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***TURGENEV AND THE QUESTION OF
THE RUSSIAN ARTIST***

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Summary:

This thesis is concerned with the thoughts of the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev (1818-83) on the development of the arts in his native country and the specific problems facing the Russian artist. It starts by considering the state of the creative arts in Russia in the early nineteenth century and suggests why even towards the end of his life Turgenev still had some misgivings as to whether painting and music had become a real necessity for Russian society in the same way that literature clearly had. A re-appraisal of *On the Eve* (1860) then follows, indicating how the young sculptor Shubin in this novel acts as the author's *alter ego* in a number of respects, in particular by reflecting Turgenev's views on heroism and tragedy. The change in Shubin's attitude towards Insarov, whom the sculptor at first tries to belittle before eventually comparing him to the noble Brutus in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, can be said to anticipate Turgenev's own feelings about Bazarov in *Fathers and Children* (1862) and the way that this 'nihilist' attained the stature of a true tragic hero. In this chapter, too, the clichéd notion of Turgenev's alleged affinity with Schopenhauer is firmly challenged—an issue that is taken up again later on in the discussion of *Phantoms* (1864) and *Enough!* (1865). Other aspects of Turgenev's portrayal of Shubin are used to introduce the remaining chapters, where the problems of dilettantism, originality, nationalism and Slavophilism—among the most acute problems which Russian artists had to contend with in Turgenev's eyes—are explored through various works of his, especially the novel *Smoke* (1867), as well as by reference to his observations of such contemporaries as Glinka, the painter Ivanov, Tolstói, and the composers of the 'Mighty Handful'. The springboard for the final chapter on the tragic fate befalling so many Russian artists is once again Shubin, whose voluntary exile in Rome at the end of the novel allows for certain parallels to be drawn with Gogol'. Despite Turgenev's own 'absenteeism' from Russia, for which he was much reproached, it is emphasized in the conclusion that he always remained devoted to the cause of Russia's civic and cultural development, especially in the realm of the arts, whose national, and at the same time universal, value he upheld so compellingly in his Pushkin speech of 1880.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that my thesis entitled:

"Turgenev and the Question of the Russian Artist"

- is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text
- is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted or will be submitting for a degree or diploma or other qualification at this or any other University, except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text
- does not exceed the prescribed word limit

I have also:

- resided in Cambridge for at least three terms
- undertaken the minimum requirement of research terms
- submitted this thesis by my submission date or requested leave to defer it
- formally applied for examiners to be appointed

I will also keep my contact details up to date using my self-service pages throughout the examination process

STATEMENT OF LENGTH

I confirm that this thesis is 79,998 words long (excluding the bibliography), and that it does therefore not exceed the limit prescribed by the MML Degree Committee.

Date: 27 October 2010

Signature:

Print Name: LUIS SUNDKVIST

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION, DATES, AND ABBREVIATIONS

Transliteration:

The transliteration system used is that of the Library of Congress, except for diacritics. In the text and notes titles of Russian works have been left in Cyrillic. Some names (Herzen, Cui, and Laroche) are given in the main text in their more familiar English spellings, but are transliterated consistently in the bibliographical references. The names of Russian tsars are also given in their English spellings.

Dates:

Dates of letters sent from Russia are given in the 'old style'. The dates of those sent from other European countries are given in both styles.

Abbreviations and other conventions:

The author-date system is used for citation, with the volume numbers, in the case of multi-volume editions, given in roman numerals. For references to Turgenev's writings a modified system is used: only the volume and page numbers are given, and this is assumed to refer to Turgenev (1961-68). Where his letters are cited, *P* comes before the volume number, referring to the *Pis'ma* section of Turgenev (1961-68). In a few cases, the second Academy edition, Turgenev (1978-), has been cited, and this is indicated by an asterisk superscript (*). Letters not included in the first Academy edition are cited using the following abbreviations:

LI = *Lettres inédites* (Granjard & Zviguilsky 1972)

NC = *Nouvelle correspondance* (Zviguilsky 1971-72)

Abbreviations are also used for the two main editions of recollections of Turgenev:

VT (1983) = *Turgenev v vospominaniakh sovremennikov* (Fridliand & Petrov 1983)

VT (1988) = *Turgenev v vospominaniakh sovremennikov* (Fridliand 1988)

Italicized words in the original texts are preserved in italics in the quotations. I have used dotted underlining to emphasize words or phrases in some quotations.

CHAPTER I

*THE PLACE OF THE ARTS IN RUSSIA***Introduction**

All the free arts, in Turgenev's view, had come to Russia from Western Europe as part of her gradual evolution into a civilized nation. He was of course aware of Russia's native traditions in iconography, folksong and poetry. In fact, he studied the latter with great interest during his exile to his estate at Spasskoe in the 1850s, when in letters to the Aksakov family he often mentioned the *byliny* he was reading, and later came to appreciate other genres of early Russian literature (such as Archpriest Avvakum's writings). Yet it was no surprise that in *Дым* (1867), Potugin, the spokesman of some of Turgenev's most cherished views and the most reviled figure he ever created,¹ pointed ironically to the crudeness of Russian *byliny* and legends and insisted that without civilization in the European sense there could not be true poetry (IX/236-37). For already in his article 'De la littérature russe contemporaine', which he wrote in 1845 for a Parisian journal,² Turgenev had stated his conviction that only amongst peoples where a civic society had emerged or was forming did a genuine necessity for art arise. This had been the case with Europe even before the Middle Ages, he argued, but not in Russia until she began to assimilate the reforms of Peter the Great:

En Europe, effectivement, et dans chaque nation, le besoin de reproduire les faits, les idées, les croyances, les formes de la société, toute la vie humaine, en un mot, ce besoin, source de tout art et de toute science, s'était fait sentir sans interruption [...] C'est que la *société* a toujours existé à l'Occident. En Russie, au contraire, si l'on excepte ces contes et ces chansons du peuple, ce besoin de reproduire la vie nationale ne s'était pas encore manifesté. Même avant Pierre le Grand, l'art en Russie venait d'Italie ou de Byzance. C'est que la Russie n'existait que comme peuple, pas encore comme société. (XII*/502)

This view of art as expressing the life of a civilized nation is one of the central tenets of Turgenev's aesthetics, influenced by Belinskii's 'Hegelian heritage, with its organicist and historical conception of art'.³ Thus, in his remarkable essay on Goethe's

¹ Dostoevskii was particularly incensed and even almost ten years later, when preparing the *Дневник писателя* of 1876, he considered writing an article to refute Potugin's 'ругательство на Россию' (1972-90:XXIV/74). See also Budanova 1985.

² This article was published anonymously, but Lanskoï (1964:271-74) has made an irrefutable case for Turgenev's authorship, pointing out that the views on Pushkin expressed here anticipate Turgenev's speech of 1880.

³ Terras 1970: 32.

Faust for *Отечественные записки*, also in 1845, Turgenev argued that the highest glory an artist could achieve was to ‘положительно выразить сущность своего народа и времени’ (I/219). This idea was problematic in Russia where the ‘national essence’ was far from clear to those members of the educated classes who reflected on it. Some of them, in particular Turgenev, understood that it was necessary to take into account the aspirations not just of their own class but also those of the peasantry. But clarifying these through free discussion was very difficult in the Russia of Nicholas I where the State bureaucracy stifled all independent endeavour, except for the increasingly critical thought and writing of the intelligentsia.⁴ However, the latter too suffered the State’s leaden grip in the last seven years of Nicholas I’s reign (1848-55) as control over the press and the universities was intensified. As Turgenev recalled in a speech he gave in Moscow in 1879, the years of his youth were a time ‘когда ещё помину не было о политической жизни’ (XV/58).

Given the relationship that Turgenev saw between civic development and the flourishing of the arts, it is natural that in the years immediately following 1855 he experienced what he himself recognized as a surge of creative activity, producing his four finest novels in quick succession as Russian society was vivified by the new tsar’s reforms. But any hopes that the other arts would benefit too from this atmosphere of change suffered a setback with the deaths of Glinka in 1857 and Aleksandr Ivanov in 1858, the two leading representatives of Russian music and painting in Turgenev’s eyes. Moreover, these deaths occurred in circumstances just as tragic as Gogol’s only a few years earlier (in 1852) and they affected Turgenev almost as strongly. His observations at the time seemed to confirm what in his Pushkin speech of 1880 he would describe as ‘та жестокая судьба, которая с такой, почти злорадной, настойчивостью преследует наших избранников’ (XV/71). This ‘cruel fate’ also struck at those who were not artists, and the loss of such outstanding figures as Stankevich and Belinskii when Turgenev was a young man contributed to his vivid sense of the tragic.

In his book on Turgenev and music, Abram Gozenpud (1994:123) argued that the writer’s meetings with Glinka and Ivanov not long before their deaths influenced his portrayal of Herr Lemm in *Дворянское гнездо* (1859) as an artist whose potential remains unfulfilled, partly because of the indifference of the surrounding world. We shall return to this issue later on, and, indeed, Lemm is arguably the most compelling artist figure in Turgenev’s works. However, apart from the fact that he is a foreigner (which in itself says

⁴ Riasanovsky 1983:16.

much about Turgenev's view of instrumental music's 'alienness' to Russia) and therefore not directly relevant to the question of the Russian artist, it is significant that the main plot of *Дворянское гнездо* is set in 1842, like that of *Рудин*. It is only with his third novel, *Накануне* (1860), which begins by the banks of the Moscow river in the summer of 1853, that Turgenev begins to address such contemporary matters as the value of art in the Russia of his time. For the two young Russians, Bersenev and Shubin, in 1853, just before the outbreak of the Crimean War, no end was yet in sight to Nicholas I's reign, but even so a tendency which emerged in the aftermath of 1855 and dominated Russian thought in the 1860s and 70s makes itself felt in the novel. It is the tendency of criticism, with its concomitant hostility towards art, which was to trouble Turgenev all his life, and which in *Накануне* manifests itself mainly in Elena, but also in Insarov. The anachronism of this happening in the Russia of 1853 is veiled by having these stirrings of the future confined to a woman and a foreigner. Interestingly, these critical tendencies are most keenly felt by Shubin, an artist, who, by his apparent lack of seriousness, forfeits Elena's respect. It is in fact through the sculptor Shubin, of half French, half Russian parentage, that Turgenev touches on many of the issues which made the existence of a Russian artist problematic, not least of which was this questioning of the necessity of art in view of all the difficulties Russia was facing.

Certainly, Shubin is a minor character, but Turgenev portrays him with his skill for giving essential, typical details. As William Ralston, Turgenev's English friend and translator put it in 1881: 'Scarcely any other novelist has been able to produce a striking portrait by so few strokes'.⁵ By following these strokes in Shubin's case, various aspects of the problem of the Russian artist will be seen to come to light. The next chapter will also consider how Shubin in turn sheds invaluable light on the novel's hero, Insarov, and his tragic fate.⁶ One detail of Shubin's biography, though, is worth mentioning here: his foreign descent. Turgenev doesn't give this detail in vain. On the one hand, it reflects the fact that he may have used some traits of his friend, the writer Dmitrii Grigorovich in his portrayal of Shubin. Like the latter, Grigorovich had studied at the Academy of Arts for a few months and, most importantly, his mother was French—indeed, he was often criticized

⁵ Waddington 1995:91.

⁶ As Freeborn observes, Turgenev 'always excelled in portraying minor characters', giving them roles which 'contribute directly to the portrayal of either hero or heroine' (1960:63).

for a certain vivacity which seemed suspiciously un-Russian to many contemporaries.⁷ Similarly, Shubin's fondness for light-hearted pranks is at one point associated with his French temperament: «Что ты так егозишь, француз!»—раза два заметил ему Берснев' (VIII/57). On the other hand, Shubin also shares his foreign ancestry with some of the artists who were at the forefront of Russia's cultural life in the first half of the nineteenth century. Thus, Ivan Vitali (1794-1855), the most accomplished sculptor of that period, was born in St Petersburg to Italian parents, but he was definitely seen as a Russian artist by his contemporaries, including Turgenev.⁸ As we shall see in section IV.2, it is likely that Turgenev based some aspects of Shubin's biography on his observations of Vitali, recorded initially in a review of St Petersburg's artistic life which he wrote for *Современник* in 1847.⁹ The most popular painter of the time, Karl Briullov (1799-1852) was of French Huguenot descent.¹⁰ Turgenev knew the work of these artists, whose foreign origins only served to confirm the idea he expressed in his article of 1845 about the fine arts in Russia having been imported from Western Europe. In contrast to the Slavophiles, there was nothing wrong or humiliating for him about this, since, like Potugin, he believed in the continuity of art—'преемственность искусства' (IX/232)—as culture was passed down the generations and shared between countries.

However, commissioning works of art and artists from abroad by supreme decree and, later, by the whim of ostentatious landowners, was not enough for the arts to thrive properly on Russian soil. They had to be assimilated by Russian society, in accordance with its needs, and in the mid-nineteenth century Turgenev saw that this was as yet only really the case with literature.

I.1 Literature as a vital necessity of Russian society

In a scathing review of a historical drama by Stepan Gedeonov in 1846, Turgenev argued that the success of the plays of Fonvizin, Griboedov and Gogol' showed how 'театр у нас уже упрочил за собой сочувствие и любовь народную; потребность

⁷ For example, at one public reading in 1879 or 1880 Dostoevskii suffered an attack of jealousy when he saw the gallant and still youthful Grigorovich kissing his wife's hand: 'Ишь французишка, так мелким бесом и рассыпается' (Dolinin 1964:II/277).

⁸ In the 1830s Vitali fashioned the ornamental sculptures for many public squares and gates in Moscow, was the author of various famous busts, and, from 1841, was commissioned with sculpting the bas-reliefs and figures of the Apostles for the interior of St Isaac's Cathedral in Petersburg. See Iakirina & Odnoralov 1960 for illustrations of these.

⁹ Another prototype might be his namesake, the sculptor F. I. Shubin (1740-1805), but there is no evidence that Turgenev was aware of this artist of peasant origins who sculpted portraits of Catherine the Great and many of her courtiers (see Nedoshivin 1944).

¹⁰ Mashkovtsev 1961:23.

созерцания собственной жизни возбуждена у русских' (I/257). This is true of literature in general, which, especially after the war of 1812, began to answer to educated Russians' awakened interest in their country's past,¹¹ producing a host of historical novels such as Zagoskin's *Юрий Милославский* (1829), greatly admired by Turgenev as a boy (XIV/81-82). However, the natural yearning for works about Russian life in the present was not so easily satisfied, partly because of the censorship which frowned on anything that resembled social or political commentary, and partly because of Romantic disdain for the ordinary which persisted well into the 1840s. The latter, together with the State doctrine of Official Nationality, ensured a constant supply of works on historical themes that imitated foreign models (mainly Schiller and Shakespeare in drama, Walter Scott in prose) and whose national content was quite artificial. They belonged to what Turgenev in his reminiscences of Belinskii (1869) called the 'ложновеличаявая школа', and despite all their thickly laid on Russianness, these plays and novels 'в самой сущности не имели ничего русского: это были какие-то пространные декорации, хлопотливо и небрежно воздвигнутые патриотами, не знавшими своей родины' (XIV/38).

As Heine once said, only a true poet can recognize the beauty of his own times, which is never as obvious as that of the past. In Russia the first such poet was Pushkin, who, in *Евгений Онегин* (1823-30), depicted contemporary Russian society without the overtly polemic intent of such dramatists as Fonvizin or Griboedov. Moreover, Pushkin's verses, as Turgenev noted in his French article of 1845, struck a chord with readers in a way that eluded Zagoskin's patriotic novel (XII*/506). The immediate sympathy which Russians felt for Pushkin and, later, for Gogol', was for Turgenev in his *Faust* essay a sign of how Russia's 'общественное сознание, чувство истины и красоты растёт и развивается быстро' (I/214).

At the same time, although 'society' in Turgenev's mind was something much wider than the educated classes in the two capitals, extending to the provinces as well, he was under no illusion that literature was a necessity for all Russians. Not even for all Russians of the nobility, as some autobiographical remarks in the story *Пунин и Бабурин* (1874) indicate,¹² but above all not for the overwhelming mass of the population which did not belong to the nobility. One important factor was of course widespread illiteracy among the peasantry. Significantly, during a meeting of the Russian students in Berlin in the

¹¹ Tosi 2006:31.

¹² The narrator of this story recalls how 'в нашем доме не только не обращалось никакого внимания на литературу, на поэзию, но даже считали стихи, особенно русские стихи, за нечто совсем непристойное и пошрое' (XI/171).

winter of 1838-39, at which Turgenev and Granovskii were present, Stankevich is said to have exacted an oath from his comrades that they would devote all their energies to the aim of providing general education for the peasantry. Because the abolition of serfdom was bound to happen sooner or later, Stankevich had argued, it was essential to educate the peasants so that they could participate in public life and become true citizens.¹³ Whether or not such an oath was actually sworn, there is no doubt that Turgenev believed in this noble aim. Thus, in 1842, during his brief spell as an official at the Ministry of Interior and at a time when the government had allowed some discussion of how emancipation of the serfs might be achieved, the young Turgenev wrote a memorandum on Russian agriculture in which he stressed the importance of bringing literacy to the peasantry and the gentry's moral obligation to help in this:

Человек грамотный, хотя бы он умел только читать и писать, пользуется бесконечными преимуществами в сравнении с безграмотным; ему открыли глаза; он чувствует, что он вступил в общество [...] Наши братья, русские земледельцы, вправе ожидать от своих более образованных соотечественников деятельной, усердной помощи. (I/466, 472)

This memorandum, a curious amalgam of Slavophile notions about rural Russia and of hopes for Russia's civic development along the lines marked out by Peter the Great, was predictably ignored by Turgenev's superiors. Still, with its optimism about Russia's future—summed up by a quotation from Pushkin's 'Стансы' (1826) at the end—it anticipated in some ways the Pushkin speech of 1880 in which Turgenev reminded his audience of one of the ideals that had guided his own work as a writer, namely the liberating effect of literature:

В поэзии—освободительная, ибо возвышающая, нравственная сила. Будем также надеяться, что в недалеком времени даже сыновьям нашего простого народа, который теперь не читает нашего поэта, станет понятно, что значит это имя: Пушкин! (XV/76)

But illiteracy was not the only factor preventing the peasantry from sharing in the growing riches of Russian literature. Even if a peasant did learn to read, his material

¹³ This solemn oath is described in a memoir written in 1856-57 by Neverov, one of Stankevich's fellow-students in Berlin (Granard 1954:87). It isn't mentioned in other recollections of Stankevich (including Turgenev's), and, as Edward Brown has noted, it may rather be a projection of Neverov's own concerns as an official of the Ministry of Public Education and part of the 'hagiography' of Stankevich carried out by his friends after his death (1966:23). Still, it is very likely that the question of peasant illiteracy was discussed by the Stankevich circle.

circumstances were generally such that he had little time or inclination to appreciate books of any kind. Turgenev was aware of this, and in 1881, during his last summer at Spasskoe, he told his friend Polonskii a childhood anecdote which illustrated how superfluous literature, especially poetry, must seem to the common folk: ‘До стихов ли, в особенности нежных, человеку, забитому нуждой и всякими житейскими невзгодами?’¹⁴ Even in the last years of Turgenev’s life this was still the case for many in Russia, peasants and townsfolk alike.

This awareness, however, of being in a privileged position also gave Russian writers the courage to speak for the country as a whole in the name of progress. That some, like Radishchev, had started doing so even when Russian society was unfledged and still managed to reach future generations,¹⁵ strengthened Turgenev in his conviction that literature could contribute to the ‘история русского просвещения’, as he was to emphasize in a speech in Moscow in 1879 (XV/59). Thus, apart from reflecting Russian society unto itself, literature also had the vital role of pointing to the future.

This idea was particularly close to Turgenev because it had been so passionately expressed by Belinskii in his Letter to Gogol’ accusing him of having reneged, in *Выбранные места из переписки с друзьями* (1846), the Russian writer’s duty to guide his country on the ‘путь сознания, развития и прогресса’ (1953-59:X/212). Turgenev, of whom a contemporary noted: ‘Белинский и его письмо—это вся его религия!’¹⁶ would always believe in the enlightening role of literature proclaimed by his mentor and ‘незабвенный друг’, as he called Belinskii in the preface to *Отцы и дети* (VIII/446).¹⁷ However, it was an idea which also underlay Chernyshevskii’s 1855 dissertation *Эстетические отношения искусства к действительности*, in which the future radical leader claimed, much as Belinskii had, that the writer’s task was to ‘воспроизнести, по мере сил, эту драгоценную действительность и ко благу человека объяснить её’ (1939-50:II/90). But Chernyshevskii’s insistence that in modern times an artist was only worthy of that name if he consciously included in his work his ‘приговор о явлениях

¹⁴ VT (1988):398.

