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THE POETICS OF IVAN TURGENEV

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Acknowledgements

On June 9-10, 1987, the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow hosted the second American and Soviet Literary Symposium on Russian Classical literature, cosponsored by the American Society of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the USSR Academy of Sciences. The conference was also supported in part by a grant from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) with funds provided by the Trust for Mutual Understanding. This conference was part of an ongoing series of symposia on classical Russian literature, cosponsored by these organizations and the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies.

The symposium was devoted to the topic "The Poetics of Ivan Turgenev." Professors Elizabeth Cheresch Allen, Donald Fanger, Robert L. Jackson, Dale E. Peterson, and David A. Lowe made up the American delegation, with Professor Fanger serving as head of the delegation and Professor Lowe as the conference director on the American side. The Soviet participants were V. A. Chalmaev (Union of Writers), A. P. Chudakov (Gorky Institute), P. G. Pustovoit (Moscow State University), V. D. Skvoznikov (Gorky Institute), and D. M. Urnov (Gorky Institute), with Professor Urnov serving as head of the Soviet delegation.

The following papers are the American contributions to this conference. These papers were edited by David A. Lowe and published at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, with the support of the Smith-Richardson Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The opinions expressed in these papers are solely those of the authors.

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**Turgenev the Master Carpenter
Framing "Andrei Kolosov" and First Love**

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There is a painting hanging in New York City's Museum of Modern Art that should be of singular interest to students of the prose fiction of Ivan S. Turgenev, not because of the painting's relevance to the contents of any particular work by Turgenev, but because this painting offers a strikingly apt visual representation of one of Turgenev's most frequently employed structural devices, the narrative frame. This painting, Michelangelo Pistoletto's *The Man in Trousers*, itself has no formal frame composed of material different from that of the painted surface. The work consists solely of an approximately eight-foot by six-foot, silver, wavily reflecting surface, upon which is painted only the life size, life-like figure of a man in a tweed sportsjacket and, indeed, yellow trousers. The man is standing casually, one foot crossed in front of the other, his left hand resting on his left hip, his right hand supporting his slightly tilted head by leaning, as it were, his right elbow against the right edge of the work. This figure is distinguished not so much by his attire or stance, though, as by the fact that he is portrayed standing with his back to the museum's gallery, and therefore to anyone who might be viewing the work. He evinces no sign of self-consciousness as he steadily looks into the reflecting surface. He appears to be simply a viewer, like any other real viewer, of whatever might be reflected across that surface and be transformed in that surface's undulating reflection. The man in yellow trousers is thus posed as if he belonged to the reality outside the work of art in which he is represented.

Yet this figure is not represented as acknowledging directly either the existence of any other viewer or of the reality that viewer inhabits. He acknowledges other viewers and their reality only indirectly, by appearing thoroughly engrossed in the aesthetically altered images of the reality that the reflecting surface engenders. The man in yellow trousers therefore embodies a transition between realms of reality and of art, belonging in part to both, in part to neither, as he seems to stand between the real world and its aesthetic transformation. In a sense, he provides the frame that the painting formally lacks.

Still, the direction of his gaze -- inward, towards the realm of art, rather than outward, towards the realm of reality -- suggests that this figure is not merely intended to mark the transition between reality and art. For his seemingly intent focus on the aesthetic effects wrought by the surface summons the real viewer to do likewise -- to focus carefully on the artist's deliberate deformation and reformation into patterns of the random raw material provided by the real world. Thus the figure of the man in yellow trousers stands as a model for real viewers, signalling the need for awareness -- and perhaps even appreciation -- of the aesthetic transformation of reality into art.¹

¹ A telling comparison to *The Man in Yellow Trousers* is presented in Diego Velazquez's seventeenth-century painting *Las Meninas*. This is of course the well known painting that shows a painter and some Spanish courtiers looking at the subject this painter is painting. But since the painter's subjects would have to be standing outside

I suggest that the narrative frames employed by Turgenev serve precisely the same purpose as the figure of the man in yellow trousers: they provide a model for readers of the need for awareness and appreciation of such an aesthetic transformation of reality. Like the figure of the man in yellow trousers, Turgenev's narrative frames do not acknowledge directly the reality outside the work -- they also turn their backs, as it were, on the real world. Yet, like this emblematic figure, these frames indirectly acknowledge that world by suggesting that the events portrayed within their confines have their provenance in reality. And above all, like the man in yellow trousers, Turgenev's narrative frames focus their reader's attention on the aesthetic transformation of those events.

But Turgenev's narrative frames can influence his audience as the figure of the man in yellow trousers cannot influence his own. This figure can at best only encourage his audience to look at those transformations, whereas Turgenev's narrative frames can tell an audience what to see, and how to interpret what is seen.

Yet the question arises: why should Turgenev employ narrative frames to achieve such influence over his audience? Before an answer to this question can be offered, through, some general observations on narrative frames are in order. By the term "narrative frame" I mean the structural device of a narrative presented in a novel or short story that provides a context in which another narrative of that novel or short story unfolds. The narrative that provides this context usually opens and closes a text and thus physically surrounds that text somewhat like a traditional frame surrounds a painting, hence the term "narrative frame." But unlike the frame of painting, which most often serves a purely formal, often decorative function, a narrative frame has a substantive as well as a formal function. For a narrative frame not only physically surrounds another narrative, it contains its own narrative as well, portraying characters and events belonging, as Boris Uspenskii points out, to "a special world, with its own space and time, its own ideological system, and its own standards of behavior,"² all of which are normally separate from the characters and events, space and time, systems and standards presented within the narrative it frames (which hereafter will be referred to as the *framed* narrative). Most often, in the course of the narrative that constitutes the frame (hereafter the *framing* narrative), the source for the framed narrative -- such as a personified narrator or the discover of a set of letters or of a lost or abandoned manuscript -- is introduced. And in the process of making this introduction, Uspenskii notes, the framing narrative achieves "the transition from the real world to the world of representation" (i.e., the world of art).³

the painting, precisely where the viewer must stand to observe the painting (and the subjects, the Spanish king and queen, are indeed faintly reflected in a mirror behind the painter in the center of *Las Meninas*), the figures in the painting appear to be looking directly at the viewer. The intellectual historian Michel Foucault, who considered *Las Meninas* emblematic of the seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century fascination with differing perceptions of truth and illusion, summarizes the effect of this arrangement thus: as soon as the painted figures seem to "place the spectator in the field of their gaze, their eyes seize hold of him, and force him to enter the picture" (Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences: A Translation of Les Mots et les Choses* [New York: Vintage Books, 1973], p. 5). Velazquez thus affirms his work's connection to and explicit acknowledgement of the viewer's reality, overtly breaking down the boundaries that traditionally separate the observer and the observed, art and reality. *The Man in Yellow Trousers* renders those boundaries ambiguous, to be sure, and yet leaves their presence far more palpable.

² Boris Uspenskii, *A Poetics of Composition. The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*, trans. V. Zavarin and S. Wittig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 137.

³ Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, p. 137.

Novelists down through the eighteenth century made extensive use of narrative frames, particularly as a means of enhancing the verisimilitude of the framed narrative. One has only to think of such novels as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise*, or Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* to recognize how prevalent this structural device was. Each of these works makes use of a framing narrative in which a narrator directly addresses the reader, appearing to acknowledge the reader's existence and the reality the reader inhabits. For example, in the prologue to *Don Quixote*, the narrator turns to his "kind reader" and tells him, "You yourself will be relieved at the straightforward and uncomplicated nature of the history of the famous Don Quixote de la Mancha, who, in the opinion of all the inhabitants of the district around the plain of Montiel, was the chastest lover and the most valiant knight seen in those parts for many a year."⁴ The reader is thus doubly drawn into the realm of the novel's art: he is apostrophized by the narrator, and he is told that the characters of the novel have existed in his own, real world, and have been encountered by other inhabitants of that world.

Although some recent critics, such as Robert Alter, have discerned in the use of such framing narratives not an attempt to enhance verisimilitude but an exercise of self-conscious aesthetic play or irony,⁵ until the nineteenth century readers on the whole accepted those framing narratives' assurances of the reality of what was presented by the framing narrator. For instance, as the historian Robert Darnton demonstrates in his study of the popular reception of *La Nouvelle Heloise* many of this epistolary novel's readers so believed in the existence of the correspondents that they besieged Rousseau for further information about Saint-Preux, Julie, and others. Darnton reports that "a certain Mme. Du Verger," for one, wrote "from an obscure outpost in the provinces" begging to know, "Is Saint-Preux still alive? What country on this earth does he inhabit? Claire, sweet Claire, did she follow her dear friend [Julie] to the grave?" Indeed, so many of Rousseau's readers pursued him in quest of more letters that "he needed a trap door to escape those who sought him out in his retreat on the Ile Saint Pierre."⁶ For Rousseau, the framing narrative of *La Nouvelle Heloise* evidently did its work too well.

By contrast to their predecessors, most nineteenth-century novelists did not widely utilize narrative frames. For they did not see the framing narrative as a means of enhancing verisimilitude any longer. Rather they saw it as a structural device which had been unmasked as a mere literary convention. And once they -- and their readers -- perceived the framing narrative as a literary convention, its artifice became transparent and the frame lost its ability to adduce art as a part of reality. These authors therefore

⁴ Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1950), p. 30.

⁵ For example, Alter labels *Don Quixote* a "self-conscious novel" whose "fictional world is repeatedly converted into a multiple regress of imitations that call attention in various ways to their status as imitations" and thereby presenting "a representation within a representation within a representation of what one finally hesitates to call reality." Robert Alter, *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 8.

⁶ Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984), p. 245.

abandoned narrative frames and invited their readers to encounter the narrative directly, as though the art were already a part of reality to which no transition was needed.⁷

Despite this nineteenth-century trend, Turgenev clearly favored narrative frames. Throughout this literary career, he repeatedly chose to invoke framing narratives, some quite elaborate, other quite simple. For instance, Turgenev built complex framing narratives around the short stories, "The Correspondence," "The Dog," and "The Brigadier," and around the novella *Spring Torrents*, describing the circumstances and the motives for the presentation of the framed narrative in some detail. The framing narratives he constructed around the short stories "The Watch," "The Unhappy One," or "Knock... Knock... Knock...!" by contrast, consist only of an introductory sentence or even a single phrase establishing merely *en passant* the identity of a narrator for the framed narrative and presence of an audience for that narrative. And yet other stories, such as "As'ja," Turgenev began with the briefest possible frame noting a narrator and an audience, only to conclude with an extended discussion of the implications of the framed narrative.⁸

Narrative frames also appear in Turgenev's novels, although none of these novels is framed as a whole. For example, the course of the protagonist's self-discovery in *Rudin*, the modes of upbringing of Lavreckii and Liza in *A Nest of Gentry*, the fate of Elena after Insarov's death in *On the Eve*, the unrequited love affair of Pavel Petrovich in *Fathers and Children*, and Litvinov's youthful infatuation with Irina in *Smoke* are all presented in clearly framed narratives. In each case, a narrator, whether a character in the novel or an omniscient narrator, shifts the reader's attention from the narration of the novel's main plot to another, framed narrative.

Turgenev's extensive reliance on narrative frames therefore suggests that Turgenev shared the pre-nineteenth-century predilection for that structural device. But this predilection must not be dismissed as an idiosyncratic preference for an anachronistic aesthetic maneuver. Like his contemporaries, Turgenev was undoubtedly well aware of the conventionality of such frames. But unlike his contemporaries, Turgenev exploited the very conventionality of narrative frames not to emphasize the verisimilitude of the framed narrative but, on the contrary, to emphasize the fictionality of the framed narrative. That is, Turgenev employed narrative frames to stress the fact that even if the events portrayed in the framed narrative were drawn or appeared to be drawn from reality, the rendition of those events has been aesthetically molded by a mediating consciousness in carefully selected forms not necessarily occurring in reality.

But why would Turgenev, so well known as a realist, regularly employ a structural device that would inevitably undermine, if only partially, the verisimilitude of his narratives? I suggest that Turgenev's reliance on narrative frames bespeaks Turgenev's commitment in his literary activity to non-aesthetic as well as aesthetic ends. These ends, which may be summarized as the enhancement of Turgenev's influence over readers' psychological and ethical responses to both literary and non-literary experiences, justify Turgenev's turn to the seemingly outmoded aesthetic means of narrative frames. For, as the work of two

⁷ Opening references to real locales, precise dates, or actual historical events, for instance, are offered by nineteenth-century novelists as affirmation of the realistic provenance of the events to be portrayed.

⁸ In short stories without explicit frames, the function of a frame is satisfied in other ways, such as an epistolary form ("Perepiska," "Faust") or a "skaz" style narrator ("Petushkov," "Rasskaz otša Alekseia") or a subtitle marking the narrative as an artistic creation ("Sobstvennaia gosposkaia kontora [Otryvok iz neizdannogo romana]," "Prizraki. Fantaziia," "Son. Rasskaz").

contemporary American scholars reveals, the explicit use of frames as conventionalized forms, without any guarantee of the reality of what is framed, increases precisely the psychological and ethical impact of a literary work on its readers. The social theorist Erving Goffman, for one, asserts that recognizable frames are deployed in literary works - and in social interactions as well -- because "participants in an activity are meant to know and to openly acknowledge that a systematic alteration is involved, one that will radically reconstitute what it is for them that is going on."⁹ Goffman therefore claims that the readers of a literary work often actively seek out frames that provide clues not only to "what... is going on" but to the author's conception of the "proper perspective" from which to comprehend "what... is going on." Thus he concludes that the employment of a narrative frame enables an author to guide the readers' determination of what is a "proper," that is, appropriate emotional and ethical response to the events portrayed.

The literary critic Norman Holland further illuminates the ability of an author of a narrative to influence readers' responses by framing that narrative. In *The Dynamics of Literary Response*, Holland observes that the presence of a framing narrative facilitates the readers' enjoyment of a work of fiction by clearly marking that work as fiction. Holland argues that such marking actually frees the reader to respond: "it is precisely the conscious knowledge that we are dealing with unreality that makes it possible for us to relax, to suspend our disbelief," whereas "conversely during the time we think fiction is real, we are tense, sometimes even to the point of displeasure."¹⁰ He maintains that the reader can learn from these unselfconscious responses to fiction, and as a result become able to respond more fully, more constructively, to experiences in reality that he has fully responded to in fiction. Thus Holland suggests that a narrative clearly marked as fiction -- i.e., somehow framed -- enables an author to guide the readers' determination of effective emotional and ethical responses not only to events portrayed in literature but to events encountered in life.

This paper will examine two of Turgenev's framed prose narratives, "Andrei Kolosov" and *First Love*, in order to demonstrate that Turgenev constructed frames clearly indicating the fictionality of the framed narratives within so as to influence his readers' responses -- not only aesthetic, but emotional and ethical as well -- to both literature and life. And the paper will reveal that Turgenev selected narrative frames to insure this influence because they convey both in their contents and their very form the psychological and moral qualities Turgenev sought to encourage in his readers. For the contents and form of the frames unite in both "Andrei Kolosov" and *First Love* to provide a model of limitation, or balance, and of separation applicable to every mode of human experience. The formal and substantive reminder of aesthetic limitation embodied by these frames mirrors the psychological and moral constraints Turgenev desired his readers to develop, because such constraints lead in turn, as these works illustrate, to psychological autonomy and moral integrity. Thus this paper will conclude that Turgenev employed framed narratives as a vehicle to persuade his readers in a sense to frame their own experience.

⁹ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis. An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 45.

¹⁰ Norman Holland, *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1975), p. 68.

"Andrei Kolosov"

When first printed in *Notes of the Fatherland* in 1844, "Andrei Kolosov" received little critical or popular attention. Belinskii, for one, found this first published prose work by Turgenev promising but inadequate, as if its young author, as Belinskii put it, "was searching for his road and still had not discovered it."¹¹ Turgenev perhaps agreed with this assessment, for he revised the story in 1856, shortening it and eliminating the romantic effusions that betrayed a twenty-two year old author educated in Germany. Even so, the revised version of "Andrei Kolosov" has gotten little more than passing attention from most critics, and then only when perceived as a veiled portrait of Turgenev's mentor, Stankevich, or as a fictionalized account of Turgenev's youthful attraction to Tat'iana Bakunina, sister of the famed revolutionary.¹²

But, in fact, in the revised edition of "Andrei Kolosov" Turgenev crosses the border between literary apprentice and literary master. For in the "Andrei Kolosov" of 1856 Turgenev confidently marshals and seamlessly interweaves structure and substance, imagery and ideas, to create a mature, complex narrative. And Turgenev's mastery of his art is nowhere better displayed than in the narrative frame that surrounds this story of a young man's attempt to supplant his most admired acquaintance -- the eponymous Kolosov -- in the affections of a sheltered young woman. For the frame does not merely provide the structural periphery of "Andrei Kolosov," it reflects the work's thematic core as well: the moral obligation of every individual voluntarily to impose limits on himself and consciously to accept limits imposed by circumstance.

Turgenev conveys the necessity of accepting limits from the outset of "Andrei Kolosov" in his manipulation of the narrative point of view within the framing narrative. The first sentences of the story themselves offer a model of emotional restraint and distance, as they introduce an objectively observed, ordinary social scene:

In a small, tidily cleaned room, before a fireplace, sat several young people. The winter evening had only just begun, the samovar was boiling on the table, the conversation warmed up and ranged from one subject to another. They began to discuss unusual people and what distinguishes them from ordinary people. Each set forth his opinion as best he could; the voices rose and resounded.¹³

All these statements seem to originate from an uninvolved, impersonal, omniscient narrator speaking in the third person. Only at the conclusion of the fifth sentence is the narrator of the frame revealed to be among the group of young people in attendance, as he parenthetically announces that "I too was among the discussants."¹⁴ Thus Turgenev carefully

¹¹ V. G. Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1953-59), vol. 10, p. 345.

¹² Literary critic Eva Kagan-Kans dismisses the story as "unsuccessful from an artistic point of view," for instance, although she does perceive the work as "interesting in that it contains archetypes of the two kinds of heroes Turgenev develops subsequently." Eva Kagan-Kans, *Hamlet and Don Quixote. Turgenev's Ambivalent Vision* (The Hague, Paris, Mouton, 1975), p. 17.

¹³ I. S. Turgenev, *Sochineniia v dvenadtsatii tomakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1978-86), vol. 4, p. 7.

¹⁴ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 7.

shifts the point of view from a third-person to a first-person narrator. And Turgenev complicates this shift by employing not a first-person singular but a first-person plural narrative voice, as the narrator observes that "a small little fellow...suddenly stood and addressed *us all*" (italics here and below are mine). After this little fellow's suggestion that discussions such as those they are engaged in have no purpose, the narrator reports that "*we all* fell silent." Next the narrator notes that "one of *us*" asked how to proceed in that case, and that "*we all* became thoughtful" when challenged by the little fellow to tell the story of an encounter with an unusual person. When challenged in return, the little fellow is told, "If your story doesn't please *us*, *we* will hiss."¹⁵ And after the little fellow agrees to such terms, the narrator then states that "*we all* sat down around him and grew quiet," in response to which "the little fellow looked at *us all*, glanced at the ceiling, and began."¹⁶ His first-person account of his relationships of long ago with Andrei Kolosov and Varia, a girl to whom Kolosov introduced him, then constitutes the substance of the framed narrative of the work.

Thus each point of view presented at the outset of "Andrei Kolosov" is positioned at a temporal and spatial distance from the events of the framed narrative to come. This distance in turn reflects the emotional distance of the little fellow's audience -- and presumably the reader -- from these events. That emotional distance is preserved as the perspective of the narrative point of view gradually narrows in this opening segment of the frame, for the point of view becomes focused only slowly as it moves from the completely impersonal to the somewhat more personal collective to the most personal, individual point of view. Such a cautious narrowing of the point of view of the framing narrative diffuses any strong emotional identification of the reader with the narrator potentially generated if only his personal point of view were presented from the start.

