

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

Permanent WRAP URL:

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/114393>

Copyright and reuse:

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it.

Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk

TURGENEV AND THE CONTEXT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, 1850-1900

The aim of this thesis is twofold: to deepen existing understanding of Turgenev's impact upon late nineteenth-century English literature by a concentrated study of his meaning for George Gissing and Henry James, and to study selected examples of English language translations of Turgenev's work in both their linguistic and their cultural aspects.

The first of these two lines of inquiry is undertaken in the belief that existing studies of Turgenev's influence upon English writers have, on the whole, left untouched the question of the respective cultural contexts, within which Turgenev and his devotees wrote. It is this question, and in particular the awareness of historical determinism and its relation to culture on the part of Turgenev and his English admirers, that I have tried to explore.

The second of my aims has been to perform the task, hitherto neglected, of assessing the stylistic qualities and linguistic accuracy of the most significant translations of Turgenev's work into English undertaken during the nineteenth century. Additionally, I have tried to establish the importance for those translations of the English cultural context in which they were undertaken. In doing so, I hope to have shown how the nature and reception of translations from so unfamiliar a tongue as Russian in the second half of the nineteenth century may be taken as indices of shifts in English cultural and historical perspectives during that period.

To these ends, I have devoted the first and fourth chapters of this thesis to a study of English translations from Turgenev in the eighteen-fifties and eighteen-nineties respectively, while the second and third chapters assess the significance of Turgenev for two contrasting writers of the period, Gissing and James.

TURGENEV AND THE CONTEXT
OF ENGLISH LITERATURE,
1850-1900

by

LAWRENCE GLYN TURTON, M.A.

Thesis submitted for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Department of English and Comparative
Literary Studies

September 1984

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	Turgenev in the Context of the 1850s
Chapter 2	Turgenev and Henry James
Chapter 3	Turgenev and George Gissing
Chapter 4	Turgenev and the English 'Nineties
Bibliography	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The help and support which I have received in preparing this thesis has taken such different forms and come from so many quarters that it is difficult to know in what order to thank people. My family have shown a tolerance and understanding that I have not always deserved, while my colleagues, in particular Dr. Mick Miller and Dr. Jeffrey Johnson, have offered advice and encouragement at moments when it was most needed.

To my supervisors, Dr. John Rignall and Mr. John Goode, my particular thanks are due. I count myself fortunate to have been guided by two people who have given so freely of their knowledge and their time. I have been no less lucky in finding in Mrs. Trudine Gillman a typist whose care, efficiency and patience have been outstanding.

Finally, I would like to record my gratitude to Alan Haywood and the late Max Hayward, who taught and encouraged me in earlier years. This thesis cannot be a tribute worthy of them, but the memory of their enthusiasm for Russia's language and literature sustained me in writing it.

A Note on Editions and Abbreviations

I have used throughout the complete edition of Turgenev's Works and Letters, published during the nineteen-sixties. Although a revised and enlarged edition of Turgenev's works began to appear during the composition of this thesis, I have been unable to take account of it. Except when written from outside Russia, the dates of Turgenev's letters are given in the Old Style.

Despite the fact that it excludes some of James's novels, I have chosen to use the New York Edition of his works for reasons of consistency. Where textual differences occur between the New York Edition and the earliest published forms of James's work, I have noted them wherever they may be considered relevant to the argument.

All abbreviations adopted are indicated in footnotes when the texts in question are first referred to.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most rewarding comparisons are those that writers themselves have accepted or challenged their readers to make - those that spring from 'the shock of recognition,' where one has become conscious that an affinity exists between another and himself. Henry James felt this about Turgenev, Pound felt it about Propertius, Pushkin about Byron. To explore 'influence' here leads quickly into situation, and the reason why the example of one author should mean so much at a particular time and place to another. These are matters of inquiry which have their own clear justification ...¹

At almost every point, then, comparative literary studies lead over into, or presuppose,² studies in cultural history and history of ideas.

So much has already been written about Turgenev's impact on the English-speaking world, that any additional inquiry into the subject requires particular justification. My own debt to existing scholarship in the field is considerable, and I must acknowledge at the outset the importance of Royal Gettmann's Turgenev in England and America and Patrick Waddington's Turgenev and England. No one writing on Turgenev's reputation in the West could avoid some reliance upon these two exemplary works of scholarship.

At the same time, the use I have made of previous studies has been as 'navigational aids', directing me to areas of the subject which I believe have been inadequately explored. Gettmann's work is a history of the critical reception of

1 Henry Gifford, Comparative Literature (London, 1969), p. 73.

2 S.S. Prawer, Comparative Literary Studies (London, 1973), p. 141

Turgenev in the West. It deals in passing with the quality of the translations of his work, but it does so without reference to the original Russian source, relying for its judgements on the translations by Constance Garnett. Waddington's more recent book is essentially an exhaustive biographical and bibliographical study of Turgenev's personal connection with England. In the gap between these two works, I have discerned two lines of inquiry that need pursuing.

Firstly, the uneven quality of the nineteenth-century translations of Turgenev's has been more often remarked upon than studied. I have therefore chosen to examine the texts of translations from Turgenev in the two decades when a coherent group of his works was translated - the eighteen-fifties and the eighteen-nineties. Additionally, I wish to examine the relationship of these translations to the climate of English culture at the time they were undertaken. The nature and reception of translations, at a time when publishing was still very far from being 'internationalised', may be taken as accurately indicating, not only one nation's perception of another, but also the broad cultural and historical pre-occupations of the 'host' country. I consider this to be peculiarly true of the English versions of Turgenev's works which appeared in the eighteen fifties and the eighteen-nineties. In the former decade, hostility toward Russia during the Crimean War and the habitual insularity of English culture produced a selective curiosity which, in its distortedness, made possible the publication of translations that are themselves distortions. Forty years later far-reaching changes had occurred which facilitated the efforts of Constance

Garnett to produce a scrupulous and faithful translation of the bulk of Turgenev's work. By the early eighteen-nineties an aesthetics of fiction had emerged which favoured the reputation of a discriminating stylist like Turgenev, while English literature had become infinitely more open to foreign influences in general. These, and a range of other factors, I have adduced in Chapters One and Four. In doing so I hope to have performed the dual task of illustrating a general shift in the outlook of English culture by showing the changes in approach to the intrinsic linguistic and literary qualities of one foreign writer in particular. I believe that the approach to English translations of Turgenev which I have taken - combining linguistic examination with an analysis of their place in English cultural history - has not been made before.

My second aim has been to open and explore a comparative perspective upon Turgenev and two writers of the late Victorian period who, in Henry Gifford's words, experienced a 'shock of recognition' upon reading Turgenev's fiction. Studies of the impact of Russian fiction on English literature such as Gilbert Phelps's The Russian Novel in English Fiction, have already recognised the importance of Turgenev to George Gissing and Henry James. However, works such as Phelps's have tended to confine themselves to a point-for-point comparison of plot, theme and character, without exploring the deeper implications of either similarities in the fiction, or the precise nature of the affinity felt for Turgenev by his devotees. Therefore, while my own inquiry has been partly directed towards identifying specific signs of tangible

influence, the main effort of Chapters Two and Three has been to establish a unified critical perspective, within which Gissing and James, on the one hand, and Turgenev, on the other, may be viewed in comparison and contrast to each other.

In order to do this, I have tried to locate Turgenev, Gissing and James in a framework bounded by the two ideas of culture as an autonomous activity with its own self-generated values and determinants, and history as a blind force crucially affecting all aspects of human reality, including culture. The tension between these two concepts I take to be a central preoccupation of modern Anglo-Saxon literature, which we may trace from Arnold's Culture and Anarchy through to Eliot's contemplation of the 'immense panorama of³ futility and anarchy which is contemporary history'. The disturbed history of nineteenth-century Russia thrust upon Turgenev recognition of the potential conflict between humanistic and aesthetic values, and the force of an ascendant materialism in science and ideology. My reason for choosing to study James and Gissing in relation to him (and not, for example, other devotees such as George Moore⁴) is that together they form a balanced contrast in their differing awareness of this important dimension of Turgenev's fiction.

3 'Ulysses, Order and Myth' in *The Dial*, 75 (1923), p. 483.

4 The influence of Turgenev on Moore has, in any case been fully treated by Phelps, and, more recently, by Richard Cave in his work A Study of the Novels of George Moore (Gerrard's Cross, 1978).

Gissing wrote discursive and unwieldy narratives which bear no formal resemblance to Turgenev's. Nevertheless, as I shall argue, his works rehearse conflicts of meaning and value that correlate with Turgenev's own dramatisations of the clash between history and culture. James, by contrast, saw Turgenev as the supreme exponent of an independent, freely discriminating 'art' of fiction, without ever fully appreciating the sense of history and ideology and their continual challenge to the 'freedom' of literature which informs Turgenev's work, just as it haunts Russia's culture. I shall argue that only in The Bostonians, a settling of accounts with America unique in James's work, does he come close to Turgenev's awareness of the momentum of historical change. More typically, James's highly refined sensibility either excludes the nature and processes of history, or else - as in The Princess Casamassima - it conjures the victory of cultural values over political ones.

Extreme though James's case may be, in one sense it typifies the predominantly apolitical character of English culture. Bernard Bergonzi has spoken of the 'essentially conservative and innocent nature' of English cultural life as 'both its limitation and its privilege'⁵. James, in his perception of Turgenev, exemplifies that limitation and privilege, while Gissing's recognition of the intellectual and ideological sides of Turgenev's fiction mark him out as curiously at odds with that tradition of 'innocence'.

5 Bernard Bergonzi, 'The Advent of Modernism' in the Sphere History of Literature in the English Language (London, 1970), VII, 45

In the last analysis, though, my intention has not been to magnify or diminish the reputation of either James or Gissing. What I hope to have illustrated is the extraordinary protean quality of Turgenev's art, by virtue of which it meant different things to widely differing writers. In this respect, the shared enthusiasm of Gissing and James for Turgenev, and their difference in practically everything else seem to me to bear out James's description of his master as 'the novelist's novelist.'

CHAPTER ONE

TURGENEV IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 1850s

(i) Souls - dead and living

The appearance of the first translations of Turgenev's Zapiski okhotnika in English at the height of the Crimean War signalled a moment of political conflict and symbolised one of cultural convergence. Anti-Russian feeling, endemic in England for a generation, gave rise to a propaganda campaign of jingoistic fervour¹. There arose, in the press and periodicals, an urgent need for information about the domestic condition of an enemy, whose external ambitions could be represented as an extension of internal repression and social injustice. Among the variety of sources relating to Russia that appeared in England between 1853 and 1856 - some of them of doubtful authenticity and obscure provenance - a French language version of Zapiski okhotnika was published in English, in both book and² extract form, between August 1854 and November 1855.

1 '... even in the most moderate of circles ... the war was welcomed as the culmination of an ideological struggle which had been going on for many years.' Olive Anderson, A Liberal State at War (London 1967), p. 4.

2 'Photographs from Russian Life', Fraser's Magazine, 50 (1854), 209-22; Russian Life in the Interior or The Experiences of a Sportsman, edited by James D. Meiklejohn (Edinburgh, 1855); 'The Children of the Czar', Household Words, 11 (1855), 108-14, 'More Children of the Czar', Ibid., 227-32, 'Nothing like Russia-Leather', Ibid., 286-88, 'A Russian Singing Match', Ibid., 12, 402-5.

Ironically, this introduction of Turgenev to England in a climate of ignoble curiosity affords a symbolic example of that convergence of national literatures in the pan-European literary development of Realism. For the 1850s are not just a decade of conflict between the European powers; they are also the years in which Realism first emerges as a recognisable artistic movement in Europe. Culture, it appears, flows through channels unstoppable by the ideology of nationalism. Indeed, nationalism may even carry forward unwittingly those processes and values it exists to deny.

At its most virulent, the attitude of the English periodicals towards Russia during the Crimean War can be described as one of curiosity, tempered by loathing. The British Quarterly Review in particular was assiduous in both seeking out material on Russia and in using it to denounce the whole structure and fabric of its society. During 1855, the British Quarterly regularly 'rounded-up' books on Russia, favouring those that had been, or purported to have been, written by authors with first-hand experience of the country. In its 'Epilogue on Books' section for April 1855, the British Quarterly praises Russia and the Russians by J.W. Cole for its concentration upon those historical, economic and military aspects of Russia that it judges to be most pertinent to the current situation; it concludes by using the work reviewed as a stick, with which to beat the anti-war lobby at home: 'Mr Cobden would make Nicholas a virtuous and magnanimous prince ... We commend this little volume on Russia and the Russians

to Mr Cobden's perusal. It will afford him a succinct history of the crimes of Russian princes past and present.³

Moving on directly to a dismissively brief notice of James Meiklejohn's translation of the French version of the Zapiski okhotnika, the Quarterly registers disappointment that Russian Life in the Interior; or the Experiences of a Sportsman fails to offer the right kind of material: '... the work is not so descriptive of national manners and customs as we expected to find it. The persons described, the Country Doctor, the Sportsman, the Bourmistr or Steward, the Forest Ranger, the Serf, etc., are not exactly the classes whose domestic history and customs we wish to learn something about at this moment.'⁴

Such deprecation one must put down to the fact that the fundamental humanitarianism of Turgenev's sketches might have weakened the grounds for enmity - an enmity which the British Quarterly took to be self-evidently justified. The journal's attitude to Russia and its eagerness for propaganda fodder are baldly stated in the opening paragraph of a review of eighteen works relating to Russia, published in 1855, shortly before the review cited above:

3 British Quarterly Review, 21 (1855), 567-569 (pp. 568-569).

4 Ibid., p. 569.

Everything relating to the home life, or intimate history of our bitter enemy - and we may add to the enemy of liberty and the enemy of humanity - is at this moment deeply and painfully interesting. Seen at a distance or abroad, or in the fulfilment of functions high and, out of their own country, Russians are ever playing a part or wearing a mask, more especially if they be in the pay or in the confidence of the emperor. Their object then is to delude and to deceive by false representations, by magnificent descriptions, and by toning down the colouring so as to suit the taste of more civilised countries.⁵

Whatever adverse criticism of his country Turgenev's Sportsman's Sketches might contain, they evidently lacked sufficient violent colouring for the purpose of showing Russia as a 'rude and barbarous kingdom', threatening to throw civilisation 'back to a worse condition than in the third century.'

In such a climate, with chauvinism dictating the direction of curiosity, truth proved the first casualty of war in more ways than one. Predisposed to believe the very worst about Russia and largely ignorant of Russian literature, London publishers and editors laid themselves open to what might punningly be called the blatant ruse. Hurst and Blackett, the publishers, brought out in 1854 a work entitled Home Life in Russia by a Russian Noble, purporting to be a true account of the life of masters and serfs in contemporary Russia.⁶ In fact, the book was

5 British Quarterly Review, 21, 130-157 (pp. 130-131).

6 Donald Davie, in his wide-ranging thesis, 'The English Idea of Russian Fiction since 1828' (University of Cambridge, 1951), pp. 67-69, has drawn attention to the publication of Home Life in Russia as a symptom of the climate of feeling in England during the Crimean War.

an adulterated version of Gogol's Dead Souls, foisted upon the publishers by a Russian noble whose name they were not at liberty to disclose⁷. Avid though they were for sources that would portray Russia in a bad light, most of those English periodicals which noticed the book, also noticed the deception that had been perpetrated upon the publishers. The Athenaeum, the Leader, and the Eclectic Review all reviewed the work, in some cases proving its fraudulent nature by juxtaposing extracts from it and a German translation of Dead Souls, published in the 1840s. The Athenaeum, in its exposé, makes use of extracts from Dead Souls, published by Prosper Mérimée in Paris in 1852, to prove the deception, quotes from the preface of Home Life in Russia the claims made for its authenticity, and ends by noting the irony of this deception within a deception:

The proposal to purchase dead serfs could not be made to any honest man in his senses, without occasioning some inquiry as to its purpose, and leading in consequence to detection. That the general tone of the work

7 'In conclusion, we may regret that we are not at liberty to mention the author's name - not that the work itself requires any further verification, for its genuineness is avouched by almost every line - but the truth is, that the writer is still anxious to return to his native country, and is perfectly well aware that the avowal of his handiwork and such a display of his satirical powers, will not serve as a special recommendation except, possibly, as a passport to the innermost regions of the Siberian wilds'. Home Life in Russia. By a Russian Noble (London, 1854) I, iii.

Upon this last suggestion, the Eclectic Review's contemptuous comment was: 'Coventry we should think the more likely destination.' 'Modern Russian Literature', Eclectic Review, 9 (185), 199-219 (p. 200).

in regard to swindling is not sufficiently distasteful to swindlers is proved by the circumstances that the adventures of one Russian impostor have, as we have seen, been introduced into England by another.⁸

The Eclectic Review is both more thoroughgoing and more caustic in its exposure of the fraud. After derisively quoting a letter from the anonymous author, elicited from him by the publishers and forwarded to the Athenaeum as proof of the work's authenticity, the Eclectic continues in sardonic vein.

This must be considered a triumphant vindication of the originality of 'Home Life', for the work, still under that title, and the shady name of its Russian noble author, continues to be publicly advertised with the addition of some critical puffs on behalf of its original merits.

Whatever the author's knowledge of Gogol's 'poem', and we suspect it must be like our own, rather mythical, memory must have failed him as to the existence of Gogol's novel, or there has been a miracle more astounding than any enshrined in the Tsar's own holy church. To speak plainly, we have compared Gogol with the nameless noble, page by page, sentence by sentence, through the whole of the anonymous first volume, which includes Chapters 1, 12, 2, 3, 4 and a portion of the fifth chapter of Gogol; we have examined the second volume, not continuously, but not the less closely, and wherever we have read we have only found a bad translation of the novel.⁹

What follows in the Eclectic are extensive extracts from Home Life in Russia, juxtaposed with the corresponding passages of Dead Souls, translated into English from a

8 Athenaeum, (December 2, 1854), 1454-1455, (p. 1455).

9 'Modern Russian Literature', Eclectic Review, 9 (1855), 199-219 (pp. 201-202).

'good and faithful German version'; the comparison proves beyond doubt a case of plagiarism, compounded by adulteration of the original text.

While the Eclectic and the Athenaeum are both unambiguous and forthright in their condemnation of the fraud, the British Quarterly Review attempted to have its cake and eat it. In its review of eighteen works on Russia, quoted above, it made extensive use of Home Life in Russia, quoting it liberally, as if it were truth and not fiction, while at the same time grudgingly acknowledging the reports, already circulating, of its fraudulent nature:

'... it is evident that the author of the book is familiar with Russian life and customs; and if he has not actually been born in Russia, must have long lived in the country. He affirms that the story is true; and our experience of Russia would induce us to say that such circumstances as the author relates are not only possible but exceedingly probable to have occurred. There are those, however, who allege, notwithstanding these specific statements, that the book is not what it purports to be. It is said not to be an original work at all, but a mere translation from Gogol's Dead Souls; and this charge is openly made in a weekly journal of first-rate repute, the Examiner, and is reiterated with more circumstantiality by the Athenaeum. We have no means of verifying this statement at hand.¹⁰

The British Quarterly then quotes extensively from Home Life in Russia, but in the course of the editorial process clearly had second thoughts about its cavalier dismissal of the charges of literary fraud. At the foot of the page quoted above, it added a footnote, acknowledging the charges of deception to be true and, in

10 British Quarterly Review, 21 (1855), 132-133.

outraged tones, demanding the unmasking of the perpetrator.

Since the text was written, we have seen the Athenaeum of December 2nd, which positively asserts that the book is not an original one but a translation. The story, it appears, has been popular in Russia for the last twelve years. It was published at Moscow in 1842 under the title of Pokhozhdeniya ili Mertourye Dashi /sic/, the adventures of Chichikov, or the Dead Souls. Though the English edition speaks of not being at liberty to mention the name of the authors, the book when published bore the name of Nicholas Gogol, Professor of History at the University of Petersburg. In the collection of Nouvelles of Prosper Mérimée, published at Paris in 1852, a sketch of the plot of Mertourye Dashi is given, and it agrees with that of Home Life in Russia. That an abominable deception has been practised on the public no one can doubt. It is true the publishers may have been the deceived, but if so they are bound to unmask the deceiver, who is an impostor trading on false pretences.¹¹

The passing off of Gogol's Dead Souls as a documentary rather than a fictional work indicates a climate in which traduction and travesty were just as likely as scrupulous translation and honest attribution. England's only perspective on Russia was that of ideological enmity, through which narrow perception all information, whether documentary or fictional, had to pass. That distortion and deception should occur is, therefore, hardly surprising. What one might call the second retailing of the 'dead souls' illustrates, with a rich and multiple irony, the essentially divergent relationship between artistic truth and political expediency. No work offers a more radical critique of Nicolayevan Russia than the satirical Dead Souls, yet the disappointed editors of the British

11 Ibid., p. 133.

Quarterly Review would clearly rather have had the 'truth' of Home Life in Russia.

Fortunately, not all periodicals made such crudely polemical use of the Russian literature that came into their hands as did the British Quarterly. James Meiklejohn's translation of the French version of Zapiski okhotnika was noticed by a number of periodicals, which gave credit to the work's intrinsic worth, rather than merely abstracting from it that which was of propaganda value. In most cases, that inherent worth was perceived to be¹² documentary rather than literary - a perception on Turgenev's work that was to be the norm in England until, largely through the efforts of Henry James, Turgenev's literary importance became solidly established in the 1880s. But enough of the imagination, insight and sensitivity of Turgenev's original survived the distortions of Ernest Charrière's French translation for some English editors to discern and acknowledge the writer's literary skill. Moreover, what is of particular interest is that the appreciation of Turgenev's literary qualities, when it occurs, is expressed in an idiom, which was increasingly being used to establish the emerging convention of Realism.

12 'We conceive M. Tourghenieff to want sufficient imagination for a high-class fiction. Like all the other books we have met with descriptive of Russian life by Russians, the value arises from the information and its novelty, not from the graphic or dramatic power of the writers.' Review of 'Russian Life in the Interior; or the Experiences of a Sportsman, edited by James Meiklejohn', The Spectator (January 6, 1855), p. 27.

Richard Stang, in his study of the theory of the novel in England between 1850 and 1870, has shown how the theory of Realism, and the terminology needed for the articulation and development of the theory, emerge in England in the early 1850s¹³. As his study shows, the impulse towards literary Realism in those years receives a vital stimulus from the debate over the question of verisimilitude in the visual arts. But both the visual and the literary arts are themselves challenged and stimulated by the development of photography. The impact of a technology, able to produce, for the first time, an objective image of reality is such that photography becomes both a criterion for judging verisimilitude in art and an important enabling analogy in the development of a critical idiom, in which to discuss Realism¹⁴.

The critical reception of Zapiski okhotnika, in those periodicals which do more than simply make crude propaganda out of them, offers some striking examples of the contemporary concern with close verisimilitude in fiction; in a number of cases that concern is expressed in terms of art's obligation to aspire to the photographic. In August 1854 Fraser's Magazine published brief extracts from a number of the Turgenev stories in the Ernest Charrière translation, prefacing them with an introduction

13 Richard Stang, The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850-1870 (London, 1961), pp. 139-190.

14 'The words copy, transcript, photograph, and daquerrotype, ... were used by both defenders and attackers of the new movement.' Ibid., p. 144.

which illustrates precisely the then current terms of reference of the debate over realism.

Turgenev, though a gentleman is singularly exempt from prejudice. Not that he professes any liberal ideas: quite the contrary - he seeks to avoid self-obtrusion throughout, and limits himself to reproducing, with an instinctive fidelity what he has heard and seen. M. Ivan Turgenev's 'photographs' are the more interesting, in as much as he is not a professed writer; he has not sought 'effects', but has transferred to paper, with the vividness of a daguerrotype, the impressions produced upon him by the various personages and scenes he describes. Nature has given him a fine perception of the beauties of scenery, and of the peculiarities of the human character: he paints them with the simplicity and ardour of a lover, and he is none the less of an artist because a practised eye will detect the absence or even the want of art. Of all descriptive works, those which are produced by men of this stamp are the most valuable and the most lasting, because they are necessarily stamped with the fidelity of truth.¹⁵

Containing, as it does, analogies with both photography and painting, there can be no clearer illustration of the problems of defining literary realism than this article; it encapsulates perfectly the tensions between the mimetic and affective functions of fiction by simultaneously praising both the text's 'photographic' objectivity and - by implication - the author's artistic powers of unobtrusive discrimination. I wish to return to the question of the relationship between A Sportsman's Sketches and the realistic aesthetic in England in the 1850s; it suffices at present to note the Fraser's article - tentatively ascribed to John

15 'Photographs from Russian Life', Fraser's Magazine, 50 (1854), 209-10.

Duke Coleridge - as an example of a foreign text converging with, and being assimilated to, a major shift in the theory and practise of English fiction.¹⁷ But before the general implication of this convergence can be considered, it is necessary to examine the linguistic and stylistic form which the translations of Zapiski okhotnika took, and the most culturally interesting of their several appearances in the 1850s - in the columns of Dickens's miscellaneous journal, Household Words.

(ii) Words - household and adulterated

The brief extracts from Zapiski okhotnika in Fraser's Magazine, the much more extensive extracts in Household Words and the James Meiklejohn translation have a common source in Ernest Charrière's French version, published in Paris in 1854 under the title Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe, ou tableau de la situation actuelle des nobles et des paysans dans les provinces russes. There is nothing in the introduction to Charrière's work to suggest that liberties have been taken

16 Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900, (Toronto, 1972), II, 425.

17 Fraser's was not alone in using the analogy of photography in describing Turgenev's method. The Eclectic Review, in one of the most perceptive responses to Russian Life in the Interior, observes that 'all sorts and conditions of mankind as they vegetate in the wild interior, from the lord to the serf, are drawn with the graphic force of photographs.' 'Life in Russia', Eclectic Review, 9 (1855), 400-414 (p. 411). Two months earlier in an article entitled 'Art and its Aspirations', the Eclectic, reviewing a Handbook of Painting, noted the impact of photography on the visual arts with the statement 'It is evident that photography will at least for a time strengthen the tendency of our English school to materialism.' Ibid., p. 133

with the original text. Charrière makes plain in his introduction that the title has been altered, solely to reflect the documentary character of the stories¹⁸. Otherwise, the lengthy introduction is a sober and sensible appraisal of the sketches as both sociological testimony and imaginative achievement. Noting the former aspect, Charrière observes that 'Ce livre, en apparence sans prétention, se trouvait offrir le tableau le plus saisissant des mœurs de la Russie, qu'il révélait en quelque sorte à elle-même.'¹⁹ Remarking upon the coincidence of the work's appearance at the same time as Uncle Tom's Cabin, Charrière goes on to warn prospective readers that the sketches are far from being mere sentimental didacticism. On the contrary, Turgenev's refusal to preach to his readers, his unobtrusive presence in his work 'donne à ses tableaux une vie et une réalité saisissante'.²⁰ Charrière's praise of Turgenev's realism and his attack upon 'cette déclamation sentimentale, qui est le vice de toutes les oeuvres d'art de notre époque, qui nous poursuit partout'²¹ arouses expectations of a translation, scrupulously faithful to

18 'Mais si le livre est devenu, dans notre traduction, les Mémoires d'un seigneur russe, c'est pour prendre avec ce titre le caractère de témoignage de l'aristocratie russe sur la situation réelle du pays qu'elle domine'. Ivan Tourghenief, Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe, traduit du Russe par Ernest Charrière (Paris, 1854), p. iii.

19 Ibid., p. ii.

20 Ibid., p. iv.

21 Ibid., p. iii.

the original. In fact, Charrière abuses the original source by a translator's sin worse than that of omission; he shamelessly embroiders Turgenev's style, and in places inserts whole sections of text not present in the original. The result is a gross distortion of that delicate, restrained and flexible style, with which Turgenev is able to achieve effects of either humorous irony or pathos.

For ease of comparison, I have concentrated on examining those stories from Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe abstracted by Household Words, whose treatment of the texts will be considered below. I have also compared the text of the Charrière version with the full English translation taken from it by James Meiklejohn. In every one of the stories examined - 'Burmistr', 'L'gov', 'Pyotr Petrovich Karatayev' and 'Pyevtsy' - there is evidence of Charrière's expansion and exaggeration of the original. These distortions are, not surprisingly, carried over into the Meiklejohn translation, which displays, in general, a commendable if naive fidelity to its source, that Charrière might have done well to emulate.

Charrière's version of 'Burmistr' furnishes numerous examples of gratuitous insertions that exaggerate the studiously controlled processes of characterisation and description in Turgenev. In the description of the landowner, Arkady Pavlytch, and the narrator taking breakfast together, which occurs very near the beginning of the story, and, in Turgenev, by carefully established but uncommented

details, helps fix Arkady Pavlytch's spoilt, self-indulgent nature, Charrière chooses to enlarge the description of the meal with a Dickensian figurativeness:

Charriere, p. 159

Bientôt, il attaqua sérieusement les côtelettes et le fromage et, après avoir vaqué en homme à cette operation, il se versa un verre de vin rouge, le porta à ses lèvres et fronça les sourcils.

Turgenev, Pol. sob. soch., IV, 136

Позавтракавши плотно и с видимым удовольствием, Аркадий Павлыч налил себе рюмку красного вина, поднес ее к губам и вдруг нахмурился.

Here, as in general, Meiklejohn follows Charrière:

'Soon after, he attacked the cutlets and cheese seriously, and after acquitting himself manfully in this respect, he poured out a glass of red wine, carried it to his lips and
22
frowned.'

To each of the stories he translates, Charrière gives his own sociological title and sub-title, and it is presumably out of consistency with his generally sociological and documentary claims for Zapiski okhotnika that some of his insertions impart background information that Turgenev does not give. Thus, Charrière feels it necessary to lengthen Turgenev's brief description of a scene in which icons occur, with an anthropological explanation:

Charrière, p. 163

Arcadi Pavlytch les chassa bien vite pour aller se placer sur le banc juste au dessous des saintes images que l'homme du peuple ne manque jamais de saluer en signant lorsqu'il entre dans une chambre quelconque.

Pol. sob. soch., IV, 140

Аркадий Павлыч выслал их вон и поместился на лавке под образами.

Meiklejohn (p. 189) likewise incorporates Charrière's aside on this religious observance of 'l'homme du peuple'.

But it is upon those subtle effects of humour and satire which Turgenev achieves by understatement, that Charrière wreaks the greatest damage. In 'Burmistr' the scene between Arkady Pavlytch and his bailiff is so richly comical because authorial comment upon it is restricted to that minimum which is necessary to enhance the dialogue. Here Charrière manages to undermine ironic effect by both omission and commission:

Charrière, p. 165

On servit le souper; Arcadi Pavlytch se mit à souper. Le vieillard fit vite sortir son fils, qui exhalait une odeur champêtre très forte à ce que disait le père même qui se tenait comme un automate à quelques pas de la table.

- Eh bien! Vieux, en as-tu fini avec les voisins, pour la limite? - dit M. Péenotchkin
- Fini, bârène, fini ...

Pol. sob. soch., IV, 141.

Между тем подали ужин; Аркадий Павлыч начал

кушать. Сына своего старик прогнал - дескать, духоты напускаешь.

- Ну что, размежевался, старина? - спросил г-н Пеночкин, который явно желал подделаться лод мужицкую речь и мне подмигивал.

- Размежевался, батюшка, ...

By destroying, through elaboration, the euphemistic expression 'дескать, духоты напускаешь', and omitting the author's wry comment on Arkady Pavlytch's patronising paternalism, Charrière has removed most of the humour and satire from the scene - qualities of the original which are manifestly retained in this version of the encounter between bailiff and master in Richard Freeborn's translation:

Supper was meanwhile served; Arkady Pavlytch began to eat. The old man drove out his son, explaining that he wanted to make the room less stuffy.

- Well, me old dear, have you marked off the boundaries? asked Mr Penochkin, who clearly wanted to give the impression of knowing peasant speech and kept on winking at me.

- Tis done, good master ...²³

This pattern of elaboration - undermining the satirical and comic effectiveness of Turgenev's understatements and dissipating the effects of his concentrated but vivid descriptions - is the same throughout the Charrière text. In the story 'L'gov', for example, the narrator questions the peasant Sutchok on the various

23 I.S. Turgenev, Sketches from a Hunter's Album, translated by Richard Freeborn (London, 1974), p. 108.

occupations he has had as an household serf. His replies are phlegmatic and brief, throwing into relief by their brevity both his acceptance of his lot and the demeaning treatment he has received. These effects Charrière partly dissipates by making Sutchok reply in a relatively garrulous fashion, with details of his various occupations, not present in the original, inserted in the translation. Asked what his duties were under the father of his last mistress, he replies simply:

Pol. sob. soch., IV, 86

- А в разных должностях состоял: сперва в казачках находился, фалетором был, садовником, а то и доезжачим.

My translation

- I had various duties. First I was a page, then a coachman, then a gardener, and finally a whipper-in.

This reply Charrière renders as follows:

Charrière, p. 98

- Chez le père? Chez le père j'ai été petit kazac, je me tenais debout contre une porte; puis postillon, nous n'allions qu'à quatre chevaux, je montais sur une haute selle le cheval de gauche de la paire de devant; mais on m'a fait veneur et ...

A little further on in the same exchange, Sutchok is asked how he learned the job of cook - another rôle he was assigned. His reply is characteristically brief.

Pol. sob. soch., IV, 87

Сучок приподнял свое худенькое и желтенькое лицо и усмехнулся.

- Да разве этому учатся? ... Стряпают же бабы!

My translation

Suchok raised his thin, yellowish face and laughed

- You don't learn cooking. You get the women to do it!

This reply in Charrière (and Meiklejohn, who follows him) becomes:

Charrière, p. 98

- Tiens! est-ce qu'on a besoin d'apprendre ça? On fait cuisiner les femmes donc, et on goûte, c'est tout, - dit Soutchok en relevant son visage maigre et jaunâtre, ou le rire voulut en vain se faire jour.

Meiklejohn, p. 117

- O! It is not necessary, surely to learn cooking. Why, we make the women cook, and then we taste - that is all, - said Soutchok, raising his thin yellow face, in which a smile seemed to be vainly struggling into light.

Charrière's capacity for expanding Turgenev's original text did not merely extend to the embellishment of dialogue and description. At one point in the story 'Pyevtsy', he introduces a character of his own invention, describing him as 'l'entrepreneur' and giving a substantial paragraph of detail about his activities (Charrière, p. 280). Curiously, this is one point in the text where Meiklejohn - unaccountably - chooses to

modify his source. The few lines preceding the introduction of the invented Charrière character describe the son of one of the peasants, Morgatch. This description, which Charrière includes, Meiklejohn (p. 309) omits, going on to give a much reduced account of the invented Charrière character, 'l'entrepreneur'. I can see no clear reason for Meiklejohn's deviation from Charrière at this point, other than that he has sensed the manifestly unnatural nature of this insertion of a character and has therefore wavered in his own work of translating.

Charrière's travesty of the Turgenev text did not go undetected for long. Turgenev himself noted the appearance of the Charrière version of his sketches in a letter to Sergei Aksakov in May 1854²⁴. Whether the mild deprecation, in that letter, of Charrière's efforts is genuine, or a form of false modesty on the part of a young writer finding himself translated, is hardly relevant, since Turgenev's attitude turned to outrage once he received a copy of the French version:

24 'A translation of my book has just appeared in Paris. It has a long foreword - which no doubt contains a good deal of nonsense.' /My translation/ I.S. Turgenev, Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy i pisem v dvadsati vos'mi tomakh (Moscow and Leningrad, 1960-68), II, 222, No. 292, Letter to Aksakov of May 31, 1854.

Please note that hereafter in notes, and throughout in the text, this edition is referred to by the abbreviation, Pol. sob. soch., where literary extracts are referred to and Pis'ma, where quotations are made from letters.

I have at last received the French translation of my sketches - and it would have been better if I hadn't! This Monsieur Charrière has made of me the Devil knows what. He has added whole pages, made up some things and discarded others to an unbelievable degree. Let me give you a brief example of his treatment: where I, for instance, have written 'I fled', he translates these two words in the following manner: 'Je m'enfuis d'une course folle, effarée, échevelée comme si j'eusse eu à mes trousses toute une légion de couleuvres, commandée par des sorciers.' Everything is in this vein. How unscrupulous this Frenchman is - and, thanks to his good offices, I shall become a laughing stock.²⁵

Turgenev must have welcomed the chance to redeem this unfortunate situation, which came during a visit to Paris in 1856. Approached by the critic Henri-Hyppolyte Delaveau with a proposal to translate the Zapiski okhotnika²⁶ afresh, Turgenev gave his blessing to the project. Delaveau's translation came out in 1858, announcing itself as the 'seule édition autorisée par l'auteur' and featuring a preface which contained a qualified denunciation of the Charrière travesty. Delaveau quotes Turgenev's letter of complaint to the French press, endorses it with his own judgement,²⁷ but accepts in mitigation of Charrière's

25 Pis'ma, II, 224, No. 294. Letter to Aksakov, August 7, 1854. My translation.

26 'I am seeing Delaveau here ... he is undertaking a new translation of my sketches. To my surprise, I'm quite well known in France and have had several offers to translate my work.' Pis'ma, III, 24, No. 482. Letter to Botkin, October 25, 1856. My translation.

27 '... non seulement M. Charrière connaît fort mal le russe, ainsi que le démontrent de nombreux contresens, mais il a eu la prétention d'embellir son auteur. Cela est impardonnable.' Ivan Tourgueneff, Récits d'un Chasseur, traduits par H. Delaveau, (Paris, 1858), Avertissement, p. vi.

travesty, the facts that the Russian colloquial idiom is difficult and that Charrière has retained 'la plupart des traits fin et touchants qui donnent tant de prix à l'ouvrage original.'²⁸ The judgement seems a generous one.

Though characterised by the stylistic blandness that is the perennial limitation of many translations, Delaveau's version of Zapiski okhotnika is, on the basis of my sampling of it, broadly accurate. For example, the exchanges between the peasant Sutchok and the narrator in 'L'gov', which Charrière chose to elaborate, are rendered by Delaveau with a neutral accuracy²⁹. No doubt to Turgenev's satisfaction, the mysterious figure of 'l'entrepreneur', invented by Charrière, finds no mention in Delaveau's translation (p. 347) of 'Pyevtsy'.

The Delaveau version did not appear in print until after the war. By that time English interest in Russia, and in Turgenev, had subsided, and the work did not appear in English. Home readers knew Turgenev only through the Charrière version, taken up by James Meiklejohn, by Fraser's Magazine and by Household Words. The treatment that Turgenev received at the hands of the latter merits

28 Ibid., p. vii.

29 "'J'ai eu différents emplois. D'abord, j'ai été petit kosak, puis postillon, jardinier, et piqueur"; "Quand as-tu appris l'état de cuisinier?" A cette question Soutchok releva sa petite figure jaune et fletrie. "Est-ce que cela s'apprend?" - me dit-il avec un sourire; - "au village, toutes les femmes bien font la cuisine."' Ibid. pp. 126-127.

individual consideration, for it exemplifies not just the policies and editorial methods of Household Words - and, thereby, the workings of an English cultural phenomenon - but also the processes of distortion and disruption possible when one national culture engages with another in inauspicious circumstances.

Some English periodicals, reviewing the Meiklejohn translation of Charrière's Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe expressed a measure of caution about the accuracy of the French source. The Spectator, for example noted that 'the book is a translation from a French translation of the Russian. It is therefore difficult to form an accurate judgement on the individual merits of Ivan Tourghenieff, for we know not what lightness or vivacity of manner the French litterateur may have introduced, though we do not think he has gone much further than
30
manner.'

Household Words appears to have had no such doubts about the textual reliability of the Charrière version, which came into its possession, and which it proceeded to serialise under its own picturesque headings. That the magazine did not trouble itself about the quality of the translation must, in part, be due to the general lack of fastidiousness displayed by a number of periodicals at a time when any material relating to the enemy was valuable - a tendency which the dishonest marketing of

Dead Souls illustrates. But with its constant demand for miscellaneous, easily assimilable material for family consumption, Household Words had its own particular reasons for accepting Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe uncritically, and its own particular practise of taking editorial liberties with the works that came its way. Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe was not merely accepted by Household Words and used in the form in which it stood; by a process of omission, the periodical managed to add to Charrière's vices of translation some vices of adaptation of its own.

The cavalier treatment of Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe by Household Words is in part accounted for by the fact that it was not a literary periodical and took a utilitarian, rather than a reverential view of the fiction that it utilized. As Anne Lohrli has pointed out, in her study of the magazine based on its office books, 'Household Words did not review books, nor did it discuss books as literary works. It described or related their content in part or whole, it summarised and paraphrased, and quoted selections: sometimes it³¹ "gossiped" about a book.' What Lohrli's study of the periodical also shows is that Dickens and his contributors were not always scrupulous in acknowledging their sources. She instances, in this respect, the

31 Household Words, a weekly journal conducted by Charles Dickens, Table of Contents, List of Contributors and their Contributions, edited by Anne Lohrli (Toronto, 1973), Introduction, p. 6.

failure of Household Words to attribute its final extract from Zapiski Okhotnika - an adaptation of the story 'Pyevtsy', entitled 'A Russian Singing Match' - to Turgenev, even though six months or more had elapsed³² since the publication of the previous extract.

In fact, Zapiski okhotnika, both by virtue of its inherent qualities and of the characteristics superimposed on it by Charrière, answered particularly well to the magazine's proclaimed objectives of 'Instruction and Entertainment'. The uncomplicated narrative method and simple structure of the stories make salient the social and humanitarian nature of the themes; at the same time, the additional colouring and figurativeness given to the originally condensed and gently ironical style by Charrière, bring the language of the Mémoires closer to both the house style of the magazine and that of its owner's novels. The extracts could thus be published primarily for their sentimental-moralistic, rather than their formal literary value, with the embellished Charrière style already approximating to the popular idiom in which Household Words was written.

On the basis of the Household Words office books, Lohrli attributes the introductions and editing of the four Turgenev extracts, published in 1855, to Edmund Saul Dixon, a regular contributor of miscellaneous³³ articles to the magazine. The first two extracts -

32 Ibid., p. 11.

33 Ibid., pp. 256-259.

from Charrière's versions of 'Burmistr' and 'Pyotr Petrovich Karatayev' - are named respectively 'The Children of the Czar' and 'More Children of the Czar' and carry substantial introductions; the third (from 'L'gov') is introduced by the single sentence 'We will again call on M. Tourghenief to illustrate the social condition of Russia.'³⁴ The fourth has no introduction at all and is, as Lohrli notes, not attributed to its author.

The introductions to the first two extracts strike a note of sententious humanitarianism, characteristic of Household Words's sustained crusade against social abuses, while at the same time discharging the patriotic duty of casting Nicholas in the role of Anti-Christ. After acknowledging its source as the Charrière translation and remarking upon the 'truthfulness' of the sketches, the introduction continues:

Some of these are touching groups, making us conscious, after all, of the band of common brotherhood which urges us individually to fraternize with individual members even of a hostile nation. Other scenes are simply astounding, compelling us to lift our hands and eyes in wonder that such monstrous things should be possible in a land which protests that it is eminently a member of true Christendom. But the whole series of pictures, great and small, confirm the accounts previously current of the barbaric civilisation, the feudal tyranny, and the many instances of personal merit which characterise the multitudinous nation that bows itself down and is irresponsibly driven by³⁵ the world's arch enemy, the Emperor Nicholas.

34 'Nothing like Russia-Leather', Household Words, 11 (April 21, 1855), 286.

35 'The Children of the Czar', Household Words, 11 (March 3, 1855), 108.

This, and the similarly expressed introduction to the second extract, anticipate the appeal to popular sentiment of the stories in a manner, which reminds us that Dickens's own views shaped and permeated the content of Household Words. It may, therefore, be inferred that while some of the numerous omissions in the Household Words text are due to reasons of editorial expediency alone, others are due to Dixon's wish to conform with editorial policy by heightening sentimentality at the expense of irony and of sociological details, that might be considered, respectively, too subtle and too tiresome for the readership.

Thus it is, that, while Dixon in Household Words adheres to the elaborated style of Charrière's translation, he omits, from the Charrière version, certain sections of the text which give the original, to use James's phrase, 'solidity of specification.' 'Burmistr' offers a striking example of this pattern of omission. In the original text, Turgenev has the absurd and uncaring landowner, Penochkin, explain to the narrator that his peasants in the village of Shipilovka are paying quit rent rather than working for him directly:

Pol. sob. soch. IV, 137-138

- Ведь вы, может быть, не знаете, - продолжал он, покачиваясь на обеих ногах, - у меня там мужики на оброке. Конституция - что будешь делать? Однако оброк мне платят исправно. Я бы их, признаться, давно на барщину ссадил, да земли мало! Я и так удивляюсь, как они концы с концами сводят. Впрочем, c'est leur affaire.

My translation

- Of course, you probably don't know, - he went on, rocking on his heels, - that my peasants there pay quit rent. That's the Constitution for you. Still, they pay me properly. I must admit, I'd have put them to work for me directly long ago, but there isn't much land there. I wonder really how they make ends meet. But, c'est leur affaire.

Charrière, albeit with several minor stylistic flourishes and one mistranslation - 'en se balançant d'une jambe sur l'autre' instead of 'rocking on his heels' - renders this passage in full³⁶. In Household Words, the whole of this section, with its important references to the two systems of feudal dues and their relationship to the quality and extent of the land available, is reduced to 'm/y peasants pay their taxes punctually. I can't understand how they make ends meet but that's their³⁷ affair.'

Again, in 'Burmistr', the accident on the journey to Shipilovka, in which Penochkin's cook's stomach is crushed by a cart-wheel, and which Turgenev offers in a single sentence of ironical understatement, is included by Charrière (pp. 160-161), but omitted in Household Words (p. 110). By such seemingly minor, but effectively significant omissions, much of the critical edge of the

36 Charrière, p. 160.

37 Household Words, 11, 110. Royal Gettmann, in his study Turgenev in England and America (Connecticut, 1974) considers the Household Words redaction of 'Burmistr' 'remarkably complete'. He has clearly overlooked this, and a number of other significant omissions, such as the elaboration of Penochkin's character at the beginning of the story, a section of which Household Words, 11, 109, leaves out.

Turgenev original is lost.

This tendency to blunt both the irony and the sociological specificity of the original is not confined to the first Household Words extract. The modification of Charrière's version of 'Pyotr Petrovich Karatayev' by Household Words in their second instalment of the Zapiski okhotnika is so fundamental as to completely alter the tenor and moral of the story. By a series of omissions the love theme of the story is given a false precedence over the complex social and moral implications in which it is embedded in the original. Charrière, although he indulges in the kind of stylistic exaggerations which have been noted above, remains faithful to the broad narrative of Turgenev's original.

Similar patterns are to be observed in the treatment of the two other stories which Household Words adapted - 'L'gov' and 'Pyevtsy'. In the former, as Gettmann has³⁸ noted, the character of Vladimir, the freed house-serf, is deleted from the Household Words version, thus removing a significant social type and a foil to the other peasant characters in the story. In 'Pyevtsy', Household Words again manages to achieve the worst of both worlds by incorporating Charrière's enlargements of Turgenev's concentrated vivid passages of description, while omitting certain details of character and social mores that Charrière does include. The opening sections of

38 Turgenev in England and America, p. 20.

the story provide examples of both kinds of distortion; Household Words thus leaves out the initial profile of the important central character, Nikolay Ivanych, the innkeeper, which Charrière (p. 269) includes, while following the latter in his exaggerated rendering of the description of the hot July day, on which the narrator enters the inn. A comparison of one brief piece of that description in Turgenev, Charrière, Household Words and the accurate modern translation by Richard Freeborn illustrates the carrying over of Charrière's distortions of Turgenev's style into the English version.

Pol. sob. soch., IV, 228

Покрытые лоском грачи и вороны, разинув лобно глядели на проходящих, словно прося их участия;

Freeborn's translation, p. 147

Glossy feathered rooks and crows hung their beaks and gazed miserably at those who passed by, as if literally imploring their sympathy.

Charrière, p. 271

Les freux et les corbeaux, absorbant sur le noir luisant de leur plumage tous les rayons colorants et lumineux à la fois, tenaient leurs becs béant en jetant des regards voilés sur les passants, à qui ils avaient réellement l'air de demander l'aumône d'un peu de pitié ou de sympathie dans la commune souffrance.

Household Words, 12, 402

The rooks and carrion-crows, whose black plumage absorbed at once every colouring and luminous solar ray, stood with wide open bills; gazing dimly at the passers-by with looks that begged the dole of a little extra pity and sympathy in the midst of the sufferings that were common to all.

In such adulterated form, Turgenev's work was first rendered into English. To the injury of this stylistic adulteration, Household Words added its own - albeit unwitting - insult with the observation that 'the effect produced is rather that of listening to an eloquent improvisatoire, or Red Indian orator, than of perusing the work of a practised writer.'³⁹ This conflation and confusion of the concentrated simplicity of Turgenev's narrative style with a lack of artistic sophistication has, as we have seen, precise and immediate technical causes. But, beneath both Charrière's contaminated translation and the rough and ready editorial practises of Household Words lies an attitude of insularity that was to characterise English criticism, at a certain level, until the end of the century. The indiscriminating casualness with which the crypto-Dead Souls text and A Sportsman's Sketches were handled in England is only partly due to the physical, linguistic and cultural remoteness of Russia and the unfavourable nature of contemporary politics. It is also a symptom of the more pervasive condescension towards developments in European fiction, characteristic of that influential corpus of critical opinion, the English periodical press. Indeed, there exists in English criticism of the middle and late nineteenth century a distinct tension between those more enlightened students of European literature such as G.H. Lewes, Arnold and James, who wished to see the English literary consciousness enlarged and Europeanised,

39 Household Words, 11, 108.

and the aggregate conservatism of literary journalism, which helped retard the full impact of contemporary European culture on English literature until the last years of the century.

Nevertheless, despite the debased translation of Zapiski okhotnika and the subsequent lapse of some fifteen years before Turgenev's literary reputation was consolidated in England, the appearance of his work here in 1854-55 remains, on two related counts, an event of literary importance. Firstly, the positive response to humanitarianism in Household Words does represent a minor triumph of the affective, universal power of art over the rival, divisive claims of nationality. It is fitting that two works such as Hard Times and Zapiski okhotnika, each addressing itself to institutionalised iniquities of a specifically national kind, should appear in the same journal, dedicated to an 'uncompromising humanitarian radicalism.'⁴⁰ For all the manifest differences in the form of their art - and, for that reason, to the continuing bewilderment of Henry James - Turgenev retained a fervent admiration for the humanity⁴¹ and imaginative penetration of Dickens's fiction . The

40 Edgar Johnson, Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph, 2nd edition (London, 1977), p. 367.

41 'So you didn't like the English. I'd half expected it. It would appear that you had neither the time nor the opportunity to appreciate the spirit of sincerity which beats in the hearts of many of the characters in the novels of Dickens and which flows strongly in the veins of the people in general and in each individual Englishman.' Pis'ma, IV, 210 No. 1045. Letter to Tolstoy of March 22, 1861. My translation.

affinity should surprise no one, for the novels of both writers make their primary appeal to the sympathetic emotions of the reader and, in their cultural and national particulars, proclaim a common human experience that could make Dickens so popular in Russia and Turgenev so accessible to the West.

Secondly, the appearance of Zapiski okhotnika in England in the middle of the 1850s epitomises the fundamental convergence of Russian and English fiction in the mainstream of European Realism, despite all cultural and ideological obstacles. It is to the implicit relationship between the realism of Zapiski okhotnika and the avowed realism of such a representative English writer as George Eliot that I wish to devote a final separate section of this chapter.

(iii) Dutch paintings - in Russian and English

It is surely not necessary to rehearse all the evidence for regarding the 1850s as 'a kind of watershed'⁴² in the development of Realism as a literary movement. The studies of the decade by Becker, Stang and others, have assembled ample materials to show that

42 George Becker, Documents of Modern European Realism (Princeton, 1967), p. 7. Becker goes on to note (pp. 7-8): 'The claim that the 1850s are the starting point for the new movement does not rest on the innovations of Tolstoy and Flaubert alone. We must remember that the early works of George Eliot and Anthony Trollope belong to that decade, that for many the appearance of Turgenev's A Sportsman's Sketches in 1852 is the true beginning of Russian realism, and that in the United States Whitman's Leaves of Grass (1855) had the explosive force of a manifesto in favour of a new literature.'

the 1850s was the crucial decade for both the fictional practice and the theoretical articulation of Realism. I have already pointed out how the tendency of reviewers to use analogies with photography in their treatment of the Meiklejohn/Charrière translation indicates both a pervasive concern with verisimilitude, as well as a recognition of the impulse towards objective representation, characteristic of the Zapiski okhotnika and of Turgenev's artistic outlook in general⁴³. But in order to throw into relief the importance of the historical moment at which Turgenev's work first appeared in English, I wish to illustrate, in more exact terms, the underlying community of imaginative outlook and artistic aspiration linking Turgenev and the foremost representative of mid-century English realism, George Eliot. For, like Turgenev, George Eliot was to compose her first full length fiction in the second half of the 1850s; and, like him, she perceived and pondered the writer's obligation to engage with reality, in terms that are fundamentally humanist and ethical.

To an important degree, the realism of Turgenev derives from progressive Westernist views, shaped in part by the powerful influence of Belinsky, whose advocacy of verisimilitude in poetry and fiction did much to form

43 'Impartiality and a desire to seek only for the Truth are two of the qualities for which I'm grateful to nature for having bestowed on me.' Pis'ma, III, 3Q No. 485. Letter to Druzhinin, November 11, 1856. My translation.

the 'civic' tendencies of later Russian literature. Belinsky's praise of those of the Zapiski published in the 1840s, before his death in 1848, commend their author for his imaginative grasp of actuality. In a letter to Turgenev of March 1847, quoted in the latter's Literary Reminiscences, Belinsky gives his appraisal of Turgenev's gift in the following terms: 'If I'm not mistaken, your real vocation is to observe actual phenomena and convey them by filtering them through your imagination, without placing your sole reliance upon the imagination.'⁴⁴ The imaginative engagement with actual facts came about progressively in Turgenev's work from the middle-1840s, and represents a shift, partly under Belinsky's influence and partly by temperamental inclination, towards that position of liberal humanism that Turgenev was to occupy for the rest of his life. Humanism and Realism are the essential co-determinants of the Zapiski okhotnika, and the sketches themselves form a monument to the progressive aspirations of the Russian intelligentsia of the late Nicolayevan period.

Although after completing them, Turgenev felt an urgent need to realise a more ambitious fictional project, the essential principles of what one must call the sympathetic realism of Zapiski okhotnika were not abandoned. And it is in the formulation of his literary aims in Turgenev's letters of the early and middle 1850s, that one

44 Quoted in 'Vospominaniya o Belinskom', Pol. sob. soch., XIV, 60. My translation.

senses an essential similarity to the moral and humanistic realism of his English contemporary, George Eliot.

Two extracts from his letters will make the point. In a letter to Annenkov of 1852, albeit in a self-deprecating dismissal of what he has done so far as a writer, Turgenev offers a brief account of his objectives in the Zapiski: 'I tried to extract from my characters, taken from among the ordinary people, their fundamental essences - triples extraits - and then bottle them, saying, so to speak, uncork them, honoured reader, and sniff - don't you sense a truly Russian type?'⁴⁵ Four years later, writing to Botkin, the imperative of contact with, and commitment to, 'real life' is asserted in a spirit of dissatisfaction with his own falling short of that reality:

It seems to me that the chief fault in our writers - and this applies to me especially - is that we come all too rarely into contact with real life, that is with real live people; we read too much and think in the abstract ...