¹⁵ A copy of the *Путешествие из Петербурга в Москву* (1790) came into Turgenev’s hands in 1854 (Den 1968:115). In 1880 he told the painter Aleksei Bogoliubov who wanted to open an art museum in Saratov that would bear his grandfather Radishchev’s name: ‘Саратов всегда был городом передовым, а поэтому передового человека он должен возвеличить в лице Вашего деда Радищева, который всегда будет для них и России первым поборником освобождения крестьян’ (Gitlits 1966:307).

¹⁶ Vera Aksakova’s diary for 1856-57, quoted by Batiuto 1990:5.

¹⁷ See Batiuto 1990 for a survey of how some of Belinskii’s views are echoed by Bazarov, albeit in an exaggerated manner. In this novel, dedicated to the great critic’s memory, Turgenev also paid tribute to him by endowing the endearing figure of Bazarov’s father with a number of biographical traits of his friend (see Nikitina 1997).

жизни' (1939-50:II/92) would soon be invoked by other critics to disparage all works of art that did not deal with relevant issues of Russian reality.

Although Turgenev respected Chernyshevskii for taking up Belinskii's mantle (in the 1856 series of articles: *Очерки гоголевского периода русской литературы*), he was alarmed by the younger man's persistent subordination of art to real life. Thus, shortly after reading Chernyshevskii's dissertation he exclaimed in a letter to Nekrasov: 'Эта худо скрытая вражда к искусству—езде скверна—а у нас и подавно. Отними у нас *этом* энтузиазм—после того хоть со света долой беги.'¹⁸ And taking up Chernyshevskii's argument that art could never produce anything as beautiful or as satisfying as Nature, he stressed: 'В действительности нет шекспировского Гамлета—или, пожалуй, он есть—да Шекспир открыл его—и сделал достоянием общим.'¹⁹ In *Накануне* and elsewhere Turgenev would challenge the ancillary status accorded to art by Chernyshevskii, according to which works of art served either as a 'surrogate' of reality (in the case of painting and other fine arts) or as an 'indictment' of that reality (in the case of literature).

Given Turgenev's views on the relationship between literature and society, it is clear that he was no advocate of aestheticism as such. Indeed, a few weeks before reading Chernyshevskii's dissertation he had written to his friend Botkin: 'Бывают эпохи, где литература не может быть *только* художеством—а есть интересы высшие поэтических интересов. Момент самосознания и критики так же необходим в развитии народной жизни'.²⁰ And Captain Baptiste Faurie who knew Turgenev in Paris in the 1870s stressed how the creed of *l'art pour l'art*, espoused by Flaubert among others, made no sense to Turgenev, who wrote not merely for the sake of creating beautiful works but also to stir up thoughts in his readers. Of no work of his, Faurie said, was this truer than *Записки охотника* (1847-52) which, by causing educated Russians to reflect on the consequences of serfdom, had helped pave the way for the Emancipation Edict of 1861.²¹ Turgenev himself saw in the enthusiastic reception he was accorded by the students of Moscow in February 1879, who greeted him as the 'автор «Записок охотника», появление которых неразрывно связано с историей крестьянского освобождения',²² the greatest reward of his literary career (XV/57). However, these stories of the Russian countryside had been written in accordance with one of the aesthetic principles of Belinskii

¹⁸ Letter of 10 July 1855 (P II/297).

¹⁹ Letter to Nekrasov and Botkin, 25 July 1855 (P II/301).

²⁰ Letter of 17 June 1855 (P II/282).

²¹ *VT* (1988):306.

²² Alekseeva 1960:313.

which Turgenev wholeheartedly subscribed to: ‘Поэт мыслит образами; он не доказывает истины, а показывает её’.²³ It was the other way round with many of the overtly tendentious stories and novels—or ‘повести «с начинкой»’, as Turgenev ironically called them (P IX/212)—that began to appear from 1855 onwards.

In a mature civic society with a free press other forms of writing could fulfil the polemic tasks which in Russia had traditionally been assigned to literature—the sole tribunal available to a nation without political liberty, as Herzen observed in 1851 (1954-66:VII/68). Turgenev had initially hoped that after the accession of Alexander II Russia would soon reach this stage. Thus, in 1858 he drafted a memorandum with suggestions to the government for setting up a journal in which the reasons for the imminent abolition of serfdom would be discussed in order to convince sceptical landowners. Significantly, he invoked here the importance of every new publishing enterprise in a country like Russia which was in such need of civilizing influences: ‘у нас до сих пор, по выражению Грибоедова, «печатный каждый лист быть кажется святым»’ (XV/239).

The unsatisfactory press reform of 1865 did not fulfil all of these hopes, and that is why ‘fiction’ still had to serve as a forum for denouncing social problems, somewhat to the dismay of Turgenev, even though his works were part of this tradition. The difference between him and his antagonists in the Nekrasov camp of ‘civic poetry’ may perhaps best be explained by reference to Goethe, who, alongside Pushkin and Shakespeare was the ‘teacher’ whom Turgenev most frequently cited.²⁴ Responding to those who demanded high-minded didacticism from poetry, Goethe had countered that ‘ein gutes Kunstwerk kann und wird zwar moralische Folgen haben, aber moralische Zwecke vom Künstler fordern, heißt ihm sein Handwerk verderben’.²⁵ Turgenev himself liked to cite Pushkin’s poem about the poison-tree ‘Анчар’ (1828) as an example of how a writer should avoid being too direct and allow readers to use their imagination: ‘Пушкин тут [в «Анчаре»] хотел изобразить тлетворное влияние тирании, между тем не сказал он: «так тирания гнетёт и умерщвляет всё вокруг себя»’.²⁶ The same restraint can be observed in many of the *Записки охотника*.

²³ From Belinskii’s 1839 article on *Горе от ума* (1953-59:III/431). The same principle is expressed by the Latin adage ‘*scribitur ad narrandum, non ad probandum*’, which Turgenev quoted in a letter to an aspiring young writer in January 1877 (P XII₁/64).

²⁴ Addressing the younger generation of Russian writers in *По поводу «Отцов и детей»* (1869), Turgenev described Goethe as ‘наш общий учитель’ (XIV/106). Turgenev also revered Gogol’ and Schiller, but, significantly, he did not call them his teachers.

²⁵ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, III, 12 (Goethe 1985-98:XVI/574).

²⁶ As recalled by Adelaida Lukanina. *VT* (1983):II/195-96.

Although Turgenev would repeatedly defend the writer's freedom from demands by the critics that he should address 'relevant' topics, even the profusion of tendentious works was a sign of how literature in Russia had become a vital force in society. It could develop by independent endeavours alone, without State tutelage, but the situation of the other 'free arts' was more complicated.

I.2 The fine arts: a foreign commodity

Catherine the Great had founded the Academy of Fine Arts in 1764, but well into the nineteenth century the painters and sculptors who emerged from its walls continued producing works according to the neoclassical canon that had nothing to do with contemporary Russian reality. They were commissioned either by wealthy landowners and self-styled patrons of the arts like Benevolenskii in *Татьяна Борисовна и её племянник* (one of the *Записки охотника*, first published in 1848) or directly by the Ministry of the Court, which was in charge of the Academy and promoted mainly works on historical themes that glorified the principles of autocracy.²⁷ In the critical atmosphere of the latter half of the century the Academy, not surprisingly, came under increasing attack from those who saw in it 'an instrument that molded artists into servitors of the State'²⁸ and a citadel of lifeless classicism. One of the most vociferous critics, Vladimir Stasov, for example, wrote about an exhibition at the Academy in 1861: 'Что сказать про скульптуру у нас? Она ещё при своих Регулах и Сцеволах спит непробудным сном, а в своём сне пребывает где-то за сто или сто пятьдесят лет назад'.²⁹

This 'increasing disenchantment with the Academy's continued reliance on classical prototypes foreign to the demands of modern life'—which culminated in 1863 with the secession of Ivan Kramskoi (1837-87) and thirteen other students of the Academy in protest at the mythological subject that had been set for a competition—³⁰ was anticipated by Turgenev in *Накануне* when he included the following detail in Shubin's characterization: '[он] слышать не хотел об академии и не признавал ни одного профессора' (VIII/21). Shubin's rebellious attitude reflects the Russian artist's difficult quest for originality, for as he tells Bersenev, he had smashed up his bas-relief of a boy with a goat after realizing that it was nothing more than a derivative composition: 'К

²⁷ Such as 'The Baptism of Vladimir' or 'The Arrival of Riurik' (Starr 1983:105).

²⁸ E. Valkenier cited in Olkhovsky 1983:115.

²⁹ Kuznetsova 1989:9.

³⁰ Bowl 1983a:131. Several of these students went on to form the society of itinerant painters (*peredvizhniki*) in 1871.

чёрту! к чёрту! [...] Посмотрел на настоящих, на стариков, на антики, да и разбил свою чепуху' (VIII/9).³¹ However, this self-criticism also arises from his awareness of how all these neoclassical works were alien to the reality of Russia. Significantly, like Aleksei Venetsianov (1780-1847), whose landscapes and depictions of peasant life brought about what J.C. Taylor calls a 'revolution' in Russian painting by showing 'that Russian fields and homely circumstances could, indeed, be seen as art' (1983:144), and like Turgenev himself in *Записки охотника* and Grigorovich in his early stories *Деревня* and *Антон-Горемыка*, Shubin too begins to seek inspiration for his art amongst the peasantry: '[он] скитался по окрестностям Москвы, лепил и рисовал портреты крестьянских девок' (VIII/20).³²

Nevertheless, these new strivings could not alter the fact that the works produced even by such artists were meant principally for the appreciation of the nobility, which constituted a mere 1.5% of Russia's population in the 1830s.³³ Leaving aside until section IV.1 the question of how this audience remained in thrall to foreign aesthetic paragons, even in times of nationalism, and so made it hard for original artists to thrive in Russia, it is clear that the fine arts, as Turgenev understood them, were inaccessible to the vast majority of the Russian population. Already in Gogol's story *Портрет*, the painter Chartkov had reflected on how the common folk walking past the art dealers' shops in St Petersburg could hardly be expected to take an interest in the landscapes and Flemish genre paintings on display in the windows.³⁴ Given Turgenev's wistful observation, in his 1880 speech, of how even a national poet like Pushkin could still only be appreciated by the educated classes, we might expect him to have believed that at least for educated Russians the fine arts had or could soon become a living necessity, as in other European nations. Surprisingly, though, this was not the case. As late as 1871, when Il'ia Repin (1844-1930) hadn't yet caught the public's attention with *Бурлаки* (Plate 4A), and still mindful of how Aleksandr Ivanov had been treated during his ill-fated return to St Petersburg in 1858, Turgenev expressed his misgivings about painting ever taking root in Russia: 'Об

³¹ Shubin's bas-relief of a genre scene in the neoclassical manner was probably not unlike the sculptures of Nikolai Pimenov, in particular his *Парень, играющий в бабки* (1836), which, though inspired by classical works, sought to represent scenes from Russian life (Kennedy 1983:206).

³² Turgenev himself acknowledged Grigorovich's precedence, describing *Деревня* (1846) as the 'первая попытка сближения нашей литературы с народной жизнью'. Quoted in Grigorovich 1961:9.

³³ Starr 1983:91.

³⁴ Gogol' 1952-53:III/72.

искусстве я судить не берусь; его час—мне сдаётся—ещё не наступил на Руси: жизнь закопошилась—да крови в этой жизни ещё нет.³⁵

The reasons for such pessimism lay not just in the prevalence of various factors which stifled original creativity, such as the burden of Official Nationality and the Academy's neoclassicism, but, more significantly, in Russian society's apparent indifference to the fine arts. Thus, although the Hermitage's art collection was opened to the public by Nicholas I, the number of Russian visitors was never very high in the nineteenth century.³⁶ It was visited mainly by students of the Academy and foreign travellers like Turgenev's friend, Louis Viardot, a respected authority on European art who made use of his stays in St Petersburg to draw up a catalogue of the Hermitage's collection. Outside the two capitals the situation was even worse, for until 1885, when the Radishchev museum was finally opened in Saratov, there were no art collections open to the public in the provinces.³⁷ It might be argued that low attendance at the Hermitage was due to it being quite difficult to obtain entry tickets (even for members of the nobility) and that the great success of the Saratov museum, for example, or accounts by Repin, in his letters of 1872 from Moscow, of how on Sundays many peasants would visit the Rumiantsev museum, especially to see Ivanov's *Явление Христа народу* (1836-55; Plate 3B),³⁸ indicate how appreciative Russians could be of the arts once they became more accessible. Yet the fact is that painting (not to speak of sculpture) never awoke such interest and sympathy among the Russian public as works of literature. Stasov had lamented this apathy of Russians towards the fine arts in an article of 1865, in which he noted that exhibitions held in St Petersburg often comprised few paintings not because of the sloth of Russian artists but because of the lack of demand for their work. And in another article Stasov quoted a comment by the Academy's director in the 1860s, who agreed with him that 'потребность в созданиях искусства просто ничтожна у нас [...] Любви к искусству, инстинкта художественного у нас нет' (1950-51:I/539).

Given the prevalence of this notion that the fine arts were extraneous to Russian society and could only be maintained through State sponsorship, it is not surprising that painting became a frequent target for attacks by radical members of the intelligentsia. Already Belinskii had rebelled, during his stay in Germany in 1847, against the veneration of the *Sistine Madonna* to which all Russian visitors to Dresden since Zhukovskii had

³⁵ Letter to Stasov, 15/27 October 1871 (P IX/149).

³⁶ Starr 1983:96.

³⁷ Blakesley 2007:38-39.

³⁸ Cf. Repin's letter to Stasov, 3 June 1872 (Repin 1969:I/42).

invariably paid tribute.³⁹ Not long after Turgenev had taken him to see Raphael's celebrated painting, the democrat Belinskii expressed his animosity towards such art: 'Это не мать христианского Бога; это аристократическая женщина, дочь царя, *ideal sublime du comme il faut* [...] а у него [младенца] весь рот дышит презрением к нам, ракалиям.'⁴⁰ At least, though, he recognized the 'благородство' and 'грация кисти' of Raphael's technique. Later critics proved less forgiving towards Raphael and the arts in general. Thus, Pisarev, in 'Разрушение эстетики' (1865), condemned Raphael as a willing 'лакей роскоши', putting him (and Beethoven, incidentally) on a par with gourmet chefs who produced luxurious dishes for the consumption of a few (1955-56:III/426). As Il'ia Zil'bershtein has pointed out (1945:56), such ideas were already floating about in the late 1850s, and Bazarov's rejection of the fine arts in *Отцы и дети* (1862) would not have sounded so compelling if these had been more firmly established in Russia.

As for Russia's native iconographic traditions, which might seem to belie what was said above about Turgenev's views on art still being an exotic plant on Russian soil, it must be emphasized that he was concerned above all with the free arts, to which icon painting does not belong. This is not to say that Turgenev was not aware of the role of icons in Russian life, but it is very revealing that the few times they appear in his works, they do so in tragic circumstances. For example, in *Несчастливая* (1869) the expression of Susanna's face on her deathbed 'напоминало лика на старых-старых образах' (X/145), and in *Живые мощи* (1874) Luker'ia's withered face reminds the huntsman of an 'икона старинного письма' (IV/354). The austere and sad expressions of the figures on these icons reflect submission to the laws of 'unfeeling' Nature which annihilated all those individual qualities that Turgenev so cherished. Indeed, the principles of iconography went against that realistic portrayal of life which was the hallmark of Turgenev's own artistry, as we may appreciate, for example, by reference to Leskov's famous story *Запечатленный ангел* (1873), where the icon-painter Sevast'ian refuses a commission to paint the portrait of a young woman, since he was only allowed to paint 'святые иконы'.⁴¹

Moreover, the educated classes were by and large indifferent to this artistic patrimony, as the Slavophile leader Khomiakov pointed out in his obituary of Aleksandr

³⁹ Pearson 1981:348. Turgenev described his compatriots' 'мучительное дежурство перед [...] «знаменитыми произведениями»' in an 1858 article in which he felicitously likened the bench in front of the *Sistine Madonna* at the Dresden gallery to an instrument of spiritual torture on which Russian tourists would force themselves into rapture for several hours (XV/9-10).

⁴⁰ Letter to Botkin, 7/19 July 1847 (Belinskii 1953-59:XII/384).

⁴¹ Leskov's story, as well as other examples of icon-painter figures in Russian literature, are discussed in an interesting survey by V. Lepakhin (2005). This book was kindly pointed out to me by Prof. Simon Franklin.

Ivanov (1858). Khomiakov tried to present this as a blessing in disguise by arguing that it was thanks to this that Russian iconography had not been corrupted by European influences and had thus been able to nourish Ivanov's work.⁴² However, for Turgenev this was just an attempt to make a virtue out of a deficiency, something which, as Potugin notes, the Slavophiles were especially prone to. Not surprisingly, in his own essay on Ivanov in 1861, Turgenev took issue with Khomiakov's messianic interpretation of the late painter's role in reviving Russian art (XIV/94). As we have seen, Turgenev also had doubts—at least until the 1870s with the emergence of Repin and Vereshchagin—about Russian society's need for the fine arts at that particular stage of its civic development, when literature alone seemed capable of doing justice to its concerns.

I.3 The 'strangeness' of music in Russia

As late as 1881, during his last visit to Russia, Turgenev made an assessment of Russian musical life which, with its mixture of scepticism and hope for the future, could almost have come from Potugin in *Дым*. As Polonskii recalled,

Тургенев полагал, что музыка в России пока то же, что литература до Пушкина, то есть не стала ещё нашей потребностью, нашим, так сказать, насущным хлебом, и проч. и проч. Говорил, что из прежних русских композиторов он высоко ставит Глинку, а из новейших всем другим предпочитает Чайковского; был уверен, что в России не найдётся и 20-и человек, которые бы свободно могли читать ноты (что, конечно, несправедливо).⁴³

It is difficult not to agree with Polonskii's objection, given the huge efforts that Anton Rubinshtein (1829-94) and Mili Balakirev (1836-1910) during the 1860s had put into advancing the cause of musical education in Russia and, more generally, into familiarizing Russian audiences with the great works of the past and the most recent compositions. Thus, in the same year (1862) Balakirev set up the Free Music School whose teachers charged no fees from the pupils, drawn mainly from St Petersburg's non-gentry classes (especially merchants), and Rubinshtein inaugurated, with some help from the State, the St Petersburg Conservatory, the first such institution in Russia. Among its first graduates was Petr Chaikovskii (1840-93), who also went on to become one of the first teachers at the newly

⁴² Khomiakov spoke of the 'почти совершенное равнодушие общества нашего к нашему искусству' (1900:III/364). There were of course exceptions, such as Turgenev's friend, the philologist Fedor Buslaev, who urged Academy-trained painters to look to Russia's iconography for inspiration (Valkenier 1983:161).

⁴³ *VT* (1988):399.

founded Moscow Conservatory in 1866. Moreover, in contrast to the 1840s and 50s, when there was a dearth of symphonic concerts, with opera, dominated by foreigners, still being the most prominent form of musical activity,⁴⁴ the concerts of the Russian Musical Society (founded by Rubinshtein in 1859) and the more nationalistic ones directed by Balakirev showed that professional musicianship had at last been consolidated in Russia.

It is true that these instrumental concerts were not very popular with the aristocracy, and that in 1867 Rubinshtein was forced to resign from his posts at the head of the RMS and the Conservatory by court intrigues as insidious as those Glinka had suffered thirty years earlier.⁴⁵ And yet a great deal had changed for the better in Russian musical life since the 1840s, when Glinka had exclaimed in despair:

Искусство—эта данная мне небом отрада—гибнет здесь [в Петербурге] от убийственного ко всему равнодушия. Если бы я не провёл несколько лет за границей, я не написал бы «Жизни за царя»—теперь убеждён, что «Руслан» может быть окончен токмо в Германии или Франции.⁴⁶

In the 1870s Chaikovskii and Nikolai Rimskii-Korsakov (1844-1908), the two young Russian composers whom Turgenev admired most (eventually joined in his esteem by Modest Musorgskii),⁴⁷ were both able to earn a living as professional musicians, much sought after as teachers and conductors. Glinka, in contrast, had been unable to find such a role in the musical life of St Petersburg—the few years (1837-39) he spent as music director of the Imperial Chapel choir were hardly very fulfilling—and his long absences from Russia were partly due to his discontent with this situation. Reflecting on Glinka in an article of 1872, Chaikovskii conjectured on how he might have written more operas and symphonic works if there had then been better opportunities for Russian musicians at the time: ‘но в том-то и дело, что судьба не послала ему [Глинке] той обстановки, тех условий развития, которые были нужны для полного расцвета его огромного дарования’ (1953:53).