The framing narrative further limits and constrains the reader's emotional engagement with the events of the framed narrative by underscoring the fact that the framed narrative is just that, a narrative, one person's aesthetically molded rendition of a series of events. For the framing narrative stresses the fact that the little fellow's narration is a performance, a deliberately constructed aesthetic presentation. The little fellow stands before his audience while they sit, as though he were an actor upon a stage. And the audience reminds him that his task is to entertain, to divert and hold their attention or else he will face the punishment meted out to bad actors: "We will hiss." Moreover, he is repeatedly referred to in the frame by reference to the role he plays, that of "the narrator."¹⁷

He himself explicitly calls attention to the aesthetic nature of his narrative when he assures his audience that "the worst story is far more effective than the most excellent philosophical discussion,"¹⁸ because in such discussions he notes, "each one knows the opinion of his opponents and each will remain with his own conviction."¹⁹ He thus appears to argue that a story is "effective," as philosophy is not, in that a story can bring about

¹⁵ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 8.

¹⁶ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 8.

¹⁷ Indeed, the term "*rasskazchik*" is used in the final reference to the "little fellow" in the penultimate line of the story: "*Ne znaiu, -- otvechal rasskazchik*" (Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 33.).

¹⁸ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 8.

¹⁹ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 7.

change in its audience by providing concrete models of experience as opposed to the abstract generalities of philosophy. Yet a story, which is fictional (even "the worst story," which is somehow probably too fictional), although often certainly closer to actuality than is philosophy, is not, of course, a mere recording of actual events. As an artistic creation, it discloses patterns in those events by the aesthetic arrangement of their presentation. And such an arrangement inevitably requires some kind of limitation, as artistic form, however expansive, forces the exclusion of some components of the relatively formless, random stream of events that comprise actuality. Indeed, only by means of such limitation in the rendition of events can a story be "effective" in offering models of experience, since a model is by itself a pattern consciously derived by discerning a constant, delimited form amidst various, variable experiences.

And how is the story "Andrei Kolosov" to be effective? It is to expose the pattern in human experience that the frame embodies formally and advocates substantively: the moral value of the imposition or acceptance of limitation in experience. It is precisely this value that the little fellow discerns in Kolosov's behavior and praises to his audience in a series of rhetorical questions posed after he has concluded the framed narrative. He then reverts to the temporal and spatial setting of the framing narrative to ask:

Who among us could divorce ourselves from our past at the right time. Who, tell me, who does not fear reproaches, I don't mean the reproaches of women, but the reproaches of any fool? Who among us has not given himself over to the desire at times to brag about our generosity, at other time egotistically to toy with another person's devoted heart? Finally, who among us has the strength to oppose petty egoism -- petty good feelings: pity and repentance?²⁰

With this series of questions the little fellow relentlessly exposes the immorality in the lack of self-restraint, artificiality, and dependence that he perceives in the conduct of most human relations. That conduct, the little fellow reveals, is morally bankrupted through the deception of self and others that self-centered self-consciousness rationalizes. Moreover, the little fellow's queries demonstrate that conduct is ironically limited, unconsciously, by the egotistical needs of self-deceiving participants who cannot unconstrainedly express sincere emotions.

It is, by contrast, Kolosov's conscious, self-aware moral integrity, manifested in the ability to establish an independent, honest, knowing relationship without excessive attachments to past experience, traditional opinions, or social conformity, and to conclude that relationship when it has run its course, that the little fellow finds so remarkable. The little fellow then summarizes this admiration for Kolosov's unswerving integrity in a final assessment of Kolosov's character: "At a certain age, to be natural means to be unusual."²¹ The little fellow considers Kolosov natural, and therefore unusual, not simply in the sense of being authentic, that is, true to Kolosov's inborn temperament. Kolosov is deemed unusual because he understands and models his behavior on the fundamental pattern of nature, which is one of balance achieved through the limitation of the life-span

²⁰ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 32.

²¹ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 33.

of all natural phenomena.²² This understanding enables Kolosov to recognize and unresistingly accept the waxing and waning of his natural attraction to Varia. He, unlike "usual" men, apprehends the pattern of his emotions as falling within natural limits, and willingly espouses those limits as moral imperatives. By internalizing this pattern, then, and by consciously conforming to its demands, Kolosov can be said in essence to frame his own experience.

In the concluding lines of the framing narrative Turgenev indicates just how difficult it is to limit or frame emotional responses. For after hearing the little fellow's peroration, an audience member asks, "What happened to Varia?"²³ the girl whom both Kolosov and the little fellow have courted and then abandoned without even a farewell. This question obviously anticipates a response characterized by the very qualities the little fellow has just debunked as concealed self-aggrandizement, pity, and repentance. The questioner has not fully learned Kolosov's lesson on the folly of socially-sanctioned sentiments.

But the little fellow himself has learned this lesson well, as his simple, three-word reply to the question proves: "I don't know."²⁴ At first, this abrupt, stark, stunning reply sounds utterly self-indulgent and heartless, as though he had cavalierly neglected even to inquire as to Varia's fate. Yet this reply reveals how thoroughly the little fellow has faced the truth about his own self-serving motives in engaging the affections of a girl in love with the man he has most admired. He has finally realized that to pursue any relationship with Varia would be purely self-gratifying for him and blatantly deceptive and destructive of her, in a word, immoral. Furthermore, in his complete indifference to the tender sensibilities of his audience, whom he must know he shocks with his evident unrepentance, the little fellow displays an independence from social expectations that he had lacked when he knew Varia. Once so exquisitely self-conscious, he no longer fears the reproaches of any fool.

But Turgenev does not leave the little fellow's audience wallowing in outraged sympathy for Varia. Instead Turgenev suggests the possibility that each member of the audience -- and thus, by implication, each reader of his story -- may acquire the moral integrity and autonomy achieved by Kolosov and the little fellow. For the frame closes with a statement as dispassionate and abrupt as the little fellow's preceding reply. The frame's narrator momentarily reasserts the collective point of view as he observes, "We all got up and went our separate ways."²⁵ This collective point of view thus immediately breaks down as each member of the audience departs silently and singly into his individual existence. There, while alone, he, and the reader likewise, may now learn to admit the moral value of limitation and to appreciate the aesthetic order, as embodied by the narrative frame, that promotes the imposition and acceptance of limitation in human relations.

²² Kolosov summarizes this understanding in his metaphoric description of his relationship with Varia: "In May I sat with her on this bench... The apple tree was in bloom, fresh white little flowers floated down on us from time to time... I held both Varia's hands... We were happy then... Now the apple tree has faded from bloom, and the apples on it are bitter." Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 24.

²³ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 33.

²⁴ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 33.

²⁵ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, p. 33.

First Love

To turn from "Andrei Kolosov" to *First Love*, published in 1861, is almost to turn to a sequel. As noted above, the frame of "Andrei Kolosov" closes with the dispersal of a group of acquaintances who have been listening to a narrative about an "unusual man," as the narrator reports, "We all went our separate ways." The frame of *First Love* opens with a scene set late at night, as though held after the one portrayed in "Andrei Kolosov." At the outset of *First Love*, an impersonal narrator announces in third-person narrative: "The guests had long ago departed. The clock struck 12:30. Only the host, Sergei Nikolaevich, and Vladimir Petrovich remained in the room."²⁶ A few close friends have stayed together not to discuss a certain type of person, as in "Andrei Kolosov," but to recollect a certain intimate emotional experience, that of first love.

In presenting these recollections, Turgenev goes beyond his artistic achievement in "Andrei Kolosov" by constructing a more complex frame and by exploring a more personal theme. In "Andrei Kolosov" the frame is formally complete -- the closing segment returns to the time, place, characters, and narrator of the opening segment. This frame is clearly separate from the narrative it encloses. And the theme of "Andrei Kolosov" is clearly articulated and embodied by the frame itself: the individual has a moral obligation to adhere to limits fundamental to honest, open human relations. By contrast, in *First Love* the frame is not formally complete -- no closing segment is included. Instead that frame gives way to another frame, which is interwoven into the framed narrative itself. And the theme of *First Love* is not articulated as deliberately in a closing statement as is the theme of "Andrei Kolosov." Yet the theme of *First Love* is still embodied by its intricate structure: the individual has a pressing psychological need to instill a balance between the emotional restraints and excesses inherent in human relations. More intensity of emotion, more subjective responses to experience are portrayed in the framed narrative of *First Love* than are portrayed in that of "Andrei Kolosov." At the same time, more constraint of emotion, more objective commentary on experience is included in the framing narratives. The interweaving of a framing narrative with a framed one reinforces how necessary an alternation between these two perspectives is to the preservation of a psychological wholeness and autonomy.

The first narrative frame in *First Love* begins as an omniscient, impersonal narrator describes the conversation about first love among the three friends. And that point of view is sustained throughout the opening segment as though the events to be portrayed within the framed narrative to follow are so emotionally charged that they require a constant, unemotional counterweight from the start to offset them. This segment discloses that one of the friends, Vladimir Petrovich, has had a first love that, as he diffidently admits, "actually belongs to the ranks of the not altogether usual."²⁷ Yet Vladimir Petrovich, who will then assume the role of narrator for the enclosed account of his first love, refuses to recite that account aloud and at once. In response to his friends' demand that he relate his experience immediately he declares, "No: I will not begin to relate it."²⁸ Instead, he

²⁶ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 303.

²⁷ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 303.

²⁸ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 303.

announces to his friends, "If you will permit me, I will write down everything I remember in a little notebook and I will read it to you."²⁹ Two weeks later, the framing narrative reports, Vladimir Petrovich does just that, as he reads aloud the story of the love he developed for an impoverished aristocratic neighbor, Zinaida, and his discovery of her love affair with his own father.

Why does Vladimir Petrovich insist on reading his story rather than telling it, even to close friends? He explains that he refuses to tell it by claiming, "I am not a master of narration. Either everything comes out drily and briefly or verbosely and falsely."³⁰ This explanation conveys Vladimir Petrovich's recognition that an impromptu presentation is more liable than a written one to failures of either omission or commission that will violate the truth of his narrative. But beyond that recognition, Vladimir Petrovich's insistence on writing his experience down implies a desire aesthetically to transform that experience by imposing the order and constraints of writing, that is, of art, on it, and thereby to control both his own emotional reaction and that of his listeners as well as of future readers. Thus he signals his awareness of the highly personal and revealing, potentially greatly disturbing nature of the account of his first love.

Vladimir Petrovich further insures his control over the emotional responses to his story, and further betrays an awareness of the need for such control, by creating a frame for the written narrative. He carefully indicates that the events of his recorded narrative took place well in the past, making this point explicitly in the first line: "I was sixteen years old at that time. The matter occurred in 1833."³¹ By noting his age, the date, and by employing the adverb, "then," Vladimir Petrovich firmly marks the events he will describe as belonging to an earlier, distant time. And he goes on to describe the events of that time in the past tense. Yet at some moments, Vladimir Petrovich seems to allow the point of view in his narrative to shift, as though the consciousness of the sixteen-year old has replaced that of the adult Vladimir Petrovich. This shift brings an emotional immediacy and intensity to the narration, as for instance, when he depicts his first glimpse of Zinaida. He recreates so eloquently the quickening of his emotions as they stir and then subside in wordless admiration that the adolescent's point of view virtually takes over the narration: "I forgot everything. I devoured with my gaze that lovely figure and little neck, those beautiful hands and that slightly disheveled blond hair beneath a white kerchief and that half-closed intelligent eye and those lashes and the tender cheek beneath them..."³²

Lest this highly emotional point of view come to dominate the narrative, though, Vladimir Petrovich places numerous reminders of his adult point of view throughout the narrative -- that is, he reverts to the point of view of the written account's framing narrative. Terms or phrases such as "I shall never forget," "I remember," and "at that time" place the adolescent's emotions firmly in the past, mediated and mitigated by the distance of time and space. And the more intense the emotions the adolescent experiences, the more deliberate the assertion of the adult's voice. Thus, for example, in the pivotal seventh chapter of the novella, Vladimir Petrovich movingly recalls the epiphanic moment when "I

²⁹ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 304.

³⁰ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 304.

³¹ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 304.

³² Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 307.

became cold at the thought that I was in love, that here it was, here was love"³³ and romantically recollects watching a late night summer storm that mirrors the alternations of turbulence and calm within him. But the narrative then shifts to the present tense, as the adult voice of Vladimir Petrovich provides a counterweight to the emotional force of this epiphany by emphasizing that it belongs only to the past: "O sweet feelings, soft sounds, goodness and peace of a moved spirit, the melting joy of the first tender emotions of love - where are you, where are you?"³⁴ Thus Vladimir Petrovich's frame lyrically yet firmly separates past from present, youth from adulthood, emotion from recollection.

Vladimir Petrovich includes a final shift from past tense to present, and thus from the framed narrative back to the framing one, in the concluding chapter of *First Love*. In this chapter he presents himself not at age sixteen, but at age twenty. And he reveals that at that time he had gone from one emotional extreme to another. Whereas at sixteen Vladimir Petrovich had been deeply sensitive and passionate, at twenty he has become insensitive and dispassionate, as his response to the news of Zinaida's death demonstrates. To summarize this response he quotes two lines from a poem by Pushkin: "From indifferent lips I heard the news of death,/ And indifferently I heeded it."³⁵ At what might have been the emotional climax of his narrative Vladimir Petrovich presents an epitome of emotionlessness, not even using his own words but quoting those of another author and thus rendering his own response more distant still.

He then commences the longest portion of the written narrative frame, in which he first observes the follies of youth in general, in its ignorant and arrogant self-absorption. Yet he next finds a redeeming strength in youth's very arrogance." Perhaps the entire secret of your charm lies not in the ability to do everything but in the ability to think that you can do everything."³⁶ He then proceeds to glorify his memories of his own self-absorbed youth:

And now, when evening shadows are beginning to fall over my life, what has remained to me that is more fresh, more dear, than the memories of that quickly fleeting, morning spring storm?³⁷

But why should Vladimir Petrovich conclude his frame by praising the emotional intensity of his early, stormy love, which he appears to have worked so hard to have avoided in his narrative? I think that the answer to this question lies in the fact that although Vladimir Petrovich concludes the frame of his written narrative with this rhetorical question, he does not conclude his narrative with it. Instead he adds one final paragraph that illuminates the reason for his attachment to the seeming excesses of his youth. In this final paragraph he portrays the horrible death throes of an old woman, which he had witnessed several days after learning of Zinaida's death. Although he had felt no particular pang at the report of that death, he is clearly disturbed when confronted in person by a desperate, pathetic, and utterly hopeless struggle against death. And in the

³³ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 322.

³⁴ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 323.

³⁵ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 363.

³⁶ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 363.

³⁷ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 363.

final line of the work, he confesses that "there, at the deathbed of this poor old woman, I became afraid for Zinaida, and I wanted to pray for her, for my father and for myself."³⁸

By concluding his narrative with the word "self" in the accusative case, *sebia*, Vladimir Petrovich ends with the image of himself as an object -- a mortal object. At that moment he sees all too vividly his own objective typicality and he knows all too well his own mortal uniformity. But, however true, such a vision of death, in constant sight, would destroy the ability to see anything else; such knowledge of death, in constant force, would destroy the will to live at all -- hence his desire to pray for his profoundly threatened "self." The affectionate emotional evocation of youth that has provided the essence of the framed narrative therefore offers an antidote to the psychological poison of the awareness of ineluctable death. And likewise, the complex narrative structure of *First Love* exemplifies shifts in the perception and comprehension of experience, including the experience of death, that can enable the individual to maintain psychological health through a sanity- and life-preserving balance between ignorance and knowledge, between subjectivity and objectivity, between excess and limitation.

Thus these two works reveal that Turgenev employed narrative frames structurally and substantively stressing the values of limitation and balances so as to provide models of these values to his readers. Hence Turgenev emphasizes the aesthetic ordering of his framed narratives as they are limited and balanced by framing narratives. These frames emphatically do not, however, encourage readers to accept passively whatever limits experience may mandate. On the contrary, the presence of personified narrators in those framing narratives demonstrates clearly Turgenev's belief in the individual's ability to marshal creative energies to transform experience aesthetically. Turgenev's narrators are above all models of individuals re-forming and re-creating their own experience, choosing limits, striking balances, and thereby insuring their autonomous ethical sensibility and psychological self-mastery. In essence, then, Turgenev employed narrative frames to encourage individuals not to be made into readers and observers but to make themselves into authors and artists. For Turgenev's narrative frames compel their audience not to encounter literature as though it were life, but to encounter life as though it were literature -- literature still to be written.

³⁸ Turgenev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, p. 364.

**The Influence of Dostoevsky and Chekhov
on Turgenev's Fathers and Sons**

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I

The title of this paper as originally announced ("The Influence of Chekhov on Turgenev") expanded in the process of writing, but the theme remains the same: to consider afresh (if cursorily) the poetics of *Fathers and Sons* in historical context--with emphasis on the fact that the historical context is not something fixed once and for all but, on the contrary, constantly changing.

The novel appeared exactly a century and a quarter ago, and it was appropriate that its contemporary readers should have taken as central what was most topical in it: nihilism (defined in Dahl's dictionary as "a monstrous and immoral teaching that rejects everything that cannot be palpated"), together with the revolutionary temperament of Bazarov. Even today these aspects of Turgenev's book are unquestionably useful and valuable for anyone who is concerned with the social history of Russia. For anyone concerned with the development of fiction in Russia, however, a contemporary understanding of *Fathers and Sons* requires seeing it in other, comparative contexts. For "the contemporary reader" is not only Pisarev, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Annenkov, Strakhov, and company; in view of the ambiguity at the heart of the adjective, "the contemporary reader" may be with equal justice construed as the reader of the late twentieth century, Russian and non-Russian alike. It is precisely the latter reader that I have in view. In what way does he (or she) differ from that other contemporary reader? Principally, I will argue, in *the theoretical assumptions* he (or she) brings to the reading of the novel. I will confine myself to three examples, under the headings of "idea," "realism," and "tradition."

Idea

The now-familiar thesis, first elaborated by Chernyshevsky (in his *Sketches of the Gogol Period in Russian Literature*), that literature played a special role in nineteenth-century Russia by comparison with its role in the other countries of Europe turned quickly, in the minds of the intelligentsia, into a conviction that literature was important to the extent that it contained ideas of a sort that could not be discussed in print in any other form. Here the concept of "an idea" was simply transferred, unchanged, from the sphere of life to the sphere of art -- and the transfer involved a relative neglect not only of the presence of art in a given work, but of the radical difference between "idea" inside and outside a work of art.

The difference in question was most succinctly formulated by Kant in the previous century when he defined "an aesthetic idea" as one that could only be grasped intuitively, in contradistinction to "a rational idea," to which no intuition could ever be adequate. In our time, this distinction was developed by Lionel Trilling in his article, "The Meaning of a Literary Idea" (1950). There Trilling insists on the special nature of literary ideas. It is not adequate, he insists, to think of ideas only as being "highly formulated"; they need not be "pellets of intellection or crystallizations of thought, precise and completed." Quite the contrary: "*Whenever we put two emotions into juxtaposition we have what can properly be called an idea*" [my italics--D.F.]. Moreover, "the very form of a literary work, considered apart from its content, so far as that is possible, is itself an idea!"¹ It is evident that such a viewpoint presupposes the possibility of many "correct" interpretations of any genuinely artistic text--for, as Frank Kermode has written recently, any such text may be considered as "a system of signifiers which always shows a surplus after meeting any particular restricted reading."²

From this it follows that neither the author's own interpretation nor his announced intentions are necessarily to be taken as authoritative--a point we find made by Turgenev himself in connection with *Fathers and Sons*. "I am not surprised," he writes Saltykov, "that Bazarov has remained a puzzle for many people; *I myself cannot clearly account for the way I created him*. There was some sort -- don't laugh -- of fate involved, something stronger than the author himself, something independent of him.... I wrote naively, as if marveling myself at what was coming out."³ And in a letter to Annenkov Turgenev generalizes the point, suggesting that "no author knows very well what he is doing."⁴

From this it follows that if an author doesn't know with any certainty what he is doing, it is quite possible that he may not know better than others *what he has done*. Thus Herzen had every right to claim that "Turgenev was more of an artist than people think in his novel, and so lost his way -- happily, from my point of view: he was heading for one room but wound up in another and better one."⁵ By the same token, over the century that separates us from Herzen, it has become quite legitimate to consider still other rooms as the best; i.e., to disagree not only with Herzen's analysis of the novel, but with the assumptions that underlie it. It may well be the case that Turgenev's artistic instincts led him not to confuse the rooms, but to construct a new house, on a new and separate model.