... If one of us pays attention to the 'local', he immediately tries to make it universal - that is he invests it with a universality of his own making and so produces nonsense.⁴⁶

In the same summer that Turgenev was writing to Botkin of the importance of the 'local' and of 'contact with real life', George Eliot was formulating her own principles

45 Pis'ma, II, 77, No. 197. Letter to Annenkov of October 28, 1852. My translation.

46 Pis'ma, III, 46, No. 494. Letter to Botkin of December 7, 1856. My translation.

of realism in an effort to 'escape from all vagueness and inaccuracy into the daylight of distinct vivid ideas', and noting that 'the mere fact of naming an object tends to give definiteness to our conception of it.'⁴⁷ This commitment to the representation of the actual becomes fully articulated in her Westminster Review piece of July 1856, 'The Natural History of German Life'. In the month in which Turgenev was castigating himself and his contemporaries for remoteness from 'real live people', George Eliot was decrying the 'influence of idyllic literature'⁴⁸ on art, and presenting an image of the English peasant very different from the idealised rustic of conventional fancy. The picture she sketches, in order to explode the idyllic myth of the peasantry, is of the real nature of a drunken haymaking, and it calls vividly to mind the drunken revel at the end of Turgenev's story 'Pyevtsy', whereby the author deliberately counter-balances the lyric interlude of the singing contest with an image of rustic life in its commoner aspects.

At the same time, the realist impulse in both Turgenev and George Eliot is one of sympathetic honesty, rather than brutal exposure. Considered together, what Turgenev and George Eliot show is not just the closely similar processes, whereby European Realism crystallised in different local conditions, but also the extent to which,

47 The George Eliot Letters, edited by Gordon Haight (London, 1954), II, 251.

48 'The Natural History of German Life', Essays of George Eliot, edited by Thomas Pinney (London 1963), p. 269.

in one important strain at least, that Realism was moral and sympathetic, as well as scientific and investigative in spirit. What George Eliot wrote in 'The Natural History of German Life' about the moral function of art applies with particular force to the spirit of Turgenev's Zapiski okhotnika:

The greatest benefit we owe to the artist ... is the extension of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalisations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is apart from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment.⁴⁹

In the peculiarly extreme circumstances of Nicolayevan Russia, Turgenev's efforts to 'extend men's sympathies' by his emotionally affective, and yet essentially realist treatment of the relationships between master and peasant assumed a political significance that none of George Eliot's works - including the avowedly political Felix Holt⁵⁰ - were to have. As Leonard Shapiro has observed, Turgenev, in the Zapiski okhotnika, 'had, for the first time probably, shown members of his own social standing that peasants were individual human beings, with

49 Ibid., p. 270.

50 I will argue below, in relation to the work of George Gissing, that the ideological dimension of Turgenev's work, its sense of the interaction of individual life with the historical process - a sense which is arguably outside George Eliot's imaginative scope - largely accounts for Gissing's greater affinity with Turgenev than with an English mid-century realist such as George Eliot.

intellectual and spiritual potentialities'.⁵¹ Nevertheless, mutatis mutandis, the twin impulses of Humanism and Realism, the aspiration towards both exact representation and the extension of men's sympathies seem to me to represent an artistic intention common to both George Eliot and Turgenev, and lying at the very heart of nineteenth-century realist fiction. In the letter to Annenkov of October 1852, quoted above, Turgenev, after describing his fictional aims in Zapiski okhotnika as the depiction of essential types, drawn from the common people, goes on to ask himself the question: 'Will I⁵² ever be able to draw in clear and simple lines?'

In a much quoted passage from Adam Bede, George Eliot passes directly from an authorial reflection on the⁵³ difficulty of drawing the exact truth to the defence of her 'Dutch paintings', pleading for an art which is 'ready to give the loving pains of a life to the faithful⁵⁴ representing of common place things.' In both instances, the collocation is significant; the commitment to common humanity and the striving for a clear, unexaggerated realist art are inseparable. Like George Eliot's, Turgenev's is fiction that aspires to both affectivity and verisimilitude. The fact that he

51 Leonard Schapiro, Turgenev, his Life and Times (Oxford, 1978), p. 66.

52 Op. cit., p. 77.

53 Adam Bede, edited by Stephen Gill (London, 1980) pp. 222-223.

54 Ibid., p. 223.

aspires to, and, at his best, achieves those aims in a more condensed form of fiction than any of his great English contemporaries was to make him an object of admiration and emulation for the generation of English and American writers who succeeded Dickens and George Eliot, and who sought ways of escaping from their great but overpowering example. It is to Turgenev's importance for two of these writers, differing in practically all but their admiration for his work, that I now wish to turn.

CHAPTER TWO

TURGENEV AND HENRY JAMES

(1) Turgenev in James's critical outlook

Turgenev is in a peculiar degree what I may call the novelist's novelist - an artistic influence extraordinarily valuable and ineradicably established.¹

The affection, affinity and reverence felt by James towards Turgenev, and the personal contacts through which these developed, represent one of the best attested and documented relationships between writers of different nationalities. The copious references to Turgenev in James's writings have formed the basis of studies of both their personal connection and the artistic influence of Turgenev's fiction on James's.

Of these accounts, three deserve particular mention. Leon Edel's first volume of The Life of Henry James provides a comprehensive record of James's links with Turgenev from the time of the former's arrival in Paris in 1875 until Turgenev's death. Edel gives an evaluative summary of the apparent reasons for James's attraction towards the older Russian writer, emphasizing the common factor of their exile in Paris, and the 'powerful ferment in the "provinces"',² of which, he suggests, they were both products. Though

1 From 'Turgenev' in Library of the World's Best Literature, XXV, reprinted as 'Turgenev and Tolstoy' in Henry James, The Future of the Novel, edited by Leon Edel (New York, 1956), p. 228.

2 Leon Edel, The Life of Henry James (London, 1977), I, 436.

essentially biographical, Edel's account of the relationship of Turgenev with James offers, en passant, a highly condensed assessment of the similarities of their respective themes and methods³. Daniel Lerner's study of Turgenev's influence on James⁴, dealing, as the first of its three main aspects, with the history of James's contacts with Turgenev and his writings, emphasizes Turgenev's 'cosmopolitan, humanist aestheticism' as the main ground of affinity on which the personal relationship was founded. Patrick Waddington's recent study, Turgenev in England, provides an exhaustive documentary record of those of James's contacts with Turgenev which appertain to England, shedding much light on the precise links between James and figures such as W.R.S. Ralston, Turgenev's English translator and publicist⁵.

Because the facts are already well documented, the present study will not attempt a comprehensive account of Turgenev's personal links with Henry James. Instead it is proposed to select only those biographical and documentary points of reference that will serve the main purpose of this chapter, which is to make a fresh comparative assessment of their work. By viewing James and Turgenev in a single critical and historical perspective, I hope to explore not only questions of positive influence and affinity, but also areas of difference which, I believe, are both governed by,

3 Ibid., p. 437.

4 Daniel Lerner, 'The Influence of Turgenev on Henry James', Slavonic and East European Review, 20 (1941), pp. 28-54.

5 Patrick Waddington, Turgenev and England (London, 1980).

and shed light on, the radically different cultural situations of the two novelists.

Such an assessment will have to focus upon the two areas of James's fiction and his criticism - particularly those three or four extended critiques of Turgenev that James wrote over a twenty-five year period of his career and which are the main testimony of his unswerving admiration for Turgenev as a human and artistic influence 'extrarodinarily valuable and ineradicably established'.

As a preliminary to that assessment, it is necessary to identify the important trans-atlantic literary context in which James's life-long attachment to Turgenev developed in the early 1870s and to link it to that surge of interest in Turgenev among a small, but influential, circle of New England critics and writers whose main members were T.S. Perry, W.D. Howells, Hjalmar Boyesen and James himself.

The very earliest source of Henry James's enthusiasm for Turgenev lies, as Daniel Lerner has pointed out ⁶, in the admiration of his father and elder brother for the Russian writer. Lerner speculates that James's earliest reading of Turgenev may well have preceded his fifteenth birthday, cites the numerous laudatory references to Turgenev in the letters of William and Henry James, Senior, and observes that 'Turgenev established himself firmly, as ⁷ well as early, as a favorite in the James household'.

6 Slavonic and East European Review, 20, pp. 29-30.

7 Ibid., p. 29.

When James embarked on a literary career in the 1870s, the 'favorite' immediately became a model, at times almost a totem, ardently recommended by the elder, and willingly accepted by the younger Henry James. In Notes of a Son and Brother, writing of the year 1872, James warmly and nostalgically recalls his father's sympathy for his 'fondest preoccupations' which were 'now quite frankly recognised as the arduous attempt to learn somehow or other to write' and quotes the following extract from a letter of his father's at the time: "I send you The Nation, though there seems nothing in it of your own, and I think I never fail to recognise you. A notice of Gustave Droz's Babolain (by T.S.P., I suppose) there is; which book I read the other day. Thus fumbling in the cadaver of the old world, however only disgusts me when so unrelieved as in this case by any contrast or soufflé of inspiration such as you get in Tourgueneff".⁸

James readily assented to his father's high valuation of Turgenev; the following year he completed the first critical appraisal of the Russian, sending it to his father for comment⁹ and, in 1874, during his visit to Europe, proudly announced his intention of visiting Turgenev at Baden.¹⁰ Plainly, Turgenev was already for

8 Quoted by James in Notes of a Son and Brother (London 1956), p. 408.

9 The Letters of Henry James, edited by Leon Edel (London, 1974), I, 405. Letter to Henry James, Snr, October 26, 1873. Two editions of James's letters - one edited by Edel and one by Lubbock - have been used in this text. Hereafter the Edel edition is referred to simply as Letters. Where the Lubbock edition is referred to, its use will be indicated.

10 Ibid., p. 458. Letter to Henry James Snr. from Baden.

James the hero as man of letters in a somewhat un-Carlylean mould, and his pilgrimage to Europe in the middle 1870s had the Russian writer as its specific object of veneration.

But it is clear that James's admiration for Turgenev typifies the enthusiasm of a wider circle of New England literati, for by the early 1870s the prominent New England reviews under the direction of T.S. Perry and W.D. Howells, had adopted Turgenev's work as a criterion of excellence. He was commended as a model for what one may call the ideal of pictorial realism with a moral face, which Perry and Howells saw as the desirable basis for the practice of American writers and the tastes of American readers. Turgenev's work was perceived as a golden mean that avoided both the vapidities of many English novels of plot and incident and the excessively cerebral approach of French fiction. It is during the early 1870s that the New England periodicals can be observed trying to establish a code of principles and practice for the novel, resting on the assumption that the form has both moral and aesthetic functions. In so doing the American editors clearly hoped to safeguard the dignity and high-seriousness of a genre peculiarly susceptible to debasement by popular taste and careless practice. Turgenev's novels, realistic in essence, pictorial and dramatic in method, and moral in outlook, came to be used as a benchmark, by which Perry and Howells in particular judged fiction, and they accorded him generous treatment and hyperbolic praise in their reviews. As Royal Gettmann has observed, 'The Atlantic Monthly ... was studded with commendations of Turgenev, and the Nation brought him forward at

every opportunity.¹¹

It is evident that James's passion for the spirit and method of Turgenev's fiction must be seen in the context of the general enthusiasm of this small but influential group of American critics and writers. They were his friends, associates and correspondents, and with them he conducted a debate on the nature of the art of fiction, lasting - certainly in the case of his relationship with Howells - over many years. In its turn this general enthusiasm for Turgenev as an example of a realist, capable and worthy of being imitated, must be seen as typifying a new spirit of intellectual inquiry, a quest for new intellectual and artistic frontiers, prevailing among the circles that centred on W.D. Howells and the Atlantic Monthly during the early years of his editorship. The desire to establish and affirm the principle and methods of realism in fiction is one important aspect of a wider effort to define a moral, intellectual and artistic framework within which American thought and letters might thrive. Edwin Cady, editing Howells's criticism, has written of this period in terms of a post-civil war New England impulse of renaissance:

A decided newness in thought and sensibility, varying somewhat between generations and from person to person, of course, became epidemic in Howells's Cambridge circles and in his generation. To put the situation paradigmatically, everything intellectual history means by 'Darwinism' drove these minds towards the stance of agnosticism. As agnostics they turned away from supernaturalism, whether Hebraic or Platonic, toward forms of humanism. The resultant metaphysical and emotional tensions they resolved as pragmatism in philosophy

11 Turgenev in England and America, p. 43.

and realism in art. As Henry Adams rejected the Unitarian optimism of the hereditary 'Boston solution', Howells, in company with William and Henry James, rejected the romantic idealism of his father and entered upon the newness. Scientists like Asa Gray, Fiske, Peirce, Nathaniel Shaler, Wright, and William James might lead the way, but everyone else marched in the procession after his fashion. From the heart of Cambridge as far as the eye of the age could see, in every intellectually respectable direction the newness flourished.¹²

Cady's assessment of this spirit of new departure in intellectual and artistic circles gives us the key to Turgenev's popularity with Howells, James and other New England advocates of realism, for in replacing the romantic idealism of an earlier New England generation of writers by their own intellectual pragmatism, the younger men were sufficiently imbued with a sense of high seriousness not to want to throw the baby of morality out with the bathwater of idealism. Turgenev, possessed of a moral sense and a truthful eye, but in no way transcendental in his vision, was a perfect example of a morally responsible and emotionally responsive realist. He had, moreover, the distinct advantage of originating in neither of the two western European cultures from which Howells, at least, was keen to distance the new American Realism.

It was in this climate of receptivity to Turgenev in particular, and selective or discriminative realism in general, that James's own enthusiasm for Turgenev was fostered before he left for Europe in the mid-seventies.

¹² W.D. Howells as Critic, edited by E.H. Cady (London, 1973), pp. 24-25.

The Russian academic M.M. Kovalevsky, who visited both England and America during the last decade of Turgenev's life, noted that the Russian writer had 'even managed to create something of a little school among American novelists'¹³. In part, of course, the formation of Turgenev's American 'school' is attributable to the sensitive pride of an emerging culture, ready to look to anywhere but western Europe for its models. Nevertheless, the New England critics did enunciate precise aesthetic grounds for their high estimation of Turgenev. These grounds, and the idiom in which they were expressed, were to characterise the aesthetic which Henry James himself developed in the course of his career as a critic and novelist. Thus, the analogy of pictorial art pervades the criticism of T.S. Perry in particular, while in both Perry and Howells such terms as 'the art of fiction', 'the air of reality' and 'the power of choice' recur.

13 M.M. Kovalevsky, 'Vospominaniya ob I.S. Turgeneve', in Turgenev v vospominaniyakh sovremnikov. (Moscow, 1969), II, 142. My translation. The devotion of James's New England associates may be judged from the excited reaction of Howells upon being told by Hjalmar Boyesen that Turgenev wished to convey both his greetings and his praise of Venetian Life and A Chance Acquaintance. Howells wrote to Boyesen '... Tell him /Turgenev/ that scarcely a month passes but we burn incense to him in the Atlantic. The subtitle of the magazine should be changed so as to read "Devoted to Turgenieff, Science and Art"'. Selected Letters of W.D. Howells (Boston, 1979), II, 61. Letter to Boyesen of June 10, 1874.

In the opinion of Perry and Howells, the 'art' of Turgenev's fiction is manifested in three main characteristics of his work - the centrality of dramatically presented character, the absence of the apparatus of plot and melodramatic incident, and the unobtrusive and dispassionate narrative stance. Royal Gettmann has fully demonstrated the importance which the 'Turgenev enthusiasts' attached to these qualities of the master's work¹⁴, and I do not intend to duplicate the many quotations from the Atlantic and the Nation, which he uses as illustrations. To grasp the exemplary force which Turgenev's novels possessed for James's New England contemporaries, it is necessary only to quote a remark of Howells's, written after his passion for Turgenev had been superseded by an even stronger admiration for Tolstoy: 'The business of the novelist is to put certain characters before you and keep them before you, with as little of the author apparent as possible. In a play the people have no obvious interference from the author at all. Of course he creates them, but there is no comment; there can be none. The characters do it all. The novelist who carries the play method furthest is Tourguenief and for a long time I preferred him to any other ...'¹⁵

Among American novelists it is James whom Howells considers the finest exponent of the 'play method' which he

14 See Chapter 2 of Turgenev in England and America.

15 W.D. Howells 'My Favorite Novelist ...' (1897) in W.D. Howells as Critic, p. 270.

praises so highly in Turgenev. In his article on James in the Century of November 1882, he warmly commends James for his 'artistic impartiality' ('... one of the qualities most valuable in the eyes of those who care how things are done ...')¹⁶ and for the precedence given to character and situation over 'the moving accident' and 'all manner of dire catastrophes'. For Howells, James is the leader of a new school of American novelists, committed to the Turgenevan brand of sensitively discriminating realism, dramatic in method without being sensational in effects. It was particularly important for Howells to liberate the concept of fiction from both the 'deviant' tendencies of the present and the massive burden of the past - from the monumental but inimitable examples of Dickens and George Eliot, as much as from the excesses of contemporary naturalism. If fiction could be claimed as an 'art' with identifiable techniques and characteristics, it followed that it could be learnt without undue reference (or deference) to the massively individual genius of Dicken, the intellectually exhaustive manner of George Eliot, or, for that matter, the idiosyncrasies of any notable writer of the previous generation. More than that, it could be practised just as well in the rarer cultural atmosphere of the United States as in Europe.

When he moved to Europe, James took with him both the concept of the 'art' of fiction and the idea of Turgenev

16 'Henry James, Jnr', in Century Magazine (November, 1882), reprinted in W.D. Howells as Critic, pp. 59-72 (p. 66).

as its exemplar. Throughout his life he was to regard Turgenev's work as the absolute epitome of his own aesthetic. But the Jamesian notion of the art of fiction carries with it, for all its commitment to the 'air of reality', an assumption of the ontological independence of imaginative literature. It is this assumption which reflects a fundamental difference in the cultural situations - and, therefore, the artistic outlook - of James and Turgenev. Moreover, it is a difference of which I believe James to have been quite unaware in his appraisals of Turgenev's writing. James believed that the artist enjoys an absolute freedom to reconstitute the facts of reality in a formal order that transcends life itself. By contrast, Turgenev possessed a strong sense of the historical determinants of culture. Insistent though he was upon the artist's right to claim impartiality amidst the heat of political controversy, Turgenev nonetheless recognised that 'there are epochs when literature cannot merely be artistic, there are interests higher than poetry' ¹⁷. I propose to focus upon this difference in outlook in order to add a contrastive dimension to the frequently undertaken comparative studies of James and Turgenev, and additionally to shed light on the differences between a politicised and a non-politicised culture.

The emphasis in James's aesthetic upon form, upon the autonomy of the novelist's imagination, upon the growth of a novel out of a picture of character inwardly conceived

17 Pis'ma, II, 282. Letter to Botkin, June 29, 1855.

- these may be construed despite James's ostensible realism, as a form of crypto-Romanticism. The difference between 'reality' and 'the air of reality' is three words and a wealth of arguably problematical meaning. The term 'the air of reality' may imply a shift in the nature and function of fiction away from a simply mimetic role, away from that sense of art's subordinate and relative relationship to life from which the concept of Realism derives. Of course the phrase is intentionally ambivalent and may be taken as no more than an assertion of the axiomatic truth that art is not life. But in James's aesthetic I believe the concept of the 'air of reality' is handled with a licence which moves the absolute centre of value towards art itself and away from the life it mirrors.

There is much evidence to suggest that James lived intensely, but vicariously, through and by art. 'It is art,' he wrote, 'that makes life, makes interest, makes importance for our consideration and application of these things, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process ...'

The notion that 'art makes life' leads to a certain epistemological ambiguity when it is combined, as it is in James's aesthetic, with ostensibly realist intentions. Arthur Mizener has written interestingly of the ingrained subjectivism of James's art and of what he terms 'the troubled uncertainty about objective reality' apparent

18 The Letters of Henry James, selected and edited by Percy Lubbock (New York, 1970), II, 490.

in his work:

He had his fair share of the characteristic American preoccupation with aspects of experience that are as dazzlingly meaningful to those who respond to them, as they are irritatingly muddy to those who do not.

One consequence of this preoccupation is a perhaps exaggerated interest in subjective reality and one consequence of that interest is a troubled uncertainty about objective reality, an uncertainty that makes the direct, authoritative narration of the conventional novel of manners hard to manage ...¹⁹

Without necessarily conceding Mizener's generalisation about American writing, one may agree with his judgement upon the ambiguity of James's sense of reality. In James's conception of the artistic process, there occurs an elision between the process of observation and the phenomena observed. The following lines spoken by the narrator in The Author of 'Beltraffio' illustrate the point: 'That was the way many things struck me at that time, in England - as reproductions of something that existed primarily in art or literature. It was not the picture, the poem, the fictive page that seemed to me a copy; these things were the originals, and the life of happy and distinguished people was fashioned in their image.'²⁰

It is the sheer density of James's sense of things, his²¹ 'vast, bland sensitivity to impressions' , that renders

19 Arthur Mizener, introduction to F. Gorley Putt, The Fiction of Henry James (London, 1968), p. 15.

20 'The Author of Beltraffio' in The New York Edition of Henry James, XVI, 8.

21 F. Gorley Putt, The Fiction of Henry James, p. 51.

problematical his use of such terms as the 'air of reality' for, in its very formulation, the term subtly evades the question of whether the artistically achieved 'air' of reality reflects or transcends reality itself.

We are here at the very heart of James's conception of his own fiction, and that of those writers of whom he approved. For while it is clear that in enunciating such criteria of the art of fiction as its right and power to select, to discriminate, to present without discursively explaining, James was in part undertaking a quite legitimate defence of art and imagination against the seemingly relentless advance of scientific rationalism and its literary 'fifth column', Naturalism, it is nevertheless equally clear that the mode in which the writer is granted his 'donnée' may be open to the charge of inadequacy, fallibility or error when it claims to engage directly with historical or social forces. Such a mode may assume causality to be subsumed in the fictional effects it creates, proceeding a priori rather than a posteriori. In short, it is sometimes possible to see James as appropriating the facts of reality to serve as the furniture of the House of Fiction, or, indeed, the Palace of Art.

What illustrates this fundamental question of the method and manner of James's treatment of reality is the repeated use of the analogy of pictorial art throughout his criticism - to the point, almost, where one is inclined to think of him as believing that all art aspires to the condition of painting. James's insistence on preserving the integrity of form, upon allowing the 'portrait' to stand by itself without discursive elaboration or moral commentary

is really an appeal not to tear open the canvas upon which the 'portrait' is 'painted', since effect and cause are compressed, assimilated to the single pictorial dimension, the one surface on which they are portrayed.

It is in the light of his insistence on the art of fiction as the 'painting' of portraits that we should view James's objections to Tolstoy and his reservations about George Eliot; ostensibly those reservations concern the absence of shaped form in such novels as Middlemarch and War and Peace, but in essence his objections are to any attempt to probe the achieved image, to create an art of three-dimensional relief in which effect is extended back to cause, a fiction more analogous to plastic than pictorial art and sharing its procedures with the human and social sciences ('If we write novels so, how shall we write²² History?'). Nothing so suggestively illumines the different approaches to character as portraiture taken by James and George Eliot as the continual ironical play in Middlemarch upon the discrepancy between painted images and the reality of flesh, blood and emotion. Indeed it might be argued that Middlemarch, deprecated by James for its lack of 'form', is as much a sustained illustration of the essential disparities between portraits done in oils and those executed in language, as James's work is an appeal for the

22 Henry James's review of Middlemarch from The Future of the Novel, p. 89.

correspondences between the two.

This recurrent treatment of the novel by analogy with the painter's art is the single most prominent identifying feature of James's critical writings and it typifies his conviction that the primary characteristics of fiction are its formal, compositional, effective qualities, bestowed upon it by the untrammelled exercise of the writer's imagination, his direct personal perception and sense of reality. As I have suggested above, in James's aesthetic it is not just content (idea) and form²⁴ that are assimilated to each other, but, by the processes of art, cause and effect. ('A psychological reason, is to my imagination an object adorably pictorial'²⁵). Such a process of assimilation may appear and indeed be, incontrovertible when confined to the psychological and emotional plane of meaning - James's finest dramatisations of moral conflict such as Washington Square and Portrait of a Lady bear out the author's view. But when the frame of reference of a novel is widened to take in historical and social forces, the question of whether and how the 'aspect of things'²⁶ embodies their cause and origin becomes problematical; some account - whether by way of acceptance, rejection or compromise - must be taken of art as a determined as well as a determining activity.

23 '... the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete.' Henry James, 'The Art of Fiction' in Selected Literary Criticism, edited by M. Shapira (London, 1963), pp. 50-51.

24 Ibid., p. 63.

25 Ibid., p. 64.

26 Henry James 'Daniel Deronda: A conversation', op. cit., p. 39.

The point I wish to make is that for all the very real similarities of method and process between James and Turgenev - similarities and affinities which James was right to draw strength from - Turgenev, by virtue of a difference in temperament, vision and, above all, cultural situation had a keener sense than James of the manifestation of impersonal forces in personal lives and a stronger awareness that, although it might suffer outrageous injustice in the process, fiction would have to be tried at the bar of history, as well as that of art.

Correspondingly, there is to be found in Turgenev a proportionately greater concession made to the determining power of historical reality over a writer's work than, I believe, James ever could have conceded. Throughout the nineteenth century Russia underwent a protracted political crisis from which the personal destiny of its people could not be detached or abstracted imaginatively any more than it could be freed literally. In writing about that 'rapidly changing physiognomy of Russians of the educated class',²⁷ Turgenev was inevitably involved in creating 'pictures' of character which were, at the same time, 'readings' of history, pictures picked out in relief from the ground of their historical situation. James's procedure was to seize upon a situation morally interesting and, even in a novel such as The Princess Casamassima, whose theme is ostensibly political, to adjust and accommodate the socio-political focus to the personal drama inherent in the morally interesting

27 'Predisloviye k romanam, 1880', Pol. sob. soch., XII, 303. My translation.

situation. James's response to the challenge of social determinism is to transmute social and historical phenomena into moral drama in its emotional and psychological aspects. Turgenev, albeit with varying degrees of artistic success, chose to meet history on its own ground, but to counter-balance it by that profound pessimistic sense of mortality which James found the only negative feature of his master's art.

I propose to illustrate this point in two ways. Firstly, I shall compare what may be taken as the critical and artistic testimonies of Turgenev and James - the latter's 'The Art of Fiction' of 1884 and the former's foreword to the collected edition of his novels of 1880; to the best of my knowledge, such a comparison has not been undertaken and I believe it sheds light on what is often assumed to be the complete affinity between James and Turgenev. Secondly, I shall examine James critical writings on Turgenev, writings which while accurately perceptive of many aspects of Turgenev's artistic method, nevertheless show James to be distinctly blind to other important tests of the Russian's artistic success - tests by which Turgenev was and, indeed, expected to be, judged.

At first glance, placed side by side, Turgenev's foreword and James's 'The Art of Fiction' appear to have, as their central concern, a near identical preoccupation with what has been called in reference to James's essay 'the integrity of the artist's vision'²⁸. Both 'testimonies'

28 Morris Roberts, Henry James's Criticism (Harvard, 1929), p. 59.

assert the unquestionable and inalienable right of the author to freedom from constraint and direction by agencies other than his own imagination. The apparent similarities go further; both Turgenev and James affirm the image, as apprehended by the artist, as the irreducible building block of fiction, and, by that token, proof of the inviolable nature of the artistic imagination.

But beneath this resemblance lies a fundamental difference of emphasis which amounts to a difference in conception and meaning. Running through Turgenev's foreword is an awareness of the extrinsic significance of the art of fiction, an acknowledgement—however 'free' the artist may be—of the way in which historical reality impinges upon imaginative writing. In James's essay, I find no such concession made to the power of historical circumstance; for him the value of art is entirely intrinsic and his reaction to the question of what differentiates and what connects art and history is not to concede their interpenetration, but, by characteristic 'sleight' of style, to locate fiction within a hall of mirrors in which, no matter where you turn, alternative analogies, rather than direct, unmediated connections, provide the meaning of the art of fiction. Thus fiction is held by James to be at once analogous to painting and to history and, by implication, greater than either: 'It seems to me to give him [the novelist] a great character, the fact that he has at once so much in common with the philosopher and the painter; this double analogy is a magnificent heritage.'

29 'The Art of Fiction', p. 51.

To insist upon this double analogy is to create a proposition essentially reflexive, in which art appears as both subject and predicate. It is a proposition that can only hold if we admit the prior assumption upon which James's aesthetic is founded, that what the imagination siezes upon must be true, that 'as the picture is reality,³⁰ so the novel is history', and that the novelist competes with 'his brother the painter in rendering the look of things,³¹ the look that conveys their meaning' [my italics].

James, writing in a culture in which the question of the relationship, much less the subservience, of art to historical and political life, had not assumed the acute and pervasive form that it has traditionally and historically had in Russia, perceived no ideological challenge to the view, that 'the look' of a thing 'conveys its meaning'. By contrast, Turgenev was frequently arraigned, particularly by the younger generation of Russian radicals, for allegedly presenting in his novels a 'look' which did not convey the meaning of history, for failing to offer what they regarded as a faithful picture of the progressive forces subterraneously at work in Czarist society. The hostile reception by young Russian radicalism of On the Eve, Fathers and Sons and Virgin Soil represented a challenge to the integrity of the artist's vision in politico-historical, rather than artistic terms. In defending himself against charges of

30 Ibid., p. 51.

31 Ibid., p. 57.

inaccuracy and betrayal, Turgenev, it is clear, felt obliged to insist, just as strongly as James does, on the primacy and prerogatives of the artist's imagination, but - and it is a crucial difference - to concede, far more than James is prepared to, the determining power of curcumambient reality. In James's writings so much emphasis is placed upon the processes of receiving, collecting and selecting the impressions upon which the imagination feeds, that the sense of the autonomous active power of the cause and origins of those impressions is frequently lost. Turgenev, challenged by hostile critics with the view that there is both a higher reality and a higher necessity than imaginative art, was compelled to argue his case in terms of a causation, external to the artistic process.

Two sections in particular of Turgenev's 1880 foreword are of relevance to the point in question. In his opening remarks Turgenev vigorously answers those critics who have accused him of deviating from the direction he had first taken as a novelist more than twenty years earlier by stating that, on the contrary, he might be more justifiably accused of excessive consistency. He continues, 'The author of Rudin, written in 1855 and the author of Virgin Soil, written in 1876 are one and the same man. In all that time I have striven, as far as strength and ability have permitted, conscientiously and dispassionately to depict and embody in appropriate human types what Shakespeare calls "the body and pressure of time", and that rapidly changing face of Russians of the educated class, who have formed the predominant subject

of my observations.' ³² Turgenev's use of the quotation from Hamlet, and his insistence upon the novel as chronicle, seem to me to represent a recognition of the power of actuality that is far less equivocal than James's perception and interpretation of the way in which 'the novel is history'.

But it is in his conclusion that Turgenev in one sense most nearly approaches, and yet in another crucially differentiates himself from James's position in 'The Art of Fiction', and I have felt it necessary to translate that conclusion in its entirety. After completing a self-justificatory commentary upon the conception and often hostile reception of each of his six major works, Turgenev embarks on a counter-attack upon the assumptions of recent criticism:

'Was ist der langen Rede kurzer Sinn?' - What is all this leading up to? the reader may ask himself. In the first place, to a justification of that intention which I expressed in the opening lines of this foreword; and, in the second place, to the following conclusion, instilled in me by long experience: criticism in our country, especially in recent times, can lay no claims to infallibility - and that writer who heeds the critics alone is in danger of spoiling his gift. The main fault of criticism in our country is that it is not free. At the same time I feel bound to express my opinion concerning 'unconscious and conscious writing', 'preconceived ideas and tendencies' 'the function of objectivity, spontaneity and naivety' - concerning all those 'wretched' words, which, however authoritative the lips that utter them, have always seemed to me the commonplaces, the stock-in-trade of current rhetoric, and which would be recognised as false were they not so widely taken to be genuine. Every writer, who has talent (which is, of course, a prerequisite - every writer, I maintain, tries above all to reproduce, in a living and faithful form, those impressions which he has culled from his own life and that of others: every reader has the right to judge to what extent he has succeeded in this and where he has gone wrong:

but who has the right to tell him which impressions are suitable for literature and which are not? If he is truthful, then he is right, and if he has no talent, no amount of 'objectivity' will help him. We now have among us a new breed of writers who consider themselves 'unconscious creators' and who choose only 'vital' subjects - subjects which are nevertheless permeated by this unfortunate thing, 'tendentiousness'. Everyone is familiar with the saying: the poet thinks in images; the saying is indisputably true. But on what grounds do you, the poet's judge and critic, allow him to reproduce images of nature, of national life, of life in the raw (yet another of those wretched terms), while shouting 'stop!' if he should dare to touch upon something obscure, something psychologically complicated, even morbid - especially if that something is not a personal, individual fact but is instead thrown up by that self-same public and national life? No, such things will not do, they amount to introspection, to a preconception, they are politics, propaganda! You maintain that the propagandist and the poet have different tasks ... No! Both may have the same task; only the propagandist looks at them with the eyes of a propagandist; and the poet with a poet's eyes. In the question of art the question 'how?' is more important than the question, 'what?'. If that which you reject has taken shape in the soul of the writer as an image - an image, mark you! - then why should you suspect his intentions, why try to expel him from that temple upon whose decorated altars sit the high priests of 'unconscious' art - altars where burns the incense that they themselves have often lit? Believe me, real talent never serves extraneous ends, it is its own satisfaction: it draws its content from the life that surrounds it; it is the concentrated reflection of that life; but it is just as incapable of producing a panegyric as it is a lampoon ... In the last analysis such things are beneath it. Only those who are incapable of doing anything better can submit themselves to a given theme or adhere to a programme.³³

The points at which Turgenev's defence of artistic freedom appears to touch that of James in 'The Art of Fiction' are numerous. Turgenev's insistence that 'every artist ... tries to reproduce ... those impressions which he has culled from his own life and that of others', that the artist may

33 Ibid., pp. 309-310. My translation.

not be dictated to, appears close to James's statement that 'a novel is, in its broadest sense a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression. But there will be no intensity at all, and therefore no value, unless there is freedom to feel and to say. The tracing of a line to be followed, of a tone to be taken, of a form to be filled out is a limitation of that freedom'³⁴.

Similarly, James's contention that 'we must grant the artist ... his *donnée*, our criticism is applied only to what he makes of it' appears equivalent to Turgenev's 'every reader has the right to judge to what extent he has succeeded', while his quotation of the maxim 'every poet thinks in images' reminds one of the emphasis in 'The Art of Fiction' (and throughout James's criticism) on the literary imagination as inwardly visual.

But the essential difference between 'The Art of Fiction' and Turgenev's foreword is that the former is a defence of aesthetic freedom against artistic constraints, while the latter is a defence of artistic and imaginative freedom against ideological constraints. To James questions³⁵ of art 'are questions (in the widest sense) of execution' and the artist, in striving to capture the 'air of reality' produces 'the illusion of life'; by an exquisite process, he³⁶ 'competes with life' [*my italics*]. For all that James

34 'The Art of Fiction', p. 54.

35 'Art of Fiction', p. 65.

36 Ibid., p. 57½

insists on 'solidity of specification' as the 'supreme virtue of the novel', there is at work pervasively in 'The Art of Fiction' an underlying subjective aestheticism that foreshadows the preciousness of his last phase of writing, a stealthy if subtle translation, by processes of questionable logic, of the objective into the subjective, an assimilation of life to art: 'If experience consists of impressions, it may be said that impressions are experience just as they ³⁷ are the very air we breathe.'

In James's aesthetic, the 'body and pressure of time', the 'surrounding life' of which art is the concentrated reflection, these solid points of reference, the fundamental determinants of fiction, upon acceptance of which Turgenev's artistic testimony is based, are vapourised into 'the very air we breathe', the 'airborne particles', the 'very atmosphere of the mind'. The difference is essentially between a conception of fictional art as synthesis, on the one hand, and as assimilation on the other, between art as absolute in value and transfigurative in effect, and art, as Turgenev came to see it, as conditional upon the historical moment and ultimately relative to time and death.

For although Turgenev may never have entirely lost traces of romantic idealism and, in particular, Hegelianism which clung to him from that youthful 'head long plunge' ³⁸ into 'the German sea', in the course of time the Hegelian idea of art as representing a higher reality than nature was superseded by the sense that permeates Turgenev's

37 Ibid., p. 57.

38 'Literaturniye vospominaniya' in Pol. sob. soch., XIV, 9.

mature work of the blind indifference of the cosmos to man and his works. The deeply pessimistic (and unquestionably autobiographical) fragment 'Enough!' of 1864 takes art to be subject to decay, like all other human artefacts. The disillusioned artist-narrator speaks of how he can endure the thought that beauty and art are relative rather than absolute, but he is driven to despair by the thought that art, like everything else human is perishable and transient:

... But it is not the relative nature of art that bothers me; it is its transience - its transience, its decay, its ruin that disheartens me and makes me lose faith. Of course, at any given moment, you may say that it is stronger than nature because in nature there is no symphony by Beethoven, no painting by Rouisdal, no poem of Goethe's, - and it is only dull-minded pedants or dishonest fools who would claim art to be imitation of nature; but in the end nature is irresistible. She has no need to hurry, for sooner or later she will prevail. Unconsciously and unswervingly obedient to her own laws, she does not recognise art, just as she does not recognise freedom or goodness ...
 ... How can we poor humans, we poor artists come to terms with this mute, blind force, which does not even celebrate its own victories, but goes relentlessly onward, consuming everything. How can we withstand the rude shock of those endlessly and indefatigably oncoming waves, how in the end, can we believe in the significance, the value of those perishable images which we, in darkness and on the very edge of the precipice, fashion for a moment from the dust.³⁹

There is simply no equivalent in James to the unmitigated pessimism of this view of art, no corresponding sense of the ultimate futility of all the works of man, including the highest. For Henry James, art was a distillation from, rather than of life. For Turgenev, as we have seen, the reverse was true, and thus art must ultimately perish from the

39 Pol. sob. soch., IX, 119-120. My translation.

same causes as life itself, dissolved in 'the endlessly and indefatigably oncoming waves' of time.

When we turn to a consideration of James's writings on Turgenev, what we find is a remarkable consistency and loyalty lasting over forty years - consistency not merely in the level of enthusiasm, but in the qualities which James continued to appreciate. Much of what James saw and praised in Turgenev is there for the praising. Much of what James felt himself to have in common with Turgenev was indeed common to the two. But, at certain points and over certain aspects in his critical writings on Turgenev, James errs, omits or stumbles in his judgement; at certain times he unwittingly exposes differences in artistic outlook between himself and Turgenev. I would submit that it is, in a sense, the evidence of limitations in his understanding of the Russian novelist that constitutes the most interesting aspect of James's life-long devotion.

James's principle writings on Turgenev consist of the following pieces: a long article for the North American Review of April 1874, ostensibly a review of German translations of 'The Torrents of Spring' and 'A King Lear of the Steppe', but in fact a survey and appreciation of Turgenev's work as a whole; a review of Virgin Soil in its French form for The Nation, April 26 1877; the reminiscences of Turgenev written immediately after his death and published first in the Atlantic Monthly of 1884 and subsequently in Partial Portraits of 1888; a contribution to the 'Library of the World's Best Literature' (New York) of 1897.

Additionally, two pieces which allude to Turgenev incidentally are of relevance - the preface to Scribners Sons' edition of Portrait of a Lady (1908) and James's 1877 piece 'Daniel Deronda: a conversation'.

We may enumerate those main features of Turgenev's art to which James recurrently draws attention throughout his writings on the Russian novelist. The most salient of these are: Turgenev's emphasis upon character portrayal and moral situation, rather than upon story or plot; his 'ironical' detachment; the quality of 'poetic' realism by which his work is distinguished and, as a corollary, its avoidance of the excesses of Naturalism; his conciseness; the consistently impressive moral character of his heroines; his sensitive treatment of the theme of failure in his male characters; and, to James, the one blemish on his master's otherwise spotless record, his pessimism.

Of these aspects of Turgenev's work the one most often insisted upon by James is that of character and its 'morally interesting' potentialities as the germ of Turgenev's art. It is this that, among James's positive and accurate insights into Turgenev, deserves the closest attention, not simply because it is the cornerstone of his own art of fiction, but also because of Turgenev's invaluable usefulness to James at the height of his campaign in the middle 1880s to break down, and break with the Anglo-Saxon habituation to novels of plot and intrigue, and gain acceptance for a more mature fiction judged by moral and psychological density and depth, rather than on more meretricious criteria.

In his North American Review article (hereafter referred to as NAR), James goes out of his way to distinguish Turgenev's virtues from those of the British fiction with which his American readers might be expected to be more familiar, insisting that Turgenev has qualities which more than compensate for the absence of exuberant inventiveness and plot interest of Scott, Dickens, or George Eliot⁴⁰.
 'His figures', James tells his readers,⁴¹ 'are all portraits' and his passion is for 'an incident, a person, a situation morally interesting. This is his great merit and the underlying harmony of the mosaic fashion in which he works.⁴² He believes in the intrinsic value of "subject" in art ...'

This feature of Turgenev's work is adverted to with redoubled enthusiasm by James in his memorial tribute of 1884, the date being of especial significance if we consider that it is the year in which 'The Art of Fiction' appears, incorporating James's efforts to disabuse readers and writers of the false distinction between incident and character. So while in 'The Art of Fiction' James is asking rhetorically 'What is character but the determination of incident? What⁴³ is incident but the illustration of character?' , he is, in the same year, to be found illustrating that axiom by reference to Turgenev's practice: 'The germ of a story with him was never an affair of plot - that was the last thing he thought

40 'Ivan Turgenev', North American Review, 118 (1874), 326-356 (p. 330).

41 Ibid., p. 327.

42 Ibid., p. 331

43 'Art of Fiction', p. 58.

of; it was the representation of certain persons. The first form in which a tale appeared to him was as the figure of an individual, or a combination of individuals, whom he wished to see in action, being sure that such people⁴⁴ must do something very special and interesting.'

This observation James develops into a chastisement of Anglo-Saxon critics for their failure even to begin to grasp the need for a debate on the meaning and relative importance of plot and character in fiction:

We have not yet in England and America arrived at the point of treating such questions with passion, for we have not yet arrived at the point of feeling them intensely, or indeed, for that matter of understanding them very well. It is not open to us as yet to discuss whether a novel had better be an excision from life or a structure built up of picture cards, for we have not yet made up our mind as to whether life in general may be described. There is evidence of a good deal of shyness on this point - a tendency rather to put up fences than to jump over them. Among us, therefore, even a certain ridicule attaches to the consideration of such alternatives. But individuals may feel their way, and perhaps even pass unchallenged, if they remark that for them the manner in which Turgenieff worked will always seem the most fruitful.⁴⁵

Although James felt able to speak of the plot-character issue as a neglected one in Anglo-American literary life, his words may be construed more as a gentle taunt than a statement of fact. Kenneth Graham in his study of critical attitudes to fiction in the latter part of the nineteenth century has drawn attention to the fact that the controversy over whether plot or character formed the basis of fiction

44 'Ivan Turgenieff', in Partial Portraits (London, 1919) p. 314.

45 Ibid., pp. 315-316.

did figure in the columns of English periodicals at precisely the time of 'The Art of Fiction' and the obsequy to Turgenev, and that critics and reviewers tended to approach the questions more in a spirit of chauvinistic resentment at the impertinence of the 'American school' and their attempts to discredit plot, than in one of real intellectual debate⁴⁶. Graham maintains that, 'as part of the reaction against analysis in the eighties, came a resurgence of interest in "plot" and "incident"' and that 'reviewers everywhere seized on any evidence of plot contrivance or "strong situations" in a novel to hold it up as an example of heroic resistance to the foreign invasion.'⁴⁷ His case is well substantiated by quotations culled from the Quarterly Review, the Saturday Review and National Review. Consequently, James's Partial Portrait article may be seen as more than a mere obituary, or even a critical appreciation of Turgenev; it may also be seen as a counter-blow in his own campaign for acceptance of the novel of character and the pictorial method of presentation. It is, moreover, a blow struck by invoking the example of Turgenev's work at just the moment at which English appreciation of him was finally shifting from politico-historical to literary grounds.

James continued to pay tribute to Turgenev's method of composition, and to invoke it in support of his own method, until close to the end of his life. When, however,

46 English Criticism of the Novel 1865-1900, pp. 107-110.

47 Ibid.

we consider James's final tribute to the fundamental place of character-portrayal in Turgenev's art - the 1908 preface to Portrait of a Lady - we sense that a subtle shift in James's conception of character as organising principle has developed from the time of Partial Portraits. No longer is the choice between primacy of plot and primacy of character formulated in the robust terms of a choice between life and the un-lifelike ('an excision from life or a structure built up of picture cards'); rather the blossoming of an entire novel from the seminal image of a character, or group of characters, is taken as simultaneously signifying, proving and endorsing the authority of the subjective imagination. By now, character, as the author apprehends it, 'is unattached, the image en disponsibilité', a 'stray figure', and the novelist makes of it what he will rather by the laws of art than the laws of life. The entire emphasis of the preface to Portrait of a Lady is on 'the kind and degree of the artist's prime sensibility, which is the soil out of which his subject springs.'⁴⁸ It is as if, by having shown that 'the House of Fiction has ... not one window, but a million '⁴⁹ and that the individual imagination of the artist is paramount ('Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has been conscious'), James has performed a vanishing trick upon that 'spreading field, that human scene' onto which the windows of the House of Fiction are meant to give; or, at least, he has made vanish the question of what that spreading field objectively is.

48 Henry James, The Art of the Novel (New York, 1937), p. 45.

49 The Art of the Novel, p. 46.

Yet if we look at the remarks by Turgenev, recalled verbatim by James in the Preface, remarks intended by him to justify and legitimize his own subjective mode of imaginative creation, we find, alongside an account of his pictorial or visionary conception of his subject, a strong acknowledgement of the life, the reality that provides the germ of all fiction:

As for the origin of one's wind-blown germs themselves, who shall say, as you ask, where they come from? We have to go too far back, too far behind, to say. Isn't it all we can say that they come from every quarter of heaven, that they are there at almost any turn of the road? They accumulate, and we are always picking them over, selecting among them. They are the breath of life - by which I mean that life, in its own way, breathes them upon us. They are so, in a manner prescribed and imposed - floated into our minds by the current of life.⁵⁰

The subtle but real difference of emphasis in the Preface between Turgenev's words (as James recalls them) and James's own - between, on the one hand, a sense of the conceptual freedom of the imagination which nonetheless strongly and plainly acknowledges life as its source and, on the other, a sense of imaginative licence so strong that life itself is annexed to the 'artist's prime sensibility', 'the soil out of which his subject springs' - seems to me to be just that same difference of emphasis that I have suggested distinguishes 'The Art of Fiction' from Turgenev's 1880 'Foreword'. Perhaps the key to this distinction lies in James's comments on Turgenev's nature, made in Partial Portraits and the article for the 'Library of the World's Best Literature'. In the former James

50 Ibid., p. 43.

wrote 'h'is Turgenev's was not, I should say, pre-
 dominantly, or even in a high degree, the artistic nature,⁵¹
 though it was deeply, if I may make the distinction poetic',
 while in the article for the Library he wrote 'h'e is of
 a spirit so human that we almost wonder at his control of
 his matter'.⁵² Coming from so supremely artistic a nature
 as James's, these comments on Turgenev convey clearly a
 sense of the distinctively different character of their two
 talents, a difference which, if James is to be believed,
 manifested itself in Turgenev's lukewarmness towards James's
 works: 'He cared, more than anything else, for the air
 of reality, and my reality was not to the purpose. I do not
 think my stories struck him as quite meat for men. The
 manner was more apparent than the matter; they were too
tarabiscoté, as I once heard him say of the style of a book
 - had on the surface, too many little flowers and knots
 of ribbon.'⁵³

Of course, I am far from suggesting a radical misreading
 of Turgenev on James's part. On the contrary many of the
 qualities of Turgenev's fiction to which James draws attention
 are indeed essential characteristics of his work. In an
 age still labouring under the burden of the three-decker
 novel, James was right to make Turgenev's economy a salutary
 example ('His great external mark is probably his concision',⁵⁴

51 Partial Portraits, p. 300.

52 The Future of the Novel, p. 231.

53 Partial Portraits, pp. 298-299.

54 The Future of the Novel, p. 228.

wrote 'his Turgenev's' was not, I should say, pre-
 dominantly, or even in a high degree, the artistic nature,
 though it was deeply, if I may make the distinction poetic',⁵¹
 while in the article for the Library he wrote 'he is of
 a spirit so human that we almost wonder at his control of
 his matter'.⁵² Coming from so supremely artistic a nature
 as James's, these comments on Turgenev convey clearly a
 sense of the distinctively different character of their two
 talents, a difference which, if James is to be believed,
 manifested itself in Turgenev's lukewarmness towards James's
 works: 'He cared, more than anything else, for the air
 of reality, and my reality was not to the purpose. I do not
 think my stories struck him as quite meat for men. The
 manner was more apparent than the matter; they were too
tarabiscoté, as I once heard him say of the style of a book
 - had on the surface, too many little flowers and knots
 of ribbon.'⁵³

Of course, I am far from suggesting a radical misreading
 of Turgenev on James's part. On the contrary many of the
 qualities of Turgenev's fiction to which James draws attention
 are indeed essential characteristics of his work. In an
 age still labouring under the burden of the three-decker
 novel, James was right to make Turgenev's economy a salutary
 example ('His great external mark is probably his concision',⁵⁴

51 Partial Portraits, p. 300.

52 The Future of the Novel, p. 231.

53 Partial Portraits, pp. 298-299.

54 The Future of the Novel, p. 228.

'He is remarkable for concision'⁵⁵). He was right, too, to point to Turgenev's trick of anatomising character without killing the novel's vital form ('... M. Turgeniew, with his incisive psychology ... might often be a vain demonstrator⁵⁶ if he were not so constantly careful to be a dramatist⁵⁶). Above all, he is right to stress Turgenev's ability to invest his realism with a 'poetic' sense of pathos ('The element of poetry in him is constant and yet reality stares through it without the loss of a wrinkle'⁵⁷), and to insist upon his broad impartiality and understanding ('... a view of the great spectacle of human life more general, more impartial, more unreservedly intelligent, than that of any novelist we know'⁵⁸).

Nevertheless, there are aspects of Turgenev's work over which James seems to me to err on the side of generosity. Firstly, he is inclined to overrate, to the point of serious misjudgement, the artistic success of Turgenev's portraits of young women for, like Turgenev, James tended to favour idealised images of youth, beauty and moral constancy in the female sex. Secondly, as I have already suggested above, James judged 'portraits' by self-validating standards of dramatic effectiveness, without undue regard for the accuracy of social or historical reference. Where Turgenev's novels claim such reference, James takes their accuracy on

55 NAR, p. 332.

56 Ibid., p. 335.

57 Future of the Novel, p. 232.

58 NAR, p. 330.

trust. James devotes considerable space in his writings on Turgenev to praise for the noble-natured maidens of the latter's work whose function it is to expose, by their strength of will, the tragic weaknesses of his male characters. In his NAR article of 1874, James is most fulsome in his praise for this aspect of Turgenev's fiction: 'It would be difficult to point, in the blooming fields of fiction, to a group of young girls more radiant with maidenly charm than M. Turgeniew's Helene, his Liza, his Katia, his Tatiana and his Gemma.'⁵⁹

Clearly feeling Turgenev's virtuous women to be the aspect of work that will commend itself most to British and American readers, James is ready to draw parallels with the maidenly ideals of both his native and his adopted countries. In his NAR article, he writes, '... these fair Muscovites have a spontaneity, an independence, quite akin to the English ideal of maidenly loveliness'⁶⁰, and later in the same article 'American readers of Turgeniew have been struck with certain points of resemblance between American and Russian life. The resemblance is generally superficial; but it does not seem to us altogether fanciful to say that Russian young girls, as represented by Lisa, Tatiana, Maria Alexandrovna, have to our sense a touch of the faintly acrid perfume of the New England temperament - a hint of Puritan angularity.'⁶¹

59 NAR, p. 329.

60 Ibid., pp. 336-337.

61 NAR, p. 340.

This high valuation of Turgenev's heroines James repeats in his 1897 article, stating that it is the 'question of will' which most exercised the Russian novelist, and, while his heroes exhibit the want of that faculty, his heroines more than make up for their weakness:

But if the men, for the most part, let it go, it takes refuge in the other sex; many of the representatives of which, in his pages, are supremely strong - in wonderful addition, in various cases, to being otherwise admirable. This is true of such a number - the younger women, the girls, the 'heroines' in especial - that they form in themselves, on the ground of moral beauty, of the finest distinction of soul, one of the most striking groups the modern novel has given us. They are heroines to the letter, and of a heroism obscure and undecorated: it is almost they alone who have the energy to determine and to act.⁶²

Morris Roberts, in his study of Henry James's criticism, instances James's predilection for Turgenev's heroines as evidence of that taste for moral refinement, amounting almost to puritan priggishness, which led James to an exaggerated dislike of the greater sexual and moral candour of the French novel in its Flaubertian and post-Flaubertian form: 'It is difficult to escape the impression that James's morality is sometimes only a genteel distaste for the uglier facts of life, and that his "richness" of inspiration might upon occasion be more exactly described as purity of inspiration, as a kind of conventual fragrance⁶³ which is the opposite of richness'.

62 Future of the Novel, p. 232.

63 Morris Roberts, Henry James's Criticism (Harvard, 1929), pp. 45-46.

Roberts, in passing, contrasts James's intense enthusiasm for Turgenev's women characters with the dislike of them of Chekov, otherwise an appreciative admirer of Turgenev's work. Chekov's opinion is indeed worth citing in full for it explodes precisely that illusion under which James laboured - that Turgenev's heroines were not only the quintessence of real moral goodness, but also the quintessence of Russian womanhood:

Except for the old woman in Fathers and Children - that is Bazarov's mother - and the mothers as a rule, especially the society ladies, who are, however, all alike (Liza's mother, Elena's mother), and Lavretsky's mother, who had been a serf, and the humble peasant women, all Turgenev's girls and women are insufferable in their artificiality, and - forgive my saying it - falsity. Liza and Elena are not Russian girls, but some sort of Pythian prophetesses, full of extravagant pretensions. Irina in Smoke, Madame Odintsov in Fathers and Children, all the lionesses, in fact, fiery, alluring, insatiable creatures for ever craving for something are all nonsensical. When one thinks of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina all these young ladies of Turgenev's, with their seductive shoulders, fade away into nothing. The negative types of women where Turgenev is slightly caricaturing (Kukshina) or jesting (the description of balls) are wonderfully drawn, and so successful, that, as the saying is, you can't pick a hole in it.⁶⁴

There is no doubt that Chekov's is the more accurate judgement, that James is the victim of the idealising tendencies of his own imagination, and that, as Roberts suggests, an element of either prudishness or fear finds its way into his preferences. That this last suggestion is true seems borne out by the ambivalence and reservations

64 Anton Chekov, Letters on the short story etc., edited by Louis Friedland (New York, 1966). Letter to A.S. Souvorn, February 24, 1893.

on James's part when he speaks of one of Turgenev's women characters who is convincing in her demonic powers of seductiveness, Madame Polosova in 'The Torrents of Spring'. Of her James writes 'Madame Polosow, though her exploits are related in a short sixty-five pages, is unfolded in the large dramatic manner. We seem to be in her presence, to listen to her provoking bewildering talk, to feel the danger of her audacious conscious frankness. Her quite peculiar cruelty and depravity make a large demand on our credulity; she is perhaps a trifle too picturesquely vicious. But she is strongly, vividly natural, and our imagination goes with her in the same charmed mood as with M. Turgenev's other evil-doers' ⁶⁵ /My italics/.

It is difficult to know what James means by the apparent contradictions of 'a large demand on our credulity' and 'strangely vividly natural', just as it is hard to concur with his reservations about the seduction of Sanin away from the virginal Gemma by Madame Polosova ('Not without an effort, too, do we accept the possibility of Ssanin's immediate infidelity to the object of the pure ⁶⁶ still passion with which his heart even yet overflows'). These are the words of a 'romancer' (to coin James's own term), rather than a realist. Even if we admit the motive of concern for the sensibilities of his New England readers, we are still left with the impression that, in the matter of women and sexual relations it remains questionable how much the James of 1874 - like his heroine, Maisie - really

65 NAR, p. 348.

66 Ibid.

knew.