Turgenev was aware of these favourable developments in Russian musical life, having retrospectively lent support, through the figure of Potugin in *Дым*, to Rubinshtein’s

⁴⁴ Campbell 1994:39-40.

⁴⁵ Olkhovsky 1983:97.

⁴⁶ Letter to his mother, 15 February 1841 (Glinka 1952-53:II/55-56).

⁴⁷ In a letter to Stasov on 15/27 March 1872, Turgenev had observed: ‘Изю всех «молодых» русских музыкантов только у двух есть талант положительный: у Чайковского и у Римского-Корсакова’ (Р IX/245). But two years later, after hearing extracts from *Борис Годунов* and *Хованщина*, performed by Musorgskii himself, he would revise his sceptical attitude towards the ‘Mighty Handful’. See his letter to Pauline Viardot of 21 May 1874, in *NC*:I/ 211-12.

bitterly contested 1861 campaign to put music-training and making in Russia on a professional footing (see III.2). He had also been fortunate to witness the emergence of two of Russia's greatest composers, Chaikovskii and Musorgskii. Why then was he so sceptical in his conversation with Polonskii, quoted above?

The answer probably lies not so much in the relative poverty of Russian musical life—especially when compared to the Germany which Turgenev had got to know so well as a student and during the 1860s, where every small town had a choir and orchestra, something which Turgenev's more sober-minded contemporaries also admitted.⁴⁸ His scepticism, rather, has more to do with Belinskii's notion of art only thriving where it is a genuine need of society. For Turgenev had good reason to question whether the 'new era' of Russian music, so confidently heralded by César Cui (1835-1918) in his articles for *Санкт-Петербургские ведомости*, actually answered to a true interest in music on the part of educated Russians or whether it wasn't in the end just as artificial as the delusions imposed on society by the doctrine of Official Nationality in his youth.

For a start, the over-emphasis on creating 'Russian' operas, especially in the 1860s with Aleksandr Serov's three grandiose, now largely forgotten, attempts (*Юдифь*, *Рогнеда*, and *Вражья сила*),⁴⁹ must have seemed suspect to Turgenev. This obsession could easily be attributed to a patriotic desire to emulate Wagner (in Serov's case) or to outdo him (as with Cui and some members of the 'new Russian school'), rather than to purely musical concerns. As long as symphonic and chamber works were neglected in favour of vocal ones (operas and romances), Turgenev couldn't believe in the maturity of Russian musical life. Unfortunately, it seems that he had no chance to hear those of Chaikovskii's symphonies which appeared in his lifetime,⁵⁰ and another major orchestral work by that composer, the *Romeo and Juliet* overture, whose piano reduction he ordered from Russia, didn't leave him satisfied when it was played through at the Viardots'—which is perhaps understandable, since orchestral works are difficult to appreciate properly when heard for the first time in a piano version.⁵¹ On the other hand, Turgenev was impressed by Aleksandr Borodin's Second Symphony, the *Bogatyrskaiia*, even though, again, he only heard it in an arrangement for piano.⁵²

⁴⁸ For example, the music critic Laroche, in an 1873 article about Chaikovskii, had observed how it was still impossible to have symphonic works performed in the provinces (Campbell 1994:265).

⁴⁹ Taruskin (1993:344) makes a case for these operas' merits, but they have not survived in the repertoire.

⁵⁰ The First (*Зимние грёзы*) was premièred in 1868; the Second in 1873; the Third in 1875; and the Fourth in 1878, but these performances never coincided with Turgenev's brief visits to St Petersburg or Moscow.

⁵¹ Letter to Toporov, 28 September/10 October 1874 (P X/307).

⁵² Letter to Borodin, 27 October/8 November 1877 (P XII₁/223).

These significant works, however, began appearing only in the last years of Turgenev's life and seem to have been unable to allay his doubts about Russian society's readiness for a musical culture like that of the West. This wasn't for want of sensitivity to music on the part of Russians as a people: with a few exceptions, those characters in Turgenev's works who come into contact with music are greatly moved, sometimes even transformed, by it. This is the case, for example, with the narrator in *Несчастная* when he hears Susanna play Beethoven's *Appassionata* (X/92), but more often than not it is the effect of singing which Turgenev evokes. Russians of all walks of life could be moved by the sad beauty of their native song, as *Певцы* (1850) shows: from the serfs who share Iashka's lot, the innkeeper's wife, to the educated huntsman. Rolf-Dieter Kluge (1992:73) has rightly emphasized how original Turgenev's sketch must have seemed at the time by its demonstration not just of the two peasants' artistic gifts but also of the fine aesthetic sensibility of their equally humble listeners. Moreover, the contrast between the virtuoso cadences of the contractor ('рядчик'), which remind the huntsman of an Italian tenor,⁵³ and the 'русская, правдивая душа' (IV/241) of Iashka, who triumphs in this singing contest, can be related to one of the essential problems faced by the Russian artist in Turgenev's view: the quest for originality.

In the specific case of music it is interesting that Turgenev included in the first draft of *Певцы* an observation to which the composers of the 'Mighty Handful', whose assertions of originality were so often to repel him, would gladly have subscribed: 'Я бы каждому музыканту посоветовал съездить послушать хор сергиевских мужиков; я ему отвечаю, что он бы не раскаялся в своей поездке и, может быть, вынес бы оттуда не одну мысль' (IV/582-83). This advice, which brings to mind Glinka's famous phrase: 'Создаёт музыку народ, а мы, художники, только её аранжируем',⁵⁴ might even seem to give Turgenev's reflections on Russian music a Slavophile turn rather like that we find in Dostoevskii's unfinished novel *Неточка Незванова* (1849). There, as M. De Sanctis has pointed out, the violinist Efimov's 'Western' ambition and arrogance are effectively juxtaposed with his initial inspiration in native songs as 'idealistic and disinterested expressions of the spiritual and national characters of the Russian people' (1995:48-49).⁵⁵

⁵³ As Gozenpud has noted (1994:100), it isn't accidental that Iashka's rival has no name in the story: lacking true artistic individuality, he imitates the manner of professional singers whom he has heard.

⁵⁴ Livanova & Protopopov 1955:II/125.

⁵⁵ Cf. the scene in question: 'Тут он [Ефимов] взял скрипку и начал играть свои вариации на русские песни. Б. говорил, что эти вариации—его первая и лучшая пьеса на скрипке и что более он никогда ничего не играл так хорошо и с таким вдохновением' (Dostoevskii 1972-90:II/147). Such variations on

In contrast to Slavophiles like Khomiakov, who interpreted the Russian people's affinity for song as a manifestation of their religiosity ('православный мир—народ певучий'),⁵⁶ Turgenev, in *Певцы*, did not read into these peasants' singing any such connotations. Instead, he noted the passion and strength conveyed by Iashka's song but also its 'грустная скорбь' (IV/241), and this underlying sadness of so many Russian folksongs was probably one of the things he had in mind when he wrote to another leading Slavophile, Konstantin Aksakov, in 1852 that the peasantry's artistic heritage filled him not so much with hopes for the future as with sad thoughts about the 'трагическая судьба племени' and of the 'великая общественная драма' of serfdom.⁵⁷

Turgenev also knew that whilst folksong undoubtedly showed the great potential for musical culture in Russia, songs were one thing and elaborate compositions another. In his Pushkin speech of 1880 he would emphasize that in mature, civilized nations true artists transcended the merely 'national', giving as an example the way in which Mozart and Beethoven's works hardly resembled German folk music precisely because 'эта народная, ещё стихийная музыка перешла к ним в плоть и кровь' (XV/69). That Russian folksong for Turgenev was still something 'elementary', though not necessarily in a negative sense, is clear from his observation, in a letter of 1850 to Pauline Viardot, about the scene in a village inn which inspired him to write *Певцы*: 'L'enfance de tous les peuples se ressemble et mes chanteurs me faisaient penser à Homère.'⁵⁸ This association of folksong with cultural immaturity recurs in some of Turgenev's later works. In *Вешние воды* (1872), for example, it clearly has a negative slant when the seductress Polozova, who represents the worst aspects of Russia's historical legacy, namely tyranny and anarchy,⁵⁹ tells her victim, Sanin, of her disdain for European orchestral music: 'Нравятся мне одни русские песни—и то в деревне, и то весной—с пляской, знаете...' (XI/119). It is not surprising that someone so contemptuous of duty as Polozova should reject the discipline required to sustain musical culture at a Western level: an attitude not unlike that ascribed by Potugin to the Russian 'home-grown geniuses' in *Дым*.

But what the more frequent positive references to folksongs and their appeal even to members of the gentry in Turgenev's works (e.g. in *Накануне* Shubin and Bersenev sing

folk melodies were in fact the most popular instrumental genre for Russian composers in the early nineteenth century (Brown 1983:62).

⁵⁶ In an 1844 article on Glinka's *Жизнь за царя* (Khomiakov 1900:III/99).

⁵⁷ Letter of 16 October 1852 (P II/72).

⁵⁸ Letter of 26 October 1850 (LI:42).

⁵⁹ Cf. James Woodward's excellent discussion of *Вешние воды* (1995:236).

‘Вниз по матушке по Волге’) illustrate is the ability of Russians to assimilate what Turgenev called the element (‘стихия’) of music. What many of them still lacked, though, was a sense for more elaborate musical forms, in particular, for instrumental music. This is especially evident in Bersenev’s nocturnal improvisations on the piano which went no further than endlessly repeating those chords he liked most (VIII/31). On the other hand, because of his faith in the way that culture was shared between nations (‘преемственность искусства’), Turgenev had good reason to believe that his countrymen might, under the guidance of mainly German teachers to start with, eventually come to appreciate the more elevated forms of music. There are intimations of this hope in *Дворянское гнездо*, where both Lavretskii and Liza feel genuine respect for Herr Lemm’s work as a teacher and composer. Only this process of assimilation could turn instrumental music from an exotic import (for, like the fine arts, secular music too had been introduced into Russia by supreme decree)⁶⁰ into a real spiritual necessity for Russians.

It is true that from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards interest in music had spread from the imperial court to the salons of the nobility, which produced notable amateur musicians such as Prince Golitsyn, and even to the provincial estates. Turgenev, in his childhood and youth, had frequent occasions to observe this phenomenon among some of his neighbours, that is, the way in which ‘wealthy nobles, emulating the court, set up domestic orchestras, choirs and opera theatres staffed largely by serfs and trained by foreign professionals.’⁶¹ We find reflections of this in some of the *Записки охотника* (e.g. *Малиновая вода*) and in Lemm’s biography (VII/138). However, Turgenev couldn’t help noting the ‘strangeness’ of many of these enterprises: thus, although he seized every opportunity to hear classical music performed when he was living in Spasskoe, his descriptions of one neighbour’s serf orchestra, whose vast repertory (comprising even symphonies by Beethoven) delighted him, do betray a certain unease at the notion of listening to ‘un orchestre... acheté, car ce voisin a acheté les musiciens *en masse*.’⁶² There was also something strange in the way these serfs had been trained to great uniformity by the landowner’s German kapellmeister.⁶³ Turgenev didn’t go as far as Dostoevskii (in *Неточка Незванова*) in exploring the negative effects which such

⁶⁰ Namely by Empress Anne, who in 1735 appointed the Italian Francesco Araja as music director at the imperial court (Brown 1983:58).

⁶¹ Brown 1983:59.

⁶² Letter to Pauline Viardot, 28 October 1852 (P II/83).

⁶³ Letter to Pauline Viardot, 4 February 1853 (LI:64).

enforcement of ‘foreign’ norms from above might have on the psyche of the serf artist,⁶⁴ but he did recognize the artificiality of these oases of culture in the Russian countryside. The sponsorship of music by Russian landowners didn’t always testify to a genuine respect for civilized values, as is clear from the humiliating treatment which musicians in Turgenev’s works, such as the kapellmeister in *Малиновая вода* (IV/39) and Lemm, were often subjected to by their employers.

As for the wider urban public, that is, the lesser gentry and *raznochintsy* who made up the increasingly self-assertive intelligentsia, Turgenev had strong grounds to suppose that music wasn’t yet a real need for most of them, as he indicated in his conversation with Polonskii. For a start, there was the already mentioned dearth of opportunities to hear symphonic concerts. Thus, it’s not surprising that Chernyshevskii, in his dissertation of 1855, dealt with music so summarily and, in particular, dismissed instrumental music as ancillary to singing: ‘инструментальная музыка—подражание пению, его аккомпанемент или суррогат’ (1939-50:II/63). Given that the Italian Opera was the most popular company in St Petersburg even in the 1860s and that domestic music-making was limited mainly to arias and romances, accompanied on the piano, with very few performances of chamber music works,⁶⁵ radicals of humbler origins like Chernyshevskii might well be forgiven for thinking that all there was to music was singing. However, even Pisarev, who came from a more privileged background, in his article ‘Реалисты’ (1864) was to throw violinists and clarinetists and even composers like Beethoven (!) into the same sack as lovers of vodka, tobacco, or hunting, whose sybaritic activities were irrelevant to the ‘умственное или нравственное совершенствование человечества’ (1955-56:III/114-15).

The implications of the intelligentsia’s growing intolerance of all the arts—except literature—will be elaborated in the next chapter, but it is easy to see why Turgenev, who shared their concerns about the social and political situation in Russia, might sometimes feel that music was a fruit which his countrymen could not yet cultivate properly.

⁶⁴ Cf. De Sanctis 1995:78 and Gozenpud 1971:41.

⁶⁵ As Rubinshtein observed in his damning article ‘О музыке в России’ (1861)—see Campbell 1994:71-72.

CHAPTER II

НАКАНУНЕ: ART, HEROISM, AND TRAGEDY**Introduction**

The title of Turgenev's third novel served as a poignant reminder of two landmarks in Russian history: the Crimean War (1854-56), which broke out soon after the events described in the novel, and the abolition of serfdom, since by the time *Накануне* was published in January 1860, Alexander II's decision to go ahead with this crucial reform had been taken irrevocably. The new tsar had brought the question of emancipation into the open in early 1858, and in that same year Turgenev wrote both a memorandum advising the government to create a journal devoted to this question (see p.9) and an article on the future of the Russian gentry in view of the imminent changes to its traditional economic base. In this article, which remained unfinished and wasn't published in his lifetime, Turgenev argued that the gentry's historical role in Russia lay not in ownership of serfs but in service to the land (XIV/303). Anticipating Versilov's thoughts about the 'дворянство' in Dostoevskii's novel *Подросток* (1875), Turgenev noted how in the past Russian noblemen had served their country on the battlefield, whereas in Russia's more recent history it wasn't just military heroism which was expected from them: 'Но не всегда одной крови требует от нас наше отечество' (XIV/303). In contrast to the Western aristocracy, which had largely become stagnant as a class, the Russian gentry, Turgenev emphasized, had produced generations of scholars, poets, scientists, and artists who had all distinguished themselves by their 'служение делу просвещения и образования' (XIV/304).

In *Накануне* the representative of this worthy tradition is the young scholar Bersenev, who tells Elena that he yearned to follow in the footsteps of Granovskii (VIII/23). Like Stankevich, the historian Granovskii after his premature death (in 1855) was remembered by his contemporaries for his generosity and idealism. Turgenev, who had first met Granovskii at St Petersburg University in 1835, wrote a moving obituary of him in which he noted how Russia sorely needed teachers like Granovskii, a 'бескорыстный и неуклонный служитель науки' who had always held aloft the ideals of 'добро и нравственность, человеческое достоинство и честь' (VI/374). The sculptor Shubin, in contrast, shows scant respect for the Russian gentry's values, not just where represented by such comical figures as Stakhov or Uvar Ivanovich, but even in the case of

his friend Bersenev, whose idealism he repeatedly mocks: ‘ты истый представитель тех жрецов науки, [...] *кои*ми столь справедливо гордится класс среднего русского дворянства!’ (VIII/28). The fact that in the novel’s epilogue Bersenev’s two articles on Old German law and the role of urbanization in European history are described with palpable irony suggests that Turgenev shared Shubin’s scepticism as to the relevance of such scholarly work to the needs of contemporary Russia. What had happened since his obituary of Granovskii in 1855?

First of all, it should be said that this irony at the cost of Bersenev wasn’t at all meant to belittle Granovskii’s legacy. Turgenev knew that the latter’s public lectures on the Middle Ages had played an important role in reminding his countrymen of the debt they owed to Western Europe, from which Russia had received the blessings of civilization.⁶⁶ But Turgenev, sensitive as he was to the latest developments in Russian society and seeking to portray what Shakespeare called ‘the body and pressure of time’, as he put it in the 1880 preface to his collected novels (XII/303), realized while writing *Накануне* in 1859 that Russia at this juncture needed men of a different stamp than Bersenev.

The main factor was almost certainly his observation of how after the abolition of serfdom became a public matter in 1858 conservative landowners had been trying to obstruct the plans of the reformers on the committee appointed by Alexander to draft the emancipation act. It took the determination of such men as Nikolai Miliutin, the Slavophiles Samarin and Cherkasskii, and the committee’s chairman, Iakov Rostovtsev, who was of plebeian origins, to overcome the opposition of the reactionaries and secure terms that were as fair as possible to the peasants.⁶⁷ Richard Freeborn has observed that *Накануне* shows a clear bias against the nobility as a class (1960:95), and Turgenev’s description of the underlying idea of his novel as being the ‘необходимость сознательно-героических натур [...] для того, чтобы дело подвинулось вперед’⁶⁸ implies that he acknowledged the need for a new type of hero who would advance the cause of progress in Russia. On the eve of emancipation the greatest obstacle to this cause was the vested interests of reactionary landowners. Their selfish attitude contrasted markedly with the democratic spirit expressed by Insarov in these words to Elena: ‘Заметьте: последний мужик, последний нищий в Болгарии и я—мы желаем одного и того же. У всех у нас одна цель’ (VIII/68). Although it would be far-fetched to see in the plebeian Insarov a

⁶⁶ Granovskii’s public lectures and the enthusiasm they awakened in Moscow are described by Turgenev’s friend Annenkov in his reminiscences (1960:214).

⁶⁷ Pares 1962:400-3.

⁶⁸ Letter to I. Aksakov, 13 November 1859 (P III/368).

tribute to Rostovtsev, it is interesting that in a letter to his namesake the Decembrist Nikolai Turgenev in February 1860 the novelist would comment on Rostovtsev's recent death as a great loss because, though the government was likely to persevere in its reformist course, Russia was a country where '[т]ак много зависит от личностей'.⁶⁹ At any rate Insarov can certainly be said to anticipate the *raznochinets* hero Bazarov, who at one point compares himself to the great reformer Speranskii, also a man of humble origins (VIII/274).

What is very interesting for our topic is that in *Накануне* the role of Insarov as a hero is so frequently illuminated by the sculptor Shubin. The most complete artist figure created by Turgenev in all his works, Shubin acts as a spokesman for many of the author's views, though in a subtler way than Potugin in *Дым*. In later sections we will examine how Shubin's comments on Insarov reflect Turgenev's engagement with the ideas on heroism expressed by Thomas Carlyle and other writers, as well as the important connection which Shubin makes between Insarov and Brutus in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

The fact that Turgenev kept a diary in Shubin's name as part of his preparatory work for *Накануне*—a technique that he used for those characters with whom he felt a special rapport, notably in the case of Bazarov—⁷⁰ shows that the young sculptor was close to his heart, and not surprisingly he created him in his own image. Thus, just as Shubin exclaims: 'я недаром артист: я на всё заметлив' (VIII/15), so Annenkov tells us in his invaluable reminiscences that Turgenev 'обладал одним замечательным качеством: за ним ничего не пропадало' (1960:392). Turgenev liked to talk to people from all walks of life and always remembered what he saw and heard. Similarly, Shubin is described as associating 'с разными лицами, молодыми и старыми, высокого и низкого полёта' (VIII/20). It is this interest in people that allows Shubin to make the most perceptive observations about Elena and Insarov.

Like Turgenev, Shubin has also 'read' Chernyshevskii—a slight anachronism of course, since *Накануне* is set in 1853. But Shubin's defiant refrain to Bersenev during their opening conversation: 'мы завоюем себе счастье!' (VIII/14) clearly has echoes of Chernyshevskii's 1858 article on Turgenev's *Ася*, in which the radical critic had analyzed

⁶⁹ Letter of 10 February 1860 (P IV/28). Interestingly, in this letter Turgenev also urged his correspondent to read *Накануне*. Turgenev was acquainted with Rostovtsev's son Nikolai, with whom he discussed the drafting of the emancipation act (Freeborn 1973:397).