The form of the novel is its idea. Being an aesthetic idea, it embodies an intuition that could not adequately (i.e., fully) be expressed in "rational" (i.e., critical) terms; that idea, of course, contains a series of "rational" ideas, but it uses them to its own ends and thereby relativizes them.

¹ Lionel Trilling, "The Meaning of a Literary Idea," in his *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York, 1950), pp. 302, 296, 283.

² Frank Kermode, *The Classic: Literary Images of Permanence and Change* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983) p. 135.

³ Letter of 3 January 1876, in *Pis'ma* 11, 190-91 (my italics).

⁴ Letter of 20 December 1869, *Pis'ma* 8, 147.

⁵ A. I. Gertsen, "Eshche raz Bazarov," *Sobranie sochinenii*, XX, p. 339.

"Realism"

Thanks in part to the function of Russian literature in the nineteenth century as pointed out by Chernyshevsky, and in part to the spirit of the age, the poetics common to the novels of the time came to be called realism, and it became customary to judge novels in terms of the relative accuracy and the relative fullness of their "reflection" of social and psychological phenomena that were observable outside literature and testable in life. The consequence was that in writing about literature oftener than not "the object of analysis was not the artistic work itself, but rather whatever it was that the analyst found it 'reflecting'."⁶ Only in time did other, more flexible approaches to the notion of "realism" become possible. Thus, V. V. Vinogradov found a whole multitude of realisms in the Russian nineteenth century:

Our great writers did not hold to any single and exclusive system of realistic depiction. Turgenev wrote L. N. Tolstoy (in a letter of 3/15 January 1857): "Systems are valued only by those who can't get a grip on the whole truth and try to grab it by the tail; a system is like the tail of the truth, but the truth is like a lizard; it leaves the tail in your hand and escapes, knowing that it will soon grow another."

Realism as a method of the artistic depiction of reality in the history of Russian nineteenth-century literature not only develops but stratifies. While preserving certain of the internal bases for the embodiment and representation of real life in verbal art, it at the same time gives rise to a whole series of literary-artistic systems in Russian nineteenth-century literature, not infrequently opposed to each other in particular, very important structural elements.... It goes without saying that to label all these systems or forms of realism "critical realism" is too general and calls for concrete historical differentiation. The study of the mutual interaction, struggle and succession of forms and types of realism, together with their interrelations with other methods and systems of artistic representation in the history of Russian literature in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries is one of the central problems of the history of the Russian literary art....⁷

Even if one were to speak of realism as the single, fundamental method of the classical novel, one might do that basing one's construction of the term on other considerations; e.g., on the position and viewpoint of the reader. Such an approach is taken by the American Hispanist Stephen Gilman when he writes:

The novel may be defined as the kind of literature which presents a fictional world not necessarily resembling our own, but in a fashion resembling the way we experience our

⁶ B. M. Eikhenbaum, *Molodoi Tolstoi*, (Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München [reprint], 1968), p. 8.

⁷ V. V. Vinogradov, *O iazyke khudozhestvennoi literatury* (Moscow, 1959), pp. 506-07.

own--thus its natural realism less of mirrored content than of unfolding process.⁸

Like the reconstruing of the concept of "idea" in the novel, such a reconstruing of the concept of "realism" can lead to a new understanding of Turgenev's novel, one that would take it out of the literary museum for fresh inspection--in order to re-situate it there, perhaps in a new room, under different illumination.

Tradition

A reviewing of the notion of tradition may serve the same end; it is precisely with this point that the title of my paper is connected.

The present-day reader differs from Turgenev's contemporary reader principally in the fact that his awareness includes a whole series of writers who came after Turgenev (not to mention critics and theoreticians), with the result that the framing of any Turgenev text is inevitably different today. The best discussion of this phenomenon is T.S. Eliot's, in his 1917 article, "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. *I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism.* The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one sided; *what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it.* The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of ... European literature *will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past.*⁹

⁸ Stephen Gilman, "The Novelist and his Readers: Meditations on a Stendhalian Metaphor," in Charles S. Singleton, ed., *Interpretation: Theory and Practice* (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 157, 160.

⁹ T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in his *Selected Essays, 1917-1932* (New York, 1932), pp. 4-5 (my italics).

II

What is common to the points of view sketched above is an orientation toward poetics which in its turn allows us to approach two specific aspects of Turgenev's poetics of the novel -- the first through the example of the "aesthetic idea" of *Fathers and Sons*, the second through a juxtaposition with the poetics of Dostoevsky and Chekhov.

The idea (i.e., the form) of *Fathers and Sons* is biographical. V.S. Pritchett is on record as having declared of Turgenev that "he writes [I would amend this to read "constructs"--D.F.] novels as if he were not a story-teller but a biographer."¹⁰ Moreover, Turgenev's preference (as S. E. Shatalov points out) was for "depicting characters that were already formed.... One can consider as a distinctive sign of his artistic world the writer's tendency to tell how fully formed characters enter into relations with each other, and to show how their characters determine these relations and at the same time reveal the essence of themselves."¹¹

Here Bazarov must appear as an exception, being the only character who manifests dynamism, and the only one who is not provided with the usual dossier. As Yurii Mann observed twenty-one years ago in an unusually interesting article in *Novy Mir*:

In reflections on Bazarov two questions arise with increasing insistence. What has he done in the past beyond studying in medical school? And what does he intend to do tomorrow beyond completing his training as a doctor and working in the area of medicine?... The context in which we see him explains Bazarov's reserve, but not the reserve with which his image is presented.... Bazarov is the rare example of a Turgenev character who lacks not only a pre-history, but to whom the writer never applies introspection (i.e., an authorial explanation and testing of his subjective world) at those points where Bazarov's position--his past and future--is in question (yet such introspection is applied to his experience of love!).¹²

We see Bazarov only in the last weeks of his life, and this is crucial in light of Walter Benjamin's comment on the assertion that a man who dies at 35 is at every moment of his life a man who dies at 35. It would be more accurate, Benjamin writes, to say that a man who dies at 35 *will be remembered* at every moment of his life as a man who will die at 35, and he concludes: "The nature of a character in a novel cannot be presented any better than this statement, which says that *the 'meaning' of his life is revealed only in his death.*"¹³

¹⁰ V.S. Pritchett, "The Russian Day," in his *The Living Novel* (London, 1954), p. 223.

¹¹ S. E. Shatalov, *Khudozhestvennyi mir Turgeneva* (Moscow, 1979), p. 302.

¹² Iu. Mann, "Bazarov i drugie," *Novyi Mir*, No. 10, 1966, pp. 238-39.

¹³ Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in his *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1968), p. 100. (My italics.)

Turgenev, condemning Bazarov to an early death, said of his hero (in a letter to Katkov) that he was "empty and sterile."¹⁴ Let us leave for a moment the question of his emptiness; I will return to it later. For now I would stress that the "meaning" of Bazarov's life evidently rests on his "sterility," which is to say, on his early death.

Why does he die? Turgenev's own statement on this score is well known: "I saw as in a dream a large, gloomy, wild figure, half grown out of the soil, strong, bitter, honest -- and all the same doomed to die because he stands only on the threshold of the future...."¹⁵ All the same, more than one reader, captivated by the dynamism of Bazarov's character, has ruminated on how his life might have continued. Strakhov, for example, writes: "Bazarov's credo, nihilism, ... I have adduced as an effort of thought to free itself from old concepts, as a coherent quest for a new path for life and mental activity. However,... this quest is only a transitional moment, an incomplete process.... Bazarov's whole depiction in this novel is only the beginning, the embryo of some future figure...."¹⁶

Similarly, Herzen -- though he praised Turgenev's art -- found it easy to imagine a different ending for the novel:

What if he had sent Bazarov to London?... We might have proved to him on the banks of the Thames that it is possible, without working up to the rank of department head, to be not less useful than any department head; that society is not always unresponsive and implacable when protest finds the right tone; that the cause can sometimes succeed....

The worst service that Turgenev rendered Bazarov consists in his having punished him with typhus because he didn't know how to come to terms with him. That is the sort of *ultima ratio* that no one can withstand. Had Bazarov recovered from typhus, he would surely have developed beyond Bazarovism, at least in the science which he loved and valued, and in physiology which doesn't change its approaches, whether it is dealing with a frog or a human being, redividing embryology or history.... Science would have saved Bazarov, he would have stopped looking down on people....¹⁷

Even Nabokov could not resist the temptation to follow Turgenev's hero beyond the limits imposed on him: Bazarov is a strong man, no doubt -- and very possibly had he lived beyond his twenties ... he might have become, beyond the horizon of the novel, a great social thinker, a prominent physician, or an active revolutionary. But there was a common debility about Turgenev's nature and art; he was incapable of making his masculine characters triumph within the existence he invents for them.... Love turns out to be something more than man's biological pastime. The romantic fire that suddenly envelops his soul shocks him; but it satisfies the requirements of true art, since it stresses in Bazarov the logic of universal youth which transcends the logic of a local system of thought--of, in

¹⁴ Letter to Katkov, 30.XI.61, *Pis'ma*, vol. 4, 303.

¹⁵ Letter to Sluchevsky, 26.IV.62, *Pis'ma*, t. 4, Z81.

¹⁶ N. N. Strakhov, "Predislovie," *Kriticheskie stat'i ob I.S. Turgenve i L. N. Tolstom*, SPb, 1887, p. V.

¹⁷ A. I. Gertsen, "Eshche raz Bazarov," *Sobr. soch.*, XX, pp. 339, 345.

the present case, nihilism.¹⁸ This common tendency to extrapolate Bazarov's story, it seems to me, points to a certain contradiction between the novelty of Bazarov's "emptiness" (i.e., his openness, his capacity, like the heroes of the late Dostoevsky, to change sharply and abruptly) on the one hand, and that characteristic framework in which it is confined. The words of Bakhtin, inspired by the heroes of the late Dostoevsky, apply fully to Bazarov: "So long as a man is alive, he lives by virtue of the fact that he is not completed and has not yet said his final word." That appears to be something felt by all readers -- and one might add that, like the heroes of Dostoevsky, Bazarov does not so much proclaim his views -- he speaks of them unwillingly and rarely -- as incarnate them.

So, from this point of view, *Fathers and Sons* turns out to be both atypical and typical with respect to Turgenev's novelistic poetics. The protagonist is atypical, being far from "already formed." He alone grows as we read. But it turned out to be too much for Turgenev (or for his poetics) to do what the late Dostoevsky did in *The Brothers Karamazov*; that is, to finish the novel, leaving the young heroes alive and their fates open, to call the novel in question "only a prehistory" -- or to refer to that "new story" that begins after the downfall of the hero, as Dostoevsky does at the end of *Crime and Punishment*.

Turgenev himself admitted as much. To the observation that Bazarov dies "an accidental death, as if you didn't know yourself what to do with him," he replied: "Yes, I really didn't know what to do with him. I felt then that something new had come into existence; I saw new people, but how they would act or what would come of them, I could not imagine. So it remained for me either to write nothing, or to write only what I knew. I chose the latter."¹⁹ In other words, Bazarov (in Yuri Mann's phrase) "had to die in order to remain Bazarov."²⁰

In this truncation we see not only a sign of what might be called Turgenev's novel manqué (by comparison with the Dostoevskian novel which he seemed to be approaching in *Fathers and Sons*), but also (though in a less extreme form) one feature of Chekhov's future poetics. I cite the article of Harai Golomb; though it deals with Chekhov's plays, his words are applicable to the mature work in general. Since Chekhov equally stresses both the existence-and-worth of the human potential and the inevitability of its non-realization, he can be sharply and equally distinguished on the diachronic axis from two groups of authors: (a) his predecessors (and many contemporaries) in literature and drama, who share with him only the high valuation of human potential, and (b) his successors (notably the "absurd" playwrights and authors), who share with him only the sense of its inevitable non-realization. It is this uniquely Chekhovian combination which makes him too complex for some reductionist critics (in the East and the West alike), who perpetuate the futile controversy about whether Chekhov's view of reality and mankind is "positive-optimistic" or "negative-pessimistic." Those critics, no matter whose side they are on, oversimplify the picture by failing to reconcile Chekhov's genuine respect for the great potential of the human mind, spirit, talent, compassion, etc., with his uncompromising, often relentless

¹⁸ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lecture on Russian Literature* (New York, 1981), p. 71.

¹⁹ Iz "Vospominanii o Turgeneve N. A. Ostrovskoi," *Turgenevskii sbornik*, pod red. N.K. Piksanova, Pg, 1915, p. 80.

²⁰ Op. cit., p. 249.

pursuit of his characters on their flight into illusion and self-deception, and the false hope of realizing those potentials.²¹

One might similarly apply to Turgenev's novel Isaiah Berlin's gloss on Strakhov's words about Turgenev's "poetic and truthful genius." Berlin speaks of the writer's capacity, "undistorted by moral passion,"²² for rendering "the very multiplicity of interpenetrating human perspectives that shade imperceptibly into each other, nuances of character and behavior, motives and attitudes...."²³

That feature, I submit, is one that we perceive, inevitably, through the prism of Chekhov -- thus "the influence of Chekhov on Turgenev" -- since, as a result of Turgenev's own definition of his novels, together with the response of his contemporaries to them, a tradition was formed that neglected precisely such nuances. By way of example one might analyze the remarkably subtle structure of the third chapter of *Fathers and Sons*, underscoring the nuanced modulation of feeling and perspective, the art of implication, and the way that these recall (for us, today) Chekhov, particularly in his plays. The chapter in question contains a delicately managed series of interchanges, in which Nikolai Petrovich speaks warmly of his future work in running the estate together with Arkady; Arkady switches the subject to the beauty of the day; Nikolai Petrovich, agreeing, declaims Pushkin (an indirect lyrical confession) -- only to be interrupted by Bazarov's voice asking for a match; Arkady himself then lights up to show his solidarity with Bazarov, thereby excluding his father and banishing (by polluting) the fresh spring atmosphere. Precisely like Chekhov, Turgenev "rel[ies] fully on the reader, assuming that he will supply the subjective elements that are missing in the account."²⁴

Signs of such a reliance in both writers are the frequent pauses and ellipses²⁵; and particularly the eloquent gestures, quite as telling as words (e.g., the way on first meeting Bazarov Nikolai Petrovich "firmly grasps... the uncovered red hand, which [the former] hesitated to extend to him").

²¹ Harai Golomb, "Music as Theme and as Structural Model in Chekhov's Three Sisters." in Herta Schmid and Aloysius Van Kesteren eds., *Semiotics of Drama and Theatre*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 1984, pp. 174-175.

²² An example of such "distortion through moral passion" can be seen in the words of I. S. Aksakov about *Fathers and Sons*: "The novel is remarkable for the social problem it treats, but the artist *n'est pas la porte du sujet*--and the result is a monstrous enough work. Turgenev is a very intelligent man, and a very benevolent one, but as the daughter of the poet Tiutchev (who is bringing up the Empress's children) said of him with remarkable perspicacity and truth: *il lui manque l'épine dorsale morale*. Indeed, he has no bones in him at all; it's all cartilage." Quoted in N. P. Barsukov, *Zhizn' i trudy M. P. Pogodina* (St. Petersburg, 1888-1910), XIX, p. 169.

²³ Isaiah Berlin, "Fathers and Children: Turgenev and the Liberal Predicament" in his *Russian Thinkers* (London, 1978), p. 293.

²⁴ A.P. Chekhov, letter to Suvorin of I.IV.1890, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridsati tomakh, Pis'ma*, IV (Moscow, 1976), p. 54.

²⁵ Cf. A. Batiuto, *Turgenev-romanist* (1972), 201-02: "The text of Turgenev's novel literally swarms with pauses and ellipses. The device of the long pause or the suppressed statement after which the train of thoughts, feelings, and experiences not always even named but understandable to the alert reader is hidden--this is a favorite means of psychological characterization for Turgenev and one he employs frequently."

III (Conclusion)

Just as Odintsova finally rejects the temptation of Bazarov's passion and strength in order to remain herself, so Turgenev rejected the temptation--evidently a serious one--of the kind of large novel that Dostoevsky was shortly to begin writing. Because what he understood best of all (in life and in art) were personal relations, the complexities of feeling and nature, he was more drawn to the kind of inner dynamics which Chekhov was later to develop and which, once developed by him, would allow a clearer and fuller appreciation of the main aspect of the art of the author of *Fathers and Sons*.

Turgenev's essential gift was that of a dispassionate and penetrating observer; his genius lay in his rendering of character--not developing but rather revealing itself in the humdrum interactions of everyday life. That this was by no means the sign of an intellectual or artistic insufficiency but quite the opposite becomes irresistibly clear to generations that have undergone the "influence", among others, of Dostoevsky and Chekhov.

**The Ethics of Vision
Turgenev's "Execution of Tropmann,"
and Dostoevsky's View of the Matter**

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*Je me reprochais alors de n'avoir pas prêté assez
d'attention aux récits d'exécution. On devrait
toujours s'intéresser à ces questions. On ne sait
jamais ce qui peut arriver. Comme tout le monde,
j'avais lu des comptes rendus dans les journaux.*

Albert Camus, *L'Étranger*

At the end of Book IV of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates, pursuing his argument that the soul is a unity in diversity, provides an example in which "spiritedness," or *fimous*, appears to be the natural ally of reason:

I once heard something that I trust. Leontius, the son of Aglaion, was going up from the Piraeus under the outside of the North Wall when he noticed corpses lying by the public executioner. He desired to look, but at the same time he was disgusted and made himself turn away; and for a while he struggled and covered his face. But finally, overpowered by the desire, he opened his eyes wide, ran toward the corpses and said; "Look, you damned wretches, take your fill of the fair sight!"¹ (Book IV)

Socrates' own interpretation of the story aside, the incident suggests a basic conflict between man's curiosity, or lower instincts and appetites, and his moral nature or instinct to protect himself from realities that threaten to destabilize the soul or psyche. Leontius' powerful desire to *look* comes up against deep resistance in him; he struggles for a while and *makes* himself turn away, but in the end, overcome by a desire that expresses itself almost physiologically in his wide-open eyes, he *looks*. His angry statement, "Look, you damned wretches, take your fill of the fair sight!" suggests the power of *fimous*, but also the overwhelming force of the desire to see and know the forbidden.

Socrates' story highlights a phenomenon that is a matter of common experience: the confusion of impulses or instincts that almost invariably accompanies looking at scenes of violence, ugliness and death. For Turgenev and Dostoevsky, *looking at* such scenes -- specifically, looking at public executions -- raised serious social, ethical and psychological

¹ I avail myself here of Allan Bloom's translation of *The Republic*. See *The Republic of Plato*. Translated with Notes and an Interpretive Essay, by Allan Bloom (Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1968), p. 119.

questions.² Each of these writers is troubled when looking at executions. Each "looks" in his own way; and each provides variants, as it were, of the Platonic model.