At the same time James's judgement of Turgenev's heroines may, to a significant degree, be attributed to the thoroughgoing aestheticism of his outlook, his belief that 'as the picture is reality, so the novel is history'. This conviction - that the aspect of things, as that aspect is manifested in the author's imagination, yields their truth - informs the whole of James's writing on Turgenev. So, trusting implicitly to Turgenev's imaginative eye, James is capable of erring critically at those points where the former errs imaginatively. Where Turgenev falters or fails in his imaginative apprehension of objective, historical reality, James, with an apparently superficial acquaintance with Russian politics and society, is doubly prone to misjudgement. As a matter of principle, he takes the fictional picture as reality, and, in any case, knows little of the reality on which the picture is based. Two examples of James's writing on Turgenev - the review of Virgin Soil of 1877 and the critique of Daniel Deronda - illustrate the point.

James's review of Virgin Soil contains a number of interesting features, not the least of which is a striking discrepancy in its judgement of the novel from that made in private to T.S. Perry in the same month that it was published in the Nation. On the eighteenth of April, 1877, James wrote to Perry:

I send you herewith the cheap (and nasty) reprint of Tierres Vierges which John Turgenieff lately sent me - having kept it only to review it. The nice edition is not yet out. The book will disappoint you, as it did me; it has fine things, but I think it the weakest of his long stories (quite) and it has been such a failure in Russia, I hear, that it has not been reprinted from the Review in which it appeared. Poor T is much cut down. He wrote me the other day: 'La fortune n'aime pas les vieillards' and the miserable prospect of war (which is all that is talked of here) won't cheer him up. I should not find myself able conscientiously to recommend any American publisher to undertake Terres Vierges. It would have no success.⁶⁷

By contrast, the review (to which James refers in his letter) is generous in its praise of the novel, containing no adverse criticism at all. The charitable explanation of this discrepancy (and, probably, the correct one) is that James wished to spare Turgenev's already sorely bruised feelings. In his private opinion, expressed to Perry, James is stating no more than Turgenev himself was ready to acknowledge - that the novel was indeed a failure and that it was so largely because Turgenev was physically and mentally⁶⁸ out of touch with his native country and its current mood. It scarcely seems possible that James's laudatory review was a disingenuous act committed for purposes of continuing to cultivate his famous friend.

James's review of Virgin Soil is of interest also because of its acknowledgement of the problems of translation from so obscure a language as Russian and the question of erroneous or contaminated texts. To his

67 Letters, II, 108, Letter to T.S. Perry of April 18, 1877.

68 See Turgenev's letters to A.M. Zhemchuzhnikov of March 17, 1877 and to M.M. Stasyulevich March 19, 1877 in Pis'ma, XII, ii, 113-114 and 115-116.

credit, James, the stylist par excellence, consistently recognised the importance of accurate and sensitive translation and remained highly conscious of the problem up to the time of the Garnett translations of the 1890s: '... the impatience of his admirers was increased by the fact that - Russian scholars being few - the book would be for some time before the world and yet be inaccessible. Nov appeared in Russia during the first weeks of the present year; but it has been translated into French with commendable promptitude - with what degree of accuracy we are unable to say, though we may suppose that as the translation was made under the eyes⁶⁹ of the author it is fairly satisfactory.'

Exactly twenty years later, when parts, but not all, of the Garnett translations were available, James expresses himself strongly and acutely on the question of Turgenev's great achievement, his style, and combines his remarks with what we may take to be an implicit plea for translations that approach, as closely as possible, 'his personal tone, his individual accent'⁷⁰.

But, notwithstanding that an element of well-meaning insincerity may inform the review, when it comes to the matter rather than the manner of Virgin Soil, we observe that it is to the 'morally interesting' aspect of a situation, its 'moral and psychological side', and not to

69 Review of Terres Vierges Par Ivan Tourgueneff. Traduit par E. Durrand-Greville. Paris 1877. The Nation, April 26, 1877. Reprinted in Henry James, Literary Reviews and Essays, edited by A. Mordell (New York, 1957), p. 190.

70 The Future of the Novel, p. 229.

the accuracy and appositeness of its social and political reference, that James attends. However much James may be feigning admiration for Virgin Soil, we may be clear that the terms in which he discusses it typify his general tendency in the theory and practise of fiction, to judge 'pictures' as if they had no 'frame'. When Donald Mackenzie Wallace, writing in 1905 added several chapters on the revolutionary movement to the famous work, Russia, which James reviewed in the same year as Virgin Soil, he reflected that by 1877 '... propaganda and agitation among the masses were⁷¹ being abandoned for the system of terrorism' .

As Richard Freeborn and others have pointed out, what is wrong with Virgin Soil, apart from its weak and schematic conception, is that it is simply not relevant to the state of the revolutionary movement in 1877, by which date long-delayed trials were bringing to an end the first idealistic and agitational phase of the 'going to the people' and were ushering in the phase of terrorism which characterised the⁷² last three years of Alexander II's reign . Virgin Soil, set in 1868-70 and toyed with by Turgenev for at least seven years, was out of touch and out of date before it was published. It lacks precisely that solidity of specification which James prescribed as the sine qua non of realistic fiction. James, however, appears to take the picture offered on trust, and the comfort he takes in the innocuous (because

71 Donald Mackenzie Wallace, Russia (London, 1905), II, 337.

72 See H. Seton-Watson, The Russian Empire (Oxford, 1967), pp. 422-423.

incompetent) nature of the young 'narodniki' seems ironical when one considers that it is expressed on the eve of a period of terrorist violence and government reaction: 'The outside world knows in a vague way of the existence of secret societies in Russia, and of the belief entertained by some people that their revolutionary agitation forms a sufficient embarrassment at home to keep the Government of the Czar from extending his conquests abroad. Of one of these secret societies M. Turgenev has given a picture, though it must be said that the particular association he describes hardly appears to be of a nature seriously to alarm⁷³ the powers of order.'

In one sense, James's ignorance of Russia is simply that of most Westerners. Objective information on Russia was lacking, while the Russo-Turkish war and the anti-Russian sentiments it aroused disposed even the educated towards an uncritical acceptance of sources, fictional or otherwise⁷⁴. Nevertheless, James's acceptance of the fidelity of Virgin Soil to the historical situation of which it treats, is strongly reinforced by his personal tendency to view fictional material almost exclusively in terms of its potential for studies in character and dramatic situation.

73 Literary Reviews and Essays, p. 191.

74 See 'Russia and Nihilism in the Novels of M. Tourgenief', Blackwoods Magazine, 127 (1890), 623-647 and 'Russian Revolutionary Literature', Nineteenth Century, 1 (1877), 397-416. Both articles recommend Turgenev as a source of information on a subject 'shrouded in so much darkness'. Blackwoods Magazine, 127, p. 647.

James conceives of the theme of Virgin Soil solely as 'the opposition of different natures convoked together by a common ideal'.⁷⁵ Judging its subject purely on its potential as a 'morally interesting situation', James fails to recognise the way in which an ideological dimension, superimposed upon 'character', mars the work both as a study of characters under moral stress and as a study of a political movement. As Richard Freeborn points out in his study of Turgenev, 'the distinction which he makes between the aims of the populists and their persons was artificial, especially for a writer like Turgenev who had been used to accepting both the man and his ideas.'⁷⁶ When James maintains that in Virgin Soil Turgenev achieves 'the union of the deepest reality of substance ... with the most imaginative, most poetic touches'⁷⁷, he is simply placing trust in his own maxim that 'as the picture is reality, so the novel is history.'

A similar judgement on Turgenev from 'Daniel Deronda: a conversation' affords further evidence that for James 'reality of substance' is subsumed in the artistically achieved image. In the 'conversation', Turgenev's On the Eve and its principal characters, Insarov and Yelena Nikolayevna are invoked by Pulcheria as superior artistic achievements to Deronda:

Pulcheria: Pulcheria likes very much a novel which she read three or four years ago, but which she has not forgotten. It was by Ivan Turgenev, and it was called On the Eve. Theodora has read

75 Literary Reviews and Essays, p. 191.

76 Richard Freeborn, Turgenev (Oxford, 1960), p. 169.

77 Literary Reviews and Essays, p. 196.

it. I know because she admires Turgenieff and Constantius has read it, I suppose because he has read everything.

Constantius: If I had no reason but that for my reading it would be small. But Turgenieff is my man.

Pulcheria: You were just now praising George Eliot's general ideas. The tale of which I speak contains in the portrait of the hero very much such a general idea as you find in the portrait of Deronda. Don't you remember the young Bulgarian student, Insaroff, who gives himself the mission of rescuing his country from its subjection to the Turks? Poor man, if he had foreseen the horrible summer of 1876! His character is the picture of a race-passion, of patriotic hopes and dreams. But what a difference in the vividness of the two figures. Insaroff is a man; he stands up on his feet; we see him, hear him, touch him. And it has taken the author but a couple of hundred pages - not eight volumes - to do it.

Theodora: I don't remember Insaroff at all, but I perfectly remember th heroine, Helena. She is certainly most remarkable, but, remarkable as she is, I should never dream of calling her as wonderful as Gwendolen.

Constantius: Turgenieff is a magician, which I don't think I should call George Eliot. One is a poet, the other is a philosopher. One cares for the aspect of things and the other cares for the reason of things. George Eliot, in embarking with Deronda, took aboard, as it were, a far heavier cargo than Turgenieff with his Insaroff. She proposed consciously to strike more notes.

Pulcheria: Oh, consciously, yes!⁷⁸

As in the case of Virgin Soil, James's judgement here is partially defective. Insarov is not a vividly conceived 'picture of a race-passion', but a cipher, a wooden and unconvincingly 'heroic' creation, lacking credibility, like many of the characters in Virgin Soil, because he is made to bear the superimposed weight of an ideological destiny. By contrast the 'non-ideological' characters in On the Eve, Shubin and Bersyenev, though secondary, have an inner reality that Insarov quite lacks. In the case of

78 'Daniel Deronda: a conversation' in Partial Portraits, pp. 77-78.

Insarov 'the aspect of things' is insufficiently grounded
 79
 in 'the reason of things' .

What these lapses of critical judgement illustrate is that James, generally speaking, had no real conception of the problems of correlating the moral drama of particular human predicaments with the wider movements of social history. A full sense of these problems - and a successful resolution of them - came to him only when, in the middle 1880s, his emotional involvement in the historical destiny of America became critical. The novel that came out of this crisis, The Bostonians, while owing far less thematically to Turgenev than other novels by James, seems to me the most Turgenevan, for its source is the same anxious engagement with the fate of the writer's native country that exercised Turgenev throughout his career. Superficially, it is The Princess Casamassima which owes most to Turgenev, but, as I hope to show, The Princess dramatises personal destinies without dramatising the issues on which they are meant to hinge. It fails because it is conceived according to James's implicit trust in the picture-making matrix of the imagination. By contrast The Bostonians is a product,

79 There may be several reasons for the failure of Insarov as a character study. One might well be the difficulty Turgenev experienced in giving sympathetic embodiment to a nationalist cause not his own. Another may be that Insarov is too consciously an experimental attempt at a 'Quixotic' character, undertaken to counterbalance the many 'Hamletic' types already drawn by Turgenev. Most likely cause of all is that Insarov was taken from an extraneous source - the Karatayev diaries - and not organically conceived. (For information on this last point, see the Foreword to the 1880 edition of Turgenev's work).

arguably unique in James's work, of the dialectical process whereby the 'body and pressure of time' and the artist's free but responsible creativity engage with each other, a response to, rather than an appropriation of reality which wins as its prize the 'air' of that elusive but indispensable commodity.

(ii) The Fiction - a comparative assessment

When we came to look for the specific and tangible manifestations of Turgenev's influence in James's fiction, the initial problem is that of the massive prima facie case for influence being there - the prima facie case, that is, constituted by the strength of James's dedication to Turgenev and the example of his work, a dedication amounting at times to idolatry. James lavished so much praise upon Turgenev and exhibited so many broad similarities in conception, method and theme, that, in the early stages of his career at least, he virtually invited critics to treat him as Turgenev's pupil and to infer imitation rather than a case of naturally occurring likeness. Typical of this response is the American critic W.E. Henley's review in October 1878 of The Europeans in which, while praising the work as 'capable and original', he still finds it possible to write of James as 'an exponent of the refined eclectic realism of Turgenieff.'⁸⁰ It is hardly surprising that Henley, who in any case had an interest of his own in Turgenev, should write of him as

⁸⁰ Review in The Academy, 14 (1878) in Henry James The Critical Heritage, edited by Roger Gard (London, 1968), p. 54.

James's master; two months earlier James had written of Turgenev to Henley in terms of almost slavish admiration:

I am extremely glad to hear you mean to write something about him and wish you all success. I don't think he is one quarter appreciated, anywhere. My own attempt dates from a good while ago - 1873 - and if it were a *refaire* I should make a much better thing of it ... I wish I had never read any of T, so that I might begin. You are right in saying that he is better than George Meredith. Rather! George Meredith strikes me as a capital example of the sort of writer that Turgeneff is most absolutely opposite to - the unrealists - the literary story-tellers. T. doesn't care a straw for an epigram or a phrase - his inspiration is not a whit literary, but purely and simply human moral.⁸¹

By such expressions of admiration and by his detailed published appreciations of Turgenev's work, James can, in a sense, be said to have conditioned the reflex whereby critics automatically wrote of him as Turgenev's apprentice and discerned the influence of the master's method in his fiction. So an unsigned review of Confidence in the 'Spectator' of January 1880, giving a somewhat prim qualified approval to James's method of creating characters en disponsibilite' (to use his own phrase) speaks of the technique as having 'at all events, the authorisation of so eminent a master as Tourgeneff'⁸²; a review of Portrait of a Lady in the Nation of 1882 mentions in the same breath, James's chief characteristic as his attempt 'to dispense with the ordinary machinery of the novelist'⁸³ and of his having Turgeneff as his master; and Julien

81 Letters, II, 183. Letter to Henley. August 28, 1878.

82 The Critical Heritage, p. 84.

83 Ibid., p. 114.

Hawthorne writing in 1884 on both James and Howells as representing what is fullest and newest in American fiction, considers James to have been caught by Turgenev's 'current' of realism.⁸⁴ One might point to many other examples, both during James's lifetime and since, of this critical reflex, detecting in James Turgenev's influence. Therefore it is salutary to preface any discussion of concrete influence and specific borrowing by a reminder that, in his own critical writings on Turgenev, James was invoking the work of the latter as a precedent and an authority for the natural disposition of his own talent, for 'the blest habit of one's own imagination'. James was a derivative writer but not a plagiarist; the case of Daniel Deronda and The Portrait of a Lady is an illustration of a borrowed theme being given the distinctive stamp of James's individual imagination. So it is with James's use of Turgenev. Themes, human types and their arrangement vis-a-vis each other, stories and individual scenes may be drawn partly from Turgenev's work, but they are generally recast into a form which is essentially sui generis.

This is a fact which Daniel K. Lerner in his article 'The Influence of Turgenev on Henry James' appears to make clear, prefacing his detailed examination of thematic and textual similarities between the two writers with the remark, 'Working with materials and methods that he had found in Turgenev ... James's results were peculiarly his own'.⁸⁵ Yet having rightly made this caveat, Lerner assembles four groups of stories of James's which bear general technical,

84 Op. cit., p. 140.

85 Slavonic and East European Review, 20 (1941), p. 39.

structural or thematic resemblance to stories by Turgenev and with scarcely a reference to the substantial differences in fundamental imaginative intention between many of the stories he pairs, pervasively implies that technical similarity and broadly common themes constitute an influence. Admirable though most of Lerner's article is in its detailed assembling of parallels, in its treatment of the stories of James and Turgenev in particular, it tends to accentuate circumstantial evidence to the point where the important distinction between fortuitous similarity and influence is blurred, or else circumvented, by phrases such as 'a major interest which James found in Turgenev', 'the interest of both writers in an important technical problem', or 'their mutual interest in a highly important subject'.

Lerner assembles four groups of stories which he regards as so close in either structure or theme that they suggest influence. One group consists of certain of those stories of both writers which reflect an interest in the supernatural and paranormal - James's 'Professor Fargo' (1874) and 'The Turn of the Screw' and Turgenev's 'A Strange Story' and 'Clara Milich'. Lerner stresses the ambiguous treatment of abnormal phenomena in each writer implying, without stating, that there must be some sort of influence. It may indeed be the case that Turgenev's interest in the fictional potentialities of the supernatural helped stimulate James's own, but the form that their stories take are in other ways so different that the case for influence can neither be proved nor disproved.

More plausible is Lerner's suggestion that the use of psycho-sexual themes along Freudian lines, apparent in both James's and Turgenev's stories may represent an influence. While his claim that Turgenev's First Love probably served as a partial source of James's What Maisie Knew may seem tenuous, the similarities in plot and configuration of characters between Turgenev's story 'The Dream' and James's 'Master Eustace' are so close - the sudden appearance (or apparition) in a boy's life of an unknown or long absent father with threatening implications for the maternal relationship - that a case of likely, if unprovable, borrowing must be entertained. However, the two further groups of stories with regard to which Lerner finds it possible to imply the influence of Turgenev on James, seem to me to exhibit no more than the broadest technical or structural similarities and to present such differences in artistic conception and intention that one is scarcely justified in speaking of an influence - at least not in the absence of any firm extra-textual evidence for its being there.

Lerner regards James's story 'Four Meetings' as bearing strong resemblance to Turgenev's 'Three Meetings' in two aspects of its structure - the 'device' of a series of encounters with significant lapses of time between each, employed as a means of giving dramatic compression to a story, and the unifying agency of a 'central, detached observer'. That these broad structural similarities exist is not in question, but Lerner makes no reference to the substantial differences in subject and treatment of subject which distinguish the two stories quite radically. Turgenev's

'Three Meetings' is, in a number of respects, typical of his shorter work: it is a romantic tale of lost love, characterised by an elegiac mood of melancholy and by suggestive overtones of the mysterious and the melodramatic. It luxuriates in its own intense and cloying pathos, savouring the mood of unhappy and unrequited love which is its theme. 'Four Meetings', in which the narrator, for all his 'detachment' is a much more ebullient participative figure than in 'Three Meetings', is equally characteristic of James, being a variation on the familiar international theme and treating an aspect of that theme to which James habitually returned - the corruption and the allure of Europe. Each piece is so quintessentially the work of its individual creator that to imply influence through broad structural resemblance, without reference to the marked individuality of each work, seems to me to offer an incomplete representation of whatever connections may exist between the two stories.

Similarly, with those stories in which Lerner discerns evidence of a common interest in the 'important technical problem' of the Point of View, he adduces no more than the device of the unmodified, correspondence (Turgenev's 'A Correspondence' and James's 'A Bundle of Letters') to substantiate his implication of influence. It is true that the aim and accomplishment of each tale is 'to evoke a sequential narrative from the exchange of letters, but in such a way that the various points of view of the correspondents are seen operating on the same material' ⁸⁶. However, the

86 Op. cit., p. 40.

line of artistic interest in each story is radically different. James's story is yet another contrastive study of the international comedy of manners which fascinated him. It is essentially light in tone and atmosphere. By contrast Turgenev's story, though technically in the form of a correspondence, is essentially a series of lucubrations on love, futility and the vanity of human wishes. It is typical of his stories of the 1850s, in its melancholic sense of hopelessness. Nothing could be further removed in spirit from the astringent yet good-humoured observations of James's story.

It seems to me that, in respect of the short stories of James and Turgenev there are no grounds for drawing any other than the broadest and most qualified inferences of tangible influence, even in those cases where the structure or themes are similar. We do know that James, far from confining his reading of Turgenev to the novels, was familiar with most, if not all of those of his short stories which appeared in translation in the 'pre-Garnett' era. But, broadly speaking, if James used Turgenev's stories in the making of his own, we may say with some certainty that, except in such cases as 'Master Eustace', it was as a point of departure for a very different direction to that taken by Turgenev.

The case of the novels is, I believe, different. In James's longer fiction the influence of Turgenev is widely interfused and in places intensely concentrated. Where we find that influence, it may be read as evidence of two contrasting aspects of their artistic relationship - on the one hand, of a common notion of artistic integrity

and fictional method, deriving from similar conceptions of the artist's freedom to select and, on the other, of widely differing degrees of historical awareness, deriving from cultural and personal circumstances of radically different kinds.

Before looking at those phases of James's work in which Turgenev's influence is most concentrated and palpable, we may briefly survey general similarities of theme, situation and approach which are strong enough for us to say that they may well represent the enabling effects of Turgenev's example. One such feature is the international theme and the form it takes in the work of the two. Both James and Turgenev made use of the condition of exile as a vantage point from which to observe and embody imaginatively the complex relationship between their native countries and Western Europe. This pivotal position between problematically related cultures I take to be one of the most important common factors between them, representing as it does a situation rare among the major novelists of the nineteenth century.

From the point of view of their own work, what exile and experiences in Western Europe offered James and Turgenev were the considerable artistic possibilities of combining two cultures in a single focus with all the scope for contrast and mutual illumination that that afforded. It is, of course, the case that, with the exception of Smoke, all Turgenev's novels have Russian settings; but the spirit of liberal

enlightenment of Western Europe is a pervasive presence in his fiction, continually informing the perspective taken on Russia. The artistic dispassionateness which both James and Turgenev valued so highly has much to do with their common fate of being poised between radically differing cultures and owing allegiance to both.

At the same time, the question of the relationship between their native countries and Western Europe is, in certain respects, treated differently by James and Turgenev, being handled by the latter in a historical and ideological perspective which, as I have already suggested, is generally absent in James.

Of course, I do not wish to detract from the subtlety of James's understanding of the relationship between America and Europe. Throughout his fiction there is a strong sense of the antinomy in which the United States and Europe are locked. In his handling of the international theme, James was almost obsessively aware of the moral implications of the New World's capital trying to annex the Old World's culture, while the Old World tries to seduce without losing its honour and 'face'. In both early and late novels - The American, The Golden Bowl, The Wings of the Dove - the relationship between the two cultures becomes a paradigm for the struggle of good and evil.

But in James's perception of the tension between Europe and America, there is no ideological or philosophical dimension. In James's world-view it is culture that

both proposes and disposes, so that the Europe that American capital yearns to possess is that of the dense concentration of manners, morals, culture and tradition, the residue of the European past, not the vital springs of its future. The crisis of relations between America and Europe is a crisis of culture, or at its most extreme, of morals, because in James's vision of reality culture reigns supreme as both determinant and ultimate criterion of value.

In James's treatment of the theme of capital and culture and of New and Old Worlds, there are latent historical and political implications, but, in choosing to shape his subjects into patterns of either cultural tension or personal drama, he deploys the abitrating power of art as a way of confining questions of meaning and value to apolitical terms. He is not, of course, to be censured for doing so, but it is instructive to see how fundamentally different a handling of the 'international theme' it is from that of Turgenev.

Turgenev wrote in a historical context in which the cultural contrast between Russia and Western Europe was subsumed in the ideological divergence between the two. Because of the rigid political absolutism, the monolithic nature of Czarism, the cultural impact of the West on Russia from the time of Peter the Great onward, registered as an intermittent, seismic effect, rather than an influence organically interfused. Thus, particularly from the time of Alexander I, the destiny of Russia presented itself in terms of a stark choice, at once cultural and political,

between the Western traditions of liberalism, humanitarianism and intellectual enlightenment, and the ideological and spiritual conservatism of Russia's peculiar historical experience. This experience, expressed at the level of national policy by what we might call xenophobia tempered by necessity, determined that, whenever literature dealt with international themes, it had no choice but to see personal destiny - failure, alienation, fulfilment - at least partially in historical and political terms. The hegemonic nature of Russian political life hardened the question of Russia's relations with Europe into the polarised debate between Slavophiles and Westernisers, in which argument Turgenev, while occasionally giving sympathetic treatment to moderate Slavophilism, adhered consistently to Westernist beliefs⁸⁷. By the very nature of the culture in which he originated, Turgenev was bound to see the international theme in ideological and historical terms.

The point is well put by Irving Howe a propos of what he calls Turgenev's 'least ideological novel', A Nest of the Gentry, but in which he nevertheless sees the hero, Lavretsky's, fate in both personal and political terms:

87 Outside the novels themselves, the episode which best illustrates Turgenev's concern for the Slavophil/Westernist issue is the debate conducted in Herzen in 1862 in which Turgenev challenged Herzen's bitter disenchantment with the state of post-1848 Europe and disparaged his Slavophilism. For an account of this episode see Schapiro, Turgenev, ch. 12, pp. 195-197.

Are we to read this story simply as a personal tragedy, another of Turgenev's bitter-sweet tales of disappointment? That element is certainly there and not to be slighted, but I think we must see something more, I think Turgenev is saying, by the most exquisite indirection, that when the Russian intellectual comes home, trying to break away from the West that has become contaminated and turning to the remaining purities of Russia, he will again be frustrated: his cosmopolitan experience, which he cannot undo, makes him unfit for the task of reading the heart of Russia. The private tragedy of Lavretsky is, on one plane of meaning, the tragedy of Russian liberalism, the tragedy of politics of homelessness and homesickness.⁸⁸

An interesting contrast is possible here - one I intend to expand on later - between Lavretsky and Christopher Newman, the hero of The American, which of all James's novels most resembles A Nest of the Gentry in certain of its aspects. Lavretsky and Newman are both men engaged in the effort of coming to terms with the European and the native sides of their experience. But while, as Howe suggests, Lavretsky's personal predicament cannot be separated from the socio-political identity crisis which confronts him, Newman's socio-economic identity is, so to speak, surgically removed by James in a neat operation in Chapter V of The American, so that the drama of his imbroglio with the Bellegardes and Europe can become a purely personal and cultural conflict. Lavretsky's public function stands before him as a challenge; Newman's public life ('He had spent his years in the unremitting effort to add thousands⁸⁹ to thousands') is neatly consigned to the past before he

88 Politics and the Novel, p. 126.

89 Henry James, The American, New York Edition (New York, 1907), p. 102.

takes on Europe in a battle of class, morals and manners, quite unlike Lavretsky's struggle to reconcile Europe and Russia historically and ideologically.

I have considered the international theme, common to James and Turgenev and pervasive in the fiction of each, because it seems to me, as an area of comparison and contrast, to illuminate the thesis which I have tried to argue - that the different treatment given to broadly similar material in James and Turgenev illustrates the difference between the novel as story and the novel as history (James's own claims notwithstanding!); that James's own instinctive preference is for the precedence of story over history rather than for the two as co-determinants; that James enjoyed the luxury of a fiction in which ideological implications might be assimilated to 'artistic' effects, while Turgenev wrote in a culture, and at a historical moment, which rendered impossible the separation of personal histories from impersonal history. It seems to me doubtful that James ever really grasped this dimension of Turgenev's work. What James did grasp about Turgenev was his preference for, and use of, the 'morally interesting situation', and there is evidence enough that the kinds of morally interesting situation which James himself was to choose bear close enough generic resemblance to Turgenev's for us to infer a significant influence. As James observed of Turgenev 'w⁹⁰hat works in him most is the question of will' and from this

90 The Future of the Novel, p. 232.

hub radiate those elements and features of human behaviour which most frequently constitute the 'morally interesting situations' of his novels - renunciation, missed opportunities (in both life and love), sexual attraction in relation to corruption and innocence. These are the recurrent constituents of Turgenev's novels, offering both dramatic potential and moral edification, and they are substantially the same elements of which James's moral dramas are composed.

As Cornelia Kelley has pointed out in her study of James's early work, when he came to ask himself what made a subject morally interesting, 'Turgenieff answered the question for James in almost every one of his stories. Failure.'⁹¹ James exploited the idea of failure in a series of portraits of characters, both central and secondary, who bear a family resemblance to Rudin, Nezhdanov and the protagonists of such stories of the 1850s as 'Faust' and 'A Correspondence', and who are clustered in that group of novels written in the period 1874 to 1885 when Turgenev's impact on James was at its greatest. Without straining the comparison, it is possible to see such characters as Roderick Hudson, Valentin de Bellegarde and Hyacinth Robinson as variations upon the theme of Dmitri Rudin, gifted, volatile, spontaneous individuals, artists or artists manqués, fatally ill-adapted to the social and moral worlds they inhabit and condemned to gratuitous deaths which are the last gestures of their futile lives.

91 Cornelia Kelley, The Early Development of Henry James (Illinois, 1965), p. 179.

With such characters, James is extracting, from the vein of failure, the rich ore of drama, pathos and psychological interest that Turgenev had exploited before him. Of course, in the case of Turgenev's 'failures', there is always an intimation, sometimes strong and overt, sometimes discreet and submerged, that the failure is partly attributable to a social malaise, while even in James's most manifestly political novel, The Princess Casamassima, the connection between Hyacinth Robinson's failure and the condition of society remains problematical and ambiguous. Nevertheless, in James's use of the theme of failure there are sufficient generic resemblances to Turgenev, supported by evidence in his Turgenev criticism of interest in the theme's potential, for us to say that James drew general inspiration from Turgenev's superfluous men, whose characters wear 'the form of the almost helpless⁹² detachment of the short-sighted individual soul'.

But as James remarks, if strength of will and sense of purpose desert Turgenev's male characters, resoluteness takes refuge in the other sex. As I have already pointed out, James is, at times, hyperbolic in his praise of Turgenev's noble, idealistic and self-sacrificing heroines and, if the generic similarities between his failing or faltering male protagonists and Turgenev's is strong, the resemblance in both character and, mutatis mutandis, situation between the more virtuous female characters in the two novelists is stronger still.

92 The Future of the Novel, p. 232.

That women in Turgenev's fiction tend to fall either into the category of daemonic seducers, triumphing through sexual power, or towers of moral strength, triumphing through resoluteness and renunciation, has often been remarked. The superior power of women over men - in both of the senses given above - is indeed an axiom of Turgenev's fiction. The heart-sore and world-weary Alexei Petrovich, protagonist of Turgenev's 1856 story 'A Correspondence' analyses the differences between men and women, in his letters to Marya Alexandrovna, in terms that seem to express Turgenev's own perception of those differences. 'If women only knew how much kinder, more generous, more intelligent they are than men - yes, more intelligent - they would become bloated with pride and utterly spoilt; but, fortunately, they don't realise this because, unlike us, they haven't got into the habit of repeatedly thinking about themselves - that's both their strength and their weakness.'

It is a message Alexei Petrovich repeats in his next letter with the words '... you women are better than us ... You may surrender to pettiness more than we do. But you are better able to look the Devil in the eye.'

As James writes of Turgenev's priestesses of virtue and idealism 'it is almost they alone who have the energy to determine and to act'⁹⁴, and the dramatic and fictional importance of many of James's heroines, who bear such a close

93 Pol. sob. soch., VI, 175. My translation.

94 The Future of the Novel, p. 323.

resemblance to Turgenev's, is exactly what it is in the latter's fiction - to function as a point of moral constancy in a world otherwise governed by vacillation, weakness or cupidity. In some cases the resemblance in the configuration of characters in James's novels is so close to Turgenev's as to merit the particular attention I will later give them, but it is relevant at this stage to enumerate the many examples of virtue and steadfastness embodied in women in James's work and to suggest that their nature and the relationship they bear to other characters is too close to Turgenev and too much in line with James's documented admiration for Turgenev's heroines for the resemblance to be coincidental. There is a whole gallery of heroines in James's fiction - Mary Garland in Roderick Hudson, Mme de Cintre in The American, Isabel Archer, Milly Theale - who are put to and pass a supreme moral test, a test of character closely resembling the trials of Turgenev's heroines such as Vera Nikolaevna in 'Faust', Liza in A Nest of the Gentry, Yelena in On the Eve, and, as in Turgenev's novels, their triumph of will sheds (sometimes harsh) light upon a range of 'characteristic' male weaknesses - vacillation, self-doubt, capriciousness or, at worst, sadism and cupidity. And, if nothing else did, the frequency with which that strength of will manifests itself as an act of renunciation (Mme de Cintre and Liza taking the veil, Vera Nikolaevna and Isabel Archer renouncing the offer of adulterous love for the sake of vows taken) argues a specific debt to Turgenev on James's part.

Indeed, so strong are the general affinities between James's and Turgenev's heroines that the temptation to indulge in an over-detailed correlation of individual characters has led some critics to overstate particular cases. In his treatment of James's debt to Turgenev, Daniel Lerner goes particularly far in the case of Yelena in On the Eve and her likeness to Isabel Archer.

Opening his account of the two novels Lerner contends - surely extravagantly - that 'The Portrait of a Lady (1881) derives largely from On the Eve'.⁹⁵ While the broad pattern of relationships and characters in the two novels may be similar, the differences of theme, mood and scope seem to me to exceed that similarity. There is, indeed, an undeniable resemblance between the situation of Isabel Archer and that of Yelena as well as a likeness in the way in which that situation is presented and allowed to unfold. But Lerner presses his case too far, and, in doing so, overlooks dissimilarities that typify the fundamental differences which I have pointed to in the frame of reference of Turgenev's and James's work.

To begin with, it is doubtful whether either Isabel or Yelena answer to the description of them offered by Lerner of 'an almost "neutral" girl' transformed into 'an heroic woman'.⁹⁶ If by 'neutral' is meant passive, waiting to be created, it must be countered that both

95 Op. cit., p. 44.

96 Op. cit., pp. 44-45.

Turgenev and James are at pains to point out the restless, impatient nature of the potentialities of Yelena and Isabel.

But what seems even more important is the distinction (which Lerner fails to comment upon) between the nature of Isabel's exceptional character and that of Yelena, for while Isabel's as yet unchanneled sympathies are essentially imaginative, Yelena's are humanitarian. James writes in The Portrait of a Lady that 'Isabel Archer was a young person⁹⁷ of many theories; her imagination was remarkably active'

Turgenev describes Yelena in the following terms: 'From her childhood she had longed for action, for active goodness; the poor the hungry and the sick concerned her, worried her, tortured her. She dreamt of them and cross-questioned all her acquaintances about them. She gave her alms with careful thought, with an instructive gravity almost with⁹⁸ emotion.'

The distinction is no pedantic one; it indicates differences in the conception of both these two characters and the novels whose principal figure they are. Yelena is altruistic and humanitarian and exemplifies those qualities at both a realistic and an emblematic level in On the Eve. Isabel, though rich in imaginative sympathies, is egotistical and awaits destiny in essentially personal terms. So although Lerner is right in suggesting that 'each novel might well have been titled: "The Education⁹⁹ of a Lady"', he omits all reference to the difference

97 The Portrait of a Lady, New York Edition (New York, 1908) III, 1, 66.

98 Nakanunye in Poi. sob. soch., VIII, 33. My translation.

99 Op. cit., p. 44.

in the way that the two are educated. For as Isabel is egotistical and must learn the bitter moral lesson of trusting too much to the imagination, so James's manner of dealing with her is one of irony, modulating to sympathy. By contrast, as Yelena is from the outset potentially and restlessly altruistic and idealistic, so Turgenev's manner and tone in dealing with her is unironical to the point of being almost embarrassingly reverential.

It is arguable that Yelena and Isabel are both intended not just as realistic portraits, but as the type of their respective nation's conscience and soul. And if that is so, the differences in their 'education' are indeed illuminating for it becomes possible to see Isabel's 'lesson' as the moral antidote to an egotistical individualism, fired by money, freedom and an unfettered imagination, which might plausibly be argued to be an American national malaise, conceived in personal, moral and psychological terms. Equally, it becomes possible to see Yelena's education as a prescription for the characteristic malaise of nineteenth century Russia - the failure of its intelligentsia to transform personal strengths, virtue and vision into a meaningful form of political and social action. Yelena and Isabel certainly fulfil similar functions in the two novels in question, and it is probable that James drew on Turgenev's heroine (whose 'loveliness' he saw as lying 'all in unswerving action'¹⁰⁰). But this basic likeness of function and characterisation is made all the more interesting by the suggestive dissimilarities

100 NAR, p. 337.

that intimate the distinctive contexts of each writer's culture.

Nevertheless, in the general terms of their characters and destinies, there are enough similarities between James's heroines and Turgenev's to suggest a definite influence. Additionally James's plots in which two contrasting types of woman - the virginal, noble, self-sacrificing type and the seductive, predatory type - contend for the soul of a man, suggest the influence of similar triangular dramas in Turgenev. The relationships between Roderick Hudson, Mary Garland and Christina Light, between Osmond, Isabel Archer and Madame Merle, between Kate Croy, Densher and Milly Theale - all of these are portrayed in terms of the opposition of sexual to idealising love, in a pattern that strongly recalls The Torrents of Spring, Smoke, A Nest of the Gentry, and Virgin Soil. We cannot prove the 'borrowing' of these 'morally interesting situations', but we may surmise that they are the germ from which James's stories sprang. It is a surmise which seems more justified when we consider those groups of novels in which I take Turgenev's influence on James to be a palpable one.

Two pairs of novels by James seem to bear the most manifest and concentrated marks of Turgenev's influence - Roderick Hudson and The American of 1875-76 and The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima of 1884-85. In the first two, James's debt to Turgenev takes the form of elements of theme, plot and relationships between characters. In the case of The Princess Casamassima there is substantial and specific borrowing of plot and character. But in The

Bostonians, uniquely, I believe, in his work, James has caught and incorporated the quintessence of Turgenev's moral and imaginative outlook, his sense of the complex interaction of personal lives and impersonal forces.

Roderick Hudson, which James wished to be considered his first novel, was written during the year of publication of his North American Review article on Turgenev and it is in that review, a propos of Rudin, that we find the author reflecting upon the theme of tragic failure in terms suggestive of his volatile artist hero:

The theme is one which would mean little enough to a coarse imagination, - the exhibition of a character peculiarly unrounded, unmoulded, unfinished, inapt for the regular romantic attitudes. Dmitri Rudin is a moral failure, like many of the author's heroes, - one of those fatally complex natures who cost their friends so many pleasures and pains; who might, and yet evidently might not, do great things; natures strong in impulse, in talk, in responsive emotion, but weak in will, in action, in the power to feel and do singly.¹⁰¹

We should note, however, that it is the theme which interested James - the theme of a complex, flawed nature, egotistical but exercising a compelling hold over those who know and are vexed by him. This should not lead us as it has led Lerner in his study of this subject, to imply too close a correspondence between Rudin and Roderick Hudson as individual portrayals of character. There are, it is true, suggestive similarities. Roderick Hudson and Dmitri Rudin are both studies of ennui, of egoism, of giftedness squandered and of the effects of changeable,

101 NAR, p. 335.

capricious and cold natures upon others. Both heroes see their failure in terms of the will. Rudin speaking confessionally to his friend Lezhnev (whose role as confidant resembles that of Rowland in Roderick Hudson), reflects ruefully upon his failure: 'Why do these powers remain fruitless ... Nothing succeeds! What's this mean? What prevents me from living and behaving like others? That's all I can speculate about now. I've hardly succeeded in reaching a definite position or stopping at a known point of view when fate just drags me down from it ...'¹⁰²

Roderick Hudson, who condemns himself as 'a failure' to his fiancée and his patron, sees his breakdown of will in that 'certain group of circumstances possible for every man, in which his will is destined to snap like a dry twig.'¹⁰³

In the last analysis, it is also true of both Rudin and Roderick Hudson that each possesses 'a perfect separateness of ... sensibility' never thinking of others 'save as they figured in his own drama'¹⁰⁴.

But to set against these points of resemblance - which do indeed make it appear that James may have used Turgenev's treatment of failure in Rudin as a grid for his

102 Rudin in Pol. sob. soch., VI, 364. Translation taken from Penguin Books edition, p. 176.

103 Henry James, Roderick Hudson, New York Edition (New York, 1907), p. 141.

104 Op. cit., p. 429. In earlier editions, the phrase used is 'the perfect exclusiveness of his emotions'. See Roderick Hudson. Hart Davis edition (London, 1961), p. 328.

own creation - there are important and interesting differences which turn on the supremacy of art in James's hierarchy of values. Rudin is a man of eloquence, vision and intelligence who fails in, and is failed by, life. The futility of his life is rooted in the deeply ingrained pessimism of Turgenev himself - the pessimism which, to James, was the only objectionable feature of his master's art. By contrast Roderick Hudson finds an outlet for his giftedness, denied to Rudin. His tragedy is that the temperament that makes of him an artist should ultimately thwart his gift. What happens to Roderick is that his acute susceptibility to the sensuous - to Italy, to women to art - overwhelms his powers of both imaginative and moral self-control. In ironic contrast to him is Rowland Mallett whose tragedy is to possess so sound a balance between the imaginative and the moral faculties that he produces no art at all.

We may speculate that what James is doing in Roderick Hudson is rehearsing the pleasures and pains of his own 'complex fate', attempting to disentangle some of the threads - the American and the European experiences, the relationship of the ethical to the artistic, of the sensuous to the abstemious - which bore directly on his own situation. Roderick Hudson is a Kunstlerroman, as characteristic of its creator's preoccupation with Art as Rudin is of Turgenev's philosophical pessimism. Consequently, while we are justified in inferring James's use of Rudin as a broad thematic model for Roderick Hudson (and it is an inference supported by such specific common features of plot and as the 'gratuitous' deaths of the

two heroes and their cold and egotistical relationship with female types of maidenly virtue), we should not press the comparison too far.

Instead, we should look for traces of Turgenev's influence on Roderick Hudson in places where, to the best of my knowledge, they have not been sought before. I would cite On the Eve, James's favourite Turgenev novel,¹⁰⁵ as an important source of inspiration. For while Rudin and his 'morally interesting' failure may be the broad pattern for Roderick Hudson, the finished character, in its detailed attributes, resembles much more closely the artist Shubin of On the Eve whose relationship with the philosophic Bersyenev strongly suggests that of Roderick to Roland Mallett.

Shubin, an important character if not a principal, in On the Eve, might well be the sketch from which Roderick Hudson is the study. Like Roderick he is a sculptor whose gift is saved, though not nearly so munificently, by fortuitous patronage. Like Roderick he has the 'artistic' temperament, spontaneous, but moody, and like him too has a strongly amorous and sensuous nature. For both Roderick and Shubin, the air of their native countries is oppressive and Rome appears to them as their spiritual and artistic home. Roderick, translated to Rome, 'cares little if he should never again draw breath in America' and declares 'for a man of my temperament Rome is the only possible place'.¹⁰⁶ Shubin, offered by Bersyenev the myth-

105 'My own predilection is great for the exquisite On the Eve ...', The Future of the Novel, p. 231.

106 Roderick Hudson, p. 173.

ological theme of Russian water-sprites for a subject for his art, dismisses them as 'offspring of a frightened, chilled imagination, creatures born in a stuffy peasant's hut in the darkness of a winter's night',¹⁰⁷ and declares that he needs the light and space and beauty of Italy: 'But, of course, I know it: outside Italy there's no salvation!'¹⁰⁸ This is surely more than the Europeanism of Turgenev and James taking coincidentally similar forms!

The suggestion that James drew specifically upon On the Eve in writing Roderick Hudson is supported by the likeness of the contrastive relationship between Bersyenev and Shubin to that between Rowland Mallett and Roderick Hudson. The Bersyenev-Shubin relationship corresponds closely to the dichotomy made between Hamletic and Quixotic types in Turgenev's 1860 speech; it offers a study in contrasting qualities all of which occur in the friendship of Rowland and Roderick. Both relationships contrast stability and instability of temperament, ethical and sensual natures, egoism and altruism, reflectiveness and spontaneity, unbridled Hellenism and moderate Hebraism - to use the Arnoldian terms in which Roderick himself speaks to the artist Gloriani.

But the view that we may perceive a specific debt to On the Eve in Roderick Hudson is particularly strongly supported by two passages, each occurring early in their respective novels. In setting, tone, theme, even wording,

107 Pol. sob. soch., VIII, 16. My translation.

108 Ibid., p. 16. My translation.

they display such close similarities that James's having used the Turgenev passage as a model seems likely.

Both passages take the form of speculative philosophical discussion between the two pairs of young men. In each passage the more sober 'Hamletic' nature strikes a note of moral and metaphysical caution, while the artist-figures - Shubin and Hudson - give enthusiastic expression to an unqualified subjectivism. In Shubin's case explicitly, in Hudson's by implication, this subjectivism argues a cult of personal hedonism, as well as the artist's prerogative to cultivate the senses.

Allowing for the difference that Turgenev's passage is the novel's opening, and therefore leads into a detailed physical description of the characters, the presentation of the two scenes is closely similar, even in phrasing:

One warm still day, late in the Roman autumn, our two young men were sitting beneath one of the high-stemmed pines of the Villa Ludovisi. ¹⁰⁹

It was one of the hottest days of the summer of 1853. By the side of the Moscow River, not far from Kuntsovo, two young men were lying on the grass in the shade of a tall lime tree. ¹¹⁰

These very similar openings are followed by brief accounts of the two men in each pair. Turgenev provides a brief description of the appearance and posture of Shubin and Bersyenev which stresses the angular awkwardness of the latter and the relaxed physical compactness of the

109 Roderick Hudson, p. 84.

110 Pol. sob. soch., VIII, 7. My translation.

former, while James tells us that Rowland although he has seen it before, goes to 'dutifully pay his respects' to a fresco of Guercino, while Roderick, who has never seen it 'remains stretched on his overcoat' and refuses to visit it. These passages of description and narrative foreshadow the contrast between epicurean and ethical natures which is to be developed. Roderick's epicureanism takes the characteristically Jamesian form of an avid thirst for impressions - impressions to be accumulated and turned into art. His words reflect the intoxicated response of James himself to the richness of Europe:

'What becomes of all our emotions, our impressions,' he pursued after a long pause, 'all the material of thought that life pours into us at such a rate during such a memorable three months as these? There are twenty moments a week - a day, for that matter, some days - that seem supreme, twenty impressions that seem ultimate, that appear to form an intellectual era. But others come treading on their heels and sweeping them along, and they all melt like water into water and settle the question of precedence among themselves.'¹¹¹

It is Rowland who, while agreeing with the young artist, sounds a monitory note of ethical concern in response to Roderick's life-affirming enthusiasm for experience, first by rectifying Roderick's misconception of Mary Garland as a stern moralist, and then, in a reflective aside, by musing that life's long journey of experiences and impressions may lead to an end that offers no meaning:

¹¹¹ Op. cit., p. 87.

'I fancy it's our peculiar good luck that we don't see the limits of our minds', said Rowland. 'We're young, compared with what we may one day be. That belongs to youth; it's perhaps the best part of it. They say that old people do find themselves at last face to face with a solid blank wall and stand thumping against it in vain. It resounds; it seems to have something beyond it, but it won't move! That's only a reason for living with open doors as long as we can!'¹¹²

Apart from the exact textual and thematic similarities to the passage from Chapter I of On the Eve, the note of existential anxiety struck by Rowland strikes us as so characteristically Turgenevan - and so relatively rare in James - that we sense something of the spirit of Turgenev's pessimism affecting James's normally sanguine outlook.

At any rate, Rowland's words counterbalance, as does his role in the fiction generally, the zest for life, sensation and art which characterise Roderick Hudson. In the same way Bersyenev's meditation upon the indifference of Nature to man and the unfathomable mystery of death. ('In Nature there is life and Death and Death speaks as loudly as life.') are an attempt to apply a brake to the irrepressible hedonism of Shubin, whose celebration of youth, and playfully egotistical craving for happiness strongly suggest Roderick's similar drives:

'... I expect happiness. I demand happiness from the forest and the river and the earth and the sky and from every little cloud and blade of grass ... Happiness, happiness! So long as we have life, so long as we have power over our limbs, so long as we're going up the hill, and not coming down it. Why, damn it,' Shubin went on with a sudden outburst 'We're young, we're not monsters, not fools; we'll conquer happiness for ourselves.'¹¹³

112 Roderick Hudson, p. 88.

113 Pol. sob. soch., VIII, 13-14. My translation.

The correlations of theme, character and textual details which I have made, seem to prove James's use of On the Eve as a model for Roderick Hudson. And yet even in so precise a case of borrowing as this, the interest lies as much as anything in the different renderings given to an essentially common subject by James and Turgenev. Both novels are about youth, its positive potentialities and the possibilities of its tragic waste. Both novels are about the placing of what may seem like absolute values and meanings in a relative perspective. But the difference of emphasis is characteristic of that difference in world-view between James and Turgenev that I have stressed throughout. In Roderick Hudson the concern with meaning and value is bounded by a triangle composed of art, sensuality and morality, and it is clear that the tragedy of Roderick Hudson is the tragedy of the death of an artist. In On the Eve, interest stems from the dramatisation of three competing tendencies of the human spirit - the metaphysical/speculative, the epicurean/artistic and the idealistic/altruistic, embodied respectively in Bersyenev, Shubin and the partnership of Insarov-Yelena. But in Turgenev, sovereign and absolute over all these forms of human striving, is death - death in its existential aspect, rather than death as the romantic and pathetic demise of James's hero which occurs simply as a way of underlining the romantic singularity of the artist, Roderick. In James's fiction the interest resides, for both writer and reader, in the drama of character under stress. It is the strength of James's best writing that he anatomises consciousness so finely that we

receive a richly nuanced impression of experience in all its complexity. But in Turgenev's writing the drama of the personal life is overshadowed and often ultimately overtaken by the imperative of time, bearing the aspects of history and death. These absolutes in James are most often tamed and domesticated to fictional effect, frequently deployed as sources of drama and pathos, but stripped of their metaphysical and existential implications by the processes of the art that deploys them.

As Roderick Hudson and On the Eve are both novels on the theme of youth and its potentialities, tragically destroyed, so The American and A Nest of the Gentry are about the quest for new life and love in middle age. I do not think there can be any doubt that, though they are different in setting, manner and scale, the germ of James's story of the thwarted love of a middle-aged man, comes from Turgenev's novel. The tragic formulae are so alike in all essentials - happiness almost grasped and cruelly snatched away, the triumph of wickedness over good - and in certain details (both heroines taking the veil as an act of renunciation), that we must certainly claim Turgenev's direct influence in this case.

Such a claim is not the first. James's choice of an unhappy ending for the novel (which might just as easily have admitted of a happy one) led at least one contemporary critic to claim that James had been deflected from his own natural inclination and from consistency with the character of Newman as it develops in the novel, by the example of Turgenev's predilection for unhappy endings. Claiming

that James carries his readers with him up to the point of Newman's refusal to press home his advantage over the Bellegardes in order to win Mme de Cintr , the anonymous reviewer in the July edition of Scribner's Monthly of 1877 concludes:

It is the best compliment we can pay to Mr James's writing to say that he gave us such a living interest in his hero, that we are made angry by his own failure to comprehend the character he had created. Can it be that we owe such a fiasco in some degree to the fact that the author had been unconsciously twisted out of his own individuality by the strong influence of Tourgueneff's example? Tourgueneff, however, would justify so miserable an ending; he is remorseless, but he does not shock nor disappoint.¹¹⁴

Beating James with the stick of Turgenev's influence suggests motives more or less worthy. It may well be that in these concluding strictures there is an element of both New England moral idealism and American chauvinism - a resentment at James's not only for allowing wickedness to triumph over good, but also for letting the victory be one of the Old World over the New. On a somewhat less elevated plane, the fact that Howells succeeded in persuading James to publish The American in Scribner's rival, The Atlantic Monthly may have had a little to do with the note of pique which the Scribner's reviewer strikes. As the editor of Howell's letters has observed, he [Howells] '... offered ample space in the Atlantic for James's stories, sketches and novels and tried hard to keep James from succumbing to the siren song of Scribner's Monthly, the Atlantic's chief competitor.'¹¹⁵

114 Henry James, The Critical Heritage, p. 48.

115 Selected Letters of W.D. Howells, edited by George Arms and others (Boston, 1979), II, 6.

In fact Howells himself had reservations which he expressed to James about the 'Turgenevan' unhappy ending of The American. While none of Howells's letters of the period 1877 to 1881 have survived¹¹⁶, James's replies in their lengthy defence of the ending make it clear that Howells's reservations were made, one must charitably assume, in his capacity as an editor with a circulation to maintain, rather than a champion of the new realism! At any rate, James's defence of those aspects of The American to which Howells and the Scribner's reviewer objected make interesting reading when we set them beside his references to A Nest of the Gentry in his NAR article of some three years before. Juxtaposed, these two sources show James as close as he ever gets to Turgenev's profound sense of the tragic nature of individual destiny. They make clear his intention of trying to have moral realism rather than vapid sentimentality at the heart of his work (even if the 'morally interesting' situation of The American is partly lost beneath the paraphernalia of melodrama!); and they show, I think, an indebtedness to Turgenev in James's awareness of how a writer may marshal and direct his readers' sympathy without unduly obtrusive commentary and analysis.

Even as The American was being written and sent in instalments to Howells, James found himself having to defend its tragic denouement. On October 24 1876, he wrote to Howells:

116 See Ibid., p. 153.

Your appeal on the subject of the denouement fairly set me trembling, and I have to take my courage in both hands to answer you. In a word Mme de Cintre doesn't marry Newman, and I couldn't possibly, possibly, have made her do it. The whole point of the denouement was, in the conception of her tale, in his losing her: I am pretty sure this will make itself clear to you when you read the last quarter of the book. My subject was: an American letting the insolent foreigner go, out of his good nature, after the insolent foreigner had wronged him and he had held him in his power. To show the good nature I must show the wrong and the wrong of course is that the American is cheated out of Mme de Cintre. That he should only have been scared, and made to fear for a while, he was going to lose her, would have been insufficient - non e vero? The subject is sad certainly but it all holds together.¹¹⁷

If we turn to James's observations on the unhappy dénouement of A Nest of the Gentry, we find that the sense and spirit of his remarks is exactly the same as in those quoted above. Acknowledging that 'the husband, the wife, the lover' is a well worn theme, James continues:

... but M. Turgenev's treatment renews the youth of the well worn fable. He has found its moral interest, if we may make the distinction, deeper than its sentimental one, a pair of lovers accepting adversity seem to him more eloquent than a pair of lovers grasping at happiness. The moral of his tale, as we are free to gather it, is that there is no effective plotting for happiness, that we must take what we can get, that adversity is a capable mill-stream, and that our ingenuity must go toward [sic] making it grind our corn¹¹⁸ [My italics]

So close are these two utterances in their insistence on the distinction between moral eloquence and sentimental reassurance that we may conclude that, both in devising his theme and story and defending it against hostile criticism,

117 Letters, II, 70.

118 NAR, pp. 339-340.

James's views were strongly and consciously affected by the precedent of Turgenev's A Nest of the Gentry.

We have already noted above that, in his NAR article, writing of Liza, the self-abnegating heroine of A Nest of the Gentry, James observes the resemblance in their 'hint of Puritan angularity' between young girls of New England provenance and Turgenev's models of female virtue. But it is no less noteworthy that what James and Turgenev are doing in The American and A Nest of the Gentry is to create the types of masculine virtue of their respective nationalities, and to create them in contradistinction to the most pernicious elements of Western European society.

James's letter to Howells of October 24, 1876 speaks of his American's 'good nature' being abused by the 'insolent foreigner'. His highly favourable - indeed somewhat idealised - portrayal of a fellow-countryman seemed to Howells proof that his friend had not lost all attachment to his native soil. Howells wrote to John Hay on February 22 1877: 'I am glad you like The American. The fact that Harry James could write likingly of such a fellow countryman as Newman is the most hopeful thing in his literary history since ¹¹⁹
Gabrielle de Bergerac.'

Of course, the patriotic Howells is right to be pleased¹²⁰ at Newman who is as James puts it 'the superlative American' Replete with all that is most promising in American life -

119 Selected Letters, II, 158.

120 The American, New York edition (New York, 1907), p. 2.

confidence, energy, wealth, optimism, intelligence - he lacks only that which no potentiality can give - the accumulated experience of the past, the history, culture, manners and refinements of Europe. His purchase of Mlle Nioche's paintings and his wooing of Mme de Cintr  are alike attempts to acquire some of the rich stock of European life. But although 'the finest uses of Newman's experience were transcendent operations in ferocious markets'¹²¹, the guile and wickedness of an older civilisation nearly defeat him as he learns, painfully, that the beauty and richness of Europe are inseparably mingled with the evil in whose presence he feels himself to be when contending with the de Bellegardes¹²². Newman wants and tries to abstract the 'beauty' of Europe from the seam of wickedness in which it lies embedded ('"Oh no, I don't want to come into it at all ... I only want to take Madame de Cintr  out of it"'¹²³) But beauty itself withdraws from the life of the world and is placed beyond his reach. Newman's final gain is not possession of the beauty of Europe, but experience and knowledge of the corruption that resides with beauty.