⁷⁰ We learn this important detail from the recollections of Hjalmar Boyesen, who interviewed Turgenev in Paris in 1873. See *VT* (1988):331. Apparently, Shubin's diary had been considerably longer than the novel, but Turgenev burnt it afterwards.

the failure of that story's anti-hero to win happiness in love. Already in 'Русский человек на rendez-vous', as the article on *Ася* was entitled, we find the inklings of that theory of 'rational egoism' which Chernyshevskii was to develop in the early 1860s, and some of Shubin's assertions—such as 'я хочу любить для себя; я хочу быть номером первым' (VIII/14)—seem to take this concept to its absurd extreme, just as Dostoevskii would do in his ongoing polemic with Chernyshevskii.⁷¹ Admittedly, Shubin's 'selfishness' may also be a reflex of that aspect of Romanticism which Turgenev had described as 'апофеоз личности' in his 1845 essay on Goethe's *Faust* (I/220). In some respects, however, the young sculptor does anticipate Bazarov's down-to-earth materialism, as when he speaks cynically of women or when he mocks Bersenev's romantic view of Nature: 'Нет-с; это не по моей части-с [...] я мясник-с; моё дело—мясо, мясо лепить, плечи, ноги, руки' (VIII/9). The affinity with Bazarov's maxim: 'Природа не храм, а мастерская, и человек в ней работник!' (VIII/236) is striking, and it is perhaps not accidental that Shubin, too, had studied medicine at university, albeit reluctantly (VIII/20). Of course, as Frank Seeley has emphasized (1991:208), Shubin's conduct ultimately belies his materialistic bravado and shows him to be no less generous than Bersenev. Seeley even goes as far as asserting that 'Shubin has as good a claim as Insarov to the title of "hero"' (207), but, as will soon become clear, this means to confuse their quite different roles in Turgenev's novel.

The 'contradictions' in Shubin, such as the one mentioned above of an artist spouting radical ideas, are very much part of his role. In his plan for *Накануне* Turgenev had jotted: 'Скептицизм и мягкость поэтической природы в Ш[убине]' (VIII/407), and it is this scepticism in a positive sense which allows Shubin to discern, with the artist's observant eye, the various sides to each question and person he encounters. Shubin shares this trait with his creator, who stressed that the 'способность видеть белое и чёрное' was essential for every artist,⁷² and just as Turgenev could sympathize with his antagonists in the radical camp to such an extent that he managed to create the remarkably compelling figure of Bazarov, so Shubin is able to appreciate the fine qualities of Elena and Insarov, even though they are so different from him. At the same time, Shubin's scepticism makes him alert to his own weaknesses. Chief among these is the possibility of his 'uselessness' as an artist in Russia on the eve of the great reforms of the 1860s.

⁷¹ See Offord 1979 for an illuminating discussion of this polemic. Dostoevskii picked up this aspect of *Накануне* because in *Униженные и оскорблённые* (1861) Prince Valkovskii, an unashamedly 'rational egoist', taunts Ivan Petrovich with a paraphrase of the altruistic Bersenev's reply to Shubin: 'ограничиться в жизни ролью второго лица' (1972-90:III/358).

⁷² Letter to Borisov, 15/27 March 1870 (P VIII/200).

II.1 The artist's role in times of crisis

This was an issue which affected Turgenev personally at the time of the Crimean War, as his letters to Pauline Viardot show. Thus, soon after the siege of Sevastopol began in October 1854 he regretted not having chosen a military career: 'j'aurais pû peut-être verser mon sang pour la défense de ma patrie.'⁷³ And a few months later he confessed:

Beaucoup de projets littéraires s'agitent dans ma tête...mais le temps n'est pas à la littérature. Il s'organise maintenant une levée en masse dans tout l'Empire [...] Notre pays entre dans une grande crise—les bras de nous tous ne lui feront pas défaut.

Pardon de cette digression, mais il est difficile de ne pas parler de ce qui remplit tous les cœurs russes dans cet instant.⁷⁴

Even if in his unfinished essay of 1858 on the Russian gentry he would emphasize that there were other ways of serving one's country than on the battlefield, Turgenev felt guilty about being merely a bystander during the Crimean War and later also during the Russo-Turkish War in 1877 when he lamented the thousands of Russian soldiers who, because of the incompetence of their generals, were being slaughtered like sheep by the Turks.⁷⁵ In the second of the prose-poems entitled *Дрозд* (August 1877) he expressed his deep shame at thinking of his own sufferings when 'тысячи моих братьев, собратов гибнут теперь там, вдали' and added: 'я, как преступник, прячу голову в постылые подушки' (XIII/204).

In the outward plot of *Накануне*, of course, the main crisis is the Bulgarians' plight under the Turks, which Insarov describes to Elena: 'как стадо гоняют нас поганые турки, нас режут' (VIII/68). Because this plight didn't directly concern Russia as yet (it would in 1876), Shubin is to some extent 'justified' in observing the Bulgarian patriot Insarov from a distance. And in this respect he plays a role which Turgenev was familiar with. Thus, during the 'June Days' in Paris in 1848 Turgenev had witnessed the fighting between the workers on the barricades and the government troops. Twenty-five years later he condensed his observations of this tragic event into the remarkable sketch *Наши послали!* in which, after noting ironically how he had been a mere 'фланер' on the streets of Paris, he vividly evoked the tense atmosphere of those days and paid tribute to the heroic altruism of an elderly worker (XIV/136-46). The way in which this sketch combines sympathy for the insurgents with subtle hints about the futility of their revolt illustrates

⁷³ Letter of 18 October 1854 (NC:I/76).

⁷⁴ Letter of 10 February 1855 (NC:I/79).

⁷⁵ Letter to Lavrov, 22 July/3 August 1877 (P XII₁/192).

Turgenev's striving for objectivity.⁷⁶ Paradoxically, it is such objectivity which vindicates the artist's role as a 'passive' observer of events. A few days before his death, Goethe had replied to those who accused him of indifference to politics: 'Sowie ein Dichter politisch wirken will, muß er sich einer Partei hingeben; und sowie er dieses tut, ist er als Poet verloren'.⁷⁷ Not for nothing would Turgenev so often cite Goethe in defence of the writer's right to impartiality.

Another historical upheaval observed by Turgenev which is directly relevant to *Накануне* is the Italian Risorgimento, and a few days before setting to work on his novel, in June 1859, he commented on recent events in Italy in a letter which anticipates Shubin's final tribute to Insarov's cause (VIII/141). Writing to Countess Lambert, Turgenev confessed that if he were younger he would travel to Lombardy, where Garibaldi and his Alpine brigade of volunteers were supporting the Franco-Piedmontese armies against the Austrians, in order to breathe the air of freedom there: 'Стало быть, есть ещё на земле энтузиазм? Люди умеют жертвовать собою, могут радоваться, безумствовать, надеяться?'.⁷⁸ In August, now busy working on his novel, Turgenev told Annenkov ironically that despite being an 'исконный зритель', if he happened to be in Italy he would probably not be able to resist crying out: 'viva Garibaldi!' even if he were to be flogged for doing so.⁷⁹ The irony lay in the fact that events in Italy at the time were being largely dictated by Turgenev's *bête noire* Napoleon III, who wasn't at all sympathetic to the complete unification of Italy aspired to by patriots like Garibaldi. As we shall see, Turgenev's thoughts on Garibaldi can be related to the tragic fate which befalls Insarov.

II.2 The value of art questioned—Elena and Bazarov

First, though, we must turn to the other 'crisis' which is implicitly at the heart of *Накануне*. When Shubin paints such a bleak picture of Russian society in front of Uvar Ivanovich—'Нет ещё у нас никого, нет людей, куда ни посмотри...' (VIII/142)—this is a clear allusion, as noted by Freeborn (1960:93-94), to the indictment of the apathetic and selfish gentry which Dobroliubov made in his famous article 'Что такое «обломовщина»' (May 1859) on Goncharov's novel. Though understandably not as dismissive of his own class, Turgenev was, like Dobroliubov, concerned by the lack of men on the ground not

⁷⁶ See Freeborn 1983 for a consideration of how Turgenev's direct experience of revolution (in which he was unique among nineteenth-century Russian writers) shaped his views on historical change.

⁷⁷ Conversation with Eckermann, March 1832 (Goethe 1985-98:XIX/460).

⁷⁸ Letter of 12/24 June 1859 (P III/306).

⁷⁹ Letter of 1/13 August 1859 (P III/334).

just to carry out the reforms which public opinion in Russia had unanimously demanded after the Crimean War, but to do so giving the peasants a fair deal. The initial consensus had broken down once conservative landowners saw their interests threatened, and Bersenev's invocation of 'соединяющие слова' in his opening conversation with Shubin (VIII/14) can be seen as an appeal to restore that spirit of unity which had galvanized Russia after the accession of Alexander II. But the reactionaries weren't the only problem. During the drafting process of the emancipation act misgivings were expressed by some liberals over the fact that control over the peasants was going to be transferred from the landowners to the State bureaucracy.⁸⁰ In *Накануне* this issue is addressed through the figure of the jurist Kurnatovskii, Elena's official suitor. As Henri Granjard has noted (1954:285), Kurnatovskii is a new version of Panshin in *Дворянское гнездо*, and it's not surprising that, like Lavretskii there, the idealistic members of the gentry Bersenev and Shubin quarrel so bitterly with this soulless bureaucrat (VIII/107-8).

Of direct relevance to our topic is what Elena says about her suitor's insensitivity to art, which, as she points out, is different from her and Insarov's attitude: 'Этот [Курнатовский] как будто хотел сказать: я не понимаю его, да оно и не нужно, но в благоустроенном государстве допускается' (VIII/107). This is almost certainly a jibe at Chernyshevskii's 1855 dissertation. Although Chernyshevskii hadn't denied the 'usefulness' of art, he did speak of the latter in a rather condescending manner. Thus, he argued that the value of an artistic work resided not in its *form* (which could never match the beauty of 'real life' anyway!) but in its *content* alone, in as far as this gave readers (for, despite the general title of his thesis, his main concern was clearly with literature) food for thought:

Содержание, достойное внимания мыслящего человека, одно только в состоянии избавить искусство от упрёка будто бы оно—пустая забава, чем оно и действительно бывает чрезвычайно часто [...] Бесплезное не имеет права на уважение (1939-50:II/79).

This sarcastic insinuation that art very often was no more than an 'empty pastime' is echoed by Kurnatovskii, whom Elena compares to an 'очень, очень снисходительный начальник' (VIII/107). Although this civil servant can obviously not be equated with the radical leader Chernyshevskii except in their shared 'utilitarianism', the implication of Elena, Shubin, and Bersenev's rejection of Kurnatovskii is that if such men were to govern

⁸⁰ Pares 1962:402.

Russia, the country would be much the worse for it. Turgenev here comes to the same conclusion as Dickens, who so brilliantly exposed the barrenness of utilitarianism in *Hard Times* (1854).

As so often in *Накануне*, Shubin is spot on when he observes how in contrast to Inсаров's 'жизнью данный идеал', Kurnatovskii possessed merely 'дельность без содержания' (VIII/108). The latter phrase resembles the epigraph which Turgenev was thinking of using for *Отцы и дети*, in which Bazarov's generation was described as being all 'сила без содержания' (VIII/446). There is evidently a great difference between the 'efficiency' of Kurnatovskii and the 'strength' of Bazarov with its revolutionary potential, but it is significant that in both cases 'content' is the other term in the antithesis. What Turgenev meant by this term is revealed in the later novel to be the plenitude of life, which includes the beauty of art so vigorously rejected by Bazarov.

Chernyshevskii, as we have seen, also invoked 'content', giving it precedence over 'form' in works of art, and Turgenev would certainly have agreed with this part of his dissertation. After all, Chernyshevskii was merely expanding on what Belinskii had stated in his last article (his survey of Russian literature for the year 1847): 'Вообще характер нового искусства—перевес важности содержания над важностью формы' (1953-59:X/309). Turgenev himself, in his *Faust* essay of 1845, had praised Goethe as a supreme example of the 'free artist'—that is, one who created beauty without troubling himself about social or political issues—whilst pointing out that 'нам теперь нужны не одни поэты' (I/238). Just like Belinskii, Turgenev had stressed that people (in Russia and elsewhere) could no longer stand in front of a painting of a beggar admiring its artistic beauty. They would be troubled by the fact that there were beggars in real life (I/238).

In *Накануне* this social conscience is illustrated by Elena, of whom we are told that as a girl she soon became weary of reading because she wanted to help those less fortunate than herself: 'чтение одно её не удовлетворяло: она с детства жаждала деятельности, деятельного добра' (VIII/33). This turning away from books, and indeed from all of the artistic accomplishments expected of a young lady—such as singing romances—is a natural process in her. It arises from her innate compassion and charity. Turgenev, like many great writers, believed in the spontaneity of women. As Schiller, for example, put it, 'Der weibliche Charakter, auch der vollkommenste, kann nie anders, als aus Neigung

handeln'.⁸¹ Thus, Elena's indifference to art is not a consciously aggressive stance as it is in Bazarov. She would never rudely interrupt someone reciting verses by Pushkin, scoff at a music-lover playing Schubert, or say that Raphael wasn't worth a brass farthing! The reason why Bazarov does all these things was discerned by Nikolai Strakhov in his article on *Отцы и дети*, published in Dostoevskii's journal *Время* in April 1862. Strakhov took issue with Pisarev's sarcastic argument (in his earlier review of the novel) that it was unfair to stop people from reading Pushkin if they were allowed, say, to drink vodka or play cards (the latter of which Bazarov does on several occasions). Quite rightly, Strakhov pointed out that Bazarov did *not* see art as equivalent to vodka or cards:

В мелодии Шуберта и в стихах Пушкина он [Базаров] ясно слышит враждебное начало; он чувствует их всеувлекательную силу и потому вооружается против них [...] Искусство всегда носит в себе элемент примирения, тогда как Базаров вовсе не желает примириться с жизнью.⁸²

Indeed, the beauty of art is so compelling that it might induce one to forget about more pressing issues in real life. That is why Turgenev, in the middle of his 1845 tribute to Goethe, reminded his readers (and himself?) of the existence of beggars; that is why Bazarov, who is so keenly aware of the poverty of rural Russia, tries, before and after his meeting with Odintsova, to bar all beauty from his life.

As noted above, Elena has a naturalness which is denied to Bazarov, whose noble resolve to work for the good of Russia is at times undermined by various inner tensions (such as the wolfish lust and genuine love he feels for Odintsova).⁸³ In her 'indifference' to art Elena is also more convincing than Marianna in *Новь* (1877). For this later heroine, despite her love of Pushkin (XII/215), consciously distances herself from such interests and encourages the would-be revolutionary Nezhdanov to give up writing poetry: 'я *наверное* знаю, что у тебя есть призвание лучше и выше литературы. Этим хорошо было заниматься прежде, когда другое было невозможно' (XII/163). Moreover, in

⁸¹ From the 1793 treatise *Kallias, oder die Schönheit* (Schiller 1992-2002:VIII/317). The same faith was expressed by Goethe in the figure of Gretchen and by Pushkin in Tat'iana, both of whom Turgenev so admired.

⁸² Strakhov 1968:14-15. Anatolii Batiuto (1977) discusses Strakhov's article and Dostoevskii's own interpretation of Bazarov (his letter to Turgenev containing his immediate reaction to *Отцы и дети* has unfortunately not survived).

⁸³ More generally, as Batiuto (1990:100f., 181-82) has emphasized, it is a conflict in Bazarov's soul between crude materialism and his indestructible 'humaneness'. This is especially clear in that scene where he observes, with apparent admiration, an ant dragging away a half-dead fly, but remarks immediately afterwards that such animal behaviour is denied to human beings because of their 'чувство сострадания' (VIII/323). In the crucial scene in Odintsova's room a few days earlier, seeing her frightened had likewise checked his savage passion (VIII/299).

Накануне Turgenev, ever true to the richness of human nature, shows that Elena is by no means always insensitive to art: she is struck by some of the paintings she sees in Venice and especially by the final duet of *La traviata* (VIII/154-55).

Still, Elena is clearly a herald of that young generation which Turgenev, looking back on the 1860s and 70s in his Pushkin speech, described as striving after ‘цели, для которых считалось не только дозволительным, но и обязательным приносить всё идущее к делу в жертву, сжимать всю жизнь в одно русло’ (XV/75). The fact that in Turgenev’s portrayal of this generation she precedes Bazarov, who consciously dismisses art as a distraction from these goals, is important. On the one hand, it reflects how Turgenev, as Annenkov noted, saw in the Russian woman ‘представительница нравственной силы в обществе’ (1960:388); on the other, it also reflects Turgenev’s more universal observation that ‘всё новое—хорошее или дурное—всегда начинается с женщин’⁸⁴—an observation he found confirmed in Sophocles’s *Antigone*, for the heroine of that immortal tragedy is driven to a ‘revolutionary’ act by love.

That Elena’s yearning for practical activity represented a new attitude in the young generation was immediately picked up by readers of *Накануне*. First among these was Dobroliubov, who in his critique of *Обломов* had already singled out Ol’ga in Goncharov’s novel as carrying within her the ‘веяние новой жизни’, that is, ‘потребность настоящего дела’ (1972:41, 29). In his equally compelling review of Turgenev’s novel—a review whose title ‘Когда же придёт настоящий день?’ echoed Shubin’s questions to Uvar Ivanovich: ‘Когда ж наша придёт пора? Когда у нас народятся люди?’ (VIII/142)—Dobroliubov argued that Elena reflected, more strongly than Ol’ga, the striving of Russian society to ‘приняться за настоящее дело’ (1972:56), even though the outlet for these aspirations wasn’t yet clear. In support of this Dobroliubov could have cited what Shubin says about the bust of Elena he was working on and how it was impossible to capture the expression on her face: ‘Не даётся, как клад в руки [...] выражение взгляда беспрестанно меняется’ (VIII/10). But Dobroliubov wasn’t really interested in Shubin as a sculptor! Instead, he moved on to a general level of argument and interpreted Elena’s ‘rejection’ of Shubin and Bersenev as an allegory of how Russian society had left behind its aesthetic and philosophical-speculative stages. A sensitive reader, Dobroliubov did recognize the fine qualities of Shubin and Bersenev, calling them ‘славные натуры’ who were able to appreciate Insarov, and who, if they had had a

⁸⁴ Letter to Golovnin, 25 February/9 March 1877 (P XII₁/103). Turgenev was referring specifically to the fact that in a recent trial of revolutionaries in St Petersburg no less than 18 of the 52 defendants were women.

different upbringing, might also have been capable of action (1972:83). However, following on from Chernyshevskii's emphasis on the need for 'содержание' in art, the young critic found the sculptor Shubin to be 'empty' and thus unworthy of Elena:

Почувствовала она было расположение к Шубину, как наше общество одно время увлекалось художественностью; но в Шубине не оказалось дельного содержания, одни блески и капризы; а Елене не до того было, чтобы, посреди её исканий, любоваться игрушками. (1972:70)

It's true that Elena reproaches Shubin for his apparent frivolity (VIII/24-25) and even loses her respect for him—too rashly, as Turgenev suggests when describing her character: 'Стоило человеку потерять её уважение,—а суд произносила она скоро, часто слишком скоро,—уж он переставал существовать для неё' (VIII/32-33). But, significantly, even though she is uninterested in Shubin's sculptures, she doesn't question his right to devote himself to his vocation and later in the novel she appreciates his sincere compassion for her (VIII/89).

Dobroliubov's harsh verdict about Shubin's lack of 'sensible content' is characteristic of Russian radicals' attitude to the fine arts after the appearance of Chernyshevskii's dissertation. Unlike writers, painters and sculptors weren't even regarded as proper members of the intelligentsia until about the 1880s (Garshin's short story *Художники*, which marks a change in this attitude, was published in 1879). This was partly because of these artists' limited education (see III.3), and even more so because of the disdain with which they were treated by critics like Chernyshevskii and Pisarev, who saw in them little more than irresponsible children. Shubin isn't a typical artist in that sense because he is remarkably well-read. However, since he is also (anachronistically!) familiar with the ideas of Chernyshevskii, he delights in living up to this disdainful view of artists and ironically criticizes his own 'emptiness' at every opportunity: 'А серьёзно я говорить не умею, потому что я не серьёзный человек' (VIII/17). He even expects to be despised by Elena and the earnest Insarov: 'я, как артист, ему противен, чем я горжусь' (VIII/60), which is of course quite wrong, as Bersenev tells him. Insarov doesn't deny the value of art, even if his translations of Bulgarian folksongs are probably meant more for propaganda purposes, but this was a 'function' which Turgenev, in his Pushkin speech, recognized as legitimate in the case of oppressed nations (XV/69).