Turgenev's and Dostoevsky's discussions of executions certainly bear a direct relation to one another, that is, they stand in polemical relation to one another. Prince Myshkin's discussion of executions in *The Idiot* turns up in Part One of the novel published in January 1868. Turgenev's "The Execution of Tropmann" ("Kazn' Tropmana," 1870), though inspired by a real execution he attended in January 1870, certainly was written with an eye to Dostoevsky's approach to this theme in *The Idiot*.³ Dostoevsky, in turn, responded to Turgenev's sketch negatively in a letter to N. N. Strakhov on June 11, 1871 and -- in a parodic and masked allusion to the sketch -- in his novel *The Devils* the same year. Dostoevsky based his parody on stories circulating about Turgenev's allegedly self-centered and cowardly behavior as a young man in 1838 on the sinking steamer, *Nicholas I*. Turgenev's *Un incendie en mer*, an account of this incident dictated in French to Polina Viardot a few months before his death in 1883, may in some respects be considered his response, unflinching and unbarbed to the different accounts (including Dostoevsky's in *The Devils*) of this incident.⁴

In January 1870, Jean Baptiste Tropmann, a young Frenchman under twenty, was publicly beheaded before an eager crowd of 25,000 Parisians; his crime -- coldbloodedly

² The responses of Turgenev and Dostoevsky to *looking at* executions and to the problem of capital punishment in general are relatively late additions to a controversy that had engaged society in England and on the continent in the 19th century. The question of looking at executions, that is, the moral and social meaning of public executions, was a matter of special concern to Charles Dickens. He noted in 1845 the "horrible fascination," the "strange fascination" that executions and all that is connected with them have for people. "I should have deemed it impossible that I could have ever felt any large assemblage of my fellow creatures to be so odious," he wrote of the 40,000-strong crowd -- ribald, debauched, drunken, and "flaunting vice in fifty other shapes" -- that attended the execution of Courvoisier. Dickens was a frequent attender of executions at home and abroad, observing carefully both victim and spectator. He spoke out strongly against public executions and capital punishment, though on the question of the latter his position shifted toward the end of his life. Thackeray, who had far less stomach than Dickens for executions, wrote at the conclusion of his account, "Going to See a Man Hanged," in 1840: "I am not ashamed to say that I could look no more, but shut my eyes as the last dreadful act was going on." See David D. Cooper's *The Lesson of the Scaffold. The Public Execution Controversy in Victorian England* (Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio: 1974), pp. 77, 78, 80, 90. Victor Hugo was a lifelong opponent of capital punishment, public or behind walls. "On voit le soleil!" (One sees the sun!) This exclamation of the condemned man in Hugo's *Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné* (1829) Dostoevsky quotes from memory in his letter to his brother Mikhail on December 22, 1849, right after his mock execution staged by Nicholas I. Dostoevsky mentions Hugo's "masterpiece" in his preface to his story "A Gentle Creature" in the November 1876 issue of *The Diary of a Writer*.

³ Turgenev, "The Execution of Tropmann" was first published in the journal *Vestnik Evropy*, No. 7 (1870), pp. 872-890.

⁴ For Dostoevsky's entire letter to Strakhov, see F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh. Publitsistika i pis'ma* (Leningrad, 1972-1986), Vol. 29, Book 1, pp. 127-129. The links between Dostoevsky's parody in *The Devils* and Turgenev's "The Execution of Tropmann" were first explored by Ju. A. Nikolskii in his monograph *Turgenev and Dostoevskii* (Sofia, 1920), pp. 67-71, and by A. S. Dolinin in his article "Turgenev v Besakh" in *Dostoevskij, Stat'i i materialy* (II), ed. by A. S. Dolinin (Leningrad, 1925), pp. 119-136. Two recent articles on Turgenev's "Execution of Tropmann" deserve to be mentioned: William C. Brumfield's "Invitation to a Beheading: Turgenev and Tropmann" in *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 17, No. 1 (Spring 1983), pp. 79-88, and A. B. Muratov's "Ocherk I. S. Turgeneva 'Kazn' Tropmana'" in the collection, *Khudozhestvenno-dokumental'naja literatura*, ed. L. A. Rozanova (Ivanovo, 1984), pp. 75-88.

killing a family of six: father, pregnant mother, and four children. He insisted to the end that he had had accomplices, but adduced no evidence to support that contention.

Turgenev was living at the time in Paris and was invited by officials to attend the execution. He gave an account of the event in "The Execution of Tropmann," a sketch consisting of twelve sections. In his account he describes the time he spent between 12 o'clock midnight and the execution at 7 A.M.: his arrival at the prison; conversations with notables attending the affair; the setting up of the guillotine and the rehearsal of the event on the square; the final interrogation and preparation of Tropmann for the execution; the walk to the guillotine and the execution itself.

Throughout the sketch the narrator devotes considerable attention to the crowd's eager interest in the execution. But he is increasingly uncomfortable with his own role as witness. "False shame," he tells us at the outset of the sketch, prevented him from going back on his decision to accept the invitation to attend the execution.⁵ "As for me," he writes a little later, "I felt one thing: namely that I had no right to be where I was, that no psychological or philosophical considerations excused me." Observing the preparations for the execution, he remarks: "I did not stop to look at this rehearsal, that is, I did not climb onto the platform: the feeling of some unknown transgression committed by myself, of some secret shame, was constantly intensifying in me." He refuses to partake in the pre-execution "collation" for the notables. "I have no right, I kept saying to myself for the hundredth time since the beginning of that night." And in the walk to Tropmann's cell before the execution the thought again flashes through the narrator's mind that "we had no right to do what we were doing, that by being present with an air of hypocritical solemnity at the killing of a being like us, we were participating in some kind of odious, iniquitous farce."

The narrator's sense of being in the wrong place intensifies until in the eleventh chapter, the penultimate one that gives an account of the execution, this revulsion expresses itself in a dramatic gesture. At the high point of his description of the last moments preceding the beheading, we learn: "But here I turned away and began to wait, the ground slowly rising and falling beneath my feet***." The narrator, in short, averts his eyes from the sight of the actual decapitation of Tropmann. There is a lapse of twenty seconds before he glances (*vzglianul*) at a companion who had grasped his arm to support him.⁶

The gesture of averting his eyes from the actual beheading is of signal importance in the sketch; it not only gives final embodiment to the narrator's persistent thought that he had no right to be where he was, but points toward one of the principal thoughts of Turgenev's sketch: namely, that the witnessing of violence, crime, the physical or moral degradation of another human being implicates the observer in the act of violence. The narrator's gesture, then, raises the issue of the ethics of observation, one involving various psychological questions relating to the peculiar interest aroused by scenes of violence.

⁵ I make use here of David Magarshack's translation, "The Execution of Tropmann," in Ivan Turgenev, *Literary Reminiscences and Autobiographical Fragments* (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, New York: 1958), pp. 244-270. For stylistic reasons I have made changes in certain passages of the translation.

⁶ According to Maxime Du Camp, who invited Turgenev to witness the execution of Tropmann, the interval was no more than fourteen seconds. See Du Camp's "La Place de la Roquette. Le quartier des condamnés a mort et l'échafaud." *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Jan. 1, 1870, p. 207. Here, as in some other instances, Turgenev has altered some details of the actual event.

Whatever the man Turgenev missed when he turned away from the actual decapitation of Tropmann on January 7, 1870, it cannot be said that the artist Turgenev either ignored the details of Tropmann's execution or the moral-psychological issues surrounding it. The twenty seconds or less during which the narrator averts his eyes from the guillotine are by no means idle ones. The narrator first of all *listens* to the guillotine, much as the victim listens.⁷ In lines of extraordinary onomatopoeic power, he describes the sound of the descending knife of the guillotine: "*Potom chto-to vdrug glukho zaruchalo i pokatilos' - i ukhnulo***tochno ogromnoe zhiivotnoe otkharknulos'****" (Then something suddenly began to growl indistinctly and set into motion -- and grunted***just as though a huge animal had retched***). The animal sounds of the "monster guillotine" (*chudovishche gil'otiny*) form a counterpart to the animal response of the crowd to the spectacle -- "the thunderous squeal of the overjoyed and expectant crowd" (*gromadnyi vizg obradovannoi, dozhdavsheisia tolpy*).

After these twenty seconds -- from an artistic point of view that interval serves as a device of dramatic retardation -- the narrator picks up his visual account of the beheading. At the beginning of chapter xii, he writes:

Our group gathered in the guard-house... I, too, went in there and learned that, while lying on the plank, Tropmann suddenly and convulsively threw his head sideways, so that it did not fit into the semi-circular hole, and the executioners were forced to drag it there by the hair, and while they were doing it, he bit one of them, the main one, by the finger.

Tropmann's head -- "it" -- one may note -- is almost a detached object in this description; his bite is an intimation of the cruel, if unequal struggle waged here.

It is impossible to describe a beheading as it occurs. The narrator approaches the matter both at his leisure and with the aid of his imagination. In the haircutting ceremony preceding Tropmann's execution, he declares: "I could not turn my eyes away...particularly from that slender youthful neck*** In my imagination I could not help seeing a line cut straight across it*** Precisely there, I thought, a five-hundred pound axe would in a few moments pass, smashing the vertebrae and cutting through the veins and muscles, and yet the body did not seem to expect anything of the kind: it was so smooth, so white, so healthy***." And in one of several dramatic descriptions of the guillotine -- this one during the guillotine "rehearsal" -- the narrator points out the "large wicker basket, looking like a suitcase into which "the executioners would throw the warm and still quivering body and the cut-off head." *The artist Turgenev, then, does not and cannot turn away from the beheading*; he loses nothing in averting the eyes of his narrator from an essentially indescribable moment; rather, he provides the reader in advance with ample material to exercise his imagination when the narrator momentarily turns away from the actual decapitation.

After the beheading, moreover, the narrator adds a detail that would satisfy even the most eager seeker of sensation:

[I learned that] immediately after the execution, at the time when the body, thrown into the van, was being driven away at

⁷ "Sight," wrote Herder, "is the coldest of the senses, whereas hearing acts immediately on the soul," Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 4. Suphan, ed. (Berlin 1878), p. 44.

a fast clip, two men taking advantage of the first moments of inevitable confusion, penetrated the lines of the soldiers and, crawling under the guillotine, began soaking their handkerchiefs in the blood that had dripped through the chinks of the planks***.

The narrator adds that he listened to all this talk "as though in a dream." The artist Turgenev, however, was not dreaming; nor was he slow in exercising the artist's "right" to participate in, and reflect upon, a scene from which the narrator -- earlier in the sketch -- had excluded both psychologist and philosopher. In his sketch Turgenev does not turn away from the gory visual details of the execution. But precisely the problem of *looking*, of sight, of vision in the deepest ethical and psychological sense preoccupies him in "The Execution of Tropmann." His concern with sight is signalled first of all by series of pronounced references to looking in the chapter given over to the execution of Tropmann -- chapter xi.

The verb "to see" (*videt*) or "to look at" or "glance at" (*vzglianut*) appears a number of times. The central passage leading up to the moment the narrator averts his eyes from the scene reads:

I suddenly felt cold, cold to the point of nausea... my legs gave way under me. However, I *looked again* at Tropmann... Those of us who wanted to *see* how his head would roll off***rushed past him in the street*** I had not enough spirit for that; with a sinking heart I stopped at the gates*** I *saw* the executioner rise suddenly like a black tower on the left side of the guillotine platform; I *saw* Tropmann separate from the huddle of the people below, scrambling up the steps (there were ten of them -- as many as ten!); I *saw* how he stopped and turned around; I heard him say: "Dites à Monsieur Claude***" I *saw* him appearing above and two men pouncing on him from the right and the left, like spiders on a fly; I *saw* him falling forward suddenly and his heels kicking*** But here I turned away and began to wait.... (my italics--RLJ)

"*Ia videl*," "*ia videl*," "*ia videl*," "*ia videl*." Sight here is not that vision that freely orders and reveals the inner significance of things; this is sight assaulted, this is captive vision, this is the eye transfixed. At the moment he turns away the narrator observes the face of a young sentry: "He looked intently at me with a kind of vacant bewilderment and horror." He had probably come from some "humble and kindly family in a distant village,-- and now--what did he not *have to see!*" [(*chto emu prikhoditsia videt*)] [my italics--RLJ]. In such moments of violence and unfreedom and hypnotic spell to turn away, to avert one's eyes, is to rescue vision from a condition of "eyes without feeling"⁸ and to restore it to its ethical function of insight and judgment.

The account in chapter xi of Tropmann's last moments is artfully framed by passages at the end of chapter x and the beginning of chapter xii -- two passages marked by

⁸ Cf. Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act II, scene iv, and Hamlet's reproach to his mother: "What devil was't/ That hath cozoned you at hoodman-blind?/ Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,/ Ears without hands or eyes, smalling sans all,/ Or but a sickly part of one true sense/ Could not so mope."

references to sight that raise the moral issue and direction of Turgenev's "Execution of Tropmann." The theme of sight is introduced in a characteristically understated manner at the very end of chapter x. "*Postushajte, Tropmann (Voyons, Tropmann!)*," -- *razdalsia sredi grobovoi tishiny, golos g. Kloda. 'Teper, cherez minutu, vse budet koncheno. Vy prodolzhaete nastaiivat' (vous persistez) na tom, chto u vas byli soobshchniki?'*" "*Da, sudar', prodolzhaiu (Oui, monsieur, je persiste).*" ("Listen, Tropmann (*Voyons, Tropmann!*), M. Claude's [the police commissioner's] voice resounded in the death-like stillness: 'Soon, in another minute, everything will be at an end. Do you persist in claiming that you had accomplices?' 'Yes, sir, I do persist (*Oui, monsieur, je persiste*).'"

In the subtext of this bit of dialogue the idiomatic or figurative "*voyons*" (listen, come now) yields to its literal and core meaning "we look." "We look," "let us look" signals the conscious or unconscious urge and preoccupation of all the observers of the execution of Tropmann, both gentlemen and mob. But can one look at, visually participate in, violence without becoming an accomplice in an act of violence and without incurring the guilt? Tropmann insists that he was "not guilty" of the terrible crime for which he was condemned. He maintains that he had "accomplices." "*Je n'ai pas frappé*" (*Ia ne nanes udara*, "I did not strike a blow"), he repeats, as though the fact that he did not strike a blow (if, indeed, true) absolves him of guilt. Turgenev brilliantly integrates this bit of dialogue between Tropmann and Monsieur Claude into his artistic text and subtext. Tropmann's argument that he did not strike the blow and that therefore he is innocent rests on the common notion that guilt or innocence is only a technical or legal issue. Neither Turgenev nor Dostoevsky accepted this way of thinking. Ivan Karamazov never actually struck a blow at his father; he had an accomplice. Ivan's guilt is nonetheless profound. Turgenev's point is clear: those who came to witness the execution of Tropmann were accomplices in the violence. As Victor Hugo put it, "*Qui assiste au crime, assiste le crime.*"⁹ But the narrator finds accomplices not only in the masses of people who came to witness the execution, but in the gentlemen-observers, and in himself.

The essence of Turgenev's thought is contained in some lines at the beginning of chapter xii -- lines that complete the "framing" of chapter xi. Here the notables gather to convey their impressions of the execution:

But I listened to all that talk as though in a dream. I felt very tired, and, indeed, I was not alone to feel that way. Everybody seemed tired, although everybody obviously felt relieved, just as though a burden had fallen from their shoulders. But not one of us, *absolutely no one looked like a person who recognized that he had presided at the performance of an act of social justice.* Everyone tried mentally to turn away and, as it were, to shake off the responsibility for this murder (*Reshitel'no nikto ne smotrel chelovekom, kotoryi soznaet, chto prisutstvoval pri sovershenii akta obshchestvennogo pravosudiia: vsiakii staralsia myslenno otvernut'sia i kak by sbrosit' s sebia otvetstvennost' vo etom ubiistve****) (Turgenev's italics).

⁹ Hugo's aphorism appears in Book 3 of *William Shakespeare, Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Jean Massin, 18 vols. (Paris: Le Club Français du Livre, 1967-1970), XII, 314.

In these lines Turgenev artfully conveys a number of thoughts central to his sketch. The response of those who came to participate visually in the execution is now "mentally to turn away" (*myslennno otvernut'sia*), as it were, to shake off their responsibility for this act of violence; that is, their *mental gesture* corresponds to the narrator's *real gesture* of turning away from the sight of the beheading; their gesture marks a sense of guilt. Their feeling, nonetheless, is one of relief, as though "a burden had fallen from their shoulders." A noteworthy phrase: after participating vicariously in the murder of Tropmann, the gentlemen-spectators experience a sense of relief; they, like Tropmann, Turgenev ironically hints, have *lost their heads* -- that is, paid for their crime.

An examination of the passage cited above yields one further subtle suggestion on Turgenev's part. The central feeling of the observers is one of shame, a sense of complicity. "Not one of them looked like a person who recognized that he had presided at the performance of an act of social justice" (*nikto ne smotrel chelovekom, kotoryi soznaet, chto prisutstvoval pri sovershenii akta obshchestvennogo pravosudiia*). Buried in this line is a variant thought: not one of them "looked like a man" (*smotrel chelovekom*) -- that is, the act of witnessing crime is a symbolic act of self-disfiguration, a kind of moral decapitation.

A difficult paradox arises from Turgenev's "The Execution of Tropmann": deliberately looking at an execution, vicariously participating in it, is, morally speaking, a turning away from humaneness; on the other hand, averting one's eyes from such a scene constitutes an equally immoral act, an attempt to shake off responsibility. In both cases, figuratively speaking, *one loses one's head* -- that is, one suffers a kind of self-disfiguration.

Yet Turgenev seems to be saying something else as well: it is impossible literally to look at a scene of violence and degradation, to be absorbed by it, and at the same time look into it -- that is, cope with it in moral and spiritual terms. But what is impossible for the individual when confronting violence is possible for the artist in the work of art. Turgenev simultaneously *looks at, that is, depicts the execution of Tropmann in all its absorbing naturalistic detail and horror*, and *looks into* the ugliness that unites executioner and observers; he looks into it and reveals its meaning in the larger frame of moral truth or image (*obraz*) -- that is, the truth of man created in the image and likeness of God. "Can one conceive in an image that which has no image?" (*mozhno mereshchit'sia v obraze to, chto ne imeet obraza?*), asks Ippolit Terentiev in *The Idiot*. The answer to this apparently insoluble question is "yes"; yes if one is a supreme artist like Turgenev or Dostoevsky.

In the opening chapter of "The Execution of Tropmann" the narrator recalls the invitation he received from the writer Maxime Du Camp to attend the execution of Tropmann; he observes:

Taken by surprise by M. Du Camp's proposal, I accepted it without giving it much thought. And having promised to arrive at the place fixed for our meeting -- at the statue of Prince Eugene, on the boulevard of the same name, at 11 o'clock in the evening -- I did not want to go back on my word. A false sense of shame prevented me from doing so*** And what if they should think I was a coward? As a punishment of myself -- and as a lesson to others -- I should now like to tell everything that I saw. I intend to revive in my memory all the painful impressions of that night. Perhaps more than the reader's curiosity will be satisfied; perhaps he may derive some benefit from it.

What follows these remarks is the account of the narrator's experience, one that is both documentary and confessional in character.

I speak of a "narrator." The narrator, of course, is Turgenev. Yet the recognition of some distinction between Turgenev as artist and Turgenev as character is as essential to an understanding of the text as it is to an understanding of Turgenev's early work, *Notes of a Hunter* (*Zapiski okhotnika*, 1847-50). The generally autobiographical character of "The Execution of Tropmann" should not blind us to the fact that the artist Turgenev has deliberately turned his experience into a self-reflecting literary artifact and himself into a character open to criticism: that is, he has subordinated all the elements of his experience to an artistic-ideological design.

The narrator critically observes the eager crowds of people attending the execution, the notables participating in the procedures and ceremonies surrounding that event, and the murderer Tropmann. But he also observes himself and the manner in which he is observed by others. "There he is -- there he is -- it's him!" a few voiced shouted around us. 'Why,' Du Camp said to me suddenly, 'you have been mistaken for the executioner!'... The Paris executioner, Monsieur de Paris, whose acquaintance I made during that same night, is as tall and as grey as I."

The motif of self-criticism is consistent throughout the sketch, as, for example, the narrator's comment on the walk to the prison: "we all felt a little awkward -- or did it only seem to me to be so? -- a little ashamed, too, though we walked along jauntily, as though on a hunting expedition." Indicting society, the mob and the cortege of gentlemen for their participation in the execution, the artist-Turgenev in his *Bildungsgeschichte* indicts himself in his role as gentleman-narrator, that is, he singles out the conventional man of sensibility who has moral scruples about attending executions, is unable to endure the spectacle, and who comes away with a sense of guilt. The narrator is the prism through which the artist observes the execution. He candidly records his own painful responses to the entire experience, his feeling that he has no "right" to be present. At the core of Turgenev's design, then, is a sacrifice: making himself as narrator, as a social cultural type, vulnerable to the charges he makes as an artist. The artist, then, stands above his narrator. Hence the irony: in this preeminently philosophical and psychological sketch the narrator is constantly insisting that he has no "right" -- philosophical or psychological -- to attend executions; in this sketch where the narrator speaks of his "inappropriate curiosity," the artist Turgenev has turned that curiosity into an instrument of self-criticism.