The American, like so many others of James's works, uses individual characters and situations in such a way as to embody what he saw as the essential contrasts and antinomies between America and Europe. But in The American, more unequivocally than in most of his fiction, the balance of

121 Ibid., p. 345.

122 Ibid., p. 362.

123 Ibid., p. 229.

moral credit lies on the American side, with Newman as the archetype of national virtue. In this respect, A Nest of the Gentry presents suggestive parallels, for it too, in a much less qualified way than is usual in Turgenev, offers in the figure of Lavretsky an affirmation of national identity and a corresponding rejection of the more unpalatable aspects of European civilisation.

The parallels are numerous. Even the physical characteristics in both men are quintessentially national. Newman is 'long, lean, muscular', he had 'the flat jaw and the firm dry neck which are frequent in the American type.' Lavretsky, like Newman embodies his country's strength in his physique and physiognomy: 'His red-cheeked, very Russian face, with the large white forehead, slightly thick nose and broad regular lips, literally exuded the healthy life of the Steppes and a powerful, durable strength. He had a splendid physique and curly fair hair like a boy's.'¹²⁴ This impression of their native strength (in both senses of the word) is qualified only by the eyes of each of the two men, for it is in their eyes that the troubled or problematical aspects of their personal and national destiny lie. Of Newman, James writes: 'It was the eye, in this case, that chiefly told the story; an eye in which the unacquainted and the expert were singularly blended'¹²⁵,

124 Pol. sob. soch., VII, 145. My translation.

125 The American, p. 4.

while Turgenev's physical description of Lavretsky concludes with the observation that 'only in his blue, protruding and rather immobile eyes could be discerned a mixture of pensiveness and tiredness.'¹²⁶ Newman's eyes tell the story of the potentially hazardous incompleteness of his /and the American/ experience, while Lavretsky's speak of the languor and world-weariness that attend his own, and his country's, bitter experience of the cruelty of fate. The descriptions presented early in each novel, signal and foreshadow the crisis and test that awaits each man later in the narrative.

In each instance, when the crisis comes, it takes the form of a test of native moral strength when confronted by the most pernicious and most tainted ways of Europe. In Newman's case the battle for Madame de Cintr  - the 'soul of Europe' - is fought against the patrician arrogance, cynicism and deviousness of the de Bellegardes. In Lavretsky's case, his wish to possess Liza - the 'soul' of Russia - is thwarted by the amorality of Varvara Pavlovna and Panshin, the pseudo-European 'St Petersburg Parisians'. In each novel what the hero is engaged in might be seen as a vain quest for pre-lapsarian beauty, truth and innocence, with the luxuriant growth of Europe figuring as the Tree of Knowledge. Set against the meretricious, byzantine amoral ways of Europe are the 'young hearts' of America and the immemorial, settled, natural life of the Russian land. Newman reflects that 'In America ... "growing" men had old heads and young hearts, or at least young morals; here they

126 Pol. sob. soch., VII, 146. My translation.

had young heads and very aged hearts, morals the most grizzled and wrinkled.'¹²⁷ Lavretsky contemplates the unchanging pulse of life of his home and reflects that 'at the very time, in other places on the earth, life was seething, racing and roaring on its way; here the same life flowed inaudibly by, like water through marshy grass; and until evening Lavretsky could not tear himself away from the thought of this receding, outflowing life; anguish for the past was melting in his soul like spring snow and - strongest of all! - never before had he felt so deep and strong a feeling for his country.'¹²⁸

Lavretsky and Newman are, in middle age, searching for a rootedness that will bestow moral and emotional peace and satisfaction. The search, in each case, is characterised by a relaxed openness to life and an absence of prejudice or fixity of view, demonstrated partly by means of the provision of a foil to the central character. In The American the foil is the priggish Babcock, a mixture of New England puritanism and rigid aesthetic academicism. Babcock's criticism of Newman, as he luxuriates in the richness and variety of European life, is that he, Newman, is displaying 'a want of moral reaction.'¹²⁹ James's ironical treatment of the absurd Babcock leaves us in no doubt that it is his hero's relaxed and magnanimous openness to life that the author sees as being the best side of the American character, Babcock's rigid insularity is the worst kind of American reaction to 'abroad'. Though with an irony more good

127 The American, p. 134.

128 Pol. sob. soch., VII, 190. My translation.

129 The American, p. 91.

humoured and through a character far less obnoxious, Turgenev too allows Lavretsky's essentially relaxed openness to emerge partly by contrast with a more intense temperament, in this case that of the idealist Mikhalevich. While not all Mikhalevitch's strictures against what he regards as Lavretsky's languid, ruminative Slavophilism are invalid, the intensity of his commitment to a lofty idealism that has no means of rooting itself in the soil of Russia makes Lavretsky's relaxed temperament and intellectual gradualism appear attractive.

The American and A Nest of the Gentry are both novels about men past the first flush of youth who no longer wish to subordinate the world to themselves or a governing idea but to adapt to and be absorbed by it. It is an essential part of the intellectual and imaginative conception of both works that this personal search for inner self-completion should be identifiable with the destiny of their respective countries, and the implication of Europe in that destiny. In this fundamentally similar conceptual basis, no less than in the details of plot and character which I have outlined, lies the case for arguing James's debt to Turgenev in the writing of The American.

Yet, as I have suggested above ~~the~~ essential individuality of the two writers and the irreducible distance between their cultural backgrounds account for a single substantial and important difference between the two novels - in The American the interlocking questions of personal identity and national destiny bear a cultural and moral aspect while the same basic

predicament in The Nest of the Gentry, even if it is as Irving Howe suggests, Turgenev's 'least ideological novel', is expressed in ideological, historical and philosophical terms. James's hero may be the 'New-man', personal fortune made, the trauma of the civil war behind him, and standing on the brink of the only kinds of experience he now lacks - immersion in the culture, manners and morals of the old world. But Lavretsky, in the depths of the reaction and inertia of Nicolayevan Russia, feels his personal predicament in terms of social and historical responsibility. His task of cultivation lies not in visiting the Louvre but - as he tells the facile Westerniser, Panshin - in ploughing the land 'as well as possible'. The two novels do indeed both deal with crises of culture, but in the one it is the derived, and in the other the primary meaning of the word which applies!

I have suggested that one phase during which Turgenev's influence on James was at its height was that bounded by the NAR article on the Russian writer of 1874 and the review of Virgin Soil published in The Nation in April 1877, and I have sought to show how James's two major works of that period, Roderick Hudson and The American, bear the imprint of Turgenev's example, and yet evidence vital differences between the two writers.

The second phase of James's career in which Turgenev may be claimed to have been at the forefront of James's mind - and at the service of his imagination - is that running from the obituary article on Turgenev of 1884 to the completion of The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima in 1886. James's tribute to his dead friend takes partly

the form of personal reminiscence but also partly that of a final evaluation and commendation of Turgenev's work. In his 'Partial Portrait', James's appears to be trying to secure Turgenev's place in the pantheon of great nineteenth-century writers by adducing a variety of contemporaries and predecessors to compare him to - Dickens, Zola, Flaubert and others. His opinion of the Russian is as high as it was ten years earlier when he had written his first appreciation, and that opinion is based - interestingly, from the point of view of Turgenev's direct influence on James's work - on a recent re-reading of the novels:

Reading over lately several of Turgenieff's novels and tales, I was struck afresh with their combination of beauty and reality. One must never forget, in speaking of him, that he was both an observer and a poet. The poetic element was constant, and it had great strangeness and power ... It was no part of my intention, here, to criticise his writings, having said my say about them, so far as possible, some years ago. But I may mention that in re-reading them I find in them all that I formerly found of two other elements - their richness and their sadness.¹³⁰

The fact that James had so recently re-read and appreciated anew the value of Turgenev's work is just one point to emerge from 'Ivan Turgenieff' to support the claim for a concentrated influence on the novels of the mid-eighties. Another, I think, is James's singling out the 'sadness' of Turgenev's work as a characteristic quality of James's goes on immediately from the words 'richness and sadness' to say that 'they the novels' give one the impression of life itself ...'. I think this marks an interesting departure

¹³⁰ 'Ivan Turgenieff', in Partial Portraits, p. 317.

from the gentle deprecation of Turgenev's pessimism which we find in James's NAR article and elsewhere. The early and middle 1880s were an unsettled and difficult period in James's private life; the death of his parents and of Turgenev himself, his mixed reaction to the United States which he revisited from 1881-1883 after a six year absence, anxieties about both his personal future and that of his host country, Great Britain, combined to make James emotionally more vulnerable than hitherto. Correspondingly, he became more receptive to, and aware of, the note of sadness in human life, and of the shadow cast over it by death. James, I believe, had become, through personal experience, more aware of the meaning of Turgenev's sadness and pessimism, and it is of note that death is arguably a more important force in The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima - pervasively in the one, dramatically in the other - than elsewhere in James.

James's emotional vulnerability during the years of the writing of The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima has been persuasively linked by Leon Edel to his anxious and watchful interest in the social and political condition of Britain during that particularly troubled decade. Of the months during which he wrote The Bostonians and The Princess Casamassima Edel writes: 'Feeling himself alone in the world after the death of his parents, clinging to art and civilisation amid the unrest in British society he seemed truly disinherited.'¹³¹

131 The Life of Henry James, I, 779.

The severing of his closest links with America made England even more than before the bedrock of James's life, and the possibility that that in turn might crumble led James to a more than usually agitated concern for political life during the middle 1880s. Anxiety at the possible long-term decline of England, alternating with a revulsion against the conduct of its contemporary politics, is to be found throughout James's correspondence of these years. To Grace Norton (to whom James wrote frequently on matters of contemporary political interest) he wrote in January, 1885: 'The possible malheurs, reverses, dangers; embarrassments, the "decline", the award of old England, go to my heart, and I can imagine no spectacle more touching, more thrilling and even dramatic, than to see this great precarious, artificial empire, on behalf of which, nevertheless, so much of the strongest and finest stuff of the greatest race (for such they are) has been expended, struggling with forces which, perhaps in the long run, will prove too many for it.'

132

James, one senses, was nearer at this time than ever to the situation that Turgenev occupied all his life - that of an essentially apolitical writer, compelled by the manifest evidence and pressure of a historical crisis and its equally obvious bearing on his own life, to introduce a socio-political dimension into his work.

W.H. Tilley, in his monograph The Background of The Princess Casamassima, has convincingly linked James's

132 Letters, III, 67.

interest in revolutionary conspiracy to the preoccupation of The Times and various London periodicals with an allegedly international revolutionary movement threatening the stability of the whole of Europe¹³³; James appears to have followed the assumption of The Times that a clandestine international organisation did indeed exist and its activities would form a topical and fascinating donnée for a work of fiction. If revolutionary cells did resemble, and were linked to each other throughout Europe, as James and the nervous leader writers of The Times seem to have assumed, the use of Virgin Soil as a model for plot, character and relationship must have seemed entirely legitimate to the author of The Princess Casamassima.

But the choice of a clandestine revolutionary cell as theme, and the use of Virgin Soil as a broad model, beg other important questions, even if one assumes the existence of such cells in the form which James gives them. When Turgenev chose Populism as his theme, even though his conception of it was outdated by the time of the novel's composition, the rigidly concentrated nature of intellectual and political life in Russia ensured that, in focusing upon the 'narodniki', he was indeed looking at the centre of radical political energy within the country, and that the activities of the young intelligentsia typified the political malaise of the whole nation. Therefore, had it not been for the fact of important changes within that movement which made Turgenev's picture of it no longer strictly relevant, his

133 W.H. Tilley, The Background of The Princess Casamassima (University of Florida, 1960), pp. 18-33.

concentration upon that particular group could certainly be said to have met James's own criterion, formulated in 'The Art of Fiction', of being a 'selection whose main care is to be typical, to be inclusive'. The same could hardly be said of James's selection in The Princess Casamassima, for in the England of 1884-85 the forces that best typified fundamental changes in the body politic were either massive and overt in nature (the newly-enfranchised working-class, New Unionism) or intellectually elite and open in nature (The Fabian Society, The Socialist League). If James was trying to take the pulse of English political life in 1884-85, he was feeling in the wrong place. He would have done better to undertake the altogether more difficult task of dramatising the life of Bernard Shaw and the Webbs!

But, of course, James is not essentially interested in the nature and direction of impersonal forces; he is interested in the history of particular cases. The subject of The Princess Casamassima, like the subject of Virgin Soil, appeals to him not because of any historical centrality but because it is potentially a good story, a most suitable particular case. Here we come to the nub of James's difficulty in handling the material of The Princess Casamassima - he conceived the effects of the novel without an adequate conception or sense of their causation. His notebook entries tell of difficulties in filling in the details of his 'magnificent subject': 'I have never yet become engaged in a novel in which after I

had begun to write and send off my MS, the details remained so vague ... The subject of the Princess is magnificent, and if I can only give up my mind to it properly - generously and trustfully - the form will shape itself as successfully as the idea deserves' ¹³⁴ .

To James these difficulties are problems of artistic execution rather than deficiencies of preparatory field work, ('Oh art, art. What difficulties are like thine' ¹³⁵), problems of imaginative self-mastery rather than sheer lack of knowledge. For the assumption underlying the creation of The Princess Casamassima, no less than those novels of James's that do not attempt to embody political and historical reality, is that art predicates its own truth, that the aspect of a thing, imaginatively caught, conveys its factual essence. In the preface to the New York edition of The Princess Casamassima, James was to elaborate this assumption into both a particular defence of his treating a theme of which, by its very nature, he was largely ignorant, and a general affirmation of the sovereign power and reach of the imagination:

Face to face with the idea of Hyacinth's subterranean politics and occult affiliations I recollect perfectly feeling, in short, that I might well be ashamed if, with my advantages - and there wasn't a street, a corner, an hour of London that was not an advantage - I shouldn't be able to piece together a proper semblance of all the odd parts of his life. There was always of course the chance that the propriety might be challenged - challenged by readers of a knowledge

134 The Notebooks of Henry James, edited by F. Matthiessen (New York, 1961), p. 68.

135 Ibid.

greater than mine. Yet knowledge, after all, of what? My vision of the aspects I more or less fortunately rendered was exactly my knowledge. If I made my appearances live, what was this but the utmost one could do with them ... What it all came back to was, no doubt, something like this wisdom - that if you haven't, for fiction, the root of the matter in you, haven't the sense of life and the penetrating imagination, you are a fool in the very presence of the revealed and assured; but that if you are so armed you are not really helpless, not without your resource, even before mysteries abysmal.¹³⁶

The words, 'my vision ... was exactly my knowledge' might well stand as a monument to the whole of James's art, to that emphasis on the assimilative and transcendent power over brute fact with which James credited fiction. But applied specifically to The Princess Casamassima, the argument sounds specious. It is surely the case, not only that James did not know enough about the revolutionary underground, but that he either was not sufficiently aware of, or simply did not care about, its relatively peripheral place in the pattern of social, political and ideological change that characterised England in the 1880s. The argument that the point of the novel is our 'not knowing' lacks credibility. James's airy confidence in his ability imaginatively to plumb the depths of 'mysteries abysmal', without in the strict and technical sense 'knowing' about them, contrasts with the depressed reaction of Turgenev to the critical failure of Virgin Soil in Russia: 'It is a fact that one should not write about Russia without living there.'¹³⁷ Turgenev's remark implies the determining power of life upon the art which reflects it, while James's

136 The Art of the Novel, pp. 77-78.

137 Pis'ma, XII, 1, 117.

preface affirms the omnipotence of the imagination even to the point of its power to transcend gaps in the artist's factual knowledge of his subject.

But, of course, what James calls his 'license for sketchiness and dimness and vagueness' is taken for the fundamental reason that revolutionary terrorism is not the central subject of The Princess Casamassima; what is central is the 'picture of an intelligence' subject to the experience and implications of revolutionary socialism. James confesses in his preface that, 'I never see the leading interest of any human hazard but in a consciousness ... subject to a fine intensification and wide enlargement.' James's essential interest and concern in The Princess Casamassima is Hyacinth Robinson's 'ordeal of consciousness', so that the novel is concerned primarily with what Hyacinth makes of the revolution, not what the revolution makes of him. This I would argue to be diametrically opposite to the case of Nezhdanov, in James's model, Turgenev's Virgin Soil.

The obvious similarities, and many of the divergences, between The Princess and Virgin Soil have occasioned a good deal of scholarly analysis which I do not propose to duplicate. Nevertheless, the salient features of some of the articles devoted wholly or partly to the relationship between the two novels merit comment.

Daniel Lerner argues for almost complete equivalence in his comparison of the two characters of Nezhdanov and Hyacinth. Not to mention important differences in their

personalities which Lerner overlooks (Nezhdanov's greater neuroticism, Hyacinth's greater savoir-faire and savoir-vivre), he also blunts the distinction between their social conditions by applying the same terminology to both Russian and English social contexts. Thus, he writes of each hero as 'a proletarian who 'falls in love with a lady of the aristocracy'¹³⁸. Even if the term 'proletarian' had any widely applicable meaning in the Russia of 1868 - which it arguably did not - it would certainly not apply to Nezhdanov whose parentage, education, financial means, as they are described in Chapter 4 of Virgin Soil, make him if anything a *declassé*, possibly in Russian terms a 'raznochinetz', but certainly not a proletarian. Equally, the term 'aristocratic' applied to both the Princess Cassamassima and Mme Sipiagina misleadingly suggests an equivalence between the social elite of Western Europe and a Russian landed class said to extend from 'the peasantry to the steps of the throne'. Lerner's treatment of the two novels is consistent with the effort he makes throughout his article on Turgenev and James to accumulate and accentuate specific instances of indebtedness in characterisation, plot and narrative.

That James did borrow heavily from Virgin Soil, both in elements of individual characterisation, plot and inter-relationships among characters, as well as in the initial choice of theme, is self-evident. Some post-war scholarship has followed Daniel Lerner's lead by tracing the borrowing through a systematic pairing of the characters, particularly male, in the two novels. Representative of this approach is Eunice C. Hamilton's 1960

138 'The Influence of Turgenev on Henry James', p. 77.

article on the subject, which, deflated by the obviousness of its own findings, is able finally to offer only an anti-climactic conclusion: 'At this time, it seems sufficient to state that when the major and minor similarities of plot and character are studied with reference to James's review of Virgin Soil, and to these is added the knowledge of his rereading of Turgenev's fiction a year prior to his commencement of work on The Princess Casamassima, the hypothesis that Ivan Turgenev's Virgin Soil is one of the sources of Henry James's The Princess Casamassima becomes valid.'

Other recent scholarship has followed the more productive course of tracing James's divergences from his Russian model and of using a comparative approach to throw into relief the distinctive features of James's fiction, although some of it has been inclined to press home too hard the divergences between the character-equivalents in the two novels and so almost reverse Daniel Lerner's insistence upon the complete correspondence of pairs of characters. W.H. Tilley, anxious to establish that James's novel derives from authentically English sources, comes close to this when he reviews the differences between Muniment and Solzmin, Nezhdanov and Hyacinth, Hoffendahl and Vasily Nikolaevitch, and reaches the conclusion that 'James's revolutionists cannot have come from Virgin Soil'. They can, and indeed, did come from Virgin Soil, but the

139 Eunice C. Hamilton 'Henry James's The Princess Casamassima and Ivan Turgenev's Virgin Soil' in South Atlantic Quarterly, 61 (1962), 354-364 (p. 364).

140 The Background of The Princess Casamassima, p. 4.

manner in which James modifies them, particularly Hyacinth Robinson, sheds interesting light on his own concerns and outlook and the important ways in which these differ from Turgenev's.

The most perceptive treatment of these changes and differences in the material is that given to the two novels by Jeanne Delbaere-Garant in her 1971 article 'Henry James's divergences from his Russian model in The Princess Casamassima'. I am indebted to Delbaere-Garant's work, but would wish to carry some of her comments to their logical conclusions. Delbaere-Garant observes, a propos of Virgin Soil and The Princess, what I have argued of the whole body of James's work in relation to Turgenev - that the comparison sheds light on 'James's deep-rooted aversion to determinism'¹⁴¹. She further points out that the evolution of the two heroes is different, that Hyacinth's tragedy is that his consciousness of life is raised and widened, while Nezhdanov's nature is fatally flawed to begin with; that James, starting from Turgenev's classical model, permits complication, elaboration and proliferation of character in a manner that is characteristic both of him and of the English nineteenth century novel; and that 'in the ready mould offered him by the Russian novelist he projected his own preoccupations with the lived life.'¹⁴²

141 'Henry James's divergences from his Russian model in The Princess Casamassima' in Revue des Langues Vivantes, 37 (1971), 535-544, (p. 535).

142 Ibid., p. 543.

I would dissent from none of these conclusions, wishing only to extend Mme Delbaere-Garant's distinction between the fates of Hyacinth and Nezhdanov in the direction of my own argument - that while for Turgenev art was conditional upon life, for James it reigned supreme and transcendent over all other human issues, absolute in its importance and surpassing (because transmuting) even those ethical dilemmas and historical necessities that are its raw material.

As I have already indicated, Delbaere-Garant has made a distinction between the tragedies of Hyacinth and Nezhdanov by pointing out that Hyacinth's dilemma lies in his horizons being widened to a sense of mutually exclusive and objectively existing necessities, while Nezhdanov's problem lies in the internal contradictions and counter-suggestibility of his nature. She writes: 'From beginning to end one side of his [Nezhdanov's] nature smothers the other and prevents him from doing anything positive. Hyacinth Robinson, on the other hand, is more "simple" at the beginning and becomes more complicated as he is led to taste and enjoy other things.'

Concluding that Nezhdanov's suicide is the inevitable destiny of his nature, while Hyacinth is destroyed against his will by unfortunate external circumstance, Mme Delbaere-Garant appears finally to cast doubt on the plausibility of Hyacinth's suicide, seeming to attribute it to James's

failure to break free of the plot of Virgin Soil:

'He [James] turned Virgin Soil into a typically Jamesian novel with typically Jamesian preoccupations but he failed to free himself from the existing plot, which perhaps accounts for the unusual importance of fatality in Hyacinth's life and for the unusual solution to which his young hero ultimately resorts.'¹⁴⁴ This seems to me a not entirely satisfactory or complete explanation of Hyacinth's suicide. It may be open to argument whether or not Hyacinth's fate is psychologically and emotionally consistent with what we are given to know of his nature. If, for example, we accept that the novel is not essentially a work of elaborated psychological realism, but an emotional drama with strong melodramatic overtones, its tragic outcome may be claimed to be built into the pattern of the drama which James intends his novel to be - which is not, to argue for the convincingness of its human theme, but simply for the internal consistency of its design.

But we may also read the respective fates of Nezhdanov and Hyacinth according to an extrinsic framework of meaning, within which the fates of Nezhdanov and Hyacinth Robinson signify and symbolise the differences in the world-historical sense of James and Turgenev. In this perspective, the two suicides form a fascinating contrast. Nezhdanov's suicide, stemming from his failure to 'simplify himself', epitomizes not only the subjugation of the artist-idealist by the imperative of historical necessity, but also the triumph

144 Ibid., p. 544.

of history over art itself. Whether or not Nezhdanov is a good poet is immaterial to the fact that the force of history will not let him retreat into the solipsism of self-expressive art. Indeed, the implications of Nezhdanov's fate go beyond the relation of art to politics to suggest, more widely, the fundamental conflict between the individual subjective self, reflexively seeking and deriving meaning from its own being, and the indifferent process of history that nullifies that search.

In Fathers and Sons Turgenev had created a hero, Bazarov, who, in his nihilism, appeared to have mastered and canalized the clamorous demands of the self so successfully that he had aligned himself completely with the impersonal, destructive necessities of history. Nikolai Kirsanov's arguments against Bazarov's nihilism rest on the same values that turn Hyacinth Robinson away from revolution - art, culture, civilisation, the finest flower of the past. Bazarov crushes such arguments with a draconian materialistic rationalism, arguing from historical necessity. Bazarov epitomises the reduction of the human will to the level of a mere instrumentality, depersonalising and dehumanising himself to the point where he becomes a mere agent of progressive change. In order to negate this negation, to re-assert individual human life as a measure of reality independent of history, Turgenev subjects Bazarov, and, in his person, the monistic doctrine of historical determinism, to forces which alone can neutralize it - the biological phenomena of love (always a malady in Turgenev's fiction) and death.

Symbolically, history, personified by Bazarov is halted in its tracks by the only powers that can check it. In this way, although history has its 'necessity', which must be recognised, meaning and value can be restored to individual life, as opposed to species life, by the invocation of the tragic sense. By the paradoxical means of thwarted love and tragic early death, Bazarov, in becoming a 'tragic' figure is redeemed from being merely an agent of impersonal history and comes to exemplify the continuing and irreducible value of human individuality which history appears to threaten. By contrast, in the later work Virgin Soil, history has won. Death and thwarted love, far from being the author's means of investing the personal life with meaning, are the very instruments of history itself. Nezhdanov loses Mariana to Solomin because Solomin is the man of historical destiny, single-mindedly aligning himself with the forces of change. He kills himself because he cannot 'simplify himself', cure himself of inwardness and reflectiveness, merge with the stream of history by ceasing to be the individual he is. It is customary to view Nezhdanov's ineffectualness, and that of most of his fellow populists, as indicative of Turgenev's conviction that they were well-meaning but wholly misguided, that their cause was 'so false and unrealistic that it can only lead to a complete fiasco' ¹⁴⁵. But even if the response is misguided, the historical crisis which provoked it remains a real categorical imperative. Although Nezhdanov no longer has faith in the cause, he nevertheless accepts history

145 Pis'ma, XII, i, 44.

as the arbiter of his fate. In his suicide note he tells Mariana that '... the falsehood lies in me, not in the thing in which you believe.'¹⁴⁶ In Virgin Soil ideology first annexes and then consumes (in the person of Nezhdanov) both art and subjective individualism. Whereas Bazarov had been a willing votary of the Moloch of history, paradoxically redeemed for humanity by love and death, Nezhdanov is a sacrifice to the same idol, and unhappy love and death are the means by which the idol metes out its punishment. This contrast between the two novels reflects the ambivalence of Turgenev himself, a man who was never quite able to decide whether history was a wheel of progress to which all, including the writer, should put their shoulder, or a terrible juggernaut, destroying in its path all that he valued most highly - liberal individualism, art, civilisation itself.

James, though not unsympathetic to the cause of political reform, was unequivocal in his high valuation of culture and art and the life of sensuous experience that attends them. The terms in which James was wont to speak of social and political upheaval shed interesting light on the nature of his attitude towards radical or revolutionary change; he appears, at times to have thought a collapse of the social order, in particular of the aristocracy, inevitable and indeed welcome, but the forces of potential revolution are nevertheless viewed, and referred to as 'barbarians'. A letter to Charles Eliot Norton of December 1886 sets out

146 Nov' in Pol. sob. soch., XII, 289. My translation.

his feelings at some length.

The condition of that body [the English upper class] seems to me to be in many ways very much the same rotten and collapsible one as that of the French aristocracy before the revolution - minus cleverness and conversation. Or perhaps it's more like the heavy congested and depraved Roman world upon which the barbarians came down. In England the Huns and Vandals will have to come up - from the black depths of the (in the people) enormous misery, though I don't think the Attila is quite yet found - in the person of Mr Hyndman. At all events much of English life is grossly materialistic and wants blood-letting.¹⁴⁷

Two, related points are to be noted in James's letter. Firstly, his analogy with the sacking of Rome by the barbarians implies that, if and when social revolution occurs, it will be an act of vandalism, however much the aristocracy may have deserved its fate. Secondly, James speaks of the body social as being in need of blood-letting rather than destruction, of curing rather than killing. Both these observations point directly to that profound reservation about the cost of political revolution which exercised James's imagination in The Princess Casamassima. If the price of bringing about equality was to be the destruction of culture - by which James understood not just the arts, but the whole fabric of cultivated life - then it was too high a price to pay. This is, of course, precisely the judgement made by Hyacinth Robinson and his decision places him in an impasse from which the only exit is by suicide.

147 Letters, III, 146.

And yet, while at the representational level of the fiction, Hyacinth's suicide is a tragedy, qualitatively not different from the personal tragedy of Nezhdanov, at a symbolic and schematic level it may be taken as signifying the very opposite of Nezhdanov's capitulation to the pressure of history - it may be seen as an act of self-sacrifice which redeems culture from the threat of politics. Hyacinth pledges himself to commit an act of supreme importance to the cause of revolution, but in so pledging himself, symbolically, he makes the revolution dependent on him for the execution of its objective. When Hyacinth defects to the cause of art, of culture and of subjective experience, his act of defection, though it leads to his death, signifies and symbolises, in terms of the scale of values which the novel offers, a victory for culture over ideology. Chronologically, developmentally, Hyacinth progresses in the novel from political conscious to a consciousness which James presents as higher still - cultural consciousness. He thus becomes the Christ-like martyr for the cultural life - everlasting, the importance of which transcends the dictates of the historical moment, even if those dictates represent what is humanly and ethically right. This measurement of relative values which the novel makes is saliently expressed in a conversation between the Radical, Muniment, and Hyacinth in Part II of the novel. The whole conversation turns very much on the question of 'seeing' and concluding from what one sees. Muniment tells Hyacinth very firmly that 'The way I've used

my eyes in that sink of iniquity off there has led to my
seeing that present arrangements won't do.'¹⁴⁸ But

Hyacinth's is the multiple vision of the artist, or at
least artist-manqué, and of the devotee of culture.

"Yes, I see that too", said Hyacinth with the same dole-
fulness that had marked his tone a moment before - a
dolefulness begotten of the rather helpless sense, that
whatever he saw, he saw - and this was always the case -
so many other things besides. He saw the immeasurable
misery of the people, and yet he saw all that had been,
as it were, rescued and redeemed from it: the treasures, the
felicities, the splendours, the successes of the world.'¹⁴⁹

This insistence on the primacy of the individual vision, of
the subjective self of experience, of the impression which
the world makes upon one as more 'real' than the world which
makes it, is James's insistence too, promoted throughout
his work in implicit opposition to historical or literary
theories of determinism. But it is a 'choice' that
Hyacinth's Russian opposite number is denied. What
Hyacinth Robinson does in The Princess Casamassima is
to choose between alternatives that epitomise both the
particular dilemma of the English late nineteenth century
Romantic mind, and, more broadly, a central crisis of
modern consciousness; he chooses between the way of
William Morris and the way of Walter Pater. Morris's

148 The Princess Casamassima, New York edition (New York,
1908), II, 217.

149 Ibid., p. 217.

passionate conviction that, in order to make any beauty exist meaningfully, all life must be made beautiful by whatever means necessary, is rejected in favour of a Paterian stance which refuses to yoke beauty to utility, and insists on an unashamedly individualistic epicureanism.

The intellectual climate of Russia in the 1870s scarcely admitted of the pluralism that makes such a choice conceivable, let alone the choice itself. Nezhdanov's aesthetic subjectivism is destroyed by historical crisis; Hyacinth Robinson disarms - literally - historical crisis by developing an aesthetic consciousness that is presented as higher and more complex than political awareness. Their literal fates are the same but the symbolic implications of their deaths are antithetical. Viewed in relation to each other these two characters, so similar in formal and structural function, and yet so different in symbolic and imaginative denotation, perfectly reflect the general contrast between James and Turgenev that I have sought to illustrate.

In a discussion of The Princess Casamassima and its relation to Turgenev's work two further points seem worthy of note. Firstly, previous scholarship has concentrated on the obvious indebtedness of that novel to Virgin Soil, without considering other possible sources of influence in Turgenev's work. It seems to me that in the relationship between the Princess and Paul Muniment there is a sufficiently strong resemblance to that between Bazarov and Odintsova in Fathers and Sons to claim that the latter inspired the former. Odintsova and the Princess are both wealthy,

intelligent and bored women of society who crave novelty and stimulation. Each of them is attracted and excited by the sexual challenge of a strong-willed, supremely rational, politically committed man, on whom they seek to exert their powers of beauty and charm. The way in which each novel features and handles the pattern of flirtation and resistance in these relationships suggests - even if Bazarov succumbs while Muniment does not - that James took the idea from Fathers and Sons, the idea, that is, of dramatising the tension between rationality and irrationality, between sexual attraction and ideological commitment, between one social class and another, by way of a variation on the theme of Samson and Delilah.

Secondly, if The Princess Casamassima is an artistic failure, imaginatively misconceived and narratively diffuse, the cause of its failure may be seen as lying in James's efforts to marry two incompatible forms - the extensive and the intensive, the Dickensian and the Turgenevan. The Princess is an unhappy compromise between a novel of plot and intrigue, with characters tending towards caricature and stereotype, and a concentrated study of the emotions and psychology of one or two individuals, in which narrative interest centres on the drama of consciousness, rather than the (melo)drama of incident.

That James persisted in deprecating Dickens's fiction for its comic and grotesque enlargements of human characteristics we know from a series of depreciating references stretching from his early reviews of the 1860s to his observation in

intelligent and bored women of society who crave novelty and stimulation. Each of them is attracted and excited by the sexual challenge of a strong-willed, supremely rational, politically committed man, on whom they seek to exert their powers of beauty and charm. The way in which each novel features and handles the pattern of flirtation and resistance in these relationships suggests - even if Bazarov succumbs while Muniment does not - that James took the idea from Fathers and Sons, the idea, that is, of dramatising the tension between rationality and irrationality, between sexual attraction and ideological commitment, between one social class and another, by way of a variation on the theme of Samson and Delilah.

Secondly, if The Princess Casamassima is an artistic failure, imaginatively misconceived and narratively diffuse, the cause of its failure may be seen as lying in James's efforts to marry two incompatible forms - the extensive and the intensive, the Dickensian and the Turgenevan. The Princess is an unhappy compromise between a novel of plot and intrigue, with characters tending towards caricature and stereotype, and a concentrated study of the emotions and psychology of one or two individuals, in which narrative interest centres on the drama of consciousness, rather than the (melo)drama of incident.

That James persisted in deprecating Dickens's fiction for its comic and grotesque enlargements of human characteristics we know from a series of depreciating references stretching from his early reviews of the 1860s to his observation in

the 'Partial Portrait' of Turgenev that 'if Dickens fails to live long, it will be because his figures are particular without being general; because they are individuals without being type.'¹⁵⁰ Yet it appears that to write about the life of the lower and lower-middle classes of nineteenth-century London, without doing so in the spirit and manner of Dickens, was impossible for James, so that although he credited himself with the intuitions into the submerged life of the capital that inspire the novel ('I arrived so at the history of little Hyacinth Robinson - he sprang up for me out of the London pavement.'¹⁵¹), the sentimental colouring of a number of the characters, the tendency to transform the mean and shabby into the pathetic and picturesque, the atmosphere of melodrama and menace, the latent emotionalism of the style, all suggest the example of the writer he so persistently sought to devalue.

Implanted in the matrix of Turgenev's structure and configuration of characters, these Dickensian elements - essentially the attempt to give a dense, variegated, atmospheric quality to the novel - are allowed to burst the bounds of the novel's intended narrative scheme and so impede James's efforts to do what Turgenev had done - to 'approach his ground on the moral and psychological side'. What the novel delivers is a sense of the pathos of Hyacinth's situation, and a heavily contrived one at that, rather than

150 Partial Portraits, p. 318.

151 Preface to The Princess Casamassima, p. vi.

an analysis of the mainsprings of his nature and being. Hyacinth's fate is more picturesque and pathetic than plausible. By contrast, Nezhdanov's suicide, though almost anti-climatic, is consistent with the strong sense of his divided nature that Turgenev concentrates on establishing - concentrates in a way denied to James by the self-imposed necessity of filling a large canvass with primary colours. Attempting to be both vivid social panorama and concentrated character study, The Princess Casamassima ends by being neither.

The Princess is the supreme example of James's trust in the imagination's power to conjure revealing images of reality from the very atmosphere the artist breathes¹⁵², to portray effects in a case where causes - objective causes - are of the very essence. As I have already suggested above, the importance of Hyacinth Robinson and his fate lie, arguably, not at the representational level of the fiction, so much as in the symbolic significance of his rejection of historical 'necessity' for the subjective life of experience. In that respect, this seemingly 'un-Jamesian' subject may have revealed more about the author's personal hierarchy of values than we commonly appreciate.

152 "'Subjects" and situations, character and history, the tragedy and comedy of life, are things of which the common air, in such conditions, seems pungently to taste; and to a mind curious, before the human scene, of meanings and revelations, the great grey Babylon easily becomes, on its face, a garden bristling with an immense illustrative flora. Possible stories, presentable figures, rise from the thick jungle as the observer moves, fluttering up like startled game, and before he knows it indeed he has fairly to guard himself against the brush of importunate wings.' Ibid., p. v.

Though James cared deeply about the political fate of Great Britain, the feelings about the future of America that led to the writing of The Bostonians were stronger still. If he viewed with trepidation the uncertain future of his host country, he felt something approaching anguish when on his brief return visits in 1881 and 1882 he surveyed the condition of the United States. Stimulated by the challenge of his friend, Howells's, cultural chauvinism, moved to a mood of atavistic nostalgia by his parents' deaths and repelled by the vulgar publicity-mongering and commercialism of the newly reconstructed republic, James turned his attention to the writing of 'a very American tale', a novel which would embody the essence of what he perceived to be radical and disturbing changes in the condition of American society. It need not be laboured that this particular situation of a writer being compelled to contemplate, from a standpoint of exile, unpalatable changes in his native country, of being compelled to try and objectify a subject which engaged his own keenest emotions and personal ties, of having to recognise the onward march of a historical reality over which one was personally powerless, is precisely that which Turgenev occupied for much of his life. I have so far argued that what the undoubted enabling influence of Turgenev upon James illustrates, even more than their artistic affinities, is an essential difference in kind, rather than degree, in their respective perceptions of historical determinism, and a corresponding difference in their sense of the mutuality of life and art. It nevertheless seems to me that The Bostonians, in the

spirit of its conception, bears a likeness to a novel such as Fathers and Sons. Both adopt the same essential procedures for measuring a prescriptive ideology for a radical future against conservative values inherited from the past by dramatising the conflict between characters who embody these competing values. But, equally, in both novels the claims to absoluteness of all doctrines are diminished by placing those claims in a perspective relative to the unquestionable determinants of individual human life, its subjection to passion, to joy and despair, to death. At the conclusion of Fathers and Sons in the scene which describes the visits of Bazarov's parents to his grave, Turgenev evokes a sense of the eternal peace of death, finding therein an intimation of transcendent meaning that life itself will not yield:

... But are those prayers of theirs, those tears, all in vain? Is their love, their hallowed selfless love, not omnipotent? Oh yes! However passionate, sinful and rebellious the heart hidden in the tomb, the flowers growing over it regard us serenely with their innocent eyes; they speak to us not only of eternal peace, of the vast repose of 'indifferent' nature; they tell us, too, of everlasting reconciliation and of life which has no end.¹⁵³

The idea of 'everlasting reconciliation' casts back upon the novel the light of a meaning that absorbs and transfigures completely the clash of doctrine and value that the work has dramatised. In the same way the scene in the Harvard Memorial Chapel in which Basil Ransom and Verena Tarrant stand in the sanctified presence of death, casts its meaning, brief though the passage is, over the

153 Otsy i deti in Pol. sob. soch., VIII, 402. My translation.

whole of The Bostonians. Both passages imply the sense, central to their respective novels, that the only antidote to the uncertainty of the future is the certain fact of death; that only time as mortality can be invoked to neutralise time as historical change. Death, the recession of all life into the changelessness of the past, is imaginatively employed in both these novels, apparently so different but essentially so alike, as a kind of talisman against change. In this way, the seeming absolute of history is made relative to the true absolute arbiter of all human life.

Disciplined though the work is, The Bostonians is, uniquely in James's fiction, the product of a sense of personal loss - the loss of his family and of an imagined pre-lapsarian America. It is this sense of keen personal loss that informs the novel, making its author experientially, as well as artistically involved in the meaning and implications of his own fiction to a peculiar degree. One of the pervasive meanings of The Bostonians is that suffering liberates the spirit from the confusions and relativities of the temporal world, prefiguring death in its absoluteness. James's own suffering and the depth of his personal involvement in the theme of The Bostonians liberated him (for the occasion of this work at least) from what I have argued to be his excessively 'iconographic' conception of fiction, rendering him sensitive to that 'body and pressure of time' that surrounds and governs all art. 'He loves the old and is unable to see where the new is drifting' ;

so James had written of Turgenev in 1874. Twelve years later personal and historical change had made these words supremely applicable to the author of The Bostonians, enabling him to write a novel which owes nothing in detail to Turgenev's work, but strongly recalls it in spirit; which seeks not to assimilate life to the imagination but works by a synthesis of the two; which merges personal and historical predicaments inextricably; in short a 'very American tale' with unmistakably Russian affinities.

I have claimed The Bostonians to be in essence the most Turgenevan of all James's novels because, alone among his works, it freely exposes ethical and cultural values to history, rather than - like The Princess Casamassima - responding to the question of historical determinism by subsuming history in culture. More typically, though, James's work seals itself off from the question of historical determinism by creating complex structures of perception based on the intricate elaboration of style. Ultimately in James's work, the artist's sense of reality passes from being the aesthetic correlative of things as they are, and becomes, instead, a substitute for things as they are. Art, by its very nature, is an organising principle and history, by its nature, is chaos. With the exception of The Bostonians, I believe James's work veers away from engagement with this contradiction.

Finally, though, history overtook James. In the closing chapters of his biography, Leon Edel movingly describes the intense anguish which James experienced upon

the outbreak of the First World War. While even the most unpalatable facts of individual human conduct and emotion might be assimilated to art, the collapse of the world - order struck at the very foundations of culture in a way that James could scarcely grasp. His letters of the time entirely bear out Edel's comment that James 'believed civilisation had collapsed totally into barbarism and ¹⁵⁵ that this had turned his life into a gross lie'. *[My italics]* In the writing of The Bostonians the painful memory of the Civil War had been the imaginative and moral stimulus to James's engagement with the question of America's future; now an infinitely more destructive conflict faced him with the prospect of horrors which 'h'is imagination could not encompass' ¹⁵⁶. James had always relied upon his 'sense' of things to transfigure the brute facts of reality into patterns of formal structure. At the end of his life, history asserted itself in a 'fact' so calamitous, that James's poised sense of reality was overwhelmed. Like Turgenev in his efforts to come to terms with Nihilism, James was confronted with a force of destructiveness that challenged fundamentally the value and processes of culture. To respond to it imaginatively was beyond the limits of his powers. The Europe which James had loved and revered as a repository of civilisation, finally became for him 'a ¹⁵⁷ nightmare from which there is no waking save by sleep.'

155 The Life of Henry James, II, 774.

156 Ibid., p. 775.

157 The Letters of Henry James, edited by Percy Lubbock, II, 391. Letter to Mrs. Wharton, August 19, 1914.

CHAPTER THREE

TURGENEV AND GEORGE GISSING

(i)

'At first glance the suggestion that Turgenev was a powerful influence in the work of George Gissing appears almost ludicrous: his whole approach and method of composition, which strike us as so characteristically English, seem utterly recalcitrant to it.'¹

Gilbert Phelps's study of Turgenev and Gissing in The Russian Novel in English Fiction, after having announced in the opening words quoted above, the manifest difference between the form of Turgenev's and Gissing's fiction, finds itself awkwardly committed, by its early use of the term 'influence', to a hunt for derivations of character, theme and situation from the work of the one writer in that of the other. Phelps is obliged to stretch that already loose concept to breaking point in order to try and demonstrate the fact of Turgenev's extraordinary importance for Gissing.

Of course, the use of the term 'influence' is fraught with semantic difficulties, and no one - least of all Phelps, whose contribution to Russian-English comparative studies is of such importance - can be blamed for finding it problematical. There are, however, particularly strong

1 Gilbert Phelps, The Russian Novel in English Fiction (London, 1956), p. 88.

reasons for trying to avoid the term in connection with Gissing and Turgenev. Turgenev's importance to Gissing is not so much as an aesthetic model - much though Gissing admired the compression and delicacy of Turgenev's art; it is rather as an example of a particular imaginative frame of reference, in which the individual's relationship with his social and political environment is perceived as dynamic and problematical. Such a conception I believe Gissing found to be generally absent from the English fictional tradition. While the texture and structure of Gissing's work may owe much to Dickens, his sense of individual failure and tragedy as both personally determined and socially structural aligns him much more closely with Turgenev than with any English writer. Consequently, while I intend to point to close thematic and situational parallels between specific works of these two writers, it must be made clear at once that the appropriate terms in which to speak of Turgenev's importance for Gissing are example and, above all, affinity.

In fact, the case of Gissing and Turgenev is, in one sense, the converse of the relationship between the writings of Henry James, prior to The Bostonians, and Turgenev - a relationship to which the term 'influence' is applicable. I have argued, in Chapter Two of this thesis, that, while the formal and aesthetic importance of Turgenev for Henry James is manifest, there were, when that influence was at its height, limits to James's understanding of Turgenev's cultural and ideological situation. By contrast, in Gissing I find little realised

evidence of aesthetic influence, little or no obvious derivation of plot and specific character - even in those cases where characters in each writer's work may seem national sub-species of a generic European 'type'. Rather, it is in what Wells claimed for Gissing - that his novels were 'deliberate attempts to present in typical groupings distinct phases of our social order'² - that we find such a close correspondence with Turgenev's declared artistic aim of depicting and embodying 'in appropriate human types what Shakespeare calls "the body and pressure of time", and that rapidly changing face of Russians of the educated class, who have formed the pre-dominant subject of my observations.'³ It is an intellectual and artistic angle of perception, rather than an aesthetic methodology, that Gissing and Turgenev have in common, a similarity of focus that gives rise to works which, while radically different in their manner of realisation, are strikingly similar in their grasp of the inter-penetration of individual lives and the structural formations of history.

This keener diagnosis of the individual's socio-historical situation and significance that Gissing found present in Turgenev in particular and contemporary

2 H.G. Wells, 'The Novels of Mr George Gissing' in the Contemporary Review (August, 1897), reprinted in George Gissing and H.G. Wells, edited by Royal Gettmann (Illinois, 1961), p. 245.

3 Preface to 1880 edition of Turgenev's works in Pol. sob. soch., XII, 303.

European literature in general, is notably absent in antecedent English fiction. It may be argued that the central premise of much English fiction, up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, is that of the possibility of harmonisation between individual human needs and social structures, the possibility of mediation between the felt imperatives of the personal life and the perceived imperatives of social organisation and historical change. The supreme example of this assumption is, of course, the work of George Eliot, wherein the positive potentialities of individual self-knowledge, disseminated throughout society in the lives of countless separate human beings, are assumed to be capable of beneficial effects upon the social organism. An implication runs through the writings of George Eliot that recognition on the part of writer, character and reader of that 'stealthy convergence' of one life upon another will dissolve even the barriers of social differentiation, will work a kind of benign 'evolutionary' effect from the lives of individuals upon the body social and politic. Even in the work of so penetrating a critic of society as Dickens, the essentially mythopoeic nature of his writing, its presentation of the distilled essences of virtue and vice, offers, ultimately, a way of circumventing the intractable rigidities of social reality by a kind of reconstitution of essential and archetypal humanity around the polarities of good and bad. In Dickens, the archetypes of vice and virtue exist as anterior to the violations of humanity by contemporary social

philosophies and operate judgementally upon them. In George Eliot the ethics of individual conduct precede and bear upon the conduct of the wider social life. Neither of Gissing's two great predecessors presents an image of reality in which the relationship between the individual and society is ineluctably difficult because it is intractably structural, an image in which the dislocations of the personal life are perceived as continuous, rather than contiguous, with the contradictions of the social structure. In Dickens and Eliot an essential 'humanity' stands free of history and society, remains actually or potentially proof and sovereign against the disassociative effects of their processes.

In Gissing, by contrast, no such contradistinction between 'humanity' and 'society' is possible - a fact that we may, of course, attribute in part to a less sanguine temperament, but in part also to the particular historical and cultural moment at which Gissing wrote. For Gissing shares with Hardy a sense of crisis in the relationship between individual and social structure, that cannot be resolved by appeals to feeling, responsibility or self-knowledge. This sense of the critical relationship between personal life and impersonal forces being in some way historically structural is perennial in nineteenth-century Russian literature, pervades Turgenev's novels and constitutes the centre of his appeal for Gissing.

Modern criticism has observed crucial differences between Turgenev and George Eliot on the one hand and

Gissing and George Eliot on the other. Irving Howe has noted how, despite the liberal humanism which they have in common and which I have emphasized in Chapter One, the different cultural and ideological situations of Turgenev and Eliot radically affect their representation of the relationship between the private and the public life.

If, against Turgenev, we set George Eliot as a representative figure of the best in both English liberalism and English literature, the comparison is nothing less than startling. Eliot seems more aggressive and self-confident, more manly, and not because these qualities are impossible to the Russian soul but because they are inaccessible to the Russian liberal of the 19th century. In George Eliot's novels people of the various social levels can still communicate with each other and even find areas of moral solidarity; one seldom senses in or near her books those social wastes that lie, desolate, just off the margins of Turgenev's novels. Eliot assumes that a degree of harmony between public activity and private feeling is still possible, while Turgenev's heroes recoil in weakness or shatter themselves in strength when they try to establish contact with public life ... Turgenev's liberalism was far less vital than Eliot's, far less imbedded in national realities; yet by a curious spin of history, it now seems closer to us, closer to our indecisions and hesitations.⁴

This assertion of the greater 'modernity' of Turgenev's historicism dovetails with a claim like Michael Collie's, in his study of Gissing, that Gissing found 'mid-Victorian values, virtues, ideas and situations wanting'⁵ and that 'he had no personal reason for believing in the moral stabilities represented by authors

4 Irving Howe, Politics and the Novel (New York, 1957), pp. 124-5.

5 Michael Collie, The Alien Art (London, 1979), p. 2.

of the previous generation like George Eliot, indeed was deeply convinced for both emotional and philosophical reasons that they were chimerical.⁶

Juxtaposed, these two critical judgements underscore the point I am making about the affinity between Gissing and Turgenev. Gissing's landscape of the 'desolate, social wastes' may be urban and Turgenev's rural, but they arise from a similar sense of the inter-relatedness of personal crisis and social process, which in its acuteness and urgency, finds no equivalent in the organicism of George Eliot. This shared sense of the problematical relationship of the personal life to impersonal forces is what I will want to examine comparatively in Turgenev and Gissing. Before doing this, however, I wish to consider the significance of Gissing's enthusiasm for Turgenev in relation to his development as a writer and to break down the general ground of the affinity, which I have begun by establishing, into a number of its constituent elements.

(ii)

It might be said that Gissing begins, in the 1880s, by appreciating Turgenev for artistic qualities that he, Gissing, aspired to but lacked, and ends by appreciating him for insights that they shared. The scale and method of Gissing's fiction altered little until the middle 1890s, but he continually scourged himself with the need

6 Ibid.

to develop an art that would be at once more condensed, more detached and yet realistic in its mode of representation. Although Gissing's reading was wide and avid and his thinking eclectic, Turgenev's example possessed a special force for him at a moment when he was intensely preoccupied with the 'art' of his own fiction (the middle 1880s) and seems to have become firmly embedded in his imagination by the time he wrote mature works such as Born in Exile and New Grub Street.

The evidence for Gissing's reading and admiration of Turgenev comes chiefly from his letters to relatives and friends and from his diary. Commissioned by the English positivist Edward Beesly, to write a series of articles on English life for Vyestnik Yevropy, the periodical with which Turgenev was closely associated, he formed an admiration for the Russian novelist before becoming fully familiar with his work.⁷ Though after two years of quarterly contributions the work of composing the articles

7 'What should you think of writings of mine being published in St Petersburg! I was astounded this morning to receive a letter from Professor Beesly (of University College) saying that he had been requested by Tourgeneff (the great Russian novelist) to find someone who would supply a quarterly article of some thirty pages on the political, social and literary affairs of England to a periodical published in Petersburg, and called, 'le Messenger de l'Europe'. Beesly thought of me.' The Letters of George Gissing to his Family, collected and arranged by Algernon and Ellen Gissing (London, 1931), p. 85. Letter to Algernon Gissing of November 18, 1880.

had begun to pall⁸, Gissing's respect for Turgenev was undimmed. We may infer from his remarks on the occasion of Turgenev's death that he had read at least some works⁹ by a man, with whom he had been proud to be connected. At any rate, by March of 1889 he had acquired five or six of Turgenev's novels in German translation¹⁰ and by May was 'very busy' with them, writing to his brother that 'the man is glorious' and recommending to Algernon the two¹¹ or three of his books available in English.

Gissing's love of Turgenev was no short-lived enthusiasm; it persisted throughout the 1880s and 1890s, leading him to read articles on the Russian novelist ('... sat down with Henry James's "Partial Portraits" ... impossible to resist articles on Daudet, Tourgueneff,¹² and so on') and fictional works other than the major

8 '... I am struggling with the old foe, the Russian article'. Ibid., p. 120. Letter to Algernon of October 6, 1882.

9 'Did you read of the death of Tourgueneff, the Russian novelist? He was, without doubt the greatest writer of fiction, and you must read him some day - of course in translations. I possess two letters, on matters of business, which he wrote to me from Paris. They are of course valuable and will become more so in the course of time.' Ibid., p. 135. Letter to Ellen Gissing, October 14, 1883.

10 Ibid., p. 136. Letter to Algernon Gissing, March 3, 1884.

11 Ibid., p. 138. Letter to Algernon Gissing, May 29, 1884.

12 London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England, The Diary of George Gissing, edited by Pierre Coustillas (London, 1978), p. 33. Diary entry for June 20, 1888.

novels¹³. By March 1890 he had read Fathers and Sons¹⁴
 some six or seven times and judged it to be a stronger¹⁵
 book than Virgin Soil.

Gissing was not James; no-where do we have the kind of detailed critical evaluation of Turgenev that is to be found in James's numerous appreciations of him. But behind Gissing's largely generalised praise of Turgenev lies the sympathetic response of a writer sensing an imaginative frame of reference akin to his own in an aesthetic form that he would have liked to make his own. Both of these aspects of Turgenev's attraction for Gissing need explicating before their novels can be considered comparatively.

At that early stage in his career when Gissing immersed himself in Turgenev's work, three fundamental artistic principles exercised him constantly - the faithful representation of human types, authorial detachment and narrative concentration. The frequency and insistence, with which these principles are enunciated in letters to his family during the early and middle 1880s, show Gissing to be willing himself towards an aesthetic philosophy and method that were by no means native to him.

13 'Reading Tourgueneffs "Punin and Baburin"'. Ibid., p. 35. Entry for July 4, 1888; '... read Tourgueneffs "Un Hamlet Russe"'. Ibid., p. 295. Entry for January 22, 1893.

14 Ibid., p. 211. Diary entry for March 16, 1890.

15 George Gissing, Letters to his Family, p. 217. Letter to Ellen of June 17, 1888.

These preoccupations emerge strongly in a debate by correspondence with his brother Algernon in the summer of 1884, three months after his acquisition of 'five or six of Tourgueneffs novels'. At the end of May, when Gissing is 'very busy with Tourgueneff', he writes to Algernon of his consciousness of how much waste paper - not 'waste' but 'indispensable' - must now be accepted as¹⁶ part of the perfecting of his art. He is now, he declares, an unashamed advocate of 'Art for Art's sake' ('I cannot get beyond it'¹⁷) and sees human life as having little interest, 'save as material for artistic presentation.'¹⁸ With this theoretical commitment goes an irritated insistence upon the qualities of artistic detachment present in his own last novel, The Unclassed, of that work being 'not a social essay, but a study of a certain group of human beings' and of his 'being responsible¹⁹ for the selection, but for nothing more.' The Unclassed, Gissing maintains, in the face of criticism from Algernon,²⁰ is 'strong in truthfulness; ... its characters are types.'

The concern to be both 'artistic' and 'realistic' as a novelist continued with Gissing throughout the following year, during which he completed Isabel Clarendon,

16 Ibid., p. 137. Letter to Algernon, May 29, 1884.

17 Ibid., p. 138. Letter to Algernon, June 12, 1884.

18 Ibid., p. 139.

19 Ibid., p. 141. Letter to Algernon, June 23, 1884.

20 Ibid.

a novel intended to be both realistic²¹ and, as Jacob Korg has observed, a break with the more tendentious,²² manifestly 'social' type of his first two novels. In the month that he finished Isabel Clarendon, again in a letter to Algernon, Gissing is to be found welcoming the influence of the continental novel on the incipient break-down of the English 'three-decker' and embracing the selective, dramatic mode of narrative presentation²³ which the new shorter forms make possible.