The dismissal of Shubin by Dobroliubov was echoed by many Soviet commentators on *Накануне*. Using the vocabulary of Marxist class warfare, they bracketed

Shubin (and Bersenev) as a typical ‘дворянский интеллигент’, whose main role was that of serving as a foil to the *raznochinets* Insarov.⁸⁵ As always, there is a grain of truth in such approaches, and Shubin himself plays into their hands when, like the Hamlet of Shchigry District in Turgenev’s early story (1849), he so eloquently condemns himself and his whole generation in front of Uvar Ivanovich (VIII/141-42). However, to see in Shubin no more than a foil to the ‘new men’ of the 1860s means to impoverish his role in the novel considerably. Moreover, Dobroliubov was unfair in describing Shubin as a dilettante in whom ‘лень заглушает способности’, and who therefore squanders his talent (1972:60). As will be seen in the next chapter, Shubin’s capacity for hard work is beyond doubt. The fact that he is a *sculptor* is also very important for understanding Turgenev’s attitude towards Insarov.

II.3 Turgenev’s reflections on heroism

The theme of heroism is one that has fascinated artists down the ages, but from the mid-eighteenth century onwards it became particularly relevant because the spirit of the times, with its growing rationalism, seemed to preclude any heroic acts. In Germany, where abuses of power by ruling princes were frequent in the various territories into which the country was divided, Schiller was one of the first to call for heroes to fight against injustice. Thus, in his *Don Carlos* (1787) there is a scene where the Marquis de Posa, a Knight of the Order of Malta, is admitted to an audience with the queen: one of her ladies-in-waiting remarks ironically that there are no longer any giants for knights to do battle with. Posa replies: ‘Gewalt / ist für den Schwachen jederzeit ein Riese’. The queen agrees with him but laments: ‘Es gibt noch Riesen, / doch keine Ritter gibt es mehr’ (Act I, sc.4). The marquis’s noble conduct subsequently shows that she is wrong in her scepticism, and one of his final exhortations to his friend Carlos is that he must never allow ‘the lethal insect of / much-praised reason’ to defile the ‘divine flower of enthusiasm’ (Act IV, sc.21). As Herzen tells us in his memoirs (1954-66:VIII/84), *Don Carlos* made a huge impact on young Russians of his generation, and Dostoevskii was the writer in whom that play and Schiller’s ideas in general would bear the richest fruit.⁸⁶

Turgenev, whilst gravitating more naturally towards Goethe than towards the younger of the Weimar Dioscuri, was certainly also receptive to Schiller’s democratic spirit. As he argued in an 1843 article on *Wilhelm Tell*: ‘Как человек и гражданин он

⁸⁵ As in the Academy edition’s commentary (VIII/506).

⁸⁶ See the excellent study by Alexandra Lyngstad: *Dostoyevskij and Schiller* (Le Hague, 1975).

[Шиллер] выше Гёте, хотя ниже его как художник' (I/207). In a country like Russia, as Turgenev readily acknowledged, it was not just artists that were called for but also citizens. Thus, he, too, was concerned by the general apathy of the times—'наш равнодушный век' (I/134)—and, in particular, that of many of his contemporaries. Freeborn has rightly emphasized (1960:86-87) that this is an important issue already in Turgenev's first two novels. Not for nothing does Lezhnev, in the last chapter of *Рудин*, describe enthusiasm as 'самое драгоценное качество в наше время' before providing a Shubin-like critique of his generation (VI/348).

Starting with isolated allusions to *Don Quixote* in *Рудин* (a brief quotation in Chapter XI) and in *Дворянское гнездо* (the chivalric figure of Mikhalevich), Turgenev would soon focus all his attention on Cervantes's knight as an archetype of heroism inspired by faith and enthusiasm in his essay *Гамлет и Дон-Кихот* (1860), which appeared at the same time as *Накануне*. The contrasting scepticism of Hamlet is described there in terms which recall the above-cited exchange in *Don Carlos*: 'Нет, он [Гамлет] не будет сражаться с ветряными мельницами, он не верит в великанов... но он бы и не напал на них, если бы они точно существовали' (VIII/178). (Schiller, who had read *Don Quixote*,⁸⁷ may well have been thinking of the windmill scene when he wrote that exchange in his play.) In *Накануне* an equivalent scene occurs during the excursion to Tsaritsyno, where it turns out that Shubin, for all his affinity with the Hamlet type, does acknowledge the existence of giants. He tries to defend the ladies against the drunken German 'великан' (VIII/74), and even if his eloquence proves insufficient to check the giant's advance, it does suggest again that Shubin's role is more complex than that of a mere foil to Insarov the man of action.

To understand this role better it is essential to turn to a suggestion made by Freeborn in the preface to his translation of *Рудин* (1974:10-11): namely, that Turgenev, while planning his first novel in 1855, discussed with his friend Botkin the lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History* by Thomas Carlyle. These lectures, Carlyle's greatest success as an orator when he delivered them in London in May 1840, were published in 1841. In this influential work Carlyle argued that the religious, political, and poetic heroes of the past had created history by leading and inspiring others, so that, as he famously put it, 'The History of the World is the Biography of Great Men' (1993:13). Botkin's translation of two of these lectures appeared in the same issue of *Современник* in

⁸⁷ See his preface to *Die Räuber* (1781) where he compares Karl Moor to Don Quixote.

1856 as the first instalment of *Рудин*. Freeborn makes the connection between Carlyle and Turgenev's novel because in a passage in the lecture 'The Hero as Poet' Carlyle had contrasted Italy, politically dismembered, yet united thanks to Dante, with Russia:

The Czar of all the Russias, he is strong with so many bayonets, Cossacks and cannons [...] but he cannot yet speak. Something great in him, but it is a dumb greatness. He has had no voice of genius, to be heard of all men and times. He must learn to speak. He is a great dumb monster hitherto. [...] The nation that has a Dante is bound together as no dumb Russia can be. (1993:97)

For obvious reasons, this passage wasn't included by Botkin in his translation of the lecture, but Freeborn suggests that he showed the English text to Turgenev. Whilst the comparison of Nicholas I to a 'great dumb monster' would have appealed to Turgenev, the notion that Russia as a country had no voice must have riled him. The figure of Rudin, according to Freeborn (1974:10-11), may have been conceived partly to refute Carlyle by showing that Russia, in this archetypal man of the forties, did have a voice, and a very eloquent one at that.

Before going on to Freeborn's next point about Carlyle and *Рудин*, it's worth noting that Turgenev first met the Scottish thinker in London in June 1857. Turgenev must have eagerly anticipated this meeting because Carlyle was the author of several fine essays in the 1830s on Goethe and Schiller. He had even corresponded with Goethe in the last years of his life. Indeed, it is likely that Goethe's emphasis on respect for one's superiors as a vital element in the education of the young—as outlined in the 'Pädagogische Provinz' chapters of his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1829)—directly influenced Carlyle's views, for in *On Heroes* he wrote: 'No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man' (1993:11). When Turgenev called on Carlyle he was astonished to hear his host referring to the late Nicholas I as a great man and saying that he liked the Russians because of their talent for obedience. In his splendid book *Turgenev and England*, Patrick Waddington has vividly described the 'clash' which ensued (1980:35f.). In brief: Turgenev observed ironically that he would like to see Carlyle in the shoes of a Russian for a week, as he would soon change his mind about the benefits of despotism. Turgenev also remarked that the talent for obedience was not as widespread in Russia as Carlyle imagined.⁸⁸ Perhaps when composing the dialogue in which Uvar Ivanovich scolds Shubin for teasing his elders: 'Млад ты, так уважай!' and the sculptor

⁸⁸ Letter to Pauline Viardot, 6 June 1857 (NC:I/83).

exclaims: ‘Сколько в нём ещё таится счастливой, детской веры! Уважать!’ (VIII/43-44), Turgenev was thinking back to his meeting with this modern-day defender of monarchism?⁸⁹

Carlyle took a very bleak view of the modern age, which he attacked for its unbelief, utilitarianism, self-interest, parliamentary majorities, industrialism... In his philippic against modernity he lamented:

This is an age that as it were denies the existence of great men; denies the desirableness of great men. Shew our critics a great man, a Luther for example, they begin to what they call ‘account’ for him; not to worship him, but take the dimensions of him,—and bring him out to be a little kind of man! (1993:12)

Freeborn notes (1974:10-11) that this very process can be observed in *Рудин*, where the various characters all ‘take the dimensions’ of the central hero, who is thereby gradually exposed as a ‘little kind of man’—at least until the last chapter and the second epilogue added by Turgenev in 1860, which shows how Rudin (unlike his prototype Bakunin) dies on the barricades of Paris in June 1848.⁹⁰

If this ‘critical’ process is at work in *Рудин*, then it is even more so the case in *Накануне*, where Shubin initially does try to ‘take the dimensions’ of Insarov—both literally as a sculptor, since he asks the Bulgarian for permission to fashion a bust of him (VIII/56), and figuratively, since during their walk along the Moscow River, despite all his clowning about, ‘Шубин всё как будто бы экзаменовал Инсарова, как будто щупал его’ (VIII/57). This is a trait which Shubin shares with Turgenev, who, as Annenkov tells us, was not so much interested in the ideas held by people as in their personalities: ‘Изучение лица стояло у него всегда на первом плане’ (1960:339). We have already seen how ‘scepticism’ was one of the qualities Turgenev endowed Shubin with in his plan for the novel, and it is no surprise that the sculptor duly comes up with a ‘формулярный список господина Инсарова’ which combines ironic remarks about Insarov’s apparent stolidness with respect for his being truly ‘связан с своею землёй’ unlike the Russian Slavophiles (VIII/60).

⁸⁹ To do Carlyle justice, it is worth stressing that he was by no means a proto-fascist, as he is sometimes made out to be. Though he disagreed with his views, Turgenev liked Carlyle as a person and sent him a copy of a French edition of *Записки охотника* in 1858. After reading *Муму* (1852), a work which shows precisely the consequences of the arbitrary exercise of power that was possible in Russia under serfdom, Carlyle said: ‘I think it is the most beautiful and most touching story I ever read’ (Waddington 1980:87). See also Theodore Dalrymple’s essay on *Муму*, in which he brilliantly contrasts Turgenev and Marx (2005:77-89).

⁹⁰ For a discussion of why Turgenev ‘revolutionised’ Rudin, see Gabel’ 1967:53.

Turgenev himself always drew up a ‘формулярный список’ or précis of his characters before writing his novels. A notable example is the précis of Bazarov, which we find in the preparatory sketches for *Отцы и дети* first published by Patrick Waddington in 1984. A comparison of Turgenev’s initially quite hostile description of Bazarov in this précis: ‘В сущности—бесплоднейший субъект—антипод Рудина—ибо безо всякого энтузиазма и веры’ (XII*/566) with how he comes across in the novel’s final text shows how Turgenev’s attitude to him changed significantly in the course of writing. As Anatolii Batiuto concludes in his outstanding study tracing Bazarov’s ideological links to Belinskii, Chenyshevskii, Dobroliubov, and other contemporaries, Turgenev really did come to see in Bazarov a tragic hero worthy of admiration and sympathy (1990:216-7). This became even clearer once the working manuscript of *Отцы и дети* came to light in 1988.⁹¹

In *Накануне* the précis of Insarov given by Shubin early in the novel also undergoes a significant change as the sculptor begins to appreciate him better. First of all, it should be said that the ‘woodenness’ of Insarov as it is perceived by *some* readers—one of the earliest being Edward Garnett in the preface to his wife Constance’s 1895 translation of *Накануне* (see Waddington 1995:130)—and even by Shubin at first, may not be a flaw on Turgenev’s part, but something quite deliberate. After all, Carlyle, in his lecture on Oliver Cromwell, had lavished praise on this ‘inarticulate prophet’, who ‘struggled to utter himself’ but whose ‘savage depth’ and ‘wild sincerity’ enabled him to get things done (1993:187). For Carlyle, the ‘great silent men’ were the salt of the earth. Now, Insarov is certainly not as inarticulate as Cromwell. Shubin notes that when speaking of his country Insarov showed ‘даже дар слова’, and he even admits that the Bulgarian did not quite correspond to his (Carlylean?) notion of what a hero should be like: ‘герой не должен уметь говорить: герой мычит, как бык; зато двинет рогом—стены валятся’. Immediately afterwards he concedes: ‘Впрочем, может быть, в наши времена требуются герои другого калибра’ (VIII/60-61).

This is a very important observation. It relates to what Turgenev had described as the underlying idea of his novel: the need for ‘*сознательно-героические натуры*’ in modern times. Unlike Don Quixote, Insarov is a conscious hero who will not tilt recklessly at windmills if this will not further his cause. He combines ‘resolution’ and ‘thought’—‘*воля и мысль*’—the two mainsprings for action that appear separately in Don Quixote and Hamlet, as Turgenev argued in his essay, but which must work jointly in order for such

⁹¹ For more details on what the manuscript has revealed, see Nikitina 1996.

action to be productive (VIII/183). What this means in the Russian context is Turgenev's hope that educated men, be it of gentry or non-gentry origins, would emerge who truly cared for the peasants, and who would not only secure a fair deal for them in the emancipation process but also go on to establish schools and hospitals in the countryside. In contrast, as Shubin points out, the task awaiting Insarov in Bulgaria was 'easier', requiring just military heroism: 'Зато и задача его легче, удобопонятнее: стоит только турок вытурить, велика штука!' (VIII/60).

Dobroliubov famously read into *Накануне* a call to liberate Russia from her 'внутренние враги' (1972:89), or 'internal Turks', that is, implicitly, to overthrow the tsarist system, but this wasn't what Turgenev had in mind, and he was rightly aghast at the young critic's words and how they might be interpreted. The Russian 'heroes' envisaged by Turgenev were not revolutionaries in the political sense of a Chernyshevskii, who since 1858 had been warning in a veiled manner that if the serfs were emancipated without land there would be a peasant revolution led by *raznochintsy*. Rather, Turgenev, as he emphasized in his polemic with Herzen in 1862, was looking for educated Russians who could act as 'передаватели цивилизации народу'.⁹² In order to serve this civilizing cause, which Turgenev did see as something revolutionary, albeit in a spiritual sense, a more difficult type of 'heroism' was required of the educated classes—namely, the capacity for 'тёмная, пригготовительная работа', such as that undertaken by Litvinov in *Дым* when he studies agronomy in Germany so as to improve conditions on his farm in Russia (IX/150), and also the ability to 'жертвовать собою без всякого блеску и треску', that is, being prepared to perform such humble tasks as teaching peasants to read and working in rural hospitals, as Turgenev explained in a letter in 1874, at the time he was planning *Новь*. Russia, he added in that letter, was entering 'в эпоху только полезных людей... и это будут лучшие люди'.⁹³ In that sense Solomin in *Новь*, a true man of the people who cares for the material and spiritual welfare of the peasants working in his factory, isn't even a 'hero', as Paklin observes at the end of Turgenev's last novel (XII/298-99).

If we return to Dobroliubov's interpretation of *Накануне*, it is clear that he was somewhat rash in seeing in Insarov a figure-head for social revolution in Russia. Turgenev did conceive Insarov as a heroic figure, but in a more universal sense, based on his reading of Shakespeare and his knowledge of ancient and modern history, as we shall soon see.

⁹² Letter of 26 September/8 October 1862 (P V/51). For a discussion of Turgenev's polemic with Herzen about the future development of Russia, see Freeborn 1960:135-38, and Freeborn 1984.

⁹³ Letter to A. Filosofova, 11/23 September 1874 (P X/295-96).

However, the impetuosity of such young men as Dobroliubov, whose talent and diligence he respected,⁹⁴ did prompt Turgenev to address, in *Отцы и дети*, the question of a *revolutionary* hero in Russia. In his important letter to K. Sluchevskii of 14/26 April 1862, in which he clarified his attitude to Bazarov for the benefit of the Russian students in Heidelberg, Turgenev didn't mince his words: 'если он [Базаров] называется нигилистом, то надо читать: революционером' (Р IV/380). However, as Freeborn (1982:17-19) has emphasized, Bazarov, despite being Turgenev's 'most revolutionary hero', was conceived not as a political revolutionary of the kind envisaged by Chernyshevskii and others, but, rather, as a 'practical reformer' seeking to work as a 'teacher' among the peasantry. This is supported by an illuminating recent article by Nina Nikitina (2001), who argues that the main prototype for Bazarov was the famous surgeon and educator Nikolai Pirogov.⁹⁵

Now, there is of course an affinity between Bazarov and Insarov, in that they both display such qualities as strength and resolve, which critics like Chernyshevskii (in his review of *Ася*) and Dobroliubov (in his *Обломов* article) had been calling for, and which Turgenev's previous 'anti-heroes' from the gentry had lacked. But one crucial difference between these two plebeians lies in the observation made by Shubin: that Insarov is bound to his land and people. This Bazarov unfortunately is not, despite his defiant assertion to Pavel Kirsanov: 'Мой дед землю пахал!' (VIII/244). In the novel's manuscript his aspiration to guide the Russian people towards a better future is expressed with even more hubris: 'Мы не одни, а народ не против нас' (VIII/453). However, Bazarov's encounters with various peasants, including Fenechka, show subtly, yet unmistakably, that despite his forthright manner, they still see in him a member of the ruling class and only welcome him when he tries to help them as a doctor. His estrangement from the Russian people,

⁹⁴ Turgenev was saddened by Dobroliubov's premature death in November 1861, as is clear from his letter to Borisov, 11/23 December 1861: 'Я пожалел о смерти Добролюбова, хотя и не разделял его воззрений: человек был даровитый—молодой... Жаль погибшей, напрасно потраченной силы!' (Р IV/316). In *Отцы и дети*, completed just a few months earlier, he had expressed his grief over Bazarov's death in quite similar terms.

⁹⁵ Known for his brusque manners, Pirogov got into trouble with the government, and, despite his great merits during the Crimean War, he was dismissed from his teaching post in Odessa in 1861. Turgenev didn't want to cause further trouble for Pirogov by associating him with the nihilist hero Bazarov, and so he took care not to mention this openly. He did, however, leave a subtle hint in *По поводу «Отцов и детей»* (1869) when he cryptically referred to Bazarov's prototype as a 'молодой провинциальный врач [...] доктор Д.' (XIV/97, 100). Nikitina (2001:8) argues quite convincingly that 'доктор Д.' stands for 'Дерптский доктор', as Pirogov was known to his colleagues because he had spent his youth in Dorpat (Tartu).

aggravated further by his materialism, also manifests itself in flashes of contempt for those whom he nobly seeks to help (VIII/325).⁹⁶

II.4 Shubin's sculptures of Insarov

After the 'формулярный список' of Insarov and a few scattered ironic remarks, Shubin's observations of the Bulgarian patriot are next condensed into the scene in which he shows Bersenev two quite different sculptures of Insarov which he had fashioned. Unfortunately, some scholars who like to force Turgenev's works onto the Procrustes bed of Schopenhauerian philosophy have read a specific allegorical meaning into these sculptures, and so it is necessary to clarify the background of this scene.

For the first sculpture, a bust of Insarov which conveys his noble resolve and courage, Shubin has chosen the epigraph: 'Герой, намеревающийся спасти свою родину' (VIII/100). Because of Shubin's French lineage this work may well have been conceived in the style of David d'Angers (1788-1856), the greatest portrait sculptor of his time, whose busts reflected the 'characteristically Romantic view of the history-making hero' and were designed to 'perpetuate exemplars of greatness'.⁹⁷ One of d'Angers's most famous portraits was the austere neo-classical bust of Victor Hugo (see Plate 2B) which he sculpted in 1842. Such portraits were a legacy of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, where a cult of great men had arisen and statues were erected to them in accordance with Plutarch's dictum: 'The images of great men are a powerful stimulant for us to do good'.⁹⁸

During the 1830s and 40s, in the France of the *citoyen roi* Louis-Philippe, there was an inevitable reaction against this cult of greatness, and this accounts for the craze which developed for the sculptured caricatures by Jean-Pierre Dantan (1800-69). 'Witty and inventive, but never malevolent', Dantan made statuettes and so-called *buste-charges* of illustrious figures in French public life (including Victor Hugo in 1832—see Plate 2C) which became so popular that reproductions of them were sold commercially.⁹⁹ Each such caricature also had a 'rebus' on its plinth suggesting humorously the subject's name. It's not surprising that Shubin, with his love of pranks, should draw inspiration from Dantan's

⁹⁶ Batiuto (1977:36) argues that this aspect of Bazarov's tragic isolation was very likely one of the points raised by Dostoevskii in that lost letter to Turgenev, and that this caused Turgenev to make some changes when preparing the separate edition of *Отцы и дети*.