After reading Turgenev's "Execution of Tropmann" Dostoevsky wrote the following to the critic Nikolai Strakhov in a letter dated June 23, 1870:

You may have a different view, Nikolai Nikolaevich, but this pompous and finicky article exasperated me. Why does he get all flustered and maintain that he had no right to be there [at the execution]? Yes, of course, if he only came for the spectacle; but man on the surface of the earth does not have the right to turn away and ignore what is taking place on earth, and there are lofty *moral* reasons for this: *homo sum et nihil humanum*, etc. The most comic thing of all is that in the end he turns away and doesn't see how [Tropmann] is finally executed. "Just look, gentlemen, how delicately I have been nurtured! I couldn't bear it." Moreover, he gives himself away: the chief impression one gets from the article is a frightful

concern -- fussy to the *n*th degree -- about himself, his integrity, his composure -- and all this over a decapitated head!¹⁰

Dostoevsky's final observation recalls the Englishman Thomas Macaulay's comment that the proponents of the abolition of capital punishment were victims of "effeminate feelings."

Dostoevsky's critique of Turgenev's allegedly self-centered and squeamish approach toward the execution of Tropmann is echoed in his well-known parody of Turgenev in *The Devils*. Here the chronicler remarks apropos of Karmazinov the writer:

About a year ago I read an article in a journal written with a frightful affectation of the most naive poetry and also psychology. He was describing the wreck of a steamer somewhere off the English coast, one which he himself had witnessed, and how he had watched the drowning people being saved and the drowned people being dragged ashore. The whole article was long and verbose, written with the sole purpose of putting himself in the foreground. So that one could read between the lines: "Interest yourself in me, how I behaved in those moments. Why be concerned with the sea, the storm, the cliffs, the smashed fragments of the ship? Why are you looking at that drowned woman with the dead child in her dead hands? Rather, look at me, how *I was unable to endure this spectacle and turned away from it. Here was I with my back to it, here was I full of horror and incapable of looking back; I closed my eyes* -- isn't that really interesting. (Pt. I, Ch. 3, Sect. 2) (Italics mine -- RLJ)

Dostoevsky's thought glares forth: the writer Karmazinov-Turgenev, in describing the shipwreck (read also: the execution of Tropmann) should have kept his eyes on the disaster itself and, above all, upon the human tragedy -- the dead woman and child, that is, upon Tropmann as victim. One has no right, in short, to *close one's eyes* to what is taking place on earth.

How justified is Dostoevsky's criticism? And what underlies his nervous irritability and sarcasm, indeed, his rage? Turgenev can in no way be accused either of sidestepping the brutal and gruesome detail of the execution, be it physical or psychological, or of "ignoring" in the broader moral-philosophical sense "what is taking place on the face of the earth." Indeed, what Dostoevsky accuses him of ignoring is the precise center of Turgenev's attention. Turgenev's approach to crime, to the criminal, and to the criminal-in-us is Dostoevskian *avant la lettre*. How could Dostoevsky ignore this fact? What offense or challenge did he find in "The Execution of Tropmann?"

Dostoevsky's exasperation was understandable from certain points of view. He himself had been arrested in 1849 and, after his trial, sentenced to death. That sentence, unbeknownst to Dostoevsky and his fellow prisoners, was commuted to years of hard labor. On orders from the Tsar Nicholas, the group of prisoners, including Dostoevsky, as special

¹⁰ The expression appears first in Terence's play, *The Self-Tormentor* (*Heauton Timorumenos*): "*Homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto*" (I am a man: nothing human is alien to me). The line became famous and was often alluded to by Cicero, Seneca, and others. Dostoevsky's formulation of the phrase is not Terence's.

form of punishment were led to their supposed execution -- an execution called off in a planned theatrical gesture literally seconds before being carried out. "What do you think is going on in such a man's soul at the time?" Prince Myshkin asks in *The Idiot*. "Think of the mental anguish [the victim] suffers. It's an outrage on the soul, that's what it is!" Dostoevsky, the man who had to face his own execution, might legitimately have been vexed by the narrator's focus, in part, at least, on his *own feelings* as observer in "The Execution of Tropmann."

To judge by Turgenev's oddly insouciant letter to Claudine Viardot, written in the Roquette prison seven or eight hours before the *toilette du condamné* and execution of Tropmann, he initially took a rather light and detached interest in the impending execution. As Alexandre Zviguilsky has noted in this connection, Turgenev underwent a "*prise de conscience*" on witnessing close-up the entire repulsive scene of the execution.¹¹ "I will never forget this terrible night in the course of which 'I have supp'd full of horrors' and I acquired a definite aversion for capital punishment in general and for how it is carried out in France in particular," Turgenev wrote Pavel Annenkov, January 22, 1870, apropos of his "unexpected" experience. (Turgenev cites Shakespeare's *Macbeth* [V, v] in English.) "I can only say one thing now: I could not have imagined such a courage, such scorn for death as Tropmann had. But this whole business is horrible... horrible."

Dostoevsky, clearly, sensed, if not the confessional aspect of Turgenev's sketch, at least, Turgenev's guilt or distress in reflecting on the whole experience. "Why does he get all flustered and maintain that he had no right to be there? Yes, of course, *if he came only for the spectacle*." Dostoevsky chose to ignore, however, the multidimensional psychological, social, and philosophical aspects of "The Execution of Tropmann," Turgenev's moral elevation of the figure of Tropmann, his extraordinary depiction and analysis of crowd psychology, etc.

Dostoevsky's reference in his letter to the narrator's "composure" illuminates another important element in his irritation with Turgenev: it not only signals the vast stretch between Dostoevsky's own turbulent personality and poetics and those of Turgenev, but also points to his early and painful Silvio-like envy and admiration of the youthful aristocrat Turgenev in the 1840s -- that same Turgenev who addressed some barbed epigrams at the then youthful and morbidly self-conscious Dostoevsky.

Finally, one cannot exclude an element of jealousy on Dostoevsky's part. Turgenev, as it were, challenges Dostoevsky on his own turf. His "Execution of Tropmann" not only was written with an eye to Dostoevsky's own approach to execution in *The Idiot* but contains pages that rival Dostoevsky's in their artistic and psychological brilliance and insight.

Yet we must turn to other areas of genuine distress, conflict, and creative inspiration for Dostoevsky if we are to get the bottom of his highly charged response to Turgenev's sketch. I have in mind the question that is at the heart of Turgenev's sketch as it is of Dostoevsky's own works: the problem of man's attraction to violence, crime, ugliness, and evil. Like Turgenev, and indeed more intensively than he, Dostoevsky was deeply and painfully concerned with the relation of the observer to crime and violence. Precisely in

¹¹ Alexandre Zviguilsky, "Ivan Tourguéniev et la peine de mort," in *Actes du Colloque sur la peine de mort dans la pensée philosophique et littéraire. Autour de "L'exécution de Troppmann," d'Ivan Tourguéniev* (Paris, 1980), p. 68.

this realm and, finally, in his religious-philosophical approach to evil in man, we shall find the deepest source for Dostoevsky's malevolent discontent with Turgenev.

In *Notes from the House of the Dead* (1861-1862) the narrator not only raises the question of the sadomasochistic involvement of the guards and convicts in execution, but directs attention to his own obsessive interest. "The attributes of the executioner are to be found in almost every contemporary man," he remarks, striking a note that would be central in Turgenev's "Execution of Tropmann." "In that first period in the hospital," the narrator recalls, "I would listen spellbound [*zashushivalsia*] to all these stories [about beatings] of the convicts." "I was agitated, disturbed, and frightened," he observes again. The stories told by the convicts made his heart "rise in his throat and thump heavily and violently." Yet he eagerly probed into all the gruesome details of punishments, the nature of the pain of beatings -- beatings that sometimes excited the nerves beyond endurance. "I really don't know why I was after all this," the narrator writes almost evasively, "I only remember one thing, that it was not from idle curiosity. I repeat that I was agitated and shaken." Why was the narrator of *House of the Dead* "after all this" -- as he puts it? We can with assurance only say that it was obviously not out of moral indignation that the narrator's heart thumped heavily and violently, that his eyes were riveted to the suffering backs of his fellow convicts, and that he devotes so much time to the sadistic and masochistic dimensions of punishment. What is involved is what Dickens called man's "horrible fascination" with executions.

"The example of violence is a temptation," the narrator writes in a justly famous passage of *House of the Dead* -- one that opens significantly with a reference to the names of the notorious Marquis de Sade and Madame de Brinvilliers (1651-1675): "Blood and power intoxicate, coarseness and debauchery follow, the most abnormal phenomena begin to appeal to the mind and feelings, become sweet to them." Not only torturer and victim succumb to the disease of violence, Dostoevsky makes clear in *House of the Dead*, but the observer as well; even the most educated, artistic, and scientific observer is not immune to the spectacle of violence, that is, may find something to identify with, or enjoy, in torturer or victim. How shall we put it? "*Homo sum et nihil humanum*"? I am not trying to subvert Latindom's noble formula. Dostoevsky himself recognizes that Terence's line could be used in a purely psychological and negative sense. Thus Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment* employs the expression in defense of his special carnal appetite.

Now let's just assume, now that I too am a man, *et nihil humanum**** in a word, that I am capable of being attracted and falling in love (which, of course, doesn't happen according to our will), that everything can be explained in a most natural way. The whole question is: am I a monster or am I myself a victim? Well, and what if I am a victim? (IV, 1)

What I am saying, then, is what Dostoevsky himself suggests: that the narrator's special interest in violence, though permeated by an ethos of moral and social concern, also may be explained -- in Svidrigailov's words -- "in a most natural way." Here, of course, our distinction between Dostoevsky and his narrator in *House of the Dead* is as vital as the distinction between Turgenev and his narrator in "The Execution of Tropmann."

The reader of the first dream of Raskolnikov -- the episode in which an old horse is methodically beaten to death in front of a crowd of peasants -- is treated to an orgy of violence. The episode is traumatic for the boy in the dream. "Come along, come along!" says the father "the drunken fools are misbehaving...don't look...it's not our business, let's

go." Dostoevsky is saying, of course, that it is the business of man to *look*. Violence, from the moral and social point of view is our business. We cannot and must not "ignore what is taking place on earth and there are lofty *moral* reasons for this," etc. Dostoevsky's point, however is not that we -- above all children -- should passively watch old horses being beaten to death by drunken peasants with crowbars, that is to say, that we should literally keep our eyes on such scenes of human degradation. *That* kind of looking points again to other more "natural" interests and pleasures. Indeed, one of the main points Dostoevsky makes in his account of Raskolnikov's dream is that looking at violence is form of vicarious and corrupt participation in it. The adult observers, peasant men and women alike, fully enjoy the spectacle of the beating of the horse. Like the crowd of Parisians watching Tropmann's execution, they have not the slightest inclination to turn away, that is, not until the performance is over. Svidrigailov would cynically say: *homo sum et nihil humanum*, that is, we are involved with a case of the common "brotherhood" of all men.

The complex questions involved in witnessing violence -- the ethics and psychology of observation -- are taken up again by Dostoevsky in Part One, Chapter 5 of *The Idiot*. It is in this chapter that Prince Myshkin meets Mrs. Epanchin and her daughters and expatiates at length on executions. The chapter opens with a general focus on the aesthetics of sight. The theme of *looking* which does not *see into* reality, that is, looking that is morally and spiritually blind, is raised here obliquely in the second paragraph of the chapter. In moments of crisis, we are told, Mrs. Epanchin would "usually pop her eyes" (*chrezvychaino vykatyvaya glaza*) and look vacantly before her. "Her rather large grey eyes sometimes had a most unexpected expression. A long time ago she had been so vain as to imagine that her gaze was extraordinarily striking." Mrs. Epanchin, however, like her daughter Adelaida, who is a painter, entirely lacks the capacity to see, a fact that is indirectly indicated by her remark to Myshkin: "Sit down here, Prince, in this armchair, opposite me -- no, here -- move nearer to the light -- in the sun, so that I may see you."

The problem of seeing is raised a moment later in connection with Adelaida's painting -- characteristically, she is "copying a landscape she had already begun from an engraving." She complains that for two years she hasn't been able to find a subject for a picture. "Do find me a subject for a picture, Prince," she asks. But Myshkin, who has his own problems of seeing, is unable to help. "I'm afraid I know nothing about it. It seems to me that all you have to do is to look and paint." "But I don't know how to look," Adelaida rejoins quite candidly. Mrs. Epanchin's response is what we would expect from her: "Why are you talking in riddles? Can't understand a word!...What do you mean, you don't know how to look? You have a pair of eyes, haven't you? Well, look with them!" But whether you are involved in painting or simply observing reality, looking involves more than popping your eyes or staring, that is, it involves more than the mechanical act of seeing. Mrs. Epanchin's advice is as useless as Myshkin's -- "it seems to me all you have to do is look and paint." Myshkin's limitations as an observer, at least at this point in the narrative, are signalled by Aglaya: "Besides, he is a complete child, one could still play blind man's buff with him." Myshkin, childlike, is groping about in the darkness. For his own sake, too, it is important that he "move nearer to the light."

These discussions form an important background to Myshkin's descriptions of executions. Myshkin does not know how to look at them in the deeper spiritual sense. The following conversation between Aglaya and Myshkin raises sharply all the questions raised by Turgenev in "The Execution of Tropmann."

"It's a pity, prince, that you didn't see an execution. I'd have liked to ask you something."

"I have seen an execution," replied the prince.

"You've seen one?" exclaimed Aglaya. "I might have guessed it!..."

"I saw one at Lyons, I went there with Schneider, he took me there. No sooner did I get there than the execution took place."

"Well, did you like it very much? Was there much that was edifying? Much that was instructive? Useful?" asked Aglaya.

"I didn't like it at all, and afterwards I was a little sick, but I confess that I looked as though rooted to the spot. I couldn't tear my eyes from it [*glaz otorvat' ne mog*]."

"I too would have been unable to tear my eyes from it," replies Aglaya.

What keeps Myshkin from tearing his eyes from the guillotine has nothing to do with lofty moral principles. It is a case of uncontrolled staring. He is transfixed by the scene. What is more, the execution disturbs him as it disturbs Turgenev's narrator. "Tell us about the execution," Adelaida asks him. "I would really rather not***" Myshkin replies, "looking embarrassed and almost frowning." Like the gentlemen-observers after Tropmann's execution, one might say, Myshkin at this moment tries to turn away in spirit from his own feelings of guilt and confusion.

Myshkin, however, does not go on to describe the execution scene. Not surprisingly, he proposes that the amateur painter Adelaida -- precisely Adelaida the copyist ("you most of all," he emphasizes) -- paint the face of a man at the moment he is about to be executed. "Just now when you asked me for a subject for a picture it occurred to me to tell you to paint the face of a man condemned a minute before the fall of the guillotine blade." "I thought at the time that such a picture would be a useful one," Myshkin remarks.

But what exactly does Myshkin want to teach by such a picture -- particularly a picture painted by a person who "does not know how to look"? Despair? Of course, *despair* and the *inability to look into reality* go together in Dostoevsky's lexicon. "Such a painting," Myshkin later remarks in connection with Hans Holbein's *Christ in the Tomb*, "could make one lose one's faith." Myshkin's account of the execution -- indeed his very preoccupation with executions -- is marked by a mood of tragic despair:

Paint the scaffold so that only the last step can be distinctly and clearly seen in the foreground; the condemned man stepping on it; his head, his face is as white as paper, the priest is holding up the cross, and the man greedily puts out his blue lips and *looks and knows everything*. The cross and the hand -- that is the picture, the priest's face, the faces of the executioner and his two assistants, and a few faces and the eyes below -- all this can be painted as a background. That's the kind of picture.

"He *looks and knows everything*": Dostoevsky italicizes these words. Ideally, to see is to know in the highest sense. Here, however, the looking of the condemned man is knowing death and disintegration, knowing it with absolute certainty, knowing despair, knowing, finally, what Hans Holbein's painting suggests to Myshkin: the failure of Christ.

That is why Myshkin's suggestion that his painting be made by Adelaida -- a person who "does not know how to look" -- has a symbolic and tragic meaning.

Myshkin's remarks, his references to the visual details of the painting come only as an afterword to the main description of the execution, one interestingly enough that does not provide the reader with a visual description of the actual decapitation. Like Turgenev in "The Execution of Tropmann," but from the vantage point of the victim, Dostoevsky focuses on the sound of the falling blade. But, whereas Turgenev anthropomorphizes the sound, Dostoevsky concentrates on the victim's act of listening to the blade falling.

Suddenly he *hears* the iron come slithering down over his head!
He must certainly *hear* that! If I were lying there, I'd listen for it on purpose and I would *hear* it. There is only perhaps one tenth of a second left, but one would certainly *hear* it. And imagine, there are still some people who maintain that when the head is cut off, it knows for a second perhaps that it has been cut off -- what a thought! And what if it knows for five seconds! [my italics--RLJ]

To Turgenev's horrifying "*ia videl*," "*ia videl*," "*ia videl*," "*ia videl*" we have Dostoevsky's "*uslyshit*," "*uslyshit*," "*uslyshish*," "*uslyshal*," "*uslyshish*" -- a sound very much capturing the slithering and swishing sound of the blade. "As soon as you finished your story," Aglaya remarks to Myshkin, "you suddenly became ashamed of what you've said. Why is that?" Myshkin remains silent. Silence here is eloquent. Myshkin's sense of shame is linked with a deeper sense of complicity and guilt, the same kind of feelings experienced by the narrator and notables at Tropmann's execution.

* * *

What then may we conclude from our discussion of Turgenev's "Execution of Tropmann" and Dostoevsky's approach to executions? Both authors appear to have similar concerns and attitudes. Both are troubled by man's attraction to violence and death, and both examine that problem in a broad moral-psychological framework. What is more, both Turgenev and Dostoevsky implicitly distinguish between obsessive *looking*, one captivated and fascinated by horror, and artistic or spiritual vision that looks *into* a phenomenon, contextualizes it in a moral sense and thereby brings it under control. Turgenev's repeated expression, "I saw" and Myshkin's transfixed gaze are psychologically of the same order.

Why, then, was Dostoevsky so upset by Turgenev's sketch? The answer, I believe, is two-fold. First, and in the most immediate sense, Dostoevsky was, like Myshkin and Aglaya, himself literally "unable to tear his eyes" away from scenes of violence and execution; the reasons have nothing to do with highmindedness. Turgenev's gesture of turning away, whether one of will or weakness, could not but have reminded Dostoevsky of his own fascination with violence. What troubled Dostoevsky in the first instance, I suggest, is what troubled Hamlet's mother when, under the force of Hamlet's reproach that she had "eyes without feeling," she exclaimed:

O Hamlet, speak no more!
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
And there I see such black and grained sports
As will not leave their tinct.

Yet there is another aspect of the matter that deserves equal attention. Dostoevsky seized upon a literal gesture of recoil on Turgenev's part -- one not at all characteristic of his own nature -- and interpreted it figuratively, proclaiming that Turgenev was ignoring what was taking place on earth. Nothing was further from the truth. Yet Turgenev's narrator, though he expresses a sense of "shame" at having allowed himself to play the spectator; though in general he places the spectator on no higher moral plane than Tropmann (who, in fact, emerges in this sketch as a more integral and admirable figure than the spectators); though he suggests, finally, that the executioner exists in all of us; yet essentially Turgenev *does not identify himself with the crowd and their lower instincts*. "Why, for the sake of what sensations, had *they* left the rut of everyday life for a few hours?" the narrator asks at the end of the sketch. "It is awful to think what is hidden there."

The signal characteristic of Dostoevsky is that he asks this question of himself. Dostoevsky, who felt the force of evil perhaps more deeply than any other Russian writer, clearly understood that the fact that we note in ourselves the same brutal and degrading impulses and responses that we find in others is not in itself a cause for self-congratulation. Yet the cornerstone of his religious-philosophical outlook is his insistence that human solidarity begins at the point we recognize our solidarity in evil with others. All efforts at redemption, he believes, must begin with this recognition. Dostoevsky clearly identified himself with the crowd in its corrupt tastes and its craving for sensation; but he also identified himself with it in its countercraving for redemption from sin; and this craving for sensation, suffering and redemption was very different in character from Turgenev's deep-seated disgust with the crowd and his instinctive need to separate himself from the violence, corruption and evil that threaten to engulf, and do indeed engulf, in one degree or another, the witness of violence.