The wider context of Gissing's preoccupation with authorial distance, concentrated narrative form and the 'art' which they help to realise is that process of 'aestheticisation' of the theory of fiction which arises from the general climate of Aestheticism, but more particularly from James's influence; when we recognise

-
- 21 'Tonight I finish Isabel Clarendon. I have done my best to make the story as realistic as possible. The ending is as unromantic as could be, and several threads are left to hang loose; for even so it is in real life.' Ibid., p. 164. Letter to Algernon, August 9, 1885.
- 22 Jacob Korg, George Gissing, a critical biography. (London, 1965), p. 79.
- 23 'One volume is becoming commonest of all. It is the new school, due to continental influence. Thackeray and Dickens wrote at enormous length, and with profusion of detail; their plan is to tell everything, and leave nothing to be divined. Far more artistic, I think, is the later method, of merely suggesting; of dealing with episodes, instead of writing biographies. The old novelist is omniscient; I think it is better to tell a story precisely as one does in real life, hinting, surmising, telling in detail what can so be told and no more. In fact, it approximates to the dramatic mode of presentment'. Letters, p. 166. Letter to Algernon, August, 1885.

that many of Gissing's remarks on the art of fiction are exactly contemporary with James's essay of that name and that the terminology of Gissing's statements - 'selection', 'typicality' 'dramatic mode of presentment' - strongly recalls Jamesian principles, we are reminded of just how sensitive and susceptible Gissing always was to currents of artistic theory, and at no time more so than in this early stage of conscious artistic self-development.

At the same time, this compulsive concern with artistic method and condensed dramatic form is not simply a matter of Gissing's being attuned to a contemporary shift in fictional theory and taste. The emergence of an aesthetics of fiction which Gissing treats as such a liberating force, actually posed a serious challenge to a writer, who - save arguably in a late novella such as Eve's Ransom - never achieved the kind of fictional ideal he so enthusiastically aspired to in the mid-1880s. The lament of the memoirist in the quasi-autobiographical Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft is surely Gissing's own: 'Oh, why has it not been granted me in all my long years of pen-labour to write something small and perfect.'²⁴

Of course, in a simple sense, the reason why it was not granted to Gissing to write something small and perfect has to do with its being against the grain of his temperament and abilities to do so. Viewed more positively,

24 George Gissing, The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft (London, 1961), p. 81.

however, Gissing's failure to compose 'artistic' novels can be seen as due to his having so strong a sense of the intractably determined complexity of social and individual experience that he could not achieve an art, which by its selective processes, brings about a transvaluative change from the actual to the fictional, (as I have argued James does in The Princess Casamassima). The extended form of Gissing's work is, in one sense, a kind of fictional correlative to the complex and dispersed ramifications of the English social structure, to a complexity that is both horizontal (capable of varied patterns of inter-relationship within a given group or class), and vertical (capable of complex and problematical relationships between classes).

One of the principle reasons, therefore, why Gissing thought Turgenev 'glorious' must surely be that he had succeeded in writing concentrated narratives which, in dramatising individual relationships, simultaneously dramatise socially and ideologically determined relations. As Irving Howe has observed of the two sides of Turgenev's fiction, 'the romantic - idyllic side of his work may profitably be seen as an analogue ... of his political side.' Turgenev could do what Gissing could not - write highly condensed novels in which the socio-historical implications of the personal life are manifest - not simply because of a difference in degree of artistic giftedness, but also because of the monolithic nature of

the Russian social structure. Focus, as Turgenev did, upon 'that rapidly changing face of Russians of the educated class' and you focus upon a single point at which the full extent of the country's moral and ideological predicament was felt and articulated. Turgenev enjoyed the advantage of a kind of unity - of milieu and setting - as a given condition of his fiction, which Gissing, writing in the more highly developed, highly differentiated circumstances of late Victorian, urban and commercial England, did not have.

This essential difference in cultural and political context is brought home by comparing Gissing's thoughts, in the middle 1880s, on the need to write more concisely and more dramatically with Turgenev's concern with the form and scale of fiction at a similar early stage of his career. Whereas Gissing wrote long novels and would have liked to write shorter ones, Turgenev, by 1852, had written only stories and, for several years, anxiously (and in vain) essayed the long novel form. The attempts to write a long novel lasted several years, ending when the composition of Rudin began in the summer of 1855. Yet Turgenev had already given voice to doubts about the applicability of the long novel form to the subject of Russian society. Reviewing a long novel by the woman writer, Yevgeniya Tur, in The Contemporary, in 1852, Turgenev wrote:

A novel - a novel in four parts! You know don't you, that apart from a woman no one in Russia in our time is capable of facing up to such a difficult and, in any circumstances, lengthy undertaking? Indeed what can one fill four volumes with? The historical, the Walter-Scott type of novel - that expansive, solid edifice, with its unshakable foundations embedded

in the soil of the nation, with its extensive introductions in the form of porticoes, with its reception rooms and dark corridors for ease of communication - this type of novel is practically impossible in our time; it has outlived its generation, it is not contemporary ... There remain two other types of novel which are closer to each other than may seem the case at first glance - novels which to avoid different interpretations which are not everywhere applicable, we shall call after the names of their chief representatives: the George Sand and the Dickensian. Such novels are possible among us and will, it seems, be adopted; but it is pertinent to ask now whether the basic elements of our social life have revealed themselves to the extent of demanding quadripartite dimensions in the novel that is to reproduce them? The success in recent times of various types of essay and sketch seems to prove the opposite.²⁵

This passage, originally excised by the imperial censor, is both a thinly veiled critique of the repressive Nicolayevan regime and a literary judgement which Turgenev's four studies of the Russian intelligentsia, written over the following decade, vindicated. As far as the synoptic study of social relations was concerned - as opposed to the extended psychological studies of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky - Turgenev's question remained a pertinent one until as late as the 1870s. By that decade reform, emancipation, organised radicalism and incipient industrialism had started to loosen the rigid structure of Imperial Russia. Turgenev, in Virgin Soil, was obliged to write a longer novel than his previous works and to depict scenes from a wider range of social settings - the country estate, the dingy urban lodgings, and, most significant, the factory.

In stressing the question of how far the developed

25 Review of Plemyanitsa by Yevgeniya Tur. Pol. sob. soch., VI, 372-373. My translation.

complexity of a given society has a bearing on the form of novels, I am not attempting to establish a universal law, nor am I trying to place Gissing on a par with Turgenev as an artist. Quite obviously, too, one simple reason for the difference in form of their novels is the difference in the fictional conventions which they inherited - in Russia the 'povyest'', or long story, and in England the three volume novel. But the fundamentally similar concern in Gissing and Turgenev with the interpenetration of personal histories and impersonal history and the radically different shape of their novels, do, taken together, point to the way in which more or less complex modes of existence and patterns of causation may be reflected in the form of the fiction which treats them. Gissing, I am sure, admired and envied Turgenev not only for his talent but also for a cultural situation, which enabled him to write novels that are, as Gissing would ideally have wished his own to be, both faithfully representational and ideologically diagnostic without being extensive in form.

I have argued that a similarity of scope and frame of reference, combined with a difference in scale, made Turgenev a particularly piquant example for Gissing at a stage in his career when he was much exercised by questions of fictional form. There is, however, much more to justify Morley Robert's claim that Gissing 'manifested an instinctive affinity for the lucid and
²⁶
 subtle Tourgeniev.' Together with Gissing's enthusiasm

26 Morley Roberts, The Private Life of Henry Maitland (London, 1958), p. 235.

for the single volume novel and the 'dramatic' mode of presentation went a repeatedly expressed aspiration to the artistic ideal of objectivity, of detachment from the world of phenomena observed, and, as a corollary of this aspiration, a disavowal of all given systems of social and philosophical thought. At the point of his greatest absorption in Turgenev, - in the early summer of 1884 - Gissing wrote to his brother: 'Human life has little interest to me on the whole - save as material for artistic presentation. I can get savage over social iniquities, but even then my rage at once takes the direction of planning revenge in artistic work.'²⁷ The idea in Gissing of the artist's detachment from his subject as both an aesthetic principal and a philosophical stance has origins which I shall trace below. We may, however, be sure that, in the middle 1880s, it receives powerful reinforcement from his immersion in the works of a writer whose novels epitomize supremely well the principle of artistic objectivity, in so far as that ideal is humanly attainable.

That Turgenev's work and the ideal of detachment were closely linked in Gissing's mind, we may safely infer from correspondingly closely related references in the most 'Turgenevan' of Gissing's novels of the mid-1880s, Isabel Clarendon. Ada Warren, aspiring writer of stories, seeks advice from the kindly literary hack, Thomas Meres. Meres's first piece of advice to Ada is to "... read this

27 Letters, p. 139. Letter to Algernon, June 12, 1884.

novel of Tourgueneff ... If you don't rejoice in it,
 your taste is not what it ought to be."²⁸ Several
 pages later, after Ada has submitted, and Mr Meres read,
 her attempt at a story, his helpful but direct criticism
 reflects Gissing's own current preoccupations exactly:
 "What I have to say about this little story of yours is
 that it shows very considerable promise, and not a little
 power of expression, but that, for a work of art, it is
 too - you understand the word - too subjective. It
 reads too much like a personal experience, which the writer
 is not far enough away from to describe with regard to
 artistic proportion."²⁹ This need for the novelist to
 free himself from subjectivism is reiterated later in the
 novel when Kingcote, the 'superfluous' hero of the work,
 tells his friend, the successful artist, Gabriel, that
 for fiction, he, Kingcote, is 'vastly too subjective'.³⁰

The prominence of this theme in Isabel Clarendon,
 and the strong commendation of Turgenev alongside it, reflect
 the intense nature of Gissing's preoccupation with artistic
 objectivity in the early and middle 1880s. For although
 Gissing's pessimism was deeply ingrained in his nature

28 George Gissing, Isabel Clarendon (London, 1969), II,
 131.

29 Ibid., p. 141.

30 Ibid., p. 173.

(his Positivist phase appearing in retrospect, a youthful aberration), it is the influence of Schopenhauer that first enables him to articulate that pessimism and Schopenhauer's conception of the artistic process - an important corollary of his beliefs - which informs Gissing's views on artistic objectivity.

Although it reinforces a predisposition to pessimism rather than shapes his view of reality, the influence of Schopenhauer is of importance to Gissing from his first novel, Workers in the Dawn to a novel of the 1890s such as New Grub Street. From that qualified endorsement of Schopenhauer, voiced by Helen Norman in Workers in the Dawn, Gissing passes to a much more whole-hearted acceptance of the pessimistic core of Schopenhauer's thought in The Unclassed (1884), whose hero, Osmond Waymark, 'speaks almost
31
pure Schopenhauer dogma'. At times in The Unclassed, Schopenhauerian views appear in an undigested form, which advertises, rather than integrates them into the fictional
32
fabric .

31 John Halperin, Gissing, a life in books (Oxford, 1982), p. 47.

32 The exchange between Waymark and Maud Enderby in Chapter XXVII of The Unclassed is a case in point: "..." But from the way in which you express yourself, I should have thought you had been studying Schopenhauer. I suppose you know nothing of him?" "Nothing." "Some of the phrases were precisely his. Your doctrine is simply Pessimism, with an element of dogmatic faith added. With Schopenhauer, the will to live is at the root of sin; mortify this, deny the first instincts of your being and you approach righteousness." George Gissing, The Unclassed, edited by Jacob Korg (Brighton 1976), p. 224

Outside the fiction, Gissing's pessimism is expressed in avowedly Schopenhauerian terms in 'The Hope of Pessimism', at once a polemical attack upon Agnostic Optimism and an embracing of the 'convincing metaphysics of death'. Just how closely Gissing follows Schopenhauer's view of the artistic process, as the only means of fruitfully abnegating the Will, is apparent from a brief textual comparison. In 'The Hope of Pessimism', Gissing writes:

There is in truth, only one kind of worldly optimism which justifies itself in the light of reason, and that is the optimism of the artist. The artistic mind, as Schopenhauer demonstrates, is das reine Subject des Erkennens, the subject contemplating the object without disturbing consciousness of self. In the mood of artistic contemplation the will is destroyed, self is eliminated, the world of phenomena resolves itself into pictures of absolute significance, and the heart rejoices itself before images of pure beauty.³³

Gissing's view is closely in line with the notion of the artistic process as a positive displacement of the will, expressed in Parerga and Paralipomena:

If however, the individual will sets its associated power of imagination free for a while, and for once releases it entirely from the service for which it was made and exists, so that it abandons the rending of the will or of the individual person which alone is its natural theme and thus its regular occupation, and yet does not cease to be energetically active or to extend to their fullest extent its powers of perceptivity, then it will forthwith become completely objective, i.e. it will become a faithful mirror of objects, or more precisely the medium of the objectivisation of the will appearing in this or that object ...³⁴

33 'The Hope of Pessimism' in George Gissing, Essays and Fiction, edited by Pierre Coustillas (Baltimore, 1970), p. 95.

34 Arthur Schopenhauer, Essays and Aphorisms, selected and translated by R.J. Hollingdale (London, 1970), p. 156.

Quite evidently, then, Gissing's concern with artistic objectivity in the mid-1880s can be linked to his reading of Schopenhauer, but essentially Schopenhauer's thought is simply a means of systematising³⁵ and articulating a pessimism that is native to Gissing. That this should be so exposes an additional important dimension of Turgenev's appeal for Gissing, for in Turgenev too objectivity, both theoretically affirmed and artistically realised, is causally linked to a pessimism which, like Gissing's, stems from temperament but converges, in particular aspects and at certain times, with the inductive philosophy of Schopenhauer.

I will argue, in the final chapter of this work, that the increasing acceptability of the doctrine of philosophical pessimism in England in the last two decades of the nineteenth century is a major factor in the enhancement of Turgenev's reputation, despite the fact that the more spectacular talents of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky were becoming known at the same time. Gissing's outlook is the example par excellence of that receptivity to pessimism, which characterises this phase of literary history and, likewise, of the favourable disposition towards Turgenev's work which accompanies it. The similar ways in which

35 For a discussion of the influence of Schopenhauer on Gissing, see C.J. Francis, 'Gissing and Schopenhauer' in Collected Articles on George Gissing, edited by Pierre Coustillas (London, 1968), pp. 106-116. Francis argues that to late nineteenth-century realism Schopenhauer came '... not as a revelation of new ideas but as an exponent of ideas already vaguely held; he would have the effect of explaining the realist's mind to itself.' (p. 116).

pessimism shapes character and theme in Turgenev and Gissing will emerge from a comparison of texts. For the moment, my concern is with the general and extensive basis of Gissing's affinity for Turgenev, and it is therefore appropriate simply to adumbrate the broad nature of Turgenev's pessimism and to indicate its particular Schopenhauerian complexion in order to see in what aspects it resembles Gissing's.

Pessimism is so all-pervasive a feature of Turgenev's art that illustrative quotation might be made from his work at practically any stage of its development. Typically, it emerges as a profound sense of the indifference of Nature to Man and of the tragic brevity of life, to which the only dignified response must be a fragile stoicism. This sombre perception is given characteristic expression at the end of On the Eve:

Sometimes a man will wake up with an involuntary shudder and ask himself: 'Can I really be thirty ... or forty ... or fifty years old? How is it possible that death has come so close?' But death is like a fisherman who, having caught a fish in his net, lets it remain in the water for a time; the fish continues to swim about, but all the time the net is round it, and the fisherman will snatch it out in his own good time.³⁶

Turgenev's pessimism is, as I have argued in relating his work to that of James, the ultimate and only sanction against historical necessity, because in death it perceives an over-arching negative Absolute which renders the 'absolute'

36 Nakanunye in Pol. sob. soch., VIII, 166. My translation.

of historical necessity relative, thereby contesting the right of any given ideology or metaphysics to explain reality. This existential world-view is essentially that of the Shakespeare Turgenev so fervently admired, and whom he urged upon a sceptical Tolstoy. Both points emerge in a letter written to Tolstoy several years before the rift in their relationship.

You are calming down and things are becoming clearer to you. Most of all you are freeing yourself of all your former opinions and prejudices. Looking to the left is just as pleasant as looking to the right - the world is large enough for both. There are 'perspectives' everywhere ... You just have to open your eyes. God grant that your vision continues to expand! Systems are only valued by those who do not possess the whole truth and want to grab it by the tail. A system is like truth's tail and truth is like a lizard - it will leave its tail in your hand, knowing very well that another will grow in its place ... I'm delighted that you've made the acquaintance of Shakespeare, or rather that you have gone back to him. He is like Nature. She sometimes wears a repulsive face ... but even when she does there is certainty and truth and (be prepared: your hair will stand on end) expediency.³⁷

Turgenev's rejection of 'systems' reminds us immediately of Gissing's renunciation of philosophy and activism in favour of a Schopenhauerian artistic objectivity³⁸. The rejection of philosophical rationalisations and an aspiration to artistic detachment are manifestly linked to pessimism

37 Pis'ma, III, 75-76.

38 'Philosophy has done all it can for me, and now scarcely interests me any more. My attitude henceforth is that of the artist pure and simple. The world is for me a collection of phenomena, which are to be studied and reproduced artistically.' Letter from Gissing to Algernon of July 18, 1883. Letters, p. 128.

in both writers, and the link makes plain the importance of a pessimistic world-view as an aspect of Turgenev's fiction to which Gissing would undoubtedly have been drawn. Equally, it should be noted that Turgenev's pessimism, like Gissing's, seems to have been reinforced by Schopenhauer's thought at a particular critical stage of his career. In the mood of intense depression which followed the controversial reception of Fathers and Sons, Turgenev published the short fantasy Phantoms and Enough, a short sequence of autobiographical meditations, under the thin fictional guise of extracts from a writer's diary.

The first of these short works - Phantoms - was consciously inspired by Schopenhauer³⁹, and is deeply imbued with his sense of the 'vanity of existence'. The narrator is visited by a spectral ~~female~~ figure who conducts him through time and space to take aerial survey of history and the world. Having surveyed the 'vulgar exhibition'⁴⁰, the narrator is left with a disgusted sense of the futility and pettiness of all striving which calls to mind Gissing's Schopenhauerian essay ('We lay our selfish plans as though for an eternity of life, and fate mocks the bitterness of our disappointment'⁴¹). The same despairing sense of pointlessness pervades Enough, in which the artist-narrator stands at that point of pessimism where only conscious renunciation of

39 Pol. sob. soch., XI, 379.

40 Pol sob. soch., XI, 106.

41 'The Hope of Pessimism', p. 92.

life can redeem human dignity and where even the Schopenhauerian notion of artistic activity as a kind of partial compensation is undermined by an awareness of the perishable nature ('bryennost') of art itself. The gap in time and the differences in cultural context which separate these two deeply Schopenhauerian stories from the point of Gissing's greatest susceptibility to Schopenhauer is less important than his being an influence, albeit confirmatory rather than formative, on both writers. For, in an important sense, the Schopenhauerian pessimism of Turgenev and Gissing, both in its existential despair and its concern with the function and value of art, represents, pace Zola, the reflex of European literature in general to the challenge of scientific agnosticism and historical determinism, which the later nineteenth century poses in an unprecedentedly acute form. Late nineteenth-century pessimism reflects the crisis of a culture, which, by its very activity and forms posits perennial and transcendent value, but finds such value removed by science and history.

It is to this sense of the embattled condition of culture that we may trace another significant common feature of the work of Turgenev and Gissing - the dramatisation in their fiction of the conflict between cultural values and the historical and social reality which challenges culture's claims to autonomy. In Turgenev this conflict is sharply focussed, in a manner that reflects the urgent and threatening nature of Russia's historical crisis. Bazarov's rejection of art in Fathers

and Sons is, in a sense, the ultimate ideological challenge to the brothers Kirsanov and their class because it undermines the only function of their privilege, which might be claimed to be disinterested - their stewardship of culture. Reflecting upon the force of Bazarov's arguments, Nikolay Kirsanov is prepared to concede something of their socio-political cogency but cannot come to terms with the materialist dismissal of art: "Perhaps their advantage lies in their having fewer traces of the serf-owning mentality than us?" Nikolai Petrovich's head sank despondently and he passed his hand across his face. "But to reject poetry, to have⁴² no feeling for art and for nature? ... "

With a different emphasis, this same question of the conflict between culture and the momentum and direction of an indifferent history is dramatised in Virgin Soil, whose central character, Nezhdanov, is torn between poetry and revolution. Nezhdanov's fate, as I have argued in the previous chapter, represents the victory of ideology over culture and over the values of humanistic individualism, traditionally associated with it. That Russian literature is peculiarly well adapted to the handling of this theme is a point that need hardly be laboured; Nezhdanov's failure to 'simplify' his introspective poetic self, anticipates, for example, the treatment of the conflict between the principles of individualism and culture and historical 'necessity' in a work of the Soviet period such as Doctor Zhivago.

42 Otsy i dyeti in Pol. sob. soch., VIII, 249. My translation.

Though treated with less dramatic urgency than in Turgenev, this conflict is a fundamental theme of Gissing's fiction, as well as of other late nineteenth-century works such as Hardy's Jude the Obscure. In Gissing, culture, both as the ideal of disinterested literary endeavour in the present and as the classical legacy of the past, exists in disassociation from the social structure, as an enclave of the imagination, inhabited by those who are themselves socially and intellectually alienated. Osmond Waymark, central character of Gissing's The Unclassed, experiences a conflict between art and the imperative demands of social function, which, though more mundane in form, is essentially the same as Nezhdanov's dilemma. Waymark believes that he can adapt his life to the mutual exclusivity of cultural values and social reality by mirroring that dichotomy in his own practical arrangements, by a strict compartmentalising of his life into time spent earning his living and time spent in literary endeavour. He is warned by Abraham Woodstock, the property owner who employs him to collect rents in the East End, that such a separation will not work: "And you think you can be a man of business and a poet at the same time? No go, my boy. If you take up business, you drop poetising. Those two horses never yet pulled at the same shaft, and never will."⁴³ Waymark refuses to abandon his literary aspirations and, in a spirit of Schopenhauerian artistic detachment, attempts a novel along naturalist lines, drawing on his experience of the slums. Claiming in

43 George Gissing, The Unclassed (Brighton, 1976), p. 97.

conversation with his friend, Julian Casti that the novel is a purely dispassionate exercise, he is reminded by Casti that the theme of social misery has, nevertheless, imposed itself upon him and that '"granting that this is pure art, it is a kind of art only possible to an age in which the social question is predominant."⁴⁴ The implication here, that Waymark is more governed and constrained by the nature of social reality than he cares to admit, is borne out by the way in which subsequent events impinge upon his life and make his own distinction between 'the man who suffers and the mind which creates' an untenable one⁴⁵.

By a later stage in Gissing's writing, this theoretical contradistinction between artistic creation and individual suffering between 'Art' and the 'misery' from which it is both created and separated, has undergone ironic reversal, so that in New Grub Street the activity of writing novels has itself become the very source of misery to a characteristically autobiographical Gissing hero like the novelist Reardon. Just as Nezhdanov in Virgin Soil is both oppressed and driven by political necessity, would really rather be writing subjective poetry than 'going to the people' and acts against the grain of his nature, so Edwin Reardon is oppressed by the commercial necessity which dictates the nature of literary production, would

44 Ibid., p. 212.

45 'His enthusiasm for art was falling away; as a faith it had failed him in his hour of need.' Ibid., p. 270.

really rather be indulging his taste for the classics but feels compelled to bend and 'simplify' himself in order to write three-volume novels. Nezhdanov's aestheticism and Reardon's classicism are internalised and subjectivised travesties of a culture, whose objective existence and autonomous value are called in question by different forms of materialist, historical necessity. Several of Gissing's novels, Hardy's Jude, James's The Princess Cassamassima dramatise this apparent antinomy, exploring the question of whether culture is ontologically independent of, and potentially countervailing to the dynamics of history, or whether it is a chimerical concept, whose claims are belied by everything from Reardon's manifestly 'determined' works of literary production to the vulgarity of popular taste.

The question of whether culture exists merely as an unrealisable ideal in the minds of those who find society alienating, or whether it is a force capable of being invoked to relieve or resolve socio-political contradictions is the essential theme of Gissing's novel Thyrza. The intention of Egremont, the central figure of the work, is to introduce culture to the artisan class with a view to finding Fabian solutions to social problems: "It seems to me that if I can get them to understand what is meant by love of literature, pure and simple, without a thought of political or social purpose ... I shall be on my way to founding my club of social reformers."⁴⁶

46 George Gissing, Thyrza, edited by Jacob Korg (Brighton, 1974), p. 16.

Egremont's idealistic project fails, leaving him disillusioned by 'the contemptibleness of average humanity'⁴⁷ and convinced that the self-interested capitalist does more to further the progress of humanity than the disinterested advocate of a disinterested culture.

The issue is, of course, the province of Arnold's Culture and Anarchy, which attempts to translate the disengagement of culture into a specific function of disinterestedness in a conflict-ridden social reality. Arnold's work provides us with a useful bridge between the theme of culture and its function in Gissing, and Turgenev's perspective on the relation of art to ideology; for it is surely significant that Culture and Anarchy not only serves as a frame of reference in which to view the fictional treatment of the theme of culture and society in late nineteenth-century fiction, but also calls immediately to mind, by its terms and assumptions, Turgenev's insistence on disinterestedness and his perception of the challenge to culture of doctrinaire materialist ideologies. Once we see Turgenev as a 'Hellenist', troubled by a sense of historical and scientific imperatives, we immediately grasp his importance for late nineteenth-century English literature, and, in particular, for that other troubled 'Hellenist', Gissing.

In attempting to elucidate the basis of Gissing's affinity for Turgenev, I have abstracted inter-related aspects of their fiction and outlook - the aspiration

47 Ibid., p. 422.

to artistic detachment, pessimism, a sense of culture's problematical relationship with ideology and history. But it is in the incorporation of these attitudes in character types and in the pattern of relationships within the fiction that we see most clearly the explanation for Gissing's identification with Turgenev. For Gissing's analysis of the social, cultural and ideological complexities of late Victorian England is registered on a sensitive instrument - a recurrent character type who by his hypersensitivity, his intellect, his egoism is ill adapted to the procrustean demands of social reality and whose life, by that token, embodies a critique of the structure and processes of society. This same type, put to the same fictional purpose, is characteristic of Turgenev's work; his imaginative perspective is, like Gissing's, one in which the individual predicament has a manifest social and historical significance and, as with Gissing, the individual predicament that is socially most revealing is that of the unaccommodated intellect. No English predecessor or contemporary of Gissing's offered him the encouragement of a formula so like his own.

Adrian Poole, in his study of Gissing, has spoken of the latter's work as exemplifying an unprecedented crisis of consciousness that late nineteenth-century English fiction registers as a conflict between Self and Other, between the complexities of individual awareness and the Draconian laws of an impersonal world-order:

For writers of Gissing's generation ... the relationship between form and feeling has

reached a stage of acute crisis. The imbalance was indeed becoming almost intolerable between an expanding interior world of consciousness, of complex, delicate sensitivities and velleities, and an apparently narrowing and rigidifying external world of peremptory self-assertion. It is no wonder that these years produce so many version of a sharp polarisation between will, success, vulgarity and pragmatism on the one hand, and will-lessness, failure, imagination and self-consciousness on the other. The keen dichotomies bear witness to an unprecedented anxiety about the relationship between Self and Other.⁴⁸

This incongruity between 'Self' and 'Other', which Poole speaks of as becoming critical in English fiction at the end of the nineteenth century, had been the key-note of Russian literature for virtually the whole of that century. In England it took several decades for theories of scientific, economic and historical determinism to crystallise into the images of frustration, futility and uncertainty that typify late Victorian fiction. In Russia the repressive ideology of Czarism had long formed 'a rigidifying world of peremptory self-assertion', which in its turn conditioned the characteristic type of the country's literature - the 'superfluous' man.

Russian literature takes the Western European cult of Romantic Individualism and gives it a complexion of its own. During the severely reactionary Nicolayevan period, the superfluous man is typically one who, through boredom and intellectual aimlessness, cynically exploits the emotions and social expectations of others. But precisely because of its confinement to mischief-making in a personal and social sphere, the behaviour of characters

48 Adrian Poole, Gissing in Context (London, 1975), p. 21.

such as Pushkin's Evgeniy Onegin or Lermontov's Pechorin carries the coded political implication that their egoism and cynicism merely reflect the moral bankruptcy of the social order. By the stage of Turgenev's social novels, most of them written in the more liberal climate of the first years of Alexander II's reign, the causal link between the private conduct of the superfluous man and the social order that contains him can be suggested more openly. In the archetypal case of Rudin, a discrepancy between conduct and rhetoric in love is explicitly matched by a similar gap between rhetoric and action in the public sphere. This kind of connection, between either a failure or a destructive application of the will in the private sphere and the misalignment of a central character in social and class terms, is precisely Gissing's perspective. That he should have grasped the significance of Turgenev's 'superfluous' men - whether negatively superfluous like Rudin and Nezhdarov, or positively so, like Bazarov - should not surprise us when we see how close to Turgenev's is Gissing's sense of the dialectical relationship of character and social ideology.

Gilbert Phelps has noted the resemblance of Gissing's highly-strung, unclassed characters to the superfluous men of Turgenev's novels⁴⁹, and I will want to elaborate upon Phelps's comparison by drawing my own parallels between specific novels. But, as a preliminary to such scrutiny, general discussion of correspondences between

49 The Russian Novel in English Fiction, pp. 90-91.

the themes of egoism and altruism, introspection and action, success and failure in the novels of Gissing and Turgenev can be usefully extended by invoking the terms of Turgenev's lecture on Hamlet and Don Quixote in order to show how both Gissing and Turgenev play upon the contrast between selfless idealism and ineffectual egotism as a way of illuminating their different social and historical contexts.

Turgenev's lecture, given in 1860, adumbrates the polar opposites of human nature, to one of which most human beings approximate. Taking as his starting point the fact that Don Quixote and Hamlet appeared in the same year, Turgenev posits the former as the archetypal idealist and man of action, wedded to a purpose outside himself, while the latter is the prime example in literature of the egocentric, vacillating human type, self-absorbed and incapable of commitment to a cause. They are the embodiment of opposing principles that constitute 'a fundamental law' of all human life, which may be understood as a dynamic process of conflict and reconciliation between self and not-self:

... the Hamlets of this world are an expression of the basic centripetal force of nature, by virtue of which every living thing regards itself as the centre of creation and views everything else as existing only for its sake ... Without this centripetal force (the force of egoism) nature could not exist, just as it could not exist without the other, centrifugal force, by whose law everything exists only for another (this force, this principle of dedication and sacrifice ... is the principle represented by the Don Quixotes). These two forces of stagnation and movement of conservation and progress are the basic forces of everything

The interesting thing about this formal and theoretical distinction is that when we look at Turgenev's fiction, it is a distinction that is seen to dissolve into ambiguities under the pressures of an apparently all-powerful materialist reality. What Turgenev formulates in his lecture is a human dialectic that is heroic and theoretical, a neat dualism of mutually adjusting contraries. What Turgenev's fiction portrays is the disruption of the categories which his lecture formulates, so that under the force of an impersonal, threatening and determining reality, a Hamletic stance (the introspective poeticising of Nezhdanov, the rhetorical gestures of Rudin) becomes ambivalent (both positive and negative) and so too do the various Quixotic historical causes such as Nihilism and Populism. In Turgenev's fiction history superimposes its own contradictions upon the neatly balanced contraries of his literary/psychological theory; a Hamletic withdrawal, while indicating egocentricity and a personal failure of will, can look like a gesture of individual integrity when the 'Quixotic' causes have become those of a Draconian historical necessity.

In fact Turgenev's fiction offers us, in the figure of Bazarov, a vivid image of the collapse of his own distinction between Hamletic and Quixotic principles under the pressure of history and science. Bazarov's scientific and historical materialism has enabled him to conflate

50 'Gamlet i Don-Kihot' in Pol. sob. soch., VIII, 184.
My translation

ego and ideal, self and not-self. While Turgenev's essay postulates a duality between self and other which is ultimately organic and harmonious (it 'explains to us the growth of a flower'⁵¹), Bazarov's Nihilism represents the mechanical alignment of self with other, a resolution of the discrepancy between the World as Will and as Idea by a denial of the distinction. What Bazarov's evolutionary materialism clearly denies is that history is informed and shaped by human ideals; what it affirms is that history is an impersonal force to whose material laws man must become impersonally aligned. Just as Bazarov's nihilistic rationalism explodes Nikolay Kirsanov's convictions about art and nature, so it explodes the neatly balanced antitheses of Turgenev's imaginative/heroic formulation of Hamletic and Quixotic types; a prototypical Man-God, the familiar type of modern literature, is called into being to deny the cultural humanism of his creator.

I have invoked the Hamletic/Quixotic dichotomy in Turgenev because it is a distinction that very clearly operates throughout Gissing's work with the same kind of ironies and ambiguities that I have drawn attention to in Turgenev. Turgenev's theoretical distinction assumes, as I have indicated, a world fit for (Quixotic) heroes, but in his novels, history, from an idealistic point of view, is a questionable, if not actually lost cause. In Gissing an even stronger sense of the unheroic

51 Ibid., p. 184.

present produces ironic variations upon the Hamletic/Quixotic theme.

Walter Egremont, in Gissing's Thyrza, believes that he has found an ideal proper to the historical moment - the disinterested enlightenment of the working-class - but his ideal founders upon social and economic realities, to which the hard-headed and self-centred politician James Dalmaine is closer. Dalmaine's words - 'it's an axiom in all dealing with the working class that they will never value anything they don't pay for' - mock Egremont's idealism, affirming a social order of unregenerate materialism. As John Halperin puts it in his study of Gissing, Thyrza confirms that 'reform ... can never come out of the quixoticism of meddling idealists.'⁵² Egremont's efforts at enlightenment are, as I have noted above, an attempt to make culture operative, practical and conciliatory in a world dominated by the material interests of competing social classes. But, as in Fathers and Sons, culture exists in unalterable dissassociation from economic and political realities, which, far from being amenable to its conciliatory powers, appear to challenge the very grounds on which it is premised. The Quixotic ideal of solving political problems through culture cannot succeed because the values of culture will not translate into ideological terms.

In fact, what we notice about Gissing's novels generally is the frequency with which the Hamletic/Quixotic

52 Thyrza, p. 131.

53 John Halperin, Gissing, a life in books (Oxford, 1982), p. 90.

present produces ironic variations upon the Hamletic/Quixotic theme.

Walter Egremont, in Gissing's Thyrza, believes that he has found an ideal proper to the historical moment - the disinterested enlightenment of the working-class - but his ideal founders upon social and economic realities, to which the hard-headed and self-centred politician James Dalmaine is closer. Dalmaine's words - 'it's an axiom in all dealing with the working class that they will never value anything they don't pay for'⁵² - mock Egremont's idealism, affirming a social order of unregenerate materialism. As John Halperin puts it in his study of Gissing, Thyrza confirms that 'reform ... can never come out of the quixoticism of meddling idealists.'⁵³ Egremont's efforts at enlightenment are, as I have noted above, an attempt to make culture operative, practical and conciliatory in a world dominated by the material interests of competing social classes. But, as in Fathers and Sons, culture exists in unalterable dissassociation from economic and political realities, which, far from being amenable to its conciliatory powers, appear to challenge the very grounds on which it is premised. The Quixotic ideal of solving political problems through culture cannot succeed because the values of culture will not translate into ideological terms.

In fact, what we notice about Gissing's novels generally is the frequency with which the Hamletic/Quixotic

52 Thyrza, p. 131.

53 John Halperin, Gissing, a life in books (Oxford, 1982), p. 90.

distinction is centred upon the question of culture and its fate under an ascendant materialism. In Thyrza, culture appears to offer a way for a Hamletic type to attain a Quixotic ideal, but Egremont's idealism is, as he is told⁵⁴ by Mrs Ormonde 'often noble, but never heroic'.⁵⁵ Essentially Hamletic, he has too much that is feminine in his character and lacks the 'real energy' to turn his cultural idealism into a socially effective programme, just as culture itself cannot be effectively translated into the 'real energy' of a socially dynamic force.

However, if culture as a force for social enlightenment fails as a Quixotic cause, culture viewed under another aspect - as the activity of art, practised in proud independence of the prevailing materialism - can, in Gissing's eyes, be truly heroic. One of the sharpest Hamletic/Quixotic contrasts in Gissing's work is that between the introspective Kingcote and his friend, Gabriel. Gilbert Phelps has drawn parallels between the figure of Kingcote and Bazarov, choosing to regard Kingcote as a kind of nihilist manqué⁵⁶. In fact the Hamletic Kingcote bears more resemblance to Rudin. Like Rudin's, Kingcote's fate is simultaneously and inseparably his own fault and that of the society in which he exists. The world, he declares, 'has no place for a man who is possessed of

54 Thyrza, p. 342.

55 Ibid.

56 Phelps, pp. 92-93.

general intelligence and a fair amount of reading.'

Like Rudin he is at the mercy of his moods ('my moods
are tyrannous'⁵⁷), and, most strikingly, his failure stems from that deficiency of force and manliness (he lacks 'the primal energy of human life') which Lezhnev discerns in Rudin (Ch. XII).

Specifically, though, the Hamletic Kingcote's failure is defined in terms of his inability to be an artist, a role for which his gifts of intelligence and sensitivity might seem to fit him, and in this he is contrasted to the Quixotic Gabriel. Kingcote's is an 'essentially feminine nature' while in Gabriel 'masculine energy'⁵⁸ found its climax.' That climax issues in an uncompromisingly realist art which defiantly refuses to bend to the patronage of materialist philistinism: Of Gabriel Gissing writes:

He was capable of stopping a girl who sold matches in the street and paying her to let him sketch her face, if it struck his peculiar fancy; but he would not paint the simpering daughter of a retired draper who sought him out ... He held that as long as he could keep himself from starvation, the ideal exactions of art must be supreme with him. He followed no recognised school, and his early pictures found neither purchaser nor place of exhibition more dignified than a dealer's window. He was a realist and could not expect his style to be popular.⁵⁹

In Isabel Clarendon Turgenev's Hamletic/Quixotic dichotomy translates into terms which appear to make the activity and integrity of art itself the only truly heroic cause in a society where even gracious living is

57 Isabel Clarendon, I, 128.

58 Ibid., II, 168.

59 Ibid., II, 169.

an illusion that conceals mere philistinism; in such terms Kingcote's Hamletic failure is a failure to remain aloof and unseduced by the soothing but illusory blandishments of a cultivation that is not 'culture'. Gabriel, the 'realist', who remains untainted by contact with money and social prestige, is also Gabriel the Quixotic idealist, dedicated to the only honourable pursuit discernible in a falsely ordered world.

This principle of the realist as idealist is carried forward to new levels of irony in New Grub Street, but the irony registers as a defeat, as a reversal of the heroic values attaching to the Hamletic/Quixotic distinction of Turgenev's lecture. Reardon and Biffen, the novelists,⁶⁰ are both 'by temper ... rabid idealists', but neither of them is able to translate their cultural ideals, in Reardon's case a scholarly classicism and in Biffen's an uncompromising artistic realism, into a workable practise in a reality whose norms are vulgarity, philistinism and profitability. Biffen, uncompromisingly realist in his art is uncompromisingly idealistic in his refusal to bow to the dictates of commercialism: 'He had not thought of whether such toil would be recompensed in coin of the realm; nay, it was his conviction that, if with difficulty published, it could scarcely bring him money. The work must be significant,⁶¹ that was all he cared for.' At the same time he knows

60 George Gissing, New Grub Street, edited by Bernard Bergonzi (London, 1978), p. 174.

61 Ibid., p. 463.

that the world is not ordered for idealism and that his stubborn integrity is practically foolish. To Reardon he says, 'we have both of us too little practicality. The art of living is the art of compromise. We have no right to foster sensibilities, and conduct ourselves as if the world allowed of ideal relations ...'⁶²

Biffen's words are the recognition of an unheroic world which forces Quixotes to become ineffectually Hamletic. Gissing makes the point explicitly:

... try to imagine a personality wholly unfitted for the rough and tumble of the world's labour-market. From the familiar point of view these men were worthless; view them in possible relation to a humane order of society, and they are admirable citizens. Nothing is easier than to condemn a type of character, which is unequal to the coarse demands of life as it suits the average man. These two were richly endowed with the kindly and the imaginative virtues; if fate threw them amid incongruous circumstances, is their endowment of less value?⁶³

Only by dying do Biffen and Reardon 'become practical', leaving the world to the only kind of 'realists' it rewards - self-promoting opportunists like Jasper Milvain. For the Quixotic causes die with the Hamletic idealists in a society which is 'blind and brutal as fate.'⁶⁴ Even the activity of art, the Quixotic cause to which characters like Biffen and Gabriel are prepared to sacrifice their material lives, is ultimately overwhelmed by an irresistible

62 Ibid., pp. 476-477.

63 Ibid., p. 462.

64 Ibid., p. 230.

commercial materialism, what Gissing's New Grub Street dramatises is art celebrating the last rites of its own integrity and the triumph of a social order which denies the possibility of realisable ideals.

I have applied Turgenev's Hamletic/Quixotic distinction to Gissing's work in order to illustrate how alike the fundamental perspectives of their fiction are. Basic to both is what Adrian Poole has called the 'relationship between form and feeling' in an age overshadowed by the impersonal forces of science and history. The theoretical 'heroic' conception of the Hamletic and Quixotic impulses in human nature acts as a useful bench-mark in both Turgenev and Gissing; for against it may be measured the effects of an unheroic, intractably material reality upon the flow of feeling in individual lives. In Turgenev these effects register in the fate of his 'superfluous' men, with an ambivalence that stems from his own habitual scepticism and from the uncertainties of Russia's political destiny. Thus, the contradistinctions between egoism and altruism, success and failure, action and inaction become qualified, if not inverted, in Lezhnev's rhetorical question about the ineffectual Rudin in Chapter XII of Turgenev's novel: 'He will not achieve anything himself precisely because he has no blood, no manliness; but who has the right to say that he will not contribute, indeed has not already contributed something? That his words have sown the seeds of good in young hearts, to whom nature has not denied, as it has to him, the strength to act,

the ability to implement their ideas.'⁶⁵ In Turgenev, despite the destructive Nihilism of his own creation, Bazarov, the possibility that idealism can impregnate the future, even if it cannot actualise itself in the present, never quite dies.

In Gissing, the discrepancy between form and feeling is perceived more often with bitter irony than with ambivalence. The equivalent passage in Gissing to Lezhnev's summing up of Rudin would be the author's evaluation of Reardon and Biffen in New Grub Street (Ch. XXXI) which I have quoted above. The idealism of Reardon and Biffen can have no bearing on the future, because to Gissing an unregenerate materialism pervasively determines the world-order, whereas in the Russia of Turgenev's novels the identifiable, institutional forms of repression and stagnation appear, in theory at least, to argue idealism as an antidote. Turgenev hovers in uncertainty ('the politics of hesitation' in Irving Howe's phrase) over the question of whether or not history's sole determinants are materialistic. Gissing's novels, despite his own instincts, appear to leave little room for doubt, with the result that his fiction tends ultimately towards an ironic inversion of the Hamletic/Quixotic principles rather than towards Turgenev's ambivalent variations.

Whether or not Gissing ever read Turgenev's 'Gamlet

65 Rudin in Pol. sob. soch., VI, 348. My translation.

i Don-Kihot' is uncertain , and I am not, in any case, proposing that the applicability of Turgenev's views on egoism and altruism to Gissing's work suggests that the pattern of Gissing's novels derives from Turgenev. What I am claiming is that the basic imaginative dynamic of Gissing's fiction coincides closely with Turgenev's, and that that closeness originates in a crisis of consciousness that is common to European culture generally in the second half of the nineteenth century. Stated in its essentials, the theme that links Gissing to Turgenev, and which accounts for Gissing's identification with his work, is that of the unaccommodated intellectual, contending with a world of rigid social and economic forms. It is the essential common theme that I want briefly to illustrate by reference to specific novels in a final section of this chapter.

(iii)

Critical attention to the parallels between Gissing's novels and those of Turgenev has tended to concentrate on two of Gissing's works in particular - Isabel Clarendon and Born in Exile. The concurrence of Gissing's reading of Turgenev and his writing of Isabel Clarendon does indeed lend weight to the theory that this may be the one case of thematic borrowing, if not of aesthetic imitation. Its

66 The British Museum and the London Library, both of which Gissing used, began to acquire works of Turgenev in German and French from as early as the 1860s. 'Hamlet and Don Quixote' is listed as an undated but early acquisition in both a French version and an English translation by T.W. Rolleston in the London Library's catalogue. See Catalogue of the London Library, compiled by C.T. Hagberg Wright and C.J. Purnell, II (London, 1914), 1140.

essential theme - the infatuation of a displaced and neurotic intellectual with a gracious lady and with the milieu she epitomizes - has, as Jacob Korg has noted⁶⁷, elements of a number of Turgenev's novels and stories in it. Korg's linking of the novel with the mood, setting and characters of Rudin and A Nest of the Gentry seem to me more plausible than the connections made by Phelps and Poole⁶⁸ with Fathers and Sons.

However, as I have suggested above, the real significance of Isabel Clarendon in relation to Turgenev lies less in the resemblance of its superstructure to a Turgenev novel than in its incorporation of a more fundamental question central to both novelists - the existential crisis of the rootless intellect in a rigidly materialist phase of history. Taking this question as a critical perspective, I propose not to dwell on the similarities already noted between Isabel Clarendon and Turgenev's novels, but rather to concentrate on parallels that have been less fully explored - between New Grub Street and Virgin Soil and Born in Exile and Fathers and Sons.

I have already noted the basic resemblance between the predicament of Reardon in New Grub Street and Nezhdanov in Virgin Soil. It is not fanciful to link these two novels, despite their apparent differences in theme, for they both dramatise the struggle of impractical intellectuals to meet

67 Jacob Korg, George Gissing (London, 1965), pp. 78-79.

68 Gissing in Context, p. 163.

the demands of a social dynamic - in Reardon's case, the forces of the market, and in Nezhdanov's the stirrings of revolution. Both Nezhdanov and Reardon epitomize a characteristic modern paradox - that of a consciousness growing in complexity, but nullified by its own sense of history's crude determinants. As John Goode has noted⁶⁹ in his study of Gissing, Reardon accepts the principles of Social Darwinism, according to which he is unfitted to survive. ('A man has no business to fail; least of all can he expect others to look back upon him or pity him if he sink under the stress of conflict. Those behind will⁷⁰ trample over his body; they can't help it.') Nezhdanov is also put to a kind of social Darwinian test - under the aspect of Russia's historical crisis - and, like Reardon, he fails it because he cannot 'simplify himself'.

In both novels the 'superfluous' victims of an evolutionary history are contrasted to the men with whom the future lies. In Reardon's case, the contrast is with Milvain, a figure neither good nor bad, but simply realistic in his opportunism, while Nezhdanov is contrasted with Solomin, the calm, practical factory manager, a 'Lenin type' in embryo as Irving Howe terms him⁷¹. To complete the social Darwinian pattern, each novel has a sexual dimension, in which the 'endangered species' of intellectuals lose their women to those fittest to survive; Amy Reardon transfers her affections to Milvain and Mariana ultimately

69 John Goode, George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction (London, 1978), p. 117.

70 New Grub Street, p. 290.

71 Politics and the Novel, p. 136.

hers to Solomin. In both Virgin Soil and New Grub Street a sense of theremorseless movement of social forces is strengthened by the way in which the displaced intellectuals, Reardon and Nezhdanov, accept that they have failed reality, not reality them. Reardon's words - 'A man has no business to fail' - are matched by Nezhdanov's sense of himself, and not the times, being of joint: 'I was born out of joint ... I tried to right myself, but only succeeded in putting myself still further out of joint.'⁷² What these two novels dramatise, in the terms of their different social and historical contexts, is that characteristic condition of modern literature, the divided consciousness, the sensitive mind torn between desire and necessity. In this respect both works lead us directly to that clash between an organic sense of the ideal, epitomised by the impulse toward unity and coherence of art itself, and an equally keen sense of history's disruptive Draconian laws, the tension that is the generative force of Turgenev's fiction as it is of Gissing's. In Richard Freeborn's words, Nezhdanov's tragedy 'is not so much representative of a generation as of that conflict between artistic form and political purpose which was at the root of Turgenev's art. In the last resort Nezhdanov's divided character seems to reflect the division within Turgenev himself ...'⁷³ With equal force it could be said of Reardon that he too reflects the deep divisions within his own creator.

72 Nov' in Pol. sob. soch., XII, 282. My translation.

73 Freeborn, p. 171.

For the disaffiliated intellectual, the only alternative to yielding to division, is to exert the ego in an effort to align oneself with an indifferent 'World as Will'. Turgenev and Gissing each offer us one striking example of characters, who, unlike the 'superfluous' Reardon and Nezhdanov, have, as well as intellect, will enough to mount a dynamic challenge to social structures that is also a challenge to an indifferent cosmos - an assault upon the social order that mimics the universe's own laws of disturbance by being a disturbance itself.

Critics of Gissing's work have noted the resemblance between Bazarov in Fathers and Sons and Godwin Peak in Born in Exile, agreeing upon broad common factors but differing as to the significance of the similarities. Jacob Korg is challenged in his assessment of the real theme of Born in Exile by Adrian Poole. Korg strongly suggests the 'attack of science on metaphysical tradition' as the essential concern of the novel and therefore feels justified in making a close link between Peak, Bazarov, Raskolnikov and other spiritually rebellious figures in late nineteenth-century literature⁷⁴. Poole, in his study of Gissing, contests this degree of generalisation, pointing to differences in the nature of the two characters, corresponding to differences in ideological meaning between Gissing's novel and those European works to which Korg links it:

One can hardly argue with Korg's generalisation about the links between Russian nihilism, French

74 Korg, pp. 172-174.

Positivism, and English agnosticism: that in the broadest terms, they are all manifestations of a general spiritual crisis. Nevertheless, if Born in Exile succeeds in contributing to an understanding of this general crisis, it is by virtue of its dramatising the very specific currents and idioms of desire and need, that precede their articulation in the ideological dimension.⁷⁵

The affinities between Peak and Bazarov are, I think, stronger than Poole allows, and they can be approached through the phrase which Gissing so enthusiastically used a propos of Bazarov - 'the purely negative mind, common enough now-a-days in men of thought.' Godwin Peak and Bazarov are both strong-willed egoists who are also scientific rationalists; within their natures rational negation and irrational self-assertion work in dialectical relationship, the negative mind driving the positive will. The way in which both novels explore the implications of this dialectical connection between blood and brain in moral, spiritual and, pace Poole, ideological terms seems to me suggestively similar.

That it is a dialectical tension is made explicit in both novels. Bazarov gives forceful utterance to his own awareness of the contradiction between Being and Consciousness in his conversation with Arkady in Chapter XXI of Fathers and Sons:

This little spot which I occupy, is so tiny in comparison with the rest of space of which I have no part and which has no part of me; and this portion of time, which is my life, is so insignificant compared to the eternity in which I have no existence ... And yet in this

75 Poole, p. 175.

atom, in this mathematical point, the blood circulates, the brain works, and craves for something... What a hideous business! What nonsense!⁷⁶

The immediate sequel to this mood of contemplation is a burst of demonic energy in Bazarov; he first taunts Arkady in argument and ends by menacing him physically in a display of diabolical self-assertion.

The dialectic of blood and brain works in Godwin Peak too, though Gissing shows us the operation the other way round. In Born in Exile, Peak undertakes two geological excursions and on each of them experiences a suspension of the driving ego, following upon a concentrated exertion or movement of the will. In the first of these two episodes, near the start of the novel Peak prepares to pit himself against society, by mustering all his pride and intellect, convincing himself that he is extraordinary and experiencing 'a rush of confident blood, pulsing through all the mechanism of his being'. Moments later, as he continues his walk home to Twybridge, he indulges his passion for geology by examining rocks.

Then a strange fit of brooding came over him. Escaping from the influences of personality, his imagination wrought back through eras of geologic time, held him in a vision of the infinitely remote, shrivelled into insignificance all but the one fact of inconceivable duration. Often as he had lost himself in such reveries, never yet had he passed so wholly under the dominion of that awe which attends a sudden triumph of the pure intellect. When at length he rose, it was with wide, blank eyes and limbs partly numbed. These needed half-an-hour's

76 Otsy i dyeti in Pol. sob. soch., VIII, 323. My translation.

walking before he could recover his mood of practical self-search.⁷⁷

Years later his desires and ambitions thwarted,
Peak experiences once again this sublimation of self:

Sitting down before some interesting strata,
I lost myself in something like Nirvana, grew
so subject to the idea of vastness in geological
time that all human desires and purposes shrivelled
to ridiculous unimportance. Awakening for a
minute I tried to realise the passion which not
long ago rent and racked me, but I was flatly
incapable of understanding it. Will this
philosophic state endure? Perhaps I have used up
all my emotional energy? I hardly know whether
to hope or fear it.⁷⁸

Juxtaposing such passages as these from Fathers and Sons and Born in Exile throws into relief the essential common ground on which they stand, supporting Korg's suggestion of a close affinity between them by illustrating that characteristic modern paradox that they both embody. The 'purely negative mind' at once liberates and enslaves the purely assertive will - liberates because it frees from all ethical, cultural and religious restraints and enslaves because it condemns it to a reflexive function. The social objectives of Peak and Bazarov are simply finite substitutes for an infinity, towards which the will aspires, despite all intellectual recognition of its unattainability. The ultimate effect of rational scepticism is to make the will an end in itself, subversive or destructive of its environment, but ultimately self-destructive also. Like Bazarov, Peak bows 'to no

77 George Gissing, Born in Exile, edited by Pierre Coustillas (Brighton, 1978), p. 61.

78 Born in Exile, p. 450.

authority but that of the supreme human mind'⁷⁹ and like him he is 'a force'⁸⁰. The relationship of the 'supreme human mind' to the untrammelled will is the fundamental concern of modern literature that Father and Sons shares with Born in Exile. What they both demonstrate is that that relationship, seemingly a perfect mechanistic regulation of rationality and irrational compulsion, ultimately subverts the self as well as the world. The deaths of Godwin Peak and Bazarov at the end of the two novels are, at one level, not contrivances of tragedy, but the only possible resolution of the dialectic of blood and brain, the supreme negation in which the 'purely negative mind' ultimately and logically terminates. Born in Exile and Fathers and Sons must be viewed in the same critical and historical perspective as the work of Carlyle, Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky, as dramatisations of the simultaneous processes of self-apotheosis and self-destruction of the post-theistic mind.

Subsumed within this broad philosophical and intellectual similarity, is an ideological and historical dimension that the novels share. Adrian Poole has argued that Born in Exile differs from such an explicitly ideological work as Fathers and Sons because it dramatises 'the very specific currents and idioms of desire and need, that precede their articulation in the "ideological dimension"'.⁸¹ In fact, it can be argued that Born in Exile has a strong

79 Born in Exile, p. 247.

80 Ibid., p. 285.

81 Poole, p. 175.

implicit ideological dimension, which, while it may be less obviously salient, bears a distinct relation to that of Fathers and Sons. The relation consists in both Bazarov and Peak being educated but without class affiliations. Peak 'belonged to no class whatever, acknowledged no subordination save that of the hierarchy of intelligence'⁸², while Bazarov is a 'raznochinetz',⁸³ born into that narrow no-man's land between gentry and peasantry. Given the 'savagely aristocratic temperament'⁸³ of both characters, their intellect and freedom from class allegiance make them a socially destabilising force. While it may not have been so true of mid-nineteenth-century Russia as it was of late Victorian England that,⁸⁴ in Peak's words 'the classes are getting mixed, confused',⁸⁴ the weaknesses of the Russian social structure laid it open to disruption by an intelligentsia, who had either disavowed or did not possess class connections. Bazarov is a threat to the established order because he is both educated and socially disinterested.