⁹⁷ Rosenblum & Janson (1984:204).

⁹⁸ Quoted by Baridon 2006.

⁹⁹ Rosenblum & Janson (1984:205).

oeuvre, and indeed his second sculpture of Insarov, a statuette showing him in the guise of a butting ram, is described as being ‘в дантановском вкусе’ (VIII/99). Earlier in the novel we are told that Shubin had also made a Dantesque statuette of Stakhov’s mistress (VIII/10), and in this respect he again resembles Turgenev, who, while staying with Stankevich in Rome in 1840, had spent a lot of time drawing caricatures, including one of a rival for the affections of a young girl (VI/395). Moreover, Annenkov recalls in his memoirs how Turgenev was famed and feared for his epigrams, which he wrote about many outstanding contemporaries ‘не стесняясь их репутацией и серьёзностью задач, которые они преследовали и которым сам почувствовал’ (1960:389).¹⁰⁰ It is worth bearing in mind these antecedents of Shubin’s caricature.

In the expression which Shubin has given to the butting ram: ‘тупая важность, задор, упрямство, неловкость, ограниченность’ (VIII/99) Sigrid McLaughlin discerns what she holds to be the key to Insarov’s ‘failure’ as a hero. First of all, she argues that the two sculptures of Insarov illustrate the two sides of Don Quixote as he is presented in Turgenev’s essay: ‘Andererseits schmälern Einseitigkeit, Beschränktheit und blindes Vertrauen den Altruismus und Enthusiasmus des Don-Quijote-Typs’ (1984:93). It is true that Turgenev, in his essay, refers to a certain ‘односторонность’ in Don Quixote, but in no way does he suggest that this undermines the value of his enthusiasm:

Он [Дон-Кихот] знает мало, да ему и не нужно много знать: он знает, в чём его дело, зачем он живёт на земле, а это—главное знание [...] Дон-Кихот энтузиаст, служитель идеи и потому обвеян её сияньем. (VIII/174)

Besides, as discussed earlier, Insarov is not a purely quixotic type: he is a *conscious* hero, and as such he had even decided to study at university before returning to Bulgaria to fight the Turks. However, it is McLaughlin’s subsequent condemnation of Insarov in Schopenhauerian terms which must be contested outright. She argues that Insarov fails to put his altruistic enthusiasm to use because ‘[er] besaß—wie es die Šubin-Karikatur andeutete—zu viel Willen und zu wenig Verständnis seiner wahren Position in der Welt; er ließ sich durch egoistische Bestrebungen von der altruistischen Zielsetzung ablenken’ (1984:106). But this is most unjust. Insarov is conscious that such happiness as has been granted to him in finding so worthy a wife as Elena occurs rarely in the world, and, most importantly, his conduct is never ‘egoistic’. After all, he had accepted her love only

¹⁰⁰ A famous example is the epigram addressed to Dostoevskii in 1846, in which Turgenev poked fun at the way the success of *Бедные люди* had gone to the young author’s head (I/360-61).

because she was ready to make the cause of Bulgarian independence her own. Nor is there any intrinsic reason why their marriage should prevent them from serving that cause, just as Anita da Ribeiro had fought alongside Garibaldi in guerrilla campaigns in South America and followed her husband to Italy, where she died of fever during the retreat from Rome in August 1849.¹⁰¹ If Turgenev has Insarov die before reaching his beloved Bulgaria, it is for loftier reasons than ‘selfishness’.

To return to Shubin’s caricature, though, we mustn’t forget that this is the ‘vendetta’ of a jealous man. The motive of jealousy becomes clear if one looks at the variants of this scene in the novel’s manuscript. For the Dantesque logo to the ram statuette Turgenev had originally written ‘лоснящийся супруг коз и овец тонкорунных’ (VIII/432), which in the final text became just ‘супруг овец тонкорунных’ (VIII/99). The original variant shows that Turgenev was thinking of Afanasii Fet’s translation of a bucolic poem by André Chénier: ‘Супруг надменный коз, лоснящийся от жиру’ (Fet 1959: 673; the original poem begins: ‘L’impur et fier époux que la chèvre désire’). Fet had sent Turgenev his translation for perusal just a few months before his friend began work on *Накануне*.¹⁰² Chénier’s poem describes a billy-goat challenging a satyr who had been courting one of his ‘wives’, and how they butt their heads against one another. Unlike rams, goats awaken certain associations, and Turgenev evidently decided to keep just the ram because Shubin, for all his resentment of Insarov, still feels respect and affection for Elena, and a statuette of Insarov as a goat would suggest too crudely that she had become his ‘mistress’, as Shubin fears. Is it therefore so necessary to see in this butting ram a profound Schopenhauerian allegory rather than yet another example of Shubin’s irony?!

Significantly, when Shubin shows this caricature to Bersenev, he justifies himself as follows: ‘так как художник, по новейшим эстетикам, пользуется завидным правом воплощать в себе всякие мерзости, возводя их в перл создания...’ (VIII/99). The ‘new aesthetics’ which Shubin is invoking here are clearly those of Gogol’, who, in one of the letters later included in *Выбранные места*, explained that the grotesque figures of *Мёртвые души*, Part I, embodied various ‘дурные качества’ which he had observed in himself and others. His purpose in depicting these vices was not that of entertainment, though, he argued in this letter, but rather that of helping his compatriots (and himself) to recognize their ‘пошлость’ so that they could fight against it (1994:VI/78). Already in the

¹⁰¹ As suggested in the commentary for the Academy edition, Anita, famous for her courage and her beauty, may have inspired the figure of Elena to some extent (VIII/518).

¹⁰² See Turgenev’s letter to Fet, 16 January 1859, in which he comments on this translation (P III/*264-65).

lyrical preamble to Chapter VII of *Мёртвые души* Gogol' had lamented that many readers failed to appreciate 'что много нужно глубины душевной, дабы озарить картину, взятую из презренной жизни, и возвести её в перл создания' (1952-53:V/139). By 'spiritual depth' Gogol' meant the consciousness of an ideal from which all of his grotesque characters had strayed, and which he intended to regain for them, and implicitly for all Russians, in the second part of *Мёртвые души*.

As we have seen, the last part of Gogol's phrase, 'возводить в перл создания', is cited by Shubin to describe what he has achieved in his caricature of Insarov. On the one hand, he has concentrated into this statuette all the bitter jealousy he feels against the Bulgarian—perhaps indeed intending it to serve as a lesson for himself. But on the other hand, he has also distorted certain traits of Insarov's, such as his earnestness, into flaws, and in this sense Shubin has misused Gogolian aesthetics for the sake of personal revenge. Now, in his 1856 series of articles *Очерки гоголевского периода*, Chernyshevskii had praised Gogol' for introducing into Russian literature a 'сатирическое—или, как справедливее будет назвать его, критическое направление', which in his view was the most useful tendency for Russia (1939-50:III/18). This interpretation of Gogol', which concentrated on his works as ammunition for social critique rather than on his religious and moral concerns, would underpin all those denunciatory ('обличительные') stories about corrupt officials and the satirical journals like *Искра* and *Свисток* which flourished at the end of the 1850s. Shubin's caricature, however, is misguided because unlike the targets of satire attacked in those journals, Insarov deserves sympathy and respect. Bersenev, though he cannot help laughing at first, quite rightly covers the statuette with a cloth.

There is another rebus which Shubin proposes for his caricature: 'Берегитесь, колбасники!' (VIII/100). Here the irony is much more malevolent because it suggests that Insarov's defiance of the Turks will probably not be sufficient to stop their slaughtering of the Bulgarian population. Marije Janet Oudshoorn (2006:66-67) has made some very interesting associations between Insarov and motifs in Pushkin's *Песни западных славян* (1834)—one of these is explicitly cited by Shubin (VIII/147)—where the Turks are likened to savage wolves, against which a ram, for all its courage, of course has little chance of defending its flock. Thus, Shubin's two sculptures, Freeborn notes, imply that he has discerned the dual aspect of Insarov: his 'nobility as a social ideal' and his 'all-too-human insignificance' (1960:116). Still, it must be emphasized that Shubin here is very much playing the role of a critic in the Carlylean sense: he is intent on bringing the Bulgarian

patriot out to be ‘a little kind of man’. Just like Carlyle, who, referring to Rousseau, had defined the ‘fanatic’ as a ‘sadly contracted hero’ (1993:159), so Shubin gives the ram in his statuette an expression of fanaticism in order to belittle his rival. However, this caricature isn’t Shubin’s final word on Insarov. Once he has managed to rise above his jealousy, Turgenev’s sculptor speaks quite differently of this noble hero.

II.5 Brutus as a paragon for Insarov and Bazarov

A few days before Insarov and Elena depart for Bulgaria, Shubin has a long conversation with Uvar Ivanovich (although he does most of the talking!) in which, amongst other things, he notes that Insarov was still coughing up blood: ‘Я его видел на днях, лицо, хоть сейчас лепи с него Брута... Вы знаете, кто был Брут, Увар Иванович?’. Upon Uvar’s pithy reply: ‘Что знать? человек’, Shubin exclaims: ‘Именно: «Человек он был». Да, лицо чудесное, а нездоровое, очень нездоровое’ (VIII/141). Now, it is likely that Insarov’s appearance had reminded Shubin of Michelangelo’s famous bust of Brutus (see Plate 2A), but, most importantly, he is quoting here the last verse of Mark Antony’s spirited tribute to Brutus at the end of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*:

This was the noblest Roman of them all.
All the conspirators save only he
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;
He only in a general honest thought
And common good to all made one of them.
His life was gentle; and the elements
So mix’d in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world ‘This was a man!’

This affinity with one of the greatest heroes of Antiquity is essential for understanding Turgenev’s attitude to Insarov (as well as Bazarov), and it is again Shubin who makes the connection. Shakespeare’s tragedy was fresh in Turgenev’s mind because over the summer and autumn of 1858 he had been helping Fet with his translation of *Julius Caesar*, which was published the following year.¹⁰³

First of all, it is worth noting that Brutus was often invoked as a republican hero by the Decembrists, and Pushkin, too, had spoken of ‘вольнoлюбивый Брут’ in his poem ‘Кинжал’ (1821). Like Don Quixote, Brutus is a man concerned only with ‘a general

¹⁰³ See Turgenev’s letter to Druzhinin, 25 August/6 September 1858 (P III/233).

honest thought’ and the ‘common good’. Now this is certainly true of Insarov, as Bersenev tells Elena: ‘он не желает для удовлетворения личного чувства изменить своему делу и своему долгу’ (VIII/86). However, it also applies to Bazarov. In the above-mentioned letter of April 1862 to Sluchevskii, Turgenev pointed out that he had juxtaposed Bazarov against the finest representatives of the fathers’ generation for the following reason:

Все истинные отрицатели, которых я знал—без исключения (Белинский, Бакунин, Герцен, Добролюбов, Спешнев и т. д.) происходили от сравнительно добрых и честных родителей. И в этом заключается великий смысл: это отнимает у деятелей, у отрицателей всякую тень личного негодования, личной раздражительности. Они идут по своей дороге потому только, что более чутки к требованиям народной жизни.¹⁰⁴

This Brutus-like trait is quite clear in Bazarov, who is driven not by personal resentment of the aristocracy but by his vocation to serve the Russian people. As Batiuto (1990:132-33) has observed, this is one aspect in which Bazarov greatly resembles Belinskii, who, as Turgenev stressed in his reminiscences, didn’t care about insults to his own person: only where his deepest convictions were attacked would he swell up in anger (XIV/53). Significantly, Turgenev ended his memoir of Belinskii (as first published in 1869) precisely with Mark Antony’s tribute to Brutus: ‘Человек он был!’ (XIV/62). Not for nothing was *Отцы и дети* dedicated to Belinskii!¹⁰⁵

Turgenev greatly admired Brutus, as is evident from the conclusion to his wonderful 1864 essay on Shakespeare. There, Turgenev described the English bard with the same verses which in *Julius Caesar* he had applied to Brutus, ‘к едва ли не чистейшему из его созданий, к Бруту’. After again quoting the last verse of Mark Antony’s oration, Turgenev adds: ‘Шекспир не нашёл никакого более сильного слова, которым он бы мог почтить побеждённую добродетель’ (XV/51). These aspects of Brutus which he highlights are significant: ‘purity’ and ‘virtue defeated’. With regard to Bazarov, a character towards whom Turgenev *initially* was not well-disposed, the element of purity might seem to be absent. ‘Базаров был великий охотник до женщин и до женской красоты’, we are told in the novel (VIII/286), and this was expressed even more bluntly in the preliminary sketches: ‘Любит употреблять женщин [...] Базарову хочется её [Одинцову] иметь’ (XII*/566, 572). However, as already noted, Bazarov, who has

¹⁰⁴ Letter of 14/26 April 1862 (P IV/380).

¹⁰⁵ Again, see Batiuto 1990 and Nikitina 1997 for a detailed exploration of Bazarov’s genetic links to Belinskii. The great critic was seen by his gentry friends (Stankevich, Bakunin, Turgenev) as a ‘man of the people’ (E. Brown 1966:98).

truly fallen in love with Odintsova, has only to see her frightened in that scene in her room for him immediately to check his savage outburst of passion. There is a glow of almost child-like innocence about him as he addresses her from his death-bed: ‘Послушайте... ведь я вас не поцеловал тогда... Дуньте на умирающую лампаду, и пусть она погаснет...’ (VIII/396). His death can also be described as ‘virtue defeated’—defeated not in Schopenhauerian terms, as some scholars have claimed, but in accordance with Turgenev’s own views on tragedy, which were influenced by his thoughts on Brutus’s fate.

If we now return to *Накануне*, it is clear that purity and virtue—masked in Bazarov by his materialistic views—are also defining traits of both Insarov and Elena, much as some of Turgenev’s readers at the time, such as Countess Lambert, were shocked by Elena’s emancipated conduct. There are other signs that Turgenev was thinking of *Julius Caesar* when he composed his novel. Just as Brutus’s wife Portia, in a remarkable scene, entreats her husband to share his thoughts with her:

Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I your self
But, as it were, in sort or limitation?
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus’ harlot, not his wife. (Act II, sc.1)

so Elena expresses the same wish to know everything about Insarov’s plans: ‘для меня не должно быть у тебя тайны’ (VIII/111), and it is not female curiosity which speaks in her, but the noble resolve to share fully her husband’s lot.

And that apparent ‘woodenness’ for which Insarov has been criticized—is it not akin to Brutus’s self-restraint? Certainly, Brutus is not as eloquent as Mark Antony, yet how moving is the laconic way in which he speaks of his beloved Portia’s death, which he had tried to keep secret from his friends so as not to demoralize them (Act IV, sc.3). Bersenev describes Insarov to Elena as a ‘молчальник’, as someone who doesn’t like to talk about himself: ‘и в то же время в нём есть что-то детское, искреннее, при всей его сосредоточенности и даже скрытности’ (VIII/52). Reticence was a quality which Turgenev valued, as he told his German colleague and friend Theodor Storm: ‘Die besten Menschen, wie die besten Bücher—sind die, wo man viel zwischen den Zeilen liest’.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Letter of 18/30 November 1865 (P VI/34).

Bazarov, too, isn't expansive at first—except where provoked by Pavel Kirsanov—and he resists Odintsova's attempts to coax him into telling her about his life: 'Я стараюсь беседовать с вами о предметах полезных, Анна Сергеевна' (VIII/291). It is his misfortune to fall in love with a woman who, for all her beauty and intelligence, is not in the same league as Portia or Elena.

The most important parallel, however, between Brutus and Insarov lies in their ends, and Shubin makes that connection precisely because he fears the worst: that like Brutus, the ailing Insarov, whom he now genuinely respects, won't achieve his lofty goal. Insarov's death of consumption even before he reaches Bulgarian soil might seem quite different to Brutus's honourable suicide on the battlefield when he sees that the republican cause is lost. Yet Turgenev, when he wrote *Накануне*, knew that Bulgaria had not achieved independence during the Crimean War: the Russians did enter Bulgaria in March 1854, but they were forced to withdraw a few months later. Bulgarian volunteers did subsequently fight alongside the Russians, but Insarov's goal, the liberation of his country, couldn't be achieved at the time. 'Aut Caesar, aut nihil', says the first doctor treating Insarov (VIII/120).¹⁰⁷ Everything or nothing: Insarov's untimely death stands for the unfeasibility of his goal, just as Brutus's republican ideal was ahead of his time, and it has nothing to do with 'selfishness' on his or Elena's part as some enthusiasts of Schopenhauer have tried to make out!

Turgenev, as noted earlier, had been keenly following Garibaldi's actions in Italy at the time he was writing *Накануне*. He saw in Garibaldi both a national and a republican hero, and in *Вешние воды* (1872) he would pay tribute to these two ideals in the figure of Emilio, the son of a *carbonari* who goes on to form part of the Thousand, Garibaldi's famous expedition to Sicily in May 1860. Garibaldi's gesture of handing over his conquests in the south to the King of Piedmont in October that year, so as to avoid an internecine war, and his voluntary retirement to the island of Caprera must have reminded Turgenev of Cincinnatus, who willingly renounced power after having saved Rome.¹⁰⁸ However, in this subordination of personal wishes—since what Garibaldi really wanted was an Italian Republic—to one's country there was also much that recalled Brutus, and in

¹⁰⁷ This Latin motto is used by James Woodward (1986:167) for the title of an interesting article on *Отцы и дети* and the Roman allusions that occur there. Unfortunately, he also treats Turgenev's novel as if it were a case-study in Schopenhauerian ideas, which is quite misguided.

¹⁰⁸ As Nicholas Žekulin has pointed out in a recent article about Turgenev's life-long engagement with the classics (2008:196), the ideal of duty represented by Cincinnatus was already evoked in his 1847 poem *Филиппо Стродзи*, and it is significant that Bazarov's father compares himself to that great Roman (VIII/318). See also Woodward 1986:172.

August 1862, when Garibaldi invaded the Papal territories around Rome with a small force of volunteers to try to bring about the full unification of Italy on republican principles, Turgenev wrote excitedly to Herzen:

А каков Гарибальди? С невольным трепетом следишь за каждым движением этого *последнего* из героев. Неужели Брут, который не только в истории, всегда, но даже и у Шекспира гибнет—восторжествует?¹⁰⁹

A few days later, after reading reports that Garibaldi had been injured and captured, Turgenev wrote to Fet that he was distraught at this news and took up the comparison with Brutus again:

Хотя мне хорошо известно, что роль честных людей на этом свете состоит почти исключительно в том, чтобы погибнуть с достоинством—и что Октавиан рано или поздно непременно наступит на горло Бруту—однако мне всё-таки стало тяжело.¹¹⁰

What these comments show is Turgenev's awareness that those who, like Brutus, are inspired by an ideal that is ahead of their times must almost always expect to suffer personal defeat, indeed even death. But this should not necessarily be seen as pessimistic. From his reading of Roman history Turgenev knew that whilst Octavian (Augustus) was a sickly and pathetic figure, capable even of immoral acts, his rule was nevertheless marked by a flourishing of culture, peace, and prosperity. As Batiuto has observed (1990:184), Turgenev's view of life and history always remained 'dialectic', in the sense that he could see the good and bad side of things. Thus, the republican ideal for whose sake Brutus, against his own gentle nature, committed murder, and for which he paid with his own life, inspired people down the centuries, and gradually (that is, with ever less need for violence) it became reality in many countries. Turgenev had every reason to hope that in Russia, too, it would one day be the same.

What has been said about Brutus and Insarov's deaths also applies to Bazarov. In that important letter to Sluchevskii, Turgenev explained that he had envisaged Bazarov as a '[фигура] сильная, злобная, честная—и всё-таки обречённая на гибель—потому что она всё-таки стоит ещё в преддверии будущего' (P IV/381). The ideal of progress for the Russian people for which he is prepared to work, even as a humble village doctor, is still too bold that it might succeed at its first attempt, but later *raznochintsy* in

¹⁰⁹ Letter of 15/27 August 1862 (P V/40).

¹¹⁰ Letter of 23 August/4 September 1862 (P V/44). Fortunately, the reports of Garibaldi's capture turned out to be false, and Turgenev would rejoice in the hero's welcome accorded to him in London in 1864. See his letter to Pauline Viardot of 4/16 April 1864, in which he calls Garibaldi a saint (NC:I/128).