Here it is worth noting that Turgenev has his narrator turn away from the beheading in the *eleventh* chapter of his sketch of twelve chapters, that is, he turns away at the symbolic eleventh hour -- the hour of salvation. For Dostoevsky, however, the drama of salvation lay in the crucifixion (an event that dominates Dostoevsky's whole preoccupation with executions in *The Idiot*); one cannot turn away from the crucifixion, from the supreme drama of suffering, from the enigma of death, even at the risk of losing one's faith. "I like to look at this picture," Rogozhin remarks in *The Idiot* apropos of a copy of Hans Holbein's "Christ in the Tomb" on the wall. To which Myshkin replies: "Really, looking at this picture a person might lose his faith." Later Ippolit Terentiev again links the problem of looking with the problem of faith when he notes that "Christ suffered not in a figurative but in a real way [*ne obrazno, a deistvitel'no*], and that his body on the cross, therefore was subject absolutely to the law of nature." "How could one believe looking at such a corpse, that this sufferer would be resurrected [*kakim obrazom mogli oni poverit', smotria na takoi trup, chto etot muchenik voskresnet?*]" Literally, "with what image can one believe looking at such a corpse..."; or, as Ippolit puts it a moment later: "Can one conceive in an image that which has no image [*mozhno mereshchits'ia v obraze to chto ne imeet obraza?*]"

With what *image* -- that is, with what sense of form or perfection, inner and outer -- can one *look at* ugliness and disfiguration and still retain one's faith or, more generally, maintain one's moral and spiritual integrity? Dostoevsky fully recognizes the moral, psychological and spiritual problems raised by looking at ugliness and disfiguration. Such a sight -- here the sight of the disfigured Christ -- arouses "anguish and confusion" and despair. Yet Dostoevsky's point is that one cannot, one must not turn away -- however painful the sight -- or else one separates oneself from the drama of suffering and salvation.

At the moment Tropmann loses his head, Turgenev's narrator averts his head from the sight. The symbolism of both occurrences is identical: a separation from the human condition. Turgenev and Dostoevsky, each in their own way, recognize this fact. Yet both also recognize the obverse side of this truth: that looking at violence or disfiguration is a dangerous act, one that arouses in the spectator a perverse interest and pleasure, and one that is capable of arousing anguish, moral confusion and despair.

In Socrates' discussion of the unity in diversity of the three constituent components of the soul -- reason, desire, and "spiritedness," or "noble wrath" (*firmous*) -- the example of Leontius first covering and then cursing his eyes is intended to illustrate the power of spiritedness as an ally of reason in coping with desire. One might take the story, however, as an example of the triumph of irrational desire over reason. In any case, Turgenev and Dostoevsky would seem to illustrate both halves of this paradoxical example. Turgenev's gesture of averting his eyes might be viewed as triumphant exemplification of reason supported by "spiritedness" in the name of the harmony of the whole, while Dostoevsky's fixed gaze might be said to betoken the triumph of desire and lower instincts at the expense of harmony.

It is clear, however, that virtue and vice do not neatly take their place on one side or the other of the Platonic paradox. There is indication in the *Republic* that Plato himself did not approach his example in a one-sided manner. Socrates hints that the punishment of offending desire may also be harmful and stand in the way of the soul's development, indeed, may constitute a threat to philosophy; for "spiritedness" in the example given, is fighting curiosity, the kind of the desire to know. As Allan Bloom notes in his discussion of the Leontius story, "The soul in which reason is most developed will -- like Leontius' eyes -- desire to see all kinds of things which the citizen is forbidden to see; it will abound with thoughts usually connected with selfishness, lust and vice. Such a soul will be like that banished poetry which contains images of vice as well as virtue."¹²

Such a soul, of course, was Dostoevsky's -- one that went very far in an effort to see all kinds of things which the citizen is forbidden to see. "Everywhere and in everything I go to the last limit," he once observed. "All my life I have crossed the last boundary."¹³ "It was terrible to see how Dostoevsky would go deeper and deeper into the spiritual abysses, into the frightful abysses of moral and physical corruption (that is his own word)." N. N. Strakhov wrote in an introduction to Dostoevsky's works. "But he comes out of them unharmed, that is, without losing the measure of good and evil, of the beautiful and the ugly."¹⁴

As even the most cursory reading of "The Execution of Tropmann" will demonstrate, the artist Turgenev, in spite of his narrator's persistent doubts about his right to witness the execution, presents the totality of the execution in all its brutal detail and significance. Yet the narrator's honest gesture of turning away, acknowledged by Turgenev as providing no solution to the moral issues of complicity in crime, was nonetheless characteristic of Turgenev the man and his poetics. For nothing was more alien to him than crossing the "last boundary." His art is a poetry and philosophy of equilibrium, conservation and preservation. The narrator's turning away from the beheading of Tropmann was

¹² Editor's commentary to *The Republic of Plato*, op. cit., p. 377.

¹³ Quoted by L. P. Grossman in his study, *F. M. Dostoevsky* (Moscow, 1965), p. 48.

¹⁴ *Kriticheskie stat'i*, ed. V. Zelinsky (Moscow, 1901), p. 100.

emblematic of a moral and artistic nature that viewed measure, temperance and self-limitation both as the attribute of all nature and life and as the safeguard of civilization. All life exists through a series of checks and balances, through an equilibrium that is ultimately established between all forces of nature. In turn, all civilization and culture is "middle of the road," that is, lives through a complex system of balances and restraints.

The Dialectics of Turgenev's *Ottsy i deti*

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In a review of my monograph on Turgenev's *Ottsy i deti*, Edward J. Brown remarked rather cryptically that on the pages of his greatest novel Turgenev had "breathed new life into Hegel's dusty triads."¹ To my knowledge, the only person besides Brown to mention Hegel in connection with Turgenev's novel is Octave Thanet (pseudonym of Alice French). In an article published over a hundred years ago, Thanet writes of Turgenev the artist and moralist: "Tourguéneff has adopted Hegel's philosophical method. He assumes as true everything asserted of his subject, and then by its self-contradiction evolves the truth."² In the present paper, I propose first of all to follow Brown's and Thanet's lead by examining *Ottsy i deti* in light of the Hegelian dialectic and then to speculate on the actual source and significance of the dialectic patterns to be observed in Turgenev's novel.

A few fundamental observations about the Hegelian dialectic are in order.³ The Hegelian dialectic employs series of triads to describe evolution of thoughts or ideas as they move from a lower level of perception to a higher one. At the lower stage, which Hegel calls *Verstand* (understanding), contradictions, divisions, oppositions, antinomies, and so on give the impression of chaos. Hegel maintains that at this level any given phenomenon necessarily implies its opposite: complementary abstractions depend on each other for either of them to lay any claim to validity.

The Hegelian dialectic explains the movement to overcome basic oppositions and dichotomies. Through the prism of *Vernunft* (reason) dichotomies reveal a hidden identity that manifests itself in the recovery of unity. The key concept here is *Aufheben*, Hegel's term for a transition wherein contradictions from a lower stage pass into each other and are simultaneously annulled and preserved in a higher stage. Since at the higher level unity embraces contradiction, that is, both preserves and abolishes distinctions, Hegel often uses the word *Versöhnung* (reconciliation) to describe this phenomenon. In essence, then, through the dialectic, chaos metamorphoses into cosmos, duality into unity.

The same patterns at work in the Hegelian dialectic may be perceived in *Ottsy i deti*. To begin with, the dialectic neatly describes the shift in the alignment of characters that

¹ Edward J. Brown, review of David Lowe, *Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons"* (Ann Arbor, 1983), in *Washington Post Book World*, July 3, 1983, p. 5a.

² Octave Thanet, "The Moral Purpose of Tourguéneff," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 12 (1878), p. 429.

³ For my remarks about the nature of the Hegelian dialectic I am indebted to J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-Examination* (London, 1958), pp. 58-82; Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism, 1812-1855* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), pp. 231-233; Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* (Garden City, New York, 1966), pp. 153-162; Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, England, 1975), pp. 224-231; and Clark Butler, *G. W. F. Hegel* (Boston, 1977), pp. 22-24.

occurs in the course of the novel. Joel Blair, perhaps not realizing that he was describing a dialectical pattern, has noted that "the principle of composition operating in the novel is the grouping and regrouping of characters: our understanding of the novel develops as we observe the initial groups of characters dissolve and perceive the formation of new pairs. Eventually, those characters who seemed most unlike are aligned; their similarities become more important than their initial differences."⁴ This movement leads to the discovery that similarities or dissimilarities in character and worldview cut across notions of class, ideology, and chronological age.⁵ As the action of the novel progresses, attentive readers come to the recognition that the seeming antipodes Bazarov and Pavel share an outlook on the world and their fellow man that sets them apart from their apparent confederates, Arkady and Nikolai, respectively. The revelation that oppositions mask an identity is profoundly dialectical in the Hegelian sense.

At the point where we recognize the formation of new pairs of characters, however, we have not moved beyond the level of Hegel's *Verstand*, for oppositions have dissolved, merely to reemerge in new form. One set of polarities has replaced another. By the conclusion of the novel, however, we approach the stage of *Vernunft*, where unity embraces dichotomies without destroying them. Arkady turns out to be a competent estate manager: he has learned something from Bazarov's gospel of utility and practicality. Pavel, presumably as a consequence of his encounter with Bazarov's contempt for aristocratic social conventions, overcomes his inborn snobbishness at least long enough to urge his brother to marry Fenechka, a serf. Finally, on his deathbed, Bazarov abandons his hauteur and displays traits early associated with Arkady -- humility and the recognition of beauty. Thus, on the level of characterization, *Ottsy i deti* proceeds in a manner entirely consistent with Hegel's dialectic: polarities and similarities shift and finally pass over into each other.

The movement of the plot is dialectical as well, pitting tragedy and comedy against each other. The observation that *Ottsy i deti* is at least in part a tragedy will hardly strike anyone as original. It is worth noting, however, that few commentators depict *Ottsy i deti* as an unqualified tragedy. Characteristic of such hesitation is Helen Muchnic's remark that although the novel's implications are tragic, its tone is not.⁶ That *Ottsy i deti* is in any way a comedy may seem a curious notion, yet such an approach is implicit in as early a suggestion as the late Viktor Shklovsky's that "in *Ottsy i deti* Turgenev understood the love story as the confrontation of new people with a world built on old principles."⁷ More recently, Alexander Fischler has written that the epilogue of *Ottsy i deti* transforms the drama of the novel into "*prostodushnaia komediia*."⁸ As I note in my monograph, what Shklovsky and Fischler have in mind, I think, is Aristotle's concept of comedy.⁹

The most brilliant modern recapitulation of Aristotle's notions about comedy belongs

⁴ Joel Blair, "The Architecture of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 19, no. 4 (Winter, 1973-74), p. 556.

⁵ For a discussion of the limitations of narrowly socio-political interpretations of the characters in *Ottsy i deti* and of the novel as a whole, see Yu. M. Lebedev, *Roman I. S. Turgeneva "Ottsy i deti"* (Moscow, 1982), pp. 4-5, and Lowe, *Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons"*, pp. 28-54.

⁶ Helen Muchnic, *An Introduction to Russian Literature* (New York, 1947), p. 118.

⁷ Viktor Shklovsky, *Zametki o proze russkikh klassikov* (Moscow, 1955), p. 221.

⁸ Alexander Fischler, "The Garden Motif and the Structure of *Fathers and Sons*," *Novel* 9 (1976), p. 146.

⁹ Lowe, *Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons"*, pp. 15-27.

to Northrop Frye.¹⁰ According to Frye, the standard comedic formula involves a young couple -- the technical hero and heroine -- whose marriage is blocked by other members of the cast (society). The hero and heroine tend to be dull but decent people, while the blocking characters are the truly interesting types. These blockers are normally but not necessarily parental figures. Moreover, they are likely to be impostors, as Frye calls them, people who lack self-knowledge. At the conclusion of comedy the blocking characters are either incorporated into or expelled from the given society, and as a result the hero and heroine are free to wed. Thus, comedies often conclude with a wedding and the birth of babies, often as not in a rural setting. The rustic locus represents an escape to a simpler, less corrupt society. At the conclusion of comedy the audience feels that justice has triumphed, that some sort of evil spell has been broken, that a higher, natural law has worked its will, and that everyone will live happily ever after in a freer, more flexible society.

The brief reduction of Frye's Aristotelian treatise should make it plain that one of the compositional patterns in *Ottsy i deti* is comedic. Arkady and Katia, along with Nikolai Petrovich and Fenechka, are the technical heroes and heroines, the paths to whose marriages are obstructed by Bazarov and Pavel, respectively. It is precisely Bazarov's magnetic influence that for a while prevents Arkady from coming to terms with his true, non-nihilistic self, after which recognition he proposes to Katia. Similarly, it has been Pavel's unspoken antipathy toward the idea of his brother's marrying a peasant girl that has caused Nikolai to wait so long before regularizing his liaison with Fenechka. The general movement toward these final, inevitable pairings is the stuff of comedy, and the double wedding noted in the epilogue comes directly out of the traditions of classical comedy.

Ottsy i deti is thus modelled on two structural principles that seem antithetical but which in a dialectical manner actually represent reverse sides of the same coin: the question of how a viable society is created. In comedy, the villains, the blockers, are laughed off the stage, while in tragedy the people who do not belong come to a more frightful end.

Understanding the relationship between comedy and tragedy in *Ottsy i deti* helps us understand in formal terms the initial and continuing furor created by the novel. In "Neskol'ko slov po povodu *Otsov i detei*," Turgenev writes that he has an interesting collection of documents and letters from readers who accuse him of doing totally contradictory things in his novel.¹¹ This is hardly surprising, since Turgenev is in fact doing what seem to be contradictory things within the work. By combining the tragic and comedic modes he seems to stand behind two diametrically opposed views of life at one and the same time. If we take the novel's comedic structure out of context, we conclude that life is triumphant, rewarding, and meaningful. Such is the conclusion that comedy forces on its audience. And in *Ottsy i deti* the portraits of the Kirsanovs, their babies, their joyous participation in the natural cycle, all lead us to infer that all is right with the world. On the other hand, if we take the novel's tragic side out of context, we are led to the view that life, ruled by fate and the irrational, is essentially meaningless: death is triumphant. Sooner or later, of course, we end up asking where Turgenev stands. After

¹⁰ My discussion of comedy is drawn from Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 43-53, 163-185.

¹¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v 28-i tomakh* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1960-1968), vol. 14, p. 104.

all, it is precisely this point that divides the critics and scholars who have written on *Ottsy i deti*.

In a recent article on *Ottsy i deti*, James Woodward neatly sums up the two contrasting views of the novel that typify Turgenev scholarship.¹² The major disagreements concern the questions of which characters actually represent the novel's heroes and with which characters and ideologies Turgenev's sympathies lie. Commentators who interpret the novel primarily as a tragedy see Bazarov as a commandingly heroic figure, a rebel whose tragic demise shows that Turgenev's sympathies lie entirely with his Promethean protagonist. Readers attuned to the novel's comedic implications, however, argue that Turgenev's novel exposes the limitations in Bazarov's character and worldview, and elevates Nikolai and Arkady to the status of heroes of the golden mean.

Various attempts have been made to render compatible the two opposing views regarding Turgenev's intentions in the novel. Woodward suggests that such a synthesis can be achieved through approaching the novel as a study of the Schopenhauerian struggle of wills. On a less rigidly philosophical plane, Lebedev argues that the portraits of Bazarov and the Kirsanovs, *pere et fils*, are linked by Turgenev's attempt to describe contradictory aspects of a single phenomenon, the Russian type.¹³ Several critics and scholars who have written about *Ottsy i deti*, myself among them, feel that Turgenev sympathizes with all sides in the conflict he portrays, whether one conceives that conflict as narrowly Russian and socio-political or universal and a matter of personalities. Thus, Turgenev seems to argue in his novel that both sides, the gentry of the 1840s and the *raznochintsy* of the 1860s, are right in some ways and wrong in others. The truth rests on both sides, but neither side has an exclusive claim to it. The nobility, with its reforms and commitment to civilization, and the radicals, with their rejection of reform and tradition, are equally right and equally wrong. Turgenev's socio-political stance in *Ottsy i deti* dovetails with his dualistic view of life and human nature. The Kirsanovs and their wives are limited, but limitlessly happy and fruitful; Bazarov is dramatic, intense, and barren. The Kirsanovs' love of life is justified, as is Bazarov's rage against Russian society. Nikolai and Arkady's ability to deal with the social problems of the day is limited but need not give cause for despair; Bazarov's disgust with the gentry and with limited, gradual reform is understandable, but his solutions are wrongheaded.

One cannot discuss *Ottsy i deti* within a Hegelian framework without speaking of reconciliation. That reconciliation, or at least the attempt at reconciliation, occurs on at least three levels. The first is the thematic, where one of the major themes in the novel, if not in fact the major theme, is that all children rebel against their parents, thus embodying a principle that Russian Hegelians would identify as negation. With the passing of time, though, children surrender--willingly or not--to the world of their parents. That world, after all, represents life's mainstream.¹⁴ That movement toward a reconciliation between the generations stands out most obviously in Arkady, whose relationship with Katia manifests

¹² James B. Woodward, "Aut Caesar aut nihil: the 'War of Wills' in Turgenev's *Ottsy i deti*," *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 64, no. 2 (1986), pp. 161-188.

¹³ Lebedev, *Roman I. S. Turgeneva*, p. 28.

¹⁴ For the clearest statement of this position in Turgenev criticism, see Nikolay Strakhov's classic article, "Ottsy i deti," *Vremia*, 1862, no. 4.

exact parallels with that between his father and mother.¹⁵ By becoming a father at the same time he remains a son, Arkady encapsulates that Hegelian unity which would embrace contradictions without erasing them. Even in Bazarov, however, we observe a retreat to the family estate and to something resembling his father's way of life. Note, for instance, that Bazarov tells Arkady: "*Ia otpravilsia k 'ottsam'*"¹⁶ The plural emphasizes the universal implications of his action, and the transition from contradiction to reconciliation is entirely consonant with the logic of the dialectic.

The second level at which Turgenev attempts a dialectical reconciliation lies within the plot, where comedy and tragedy coexist and interact to produce a monistic view of life. In the final analysis, the monism that Turgenev projects in *Ottsy i deti* rests on man's mortality. As Turgenev wrote to his friend Annenkov, "I know that in nature and in life everything is reconciled one way or another ... If life cannot [do the reconciling], death will."¹⁷

The mention of mortality leads to the third level of attempted reconciliation, the metaphysical. In the passage that closes the novel, as Bazarov's parents weep at their son's grave, the narrator asks: "*Neuzheli ikh molitvy, ikh slezy besplodny? Neuzheli liubov', sviataia, predannaia liubov', ne vsesil'na. O net! Kakoe by strastnoe, greshnoe, buntuiushchee serdtse ne skrylos' v mogile, tsvety, rastushchie na nei, bezmiatezhno gliadiat na nas svoimi nevinnyimi glazami: ne ob odnom vechnom spokoistvii govoriat nam oni, o tom velikom spokoistvii 'ravnodushnoi' prirody; oni govoriat takzhe o vechnom primirenii i o zhizni beskonechnoi ...*"¹⁸

The choice of the word "*primirenie*" strongly suggests a Hegelian subtext, and the entire passages attempts to create harmony out of discord. Whether the attempt is successful is another question, but the very fact of the narrative intentions here, i.e., to reconcile tragedy and comedy, grief and joy, sterility and fruitfulness, and all the other contradictions and polarities in the novel, argues for the notion of an all-embracing dialectical framework within which Turgenev created his masterpiece, *Ottsy i deti*.