Peak's challenge to the English social order is no less ideologically significant for being an act of infiltration, prompted by a wish for social integration. It in no way invalidates a linking of the two characters that Bazarov wishes to undermine the social structure while

82 Born in Exile, p. 246.

83 Gissing's description of Peak in a letter to Berz of April 8 1891. Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, p. 120.

84 Born in Exile, p. 362.

Peak wishes - in more senses than one - to penetrate it for his own ends. The ideological and historical implications are clear in both cases - that in a more or less inflexible class structure, the unaccommodated intellectual becomes an agent of social disturbance. Bazarov's acts of intellectual effrontery and Peak's acts of intellectual mimicry dramatise, within their respective settings, the relationship between free thought and the fixity of social formations. From his six or seven readings of Fathers and Sons, Gissing must have drawn confirmation that the 'totally negative mind', whether in the guise of iconoclast or infiltrator, bore a central, symptomatic relationship to the historical phase within and about which he wrote.

In the middle years of the 1890s Gissing was granted simultaneously the recognition and esteem of his fellow novelists and a measure of freedom from the procrustean demands of the declining three-volume novel form. From 1893 to 1896 he undertook a relatively lucrative and prolific excursion into the genre of the short story - a form in which he had hitherto doubted his abilities. Gissing's short stories and short novels of these years, though written with verve and facility, centre, for the most part, upon predictable ironies of circumstance and behaviour without displaying particular technical originality or penetrating insights.

In the context of Gissing's relationship to Turgenev the importance of the large numbers of stories he wrote in the 1890s lies not in any tangible influence - for none

is demonstrably discernible - but in his adoption of a form that was rapidly becoming the fashionable genre of the decade. To this general vogue in the 'nineties for the short story and the short novel, we must relate an event of signal importance for Turgenev's reputation in England - the systematic translation of his stories and novels by Constance Garnett. It is to her monumental work of translation and the favourable circumstances in which it was undertaken, that I now wish to turn.

CHAPTER FOUR

TURGENEV AND THE ENGLISH 'NINETIES

(i) Turgenev and the context of the 1890s

'There is a most beautiful thing in my book,' suddenly piped the little Italian woman. 'It says the man came to the door and threw his eyes down the street.'

There was a general laugh in the company. Miss Bradley went and looked over the shoulder of the Contessa.

'See!' said the Contessa.

'Bazarov came to the door and threw his eyes hurriedly down the street,' she read.

Again there was a loud laugh, the most startling of which was the Baronet's, which rattled out like a clatter of falling stones.

'What is the book?' asked Alexander, promptly.

'Fathers and Sons, by Turgenev,' said the little foreigner, pronouncing every syllable distinctly. She looked at the cover to verify herself.

'An old American edition,' said Birkin.

'Ha! - of course - translated from the French,' said Alexander, with a fine declamatory voice. 'Bazarov ouvra la porte et jeta les yeux dans la rue.'

He looked brightly round the company.

'I wonder what the "hurriedly" was,' said Ursula. They all began to guess.¹

Birkin's dismissal of the adulterated translation as 'an old American edition' carries a clear implication that the Georgian house-party at Breadalby could, if they had wished, have had access to other better translations taken

1 D.H. Lawrence, Women in Love, Penguin edition (London, 1980), p. 96.

directly from the Russian, rather than those 'traduced' via French. For by 1900 Constance Garnett's great service to Turgenev, the translation of the bulk of his work directly from the Russian, was complete and she had moved on to the works of Russia's other major writers. Whatever lapses and limitations Garnett's translations might contain, they were not of the grosser kind noticed by Lawrence's contessa; simply by being a systematic translation from original sources, Constance Garnett's English language version of Turgenev set a new standard for translations of Russian literature and consigned to deserved obscurity the numerous travesties of his work that had appeared over the previous forty years.

So superior is Garnett's translation to most of the versions of Turgenev's works that appeared prior to the Heinemann edition, that the tests applied to her work should be correspondingly finer; her translations will need to be assessed not just on the basis of strict linguistic accuracy, but also on the more problematical ground of stylistic equivalence. Henry James in his 1897 assessment of Tolstoy and Turgenev acknowledges the importance of Mrs Garnett's work but, consistent with his own views on the primacy of aesthetic criteria, holds to his reservations concerning the violations of a work's essentially inseparable style and content that must occur in any translation: 'We are conscious, reading him in a language not his own, of not being reached by his personal tone, his individual accent.'²

² James, 'Library of the World's Best Literature' in The Future of the Novel, p. 229.

Some later critics have been more extreme in their views of the difficulties of rendering Turgenev's style into English and severe in their judgement of the technical merits of the Garnett translations. Edmund Wilson, with some knowledge of Russian maintains not only that the texture of Turgenev's Russian 'barely survives in translation' but that 'the translations of Constance Garnett are full of omissions and errors.'³ It will be one function of this chapter to assess, by a selective examination of the Garnett Turgenev, the extent to which omissions, errors and stylistic divergence from the spirit of the original do mar the Heinemann edition.

But it is to the context in which Constance Garnett's translations of Turgenev appeared between 1894 and 1899 that I first wish to turn. The late 1880s and the 1890s are the period in which it first becomes possible to discern a Russian, as opposed to a purely Turgenevan, literary impact in England. Turgenev's standing in England reached new heights at the very end of his life, thanks largely to the assiduous promotional efforts of James, Ralston and others. Honoured by Oxford University in 1879 and extravagantly praised in obituaries, Turgenev was Russian literature to most English men of letters at the time of his death in 1883. But from 1887, Turgenev's standing was increasingly measured against that of Tolstoy whose work came to be known in England, first through translations into French and later through the publication of a thirteen volume edition of his

3 Edmund Wilson, 'Turgenev and the life-giving drop' in Turgenev's Literary Reminiscences, translated by David Magarshack, p. 46.

works in English (1888-89). Matthew Arnold's essay 'Count Leo Tolstoi', published in the Fortnightly Review in 1887, drew attention both to Tolstoy's activities as a religious thinker and his achievements as a creative writer. The blessing given by England's foremost critic to Tolstoy signalled the real beginnings of his English reputation and led to a spate of articles which recognised the Russian novel more as a movement than a one-man phenomenon, while at the same time attempting judgements of Solomon over the⁴ relative merits of Turgenev and Tolstoy.

These relative merits were discussed in the columns of the periodicals with varying degrees of sophistication and understanding. Insularity, chauvinism and vague conceptions of what constituted the Slav identity were apt to colour even the most enlightened essays on the Russian novelists. At that enlightened end of the spectrum, the Westminster Review's treatment of 'Count Tolstoi's Life and Works' in 1888 has a representative significance. It begins by acknowledging the beneficial influence of Arnold in breaking down the parochialism of English taste ('Before the late Mr Matthew Arnold's delicate shafts of irony had roused us from our satisfaction with things British and provincial, there would have been little to wonder at in any denseness of ignorance regarding continental literature'),⁵ but goes on to chastise those who would throw out the baby

4 'A Batch of Novels', Pall Mall Gazette, 2 May 1887, p. 11 and 'The Russian Realists', Quarterly Review, 70 (1888), 56-73.

5 'Count Tolstoi's Life and Works', Westminster Review, 130 (1888), 277-293 (p. 278).

of judgement with the bath-water of prejudice, maintaining that unqualified approbation of foreign writers should be reserved for those of such unquestionable greatness as Tolstoy. The article then proceeds to note the rapid emergence of Tolstoy as a figure of importance in English literary culture and to indulge in the kind of comparative evaluation of Tolstoy and Turgenev that was commonly to occur in periodical literature on the subject of Russian fiction. The section concerned merits quotation in its entirety:

Three years ago, which of us had heard of Count Leo Tolstoi? A select circle there may have been to whom his name was familiar; but it had not reached the ears of the profane crowd, it was caviare to the circulating library. Now he is read here by all who read French, and in cultivated America, we might almost say, by all who read anything; for the States have been quicker than we to focus this Eastern light, and rival translations of his works are competing for sale in Boston as they compete in Paris. In this country, so far, the majority trust perforce to French versions; but even here War and Peace and Anna Karenine are in an English garb becoming names to conjure by, and, without excessive presumption, we may anticipate a time when Count Tolstoi's other works will be enthroned on the shelves of Smith and Mudie.

Why this sudden recognition after well-nigh a generation of neglect? Qui s'excuse, s'accuse; and we do not attempt to palliate an unpardonable sin of omission when we remind our Russian readers that Tolstoi has not, like his great and lamented compatriot Turgenieff, the good or evil fortune to write in Paris; and that, while Russian civilisation is still for Western peoples a sealed book, an essential element in Tolstoi's greatness and the secret of his charm, now that is discovered, to foreign readers is his determined concentration on Russian subjects as judged by a Russian eye and treated from a Russian standpoint. Turgenieff acted as interpreter between East and West, he painted his countrymen for Europe; Tolstoi, the Rembrandt of his race, has painted them for themselves and, in the maturity of time, for humanity.

This, his great merit, is also, we venture to think, one of the reasons why his fame has not spread more rapidly. Its recent expansion in France and America and subsequently among ourselves, is more easily explicable. In the zenith of his powers he has deliberately turned his back upon the novel writing which has made his reputation, has devoted himself to the advocacy of doctrines primitively Christian and profoundly, though quietly, socialistic, and, practising what he preaches, has excited among many sympathisers in many lands the interest that sincerity in high places never fails to evoke. His experiments in equality have been eagerly watched in the two great Republics, and whatever is known in France and America is not long unknown in Great Britain. From his present we have turned to his past. A series of tales, among which at least three must rank as masterpieces, at once explain the latest phase of his career and justify the respectful attention with which it has been followed.⁶

This passage clearly illustrates the force and nature of Tolstoy's impact. It had always been the case that English reviewers looked to Russian literature as a source of insight into the social and political condition of Russia, rather than as a primarily artistic phenomenon; in that respect Tolstoy seemed to some to offer a picture of Russia that was not, like Turgenev's, adjusted to - and therefore distorted by - a western European standpoint. He appeared to have, moreover, no connections with French naturalism - the literature of 'the gutter' - against which English critics waged an offensive throughout the 1880s and into the 1890s : ⁷ 'His realism, unlike that of a declining French school, is not the realism of the gutter. From the gutter, indeed, he does not recoil, but in it he sees

6 Ibid., pp. 278-279.

7 See Graham, English Criticism of the Novel (Oxford, 1965), pp. 49-61.

the image of the sky.'⁸

The common tendency of much Victorian literary criticism to conflate aesthetic and moral criteria in judging foreign literature is epitomised by the Westminster reviewer's opinion that, while Zola and Tolstoy have certain qualities in common ('talent of invention', 'vividness of portraiture'), 'in the sphere of artistic choice Tolstoy's superiority is simply transcendent'.⁹ As Kenneth Graham has observed of the hostile criticism of Zola, '... most hostile criticisms arise out of a difference in moral or philosophical view point, and the lack of idealism or of "true realism" for which Zola is alternately blamed has little relevance¹⁰ to any non-moral theory of representation in the novel.'

To the Westminster reviewer, at least, Tolstoy passed the test of approval by being both a moralist and 'a true realist', receiving at the conclusion of the article, the accolade of being dubbed 'the greatest of living novelists.'¹¹

If this is taken as the measure of Tolstoy's initial impact on English criticism, it is not surprising that, throughout the 1890s, commentators writing on Russian literature in general, and Turgenev in particular, could not omit some evaluation of Tolstoy and, most commonly,

8 'Count Tolstoi's Life and Works', op. cit., p. 282.

9 Ibid., p. 283.

10 English Criticism of the Novel, p. 57.

11 Op. cit., p. 293.

undertook a comparative assessment of the two writers. Charles Johnston's article in the Academy in 1890 on 'The Quarrel between Turgenev and Tolstoy', using letters recently published by the poet Fet, exemplifies, in biographical terms, this comparative focus and most other commentators - Stepnyiak and Edward Garnett in their prefaces to Constance Garnett's work, James in his contribution to the 'Library of the World's Best Literature', felt compelled to evaluate Turgenev relative to Tolstoy.

It is certainly true that in England from 1887 into the early 1890s Tolstoy's star was in the ascendant and that the growth of his reputation coincided with, and derived some of its impetus from, a minor explosion of interest in matters Russian among contributors to periodical literature. The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals and Poole's Index to Periodical Literature indicate an increased frequency of articles in such periodicals as the Contemporary¹² Review from 1889 to 1894, many of them the work of two small distinct groups of contributors, with a common interest in the manifestly troubled condition of Russia.

The first of these groups was that small band of political refugees who had been involved in the agitation and terrorism of the 1870s and who had found sanctuary in England - Felix Volkhovsky, Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin

12 In Poole's Index, the first supplement covering 1882-1887 gives approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ columns of entries under 'Russia', the second supplement (1887-1892) over 3 columns, and the third supplement (1892-1896) - $3\frac{1}{3}$ columns of entries.

and Sergey Mikhaylavitch Kravchinsky ('Stepnyak'). All of these men and other emigrés were to be welcome visitors to the home of Constance and Edward Garnett during the 1890s. As I hope to show, Stepnyak was to be a vital influence on the life and work of both of them. But around the turn of the decade Stepnyak, Volkhovsky and Kropotkin clearly devoted much of their energy to promoting the course of social revolution in Russia among the readers of the English periodicals by providing first hand information concerning the political and social injustices of Czarism. Thus to the Fortnightly of November 1890 Volkhovsky devoted an article entitled 'My Life in Russian Prisons' while some sixteen months later Stepnyak contributed to the same journal an article on 'The Russian Famine and the Revolution'¹³. As the title of Stepnyak's article implies, the terrible famine in Russia of the years 1891-92 was a great boon to the cause of the revolution; a famine fund was set up in England and the event excited humanitarian sentiments that found expression in the pages¹⁴ of the journals. More than that, it engendered additional

13 Stepnyak offers a detailed account of the causes of the famine and goes on to claim that only fundamental, instrumental change will remedy the condition of Russia. 'Only the remoulding of our political system can put an end to the present disgraceful condition of Russia. All Russians understand this and clamour for the change. There has never been such an unanimity in Russian public opinion as today.' Fortnightly Review, 57 (March 1892), 358-368 (p. 367).

14 See Nicholas Shishkoff, 'The Horrors of Hunger', Nineteenth Century 31 (1892), 1-6 and E.W. Brooks, 'The Shishkoff Russian Famine Fund', Nineteenth Century 31 (1892), 871-873.

publicity for Tolstoy, whose efforts at famine relief were clearly enhancing his existing reputation in the English speaking world.

As his biographer, Ernest Simmons, has put it, speaking of the year 1896, 'Tolstoy had now definitely become "news" for all the world'¹⁵. That he did become news was partly thanks to the activities of the second of those two groups of commentators to which I referred above - a small number of writers and journalists some of whom had visited and/or resided in Russia and could thus offer first hand accounts of conditions in a country that remained terra incognita for most English readers. Prominent among them were W.T. Stead and E.J. Dillon. Although there were others with travellers' tales to tell and accounts to offer of pilgrimages to Count Tolstoy's home¹⁶, it is to Stead, and, most of all, to Dillon, that credit is due for providing a flow of detailed information on Russia in general and Tolstoy in particular.

Dillon's role in publicising Tolstoy and, at the same time, publishing lengthy and detailed accounts of the nature of Russian society, was crucial in the early 1890s. Russian correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, Dillon was in Russia in 1889-90 when he met Tolstoy,

15 E.J. Simmons, Leo Tolstoy, II, 145. See Simmons for an account of Tolstoy's dealings with E.J. Dillon.

16 See William Durban, 'Russia as it is', Contemporary Review, 71 (1897), 711-733; W.B. Stevens, 'A visit to Count Tolstoi', Cornhill Magazine, 65 (1892), 597-610; R.W. Lowry, 'The Russians at Home', Cornhill Magazine, 66 (1892), 174-191.

becoming sufficiently liked and trusted by him for Tolstoy to authorise him to translate and publish his controversial article on the famine - 'A Fearful Problem' - in the columns of the Daily Telegraph on January 26 1892. But Dillon's efforts went further; in a series of major articles in the Fortnightly Review, running from 1889 to 1891, he gave a wide-ranging, and strongly critical account of Russian institutions, most of them written under the pseudonym¹⁷ E.B. Lanin or, simply, 'A former resident in Russia.' Under such titles as 'Russian prisons: the simple truth', Dillon coolly but unsparingly anatomised the iniquities of Czarism, complementing Tolstoy's own criticisms of the country's institutions as well as those of such political exiles as Stepnyak, and gently chiding W.T. Stead for offering in his book of 1889, Some Truths about Russia,¹⁸ too favourable a view of autocracy. To the accuracy of Dillon's own accounts of life in Russia, the exiled

17 See Wellesley Index, II, 260, for attribution of the series to Dillon.

18 'In his laudable, and in the main successful endeavour to give his readers a sketch of social and political life in Russia rather as it is than as it seems, Mr. Stead at times describes a state of things that would gladden the heart of the Sage of Chelsea were that philosopher still among us, and in a corresponding degree astonish those whose acquaintance with Russia is founded only on personal observation. Many of his remarks and observations reveal an overmastering tendency to idealise Russian autocracy ...' A Former Resident of Russia, 'Some Truths about Russia', Fortnightly Review, 52 (1889), 274-292 (p. 281).

Nihilists were only too willing to testify .

To the articles by Dillon and the political refugees that appeared in such journals as the Contemporary and Fortnightly during the years 1889 to 1892 were added translations of Tolstoy's own writings, and it seems reasonable to assume that Dillon's good offices might have been behind the publication in the Contemporary of March 1894 of 'Religion and Morality' by Tolstoy, and of 'Work while ye have the light' (July 1890) and 'The Relations of Church and State' (April 1891) in the Fortnightly. The publication of these and other articles by, and on, Tolstoy mark the beginnings of Tolstoyanism as a minority cult among the intelligentsia of England and America, and it is no surprise, therefore, that when Constance Garnett began to translate from Russian in 1894, one of the first two works which she rendered into English was 'The Kingdom of God is within you' - a work which, with its strongly argued case against the inherent immorality of government, must have had considerable appeal to the liberal Garnetts, whose later opposition to the Boer War has about it a decidedly Tolstoyan flavour.

-
- 19 Felix Volkhovsky, 'My Life in Russian Prisons', Fortnightly Review, 54 (1890), 782-794. Volkhovsky states that he has been asked by the editor to write on his experiences of trial and imprisonment in the late 1870s and to say what he thinks of an article by Lanin (Dillon) on that same subject. He writes (p. 782) 'Many persons, I am told, believe that Mr Lanin's statement of the case is exaggerated, notwithstanding the fact that his account is mainly derived from Russian official sources. I must say at once that it seems to me that no serious objection can be taken to Mr Lanin's paper.' Volkhovsky then goes on to offer his own detailed account of the treatment of political prisoners in Czarist gaols.

I have adduced evidence of this surge of interest in Tolstoy during the early 1890s in order partly to account for the tendency of literary commentators in the 1890s to treat Turgenev by comparing the works of the latter with the former. Tolstoy's manifest importance could not be ignored while, as a further counter-attraction to Turgenev, the name of Dostoyevsky was increasingly becoming known. When Constance Garnett's first Turgenev translation, Rudin, was noticed by The Bookman in August of 1894, the review sat side by side with one devoted to Lena Milman's translation of Poor Folk and the reviewer, clearly seeing qualities akin to those of Dickens in that novel, makes an appeal for a translation of The Idiot to add to the better known Crime and Punishment²⁰. The real vogue for Dostoyevsky, however, was not to come until the second decade of the twentieth century when Maurice Baring's Landmarks in Russian Literature, the Garnett translations of his novels and Middleton Murry's criticism were to create a cult-following for his work²¹. In the 1890s the real threat to Turgenev's reputation was that it would be overshadowed by that of the still vigorously active and controversial Tolstoy. Donald Davie's observation that the period from the 1880s onwards was one in which 'admirers of Turgenev felt themselves on the defensive in the face of the more sensational attractions of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy'²²

20 'Novel Notes', The Bookman (August, 1894), 152-153.

21 See the introduction by Donald Davie to Russian Literature and Modern English Fiction (Chicago, 1965), p. 5.

22 Ibid., p. 4.

I have adduced evidence of this surge of interest in Tolstoy during the early 1890s in order partly to account for the tendency of literary commentators in the 1890s to treat Turgenev by comparing the works of the latter with the former. Tolstoy's manifest importance could not be ignored while, as a further counter-attraction to Turgenev, the name of Dostoyevsky was increasingly becoming known. When Constance Garnett's first Turgenev translation, Rudin, was noticed by The Bookman in August of 1894, the review sat side by side with one devoted to Lena Milman's translation of Poor Folk and the reviewer, clearly seeing qualities akin to those of Dickens in that novel, makes an appeal for a translation of The Idiot to add to the better known Crime and Punishment²⁰. The real vogue for Dostoyevsky, however, was not to come until the second decade of the twentieth century when Maurice Baring's Landmarks in Russian Literature, the Garnett translations of his novels and Middleton Murry's criticism were to²¹ create a cult-following for his work. In the 1890s the real threat to Turgenev's reputation was that it would be overshadowed by that of the still vigorously active and controversial Tolstoy. Donald Davie's observation that the period from the 1880s onwards was one in which 'admirers of Turgenev felt themselves on the defensive in the face of the more sensational attractions of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy'²²

20 'Novel Notes', The Bookman (August, 1894), 152-153.

21 See the introduction by Donald Davie to Russian Literature and Modern English Fiction (Chicago, 1965), p. 5.

22 Ibid., p. 4.

perhaps requires the qualifier that Tolstoy's growing celebrity was conspicuously the greater challenge to Turgenev's standing.

Yet, despite the initial impact of his work, the growth of Tolstoy's reputation slowed and established itself largely within the limits of that interest in his ethical, religious and social teachings displayed by Anglo-Saxon progressive circles. As far as imaginative literature was concerned, though Tolstoy's work was admired and his fiction compelled the attention of critics, the balance of opinion remained tilted in the direction of James's preference for Turgenev; it was he who was to remain the novelist's novelist well into the Edwardian and Georgian periods. Leaving aside the obvious factor of Constance Garnett's decision to translate the body of Turgenev's work before that of any other novelist, there are clearly reasons, deep-seated within the literary culture of England in the 1890s, for the resurgence of Turgenev's reputation among critics and novelists, following Tolstoy's initial acclaim. Some of those causes have already been identified but, as I hope to show, there are others that have received less attention. I propose, therefore, to enumerate a range of factors, present in the intellectual and artistic climate of the late 1880s and the 1890s, which favoured Turgenev's reputation among writers, and correspondingly militated against the consolidation of Tolstoy's.

At precisely the time when the first translations of Tolstoy were appearing in English, a battle was being waged over the unofficial censorship of literature, exercised by

Mudie and endorsed by bodies such as the National Vigilance Association. Despite the efforts of George Moore in 'Literature at Nurse' and of Vizetelly, publisher of Zola's novels, the enemies of pernicious literature were, in 1889, by no means on the defensive²³. The reception of Jude the Obscure demonstrates that, even by the mid- 1890s, when Mudie's control over public taste must have been weakening with the relative decline of the circulating libraries, the criteria of 'good' taste which he had ordained for a generation were still being invoked.

Tolstoy was not exempt from these criteria. Shortly after the highly favourable account of his life and works in the pages of the Westminster in 1888, he wrote The Kreutzer Sonata. As Donald Davie has observed, '... it was the publication of The Kreutzer Sonata ... which brought about the first revulsion of feeling against the author of What I Believe'²⁴. Ironically, while the Westminster commentator of 1888 could invoke the example of Tolstoy's work as a form of realism superior to the French, by 1891, in some quarters, he was being tarred with the same brush as the Naturalists. Accordingly, the claims made for Turgenev as far back as the 1870s - that his was a realism with a decorous face - were now being reiterated at Tolstoy's expense. In a round-up of works on Russia (including French translations of Fathers and

23 See Becker, Documents of Modern Literary Realism, pp. 350-382 and F.A. Mumby and I. Norrie, Publishing and Bookselling (London, 1974), p. 278.

24 Russian Literature and Modern English Fiction, p. 7.

Sons and Virgin Soil), Elizabeth Eastlake in the Quarterly Review of 1891 measures Tolstoy and Turgenev against 'our ideas of propriety'. Having discussed, at length, the question of Nihilism, the author continues: 'We have borrowed our description of Nihilists mainly from Tourgeneff's tales. Of the two chief rivals for public favour in this line of literature, Count Tolstoi and Tourgeneff, the latter is by far superior, both as regards genial humour and purity of moral taste. Tolstoi has adapted his style as much to French as to Russian readers - both pretty much on a par in their choice of entertainment - and accordingly trans-²⁵gresses our ideas of propriety.' In a footnote to the paragraph quoted, the writer notes that 'the Bohemian Law Courts have prohibited the circulation of a Czech translation of Count Tolstoi's Kreutzer Sonata as injurious to public morals. It forbids marriage.'

Thus, in a judgement scarcely less categorical than that of the Bohemian Law Courts, the Quarterly's commentator exhibits the familiar conditioned reflex of Victorian writers towards sex in fiction - the taboo on the subject itself is allowed to override any consideration of an author's moral intention.

Evidently, reactions of this kind represent English resistance to Naturalism at its most philistine level. But at a higher level, the issue of Naturalism's challenge to the conventions of good taste was itself subsumed in the wider question of how literature, and the novel in particular,

25 Elizabeth Eastlake, 'Russia: its people and government', Quarterly Review, 172 (1891), 113-142 (p. 133).

differentiates itself from the life it observes and defines its own terms of reference.

The first translations of Tolstoy and the Garnett Turgenev appeared here at a time when the conception of art as essentially self-determining and self-justifying had acquired influential currency. Placing emphasis on the sensuous, the subjective, the impressionistic and the formal nature of art, the Aesthetic Movement signified the recoil of literature from the encroachment of positivistic science and agnosticism. But Aestheticism's gesture of defiant withdrawal was more plausibly made in the name of poetry than of fiction. Looking back on the poets of the 'nineties, Yeats was to write 'Poetry was a tradition like religion and liable to corruption, and it seemed that they could best restore it by writing lyrics technically perfect, their emotion pitched high, and as Pater offered, instead of moral earnestness life lived as "a pure gem-like flame"²⁶ all accepted him for master' .

Having no such tradition like religion and, self-evidently having much to do with the sphere of moral and social life, the novel could hardly follow poetry in its attempts to break free of all moral and public functions.

At the same time, developments in both the practice and theory of the novel in Europe appeared to be pulling fiction further and further towards convergence with scientific methodology and a utilitarian objective function.

26 Preface to The Oxford Book of Modern Verse (Oxford, 1936), p. ix.

differentiates itself from the life it observes and defines its own terms of reference.

The first translations of Tolstoy and the Garnett Turgenev appeared here at a time when the conception of art as essentially self-determining and self-justifying had acquired influential currency. Placing emphasis on the sensuous, the subjective, the impressionistic and the formal nature of art, the Aesthetic Movement signified the recoil of literature from the encroachment of positivistic science and agnosticism. But Aestheticism's gesture of defiant withdrawal was more plausibly made in the name of poetry than of fiction. Looking back on the poets of the 'nineties, Yeats was to write 'Poetry was a tradition like religion and liable to corruption, and it seemed that they could best restore it by writing lyrics technically perfect, their emotion pitched high, and as Pater offered, instead of moral earnestness life lived as "a pure gem-like flame" all accepted him for master'²⁶.

Having no such tradition like religion and, self-evidently having much to do with the sphere of moral and social life, the novel could hardly follow poetry in its attempts to break free of all moral and public functions.

At the same time, developments in both the practice and theory of the novel in Europe appeared to be pulling fiction further and further towards convergence with scientific methodology and a utilitarian objective function.

26 Preface to The Oxford Book of Modern Verse (Oxford, 1936), p. ix.

in 1880 Zola had written 'The return to nature, the naturalistic evolution, which is the main current of our age, is gradually drawing all manifestations of human intelligence into a single scientific course.'²⁷ and gone on to urge that novelists 'must operate with characters, passions, human social data as the chemist and the physicist work on inert bodies, as the physiologist works on living bodies.'²⁸ For English novelists and critics the real importance of Naturalism lay, not so much in the affront given by its practice to conventions of propriety, as in the challenge of its theory to the looseness and inadequacy of native conceptions of the novel.

At the time when Zola wrote 'The Experimental Novel', Anglo-Saxon culture lacked a clear and coherent conception of the genre with which to counter Zola's definition of the novel as an adjunct of science. The novel's scope and terms of reference, the extent to which it is subjective and/or objective, how it differs from reportage on the one hand, and poetry on the other - these were questions that remained largely unformulated and, therefore, unanswered in England in 1880. This situation, in which the novel might be all things to all men, is reflected in some of the differing judgements on Tolstoy and Turgenev in the middle 1880s. Thus, in his essay on Tolstoy, Matthew Arnold could praise Anna Karenina as being not a work

²⁷ From 'The Experimental Novel' in Documents of Modern Literary Realism, ed. Becker, p. 162.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 172.

of art, but 'a piece of life'²⁹ (implying thereby its superiority to mere art) while Oscar Wilde could maintain that 'of the three great Russian novelists, Tourgenieff is by far the finest artist. He has that spirit of exquisite selection, that delicate choice of detail, which³⁰ is the essence of style ...'

The simultaneous emergence of Naturalism and Aestheticism led a number of the more perceptive theorists and practitioners of the novel to try and define its place between those two antithetical doctrines. Fiction could clearly not assimilate completely to Aestheticism, for to do so would have meant an absurd negation of the extra-aesthetic dimension and instrumentality that the novel could legitimately claim; neither could it assimilate completely to scientific methodology without abandoning its equally obvious kinship with poetry and the other imaginative arts. While the protean nature of the novel might preclude comprehensive definition, there was a clear need at least to describe the novel's broad terms of reference, to identify that middle way which it takes between science and poetry. James's writings, in particular 'The Art of Fiction', represent the first major attempt in modern Anglo-Saxon literary culture to confirm the novel as a genre sui generis, and to assert that, while the House of Fiction might have many windows, the novel was

29 Matthew Arnold, Essays in Criticisms, second series (London, 1947), p. 152.

30 'A Batch of Novels', Pall Mall Gazette, 2 May, 1887, p. 11.

not simply an extension of either science or poetry by other means. In the 1890s other writers were to build on James's work; critics such as Edward Garnett and novelists such as Conrad were to echo and develop James's conception of the novel as a genre uniquely capable of transmuting data into art through imaginative organisation, of synthesising objective and subjective perspectives and fulfilling both expressive and communicative functions.

I propose to deal, later and in greater detail, with the views of Garnett, Conrad and others on the nature of fiction. For the moment, I wish merely to stress that the period from 'The Art of Fiction' in 1884 to the turn of the century witnessed a considerable effort of clarification and description of the novel's potentialities and function, and that the attitude towards Tolstoy and Turgenev of those who thought and wrote about the nature of fiction provides clear evidence that Turgenev's work, more than Tolstoy's - indeed, more than that of practically any other writer - served as a model for, and epitome of, that peculiar combinative power of the novel, its ability to unite the emotive and visionary intensity of poetry with the intuitive and analytical penetration of science.

In other less tangible but no less important ways, the intellectual mood of the 1890s could accommodate Turgenev far better than the earnest ethical rationalism of Tolstoy. When reviews of Turgenev's work appeared in England in the 1870s, James and other commentators, though full of praise

for most aspects of his novels, frequently expressed reservations about the deep-seated pessimism of his outlook. By the 1890s, pessimism had come to be an important, indeed arguably the dominant, strain in the outlook of many writers. In fact, as early as 1877, the emergence of philosophical pessimism as an important development had been noted in England by James Sully in his book Pessimism. Largely devoted to a survey of the continental pessimists - Schopenhauer, Leopardi and others - Sully's book, though itself ending on a somewhat strained note of optimism, acknowledges the increasing hold of pessimism over the minds of many:

How is it that pessimism happens just now to be adopted by so large a number of persons as their life-creed? Modern pessimism shows itself on a little consideration to be no natural logical development of European thought. On the contrary, in spite of its attempt to graft itself on modern science, it is essentially an exotic in the soil of European philosophy. Its main source is thus seen to be social sentiment. It has been adopted as meeting a dominant emotional want of the age.³¹

Sully goes on to note the prevalence of pessimism in continental Europe, including Russia: 'Though pessimism is most rife in Germany, it is by no means confined to that country. Other nations, as Russia [sic], appear to be deeply infected with the spirit, and Schopenhauer may claim his numerous admirers in France and in England.'³²

By the early 1890s, pessimism had clearly taken some

31 James Sully, Pessimism (London, 1877), p. 448.

32 Ibid., pp. 448-449.

hold in England if one judges by the half-dozen or so articles appearing on the subject in English periodical literature between 1891 and 1893³³. Under such titles as 'Pessimism as a system', 'Pessimism and Tragedy', 'The Causes of Pessimism', 'Poetry and Pessimism', 'Pessimism and Progress', a variety of writers of differing views attest to the growth of philosophical pessimism as a force that could not be ignored. R.N. Wenley in 'Pessimism as a system' observed that 'The importance of contemporary Pessimism is partly to be gauged by the assurance with which its professors advance it as a working theory of the world ... Pessimism, in short, has not merely a history, and a bizarre theosophy, it puts in a claim to be the system of the universe.'³⁴

Other writers preferred to regard Pessimism as an unhealthy, un-English and un-Christian development, maintaining that its influence on culture was past its peak. The Reverend Sydney Alexander, writing in 1893 in the Contemporary Review, maintained that the 'force of Byronism had almost spent itself; and a poet not less strong and radiant and full of the joy of living, than Browning has become the prophet of the rising generation.'³⁵ Alexander went on to insist that the influence of

33 See entries under 'Pessimism' in The Nineteenth Century Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, 1890-99 (New York, 1944).

34 R.M. Wenley, 'Pessimism as a system', Contemporary Review, 59 (1891), 373-388 (p. 373).

35 Sydney Alexander, 'Pessimism and Progress', Contemporary Review, 63, (1893), 75-83 (p. 83).

Schopenhauer had been superseded by that of Hegel and, consequently, 'the hope of cosmic suicide' had given way to the thought' of a spiritual society'.

The imaginative literature of the late 1880s and early 1890s suggests otherwise. The philosophy of Schopenhauer is a palpable influence in characteristic fiction of the decade, such as New Grub Street and Jude the Obscure, while in poetry, the 'rising' generation of the Rhymers' Club had as their prophets Wilde, Morris and Pater, rather than the ebullient Browning. In fact, there is no doubt that the characteristic mood of literary culture in the 1890s is a blend of Schopenhauerian philosophical pessimism, Wildean world-weariness and a Paterian sense of life's tragic brevity. Such a blend strikes one immediately as having much in common with many of Turgenev's most salient themes and preoccupations - an acute sense of life's ephemeral nature; a concern with social and existential superfluity; an obsession with lost youth and death as two sides of the same coin; an idea of sex as a subversive and destructive malady; an awareness of the indifference of nature to man.

There are several aspects to, and numerous ways of exemplifying the correlation between the world-view of Turgenev's fiction and the themes and outlook that characterise the literature of the 1890s. The sombre preoccupation with futility and ephemerality in a poet like Lionel Johnson, though perhaps more wilful and less stoical than that of Turgenev, bears a significant similarity to that stark sense of the vanity of human

existence, of mutability and of death as both negation and consummation which emerges so strongly and recurrently in Turgenev's work. A poem of Johnson's such as 'Nihilism' expresses the sense of an alienating nature and infinity and of death as both oblivion and completion. Johnson's marrying of personal and philosophical pessimism ('... upon the Earth, there stands/Man's life, my life: of life I am afraid'³⁶) and his conception of death as 'the peace life never brought' are reflections of a mood in literary culture that accords far more closely with Turgenev's stoic pessimism than with the religious and humanitarian activism of Tolstoy. Indeed, a lyric such as 'Vitae summa brevis' by Johnson's contemporary and associate, Ernest Dowson might have made a most suitable epigraph for a whole range of Turgenev's works which evoke the sadness of transience.

Moreover, while in one sense Turgenev's works record phases of Russia's intellectual and political history, they are, in a deeper sense, ahistorical, expressing an awareness of the universal and unchanging pathos of human life. In this regard, too, they match an aspect of the prevailing melancholy of English literary culture in the 1890s. Housman's lines from A Shropshire Lad - 'The tree of man was never quiet/Then 'twas the Roman, now tis I'³⁷ - in their ahistoricism reflect a cultural shift away from

36 Writing of the 'Nineties, edited by Derek Stanford (London, 1971), p. 185.

37 A.E. Housman, 'On Wenlock Edge ...', A Shropshire Lad, Garnstone Press Edition (London, 1975), p. 46.

the more confident, positivistic frame of mind of some twenty to thirty years before, to a climate in which Turgenev's pessimism becomes much more acceptable.

Something of this shift emerges from a periodical article of 1899 by Bernard Holland, in which the author accounts for the growth in popularity of Fitzgerald's Omar Khayyam. Holland notes that, whereas twenty years ago, the poem was known only to an initiated few, 'probably every book-reading undergraduate can now³⁸ declaim a quartrain or two.' Holland goes on to chart the change in mood that makes Omar Khayyam more popular in 1899 than when Fitzgerald first published it:

Fitzgerald first published his Omar Khayyam when the tide of optimistic belief in the sufficiency of material civilisation was running its strongest, and when our complacency was hardly disturbed by the caveats entered in their different ways, by Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, and Ruskin. Epicureanism, based on a pessimistic agnosticism, clothed though it was in a heart penetrating form, could not then produce its full effect. The present popularity of the poem, which Fitzgerald did not live to suffer under, marks, I think, the rapid decline at once of the old religious Protestant conviction, and of the sanguine optimistic temper due to the rapid movement of scientific discovery and mechanical invention. Realisation, as ever, has fallen far short of anticipation and an excessive estimate of the value of life has been followed by a tendency to question its whole wider purpose.³⁹ It is a time of disenchantment and doubt.

By that token, it seems, it was also a time with which Turgenev's work, though no prescription for epicureanism,

38 Bernard Holland, 'The Present Popularity of Omar Khayyam', National Review, 33 (1899), 643-652 (p. 643).

39 Ibid., pp. 650-651.

would be peculiarly consonant.

I have argued in an earlier chapter that the 'disenchantment and doubt', manifest in George Gissing's work, forms the basis of his affinity with Turgenev. But elsewhere in the fiction of the 1890s those same themes of futility, angst and social alienation indicate a mood propitious to Turgenev's novels and stories. As Patrick Yarker has observed, 'The theme of failure haunted the novels of the later nineteenth century. Meredith treated it in The Ordeal of Richard Feverel; Hardy brought it to a nadir in Jude, and saw in it the pattern of the future, for Little Father Time was the⁴⁰ "beginning of the coming wish not to live"'.⁴⁰

In fact in a work like Jude, for all the differences in cultural reference and narrative form between it and Turgenev's novels, there is a concentration of themes and assumptions that illustrates Turgenev's exemplary relevance to late nineteenth-century English fiction. Of course, the most salient of these is the theme of the inseparability of personal destiny and social displacement. But it is also in the linking of sexuality to failure, or breakdown of purpose, that Jude the Obscure brings into sharp focus a theme that permeates Turgenev. For in his fiction, love is 'not the so-called free union of souls', as Alexei Petrovich in Turgenev's 'A Correspondence' puts it, but 'a malady' in which one person is the slave

40 Patrick Yarker, 'Meredith, Hardy and Gissing' in The Sphere History of Literature in the English Language (London, 1970) VI, 251.

and the other is the master.' It is a malady which not only enslaves, but also deflects from other purposes. Sexual love undermines Bazarov's dedication to Nihilism, mocking his scientific rationalism by the irrational nature of its eruption, and it is sexuality that deflects Jude the Obscure from his devotion to learning and makes a mockery of his personal ideal and idealism in general.

In both Fathers and Sons and Jude the Obscure, the subverting of rational purpose by sexual obsession recalls Schopenhauer's pessimistic conception of sex as a phenomenon which epitomises the incongruity between the World as Will and the World as Idea⁴². But the Schopenhauerian note is, in novelists like Gissing and Hardy, merely one part of a complex pessimistic world-view, that interrelates sexuality, the crisis of personal identity and social estrangement. The exact compatibility of Turgenev's imaginative frame of reference with this kind of outlook goes far towards explaining his appeal in a phase of culture 'haunted' by the theme of failure. For, as I have argued in relation to Gissing, it is only at the end of the nineteenth century that the theme of the socially and psychologically unaccommodated individual, perceived in distinct relation to 'the body and pressure of time', crystallizes with its full implications. In

41 Pol. sob. soch., VI, 190. My translation.

42 See Schopenhauer, Essays and Aphorisms, pp. 63-64, for the view that 'sexual desire, especially when concentrated into infatuation through fixation on a particular woman is the quintessence of this noble world's imposture ...'

Russia it had long since done so and its foremost exponent was not Tolstoy - whose mode of psychological realism is so often geared to ethical or religious purposes - but Turgenev, whose socio-psychological novels match much better the mode of perception of late nineteenth-century fictional pessimism.

It is, then, in the recurrent treatment in Turgenev's stories and novels of the theme of a morbid self-consciousness and hypersensitivity at variance with social and historical forms that his work harmonizes with both the intellectual climate and with particular representative themes of fiction in the 1890s. When Jude Fawley declares to Sue Bridehead, 'We are horribly sensitive; that's really what's the matter with us, Sue!', her reply - 'I fancy more are like us than we think'⁴³ - has more than a merely fictional reference. Hypersensitivity, debilitating self-awareness, emotionalism, manifested in the fiction of the late nineteenth century, that 'nervous instability' of which Gissing's Ryecroft speaks, can be linked to a growth of interest in the psychology of the self, which from the publication of William James's Principles of Psychology in 1890, develops rapidly around the turn of the century.

William Bellamy, in his study of the turn-of-the-century work of Wells, Galsworthy and Bennett, has argued convincingly that much of the fiction of the 1890s testifies to that '"medicalisation" of society which took place

43 Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure, New Wessex Edition (London, 1975), p. 305.

between 1890 and 1910',⁴⁴ and that the conditions of neurosis, alienation and introspectiveness that typify so many fictional characters in works of the 1890s are 'only the most palpable feature of a pervasive convention of "ailment" and "alienation"'.⁴⁵ Bellamy's argument that 'most short stories and novels of the period either diagnose or exhibit symptoms of what one might call, in a general way, psychic degeneration'⁴⁶ lends weight to the view that the 1890s were a propitious moment for the translation of Turgenev. From the early 'Diary of a Superfluous Man', whose protagonist speaks of himself as a 'hypersensitive, suspicious, constrained creature from childhood up ...'⁴⁷ to Nezhdanov who cannot 'simplify' himself, Turgenev's characteristic types anticipate the anxiety states and neurosthenia that are both social and fictional concerns of the last years of the nineteenth century.

If evidence other than the prevalence of such states in the fiction of the period is called for, the perfect illustration of both anxious self-analysis as a habit of the 1890s and of Turgenev's relevance to it is provided by the recently published first volume of the papers of Bertrand Russell. Russell's secret diary for the year

44 William Bellamy, The Novels of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy, 1890-1910 (London, 1971), p. 36.

45 Ibid., p. 35.

46 Ibid., p. 36.

47 Pol. sob. soch., V, 201.

1893 reveals the agonisings of an intensely introspective young man over the true nature of his feelings for Alys, later to become his first wife. His reading during the summer of 1893, when he records in painstaking detail his own thoughts and discussions with Alys, included, as the editors of the papers note, 'large portions of the canon⁴⁸ of such writers as Henry James, Ibsen and Turgenev'. In June, July, August and September of that year Russell read, in German translation, a number of Turgenev's works including Virgin Soil (June) and 'Diary of a Superfluous Man'⁴⁹ (September). His personal situation and his reading come together in a diary reference in which, analysing his feelings for Alys, he likens himself to Turgenev's Nezhdanov - and does so, moreover, in terms that almost read like a page of Turgenev's own fiction:

I think of Alys all day long. Like Neschdanoff in Turgenjeff, I am haunted by a doubt of my real feelings. Still more horrible, I half fear the amusement of my relations. What a curse it is to have so keen a sense of humour! But of course the whole business is ridiculous and I ought to get it out of my head as soon as possible; and above all keep it quite to myself. I incline to think that my passion is imaginary when I reflect that I love Love just now and envy those who have a mutual love. But I think it has been genuine, not only now, but ever since I first met her, when I reflect on the minute recollection I have of every detail of my meetings with her. One thing thank God I gain by my habit of self-analysis: I know Lust has absolutely no share in my passion.⁵⁰

48 The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell, edited by Kenneth Blackwell and others, (Cambridge, 1983), I Appendix 2, 345.

49 Ibid., p. 351.

50 Ibid., p. 62.

I have attempted to marshal evidence of the prevailing intellectual and literary outlook of the 1890s that may, in part, account for Arnold Bennett's claim in 1899 that Turgenev has 'everywhere captured the men of letters'⁵¹. In his article in The Academy, Bennett readily acknowledges that 'half-a-dozen years ago Turgenev was barely a name to our reading public and that it was Tolstoi who had made the capture'⁵², but the burden of his article is a tribute to Constance Garnett's translation and to what Bennett regards as Turgenev's unquestionable superiority over Tolstoy as an artist. I wish to return to the relation of Bennett and his work to both Constance and Edward Garnett and Turgenev later. For the moment I cite his article simply as evidence that the six years between 1893 and 1899 did not witness Tolstoy taking the English literary fraternity by storm as the rash of articles between 1887 and 1893 might have led one to expect he would.

One further set of factors may be advanced as favourable to the reinforcement of Turgenev's reputation among writers, critics and publishers in the 1890s - the decline of the circulating libraries, the decline of the long three-volume novel form and the growth in popularity of the short novel and the short story.

As Royal Gettmann has shown in his study of the firm of Bentley, the demise of the three volume novel was not

51 Arnold Bennett, 'Ivan Turgenev, an enquiry', The Academy, 57 (1899), 514-517 (p. 514).

52 Ibid.

a simple matter of the capitulation of the circulating libraries to the pressures brought to bear on them by George Moore in 'Literature at Nurse'. By quotation from Bentley's correspondence with Mudie, and other sources, Gettmann demonstrates that the economics of publishing three-volume novels in large quantities were no longer viable,⁵³ even before Moore's attack. By 1894, the year from which the decline of the three-decker novel is usually dated, Mudie was writing to Bentley, 'My own feeling ... is directly against the three volume novel. It serves no useful purpose whatever in our business and I shall be heartily glad and much relieved if the gods (i.e. the publishers) will give us the one volume novel from the first. In every possible way it suits us better and I very long ago ventured to think that it would benefit English fiction.'⁵⁴

The book trade responded by publishing single volume

-
- 53 'Without detracting from the essential soundness of Moore's plea for the unshackling of the novelist or from the value of his example, one may suggest that the decline of the three-decker was not simply a matter of denouncing it as a manifestation of humbug and cant and hypocrisy. It was also a matter of pounds, shillings and pence. In other words, the three-decker was bound to disappear because it had ceased to be profitable to the libraries who were reaping the profits and who were concerned to keep the three-decker afloat'. Royal Gettmann, A Victorian Publisher (London, 1960), p. 257.
- 54 Letter from Arthur Mudie to George Bentley, July 13, 1894, quoted in Gettmann, A Victorian Publisher, p. 259.

novels but promptly declared their interest in having the shorter form sold rather than lent. A year after Mudie's letter to Bentley, the editor of The Bookman for December 1895, reporting on the month's activities in the booktrade wrote: 'The three volume novel still crops up at intervals /my italics/. Of course it must be better for booksellers if novels in one volume are bought instead of being borrowed from libraries.'⁵⁵

The observation that the three decker still crops up 'at intervals' gives some indication of the rapidity of the shift to a one volume format published usually at 3/6d or 6 shillings.

These technical and economic changes in the publishing trade would, quite obviously, favour the translation and publication of a novelist like Turgenev, whose forms are the short novel, the novella and the short story. In fact, the shift in popularity away from long novels towards shorter forms is alluded to in 1888 by the author of the Westminster Review article on Tolstoy. One of the few reservations expressed concerns the scale of Tolstoy's novels, clearly regarded as out of keeping with the preferences of the day: 'It must be acknowledged that

55 The Bookman, December 1895, p. 84. Gettmann in A Victorian Publisher quotes the following statistics from Joseph Shaylor 'The Issue of Fiction,' The Publishers Circular, October 15, 1910, pp. 565-566: in 1894 there were 184 three-decker novels published in England, in 1896 - 25 and in 1897 - 4. See Gettmann, p. 262.

this book War and Peace⁵⁶ has the fault of excessive length. It recalls the Richardsonian epic rather than the terse and nimble footed tales which content the modest ambitions of the nineteenth century reader.'

If changes in the form and price of fiction during the 1890s favoured the scale of Turgenev's works, other developments in publishing during the 1880s and 1890s contributed to a more general awareness of foreign literature, from which Turgenev's reputation benefited. The 1890s represent something of a watershed in terms of both the influx of foreign texts onto the English market and the influence of foreign writers on English literature. The impact of Ibsen, brought about partly through his defence by Shaw, and the influence of French symbolist poetry, aided by Arthur Symon's work The Symbolist Movement in Literature, are just two of the better known examples of the ways in which foreign literature was introduced to English writers and readers in the 1890s. By the end of the period Arnold Bennett was able to observe that 'the decade now drawing to a close has been rather remarkable for newly translated and worthily produced editions of great foreign novelists.'⁵⁷ His claim is borne out by perusal of the columns of a periodical such as 'The Bookman', pages of which give notice of the translation of a wide range of foreign literature - drama, novels and

56 Westminster Review, 130 (1888), p. 289.

57 'Ivan Turgenev, an enquiry', p. 514.

poetry - into English .

The propagation of foreign literature in the 1890s seems to have been favoured by its being a decade in which the publishing trade experienced some growth and some renewal. Royal Gettmann notes that '... the nineties was not a bad time for publishers, as may be seen from the number of other new firms which came into existence and flourished at this time ...' while Mumby and Norrie, in their history of publishing and bookselling, agree that 'the 'nineties brought many new names' into publishing. Among those new names, that of William Heinemann is notable as one who was both active in exploiting the market for cheaper shorter forms and in discovering and publishing both foreign authors and new English ones . Heinemann's

58 In addition to notices of newly translated novels of Turgenev and Dostoyevsky (August 1894), The Bookman notices the publication of Maeterlinck in English (October 1895), reviews a new play by Bjornson (March 1899) and features an article on Japanese literature (May 1899). Its pages abound in examples of other foreign works noticed, reviewed or dealt with in depth.

59 Gettmann, op. cit., p. 263.

60 Frank A. Mumby and Ian Norrie, Publishing and Book-selling (London, 1974), p. 279.

61 Gettmann (p. 263) notes that 'in one issue (May 3, 1895) of The Bookseller, William Heinemann ... announced eleven new novels, ten of them in the new six-shilling form and the remaining one at 3s 6d. 'Of the same publisher, Mumby and Norrie (p. 278) write: '... he began to issue in translation, the works of great European writers of the nineteenth century. This was to be his particular contribution to publishing, puncturing the innate chauvinism of most of his colleagues ... By the time Heinemann established himself there was a reading public for the great Russians, and in addition to them he published translations of Bjornson and Ibsen ... and of Gerhard Hauptmann, Georg Brandes, Guy de Maupassant and Gabriele d'Annunzio. He offered the British the opportunity of appreciating contemporary European literature ...'

enthusiasm for foreign works, especially ones that conformed to the new, shorter format, would have made him a natural choice for Constance Garnett to offer her translations to. As George Jefferson in his recent study of Edward Garnett writes: 'Prompted by Stepniak she sent her Goncharov to William Heinemann, who accepted it. To her intense joy he gave her £40 and a commission to translate Tolstoy's The Kingdom of God is with us and then the stories of Turgenev.'

The association with Heinemann as publisher of Constance's translations was retained until 1916 when a lukewarm response on Heinemann's part to the idea of translating Chekov led to a transfer to Chatto and Windus. How well the translations of Turgenev sold and how profitable they were to their publisher cannot be known⁶³. Even in a market moving towards cheaper, shorter works of fiction the Garnett Turgenev was relatively cheap, being marketed at 3s Od, 6d below the average price. Arnold Bennett, though by virtue of his association with Garnett hardly an unbiased commentator, appears to have regarded the works as remarkably good value.

62 George Jefferson, Edward Garnett, a life in literature (London, 1982), p. 22.

63 In a letter received from Messrs. Heinemann Ltd., in response to my inquiry concerning sales and publication figures for the Turgenev translations, a representative of the firm writes: [I] am certain that we have no sales or printing records of the 1890s and the earliest surviving catalogue of the complete Heinemann list to my knowledge is dated 1914.' (Letter from Heinemann Ltd. to the author, September, 1983).

('The format is admirable; considering the price, it is
wonderful.'⁶⁴)

If, as a present day representative of the Heinemann company maintains, William Heinemann 'was pretty shrewd in keeping in the fore of literary and commercial trends'⁶⁵, he would have been quick to appreciate that the brevity of Turgenev's fiction fitted in perfectly with the shift to shorter novels and the growth in popularity among writers of the short story form. In his introduction to Short Stories of the 'Nineties, Derek Stanford observes that 'these fictions of the nineties are significant as being examples of a new thing in English writing; the short story conceived as a genre⁶⁶ on its own - a fresh art form conscious of itself.' Looking back on the 'nineties from the standpoint of 1911, H.G. Wells recalled that 'the 'nineties was a good and stimulating period for a short-story writer ...⁶⁷ Short stories broke out everywhere.'

If, as Wells claims, short-stories did break out everywhere, they were, nonetheless, a late flowering form in England. Brander Williams, writing in 1907, notes how the form achieved recognition in the late nineteenth century and adds that 'the British were the last of the great peoples of the world to appreciate the finer

64 'Ivan Turgenev, an enquiry', p. 514.

65 Letter to the author, quoted above.

66 Derek Stanford, Short Stories of the 'Nineties (London, 1968), p. 11.

67 H.G. Wells, introduction to The Country of the Blind (London, 1911), p. IV.

possibilities of the short-story as a definite species
of fiction.'⁶⁸ Walter Allen, in his recent study of
the genre, agrees that 'in England the short story as
we now know it was a late flowering compared with the
story in the United States, France and Russia.'⁶⁹ When
it did develop though it was with a vigorous growth, which
established the genre so strongly in English that in the
hands of Joyce, Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield and other
writers, the short story came to represent one of the
major achievements of literature in the language this
century. The beginnings of that growth, the burst of short-
story writing in the 1890s, is accompanied by a surge in
the popularity of continental masters of the short-story,
in particular Maupassant and Turgenev.⁷⁰

In addition to the technical and economic changes
in publishing which favoured the rise of the short story
and the decline of the long novel, there were other less
tangible reasons for the changing fashion. The late
nineteenth century, as we have already noted, witnessed

68 Brander Williams, The Short Story (New York, 1907), p.3.

69 Walter Allen, The Short Story in English (Oxford, 1981),
p. 10.

70 It is interesting to note that, as early as 1890,
Gosse, writing in The Speaker on 'Thomas Hardy'
praised Hardy's story 'The Three Strangers', by holding
up Turgenev as the supreme criterion by which it might
be judged: '... Mr Hardy has written one short-story
so complete, so admirable in execution, so novel and
brilliant in conception, that it raises him for a
moment to the level of Tourgeneff himself'. From
The Speaker, September 13 1890, p. 295, quoted in
Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage, edited by R.G. Cox
(London, 1970), p. 170.

a developing preoccupation with the psychology of self. That clinical interest is paralleled in the cultural sphere by an emphasis upon the subjective nature of both aesthetic perception and artistic creation. The key point of reference in this respect is the philosophical aestheticism of Pater, whose influence pervades the whole of the fin-de-siecle. Pater's views both epitomize and influence the shift that occurs from the 1870s onwards, away from a positivistic objective outlook, favouring in fiction, the extended modes of Realism and Naturalism, and towards epicureanism in life and subjectivism in art. This shift very clearly favoured the emergence of a genre more suited to the prevailing emphasis upon the subjective nature of perception - the short story. It is indicative of this shift that the term 'impressionism' enters the critical vocabulary during the 1890s and that English critics begin to talk about the short story as the product of a literary theory of 'essences', originating on the continent and becoming adopted in England in the favourable climate of the Decadence.