Turgenev's novels, notably *Litvinov* and *Solomin*, come closer to achieving it. McLaughlin (1984:109) is quite wrong to read Schopenhauerian pessimism into Bazarov's final reflections: 'Im Angesicht des Todes kommt er zu dem Schluß, daß alle soziale Tätigkeit im Grunde unwesentlich ist'. As Batiuto has stressed (1990:216-7), Bazarov's confession to Odintsova on his death-bed: 'И ведь тоже думал: обломаю дел много' (VIII/396) shows that he had always hoped to do something for Russia. He does not now deny the value of such hopes, for even if he bitterly points to his own apparent superfluousness: 'Я нужен России... Нет, видно не нужен. Да и кто нужен? Сапожник нужен, портной нужен, мясник...' (VIII/396), the moving words spoken by Turgenev at his grave imply that he was mistaken in his self-deprecation. Russia needed not just shoemakers and tailors but also educated men like Bazarov who were prepared to work among the peasantry.¹¹¹

It is only natural that Bazarov should secretly yearn for personal happiness as well, and this partly accounts for his earlier 'cynical' remark to Arkadii about how he hated the very peasants for whose benefit he was expected to work: 'Ну, будет он [мужик] жить в белой избе, а из меня лопух расти будет; ну, а дальше?' (VIII/325). But here Bazarov is also tacitly admitting that he is aware of the true nature of social progress—that it is slow and that he cannot expect to see its fruits himself. At the end of *Middlemarch* (1872), a novel which also shows a provincial doctor (albeit one less fascinating than Bazarov) frustrated in his ambitions, George Eliot would write:

The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half so owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs. (1986:825)¹¹²

Turgenev's words over Bazarov's 'visited tomb' are more emotional and poetic, but the faith they express is the same. He had already declared this faith at the end of *Гамлет и Дон-Кихот* (1860): 'Добрые дела не разлетятся дымом; они долговечнее самой сияющей красоты. «Всё минется,—сказал апостол,—одна любовь останется»'

¹¹¹ Nikitina (2001: 10) points out that in this choice of words 'сапожник, портной, мясник' Turgenev was taking issue with an 1856 article on education in Russia by Nikolai Pirogov, whom she believes to be the main prototype for Bazarov.

¹¹² For details on the personal acquaintance (in 1871) and mutual admiration of Turgenev and George Eliot, see Waddington 1980. Glyn Turton (1992:27) has also compared the realism of these two writers, and observed that Eliot's famous words: 'The greatest benefit we owe to the artist is the extension of our sympathies' apply equally to Turgenev's portrayal of the Russian peasantry. Incidentally, Dorothea in *Middlemarch* has sometimes been compared to Elena.

(VIII/191). For all his mockery, Bazarov had done works of love when he helped his father to treat the sick peasants in their district, and it is these works which will last.

The fact that Bazarov dies of a small cut to his finger has been seized on by devotees of Schopenhauer as proof of Turgenev's deference to 'irrational forces' and his 'pessimism'. However, they would do well to look at *Гамлет и Дон-Кихот* again, where Turgenev, referring to the scene in which Don Quixote, after his final defeat and shortly before he dies as Alonso Quijano 'el Bueno', is trampled on by a herd of pigs, describes this as a mark of Cervantes's genius. Such a humiliation, Turgenev notes, always occurs towards the end of all quixotic heroes' lives. It is the final tribute which they must pay to 'грубая случайность', after which they can die at peace with the world (VIII/188). The deaths of Insarov and Bazarov are due to 'accidents', but that does not diminish the value of the ideals for which they had lived. When considering Turgenev's thoughts on tragedy in section II.7, we shall return to this question.

II.6 Turgenev's Kantian 'fatalism'

First, though, we must clarify some other aspects of Turgenev's world-view and its development. During his semesters at Berlin (1838-39 and 1840-41) Turgenev was introduced not just to Hegel by the enthusiastic professor Karl Werder, but also to Kant, the 'father' of German Idealism. Moreover, he attended classes in Greek and Latin philology, which encouraged his life-long interest in the classics, especially in favourite authors like Virgil and the Greek tragedies (see Žekulin 2008). Living in Germany also gave Turgenev the opportunity to acquaint himself better with that country's music and literature. As one of his translators later wrote: 'Mehr als von Hegel und seinen Aposteln, fühlte [Turgenjew] sich angezogen von unsern großen Dichtern, besonders von Goethe, der unter den Deutschen sein Liebling war und blieb'.¹¹³

Significantly, in his 1845 essay on Goethe's *Faust* Turgenev also spoke admiringly of Kant for having founded 'critical philosophy' (I/222). However, as Turgenev was the first to acknowledge, his was not a philosophical mind in the sense that he lacked the 'способность мыслить отвлечённо, чисто, на немецкий манер' (XIV/29). Like Belinskii, Turgenev, though he certainly didn't deny the value of philosophical study, was interested not in abstract theories but in real life. In both his works and letters he repeatedly warned that no single doctrine or system could adequately address the complexity of life,

¹¹³ Friedrich Bodenstedt in the foreword to an 1864 German edition of Turgenev's stories. Quoted in Žekulin 2008:187.

especially in Russia: ‘Всякая система—в хорошем и дурном смысле этого слова—не русская вещь; всё резкое, определённое, разграниченное нам не идёт’.¹¹⁴

Now, it’s true that Kant’s analytical method made possible such grandiose systems as Hegel’s and such nebulous ones as those of Fichte and Schelling, but in the clarity of his own writing, particularly on ethics, Kant still holds an appeal for the general reader which those later philosophers (except Hegel perhaps) have lost. Since ethics is the branch of philosophy most directly relevant to life, Turgenev would have studied with interest what Kant had to say on the matter. The copies of Kant’s works in Turgenev’s library at the house-museum in Spasskoe have many annotations in the margins (see Time 1997:39). One caveat, though: in Turgenev’s writings Kant’s name (like Hegel’s) appears very infrequently, and more often than not in an ironic context—but this is also the case with Schopenhauer (mentioned just three times), and yet this has not stopped some scholars from seeing in Turgenev and Schopenhauer kindred spirits! Anatolii Batiuto has protested against this misrepresentation of Turgenev and has traced his affinity with such earlier thinkers as Marcus Aurelius and Pascal (1964), as well as quite rightly pointing out, in a more recent study (1990:211), that Turgenev learnt far more from Pushkin, Goethe, and Shakespeare than from any philosopher. It is, however, legitimate to explore here the affinity between Turgenev and Kant, for reasons that will become clear.

Kant’s most famous pronouncement on ethics is the categorical imperative, and in the emphasis on duty at the end of such stories as *Яков Пасынков* (1855) and especially *Фауст* (1856)—‘исполнение долга, вот о чём следует заботиться человеку’ (VII/50)—both Granjard (1954:250, n.161) and Batiuto (1990:117) have seen a reflection of Turgenev’s reading of Kant. This is very plausible, since Goethe, too, despite his healthy scepticism towards philosophers, admired the majesty of Kant’s moral law (he paid tribute to it in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*). Let us, however, consider a few other related aphorisms by Kant: ‘Die erste Sorge des Menschen sei: nicht wie er glücklich, sondern der Glückseligkeit würdig werde’; ‘Der Lauf der Natur richtet sich auch nicht so von selbst nach dem Verdienst, sondern das Glück des Lebens (unsere Wohlfahrt überhaupt) hängt von Umständen ab, die bei weitem nicht alle in des Menschen Gewalt sind’; ‘Das Leben überhaupt hat, was den Genuß desselben betrifft, der von Glücksumständen abhängt, gar keinen eigenen Wert und nur, was den Gebrauch desselben anlangt [hat es] einen Wert’ (1956: 161, 189, 282). Kant does not deny that happiness is

¹¹⁴ Letter to K. Aksakov, 16 January 1853 (P II/107).

possible but urges us to think of more important things. Is this attitude to life not much more realistic and manlier than Schopenhauer's assertion that it is impossible to attain happiness anyway because every fulfilment of our wishes leaves us disillusioned? Kant in fact comes close to the stoic principle of *eudaimonia*, that is, the sense of satisfaction derived from living virtuously. It's not accidental that such admirable figures as Brutus and Portia (the daughter of Cato the Younger) were stoics.

If we now turn to Turgenev's works, it is significant that many of his characters, including those dearest to him, express a similar attitude. At the end of *Яков Пасынков*, Sof'ia tells the narrator: 'Наша жизнь не от нас зависит; но у нас у всех есть один якорь, с которого, если сам не захочешь, никогда не сорвёшься: чувство долга' (VI/234). The narrator describes her as a 'молодая пуританка' but he agrees with her, just as Lavretskii comes to agree with, and respect, Liza for her decision to take monastic vows. The conclusion of *Фауст*, as noted above, is similar. In *Переписка* (1856) Aleksei Petrovich observes: 'сознание честно выдержанной борьбы едва ли не выше торжества победы... Победа зависит не от нас' (VI/178). Of course, this 'fatalism' couldn't appeal to Chernyshevskii and Dobroliubov, who wanted to see Russians capable of taking matters into their own hands. But Turgenev's knowledge of life was profounder than theirs, and so, whilst sympathizing with their demand for Russian men of action, he remained true to himself in his subsequent works.

Just as Kant emphasized the absolute value of good intentions (*der gute Wille*) irrespective of whether these are crowned with success or failure (1956:102), so Turgenev praised the indefatigable idealism of Don Quixote in his 1860 essay: 'Главное дело в искренности и силе самого убеждения... а результат—в руке судьбы [...] Наше дело вооружиться и бороться' (VIII/178). Already in *Дворянское гнездо*, he had described the quixotic figure of Mikhalevich with these words: 'Будь только человек добр,—его никто отразить не может' (VII/206). In this novel Lavretskii at first protests against the 'fatalism' expressed by Liza: 'Мне кажется, Фёдор Иваныч, счастье на земле зависит не от нас...' (VII/221). Yet after his hopes of happiness have been crushed, it is in a stoic vein that he reproaches himself for having wanted too much out of life, and, most significantly, his social conscience awakens again as he watches a peasant tilling the land: 'Не бывать, так не бывать—и кончено. Возьмусь за дело, стиснув зубы, да и велю себе молчать' (VII/269). Now when Liza reminds him of her earlier words: 'Теперь вы

сами видите, Фёдор Иванович, что счастье зависит не от нас, а от Бога' (VII/273), Lavretskii, despite lacking the comfort of faith, is unable to protest.

Turgenev's is a fatalism not in the sense of passive resignation but in that advocated by Kant (and the stoics) as the correct attitude to life—to do as best as one can in the present, since the future is unpredictable. We find the same spirit even in his 'heroic' novels: *Накануне* and *Отцы и дети*. Thus, Bersenev, after telling Elena what he knows of Insarov's life, answers her question as to what the Bulgarian intended to do after completing his studies in Russia: 'Что Бог даст. Мудрено вперед загадывать' (VIII/52). Similarly, when Insarov expresses his sense of duty in his first proper conversation with Elena: 'Наше время не нам принадлежит [...] а всем, кому в нас нужда' (VIII/66); and also the beggarwoman's words to Elena in the chapel: 'Попался тебе человек хороший [...] ты уже держись одного; крепче смерти держись. Уж быть, так быть, а не быть, видно Богу так угодно' (VIII/91). Even Bazarov, who might at first seem to correspond fully to the new man envisaged by Chernyshevskii and Dobroliubov—that is, one who takes time by the forelock—even he expresses the 'Kantian' view of life when during that second conversation in her room Odintsova says she cannot believe that he could be content with being a village doctor, and he replies:

Что за охота говорить и думать о будущем, которое большею частью не от нас зависит? Выйдет случай что-нибудь сделать—прекрасно, а не выйдет—по крайней мере тем будешь доволен, что заранее напрасно не болтал. (VIII/298)

It is also at the end of this scene, when he doesn't take advantage of Odintsova's frailty, that Bazarov manifests his basic goodness—that quality which little Mitia had already sensed when he didn't cry in his arms (VIII/235).

Two very fine books by Elizabeth Cheresh Allen (1992) and Donna Tussing Orwin (2007) have examined Turgenev's ethics in relation to the poetics of his works, and they, too, have noted his admiration for stoic virtues. However, Allen's study might lead one to conclude that Turgenev was concerned only with the 'secular salvation' of the individual, which, as she argues, he saw in 'the development of the best possible self, [...] the one most capable of enduring the trials of life with equanimity' (1992:51). This may be true of some of his fictional characters, but it must be emphasized that Turgenev's world-view was by no means self-centred. In his 1845 *Faust* essay, he had criticized Goethe for his indifference to social issues and, like Belinskii, stressed that 'краеугольный камень человека не есть он сам, как неделимая единица, но человечество, общество,

имеющее свои вечные, незыблемые законы' (I/235). Turgenev valued individuals above everything, but always as members of a community to which they contributed with their unique qualities.

Orwin, whilst she speaks of Turgenev's works with genuine admiration, contrasts Dostoevskii's world-view with what she regards as Turgenev's 'non-communal ethics', according to which 'love of freedom' is the 'highest goal' (2007:99). This, again, is unfair to Turgenev because such leading characters in his novels as Lavretskii, Liza, Elena, and Bazarov show (or develop) an acute social conscience and wish to help the less fortunate. As Katharina Schütz has rightly observed (1952:51), the ethical problem of the community was at the forefront of Turgenev's mind just as it was for most other Russian writers and thinkers of the nineteenth century. Turgenev himself admitted in 1878 that he agreed with the Slavophiles only on one point: 'нравственность у нас [русских] другая, у нас больше общественного чувства'.¹¹⁵

Tracing Turgenev's views on ethics to Kant is important in order to emphasize how far he stands from Schopenhauer, who dismissed the very notion of duty (more on this in III.4). As for his 'Kantian' fatalism, it might be better to observe more generally that, like Kant in a sense, Turgenev 'believed in the eighteenth-century classical view of the Fates' (Freeborn 1960:xi). What this means can be clarified by the following example: At the end of Sophocles's *Antigone*, a tragedy which Turgenev admired,¹¹⁶ Creon is utterly distraught by the suicides first of Antigone, then of his own son, and finally of his wife, and he yearns for death. The chorus, however, admonishes him: 'That will come in due course, but now it is necessary to confront the present; / The future is in the hands of those to whom it behoves'.¹¹⁷ Creon does *not* take his own life, and although he is crushed by the lesson he has been taught, he assumes his responsibility as King of Thebes. This suggests that the Greeks' attitude to the Fates was by no means one of passive submission to 'irrational' forces, but a courageous one of facing up to events as they came.

With regard to Turgenev, it is very significant that Pushkin also had this 'classical' view of life and fate. The question which the narrator of *Медный всадник* asks when Evgenii sees Parasha's cottage swept away by the waters of the Neva: 'иль вся наша [...] жизнь ничто, как сон пустой, / Насмешка неба над землёй?' (1949:IV/386) is, as we

¹¹⁵ As recalled by Lukanina. *VT* (1983):II/204.

¹¹⁶ See the reminiscences of Polonskii. *VT* (1988):367-68. See also Batiuto (1990:97), for a fascinating discussion of how Turgenev and Belinskii differed from Hegel in their interpretation of the Antigone / Creon conflict, and how Turgenev's thoughts about *Antigone* can be related to the young *narodniki* in *Ночь*.

¹¹⁷ Sophocles, *Antigone*, v.1294-95. Translated from Sofocles 1969:121.

shall see, echoed in the young Turgenev's reflections about death. His own response to this question, influenced, again, by Pushkin—and Belinskii—is the subject of the next section.

II.7 Turgenev's views on tragedy—Elena and Bazarov

Stankevich's death from tuberculosis in the summer of 1840 was a bitter blow for all of his friends, but in particular for Belinskii (see E. Brown 1966:5) and for Turgenev, who had got to know him better in Rome that spring. Turgenev wrote a very moving letter to Granovskii about this loss which, as Freeborn emphasizes, would form the 'philosophical basis of his fiction' (1960:8), and which is of particular relevance to the tragic ending of his two 'heroic' novels:

Смерть имеет глубокое значение, если она выступает—как последнее—из сердца полной, развившейся жизни: старцу—она примирение; но нам, но ему—велеие судьбы. Ему ли умереть? Он так глубоко, так искренно признавал и любил святость жизни, несмотря на свою болезнь он наслаждался блаженством мыслить, действовать, любить: он готовился посвятить себя труду, необходимому для России... Холодная рука смерти пала на его голову, и целый мир погиб.

Stankevich had been intending to write a history of philosophy, Turgenev noted. Then comes a series of questions:

Кто, достойный, примет от умершего завещание его великих мыслей и не даст погибнуть его влиянию? [...] Отчего не умереть другому, тысяче другим, мне напр.? [...] Зачем на земле может гибнуть или страдать прекрасное? [...] Или возмущается зависть Бога, как прежде зависть греческих богов?¹¹⁸

Significantly, one of the things Turgenev says here is that it would have been better if he had died instead of Stankevich, who was preparing to work for the good of his country. Similar thoughts pass through Bersenev's mind as he stands at Insarov's sick-bed: '«Исполнит ли он свои замыслы? Неужели всё исчезнет?» И жалко ему становилось молодой погибающей жизни, и он давал себе слово её спасти' (VIII/119). Bersenev does not have to lay down his life, but he does help to save his friend.

Before we consider the rest of Turgenev's letter and its relation as a whole to *Накануне*, it is worth pointing out that Schiller, in his poem *Das Siegesfest*, which describes the Greek army's return from Troy, had also lamented how Fate was often 'unjust' in the way it struck down the noblest individuals:

¹¹⁸ Letter to Granovskii, 4/16 July 1840 (P I/191-93).

Ohne Wahl verteilt die Gaben,
 Ohne Billigkeit das Glück,
 Denn Patroklos liegt begraben,
 Und Thersites kommt zurück!

Compared to Stankevich, the modest Turgenev clearly felt himself to be a Thersites. At the end of *Гамлет и Дон-Кихот* he would cite two verses from the final strophe of Schiller's poem (in Zhukovskii's translation): 'Всё великое земное / Разлетается, как дым...' before concluding with the declaration of faith in the power of love and goodness that was discussed in section II.5 above: 'Но добрые дела не разлетятся дымом...' (VIII/191). This same apostolic message of hope appears in the passage following those sad questions in Turgenev's letter twenty years earlier:

Но нет—мы не должны унывать и преклоняться. Сойдёмтесь—дадим друг другу руки, станем теснее: один из наших упал—быть может—лучший. Но возникают, возникнут другие; рука Бога не перестаёт сеять в души зародыши великих стремлений и, рано ли, поздно—свет победит тьму. (P I/193)

Turgenev believed that Stankevich's legacy would live after him. The selfless striving to help others, which so distinguished Stankevich—according to Turgenev (VI/394) and other contemporaries (see E. Brown 1966:133)—would carry on not just in those who had known him personally, but in future generations as well. Turgenev *never* abandoned this faith in the effect of good works down the ages. It shines through the concluding words of his obituary of Granovskii in 1855: 'Он жил недаром—он не умрёт [...] он сеял свои семена днём, при свете солнца, и когда они взойдут и принесут плоды—в них не будет ничего горького...' (VI/374). Even more radiantly it would shine in his tributes to Shakespeare and Pushkin in later years.

Still, the question which Turgenev asked in that letter of 1840: 'Зачем на земле может гибнуть или страдать прекрасное?' caused him great anguish. Schiller, too, had asked it many times—in *Das Siegesfest*; in Thekla's lament in the final play of the *Wallenstein* trilogy when she hears that her beloved Max has fallen in battle:

—Da kommt das Schicksal—Roh und kalt
 Faßt es des Freundes zärtliche Gestalt
 Und wirft ihn unter den Hufschlag seiner Pferde—
 —Das ist das Los des Schönen auf der Erde. (*Wallensteins Tod*, Act IV, sc.13)

and in the brief poem *Nänie* which opens by confirming Thekla's lament: 'Auch das Schöne muß sterben!' It is in such elegiac thoughts, shared by all great artists, and not in any alleged Schopenhauerian influences, that we must look for the key to the Venetian chapters in *Накануне*. As Batiuto has so rightly emphasized (1990:108), Turgenev learnt from the Greek tragedians, from Shakespeare, Goethe and Schiller that beauty and tragedy are often linked. In an article of 1841 Belinskii would reflect on *Romeo and Juliet*:

Всякое прекрасное явление в жизни должно сделаться жертвою своего достоинства. Едва прочли вы ночную сцену в саду между Ромео и Юлией—и уже в душу вашу закрадывается грустное предчувствие... «Нет,—говорите вы,—не для земли такая любовь и такая полнота жизни, не между людей жить таким существам» (1953-59: V/56)

Batiuto (1990:109-10) connects this passage with the scene in *Дворянское гнездо* in which Lavretskii declares his love for Liza (VII/236), but it can also be applied to *Накануне*. The love of Elena and Insarov is too perfect for this world.