The question remains of Turgenev's conscious debt to the dialectical notions so dear to German idealism. Twentieth-century commentators on Turgenev's life and writings generally agree that one cannot come to a satisfactory understanding of the man and his works without taking into account his philosophical interests.¹⁹ Turgenev's background in German idealist philosophy, especially Hegelianism, is quite well documented and requires only the briefest summary. As an educated Russian coming to maturity in the late 1830s and early 1840s, Turgenev was virtually fated to pass through the crucible of Hegelianism. With few exceptions -- Mikhail Lermontov perhaps the most significant of them -- young Russians of Turgenev's generation and station lived and breathed philosophy, meeting in unofficial student circles to apply German idealism to the "cursed questions" that have

¹⁵ For details on these similarities, see Lowe, *Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons"*, p. 49. For a brief description of other situation rhymes in Turgenev's novel, see Lebedev, *Roman I. S. Turgeneva*, pp. 14-16.

¹⁶ I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, vol. 8, pp. 370.

¹⁷ I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, vol. 2, pp. 144.

¹⁸ I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, vol. 8, p. 401.

¹⁹ The most outspoken statement of this position belongs to Eva Kagan-Kans, who in *Hamlet and Don Quixote: Turgenev's Ambivalent Vision* (The Hague, 1975), p. 7, asserts that a philosophical substructure is always present in Turgenev's works and that one must approach him as a philosophical writer in order best to appreciate his art.

never ceased to occupy the Russian intelligentsia. Turgenev became attached to the most famous of the philosophical circles, Stankevich's, in 1840, just a few months before its leader's death. At that time the thinker most responsible for shaping Russian intellectual discourse was, of course, Hegel.²⁰

Even for an age in which almost all self-respecting members of the Russian intelligentsia drank deeply from the font of Hegelianism, Turgenev's interest in the German master represented an unusual degree of intellectual commitment. As is well known, Turgenev spent the winter of 1840-1841 in Berlin, where he shared quarters with a fellow Hegelian, Mikhail Bakunin, and attended lectures on Hegelian philosophy given by the latter's Berlin disciples and interpreters. One can find evidence of Turgenev's thorough study of Hegel's most important writings in the well-annotated copies of *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, and *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes* contained in the writer's personal library.²¹ Upon his return to Russia, Turgenev prepared for a career as a professor of philosophy, taking and passing the master's examination at St. Petersburg University in May 1842. At that point, only the writing of a master's dissertation stood between Turgenev and a career in academia. He soon found a purely literary career more appealing, however, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Existing scholarship additionally suggests, however, that Turgenev's youthful immersion in Hegelianism left hardly any traces in his *oeuvre*, where one nevertheless often encounters allusions to other philosophers or reflections of their teachings. Chizhevsky, who studied the question of Hegel's influence on Turgenev more thoroughly than any other scholar, isolates only a very few examples of Hegelian moments in Turgenev's writings. They include a review of Vronchenko's translation of *Faust* (1845), an article about Ostrovsky's play *Bednaia nevesta* (1851), the classic essay "Gamlet i Don-Kikhot," and two or three letters.²² In essence, Chizhevsky argues that Hegelian philosophy contributed hardly anything to Turgenev's works. Batyuto, who has also devoted considerable attention to the examination of Turgenev's use of philosophy, sees even less evidence of Hegelianism in Turgenev's *oeuvre* than does Chizhevsky.²³

The traditional explanation for the perceived lack of correspondence between Turgenev's formal education in Hegelian philosophy and his literary activity is that like many other men of the 1840s, Turgenev soon rejected German idealism. His turning away from his former passion finds affectionate but mocking reflection in *Rudin* and *Dvorianskoe gnezdo* and becomes the subject of bitter denunciation in *Gamlet shchigrovskogo uezda*. Moreover, Turgenev also attacked German idealism vigorously in private correspondence,

²⁰ For general background on the philosophical circles of the 1830s and 1840s, see Edward J. Brown, *Stankevich and His Moscow Circle, 1830-1840* (Stanford, 1966) and Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism, 1812-1855* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961). For information on Hegelianism in Russia see the preceding two items as well as Boris Jakowenko, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hegelianismus in Russland* (Prague, 1937); Dmitry Chizhevsky, *Gegel' v Rossii* (Paris, 1939); and the collection *Gegel' i filosofii v Rossii: 30-e gody XIX v.--20-e gody XX v.* (Moscow, 1974). Jakowenko and Chizhevsky have chapters devoted specifically to the topic of Turgenev and Hegel.

²¹ See V. N. Gorbacheva, *Molodie gody Turgeneva* (Kazan', 1926), pp. 13-14.

²² Chizhevsky, *Gegel' v Rossii*, pp. 162-63.

²³ A. Batyuto, *Turgenev-romanist* (Leningrad, 1972), pp. 43-47.

where he proclaimed more than once his implacable hostility toward any and all systems.²⁴

Turgenev hardly lost his interest in philosophers and philosophy, however. Modern scholarship has frequently noted Turgenev's debt to Schopenhauer, for instance. Schopenhauer's influence on Turgenev's thought dates from no later than 1855,²⁵ and scholars have singled out the great pessimist as the inspiration for at least certain aspects of *Poezdka v Poles'e* (1857),²⁶ *Prizraki* (1863), *Dovol'no* (1865), and *Senilia* (1882).²⁷ Quite recently James Woodward offered a provocative reading of *Ottsy i deti* as Turgenev's depiction of two contrasting aspects of Schopenhauer's "war of wills."²⁸ Other philosophers whose voices scholars have detected in Turgenev's fourth novel include Marcus Aurelius and Blaise Pascal.²⁹ As I have tried to show here, however, the Hegelian dialectic has no less relevance for the novel.

Although *Ottsy i deti* invites the application of the Hegelian dialectic, and despite Turgenev's demonstrated acquaintance with Hegelian philosophy, the question of influence remains neither soluble nor vital.³⁰ Insurmountable methodological hurdles often stand in the way of proving a philosopher's influence on a poet or novelist, and Hegel's debt to Fichte and Schelling in the matter of the dialectic further exacerbates the difficulties in the present instance.³¹ None of these considerations vitiates the case for a dialectical reading of Turgenev's finest novel, however. The notion of polarities representing complementary aspects of a higher or broader unity underlies all kinds of systems of thought, whether one calls the various aspects of that integral vision two sides of the same coin; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yin and yang; or thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. However one chooses to label the dialectical thought at the heart of Turgenev's novel -- Hegelian, Schellingian, or simply *palka o dvukh kontsakh*, Turgenev's dialectical intentions show themselves in the work's very title, which links the generations even as it seems to set them apart. Recognizing the dialectical patterns embedded in Turgenev's novel in a myriad of ways, both large and small, will help eliminate the sorts of simplistic, one-sided interpretations that too often mar discussion of *Ottsy i deti*, Turgenev's novelistic vision of a complex, dialectical unity.

²⁴ See, for instance, Batyuto, *Turgenev-romanist*, pp. 47-48.

²⁵ See Batyuto, *Turgenev-romanist*, p. 116.

²⁶ See A. Walicky, "Turgenev and Schopenhauer," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, vol. 10 (1962), pp. 2-3.

²⁷ See, for instance, L. V. Pumpyansky, "Turgenev-novellist," in I. S. Turgenev, *Sochineniia* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1929), vol. 7, p. 11.

²⁸ Woodward, "Aut Caesar aut nihil: the 'War of Wills,'" pp. 161-188.

²⁹ See Batyuto, pp. 63-82 on Pascal, and pp. 102-112 on Marcus Aurelius.

³⁰ At this point I am happy to acknowledge Yury Mann's contribution to the present paper. In response to an earlier redaction of it, read at the American-Soviet conference on Turgenev held in Moscow in June 1987, Mann voice two important considerations: (1) the manifold dangers inherent in attempting to prove any specific philosopher's direct influence on any given writer and (2) Hegel's debt to earlier German philosophers in the matter of the dialectic, especially Schelling.

³¹ For more on the precedents for Hegel's dialectic, see Karl Dürr, "Die Entwicklung der Dialektik von Plato bis Hegel," *Dialectica*, vol. 1 (1947); Z. A. Kamensky, "O razvitiu dialekticheskikh idei v russkoi filosofii nachala XIX veka," *Voprosy literatury*, 1964, no. 8; and Z. A. Kamensky, *Russkaia filosofia nachala XIX veka i Shelling* (Moscow, 1980).

**The Completion of A Sportsman's Sketches:
Turgenev's Parting Word**

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To this day, there is much that is unexplained and not understood about the final authorized edition of *Zapiski okhotnika* in 1874. Despite his well known modesty and even excessive deference to critical readers, Ivan Turgenev boldly ignored the strenuous advice of his most trusted confidant, P. V. Annenkov, and added three new sketches to the established sequence of the famous *Hunter's Notes*. The sudden editorial liberty which Turgenev exercised is even more surprising in light of his own cautious policy with regard to additions to the carefully composed cycle of lyrical tales. As V. A. Gromov has recently shown, Turgenev rapidly withdrew his approval from the 1860 Osnovskii edition in which a publisher's *fait accompli* had inserted two supplementary stories, "Poezdka v poles'e" and "O solov'iakh," into the text of the *Zapiski*.¹ The author himself also restored the integrity of the 1852 sequence in subsequent collections of his works published in 1865 and 1869. Moreover, Turgenev had seemed to accept Annenkov's stern warning after reading "The End of Chertopkhanov," in 1872 that "it would be the height of foolishness to begin the *Zapiski* anew."² At any rate, Turgenev was reassuring Annenkov as late as January 31, 1874, when he was submitting "Living Relics" as his mite to the Samara famine relief campaign that he "still kept in mind those golden words you spoke about continuing *A Sportsman's Sketches*."³ All the available evidence would thus indicate that Turgenev had resolved not to tamper with the deliberately wrought narrative form of the original 1852 edition. This makes Turgenev's behavior after the publication of "Living Relics" in *Skladchina* all the more curious.

Something happened in the course of 1874 to make Ivan Turgenev radically alter his attitude toward the sanctity of the established text of his twenty-two-year-old classic of Russian rural prose. The publication of Turgenev's letter to Polonskii as a "small preface" to "Zhivye moshchi" in late March identifies the tale as an "excerpt from *Zapiski okhotnika*," yet the tone of voice is typically dismissive. "Living Relics" is referred to as a "draft" (*nabrosok*) found among old papers and left incomplete because "it seemed to me not

¹ V. A. Gromov, "Zapiski okhotnika v strukture prizhiznennykh izdaniĭ sochinenii Turgeneva," in *Vos'moi mezhdvuzovskii Turgenevskii sbornik* (Kursk: "Kurskaia pravda" 1980), pp. 93, 94.

² Quoted in I. S. Turgenev, *Pis'ma, X* (Moscow, Leningrad: Nauka, 1965) in a footnote to letter no. 2983, p. 480. Writing to Turgenev on November 5, 1872, Annenkov had declared: "Pust' oni ostaiutsia v neprikosnovennosti i v pokoe posle togo, kak oboshli vse chasti sveta. Ved' eta derzost' ne dovolennaia dazhe i ikh avtoru ... Eto sumasbrodstvo -- nachinat' syznova "Zapiski."

³ See letter no. 3266 in *Pis'ma*, vol. 10, pp. 189, 190.

sufficiently interesting or not *a propos*."⁴ At the moment of publication in *Skladchina*, Turgenev was maintaining his customary self-effacing modesty; he consistently denigrated the value of the retrieved sketch even as he submitted it, as usual, to Annenkov for the literary counsel which he "never repented obeying."⁵ But a sudden shift of attitude and behavior ensued after the appearance and reviews of "Living Relics." On June 24, 1874, we find Turgenev informing Annenkov that the publisher Shalaev's request for something *inedit* to include in the new edition has led him to write from an old scrap of manuscript a new hunting anecdote entitled "Stuchit!" Most untypically, Turgenev rushes toward publication, expressing his regret that he can't pass the sketch in front of Annenkov's eyes *before* printing it.⁶ Surely it was an even ruder surprise to Annenkov that the Shalaev edition of 1874 included *three* additional stories inserted before the concluding sportsman's sketch, "Forest and Steppe." Turgenev had obviously changed his compositional scruples since the beginning of the year when he had assured Annenkov that "Living Relics" was "not a continuation, but a restoration of something old and rejected."⁷ Why Ivan Turgenev tampered with his most respected work remains a tantalizing mystery.

It is the seemingly unmotivated inclusion of "Stuchit!" that is most anomalous and, hence, that which most requires explanation. Turgenev had long intended to provide a sequel, or conclusion, to the oddly conjoined fates of "Chertopkhanov and Nedopiuskin."⁸ Once the momentous decision had been made to add to the complete text of the *Zapiski*, it followed that "The End of Chertopkhanov" would fall into its assigned place. What is more interesting is that Turgenev chose to position both "Zhivye moshchi" and "Stuchit!" immediately prior to his famous lyrical *envoi* to the complex environment of abutting ecologies that his hunter knew so well. It could be argued that it was only logical to place the newer material antecedent to the end-piece, "Les i Step'." But Turgenev had always refused to organize his album of rural sketches on the simple principle of chronology of composition. The aesthetic logic had been foremost, and *A Sportsman's Sketches* was rightly regarded as a precedent-making cycle of subtly interlinked episodes from a narrative excursion into the culture of rural Russia. As I shall argue, the poetic and anthropological symmetry that is organic to the ideology of *Zapiski okhotnika* absolutely required that "Zhivye moshchi" be accompanied by a complementary opposite. The integrity of Turgenev's text could only be restored by the pairing of the iconic "Living Relics" with the robber ballad material of "The Knocking." Although we cannot know with certainty why Turgenev chose to extend the narrative framework of *A Sportsman's Sketches* in the spring of 1874, I will venture a biographical speculation to account for his sudden change of mind. But first it is more imperative to establish with certainty the aesthetic congruence of the new extension with the classic narrative structure Turgenev had so carefully and craftily built.

It is significant that Turgenev speaks of both of the new additions as a unit in his

⁴ The preface is reprinted in full in the commentary to "Zhivye moshchi" in the Academy edition of *I. S. Turgenev, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, vol. 4 (Moscow, Leningrad: Nauka, 1963), pp. 603, 604.

⁵ Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, vol. 10, p. 193.

⁶ Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, vol. 10, p. 250.

⁷ Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, vol. 10, p. 190.

⁸ See the extensive commentary on the genesis and manuscript history of "Konets Chertopkhanova," in *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, pp. 599, 602.

rather cryptic introduction to the revised 1874 version of his famous work: "In the first edition of *A Sportsman's Sketches* they were not included for the reason that they had no direct relation to the leading idea guiding the author at that time."⁹ This may be taken to mean that neither of these earlier draft excerpts were deemed pertinent to the powerful emancipationist pathos that so memorably informed the 1852 cycle of hunter's notes. Neither the sanctified passivity of Luker'ia nor the unholy rowdiness of the gang on the Tula road is an especially apt image for eliciting a paternalistic reform from above. But now, when read together in 1874, "Living Relics" and "The Knocking" lend themselves to a particular type of dramatic climax to the hunter-narrator's excursion into the depths of rural Russia's environment and folk culture. The two tales are structurally and thematically parallel in their emphasis on the hunter's intrusion into scenes and sights unsuspected even by his wily peasant guide, Ermolai. The narrator's encounter with Luker'ia is wholly unanticipated, and it occurs at Alekseevka, the most remote hamlet of the maternal properties. And the village from which the hunter departs for his initiation experience on the Tula road is literally "at the back of beyond" (*zaglaznaia, glukhaia*). Turgenev has chosen, in 1874, to climax the narrative expedition of *Zapiski okhotnika* with surprising and disturbing introductions to two unforgettable extremes of authentic folk Russia. Let us examine these last strategically linked episodes with an eye toward their impact on Turgenev's representative figure for the "enlightened" reader, the avid gentry huntsman and lover (*okhotnik*) of the remote Russian wilderness.

Traditionally, readings of "Zhivye moshchi" have painted it as a restored icon, a modern hagiography, dedicated to an image of saintly Christian meekness.¹⁰ To do so is, however, to ignore the narrator's evident discomfort before the exhilarating spectacle of Luker'ia's quietude. Moreover, there was a note of nervous self-remove in Turgenev's original, characteristically apologetic preface to his story: "a reference to the 'patient endurance' (*dolgoterpenie*) of our people is, perhaps, not entirely inappropriate in a publication like *Skladchina*."¹¹ It is notable that Turgenev places the phrase "long-suffering endurance," a term hallowed in Karamzinian history and Slavophile discourse about Russia, inside quotation marks. As a reading of the text bears out, a respectful, anxious distance is typical of the narrative stance toward the phenomenon of Luker'ia's martyrdom.

At the very beginning of "Zhivye moshchi," a conflict of attitudes, a cognitive clash, is prominently in evidence. The epigraph to the sketch speaks, through Tiutchev's verse, to the educated culture's reverence for the concept of the Russian folk's historic patience. But the hunter's anecdote begins with the citing of an allegedly French proverb to the effect that "A dry fisherman and a wet hunter make a sorry sight." The hunter's world is associated with an impatience for environmental inconveniences, apparently in ironic contrast with the folk's acceptance of suffering as their native territory. This irony is compounded by the exaggeration that marks the description of the narrator's and Ermolai's torment amidst the hunt-destroying deluge -- "*dozhd'* -- *sushchee bedstvie ... ot nego*

⁹ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 604.

¹⁰ This tradition is mentioned and taken strong exception to in two important recent Soviet revisionist readings of the famous story. See N. F. Droblenkova, "Zhivye moshchi: Zhitiinaia traditsiia i 'legenda' o Zhanne d'Ark v rasskaze Turgeneva" in *Turgenevskii sbornik*, vol. 5 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1969), pp. 289, 302, and also A. B. Muratov, "Novye 'Zapiski okhotnika,'" in his *Turgenev-Novellist (1870-1880-e gody)* (Leningrad, 1985), pp. 51, 57.

¹¹ Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, vol. 10, p. 191.

izbavit'sia! ... uzh eto poslednee delo."¹² As so often is the case in Turgenev's *zapiski*, what appears at first sight as a digressive description of nature is, in fact, a thematic prelude to the central problem encountered in the anecdote. Here, the hunters take rapid refuge from a disabling outpour of nature ("*Nel'zia segodnia okhotit'sia. Sobakam chut'e zalivaet ...*") in what seems a comic, utilitarian avoidance of the "long-suffering" required in Tiutchev's *krai russkogo naroda*.

But what happens next establishes a subtle metaphoric tie between the biography of the gentry huntsman and the "living relic" he is about to confront. Misfortune, as it were, clears the air, but a premature ecstasy leads to a disabling fall to pain. The morning after the ruinous rain greets the hunter with a "double" radiance ("*vse krugom blistelo sil'nym dvoimym bleskom*"); the early sunlight and the shimmering droplets from the storm combine to make a lyrical glow in the eyes of the narrator. Full of bliss, he wanders the periphery of his mother's now wild estate, and in ecstasy begins to sentimentalize the afterglow of nature's furious downpour: "*Akh, kak bylo khorosho na vol'nom vozdukhe, pod iasnym nebom, gde trepetali zhavoronki, otkuda sypalsia serebrianyi biser ikh zvonkikh golosov! Na kryl'iakh svoikh oni, naverno, unesli kapli rosy, i pesni ikh kazalis' oroshennymi rosoiu.*"¹³ It is as a direct result of this suddenly careless, ecstatic wandering that the narrator follows the slope of a ravine along a snaking path toward the hidden hive-shed, the *amshanik*, in which he encounters the haunting spectre of Luker'ia. And having laid eyes on her, he "turns rigid with amazement" ("*ostolbenel ot udivleniia*"). The narrator thus repeats the fall into disability that Luker'ia herself endured as a young, love-struck maiden, except that it is now she who threatens to become for him an immobilizing figure of fate.