The idea of the short story as a vehicle for literary impressionism encountered a measure of rear-guard, chauvinistic opposition in English critical circles. Shan Bullock, writing on 'The British Short Story' in The Bookman in 1899 sardonically derides the products of the 'essence' school of short story writing as an alien growth, suspect in its obvious links with that much wider continental development, Symbolism:

It is a thing of beauty, delicacy, natural selection; an essence (ah, now we have it!), a perfume, a distillation. Your true artist - your Frenchman and one other - strives not to cover pages, to concoct, to dilute; he distils, places an impression in his alembic and distils laboriously, till in the end is left of his impression but an essential soul, a significant essence, a crystal thing, delicate savoury, beautifully wrought - a piece of artistry, in a word, the Short-story as it is written in France and not written here, the conte of Maupassant, of Loti, of Daudet, of a dozen others.⁷¹

There are two points of interest in Bullock's article. Firstly, what seems to have struck him as particularly decadent is that sub-species of the short story that flourished in the 1890s, the prose-poem or prose fragment. Secondly, there is the question of the writer Bullock has in mind when he speaks of these essences or 'distillations' being the product of 'your Frenchman and one other' [*my italics*]. The temptation here is to identify the 'one other' as Turgenev, both on the grounds of his being associated, actually and in the minds of English critics, with Daudet and Maupassant, and of his being a practitioner of the kind of lyrical short story and prose-poems that Bullock seems to have in mind.

Certainly, when one compares Turgenev's Poems in Prose, published in the Garnett translation in 1897, with the prose-poems and the lyrical impressionist fragments of writers like Crackanthorpe, Dowson and Wilde, similarities in tone, technique and theme strike

71 Shan Bullock, 'The British Short Story', The Bookman (August, 1899), p. 126.

one immediately.

An example might be made of the opening of Turgenev's 'The Country' and Hubert Crackanthorpe's fragment 'In Normandy'; in both pieces the selective exactitude of the description concentrates the visual details into an impressionistic mood:-

The last day of July; for a thousand versts around Russia, our native land.

An unbroken blue flooding the whole sky; a single cloudlet upon it, half floating, half fading away. Windlessness, warmth ... air like new milk!

Larks are trilling; pouter-pigeons cooing; noiselessly the swallows dart to and fro; horses are neighing and munching; the dogs do not bark and stand peaceably wagging their tails.

A smell of smoke and of hay, and a little of tar, too, and a little of hides. The hemp now in full bloom, sheds its heavy, pleasant fragrance.⁷²

A mauve sky, all subtle; a discreet rusticity, daintily modern, femininely delicate; a whole finikin arrangement of trim trees, of rectangular orchards, of tiny spruce houses, tall-roofed and pink-faced, with white shutters demurely closed. Here and there a prim farm-yard; a squat church-spire; and bloused peasants, jogging behind rotund white horses, along a straight and gleaming road. In all the landscape no trace of the slovenly profusion of picturesque, but rather a distinguished reticence of detail, fresh, coquettish, almost dapper.⁷³

72 The Novels of Ivan Turgenev, translated by Constance Garnett, 15 vols. (London, 1894-99), X, 239. Hereafter the translations and their introductions will be identified as 'Garnett'.

73 Hubert Crackanthorpe, 'In Normandy', Writing of the 'Nineties, p. 207.

The similarity in technique - the concentration of noun-phrases, the sparing use of verbs - and achieved effect in these two pieces is not the only point of resemblance between the 'sub-genre' as Turgenev handles it and the use made of it by writers of the fin-de-siècle. A number of Turgenev's prose-poems which take the form of dream-visions, or parables of illusion and disillusionment, bear a thematic resemblance to pieces like Wilde's 'The Master' or Dowson's 'The Princess of Dreams'. Turgenev's obsessional preoccupation with death and the transience of youth, frequently taking macabre figurative form in pieces like 'The Insect' and 'The Skulls' calls to mind the same concerns of futility and transience, which are treated, albeit with greater preciousity, in Wilde's 'The Artist' and Dowson's 'Absinthia Taetra'. Both in their themes and in the concentrated lyricism of their treatment, Turgenev's prose-poems exemplify the striking compatibility of much of his work with the characteristic forms and imaginative perspectives of the fin-de-siècle⁷⁴.

In general, when one considers the changes in the conventional scale and forms of fiction and the disassociation of poetry from Wordsworthian-Arnoldian notions of moral and public utility, a picture emerges

74 Even in short stories of the 'nineties such as Crackanthorpe's excellent 'Profiles', where the semi-naturalistic manner and bitter ending of the work are essentially unlike Turgenev, the careful composition of the initial scene-setting and the direct pictorial method of introducing the principal characters have tonal effects similar to those of the opening of a Turgenev novel.

of the 1890s as a decade in which the theory and practice of all literary genres, save drama, became more self-consciously aesthetic. I have already tried to stress, in broad terms, the importance of the conjunction of the Turgenev translations in the 1890s with such pervasive factors as the aestheticism, lyricism and pessimism that are the general literary features of that decade.

But the importance of Turgenev as a model of compositional, artistic excellence assumes a highly specific form in the influence which he exerted upon that circle of young novelists centred upon the publishers' reader, Edward Garnett - a man whose role in modern English writing has only recently been fully treated by George Jefferson in his admirable study. It is to the importance of Turgenev to Garnett and his diverse associates - to Bennett, Galsworthy and Conrad, and to the view of fictional art prevalent amongst them, that I wish to turn first, before considering as the final phase of this work, the nature of the translations executed by Garnett's wife, Constance.

The personal and professional relationships between Garnett and his literary protégés has been traced elsewhere, and I therefore do not propose to reiterate the details of those relationships, well attested as they are by published correspondence and memoirs. My intention is to show how the use of Turgenev's work as a shibboleth by Garnett, on the one hand, and Galsworthy, Bennett and Conrad on the other, epitomises their adherence to the idea of fiction as a high art on a par with poetry

and requiring dedicated craftsmanship in its practitioners.

As far as Garnett is concerned, his passion for Turgenev, over and above other Russian novelists, appears to stem from two sources - his progressive liberalism and his personal and professional concern with fiction as an art form. Both of these areas of concern are apparent in the two most important sources of information on Garnett's view of Turgenev in the 1890s - the prefaces to his wife's translations and his 1900 article on 'Tolstoy and Turgenieff' in the Anglo-Saxon Review. Garnett's desire for clear-sighted solutions to the world's problems came second only to his passionate advocacy of fiction as an art form, charged with, if not synonymous with, poetry in its power of imaginative insight. Fiction which addressed itself, with fidelity, to both the specific personal and historical dimensions of the human condition, and yet viewed those in the perspective of an awesome and mysterious, eternity represented to Garnett a higher realism - higher, that is, than the reductively analytical mode of Naturalism. As his biographer has written, 'Two principles guided Edward's criticisms and appreciations: firstly that the novel was an art form and ultimately had to be judged by the arrangement of words, secondly that the novel had to have 'veracity' to be true to life and have its own truth.'

75

This dual insistence upon form and fidelity to life

75 George Jefferson, Edward Garnett (London, 1982), p. 96.

emerges strongly and recurrently in the prefaces to Turgenev's work, which for Garnett clearly represents the highest achievement on both of those important counts. Of On the Eve - according to Bennett, probably Garnett's favourite work by Turgenev - he writes:

Turgenev's genius was of the same force in politics as in art; it was that of seeing aright. He saw his country as it was, with clearer eyes than any man before or since. If Tolstoi is a purer native expression of Russia's force, Turgenev is the personification of Russian aspiration working with the instruments of wide cosmopolitan culture. As a critic of his countrymen nothing escaped Turgenev's eye, as a politician he foretold nearly all that actually came to pass in his life, and as a consummate artist, led first and foremost by his love for his art, his novels are undying historical pictures.⁷⁶

Singling out the character of Uvar Ivanovitch as symbolic of the 'sleepy, slothful Slav of today, yesterday and tomorrow' - an observation which lends weight to Conrad's teasing characterisation of Garnett as an inveterate generaliser - Garnett proceeds to praise Turgenev for his ability imaginatively to correlate the individual and the general, the personal and the historical:

The creation of a universal national type, out of the flesh and blood of a fat taciturn, country gentleman, brings us to see that Turgenev was not merely an artist, but that he was a poet using fiction as his medium. To this end it is instructive to compare Jane Austen, perhaps the greatest English exponent of the domestic novel, with the Russian master, and to note that, while as a novelist she emerges favourably from the comparison, she is absolutely wanting in his poetic insight. How petty and parochial appears her outlook in Emma, compared to the wide and unflinching gaze of Turgenev. She painted most admirably the English types she knew, and

76 Introduction to On the Eve, Garnett (London, 1895), III, x-xi.

how well she knew them! but she failed to correlate them with the national life; and yet, while her men and women were acting and thinking, Trafalgar and Waterloo were being fought and won. But each of Turgenev's novels in some subtle way suggests that the people he introduces are playing their little part in a great national drama everywhere around us, invisible, yet audible through the clamour of voices near us.⁷⁷

Garnett's conception of fiction as a form of art which encapsulates personal drama, historical specificity and an overarching perspective of eternity, is evident throughout the prefaces to Turgenev. Here is his appreciation of Fathers and Sons: 'As a piece of art Fathers and Children is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, against which the other characters show up in their respective significance, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's importance and insignificance⁷⁸ is realised in scenes of a most ironical human drama.'

Only once - in his introduction to Virgin Soil - does Garnett ever pass adverse judgement on Turgenev, and even then, the criticism is veiled, oblique and more than compensated for by his praise for the novel as an⁷⁹ expose of Russian political life. Elsewhere in the introductions, Turgenev is advanced as a model from whom writers might learn, and a corrective to what Garnett considers to be the relative superficiality of the fashionable

77 Ibid., xiii-xiv.

78 Introduction to Fathers and Children, Garnett (London, 1895), IV, xviii.

79 Introduction to Virgin Soil, Garnett (London, 1896), VI, vi-vii.

how well she knew them! but she failed to correlate them with the national life; and yet, while her men and women were acting and thinking, Trafalgar and Waterloo were being fought and won. But each of Turgenev's novels in some subtle way suggests that the people he introduces are playing their little part in a great national drama everywhere around us, invisible, yet audible through the clamour of voices near us.⁷⁷

Garnett's conception of fiction as a form of art which encapsulates personal drama, historical specificity and an overarching perspective of eternity, is evident throughout the prefaces to Turgenev. Here is his appreciation of Fathers and Sons: 'As a piece of art Fathers and Children is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, against which the other characters show up in their respective significance, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's importance and insignificance⁷⁸ is realised in scenes of a most ironical human drama.'

Only once - in his introduction to Virgin Soil - does Garnett ever pass adverse judgement on Turgenev, and even then, the criticism is veiled, oblique and more than compensated for by his praise for the novel as an⁷⁹ expose of Russian political life. Elsewhere in the introductions, Turgenev is advanced as a model from whom writers might learn, and a corrective to what Garnett considers to be the relative superficiality of the fashionable

77 Ibid., xiii-xiv.

78 Introduction to Fathers and Children, Garnett (London, 1895), IV, xviii.

79 Introduction to Virgin Soil, Garnett (London, 1896), VI, vi-vii.

literary mode of 'Impressionism'. In particular, in his introduction to A King Lear of the Steppes and other stories Garnett proposes the title work as a model of artistic perfection and is critical - even if benignly so - of the 'Impressionists':

An examination of A Lear of the Steppes is of special interest to authors, as the story is so exquisite in its structure, so overwhelming in its effects, that it exposes the artificiality of the great majority of the clever works of art in fiction ...

... The Impressionists, it is true, often give us amazingly clever pictures of life, seen subtly and drawn naturally; but in general their able pictures of the way men think and act do not reveal more than the actual thinking and acting that men betray to one another - they do not betray the whole significance of their lives more than does the daily life itself. And so the Impressionists give pictures of life's surface, and not interpretations of its eternal depths; they pass away as portraits of the time, amazingly felicitous artistic portraits. But Turgenev's power as a poet comes in, whenever he draws a commonplace figure, to make it bring with it a sense of the mystery of its existence.⁸⁰

Garnett wrote introductions to seven of the fifteen volumes of the Heinemann Turgenev, and the sustained tribute to both Turgenev and the art of fiction that they represent culminates in the introduction to Volume XV - The Jew and other stories. Here Garnett makes his greatest claims for the novel as a form and for Turgenev as its greatest practitioner. There is no doubt in Garnett's mind that the novel is the most important literary form of modern times, and that the Russian novel in particular is the greatest achievement in the genre. This shortest of all Garnett's

80 Introduction to A Lear of the Steppes, Garnett (London, 1898), XII, xi-xii.

introductions has, in respect of the prevailing conception of the novel, the clearest and strongest implications; it merits quotation at length.

To survey the field of the novel as a mere pleasure-garden marked out for the crowd's diversion - a field of recreation adorned here and there by the masterpieces of a few great men - argues in the modern critic either an academical attitude to literature and life, or a one-eyed obtuseness, or merely the usual insensitive taste. The drama in all but two countries has been willy-nilly abandoned by artists as a coarse playground for the great public's romps and frolics but the novel can be preserved exactly so long as the critics understand that to exercise a delicate art is the one serious duty of the artistic life. It is no more an argument against the vital significance of the novel that tens of thousands of people - that everybody in fact - should today essay that form of art, than it is an argument against poetry that for all the centuries droves and flocks of versifiers and scribblers and rhymesters have succeeded in making the name of poet a little foolish in worldly eyes. The true function of poetry! That can only be vindicated in common opinion by the severity and enthusiasm of critics in stripping bare the false, and in hailing as the true all that is animated by the living breath of beauty. The true function of the novel! That can only be supported by those who understand that the adequate representation and criticism of human life would be impossible for modern men were the novel to go the way of the drama, and be abandoned to the mass of vulgar standards.

After outlining the history of the novel and claiming that it was the Russian school who had finally raised 'the novel to being the absolute and triumphant expression by the national genius of the national soul', Garnett continues:

Turgenev's place in modern European literature is best defined by saying that while he stands as a great classic in the ranks of the great novelists, along with Richardson, Fielding, Scott, Balzac, Dickens, Thackeray, Meredith, Tolstoi,

Flaubert, Maupassant, he is the greatest of them all, in the sense that is the supreme artist. As has been recognised by the best French critics, Turgenev's art is both wider in its range and more beautiful in its form than the work of any modern European artist. The novel modelled by Turgenev's hands, the Russian novel, became the great modern instrument for showing 'the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.' To reproduce human life in all its subtlety as it moves and breathes before us, and at the same time to assess its values by the great poetic insight that reveals man's relations to the universe around him, - that is an art only transcended by Shakespeare's own in its unique creation of a universe of great human types. And, comparing Turgenev with the European masters, we see that if he has made the novel both more delicate and more powerful than their example shows it, it is because as the supreme artist he filled it with the breath of poetry where others in general spoke the word of prose ... In England alone, perhaps, is it necessary to say to the young novelist that the novel can become anything, can be anything, according to the hands that use it. In its application to life, its future development can by no means be gauged. It is the most complex of all literary instruments, the chief method today of analysing the complexities of modern life. If you love your art, if you would exalt it, treat it absolutely seriously. If you would study it in its highest form, the form the greatest of our time has perfected - remember Turgenev.⁸¹

The importance of these passages, and the justification for quoting them at length, is that they represent an important stage in the perpetuation and consolidation of the Jamesian conception of the novel as a formal, artistic mode, uniquely important because uniquely capable of handling the intricate patterns of modern life. Garnett is here presenting himself as the keeper at the gates of the House of Fiction, insisting, with Jamesian fastidiousness,

81 Introduction to The Jew and other stories, Garnett (London, 1899), XV, ix-xiv.

on distinguishing between the novel as high art and as recreational fiction in its vulgarised form, on its aesthetic parity with poetry, indeed on its ability to usurp the power of poetry, and, of course, echoing James in bestowing so high an accolade on Turgenev that, even to many devotees of the latter's work, his praise sounds hyperbolic.

Garnett's criticism is Jamesian in both its spirit and details, and this is nowhere more apparent than in his article in the Anglo-Saxon Review of 1900 on 'Tolstoy and Turgenieff'. While the article does indeed attempt to do justice to both writers, Garnett's preference for Turgenev reveals itself throughout in terms that are essentially those of James's own appraisals of Turgenev, and of his aesthetic in general. In one short extract from Garnett's tribute, the Jamesian features - reliance on analogy with pictorial art, insistence on the principle of selection, realism shot through with a sense of poetry - all appear. After referring to Tolstoy's all-inclusiveness, Garnett continues:

To Turgenieff this rich world of common work-a-day interest is too large, too near, too overpowering, above all too transitory, to be thrust upon us. Turgenieff knows that to the artist life is chiefly a matter of perspective; like Corot, when he paints Nature he seeks to place himself at that just distance whence the character of his subject falls into relation with the mother earth and with the infinite sky overhead. Turgenieff, moreover, again like Corot seeks to express his pictures of life, his drawings from nature, only by means of those lines and tones, those harmonies and contrasts, to which every generation of men must respond, simply because these tones and harmonies evoke that highest kind of pleasure in us which we call

beauty. And, accordingly, Turgenieff in studying the composition of his subject loses in its broad masses and tones all that detail of life which does not carry out the particular scheme. But this exquisite discrimination between the details which reveal man's relation to life and the details which merely exhibit his individuality do not make Turgenieff in any sense less of a realist than Tolstoy. The difference between the realism of these two Russian masters is simply that, while Tolstoy is reproducing every note and tone he can catch in life, Turgenieff is intent upon rendering those finer harmonies in the volume of sound which Tolstoy does not hear. Turgenieff, therefore, sacrifices an immense mass of fact, action and variety in life's scheme for the sake of giving a special poetical interpretation, which he deems of far greater importance.⁸²

Garnett's prefaces reflect that apotheosis of the novel as an aesthetic mode, distinguished by overall form and stylistic refinement, which begins as a process with the critical writings of James and is continued in the theory and practice of Conrad, Galsworthy and Bennett in the 1890s. In the twenty years following the publication of 'The Art of Fiction', the concept of form is bandied about with more assurance than precision, its devotees, such as James and Garnett, vulnerably dependent upon analogies from other art forms in their advocacy of it as a sine qua non of fiction.

The twentieth century was not long in demystifying the novel by questioning the prescription of form, balance or

82 'Tolstoy and Turgenieff', Anglo-Saxon Review, 6 (1900), 160. Garnett concludes his appreciation by noting that the Russian masters strike a happy medium between the prurience of the French novel and the coyness of the English (p. 165).

proportion in which Garnett, after James, passionately believed. Lawrence's iconoclastic rejection of the tyranny of form is well known, but Percy Lubbock's more temperate questioning of the aesthetic necessity of form in fiction addresses itself to precisely those assumptions upon which Garnett's critical outlook - and his high valuation of Turgenev - are based.

A novel is a picture, a portrait, and we do not forget that there is more in a portrait than the likeness. Form, design, composition, are to be sought in a novel, as in any other work of art; a novel is the better for possessing them. That we must own, if fiction is an art at all; and an art it must be, since a literal transcript of life is plainly impossible. The laws of art, therefore, apply to this object of our scrutiny, this novel, and it is the better, other things being equal, for obeying them. And yet, is it so very much the better? Is it not somehow true that fiction, among the arts, is a peculiar case, unusually exempt from the rule that bind the rest? Does the fact that a novel is well designed, well proportioned really make a very great difference in its power to please? - and let us answer honestly, for if it does not, then it is pedantry to force these rules upon a novel. In other arts it may be otherwise, and no doubt a lop-sided statue or an ill-composed painting is a plain offence to the eye, however skilfully it may copy life. The same thing is true of a novel, perhaps, if the fault is very bad, very marked; yet it would be hard to say that even so it is necessarily fatal, or that a novel cannot triumphantly live down the worst aberrations of this kind. We know of novels which everybody admits to be badly constructed, but which are so full of life that it does not appear to matter. May we not rather conclude that form, design, composition, have a rather different bearing upon the art of fiction than any they may have elsewhere?

And, moreover, these expressions, applied to the viewless art of literature must fit it loosely and insecurely at best - does it not seem so? They are words usurped from other arts, words that suppose a visible and measurable object, painted or carved. For criticising the craft of fiction we have no other language than

that which has been devised for the material art ...⁸³

Lubbock's work was published in 1921 and I have quoted it to illustrate the waning of that fetishistic attachment to form that was clearly so strong at the turn of the century. Lubbock's reference to badly constructed novels, more than redeemed by the mass of life they contain reminds us that by 1921, Constance Garnett had translated Dostoyevsky, and that the fashion for his and Tolstoy's works had eclipsed Turgenev. The Craft of Fiction, with its challenge to the pervasive myth of overall aesthetic form, its concentration upon the technical and distributive internal problems of narrative, its frequent reference to Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky and its scant allusions to Turgenev, is a useful boundary marker to that period of James's greatest influence when fiction was not merely a 'craft' but a form of high art, commensurable with all others.

It is this conception of the novel as an elevated genre that forms an essential link between Garnett and Joseph Conrad. The crucial role played by Garnett in Conrad's early career has been fully dealt with by biographers of both the latter and the former⁸⁴. Our concern here is with the measure of agreement on the nature of fiction between the two men, with Conrad's evident

83 Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (London, 1954), p. 9-11.

84 See Jocelyn Baines, Joseph Conrad: a critical biography (London, 1967), Frederick Carl, Joseph Conrad (London, 1979) and George Jefferson, Edward Garnett, pp. 55-70.

appreciation of Turgenev (and in particular Constance's work on him) and with the persistent and partly misguided attempts of both Constance and Edward to judge Conrad by, and equate his work with Turgenev's. Conrad's exalted idea of fiction receives its fullest expression in the preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus. Implicit in the preface is that same sense of the manifold potentialities of the novel as an art form that was to lead Garnett to claim the genre as 'the most serious and significant of all literary forms the modern world has evolved.'⁸⁵ The tone and style - bordering on the grandiloquent - and the precise assumptions at work in the preface are essentially those of James, reinforced by the doctrines of Aestheticism. The insistence upon the inseparability of form and content ('the perfect blending of form and substance'), upon the emotive, poetic appeal of fiction ('He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives ...'), the concern with style ('... an unremitting never-discounted care for the shape and ring of sentences ...'), the idea of the unification of moral and emotional appeal ('the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time'), the assumption of the kinship and parity with other arts - except music' which is the art of arts' - all are aesthetic precepts with which James and Edward Garnett would have agreed and of which Turgenev's fiction is a perfect embodiment.

85 Introduction to The Jew and other stories, p. ix.

But what carries Conrad's preface some way beyond the essentially received nature of Garnett's conception of the novel is the impulse towards Symbolism which is so clearly straining into life in his aesthetic. Garnett's sense of the novel as both mimetic and transfigurative stops short of that revelatory dimension which Conrad seems to be ascribing to the form when, speaking of the 'rescued fragment' which the novelist holds up to his readers, he says: 'I it is to show its vibration, its colour, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its colour, reveal the substance of its truth - disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment.'⁸⁶ Here Conrad is reaching forward to the great period of Symbolist fiction of the new century, displaying an imaginative reach beyond the scope of Garnett and beyond the scope of the essentially Flaubertian-Turgenev framework of understanding and appreciation that Garnett applied to Conrad's work.

This focussing of Conrad through the lens of the work of past masters is evident in Garnett's article on Conrad in The Academy in 1898:

This faculty of seeing man's life in relation to the seen and unseen forces of Nature it is that gives Mr Conrad's art its extreme delicacy and its great breadth of vision. It is preeminently the poet's gift, and it is very rarely conjoined with insight into human nature and a power of conceiving character. When the two gifts come together we have the poetic realism of the great Russian novels.

86 Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus, Penguin Books edition (London, 1973), p. 13.

Mr Conrad's art is truly realism of that high order.

Here are all the cardinal virtues enshrined in Jamesian criticism in general - 'character', 'poetic realism', extreme delicacy' and 'breadth of vision' - and in James's appreciation of Turgenev in particular. Garnett concludes his evaluation by a gesture which, repeated by Garnett and others, was to cause Conrad some irritation - the characterisation of his work as essentially Slav:

Mr Conrad's art seems to be on the line that divides East and West, to spring naturally from the country that mingles some Eastern blood in the Slav's veins - the Ukraine. His technique is modern in the sense that Flaubert and Turgenev are modern, but he develops at times a luxuriance, and to English people an extravagance of phrase which leads us towards the East.⁸⁸

Garnett's appreciation of Conrad is essentially in terms received from the nineteenth century - 'character' 'beauty' ('... his sure instinct is for beauty') and 'poetry' - concepts which in Conrad's later work were either radically modified or transcended. His insistence upon reading Conrad as a second Turgenev is symptomatic of the relative fixity of Garnett's conception of the novel, and, for all the whole-heartedness of his appreciation of Conrad, the terms in which his earliest tributes to the Polish writer are couched detract from

87 Edward Garnett, unsigned article in *Academy*, October 15, 1898, pp. 82-83, in *Conrad, The Critical Heritage*, edited by N. Sherry (London, 1973), p. 106.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Conrad's individuality and genius.

That Conrad himself felt this partial diminution is apparent in his letter to Garnett at the time of publication of the Academy article: 'I am very anxious to see the horrors of the Academy. You are a dear old generalizer. I fancy you've generalised me into a region of such glory that no mortal henceforth will
89
succeed in finding me in my work.'

While Edward's tendency might be to generalise Conrad into the 'regions of glory' where, in his eyes, Turgenev reigned supreme, Constance's was to particularise him to that same destination. At a time of close relations between Conrad and the Garnetts - the time of the publication of The Nigger of the Narcissus - Constance wrote to Conrad, likening his delicately nuanced style to Turgenev's: 'I have been reading the 'Nigger' ... I feel as I have always told Edward that your brain does not think English thoughts - as Turgenev's own - it is more delicate, more subtle, richer and more varied than ours. Your use of adjectives, so chosen - fastidious - often ironical,
90
reminds me again and again of Tourgenev's manner.'

While very little in Conrad's themes and settings resembles Turgenev, there is some justice in Constance's likening of his carefully discriminating style to Turgenev's

89 Letters from Joseph Conrad 1895-1929, edited by Edward Garnett (New York, 1962), p. 143.

90 Letter from Constance Garnett to Conrad, December 30, 1897, in the Humanities Research Centre, University of Austin, Texas, quoted in Jefferson, Edward Garnett, p. 69.

But the dedication of Volume XIV of the Garnett Turgenev - 'To Joseph Conrad whose art in essence often recalls the art and essence of Turgenev' - appears to claim an affinity between the two writers that is difficult to support in other than the most general terms. For while both are stylists and both are pessimists, Conrad's pessimism is of a different order to that of Turgenev and often drives his style into extremes of concentrated emphasis that are rare in Turgenev. Turgenev's pessimism is of a kind which generates a sense of pathos, and the pathos becomes a kind of balm to the pessimism itself; Conrad's pessimism is of a totally inconsolable kind, reaching forward to the twentieth-century notion of the Absurd. Even such a sombre sense of transience and futility as that which pervades the opening of Turgenev's story 'Poyezdka v polyes'ye' bestows a kind of stoic dignity upon the human lot. Turgenev's work is pervaded by a horror of death and a fear of ageing, but there is no equivalent in it to the existential despair of, for example, Conrad's Heart of Darkness. What Conrad and Turgenev have in common illustrates nothing so much as how they differ.

That Conrad valued Turgenev highly and that his high opinion of the Russian formed a strand in his friendship with the Garnetts is evident from his letters to Garnett praising the translations ('She is in that work what a great musician is to a great composer -

with something more, something greater.'⁹¹) and in his introduction to Edward's book on Turgenev, published in 1917 and, for the most part, of a synthesis of the prefaces. But he had occasion to wish that the 'dear old generaliser' had not linked his name quite so closely to that of Turgenev. For the 'link' was reiterated by reviewers, Garnett included, throughout the first decade of the new century, and the docketing of his work as 'Slav' seemed to Conrad a disservice to his efforts to communicate in English. Thus an unsigned review of Tales of Unrest in Academy in 1899 maintains that 'if his work reminds us of anyone it is Turgenev.'⁹² But this relatively innocuous reference to the 'link' with Turgenev is wildly exceeded by the suggestion of Robert Lynd, reviewing A Set of Six for the Daily News in 1908, that Conrad would have done better to have his work translated from Polish by Mrs Garnett than to attempt to write in English:

Had he but written in Polish his stories would assuredly have been translated into English and into the other languages of Europe; and the works of Joseph Conrad translated from the Polish would, I am certain, have been a more precious possession on English shelves than the works of Joseph Conrad in the original English, desirable as these are. What greater contribution has been made to literature in English during the past twenty years than Mrs Constance Garnett's translations of the novels of Turgenev? But suppose Turgenieff had tried to write them in English! ... Had he remained a Polish writer, he might -

91 Letters from Conrad, 1895 to 1924, edited by Edward Garnett (London, 1928), p. 154. Letter of October 26, 1899.

92 Conrad, The Critical Heritage, p. 109.

who knows? - have given us novels to compare with On the Eve and Virgin Soil?⁹³

The attack on Conrad's English by Lynd and similar remarks by W.L. Courtney in the Daily Telegraph incensed Conrad, who wrote to Galsworthy in bitterly sarcastic tones:

The above Dly News genius exclaims that my novels would have been better if translated by Mrs Garnett. That's an idea. Shall I send her the clean type of Razumov? But why complicate life to that extent? She ought to write them; and then the harmless reviewer could begin something like this.' Mr Joseph Conrad's latest novel written by Mrs Garnett is a real acquisition for our literature, not like the others previously published which on the whole were rather noxious if amazing phenomena etc, etc.⁹⁴

It is clear, then, that the efforts of the Garnetts and other more inept reviewers to Russianize and 'Turgenevize' Conrad represent both a tribute to the esteem in which Turgenev and the Garnett translations came to be held and a disservice to Conrad. As his biographer has observed, this persistent stereotyping of Conrad, even by the man who had done most in the 1890s to forward his career, became a source of irritation to the Pole:

With his Russian friends, his close associations with anarchists, exiles, socialists and Russian literature of the fiercest kind (Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy), Garnett kept moving Conrad back into everything he had tried to escape. Further this was occurring just as he was writing 'Razumov' and attempting to distance himself from the Russian Scene, trying to filter out

93 Conrad, The Critical Heritage, pp. 211-212.

94 Joseph Conrad, Life and Letters, edited by G. Jean-Aubry, (London, 1927), II, 71. Letter to Galsworthy, July 1908.

his hatred and anger by means of an English narrator. Yet all the while he was seeking distance, both technically and psychologically, he was attacking those very anarchists and socialists who sought refuge with the Garnetts at the Cearne. So that even as Garnett protected his former protégé with notices and reviews, Conrad increasingly came to resent the nature of the support. It was a mocking situation, worthy of Conrad's own irony.⁹⁵

Conrad's case is a clear indication of the extremes of the Garnetts' enthusiasm for Turgenev in particular and things Russian in general. Beginning by applying Turgenev and the 'Slav spirit' as measures of Conrad's art, they, and others who followed their lead, ended by making the Russian novel into a procrustean bed for a Pole, passionately committed to the English language.

Nevertheless, as far as the 1890s are concerned, Conrad's case does serve as an illustration of the fundamental affinities felt by English-language novelists for Turgenev in the late 1890s in the sense that he, like his friend Galsworthy and Garnett, were sure that fiction must be art before it can communicate, before it can make its appeal to 'the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts.'⁹⁶ Turgenev's novels do lend support to the idea that fiction, by its selection, discrimination and formal redistribution of the elements of life, stands in a symbolical relationship to that life which it imitates, that it distils the sense and sentiment of

95 Frederick Karl, Joseph Conrad: the three lives, p. 650.

96 Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. 12.

life, rather than offers a mere simulacrum of reality.

In so far as Conrad's preface to The Nigger embodies such an idea, it may be taken as typifying the pervasive aestheticism of the theory of fiction in the 1890s. It seems a point worth making that this view of fiction is at odds with that expressed by Tolstoy in What is art?, finished in the same year as Conrad's preface. For Tolstoy's argument is essentially that culture in general is ontological rather than symbolical, that art must be seen to communicate before it can be recognised as art, rather than be art before it can communicate. As Tolstoy's biographer puts it, 'In all his theorizing ... one can detect a growing emphasis upon the ethical principle as the immanent organizing factor in the artistic process.'⁹⁷ At opposite ends of Europe, in the same year, two novelists are to be found expressing the moral case for art on fundamentally antithetical premises - on the one hand, that ethical determinants make art art, on the other that aesthetic determinants make art ethical. Of course, these poles mark the boundaries within which all discussion of the nature of fiction is conducted in the late nineteenth century; in a decade in which English novelists were drawn towards 'the perfect blending of form and substance'⁹⁸ as a condition of success, it is hardly surprising that Turgenev, rather than Tolstoy, should be their model and mentor.

97 E.J. Simmons, Leo Tolstoy, II, 238.

98 Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. 12.

No single case represents this predilection for Turgenev in the late 1890s better than that of John Galsworthy. Galsworthy's loyalty to the example of Turgenev was life-long; as Gilbert Phelps has shown in his study of the Russian novel in English fiction, even when the works of Dostoyevsky, Chekov and Tolstoy had all been translated and become widely known, Galsworthy's preference for a fictional art of poetic delicacy, of selection and discrimination, of the finality of feeling, persisted, and with it the conviction that no one epitomized those qualities better than Turgenev .

Turgenev's importance to Galsworthy begins at the time of his literary apprenticeship in the late 1890s. His first attempts at fiction - a collection of stories, entitled From the Four Winds and the novel Jocelyn - evidently dissatisfied their author and met with only a lukewarm reception from Garnett, to whose employer Conrad, Galsworthy's friend, had suggested they be sent. The stress in all of Garnett's early readers' reports upon Galsworthy is upon a want of artistry in his work.

This sense of deficiency Galsworthy himself recalls in Glimpses and Reflections, remembering also how reading Turgenev and Maupassant pointed the way to a breakthrough in his own artistic technique: 'I had been writing four years, and had spent about a hundred pounds on it. About that time I began to read the Russian Turgenev (in

99 See Phelps, The Russian Novel in English Fiction, pp. 112-125.

100 See Jefferson, Edward Garnett, pp. 109-110.

English) and the Frenchman de Maupassant in French. They were the first writers who gave me, at once real aesthetic excitement, and an insight into proportion of theme and economy of words. Stimulated by them I began a second novel,
¹⁰¹
Villa Rubein.'

Going on to enumerate the morals to be learnt from his apprenticeship. Galsworthy urges upon the young writers the need to find one or two masters who suit his temperament: 'The sixth moral is that a would-be writer can probably get much inspiration and help from one or two masters, but in general little good and more harm
¹⁰²
from the rest.'

What we may note from these quotations is not merely that Turgenev was one of those 'one or two' masters for Galsworthy, but also that the Jamesian principle of 'proportion of theme' is regarded by Galsworthy as normative, self-evidently the quality by which a successful novel must be distinguished. The prevailing assumptions, concerning the aesthetic nature of fictional form, are signally present here.

The cementing of relations between Galsworthy and Edward Garnett, and Galsworthy's acceptance of the latter as his mentor in matters of composition undoubtedly owed much to a shared appreciation of Turgenev and a shared acceptance of his work as a standard by which the aspiring

101 John Galsworthy, Glimpses and Reflections (London, 1937), p. 154.

102 Ibid., p. 156.

writer might judge his own novels. Before ever meeting the Garnetts, Galsworthy had written to Constance in
¹⁰³
 praise of Turgenev , while Edward's approval of Galsworthy's efforts to emulate Turgenev in Villa Rubein is evident from his own recollection of how their relationship as 'author and critic' began:

And this brings me to our relations as author and critic ... After his two false starts with From the Four Winds (1897) and Jocelyn (1898), he adopted another technique in Villa Rubein (1900), every page of which shows the disciple's devotion to the master, Turgenev. Look for example at pages 20-21, where the style the conversations, the description, and the introduction of the character, Mr Treffy, are all in Turgenev's manner.¹⁰⁴

Galsworthy's letters to Garnett, to which these remarks form the introduction, make it apparent that, for some thirty years or more Galsworthy was to continue to regard Turgenev's work as the supreme compositional achievement and that their common enthusiasm for Turgenev remained part of the lasting relationship between Galsworthy and Garnett.

Garnett's claim that Villa Rubein 'shows the disciple's devotion to the master on every page' is no exaggeration. The novel is so heavily indebted to Turgenev's work in theme, narrative method and tone, that it may rightly be considered the prime example of Turgenev's tangible influence upon English novelists of the 'nineties. In

103 Evidence supplied by David Garnett, Constance's son, to George Jefferson, Edward Garnett's biographer, see Edward Garnett, p. 110.

104 Letters from John Galsworthy, edited by Edward Garnett (London, 1934), p. 8.

its attempts at the correlation of lyrical description with human mood, its concentration upon character delineation, its blending - albeit inept - of love interest with a social and political theme, it is the most obvious salute to the Jamesian-Turgenevan formula of lyrical realism, the purest imitation of their novels, and the clearest evidence of that self-conscious preoccupation with artistic method that bound together Garnett, the critic and teacher, and Conrad, Galsworthy and Bennett, the aspiring novelists.

The specific example cited by Garnett of Villa Rubein's similarity to Turgenev's fiction in its methods of description and characterisation is merely one of many particular points of resemblance that might be noted. Galsworthy does indeed follow the Turgenevan example of concentration upon condensed description and illustrative dialogue as a method of characterisation, rather than the internal descriptive/analytical method, characteristic of Tolstoy or George Eliot. But so completely is the novel modelled upon Turgenev's fiction that, approached from any angle, its structure and detail reveal the source of inspiration. In tone, plot and the configuration of characters, the closest similarity is to On the Eve; the love of Christian, the heroine, for the artist-anarchist, Harz, maintained in the face of her family's opposition resembles that of Yelena for Insarov; Harz himself and the thinly characterised Dawney resemble, in the contrast they form between Hamletic and Quixotic types, the much more substantially realised Shubin and Bersyenev; the older generation of residents of the Villa Rubein are,

like the older generation of Yelena's family, characterised by clearly enunciated idiosyncracies. In details of incident the indebtedness to On the Eve is manifest; Christian's meeting with the old beggar immediately calls to mind Yelena's encounter with the peasant woman. Most of all, in the intense lyricism of tone, created by correlating highly charged description with human moods (for example in the thunder storm scene of Chapter XI of Villa Rubein), Galsworthy's work recalls Edward Garnett's¹⁰⁵ favourite Turgenev novel.

As Gilbert Phelps has observed, Galsworthy's admiration for Turgenev stemmed partly from close similarities in their social situation and political outlook¹⁰⁶. But in the context of the late 1890s and early 1900s, his use of Turgenev's work as a close model for his own fiction is simply the clearest example of a general enthusiasm among aspiring novelists and influential figures in the world of publishing for Turgenev and the French writers with whom his name was commonly linked. Frank Swinnerton, who, as a young man was employed by Dents in the early years of this century, has left an account of the ambience of aesthetic seriousness which surrounded the novel in literary and publishing circles:

105 Garnett was to admire Galsworthy's application of this particular technique in the work that followed Villa Rubein, A man of Devon, a propos of which he wrote 'The atmosphere is in particular most admirably done. One feels the softness, the stir of the air, the subtle changes of mood and emotion breathed in and blew with the atmosphere of the place.' Letters from John Galsworthy, Letter from Garnett to Galsworthy, September 25, 1900, p. 17.

106 Phelps, p. 114.

I must have read the critical weeklies without much comprehension from the age of sixteen; but by the time I was eighteen I had been lent or given to /sic/ Dent's Irish manager, W.G. Stirret, various French and Russian novels in English translations, and had begun to experiment in the writing of novels of my own. Therefore one explanation of a preference for The Speaker and The Academy may have been that in The Speaker Edward Garnett, who said that 'the most serious and significant of all literary forms in the modern world is the novel', was devoting many columns to the establishment of that proposition, while in The Academy appeared articles on such subjects as 'English and French Fiction in the Nineteenth Century' and 'The Fallow Fields of Fiction'.

I am sure of those things because I cut out the articles and pasted them into several albums which are still, yellow and broken-backed, in existence. Garnett was an enthusiast for the exquisite art of Turgenev, whom I already, thanks to Stirret, admired very much; the articles in The Academy were signed with initials only. I had not the prescience to guess that the initials 'E.A.B.' stood for the full names of Enoch Arnold Bennett.¹⁰⁷

Swinerton's reminiscences attest to a number of inter-related aspects of this fin-de-siècle concern with the 'art' of fiction - the intense nature of the pre-occupation with form and technique, the frequent treatment of the question of fictional form in such prestigious periodicals as The Academy and the finely produced Anglo-Saxon Review, and the place of Arnold Bennett in this particular phase of literary history.

Bennett's literary apprenticeship is perhaps the clearest and best documented case in modern literature of a young writer's determination to school himself in the art of fiction and of that devotion to French and

107 Frank Swinerton, Arnold Bennett, a last word (London, 1978), p. 9.

Russian models, which, at the turn of the century, usually formed the curriculum of this conscious process of schooling. Bennett's ambition to work his way upward from the popular journalism of Tit-Bits and Woman via the superior journalism of The Academy, to a career as a serious novelist has been characterised by Walter Allen as symptomatic of the schism in fiction between the popular and the aesthetic novel that occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century:

For Bennett, it must be remembered, was one of the first conscious highbrows in the novel: he almost as early as any Englishman, had heard the good news that Henry James and George Moore had brought back from Paris, that the novel was an art form. The great Victorian novelists, less sophisticated, had been more fortunate; no fatal schism in public taste had yet occurred, the whole of the literate public could read and enjoy Dickens and Trollope, for they catered for all levels of taste. But by the time Bennett began to write, the Education Act of 1870 had done its work, the schism in taste was a fact, and the existence side by side of Tit-Bits and The Yellow Book symbolised it as well as anything.¹⁰⁸

It is certainly true that Bennett's letters and journals abound in evidence that, in the 1890s, he was
¹⁰⁹
 'deeply preoccupied with artistic theory' and that his 'attitude towards life, the universe and himself was
¹¹⁰
 aesthetic.' Bennett was obsessively determined to

108 Walter Allen, Arnold Bennett (London, 1948), p. 24.

109 Margaret Drabble, Arnold Bennett (London, 1974), p. 65.

110 Walter Allen, op. cit., p. 33.

Russian models, which, at the turn of the century, usually formed the curriculum of this conscious process of schooling. Bennett's ambition to work his way upward from the popular journalism of Tit-Bits and Woman via the superior journalism of The Academy, to a career as a serious novelist has been characterised by Walter Allen as symptomatic of the schism in fiction between the popular and the aesthetic novel that occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century:

For Bennett, it must be remembered, was one of the first conscious highbrows in the novel: he almost as early as any Englishman, had heard the good news that Henry James and George Moore had brought back from Paris, that the novel was an art form. The great Victorian novelists, less sophisticated, had been more fortunate; no fatal schism in public taste had yet occurred; the whole of the literate public could read and enjoy Dickens and Trollope, for they catered for all levels of taste. But by the time Bennett began to write, the Education Act of 1870 had done its work, the schism in taste was a fact, and the existence side by side of Tit-Bits and The Yellow Book symbolised it as well as anything.¹⁰⁸

It is certainly true that Bennett's letters and journals abound in evidence that, in the 1890s, he was
¹⁰⁹
 'deeply preoccupied with artistic theory' and that his 'attitude towards life, the universe and himself was
¹¹⁰
 aesthetic.' Bennett was obsessively determined to

108 Walter Allen, Arnold Bennett (London, 1948), p. 24.

109 Margaret Drabble, Arnold Bennett (London, 1974), p. 65.

110 Walter Allen, op. cit., p. 33.

master the techniques of fictional writing and consequently predisposed to believe that the key methods and principles could be learnt from those masters of the art who displayed a care for style and form; his ideal of fiction was the Jamesian novel of distillation, of a balanced aesthetic form that nonetheless remained faithful to actuality. It must surely argue for the strongly pervasive presence of an aesthetic fictional ideal in the middle and late 1890s that a young provincial like Bennett should so wholeheartedly espouse the Jamesian-Turgenevan principles of formal harmony and poetic perception; for his letters and journals provide ample evidence of his seizing upon James's French and Russian associates as models of fictional technique and criteria of excellence.

From the middle 1890s Bennett was studying the 'principles of construction' from French and Russian models. In a letter to Stirt, he writes:

I must return to technics [sic]: I believe in short chapters, 2000 to 3000 words, and in making, as a rule, each chapter a complete scene, and detached - of course there are exceptions. I learnt this from the brothers de Goncourt. I must get you to read their 'Renée Mauperin'. To study the principles of its construction is both 'entertaining and instructive'.

My favourite masters and models (1) Turgenev, a royal first (you must read On the Eve - flawless, I tell you. Bring back such books of mine as you have; I have others you must read; de Maupassant (3) de Goncourts (4) George Moore - the great author who can neither write nor spell.¹¹¹

111 The Letters of Arnold Bennett, edited by James Hepburn (London, 1968), II, 28-29. Letter to Stirt of November 11, 1895.

With the publication of his story 'A Letter Home' in The Yellow Book and work underway on his first novel, Bennett's confidence in his choice of continental masters grew, manifesting itself in excursions into the theory of fictional composition which elevated the French novel of fastidious style and form above the works of earlier English nineteenth century novelists, who cared more for subject than for form:

As regards fiction, it seems to me that only within the last few years have we absorbed from France that passion for the artistic shapely presentation of truth, and that feeling for words as words, which animated Flaubert, the de Goncourts, and de Maupassant, and which is so exactly described and defined in de Maupassant's introduction to the collected works of Flaubert. None of the (so-called) great masters of English nineteenth-century fiction had (if I am right) a deep artistic interest in form and treatment; they were absorbed in 'subject' ... just as the 'anecdote' painters of the Royal Academy are absorbed in 'subject' ... Certainly they had not the feeling for words in any large degree, though one sees traces of it sometimes in the Brontes - never in George Eliot, or Jane Austen or Dickens or even Thackeray or Scott¹¹².

The 'feeling for words as words' and 'the deep artistic interest in form and treatment' take us very close to Conrad's preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus, which Bennett had read with enthusiasm weeks before the journal entry cited above: 'I have just read his new book The Nigger of the Narcissus, which has moved me to enthusiasm. Where did the man pick up that style, and that synthetic way of gathering up a general impression

112 Arnold Bennett: The Journals, edited by Frank Swinnerton (London, 1971), p. 45. Entry for January 1, 1898.

and flinging it at you? Not only his style, but his attitude affected me deeply. He is so consciously an artist.¹¹³

Bennett's conscious wish to be an artist and Conrad's consciousness of being one are both manifested in terms of an aesthetic, part Jamesian, part Paterian, that pervades the critical theory of the decade. The Paterian apotheosis of music as the pure form to which all art aspires is echoed in Conrad's 1897 preface to The Nigger¹¹⁴ ('... music - which is the art of all arts') and in a letter of Bennett's of the same year:

There is no art like music and no one who has not heard, with understanding, the later works of Richard Wagner can appreciate the emotional effects of which art is capable. Even The Tempest, Keats's Ode to a Nightingale, Turgenev's On the Eve, the three greatest literary works that I have met with so far are insignificant when confronted by these.¹¹⁵

As far as fiction is concerned, for Bennett its function must be to penetrate the veil of mere fact to arrive at the 'deeper beauty' which those facts enclose. At the same time the novel must display fidelity to outward reality. His conception of fiction is very clearly the Jamesian one of the selection and re-arrangement of data, rather than the naturalistic replication of the outer forms of life.

113 Letters, II, 94. Letter to Wells, December 8, 1897.

114 Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. 12.

115 Letters, II, 88. Letter to Mrs Penrose, July 16, 1897.

To find beauty, which is always hidden; that is the aim ... My desire is to depict the deeper beauty while abiding by the envelope of facts. At the worst, the facts should not be ignored. They might, for the sake of more clearly disclosing the beauty, suffer a certain distortion - I can't think of a better word. Indeed, they cannot be ignored in the future. The achievements of the finest French writers, with Turgenev and Tolstoy, have set a standard for all coming masters of fiction.¹¹⁶

To find the writer later to be accused by Virginia Woolf of perceiving life as 'a set of symmetrically arranged gig-lamps' expressing so thoroughgoing an aestheticism must surely be proof of the strength and pervasiveness of the aesthetic theory of fiction in the 1890s. For Bennett's views, sincerely though they may be held, are very clearly the received ideas of a decade in which the novel's purpose was clearly seen as the unification of essential truth, of poetic intensity and pathos with the 'air of reality'. To all who subscribed to this view, and to Bennett in particular, Turgenev's novels represented the perfect incorporation of this fictional ideal.

Bennett's admiration for Turgenev, his determination to learn from his fiction and his wish to publish a book on him amount almost to an obsession throughout the middle and late 1890s. By his own admission, he was guilty of 'ramming down the throats' of his friends - some of whom, like Wells and Sturt were clearly sceptical - the novels of Turgenev and the lessons to be learnt from them: 'I have just read Turgenev's Smoke-Man, we have more

116 Journals, pp. 53-54. Entry for January 3, 1899.

to learn in mere technique from Turgenev than from any other soul. He is simply unspeakable. I will ram this statement down your throat when I see you with the book in front of us.'¹¹⁷

When Stirt refused to take his medicine, Bennett responded with playful derision and a full exposition of what he perceived as Turgenev's great virtue:

You may have guessed before now that I entertain a certain respect for your critical opinion upon things literary, and when that opinion differs from my own, my instinct is towards self-distrust. Believe, therefore, that when I say 'Pooh!' to your estimate of Turgenev, I am supported by an immense and abiding consciousness of being absolutely and entirely in the right of the matter.

On the Eve is more than a nice novel; it is a great novel. I think if I could read it in Russian I should set it down as the greatest within my knowledge. It will repay the most minute study - that minute study which I hope some day to give it as some preliminary towards an article on 'Turgenev technically considered.'

I know exactly how you have been misled. The 'austerity of the technique' has deceived you, sir, in the most cruel manner. What you need is a steeping in Flaubert, de Goncourts (especially de Goncourts) and de Maupassant. I am aware you have read a lot of French - but not enough and not in the right spirit, not with the iron determination to distinguish between matter and method. This done, like a schoolboy who has got through his Ceasar, you may turn anew to the Supreme Turgenev with a better chance of appreciating.

He has not 'celared the artem', eh? With due respect to Horace, why in God's name should the artem be celared, by an artificial cloud of dialogue, digression and minor incident, such as our English novelists are accustomed to make? Turgenev disdains, simply disdains. There is no reason why art should be concealed, as there is no reason why it should be paraded.

Art is art, and the artist need not be ashamed of it. What you implicitly demand is false modesty.

Turgenev, having conceived his story, deliberately turns aside from any artfulness, and seeks to present it in the simplest, most straight-forward form. That is why he can tell in 60,000 words a history which George Eliot or Thomas Hardy would only have hinted at in 200,000. He is the Bach of fiction, whose severity and simplicity are mistaken (by those whose sensibilities have been cloyed by the Mendelssohns and Wagners /sic/ of fiction) for lack of imagination and baldness. I used to think that Bach was a lofty creature without a heart; but I have been told by people who know that he is as emotional as any composer that ever lived, and I am now beginning to see as much for myself. This is rather beside the point, even as a parallel, but it may illustrate (vaguely) what I mean with regard to Turgenev.¹¹⁸

Its prejudiced nature aside, Bennett's letter is a perfect illustration of that shift in the theory of fiction that the combined influences of Henry James and the Aesthetic Movement brought about in the 1890s, and from which Turgenev's reputation not only received a new lease of life but grew to such an extent that James's claim for him as 'the novelist's novelist' was vindicated and realised.

Bennett jokingly referred to himself as England's
¹¹⁹
 foremost authority on Turgenev and planned in the late
¹²⁰
 1890s to write a book on him . But ignorance of Russian
 and the lack of reliable sources of information on Turgenev

118 Letters, II, 37-38. Letter to Stirt, March 8, 1896.

119 Letters, II, 160. Letter to Wells, October 16, 1901.

120 Letters, II, 62. Letter to Stirt, September 28, 1896.

compelled him to defer to the couple who truly were the country's foremost authorities on the subject - Constance and Edward Garnett. For what Bennett's case illustrates is the manifest importance of the Garnett translations and their prefaces in a decade preoccupied with the 'art' of fiction. Full of enthusiasm for Turgenev and excited by references in Garnett's prefaces to background information on him, Bennett wrote to Edward Garnett expressing admiration for the prefaces and inquiring about Garnett's allusion to Pavlonsky's Souvenirs sur Tourgueneff:

... be so good as to give me further particulars of the book Souvenirs sur Tourgueneff mentioned in your introduction to On the Eve ... My excuse for thus troubling you must be that I am making a study of Turgenev as a constructive artist in fiction and that I fully share your admiration for his work ... Your prefaces to the different novels contain some of the best criticism of fiction that I have ever come across. Especially that to Smoke. Strictly technical criticism (particularly on the point of construction) seems almost a minus quantity in both England and France. It is one of my ambitions to revive it - if indeed it was ever alive. I may mention that I have more than once had the pleasure of appreciating your edition of Turgenev in the columns of Woman, a little paper of which I am editor¹²¹.

As Garnett's biographer has noted, Bennett was later to pay tribute to Edward's importance as the self-appointed high-priest of the art of fiction. In a contribution to The New Age Bennett was to recall 'Edward Garnett's introductions to the works of Turgenev contributed something new in English literary criticisms; they cast a fresh light on the art of fiction, completing

121 Letters, II, 80-81. Letter to Garnett, February 14, 1897.

the fitful illuminations offered by the essays of George
 122
 Moore.'

In fact, although the projected book was never written, Bennett's own critique of Turgenev in The Academy of November 1899 is itself both a salute to the work of the Garnetts and a significant contribution to the study of Turgenev in England. By the standards of earlier periodical writing on Turgenev, Bennett's article is reliable, informative and free of that philistine insularity that characterises so much nineteenth-century English writing on foreign authors. It combines information, appreciation and criticism in a readable way that makes Bennett's talents as a journalist quite apparent. Yet the article makes plain that it is not as a journalist, but as an artist that Bennett wishes to succeed; for it is shaped by its author's curiosity about Turgenev's working methods and by his assumption that there is a fiction of consummate formal achievement that is to be distinguished from the fiction of popular appeal.

After expressing regret that Constance Garnett had not chosen to translate Turgenev's Literary Reminiscences, Bennett proceeds to make use of the de Goncourt Journal as a source of anecdotal information about Turgenev's life. But the Journal fails to satisfy his curiosity as to how Turgenev actually went about the job of composing a novel:

122 Quoted in W. Martin 'The New Age' under Orage
 (Manchester, 1967), p. 84.

... even the all embracing Journal, to which nothing came amiss, is silent or nearly so on the supreme question: Turgenev's methods of work and the origin and growth of that consummate skill which places him in one respect above all other novelists. Guns and women: he would discuss these. What of writing, and those intimate details about actual pen-work which, as in the case of Stevenson must always fascinate the admirers of a great literary artist?¹²³

This thirst for 'details about actual pen-work' reflects Bennett's belief that the art of fiction is an arcane practise, which in turn reflects the 'aestheticisation' of the novel taking place in the 1890s. Like James before him, Bennett is amazed that so consummate an artist as Turgenev could admire Dickens ('It is strange that Turgenev, whose work marks him as a hater of exaggeration in any form, was an enthusiastic admirer of Dickens'¹²⁴); and he is convinced that Turgenev's failure to appeal to the public as he has appealed to men of letters is because of the relative crudity of popular taste:

... it is natural that people who concern themselves with art only in their leisure moments, demanding from it nothing but a temporary distraction, should prefer the obvious to the recondite, and should walk regardless of beauty unless it forces itself upon their attention by means of exaggerations and advertisement. The public wants to be struck, hit squarely in the face; then it will take notice. Most of the great artists, by chance or design, have performed that feat. But Turgenev happens not to have done so.¹²⁵

123 'Ivan Turgenev, an enquiry', p. 515.

124 Ibid., p. 516.

125 Ibid., p. 516.

In Bennett's erection of Turgenev into a totem of artistic value, a whole aspect of English cultural history is epitomised - that developing schism between popular culture and élite culture which is by now an accomplished fact, and of which Bennett's own career - from contributor to Tit-Bits to serious novelist - is a representative case-history.

In fact, for all Bennett's avowed intentions of learning from Turgenev's method, his own first novel, the autobiographical A Man from the North (1898), is much less like a Turgenev novel than Galsworthy's Villa Rubein. Although written in the third person, its autobiographical origins lead naturally to the writer's close identification with Richard Larch, the central figure, so that it lacks uniformly detached dramatisation of character and event typical of Turgenev's fiction. Correspondingly, much of the novel is given over to the hero's psychological and emotional motivation, announced rather than behaviourally and dramatically implied as it commonly is in Turgenev. In narrative mode A Man from the North might be described as a form of attenuated naturalism, rather than the lyrical realism of Turgenev's novels.

Only insofar as it deals with that characteristic theme of the 1890s, the theme of failure, does A Man from the North recall Turgenev. Richard Larch fails to become a writer and fails to find the kind of all enveloping love for which he has hoped. But his failures are relative, not absolute; he succeeds in his professional

life and he does find love of a kind. His is not the complete structural failure of temperament and circumstances that besets Rudin and Nezhdanov, while the introspectiveness he displays is not made to appear especially disabling. If anything, Richard Larch's misfortune is that he is not a superfluous man, that he adapts all too well to a petit-bourgeois mode of existence.

It must, therefore, be taken as a mark of Turgenev's standing among critics and writers in the late 1890s that, despite all its manifest differences from his work, A Man from the North should have been compared, in certain of its aspects, with Turgenev's work. Eden Phillpotts in a review in Black and White claimed that the portrayal of Adeline reminded him 'forcibly of Turgenev, not only in its artistic method of elaboration, but also in breadth and sympathy'¹²⁶, while an anonymous reviewer in the Manchester Guardian considered Richard Larch to be distinctly reminiscent of Turgenev's Hamletic heroes:

The subject is not a very attractive one, and the hero, it must be confessed is a cold fish at the best. We have met him before in Hamlet and Virgin Soil, but the problems which palsied the wills of the heroes of those tragedies were worth solving. The difficulties of Richard Larch, we cannot but feel, might have been removed by a touch of vice. An English clerk, it is to be feared would have solved them in

126 Eden Phillpotts, review of A Man from the North, Black and White, March 12, 1898, reprinted in Arnold Bennett, The critical Heritage, edited by James Hepburn (London, 1981), p. 44.

this way. Such obsessions of indecisions are more Russian than English.¹²⁷

It need hardly be said that this review does much less than justice to Bennett's novel. What Bennett achieves in A Man from the North strikes not a distinctly foreign note, as the Manchester Guardian claims, but a distinctly English one. Bennett's novel; successfully combines an individual socio-psychological study with an exploration of the relationship between artistic aspiration and the commercial ethic, and does so in such a way that it effectively reproduces the texture of living in late Victorian England. It may not find the beauty, which is always hidden but it certainly 'abides by the envelope of facts'. While it may not achieve that artistic form demanded by James - and by Bennett himself - it manages a 'solidity of specification' that is in itself a considerable achievement.

That Bennett had not achieved that concentrated selectivity of the Turgenevan novel was noted by Conrad, who, with his customary courtly politeness, paid tribute to the book in a letter to Bennett, but delicately observed that it achieved its realism at the expense of aesthetic resonance and penetration:

Generally, however, I may say that the die has not been struck hard enough. Here's a piece of pure metal scrupulously shaped with a true - and more - a beautiful ring; but the die has not been struck hard enough. I admit

127 Unsigned review in the Manchester Guardian, March 15, 1898, reprinted in Arnold Bennett. The Critical Heritage, p. 145.

that the outlines of the design are sharp enough. What it wants is a more emphatic modelling; more relief. And one could even quarrel with the design itself. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have it out with you, the book there on the table, to be thumped and caressed. I would quarrel not with the truth of your conception but with the realism thereof. You stop just short of being absolutely real because you are faithful to your dogmas of realism. Now realism in art will never approach reality. And your art, your gift should be put to the service of a larger and freer faith.¹²⁸

Ironically, of course, Bennett's dogmas, at the time of the novel's composition, were not those of realism, but of fictional aestheticism. In terms of the wider literary context, what Conrad's remarks illustrate is the developing tension between a firmly established convention of fictional realism and a concern with the relationship between form and meaning, already passing into symbolism ('... realism in art will never approach reality.') However much he may have wished it otherwise, Bennett remained rooted in that convention of realism. As Bernard Bergonzi has observed, '... Bennett never acquired the concentration of those writers who were more centrally in the Flaubertian tradition and who regarded the novel as a supremely important literary form ...'¹²⁹ This most fervent admirer of Turgenev never achieved the novels of lyrical distillation of his master; the distance between the banks of the Moscow River and the Five Towns proved, in the end, too

128 Life and Letters, I, 302-303. Letter to Bennett of March 10, 1902.

129 Sphere History of Literature in the English Language, (London, 1970), VII, 26.

great. Bennett's dedication to Turgenev in the 1890s has a significance that is all the more representative and indicative of the prevailing literary climate for its not being made manifest in his own work.

(ii) The Garnett Translations

In the first part of this chapter, I have tried to illustrate the importance of Turgenev's work for a decade in which, perhaps more than at any other time, a distinct fictional aesthetic prevailed in England. I wish finally to consider the achievement which made it possible for Turgenev to be so deeply admired - the fifteen volumes of Turgenev's work translated into English by Constance Garnett between 1894 and 1899.

The most eloquent tribute to Constance Garnett's achievement surely comes in a letter from Conrad to her husband, Edward: 'For the rest, Turgenev for me is Constance Garnett and Constance Garnett is Turgenev. She has done the marvellous thing of placing the man's work inside English literature, and it is there that I see it - or rather that I feel it'¹³⁰. Given Conrad's russophobia, the placing of Turgenev outside Russian literature might be assumed to be of as much importance as his being placed inside English literature. Nevertheless, his point is the valid one that only by Constance's efforts was Turgenev fully incorporated into the English literary consciousness,

130 Life and Letters, II, 192. Letter to Garnett, May, 1917.

rather than being simply an object of exotic interest, that nevertheless remained alien. It is of interest, therefore, to establish the circumstances in which she came to translate his work, at a time when Tolstoy seemed to be emerging as a primary focus of English interest in Russia.

George Jefferson, in his recent work on Edward Garnett, has given a detailed account of the Garnett's early married life. Drawing on sources made available to him by their grandson, Richard, and other family connections, he has described how the Garnetts' involvement with free-thinking and radical circles in the London of the 1890s brought them into touch with the political exiles Volkhovsky, Kropotkin and Kravchinsky (Stepnyak)¹³¹. It was Felix Volkhovsky who introduced Constance both to Russian and to Stepnyak, whose influence on her work was to be of the greatest importance. The Garnett household in the early 1890s clearly represented a microcosm of the contemporary intelligentsia, absorbed as they were in current ethical and political issues; in that climate of earnest inquiry, Constance began her work:

During the evenings in the cosy cottage, Constance, Edward and his sister Olive endlessly discussed false ideas of morality, oppression in Ireland, the Friends of Russian Freedom founded by Seton-Watson and the periodical Free Russia which Volkhovsky edited with Stepniak. In her enforced idleness the practical Constance set herself seriously to the task of learning Russian from Volkhovsky and began translating, as an exercise Goncharov's 'A Common Story'. The first sentence took her hours to puzzle out but she advanced to translating a

131 See Jefferson, Edward Garnett Ch. 2, 'The Young Garnetts', pp. 15-30.

page a day, writing it out as she deciphered it.

However, Constance was to make rapid progress in her translating after meeting Stepnyak, who took a keen interest in her work and soon became her chief adviser and authority. Indeed, it is clear that Constance's passion for Russia and Russian became inseparable from her strong feelings for Stepnyak. Bellamy quotes from a manuscript of Constance's, in the possession of the Garnett family, in which she speaks of him as '... the most aesthetically sensitive and appreciative man I have known' with 'a gift for divining the best others could do and for inspiring them to do better still'¹³³. It was clearly at Stepnyak's suggestion that Constance undertook her first visit to Russia in the winter of 1892-93 and his idea that she should undertake the translation of Turgenev. Constance's mission to Russia had the twofold purpose of carrying money for famine relief and letters to social revolutionary contacts of Stepnyak's and his anarchist emigré associates. As her son, David Garnett, recalled: 'It was ... largely on Stepnyak's errands that my mother left her husband and her baby and went to Russia in the winter of 1892-¹³⁴ 93.'

The relationship between Stepnyak and Constance placed strains upon her marriage to Edward, which had

132 Ibid., p. 20.

133 Ibid., p. 21.

134 David Garnett, The Golden Echo (London, 1953), p. 14.

repurcussions upon the Heinemann translation of Turgenev, that had been commissioned after her successful execution of Tolstoy's The Kingdom of God is within us. As Jefferson notes, '... Constance and Stepnyak were very much in love and Edward found this hard to bear',¹³⁵ . The complex tensions between the three surfaced over the question of Stepnyak's projected prefaces for the Garnett translations of Turgenev. Heinemann was reluctant to have the flamboyant revolutionary associated with the venture; Edward suggested to the publisher that Stepnyak should write the prefaces but that his name should not be advertised. Jefferson quotes the diary of Constance's sister-in-law, Olive, as recording the former's annoyance: '... she [Constance] would not have half of the pleasure in translating if he has no share, the idea was his, and no one else can give the facts about these epoch-making novels as he can.'¹³⁶

When Stepnyak, offended by Heinemann's attitude, refused to do more than the five prefaces he had completed, Edward suggested to his wife that he should complete them. Jefferson quotes a letter in the possession of the Garnett family, which gives some indication of the complex relationships obtaining between the Garnetts and their family friend:

... I feel very strongly that you must not undertake them. It is just like you to suggest it to get Stepniak out of a hole and

135 Jefferson, p. 21.

136 Quoted in Ibid., p. 23.

to help me - but I can't consent to it. You know very well you can't do that sort of criticism easily in a slipshod fluent way - and to write on the same author - four times in succession - even though you only write half a dozen pages each time would be an awful grind. To write something good on Turgenev - you must either put the accepted views of him more beautifully and aptly than they have been put, or else take a new line about him. You could perhaps do either of these if you gave time and trouble but you feel no impulse to do it from either, and I won't have you take time and trouble on it. You want to keep all your energies for work you care for and feel really drawn to. I know if you did the work ever so slightly and quickly I should like it a great deal better than a preface by a fool like Gosse and his tribe. But I would rather have a foolish preface by Gosse than a slipshod one by you or a good one that cost you time and trouble. The money would be nice but we don't want it and you must not write potboilers. Then Stepniak's position in retiring after the second preface is ludicrous, to retire after the first is comparatively sensible and dignified.¹³⁷

In the event, only two prefaces by Stepnyak were published - to Rudin and A House of Gentlefolk - and Edward, despite his wife's strictures, did undertake the task of writing the rest. The difficulties over the introductions was resolved by Stepnyak's tragic death in December 1895. David Garnett has recorded the impact of that event on his mother.

Stepniak's death was a blow from which it took my mother long to recover. But it only cemented more deeply friendship with his widow, Fanny, who came to live at Crockham Hill, so as to be near us, and with other Russians, particularly those who had been close friends of Sergey's. The chief of those were Prince Peter Kropotkin and Felix Volkhovsky and his daughter Vera.¹³⁸

137 Undated letter from Constance to Edward Garnett, quoted in Jefferson, pp. 27-28.

138 The Golden Echo, p. 20.

The completion of the Heinemann Turgenev became for Constance a monument to her late guide and mentor, and the penultimate volume, published in 1899 was dedicated to 'the memory of Stepniak whose love of Turgenev suggested this translation'.

It is clear, then, that Constance, after practising upon Goncharov and Tolstoy, turned to Turgenev at Stepnyak's suggestion and the consequence of this, as I have sought to show, was an enhancement of Turgenev's reputation in England at a culturally propitious moment. It would appear that Stepnyak's love of Turgenev stemmed partly from that 'aesthetic sensitivity' with which Constance credited him. Indeed, the two Stepnyak prefaces show his appreciation of Turgenev as an artist taking essentially the same form, and being expressed in essentially the same aesthetic terms, as Edward Garnett's later ones. Consistent with the current fictional aesthetic, he justifies his predilection for Turgenev over Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky on the grounds of the former's superior artistry, drawing, as James, Garnett, Bennett and others did, upon analogies with established art forms:

Tolstoi is more plastical, and certainly as deep and original and rich in creative power as Turgenev, and Dostoyevsky is more intense, fervid, and dramatic. But as an artist, as master of the combination of details into a harmonious whole, as an architect of imaginative work, he surpasses all the prose writers of his country, and has but few equals among the great novelists of other lands ... Turgenev does not give us at one stroke sculptured figures made from one block, such as

rise before us from Tolstoi's pages. His art is rather that of a painter than of a sculptor. 139

But it is also as a record of a period of Russia's history, with which he had been deeply involved, that Turgenev's works mattered to Stepnyak:

Thus, during one of the most interesting periods of our national history, Turgenev was the standard-bearer and inspirer of the Liberal, the thinking Russia. Although the two men stand at diametrically opposite poles, Turgenev's position can be compared to that of Count Tolstoi's nowadays, with a difference, this time in favour of the author of Dmitri Rudin. With Turgenev the thinker and the artist are not at war, spoiling and sometimes contradicting each others efforts. They go hand in hand, because he never preaches any doctrine whatever, but gives us, with an unimpeachable, artistic objectiveness, the living men and women in whom certain ideas, doctrines, and aspirations were embodied. And he never evolves these ideas and doctrines from his inner consciousness, but takes them from real life, catching with his unfailing artistic instinct an incipient movement just at the moment when it was to become a historic feature of the time. Thus his novels are a sort of artistic epitome of the intellectual history of modern Russia, and also a powerful instrument of her intellectual progress. 140

To Stepnyak, Turgenev's works would have been an 'artistic epitome' of the Russia he had left behind in 1882 and to which he was unlikely ever to return in safety. While Dostoyevsky's works treated radicalism unfavourably, and Tolstoy's hardly at all, Turgenev's novels dealt directly with those forces in which Stepnyak had been involved as a youth. Stepnyak had himself written a novel in English about the revolutionary activism of the 1870s, The Career

139 Introduction to Rudin, Garnett, I, vi-vii and xxiv.

140 Garnett, I, xvii-xviii.

of a Nihilist, a work which, as Richard Freeborn has shown in his recent study, The Russian Revolutionary Novel,¹⁴¹ is heavily indebted to Turgenev. Stepnyak was fixated upon the phase of history with which Turgenev's fiction dealt; that phase, even as he wrote his own novel, was being superseded by one in which Marxian socialism, rather than heroic individualism, was to be the basis of revolutionary activity. Certainly by the 1890s, what Freeborn calls Stepnyak's 'Turgenevan vision of the isolated, influential intelligent who could change Russia by his words and his example'¹⁴² was sadly anachronistic. None of this prevented Stepnyak from urging upon Constance Garnett the translation of a novelist who, in his words, 'will certainly live in his writings for many generations.'¹⁴³ Turgenev's pride of place in the corpus of Garnett translations can, therefore be accounted for in part by Stepnyak's preoccupation with the drama of his own youth.

That Stepnyak inspired the translations of Turgenev, and that he gave detailed advice to Constance on the first few volumes is beyond doubt. Precisely to what extent his

141 Richard Freeborn, The Russian Revolutionary Novel (Cambridge, 1982), p. 30. Freeborn has drawn attention to the interesting obituary on Stepnyak written by Bernard Shaw in To-Morrow, I (1896), in which Shaw places Stepnyak firmly in the Turgenev 'party', as opposed to the Tolstoyan.

142 Ibid., p. 37.

143 Sergey Stepnyak, Underground Russia (London, 1883), p. 2.

advice went is more problematical. Regrettably, at the time of writing, Mr Richard Garnett was unable to afford me access to family papers at Hilton Hall. His kind and helpful reply to a letter of inquiry concerning the translations indicates that, to his knowledge, the problems of translation are little discussed in Constance's letters¹⁴⁴. Nor can it be established with certainty which Russian edition of Turgenev's works Constance used for her translations; the catalogue of David Garnett's library, which contains many of his parents' books, indicates a mere handful of works by Turgenev, and these¹⁴⁵ in either English or French.

The firmest indication of the kind of help Stepnyak gave, as well as of the number of volumes on which he collaborated, is provided by the short interview for radio, later published in The Listener, which Constance gave a few weeks before her death in 1946. Because it not only gives a partial insight into the nature of the help which Constance received, but also an indication of what Turgenev meant to her, the interview merits substantial quotation:

I should like to be judged by my translation of Tolstoy's War and Peace. But Tolstoy's simple style goes straight into English without any trouble. There's no difficulty. Dostoievsky is so obscure and so careless a writer that one can scarcely help clarifying him - sometimes it needs some penetration to see what

144 Letter to the author, December 17, 1983.

145 David Garnett, a writer's library, Nicholas Barker, published by Michael Hosking, Bookseller (Deal, Kent, 1983), pp. 152-153.

he is trying to say. Turgenev is much the most difficult of the Russians to translate because his style is the most beautiful.

Once when I was translating The Sportsman's Sketches, I gave the first draft of six of the stories to the Russian revolutionary leader, Stepniak, to read over. I had put, as I always did, alternative words above the line, wherever I was in some doubt of the right word. Well, when I had finished all the stories in the volume, I asked Stepniak for my manuscript, but he declared he had given it back to me. However, I could not remember his doing so, and it was nowhere to be found. So I translated the six stories again. When I had done this Stepniak found my first translation among his papers and returned it, so I compared the two translations to choose the best passages from each. To my surprise I found they were identical. I had hesitated in the same places, over the same words, and had written the same possible alternatives above the line in the same places. I concluded that though someone else might do a better version, it was clear that I could not myself. I had done the only version I was capable of. I took far more trouble over my translations of Turgenev and Chekov than over any of my other translations because their Russian is so beautiful. I was very much pleased because the Russian critic, Zhdanov, said it was impossible to translate Turgenev, and afterwards took the trouble to go through some of my translations carefully, and said he was amazed that it was possible for them to have been so well done.¹⁴⁶

How well done were they? Edmund Wilson's charges of omission and error in his essay 'Turgenev and the Life-Giving Drop' amount to dismissal:

The translations of Constance Garnett are full of omissions and errors: the translations of Isabel Hapgood do not omit, but are also full of errors and often extremely clumsy. Neither lady seems ever to have thought of taking the indispensable precaution of reading her version to a Russian holding the Russian text, who would at once have spotted the dropped-out negatives

146 'Russian Literature in English', The Listener (January 30, 1947), p. 195.

and the cases of one word mistaken for another. ¹⁴⁷

Constance's remarks in her Listener interview appear to confound Wilson's charge that she failed to consult a native speaker. (Whether the mercurial Stepnyak 'held the text in his hand', we cannot know!) As to the value of the texts, Soviet scholars have been more charitable than Wilson. A 1967 survey of Anglo-American literature on Turgenev observes that: '... the Garnett translations ... remain the best means available to the English speaking countries, of familiarizing themselves with ¹⁴⁸ Turgenev, despite the appearance of new translations.'

In order to assess the validity of Wilson's criticisms and to establish what are the strengths and weaknesses of the Heinemann Turgenev, I have examined, on a word-for-word basis, a selection of texts. We know, from Constance's own remarks, that Stepnyak went on helping her up to and including the translation of A Sportsman's Sketches. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that he had some advisory part in at least the first five volumes of the Garnett translations. (The sixth volume, Smoke, has a preface by Edward Garnett, dated January 1896; it must, therefore, be considered possible that Stepnyak, who was killed in December 1895, may have advised on the translation of that volume as well). From this first third of her Turgenev translations, I have selected for

147 Published in Turgenev's Literary Reminiscences, translated by D. Magarshack (London 1958), p. 46.

148 Yu. D. Levin, 'Novyeishaya anglo-amerikanskoye literatura o Turgeneve', Literaturnoye nasledstvo, LXXVI (Moskva, 1967), 505. My translation.

examination, Rudin, the first volume to be published, and a sample story, Lgov, from the last volume upon which it is reasonable to assume Stepnyak advised. From the post-Stepnyak period, I have examined 'A Tour in the Forest' of Volume XIII and 'An Unhappy Girl' of Volume XV. This selective examination does not bear out Wilson's charge that the translations are 'full of omissions and errors'. There are errors and there are omissions, but the former are few and relatively minor, while the latter appear to occur mainly in idiomatic dialogue - and then rarely. In fact, the main deficiency of the Garnett translations is a stylistic one - a lack of responsiveness to idiom and nuance that at times amounts to mistranslation. Naturally enough, this is most marked in dialogue and particularly in peasant speech.

This relative insensitivity to dialogue in Russian has been remarked upon by Edward Crankshaw in the tribute appended to Constance's 1947 Listener interview. Crankshaw is full of praise for Constance Garnett's work, but, *a propos* of her translations of Chekov's plays, observes a significant stultification of dialogue:

I spoke earlier of certain blind spots in her so highly developed instinct for words and meaning. And the greatest of these appears when it comes to dramatic writing involving dialogue. She did, it seems to me lack the sense of dialogue. As a tiny example, the commonest Russian exclamation is 'Bozhe Moy!' Now 'Bozhe Moy!' translated literally means 'My God!' And so in her dialogue, Mrs Garnett insists on rendering it. But Irina or Olga in 'The Three Sisters' with their perpetual 'Bozhe Moys!' do not really mean 'My God!' at all, which in English is a strong exclamation. What they mean is 'Good heavens!' or 'Oh Lord!', or as often as not 'Oh dear!' -

sometimes, indeed, no more than a sigh. In other words, in Russian 'Bozhe Moy!' can mean no more than a slightly demonstrative sigh. In English 'My God!' could not. I said that was a tiny example, but the whole of Constance Garnett's dialogue is liable to be emotionally stepped up in that way.¹⁴⁹

In fact, this 'blind spot' for dialogue sometimes works to the opposite effect in Constance's translations of Turgenev; it 'steps down' the vigour of speech by its tendency to frame dialogue in an undifferentiated idiom of gentility. This is, not surprisingly, most apparent in her renderings of peasant speech, in which Turgenev has sought to preserve the salt and vigour of the original. Two examples from Rudin of this emasculation of dialogue will serve to illustrate the point. The first is from Chapter I of Rudin and concerns Alexandra Pavlovna's visit to the sick peasant woman; the second is from Chapter XII of the novel and features the exchange of insults between Rudin's peasant driver and a man walking along the road. In each case, after quoting the relevant passage of Russian, I have juxtaposed Constance Garnett's translation with the 1974 Penguin Books translation by Professor Richard Freeborn. Freeborn's version attempts - successfully - to reproduce the distinctively pithy and idiomatic nature of peasant speech in a corresponding English rustic idiom; Garnett's, by contrast, makes scarcely any distinction between the idiom in which the peasantry speak and that used by the gentry.

149 'Work of Constance Garnett', The Listener (January 30, 1947), p. 196.

(1)

Pol. sob. soch., VI, 238.

- Приняла, - проговорил старик, остановившийся у двери.

Александра Павловна обратилась к нему.

- Кроме тебя, при ней никого нет? - спросила она.

- Есть девочка - ее внучка, да все вот отлучается. Не посидит: такая егозливая. Воды подать испить бабке - и то лень. А я сам стар: куда мне?

- Не перевезти ли ее ко мне в больницу?

- Нет! зачем в больницу! все одно помирать-то. Пожила довольно; видно, уж так богу угодно. С лежанки не сходит. Где ж ей в больницу! Ее станут поднимать, она и помрет.

- Ох, - застонала больная, - красавица-барыня, сироточку-то мою не оставь; наши господа далеко, а ты ...

Старушка умолкла. Она говорила через силу.

Rudin (trans. Garnett, I, 3-4)

'She has taken it,' said the old man who was standing at the door.

Alexandra Pavlovna turned to him.

'Is there no one with her but you?' she inquired.

'There is the girl - her granddaughter, but she always keeps away. She won't sit with her; she's such a gad-about. To give the old woman a drink of water is too much trouble for her. And I am old; what use can I be?'

'Shouldn't she be taken to me - to the hospital?'

'No. Why take her to the hospital? She would die just the same. She has lived her life; it's God's will now seemingly. She will never get up again. How could she go to the hospital? If they tried to lift her up, she would die.'

'Oh!' moaned the sick woman, 'my pretty lady, don't abandon my little orphan; our master is far away, but you -'

She could say no more, she had spent all her strength saying so much.

Rudin (trans. Freeborn, p. 28)

'She took it,' said the old man, who had stopped by the door.

Alexandra Pavlovna turned to him.

'Apart from you is there no one looking after her?'

'There's a girl, her granddaughter,'cept she's away all the time. Won't keep still: right fidgety she is. It's too much for her just to give her gran a drink o' water. An' I'm old; what can I do?'

'Why not have her transferred to my hospital?'

'No! She's for no hospital! She'll die all the same. She's lived a fair while, seein' it's as God would have it. She won't get down from that bench. Where's the point of 'er goin' to hospital? Soon as try liftin' her she'll die.'

'O-oh,' the sick woman started groaning, 'dear, fine lady that you are, don't abandon my little orphan girl; our master's far away, but you ...'

The old woman fell silent. Speaking had been too much for her.

(2)

Pol. sob. soch., VI, 351-352

- Когда же это мы до станции доедем? - спросил он мужика, сидевшего на облучке.

А вот, батюшка, - заговорил мужик и еще сильнее задергал вожжами, - как на взволочек взберемся, версты две останется, не боле ... Ну, ты! думай ... Я тебе подумаю, - прибавил он тоненьким голосом, принимаясь стегать правую пристяжную.

- Ты, кажется, очень плохо едешь, - заметил Рудин, - мы с самого утра тащимся и никак доехать не можем. Ты бы хоть спел что-нибудь.

- Да что будешь делать, батюшка! Лошади, вы сами видите, заморенные ... опять жара ... А петь мы не можем: мы не ямщики ... Барашек, а барашек! - воскликнул вдруг мужичок, обращаясь к прохожему в бурой свитчонке и стоптанных лаптишках, - посторонись, барашек.

- Вишь ты ... кучер! - пробормотал ему вслед прохожий и остановился. - Московская косточка! - прибавил он голосом, исполненным укоризны, потряхнул головой и заковылял далее.

- Куда ты! - подхватил мужичок с расстановкой, дергая коренную, - ах ты, лукавая! право, лукавая ...

Rudin (trans. Garnett, I, 227)

'When are we coming to a station?' he inquired of the peasant sitting in front.

'Just over the hill, little father', said the peasant, with a still more violent shaking of the reins. 'There are two versts farther to go, not more ... Come! there! look about you ... I'll teach you,' he added in a shrill voice, setting to work to whip the right-hand horse.

'You seem to drive very badly,' observed Rudin; 'we have been crawling along since early morning, and we have not succeeded in getting there yet. You should have sung something.'

'Well, what would you have, little father? The horses, you see yourself, are overdone, ... and then the heat; and I can't sing. I'm not a coachman ... Hullo, you little sheep!' cried the peasant, suddenly turning to a man coming along in a brown smock and slippers down-trodden at heel. 'Get out of the way!'

'You're a nice driver!' muttered the man after him, and stood still. 'You wretched Muscovite,' he added in a voice full of contempt, shook his head and limped away.

'What are you up to?' sang out the peasant at intervals, pulling at the shaft-horse. 'Ah you devil! I declare.'

Rudin (trans. Freeborn, p. 161)

'When on earth are we going to get to the post-station?' he asked the peasant sitting up on the driving board.

'It's like this, sir, it is,' said the peasant and gave a stronger tug at the reins, 'when we get up that 'ill there'll be no more'n a mile to go ... Hey, you there! Mind now ... I'll mind you,

I will,' he added in a thin voice, giving the right-hand horse a taste of the whip.

'You seem to be making very poor time,' Rudin remarked. 'We've been crawling along since this morning and simply don't seem to be able to get there. You might at least sing something.'

'There's nothin's to be done about it, sir! See for yoursen, the 'orses are all worn out ... It's the heat again. An' I'm not a singin' man, I'm not one o' them cabbies ... Mutton-head, hey mutton-head!' the little peasant suddenly shouted, addressing a passer-by in a short brown coat and dilapidated bast footwear. 'Get out of the way, mutton-head!'

'Look out yourself ... so-called driver!' muttered the passer-by in his wake and came to a stop. 'Moscow hayseed!' he added in a voice brimming with reproach, shook his head, and went hobbling on his way.

'An' where might you be off to?' struck up the little peasant in his drawling way, giving the shaft-horse a tug. 'Ah, you're a sly one! A real sly one, for sure!'

Constance Garnett's failure to render the peasant idiom with anything like its original expressiveness, while it might in parts be attributable to the limitations of her own middle-class background, can also be seen as consistent with the prevailing aesthetic sensibility of the 1890s. As we have observed, Turgenev was widely regarded in the 1890s as a model of stylistic and compositional delicacy. Constance's tendency to render the common and idiomatic speech that occurs in his writing in a genteel style might well stem from a wish, conscious or otherwise, to invest her work with a uniform delicacy and poise that matched both the current conception of the novel as high art and the notion of Turgenev as its exemplar.

Where omissions occur in the Garnett translations, it is most frequently because of difficulties with the rendering of non-standard idioms in speech. Again, two examples will illustrate the point, one from Rudin and one from the later translation (1899) of 'An Unhappy Girl'.

In Chapter II of Rudin, Pigasov is deriding the Ukrainian language, claiming it to be not an independent language in its own right, but a laughable antique variant of standard Russian. He gives an example of a sentence he once asked a Ukrainian to translate from Russian. Garnett omits completely the reply which Pigasov claims was given, signifying the omission by a series of dots; Freeborn attempts to give a sense of the joke Pigasov is making by rendering the Ukrainian into a pseudo-rustic and pseudo-antique English:

Pol. sob. soch., VI, 254-255

- Помилуйте! - воскликнул Басистов. - Что вы это такое говорите? Это ни с чем не сообразно. Я жил в Малороссии, люблю ее и язык ее знаю ... "Грае, грае воропае" - совершенная бессмыслица. - Может быть, а хохол все-таки заплачет. Вы говорите: язык ... Да разве существует малороссийский язык? Я попросил раз одного хохла перевести следующую, первую попавшуюся мне фразу: "Грамматика есть искусство правильно читать и писать". Знаете, как он это перевел: "Храматика е выскусство правильно чытаты ы пысаты ..." Что ж, это язык, по-вашему? самостоятельный язык?

Rudin (trans. Garnett, I, 35)

'Good heavens!' cried Bassistoff. 'What are you saying? It's too absurd for anything. I have lived in Little Russia, I love it and

know the language ... "graë, graë, voropaë" is absolute nonsense.'

'It may be, but the Little Russian will weep all the same. You speak of the "language." ... But is there a Little Russian language? Is it a language in your opinion?

Rudin (trans. Freeborn, p. 47)

'Do you mind!' exclaimed Basistov. 'What on earth are you saying? It's beyond all reason. I've lived in the Ukraine, I love the Ukraine and I know its language ... "Rumpty-tum-tum, rumpty-tum-tum" is complete nonsense.'

'That's as may be, but your Ukrainian'll still burst into tears. You mentioned the language ... Is there a Ukrainian language? I once asked a native of the region to translate the following sentence - it happened to be the first one that came to mind; Grammar is the art of reading and writing correctly. Do you know, this is how he translated it: Grammaire iz ye arte of readinge and writinge correctlie ... Do you call that a language? A language in its own right?

In Chapter VIII of 'An Unhappy Girl' Turgenev characterises the figure of Ratch, the Russianised Czech, as someone who likes to display his knowledge of Russian by peppering his speech with 'expressions similar to those found in the ultra-nationalist poetry of Prince Vyazemsky'. After the word Vyazemsky', Turgenev gives in six lines, examples of these expressions which Constance Garnett omits completely:

Pol. sob. soch., X, 82.

Насладим ушеса честной компании! (Г-н Ратч любил уснащать свою русскую речь; у него то и дело вырывались выражения, подобные тем, которыми испещрены все ультранародные стихотворения князя Вяземского: "дока для всего", вместо

"на всё", "здесь нам не обиход", "глядит в угоду, не на показ", и т.п. Помнится, однажды Иван Демьяныч, увлеченный своею любовью к бойким словам с энергическим окончанием, стал уверять меня, что у него в саду везде известняк, хворостняк и валежняк.) Так как? Идет?

'An Unhappy Girl' (trans. Garnett, XV, 46)

Let us make sweet music for the honourable company!' (Mr. Ratsch liked to display his Russian; he was continually bursting out with expressions, such as those which are strewn broadcast about the ultra-national poems of Prince Viazemsky.) 'What do you say? Carried?'

What Garnett omits is admittedly difficult to render meaningfully into English, since appreciation of the particular phrases used by Ratsch depends upon an ability to compare them with normal idiomatic Russian. In the case of the expression: 'дока для всего' instead of 'дока на всё', Ratsch's alteration, after Vyazemsky, of the standard prepositional phrase might be conveyed in English by the difference between inversion and standard word order, by indicating that Ratsch says 'in all things a master' rather than the 'a master in everything'. Similarly the phrase 'здесь нам не обиход' would require some variation of standard English word order (e.g. 'our customs these are not') in order to suggest Ratsch's pseudo-Russian idiom. Even more difficult to convey would be Ratsch's use of archaic variants of the words 'валежник' (fallen branches) and 'хворост' (brushwood) in order to produce a series of sharp, hard-ending words, beginning with 'известняк' (limestone). Garnett can hardly be blamed

for avoiding these difficulties. Nevertheless, the omission is of a small but significant part of that precise distinguishing process whereby Turgenev builds a sense of Ratch's character. It is, moreover, as Turgenev's editors have pointed out ¹⁵⁰, a rare example of allowing his literary antipathies (in this case towards the ultra-nationalist Vyazemsky) to show in a work of fiction.

Although Constance's handling of colloquial Russian improves (for example, the rendering of peasant speech in 'A Tour in the Forest' of 1899 is more confident and slightly more flexible than in Rudin), dialogue remains by far the weakest element in her translations. Nor is this weakness confined to the speech of the peasantry; she displays a tendency to dilute the idiom of even educated characters in the novel - a tendency which marginally detracts from the individuality of their original conception.

Rudin provides numerous examples of this tendency to dilute, occasionally for what may be reasons of decorum. In Chapter II, Pigasov, Darya Mikhaylovna's court jester, tells with gusto of how he teased a peasant girl by prodding her with a stick. The Russian phrase is: 'Я ее хватил в бок осиновым колом сзади'. The phrase asks to be translated as the more risqué backside than side, especially given the character of Pigasov. Freeborn's rendering is: 'I struck her on the behind with an aspen stick' (p. 43), while Garnett translates it as 'I poked her in the side with an aspen stake, from behind' (p. 29). Similarly,

150 Pol. sob. soch, X, 464.

in Chapter V, when Lezhnyev is telling Alexandra Pavlovna the story of Rudin's youth, he refers to Rudin's having ingratiated himself with a certain rich prince. The expression used is the strong, colloquial 'снюхаться' - to sniff around. Freeborn renders this as 'a certain rich prince whom he'd sucked up to ...' (p. 82), while the Garnett equivalent is 'a rich prince whose favour he had courted' (p. 95). The point about the dilution of this idiom in Garnett is that it causes some of the force of the following phrase to be lost (Freeborn: "... well, forgive me, I won't ...; Garnett: "there, I beg your pardon, I won't do it again"); Lezhnyev has promised Alexandra Pavlovna that he will stop being ironical at Rudin's expense and Garnett's phrase fails to convey the full force and meaning of Lezhnyev's lapse into sarcasm at that point. Numerous other examples of a failure to gain the right nuance are to be noted throughout the Garnett translations which I have sampled.

As to outright errors of translation, these I find to be rare in those texts which I have examined. I can find no evidence of gross mistranslation. What do occur from time to time - and might be counted as errors - are choices of the wrong variant meaning of a word or phrase with the effect of diminishing either force or subtlety. For example, in Rudin in order to translate the phrase 'не то он завидовал Наталье, не то он сожалел о ней', Garnett gives 'either he envied Natalya, or he was sorry for her' (p. 87). The phrase 'не то ... не то', denoting mixed feelings, or one feeling informed by another, is

rendered by Freeborn as 'as if he not so much envied Natalya as pitied her' (p. 77). Some subtlety, present in the original, is lost in Garnett's version and retained in Freeborn's. Similarly, describing Natalya's attitude towards her mother, Turgenev uses the verb 'доверять', which may mean either to trust or to confide. Freeborn chooses the primary meaning 'trust' and Garnett the secondary 'confide'. But the verb occurs in a sentence and a wider context which imply distinct irony - 'Наталья любила дарью Михайловну и не вполне ей доверяла'. Translation of the sentence as 'Natalya loved Darya Mikhaylovna and did not entirely trust her' (p. 75) seems more apposite than 'Natalya loved Darya Mikhaylovna and did not fully confide in her.' (p. 84).

Against this general idiomatic inflexibility must be set the accuracy and sensitivity of Garnett's handling of narrative and description. In these she is rarely to be faulted. In a story such as 'Поездка в Полесье', a minor descriptive tour de force by Turgenev, Garnett gives a faithful and sensitive rendering of detailed description. Here, for example, is the Garnett version of Turgenev's detailed and evocative description of the 'overground fire' from that story.

Pol. sob. soch., VII, 68-69.

Мы подъехали почти к самой черте пожара. Я слез и пошел ему навстречу. Это не было ни опасно, ни затруднительно. Огонь бежал по редкому сосновому лесу против ветра; он

подвигался неровной чертой или, говоря точнее, сплошной зубчатой стенкой загнутых назад языков. Дым относил ветром. Кондрат сказал правду: это действительно был позёмный пожар, который только брил траву и, не разыгрываясь, шел дальше, оставляя за собою черный и дымящийся, но даже не тлеющий след. Правда, иногда там, где огню попадалась яма, наполненная дромом и сухими сучьями, он вдруг, и с каким-то особенным, довольно зловещим ревом, воздымался длинными, волнующимися косицами, но скоро опадал и бежал вперед по-прежнему, слегка потрескивая и шипя. Я даже не раз заметил, как кругом охваченный дубовый куст с сухими висячими листьями оставался нетронутым, только снизу его слегка подпаливало. Признаюсь, я не мог понять, отчего сухие листья не загорались. Кондрат объяснял мне, что это происходило оттого, что пожар позёмный, "значит, не сердитый". Да ведь огонь тот же, возражал я. Позёмный пожар, повторил Кондрат. Однако хоть и позёмный, а пожар все-таки производил свое действие: зайцы как-то беспорядочно бегали взад и вперед, безо всякой нужды возвращаясь в соседство огня; птицы попадали в дым и кружились, лошади оглядывались и фыркали, самый лес как бы гудел, - да и человеку становилось неловко от внезапно бьющего ему в лицо жара ...

'A Tour in the Forest' (trans. Garnett, XIII, 130-131)

We drove almost up to the edge of the fire. I got down and went to meet it. It was neither dangerous nor difficult. The fire was running over the scanty pine-forest against the wind; it moved in an uneven line, or, to speak more accurately, in a dense jagged wall of curved tongues. The smoke was carried away by the wind. Kondrat had told the truth; it really was an overground fire, which only scorched the grass and passed on without finishing its work, leaving behind it a black and smoking, but not even smouldering track. At times, it is true, when the fire came upon a hole filled with dry wood and twigs, it suddenly and with a kind of peculiar, rather vindictive roar, rose up in long, quivering points; but it soon sank down again and ran on as before, with a slight hiss and crackle. I even noticed, more than once, an oak-bush, with dry hanging leaves, hemmed in all round and yet untouched, except for a slight singeing at its base. I must own I could not understand why the dry leaves were not burned. Kondrat explained to me that it was owing to the fact that the fire was overground, 'that's to say, not angry.' 'But it's fire all the same,' I

protested. 'Overground fire,' repeated Kondrat. However, overground as it was, the fire, none the less, produced its effect: hares raced up and down with a sort of disorder, running back with no sort of necessity into the neighbourhood of the fire; birds fell down in the smoke and whirled round and round; horses looked back and neighed, the forest itself fairly hummed - and man felt discomfort from the heat suddenly beating into his face ...

Whatever errors arise in her translations - and these I find to be fewer than Edmund Wilson implies - Constance Garnett's work is certainly not that of a careless and casual translator with no concern for exactitude. Indeed, it is the case that her errors, when they arise, are rendered more conspicuous by the very care and accuracy that is generally manifested in her translations. With all due allowance made for those errors, it is still possible to concur with Edward Crankshaw's tribute to Constance Garnett, written nearly forty years ago:

If Tolstoy thought in terms of chapters and Dostolevsky in terms of paragraphs, Chekov thought in terms of sentences, while Turgenev thought in terms of words and syllables - and silences. A bad translator could have killed them both stone-dead by reducing them to nonsense. But by an amazing piece of good luck they found Mrs Garnett, and, through her, entered in their full stature into English literature. And having entered it, they changed it. This means, in effect, that Mrs Garnett gave us a new literature.¹⁵¹

The importance of Turgenev to the younger generation of English novelists of the 1890s is itself a monument to Constance Garnett's work and bears out the claims which Crankshaw makes for her work. It is to her and

151 'Work of Constance Garnett', p. 196.

to Henry James that most credit must go for securing Turgenev's reputation in England in the late nineteenth century; the work of making him 'the novelist's novelist', begun by the one as a literary tribute, was completed by the other in a pioneering linguistic feat of the greatest importance.

Postscript

It is a commonplace of literary history, that during the first three decades of this century, Turgenev's English reputation declined in proportion to the ascendancy of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Chekov. When the 'mania' for these writers had abated in intensity, it was left to Virginia Woolf, in her 1933 essay on Turgenev, to redress this relative neglect by drawing attention to those qualities of Turgenev's novels that make them enduring. Making all due allowance for his failings as a writer, Woolf still finds it possible to praise him for that rare combination of fidelity to truth and imaginative interpretation which his fiction embodies: 'He [the novelist] has to observe facts impartially, yet he must also interpret them. Many novelists do the one; many do the other - we have the photograph and the poem. But few combine the fact and the vision; and the rare quality that we find in Turgenev is the result of this double process.'¹⁵² Fifty years after Henry James had first acclaimed this 'rare quality' in Turgenev, his exemplary importance for the

152 Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Turgenev', Collected Essays (London, 1966), I, 249.

novelist is confirmed in Virginia Woolf's laudatory essay.

There is, however, another dimension to Turgenev's importance for the English speaking world in the twentieth century, a dimension that is as readily understood by the student of political philosophy as it is by the student of literature. Turgenev's life and his work both epitomize the anguish of the liberal intellectual in a world seemingly governed by ideological absolutism. The anatomy of this dilemma, which figures centrally in Turgenev's work, is, self-evidently, of relevance to the present political condition of the Western World and is in itself a powerful reason for continuing to read him. This aspect of Turgenev's fiction, its troubled awareness of the power of ideology, haunts what Virginia Woolf called his 'generalised and harmonized picture of life'¹⁵³ in a way that dramatises the tension between the poised constructions of art and the raw power of historical dynamism. In recent years it is Isaiah Berlin who, among British scholars of Russian literature, has done most to uphold the reputation of Turgenev both as an artist and as a diagnostician of the liberal predicament. It is fitting to conclude by adding to Virginia Woolf's praise of the master of 'poem and photograph', Berlin's tribute to the enduring relevance of Turgenev as an archetypal liberal intellectual:

153 Ibid., p. 250.

The situation that he diagnosed in novel after novel, the painful predicament once thought peculiarly Russian, is today familiar everywhere. So, too, is his own oscillating, uncertain position, his horror of reactionaries, his fear of the barbarous radicals, mingled with a passionate anxiety to be understood and approved of by the ardent young. Still more familiar is his inability, despite his greater sympathy for the party of protest, to cross over unreservedly to either side in the conflict of ideas, classes, and, above all, generations. The figure of the well-meaning troubled, self-questioning liberal, witness to the complex truth, which, as a literary type, Turgenev virtually created in his own image, has today become universal.¹⁵⁴

154 Isaiah Berlin, 'Fathers and Children, Turgenev and the Liberal Predicament', The Romanes Lecture, 1970, published in *Fathers and Sons*, translated by Rosemary Edmonds (London, 1982), p. 56.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography is subdivided into (a) nineteenth and twentieth century periodicals referred to in the text, or drawn on indirectly (b) primary works, including collections of letters and essays (c) secondary material.

Standard works of reference such as the Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals or Poole's Guide have not been listed.

(a) Periodicals

Academy
Anglo-Saxon Review
Athenaeum
Atlantic Monthly
Blackwood's Magazine
Bookman
British Quarterly Review
Century Magazine
Contemporary Review
Cornhill Magazine
Eclectic Review
Fortnightly Review
Fraser's Magazine
Galaxy
Gifthorse (Ohio State University)
Household Words
Leader

Le Monde Slave
 Lippincott's Magazine
 Listener
 Macmillan's Magazine
 Nation
 National Review
 Nineteenth Century
 North American Review
 Oxford Slavonic Papers
 Pall Mall Gazette
 Quarterly Review
 Revue des Langues Vivantes
 Saturday Review
 Scribner's Monthly
 Slavonic and East European Review
 South Atlantic Quarterly
 Spectator
 Temple Bar
 Westminster Review

(b) Primary Works

Bennett, Arnold	<u>A Man from the North</u> , London, 1973
Bennett, Arnold	<u>The Journals</u> , edited and selected by Frank Swinnerton, London, 1971
Bennett, Arnold	<u>Letters</u> , 2 vols, edited by James Hepburn, Oxford, 1966-68
Chekov, Anton	<u>Letters on the Short-Story, Etc.</u> , New York, 1947
Conrad, Joseph	<u>Almayer's Folly</u> , London, 1968
Conrad, Joseph	<u>The Nigger of the Narcissus</u> , London, 1973

- Dickens, Charles The Uncollected Writings of Charles Dickens, 2 vols, edited by Harry Stone, London, 1969
- Eliot, George Adam Bede, edited by Stephen Gill, London, 1980
- Eliot, George Essays of George Eliot, edited by T. Pinney, London, 1963
- Eliot, George The George Eliot Letters, 7 vols, edited by Gordon Haight, London and Yale, 1954-55
- Eliot, George Middlemarch, edited by W.J. Harvey, London, 1975
- Galsworthy, John Glimpses and Reflections, London, 1937
- Galsworthy, John Letters from John Galsworthy, 1900-1932, edited by Edward Garnett, London, 1934
- Galsworthy, John Villa Rubein, London, 1927
- Gissing, George Born in Exile, Brighton, 1978
- Gissing, George Commonplace Book, edited by Jacob Korg, New York, 1962
- Gissing, George Essays and Fiction, edited by Pierre Coustillas, London, 1970
- Gissing, George Eve's Ransom, London, 1929
- Gissing, George George Gissing on Fiction, edited by Jacob and Cynthia Korg, London, 1978
- Gissing, George George Gissing and H.G. Wells, Their Friendship and Correspondence, Illinois, 1961
- Gissing, George Human Odds and Ends, New York, 1977
- Gissing, George Isabel Clarendon, 2 vols, Brighton, 1969
- Gissing, George The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, London, 1961
- Gissing, George Letters of George Gissing to Members of his Family, London, 1931
- Gissing, George London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, edited by Pierre Coustillas, Brighton, 1978

- Gissing, George New Grub Street, London, 1978
- Gissing, George The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft, London, 1961
- Gissing, George Short Stories of Today and Yesterday, London, 1929
- Gissing, George Thyrza, Brighton, 1974
- Gissing, George The Unclassed, Brighton, 1976
- Hardy, Thomas Jude the Obscure, New Wessex Edition, London, 1974
- Harrison, Fraser The Yellow Book, an anthology, London, 1974
- Howells, W.D. Selected Letters of W.D. Howells, 4 vols, Boston, 1979-
- Howells, W.D. W.D. Howells as Critic, edited by E.H. Cady, London, 1973
- James, Henry The American, New York, 1907
- James, Henry The Art of the Novel, New York, 1937
- James, Henry The Bostonians, Penguin Edition, London, 1974
- James, Henry The Future of the Novel, edited by Leon Edel, New York, 1956
- James, Henry The Letters of Henry James, edited by Leon Edel, 3 vols, London, 1974-
- James, Henry The Letters of Henry James, selected and edited by Percy Lubbock, 2 vols, New York, 1970
- James, Henry Literary Reviews and Essays, edited by A. Mordell, New York, 1957
- James, Henry Notes of a Son and Brother, London, 1956
- James, Henry The Notebooks, edited by F. Matthiessen, New York, 1961
- James, Henry Partial Portraits, London, 1919
- James, Henry The Portrait of a Lady, New York, 1908
- James, Henry The Princess Casamassima, New York, 1908

- James, Henry Roderick Hudson, New York, 1907
- James, Henry Roderick Hudson, Hart-Davis Edition
London, 1961
- James, Henry Selected Literary Criticism,
edited by M. Shapira, London, 1963
- Russell, Bertrand The Collected Papers, edited by
Kenneth Blackwell and others,
Vol. 1, London, 1983
- Schopenhauer, Arthur Essays and Aphorisms, edited
by J. Hollingdale, London, 1978
- ed. Stanford, Derek Writing of the 'Nineties, London
1971
- Turgenev, Ivan Fathers and Sons, translated by
Rosemary Edwards, London, 1982
- Turgenev, Ivan Home of the Gentry, translated
by Richard Freeborn, London, 1970
- Turgenev, Ivan Literary Reminiscences, translated
by David Magarshack, London, 1958
- Turgenev, Ivan Memoires d'un Seigneur Russe,
traduits du Russe par Ernest
Charriere, Paris, 1854
- Turgenev, Ivan The Novels of Ivan Turgenev, trans-
lated by Constance Garnett, 15 vols,
London, 1894-99
- Turgenev, Ivan On the Eve, translated by Gilbert
Gardiner, London, 1981
- Turgenev, Ivan Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy i
pisem, 28 vols, Moscow and
Leningrad, 1960-68
- Turgenev, Ivan Recits d'un Chasseur, traduits par
H. Delaveau, Paris, 1858
- Turgenev, Ivan Rudin, translated by Richard
Freeborn, 1981
- Turgenev, Ivan Russian Life in the Interior, or
The Experiences of a Sportsman,
edited by James Meiklejohn,
Edinburgh, 1855
- Turgenev, Ivan Sketches from a Hunter's Album,
selected and translated by Richard
Freeborn, London, 1974

Turgenev, Ivan

Turgenev's Letters, selected,
edited and translated by A.V.
Knowles, London, 1983

(c) Secondary Works

Allen, Walter

Arnold Bennett, London, 1948

Allen, Walter

The Short Story in English, Oxford,
1981

Anderson, Olive

A Liberal State at War, London,
1967

Baines, Jocelyn

Joseph Conrad, London, 1967

Bates, H.E.

Edward Garnett, London, 1950

ed. Becker, George

Documents of Modern Literary
Realism, Princeton, 1967

Bell, Michael

The Sentiment of Reality, London,
1983

Bellamy, William

The Novels of Wells, Bennett and
Galsworthy, 1890-1910, London, 1971

ed. Blagoy, D.R.

Literaturnoye Nasledstvo, Vol. 76,
Moscow, 1967

Carl, Frederick

Joseph Conrad, The Three Lives,
London, 1979

Cave, Richard

A Study of the Novels of George
Moore, Gerrards Cross, 1978

Collie, Michael

The Alien Art, a critical study of
George Gissing's Novels, Kent, 1979

Conrad, Jessie

Joseph Conrad and his circle, London
1935

ed. Coustillas, Pierre

Collected Articles on George
Gissing, London, 1968

ed. Coustillas, Pierre
and Patridge Colin

George Gissing, The Critical
Heritage, London, 1972

Davie, Donald

Russian Literature and Modern
English Fiction, London, 1965

Drabble, Margaret

Arnold Bennett, a biography,
London, 1974

Edel, Leon

The Life of Henry James, 2 vols,
London, 1977

- Frecher, Alec John Galsworthy, a reassessment, London, 1982
- Freeborn, Richard The Russian Revolutionary Novel, Turgenev to Pasternak, Cambridge, 1982
- Freeborn, Richard Turgenev, Oxford, 1960
- ed. Gard, Roger Henry James, The Critical Heritage, London, 1968
- Garnett, David The Golden Echo, London, 1953
- Gettmann, Royal Turgenev in England and America, Connecticut, 1974
- Gettmann, Royal A Victorian Publisher, a study of the Bentley Papers, Cambridge, 1960
- Gifford, Henry Comparative Literature, London, 1969
- Goode, John George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction, London, 1979
- Gorley Putt, F. The Fiction of Henry James, London, 1968
- Graham, Kenneth English Criticism of the Novel, 1865-1900, Oxford, 1965
- Haight, Gordon George Eliot, a biography, Oxford, 1968
- Halperin, John Gissing, A Life in Books, Oxford, 1982
- Heilbrun, Carolyn The Garnett Family, London, 1961
- ed. Hepburn, James Arnold Bennett, The Critical Heritage, London, 1981
- Hingley, Ronald Nihilists, London, 1967
- Howe, Irving Politics and the Novel, New York 1957
- Jefferson, George Edward Garnett, London, 1982
- Johnson, Edgar Charles Dickens, His Tragedy and Triumph, revised and abridged edition, London, 1977
- Kelley, Cornelia The Early Development of Henry James, Illinois, 1965
- Korg, Jacob George Gissing, London, 1965

- ed. Lohrli, Anne Household Words, Table of Contents, List of Contributors and Their Contributions, Toronto, 1973
- Lubbock, Percy The Craft of Fiction, London, 1954
- Mackenzie Wallace, Sir D. Russia, 2 vols, London, 1905
- Mackenzie, Norman and Jeanne Dickens, A Life, Oxford, 1979
- Matthews, Brander The Short Story, New York, 1907
- ed. Michaux, Jean-Pierre George Gissing: critical essays, London, 1981
- Miller, J. Hillis The Form of Victorian Fiction, London, 1970
- Mumby, F and Norrie, I. Publishing and Bookselling, London 1974
- O, Faolin, Sean The Short Story, London, 1948
- ed. Petrov, S.M. and Fridlyand, V.G. Turgenev v vospominaniyakh sovremennikov, 2 vols, Moscow, 1969
- Phelps, Gilbert The Russian Novel in English Fiction, London, 1956
- Plant, Marjorie The English Book Trade, London, 1974
- Poole, Adrian Gissing in Context, London, 1975
- Prawer, S.S. Comparative Literary Studies, London, 1973
- Roberts, Morley The Private Life of Henry Maitland, London, 1958
- Roberts, Morris Henry James's Criticism, Harvard, 1929
- Shapiro, Leonard Turgenev, Oxford, 1978
- Seton Watson, H. The Russian Empire, Oxford, 1967
- ed. Sherry, Norman Conrad, The Critical Heritage, London, 1973
- Stang, Richard The Theory of the Novel in England 1850-1870, London, 1961
- Swingewood, Alan The Novel and Revolution, London, 1975

Swinerton, Frank	<u>Arnold Bennett - a last word,</u> London, 1978
Swinerton, Frank	<u>The Georgian Literary Scene,</u> London, 1969
Sully, James	<u>Pessimism,</u> London, 1877
Tindall, Gillian	<u>The Born Exile, George Gissing,</u> London, 1974
Tilley, W.H.	<u>The Background of the Princess</u> <u>Cassamassima, Florida, 1960</u>
de Vogüé, E.M.	<u>Le Roman Russe,</u> Paris, 1886
Waddington, Patrick	<u>Turgenev and England,</u> London, 1980
Wain, John	<u>Arnold Bennett,</u> London, 1967
Wellek, Rene	<u>A History of Modern Criticism</u> <u>1750-1950, 4 vols, London, 1966</u>

(d) Unpublished Sources

In addition to the texts listed, letters to the author from Richard Garnett and Messrs. William Heinemann, Ltd., have been used.

I have also consulted the thesis by Donald Davie on 'The English Idea of Russian Fiction since 1828' (University of Cambridge, 1951), housed in the Library of Cambridge University.