As the hunter listens to the horrific story of the misfortune that transformed a buxom beauty into a living mummy, he is both enchanted and petrified by the spectacle of Luker'ia's struggle to compose herself into an image of patient suffering. The narrator's presence is a sweet torment to the "living relic," painfully restoring to her face and lips traces of a physical rapture now sadly inappropriate: "*I tem strashnee kazhetsia mne eto litso, chto po nem, po metallicheskim shchekam, ia vizhu -- silitsia ... silitsia i ne mozhet rasplyt'sia ulybka.*"¹⁴ But as Luker'ia recites the history of her own sudden fall from rapture (amidst outpourings of birdsong!) to paralysis, it is apparent that her uncannily gay narrative is a sweet torment to the listener. The structure of Luker'ia's tale of woe is threateningly close to the hunter's rapid movement from romantic exaltation to a nasty surprise. Even more threatening, however, is the contagious power of Luker'ia's tone of voice. The forced cheerfulness with which she accepts her martyrdom nearly reduces the astonished hunter to total passivity: "*Ia ne narushal molchan'ia i ne shevelilsia ... Zhestokaia, kamennaia nepodvizhnost' lezhavshego peredo mnoiu zhivogo, neshchastnogo sushchestva soobshchilas' i mne: ia tozhe slovno otsepenel.*"¹⁵ It is at this moment, when the gentry huntsman is nearly shackled to Luker'ia's peasant spirituality that one can most feel Turgenev's nervous remove from the genre of hagiography.

In an attempt to recover his wits, the narrator proposes the secular cure for Luker'ia's woes, medical help. But this educated, activist response for catastrophic suffering

¹² Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 352.

¹³ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 353.

¹⁴ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 354.

¹⁵ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, pp. 358, 359.

is firmly rejected as a delusion; Luker'ia understands that consolation cannot come from well intentioned manipulations that disturb body and mind. As the mutually painful interview proceeds, the humanitarian narrator and the martyr of quiet endurance movingly discover that they can touch one another's lives without violating their deepest values. At first horrified by Luker'ia's capacity to celebrate her immobilization as a means to lie wholly alive to the natural and cultural environment of rural Russia, the hunter finally empathizes with the half-dead creature's hymn to life: "*No tak trogatel'no zvenel etot bednyi, usilennyi, kak struika dyma kolebavshiisia golosok ... uzhe ne uzhas chuvstvoval ia: zhalost' neskazannaia stisnula mne serdse.*"¹⁶ And, for her part, Luker'ia accepts from the intruding *barin* small secular helps -- a handkerchief to wipe her tears, the hope of a dream-inducing medicine, and a promise to intercede for relief of the economic burden on the local serfs. It is clear, however, that the calling of the suffering servant is what truly composes and consoles the life of Luker'ia -- "*vsem dovol'na, slava bogu, -- s velichaishim usiliem, no umilenno proiznesla ona.*"¹⁷

It is true, as N. F. Droblenkova has argued, that the life and visions of Turgenev's "Living Relic" parallel the conventions of an Old Russian saint's life (*zhitie*) while also depicting Luker'ia's imitation of sainthood as motivated by a preference for acts of heroic self-sacrifice that help to redeem a whole people's suffering. It also remains true, however, that Luker'ia's passive and undemanding quietude is a disturbing model of sanctity, possibly anachronistic and certainly extreme. It is her own villagers who call her "*zhivye moshchi*" and name her a *tikhonia*. And Luker'ia's most vivid visions of her redemptive suffering are dreams of liberation that are aided and abetted by both folk culture and a soporific drug, opium. With great delicacy, Turgenev's added sketch implies that the powerful spectacle of peasant *dolgoterpenie* is an ambivalent phenomenon of the Russian interior, partly a feat of collective strength and partly the opiate of the people.

Ambivalence and mystery also confront the hunter-narrator in the last anecdote Turgenev added to his book of expeditions into the Russian heartland. The very title of the sketch, "Stuchit!," arouses anxiety and ambiguity; the various English translations, "The Knocking" or "The Clatter of Wheels," miss entirely the effect of the Russian active verb which denotes both a relentless external hammering and a pounding of the internal pulse. The suspenseful approach of a dramatic uncertainty is prefigured in the name and opening intrigues of this last, and often least appreciated, of the completed *Zapiski okhotnika*. Only recently has the strategic role of "The Knocking" as a contrasting companion piece to "Zhivye moshchi" and as an appropriate climax to the entire cycle of Turgenev's sketches been duly noticed.¹⁸ As I shall emphasize, "Stuchit!" is a necessary extension and complement to the radical re-evaluation of folk Russia's historic "soul" that is in process in Turgenev's 1874 edition of his hunter's narrative.

As in "Living Relics," Ermolai once again is the unwitting agent for taking the hunter

¹⁶ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 360.

¹⁷ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 364.

¹⁸ Among the very few and valuable readings of "Stuchit!" as a dialectical response to Luker'ia's iconic *muchenichestvo* are the relevant pages in S. A. Shatalov, "*Zapiski okhotnika*" *I. S. Turgeneva* (Stalinabad, 1960), pp. 251, 255, and the brief discussion in Muratov, *Turgenev-novellist*, pp. 57, 59. I cannot agree with Muratov that "Stuchit!" is the only hunting sketch in which the narrator loses his "observer" status and becomes directly implicated in events prompted by a characteristic feature of folk "conduct," since I have argued that "Zhivye moshchi" also directly affects the equilibrium of the hitherto neutral gentry narrator.

(and the informed reader) out of his cultural depths. The events that become "The Knocking" begin with a series of suspicious happenings that the narrator and the reader attempt to outwit. Without warning the customary hunt is rudely interrupted. Ermolai announces that there is no shot left and that the shaft-horse has been lamed by a clumsy local blacksmith. Fortunately, however, Ermolai is prepared to travel to Tula and the village happens to have an excess of horses in the keeping of a "simpleton" elder brother. The shrewd gentry hunter, "instructed by experience," suspects that his trusted peasant guide is looking for a pretext for a binge, so he decides to undertake the expedition to Tula himself. But as Turgenev rapidly makes evident, a reliance on the conventional wit and wisdom of the experienced hunter is no adequate preparation for safe travel across the lay of the land. Turgenev's story builds cleverly upon the continually disrupted expectations of all the sources of intelligence the reader is likely to trust. Ermolai and the narrator are both embarrassed by their naive underestimation of the talents and mental capacity of the slow and simple Filofei. But as the long night's journey across the landscape of central Russia progresses, even the instincts and insights of the finally respected local guide prove unreliable. "The Knocking" brings to full alertness a mature suspicion that the physical and cultural environment of inner Russia is a surprisingly complex coexistence of contradictory signs.

It is worthwhile to rehearse the reversals of expectation that Turgenev's readers are forced to undergo. First, the contempt of the urbane for the rustic, of the worldly for the ignorant is reversed when Filofei proves to know the worth of his horses in more senses than one. Financially he drives a hard bargain, giving rise even to the suspicion that the injured shaft-horse was no accident. But he also knows horseflesh far better than his "sharp" younger brothers who prefer to harness a good-looking roan because "he sure can run downhill." The shaggy creature Filofei puts in the lead is as unprepossessing as its "blockish" master (*istukan*), but it, too, has the slow and steady instincts required to sense the current and survive the "bad place" in fording the treacherous local river. Yet no sooner is a trust developed in the superstitious sixth sense of peasant wisdom than the dilemma of "the knocking" occurs. Neither the hunter nor Turgenev's reader knows whether to take seriously Filofei's presumption that the clatter of an empty cart on the highway means the approach of "bad folk" (*nedobrye liudi*) and certain doom. As in "Bezhin Meadow," deference to what the educated dismiss as peasant superstition seems the path of reason amidst a rapidly changing environment that must be approached with caution. Yet the climax of Turgenev's climactic sketch apparently proves Filofei's fatalism wrong, too. "Stuchit!" is finally about a false alarm, but it would be a mistake to read the entire incident as falsely alarming.

A perfect paradigm of the hunter's experience on this last adventure into the Russian countryside occurs less than an hour into the journey with Filofei. Trusting to the "quiet, splendid night perfect for travel" and resting confident in his driver's knowledge of the road, the gentry narrator suddenly finds himself awakened involuntarily to a magical transformation of world and circumstance: "*Razbudilo menia ne sobstvennoe namerenie prosnut'sia ... Chto za chudesa? ... slovno v zakoldovannom tsarstve, vo sne, v skazochnom sne ... Chto za pritcha?*"¹⁹ This is precisely the repeated structural pattern of Turgenev's exemplary journey across the territory of central Russia. The huntsman discovers that the

¹⁹ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 372.

night landscape provides a shifting setting for all the legendary possibilities of oral folklore. Having survived an actual immersion in an "enchanted spot," the hunter next finds himself in the gorgeous grassy meadows, "the real Russian country" in which the *bogatyr*s of ancient epic hunted and feasted so joyously. But those beloved beauty spots of peace and plenty quickly shimmer past in the moonlight. Before long, even Filofei mistakes a bough for a heron in the deceptive sheen of the night. And then a less welcome magical change occurs -- without warning the lush meadows give way to terrible flat places of weedy fields and hidden ravines and into this dead and deserted landscape the sound of "the knocking" intrudes. As an eerie, obscuring mist rises to heaven and the thundering approach of a heavy cart is heard, Filofei is convinced the dread highwaymen of Tula district are advancing and the hunter's imagination associates the sound with the sinister rhythm of a Zhukhovskii ballad of robbery and axe murder: "*Topor razboinika prezrennyi...*" Just as suddenly as the landscape evoked pictures of white magic and knightly valor, it now spawns the terror of legendary peasant cutthroats.

Turgenev chooses to continue the serious humor of a kaleidoscopic shift of received expectations. Thus, the pulse-pounding suspense of "Stuchit!" leads to a false ambush that is both an anti-climax and a disturbing mystery. Although the hunter is accosted in the night by a gang of drunken rowdies, he is politely and playfully solicited by a "factory-tongued" giant (*velikan*) for the price of a half-bottle of vodka. But the pleasant phrasing and the happy ending are ambiguous in the extreme. The moonlight illuminates a "smirking" face betraying no threat "but full of a guarded attention." And the words spoken are coiled with the power of unsprung double meanings: "*Gospodin pochtennyi, edem my s chestnogo pirka, so svadebki; nashego molodtsa, znachit, zhenili; kak est' ulozhili; rebjata u nas vse molodye, golovy udalye... Vypili by my za vashe zdorov'e, pomianuli by vashe stepenstvo...*"²⁰ When all danger seems to have passed, we learn that the very night of the hunter's encounter a merchant was robbed and slain on the Tula road. And we are encouraged to hear a bit differently the expressions "coming from a hitching" where the young man "was tucked away" and the promise "to pay respects to your rank." It is a wise man who knows finally whether "the knocking" was an external threat or an internal panic. As for the simple peasant Filofei, he knows a good teasing when he's experienced one. It is to be hoped that Turgenev's intelligent readers know how to recognize a jolly good ambiguity as well.

"The Knocking" vividly demonstrates that the Russian countryside contains a bewildering variety of cultural possibilities. And it suggests, as Shatalov has observed, an "organic" continuity between the legendary exploits of heroic song and actual folk rebellion: "Thus plunder is linked to daring and becomes its expression."²¹ "Stuchit!" most assuredly initiates the hunter into a vision of Russia that causes much anxiety about the historic impatience of the folk, and in that sense it represents a complementary opposite to "Living Relics" with its nervous focus on *dolgoterpenie*. Hence, the suspicion arises that the story was conceived to function as a supplement to the image of folk Russia created by the iconic

²⁰ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 378.

²¹ Shatalov, "*Zapiski okhotnika*," p. 255. It is not necessary to see in this connection between *udal'* and *razboi* as Shatalov does, evidence of a sudden change of attitude toward the Russian *muzhik*, reflecting Turgenev's polemic with Herzen's populist sentiments in the mid-1860s. Turgenev had never depicted Ermolai sentimentally as a "*vernii sluga*."

Luker'ia. But what was it that overcame Turgenev's great hesitancy to alter the dramatic unfolding of the 1852 *Zapiski okhotnika*? We return to the original mystery of the sudden public additions to the structure of *The Sportsman's Sketches*.

We know that Turgenev was greatly upset by the surprising attention and acclaim caused by the publication of "Zhivye moshchi." There is an especially significant outburst of atypical impatience in a letter to Polonskii dated April 4, 1874: "The item I have just read concerning the public reading of my story is extremely unpleasant news to me; you can easily understand how little that story befits such an occasion -- and, besides, who is this O. F. Miller who will read?"²² The event to which Turgenev took so much exception was a literary evening of the St. Petersburg "Society for the Assistance of Needy Writers and Scholars," and the announced reader of "Living Relics" was a figure all too well known to Turgenev. Writing to Pauline Viardot on the evening of March 18, 1871, Turgenev had complained bitterly of his embarrassment and boredom at a Petersburg assembly in his honor at which the same Professor Miller read the full text of a public lecture "Concerning Social Types in the Tales of I. S. Turgenev."²³ Now, in the immediate wake of Turgenev's public restoration of an old, discarded sketch, the same O. F. Miller had come to the fore as an influential explicator and enthusiast of "Living Relics." Writing with his typical excitement for typical characters, Miller had proclaimed in an early review in *Russkii vestnik* that Turgenev's Luker'ia was nothing less than "a purely Russian image": "*Poeziia etoi bezkonechnoi krotosti, etogo svetlogo, pochti schastlivogo otnosheniia Luker'i k svoim stradaniiam, b'et zhivym kliuchem iz rodnika nashei narodnoi zhizni.*"²⁴ Given Miller's early and continued advocacy of Luker'ia as Turgenev's supreme typification of the "living soul" of the Russian folk, it is likely that Turgenev felt an intense pressure in 1874 to reassert his own considerably more complex view of the cultural environment of the Russian interior.

The few scholars who have speculated about the reasons for Turgenev's renewed interest in the composition of *The Sportsman's Sketches* have tended to relate stories like "Zhivye moshchi" and "Stuchit!" to Turgenev's ideological and literary differences with the prominent radical democratic and populist critics, Shelgunov and Shchedrin, who called for the "sober truth of documentary narratives that would "see Russia through the muzhik."²⁵ While it is true that Turgenev's reputation as a reliable observer of the Russian countryside was denigrated by a new generation of populist progressives, this phenomenon

²² Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, vol. 10, p. 221.

²³ See the letter and commentary in Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, vol. 9, pp. 41 and 471. The relevant passage reads: "*Publiki na lektzii bylo ochen' mnogo, no lektor, v kontse kontsov, umoril ee so skuki. Vy ponimaete, chto ia ne poshel slushat', kak mne budet ob'iasniat' menia zhe samogo ... Kak by to ne bylo, eto vse zhe lestno no gospodin, chitavshii etu lektsiu, po-vidomu, nastoiashchii 'bore.'*"

²⁴ The 1874 review is cited in V. Zelinskii, ed., *Sobranie kriticheskikh materialov dlia izucheniiia proizvedenii I. S. Turgeneva*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1884), pp. 166, 167. A brief discussion of Miller's role as the chief advocate of a nationalist reading can be found in Anna Maver Lo Gatto, "Rasskaz Turgeneva 'Zhivye moshchi,'" *Zapiski Russkoi akademicheskoi gruppy v SShA*, vol. 16 (New York, 1983), 159, 160. In a later lecture of 1883, "Zhenskii obrazny u Turgeneva," Miller continued to propagate the notion of Luker'ia's purely Russian (*derevenskaia*) idealization of voluntary self-sacrifice as the epitome of the type of folk spirituality -- the text is reprinted in Orest Miller, *Russkie pisateli posle Gogolia*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1890), pp. 92, 108.

²⁵ Informative discussions of Turgenev's placement in the literary debates of the 1870s are to be found in Muratov, *Turgenev-novellist*, pp. 44, 51, and in the monograph by L. I. Poliakova, *Povesti I. S. Turgeneva 70-kh godov* (Kiev, 1983).

had been occurring well before his dramatic change of mind in 1874. Without reconstructing the *Zapiski*, Turgenev had written in the early 1870s a number of retrospective rural fictions that pertained to contemporary life through their explorations of the cultural formation of types of Russian consciousness. In the words of a recent study, "What appeared to Turgenev's contemporaries as atypical and only of ethnographic interest was, in point of fact, the authentic 'extraliterary' truth about Russian life, about its unencompassed peripheries."²⁶ Turgenev had, in fact, responded adequately to those contemporary critics who were asking of him a sociological relevance he believed to be superficial.

By 1874 it was, instead, Turgenev's appreciators who threatened most to distort the delicately balanced perceptions, in the famous *Sportsman's Sketches*, of the cultural ecology of the Russian folk. Having published "Zhivye moshchi," Turgenev was faced with crude simplifications of his subtle exploration of the breadth of the physical and spiritual variety in the Russian heartland. By adding "Stuchit!" to the final text, Turgenev was not only correcting an imbalanced adulation of a false icon, he was also restoring the integrity of meaning achieved by the original composition of 1852.

Beginning with N. A. Nekrasov, the most perceptive readers of Turgenev's innovative cycle have understood that the individual sketches are part of a larger discourse which unfolds as a supervised sequence of narrative units.²⁷ Elsewhere, I have argued that Turgenev's sketches, both as individual texts and in conjunction as an album, are composed in accordance with a narrative syntax of conjoined antonyms; Turgenev's *zapiski* reveal the intimate residential linkage between apparently binary opposites, starting with "Khor' i Kalinych" and concluding with "Les i Step'."²⁸ When Turgenev added to his canonical text in 1874, he once again observed the aesthetic principle of a conjunctive syntax of complex cultural statements.

It is important to insist that Turgenev's juxtaposition of "Zhivye moshchi" and "Stuchit!" amounts to more than a dramatic contrast of cultural opposites. As happens so often in the composition of the sketches, here, too, Turgenev deliberately created a type of narrative "rhyme" designed to associate closely two apparently separate lines of content. It is no accident that both Luker'ia and Filofei speak the same words of caution to the gentry huntsman of the secrets of the Russian interior. When the narrator presses Luker'ia to renounce her impractical dedication to suffering, she responds: "*barin, milyi, kto drugomu pomoch' mozhet? Kto emu v dushu voidet?*"²⁹ And when, similarly, the hunter questions Filofei about his fatalistic nonresistance to the apparent cutthroats, the reply is: "*A pochem*

²⁶ Poliakova, *Povesti I. S. Turgeneva*, p. 188. This study does not even mention the late additions to the *Zapiski*, but it treats carefully such stories as "Stepnoi Korol' Lir" (1870), "Stuk ... stuk ... stuk!" (1871), and "Punin i Baburin" (1874).

²⁷ For an excellent survey of, and new contribution to, the critical literature on the *Zapiski* as a narrative cycle, see Iu. V. Lebedev, *U istokov eposa: Ocherkovye tsikly v Russkoi literature 1840-1860-kh godov* (Yaroslavl', 1975), pp. 43, 96. Leonid Grossman first suggested that the 1852 edition was built upon a single device -- the stringing together of a series of paired portraits -- in his 1919 essay, "Rannii zhanr Turgeneva," reprinted in Grossman's *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1928), pp. 38, 63.

²⁸ Dale E. Peterson, "The Origin and End of Turgenev's Sportsman's Notebook: The Poetics and Politics of a Precarious Balance," *Russian Literature*, vol. 16 (1984), pp. 347, 358.

²⁹ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 359.

znat'? *V chuzhuiu dushu razve vlezesh'?* *Chuzhaia dusha -- izvestno -- potemki.*³⁰ In these virtually identical responses to the sympathetic outsider we can hear Turgenev's subtle linkage of very different peasant voices that express a similar tolerance for the unpredictable passions that are indigenous to the physical and cultural environment they inhabit.

In adding and conjoining "Living Relics" and "The Knocking" just before the conclusion of the *Zapiski okhotnika*, Ivan Turgenev gave one final emphasis to his vision of a coexistence of odd contraries in the human ecology of rural Russia. The darkest enigma of the Russian folk, even in 1874, was its mutual embrace of the meek and the mighty, of the Slavophiles' martyrs of *dolgoterpenie* with the populists' rowdies of *buntarstvo*, in one complete cultural whole. When Turgenev's readers began to lose sight of his appreciation for the fragile equilibrium of complementary opposites in the living soul of the Russian folk, it was time to reassert the integrity of his famous album of sketches. The supplements of 1874 were an honest means of achieving the completion of *A Sportsman's Sketches* by reiterating Turgenev's final word on "Anonymous Russia" one last time.

³⁰ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol. 4, p. 380.