When Elena sees that Insarov is dying in front of her very eyes, she begins to ask herself again whether they had done something wrong, and, in particular, she thinks of her mother back in Russia. The narrator observes at this point:

Елена не знала, что счастье каждого человека основано на несчастье другого, что даже его выгода и удобство требуют, как статуя—пьедестала, невыгоды и неудобства других. (VIII/157)

This passage and the narrator's later observation after describing how Elena, kneeling in front of Insarov's coffin, is unable to pray, yet has no reproaches to make against God:

Каждый из нас виноват уже тем, что живёт, и нет такого великого мыслителя, нет такого благодетеля человечества, который в силу пользы, им приносимой, мог бы надеяться на то, что имеет право жить...(VIII/164)

have often been interpreted in Schopenhauerian terms. McLaughlin, in particular, argues that Elena was torn between altruism and a selfish striving for happiness, and that this is the source of her sense of guilt, as expressed in the letter which she writes to her parents to tell them that she will travel to Bulgaria with Insarov's coffin, and that after burying him she will remain there to work as a nurse:

Кто знает, может быть, я его убила; теперь его очередь увлечь меня за собою. Я искала счастья—и найду, быть может, смерть. Видно, так следовало; видно, была вина... Но смерть всё прикрывает и примиряет,—не правда ли? (VIII/165)

Referring to these three passages, McLaughlin claims: '[Elenas] Schuldgefühl steht mit dem Egoismus ihrer Glückssehnsucht in Verbindung, die dem wahren Wesen der Welt widerspricht. Ihre Gedanken ähneln Schopenhauers Besprechung der menschlichen Schuld [which McLaughlin then paraphrases:] Der Mensch wird schuldig, wenn er zum Fortbestand dieser Welt, die ein Darwinscher Überlebenskampf ist, beiträgt, und wenn er dieses Elend durch seinen Glückseligkeitstrieb vergrößert' (1984:105).

This invocation of the Schopenhauerian *selfish will* may sound very compelling, and it has encouraged such colourful interpretations as that by James Woodward, who speaks of Elena as a 'Scythian rusalka' conquering Insarov with her 'seductive charms' and 'absorbing his vitality' like a vampire (1990:105-20)!! This, however, was *not* how *Накануне* was appreciated by readers at the time, nor should it be today if one approaches the novel with a sense for poetic truth and with respect for Turgenev's intentions.

For a start, Elena's sense of guilt doesn't mean that she actually is guilty of selfishness. Already as a young girl her conscience had been troubled by the sight of beggars. And her love for Insarov is not selfish, as Granjard rightly points out: 'Hélène n'a pas cherché un bonheur égoïste. Dès l'abord, elle a accepté le sacrifice' (1954:287, n.131). Certainly, her departure for Bulgaria causes her mother (and even her father) suffering, but the narrator's reflection on how the happiness of one person entails the unhappiness of another, just as a statue requires a pedestal, doesn't need to be explained in terms of a Schopenhauerian 'Schuld des Daseins'. We find similar reflections in the works of Turgenev's predecessors—for instance, in Goethe's *Werther* (1774), in that famous letter in which Werther laments the disharmony of Nature:

Da ist kein Augenblick, der dich nicht verzehrte und die Deinigen um dich her, kein Augenblick, da du nicht ein Zerstörer bist, sein muß; der harmloseste Spaziergang kostet tausend armen Würmchen das Leben...¹¹⁹

The very metaphor of a statue and its pedestal may well have been suggested to Turgenev by Pushkin's *Медный всадник*, in which Evgenii's mad protest against the statue of Peter the Great after the destruction of all his hopes of happiness reminds us of how St Petersburg was built on the bones of thousands of serf labourers.

Elena's sense of guilt is the attempt by a highly sensitive individual to come to terms with the cruelty of fate. She tries to convince herself that she had no right to be happy. It is the same phenomenon which Turgenev refers to in *Гамлет и Дон-Кихот*:

¹¹⁹ Werther's letter of 18 August 1771 (Goethe 1985-98:I₂/239).

namely, the way in which the Greeks called their gods envious and made sacrifices to them (VIII/189). As we have seen, in the letter about Stankevich's death, Turgenev had also spoken of the 'зависть греческих богов'. He also invokes this concept ironically in a letter of 1847 to Pauline Viardot: 'Les Dieux sont jaloux; ils ne donnent à personne tout à la fois'.¹²⁰ Again, this brings to mind Belinskii's reflections on how the happiness of Romeo and Juliet was impossible in this world.

As for the narrator's observation in *Накануне* about how even the greatest benefactors of mankind were not entitled to protest if their lives were suddenly cut short, there is no need to invoke Schopenhauer here either. Turgenev had seen how such friends of his as Stankevich, Belinskii, and Granovskii, who all had so much to give to Russia, died prematurely. So do Insarov and Bazarov, who were also working for the good of their countries. When Turgenev's narrator says: 'Каждый из нас виноват уже тем, что живёт', that may indeed resemble Schopenhauer's notion of 'Schuld des Daseins', but we mustn't forget that many thinkers and writers had dwelt on this thought before him. It underlies many of the Greek tragedies, just as it underlies the Christian doctrine of original sin or Goethe's reflections on Nature (in *Werther*, *Faust*, and many other works), and Turgenev is far more likely to have 'learnt' this fact of life from them.

What is utterly unacceptable, though, is McLaughlin's Schopenhauerian interpretation of Elena's letter to her parents: 'Elenas Worte enthalten also eine tief pessimistische Überzeugung von der letzten Belanglosigkeit aller menschlichen Aspirationen' (1984:105). In her letter, part of which was quoted above, Elena says that instead of the happiness she had sought (note how she is again trying to convince herself that she had been selfish), she will probably find death in Bulgaria. Yes, there is resignation in her words, but it is akin to the resignation shown by Creon at the end of *Antigone* after he has been urged by the chorus not to kill himself. Elena continues to believe in her duty, in being faithful to Insarov's legacy: 'Я и после смерти Д. останусь верна его памяти, делу всей его жизни' (VIII/165).

The whole scene in which Elena tells Rendich of her decision to sail to Bulgaria and how she then kneels silently before Insarov's coffin can be linked to Turgenev's own reflections, in a letter of 1848 to Pauline Viardot, on *Romeo and Juliet*. Mme Viardot was due to sing Romeo in Bellini's opera soon, and Turgenev shares with her his thoughts on how that role should be interpreted. He discusses the scene in Juliet's tomb when Romeo

¹²⁰ Letter of 14-15/26-27 November 1847 (LI:8).

sees his beloved in what seems to him the sleep of death. ‘On ne peut s’imaginer quelque chose de plus affreux que de se trouver devant le cadavre de tout ce qu’on aime’, writes Turgenev, then adding that the despair caused by this sight is so terrible that a work of art can only convey it if this despair is ‘retenu et *glacé* par la ferme résolution de se donner la mort à soi-même, ou par tout autre grand sentiment’. Romeo kills himself. Elena, whom we are shown kneeling in front of the corpse of all that she had loved, does not. She is restrained by another ‘great feeling’: the resolve to devote the rest of her life to Insarov’s cause. Elena’s acceptance of her suffering without accusing God and her calmness in the way she speaks to Rendich about her decision confirm what Turgenev had said in that letter: ‘Les plus grands douleurs sont les plus calmes; et les plus calmes sont les plus belles’.¹²¹

This is the ‘purifying effect of suffering’ of which Waddington so rightly says that both Turgenev and George Eliot believed in it (1980:174-75). In *Adam Bede* (1859), for example, the carpenter Adam says to himself after he has seen his beloved Hetty together with Arthur: ‘I’m not th’only man that’s got to do without much happiness i’ this life. There’s many a good bit o’ work done with a sad heart’ (Eliot 1998:324-25). As was emphasized in the preceding section, this same stoic (or Kantian) acceptance of duty is central to Turgenev’s world-view. Schopenhauer also spoke of the purifying effect of suffering, but in his systematic way he reduced this effect simply to abandonment of the will to live. Thus, in his discussion of tragedy he said of the Maid of Orleans, Gretchen, and Hamlet: ‘sie alle sterben durch Leid geläutert, d.h. nachdem der Wille zu leben zuvor in ihnen erstorben ist’.¹²² Not so Turgenev: Elena does not take her own life because she continues to believe in her duty which she will do even ‘with a sad heart’.

For Turgenev, love is always stronger than death. ‘Любовь сильнее смерти’ is a declaration which recurs in all his works, right up to his last story *Клара Милич* (XIII/134). The love which Elena had felt for Insarov will live on as she nurses the wounded and dying in Bulgaria and other regions. Turgenev and his readers knew that during the Crimean War many Russian women had volunteered as nurses and worked in the field hospitals organized by Nikolai Pirogov.¹²³ This remarkable phenomenon would happen again during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. Turgenev’s friend, the baroness Iuliia Brevskaia left Russia in the summer of 1877 to become a Sister of Mercy and died of

¹²¹ Letter of 30 December 1847/11 January 1848 (P I/288-89).

¹²² *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, §51.

¹²³ Among the ‘севастопольские сёстры’, as they were popularly known, was Ekaterina Bakunina, a cousin of Turgenev’s friend. See Shchepkina 1966:149-50.

typhoid fever in Bulgaria the following year. In one of his most moving poems-in-prose *Памяти Ю.П.Бревской*, Turgenev paid tribute to her self-sacrifice: ‘она вся, пылая огнём неугасимой веры, отдалась на служение ближним’ (XIII/167).

In this poem, as well as in the Venetian chapters of *Накануне*, Turgenev confirms the truth of the final verses of Schiller’s *Nänie*:

Siehe! Da weinen die Götter, es weinen die Göttinnen alle
 Daß das Schöne vergeht, daß das Vollkommene stirbt
Auch ein Klaglied zu sein im Mund der Geliebten, ist herrlich,
 Denn das Gemeine geht klanglos zum Orkus hinab.

It is the artist who sings to us of the beauty that has perished and thereby gives it immortality. Turgenev said that this was the underlying purpose of art in an important letter of 1870 to Avdeev (see p.88). It is why he based the glowing figure of Pokorskii in *Рудин* on Stankevich; it is why he endowed Bazarov and his father with so many traits of his ‘unforgettable friend’ Belinskii. And just as the gods and goddesses in Schiller’s poem cry over the death of the beautiful, so Turgenev cried over the death of Bazarov, whom he had come to love when writing his novel:

Когда я писал заключительные строки «Отцов и детей», я принуждён был отклонить голову, чтобы слёзы не капали на рукопись.¹²⁴

The beautiful scene at Bazarov’s grave and the words of ‘вечное примирение’ and ‘жизнь бесконечная’ which Turgenev speaks over it are dismissed by McLaughlin as a ‘vage-optimistische Anspielung’ with almost ‘floskenhafter Charakter’ because, in her view, ‘nichts in der Romanhandlung hatte diesen Schluß vorbereitet, um ihn zu rechtfertigen’ (1984:110). Here, blinkered by Schopenhauer, she has completely missed one of the most vital motifs in Turgenev’s works—namely, the invocation of Pushkin’s poem ‘Брожу ли я вдоль улиц шумных...’ (1829).

This elegiac poem by Pushkin was one of Turgenev’s favourites. It deals with the transience of human life, yet at the same time also the continuity of Nature, as expressed in the fourth strophe:

Младенца ль милого ласкаю,
 Уже я думаю: прости!
 Тебе я место уступаю:
 Мне время тлеть, тебе цвести.

¹²⁴ As recalled by Mikhail Kovalevskii. *VT* (1983):II/146.

Again, we can appreciate Pushkin's classical view of life because already Homer had said: 'As the generation of leaves, so is that of men' (*Iliad*, VI). Perhaps these verses were going through Turgenev's mind when he showed Pavel Kirsanov tickling his little nephew's chin (VIII/230)? It was, however, the elegy's finale which Turgenev liked most of all:¹²⁵

И пусть у гробового входа
Младая будет жизнь играть,
И равнодушная природа
Красою вечною сиять.

It cannot be stressed sufficiently how vital this strophe is for 'understanding' Turgenev's works, particularly *Отцы и дети*. Not just these verses, though, but also Belinskii's interpretation of them in his fifth article on Pushkin (1844). The great critic said that in these verses (which reminded him of Goethe's pantheism), Pushkin 'поставлял выход из диссонансов жизни и примирение с трагическими законами судьбы не в заоблачных мечтаниях, а в опирающейся на самоё себя силе духа...' (1953-59:VII/354).

Turgenev agreed wholeheartedly with Belinskii that it was possible to be reconciled with the tragic laws of Fate—that is, with death—by finding within oneself the strength of spirit to contemplate life as a natural succession of the generations, in which each individual has his or her appointed time of flowering. There is no bitterness in these final verses where the poet speaks of the young generation that will enjoy life and the eternal beauty of Nature when he is long since in the grave.

Significantly, Turgenev evokes these verses—and Belinskii's interpretation of them—over and over again in his works. They appear verbatim at the end of *Дневник лишнего человека* (1849), where the dying Chulkaturin, despite all the frustrations he had suffered, is still able to say to the coming generation: 'Я умираю... Живите, живые!' before quoting Pushkin's verses (V/232). They form part of the very composition of the epilogue in *Дворянское гнездо* when Lavretskii watches the youngsters playing in the garden and blesses the happier future that awaits them (see section VI.4). In *Накануне*, the reconciliation granted by death is invoked by Elena in her letter to her parents: 'Но смерть всё прикрывает и примиряет,—не правда ли?' (VIII/165).

¹²⁵ Natal'ia Ostrovskaia recalled a conversation with Turgenev about Pushkin, during which she mentioned this poem. Turgenev said: 'Конец особенно хорош!' and then recited the last strophe. *VT* (1983):II/69.

It is, however, in the last paragraph of *Отцы и дети* that Pushkin's verses, Belinskii's word of reconciliation, and Turgenev's faith in the power of love (which he shared with all of his 'teachers') come together in an incomparable hymn (VIII/401):

Неужели любовь, святая, преданная любовь не всеильна? О нет! Какое бы страстное, грешное, бунтующее сердце ни скрылось в могиле, цветы, растущие на ней, безмятежно глядят на нас своими невинными глазами: не об одном вечном спокойствии говорят нам они, о том великом спокойствии «равнодушной» природы; они говорят также о вечном примирении и о жизни бесконечной...

The reconciliation with art, poetry, and beauty which Bazarov had so sternly resisted so as not to be deflected from his striving to work among the Russian peasantry is spoken over his grave by Turgenev because it is on such goodness, on such readiness to help others that the future of humanity depends.

CHAPTER III

*THE EDUCATION OF ARTISTS***Introduction**

Although Shubin is by no means a dilettante, there are a number of reasons why at first glance he might seem to be one. Some have been mentioned in the preceding chapter—in particular, his self-deprecating manner—but another important reason is a certain proximity to the ‘dilettante type’ which exerted such a fascination on the Russian writers who emerged in the 1840s. Indeed, one of the various charges of plagiarism which Goncharov levelled at Turgenev concerned the resemblance of Shubin to Raiskii, the dilettante protagonist of *Обрыв*, which was published in 1869 but whose plan Goncharov had confided to his fellow-writer in 1855.¹²⁶ As Eduard Babaev has observed, ‘Дилетант ещё в 40-е годы, в эпоху расцвета натуральной школы, стал ироническим героем в русском искусстве’ (1981:183). Belinskii himself, when discussing the young hero of Goncharov’s *Обыкновенная история* (1847), had defined the ‘романтик-полугалант’ as an immediately recognisable type (1953-59:X/334). Turgenev, faithful as he was to most of Belinskii’s aesthetic principles, set great store by the ‘умение класть характерные штрихи’¹²⁷ and strove to portray such types in his own works. Not surprisingly, when presenting Shubin as a sculptor, Turgenev was tempted to endow him with the typical traits associated with artist figures by the writers of his generation: in particular, overestimation of one’s natural talent and disdain for regular work.

We find such negative traits in earlier works by Turgenev featuring artists—e.g. the sponger Andriusha in *Татьяна Борисовна и её племянник*, who dabbles in painting—and, most memorably, in Dostoevskii’s *Неточка Незванова*, where the violinist Efimov ruins himself by his refusal to practice regularly. Similarly, in the initial draft of *Накануне* Turgenev had included a detail in Shubin’s biography which recalls Efimov’s tragic predicament: ‘но вместе с рутиной он [Шубин] отбросил всякую школьную работу и вдохновение его не выдерживало’ (VIII/416). The omission of this phrase, however, in the final version testifies to Turgenev’s striving to represent in Shubin something quite different from the 1840s theme of Romantic subjectivism foundering in the social reality of Russia. Unlike Efimov, or the young Aduiev (in *Обыкновенная история*) who soon tires of his poetic efforts, Shubin isn’t a dilettante but a true artist who creates works of lasting

¹²⁶ Budanova 2000:203-6.

¹²⁷ Letter to L. Stech’kina, 25 April (7 May) 1878 (P XII₁/318).

value. It is true that Bersenev, vexed by his friend's light-heartedness, reproaches him once by casting him into the by then stereotypical mould of the Russian dilettante: 'Ты поедешь в Италию [...] и ничего не сделаешь. Будешь всё только крыльями размахивать и не полетишь. Знаем мы вас!' (VIII/16). But in reality he firmly believes in Shubin's vocation, describing him to Insarov as a 'человек с большим талантом' (VIII/38).

Apart from natural talent, though, Shubin also shows a genuine capacity for hard work: 'Он трудился усердно, но урывками' (VIII/20)—these fits and starts eventually settling into constant workmanship once he has resigned himself to losing Elena. Moreover, he has that special quality which Turgenev considered essential to every true artist and which in later years he was so delighted to find in Repin, the sculptor Antokol'skii, and Garshin: that of 'темперамент' by which he meant not just a vivid, fiery imagination but also the ability to show courage in the face of adversity.¹²⁸ What we are told about Shubin at the beginning of the novel: 'Талантом он обладал положительным' (VIII/21) is fully borne out by his achievements as a sculptor—for example, his bust of Insarov: 'Черты лица были схвачены Шубином верно до малейшей подробности, и выражение он им придал славное: честное, благородное и смелое' (VIII/99). And in spite of a certain irony about Shubin's situation in Rome in the epilogue (see VI.1), we are left in no doubt that he has stayed true to his calling: 'Шубин в Риме; он весь предался своему искусству и считается одним из самых замечательных и многообещающих молодых ваятелей' (VIII/166). The very fact that he is able to earn a living from his art confirms that he is made of quite different stuff to Andriusha in that huntsman's sketch who has no qualms about sponging on his aunt and leading a spoilt, idle existence:

Бывало, по целым дням кисть в руки не берёт; найдёт на него так называемое вдохновение—ломается словно с похмелья [...] пустится толковать о своём таланте, о своих успехах, о том, как он развивается, идёт вперед... На деле же оказалось, что способностей его чуть-чуть хватало на сносные портретики. Невежда он был круглый, ничего не читал, да и на что художнику читать? Природа, свобода, поэзия—вот его стихии. (IV/210)

The ironic tone of *Татьяна Борисовна и её племянник*, which appeared at around the same time as *Неточка Незванова*, is very much in keeping with the tendency of those

¹²⁸ Thus, in a letter of 8/20 February 1870, he exhorted Flaubert not to be discouraged by criticism of his latest works: "'El hombre debe ser feroz"—dit un proverbe espagnol—et l'artiste surtout' (P VIII/189). This Spanish saying, which may be translated as: 'A man ought to be fierce', is also invoked by Bazarov (VIII/307) and will be discussed further in section VI.2.

Russian writers who came of age in the 1840s to use the figure of the egocentric dilettante as a foil to what they felt was required of an artist in their country. For Turgenev, Dostoevskii, and Goncharov all accepted in their youth the earnestness which Belinskii had demanded of them in their approach to Russian reality and to their vocation. Thus, in a section of *Дневник писателя* for 1877 Dostoevskii recalled the great critic's injunction to him, after reading *Бедные люди*, to persevere in the 'служение художника истине' (1972-90:XXV/31), and Turgenev likewise saw in the writer a 'служитель идеала'.¹²⁹

Of course, the two novelists differed in their views as to the exact nature of this 'truth' or 'ideal', but what is significant is the shared emphasis on art as 'service', this being understood to be a service to Russian society as well. Dostoevskii did become estranged from Belinskii as a result of the latter's militant atheism,¹³⁰ and yet one may with equal right apply to him what Ralph Matlaw has said of Turgenev: 'Throughout his life he was conscious of the artist's socio-political responsibility, established as creed by Belinsky' (1957:249). They both believed in the contribution which literature could make to the 'нравственное образование новых поколений', as Belinskii had put it when discussing the effect on Russian society even of Pushkin's predecessors (1953-59:VII/176). This is clear from the way both Turgenev and Dostoevskii hoped that their last novels—*Новь* (1877) and *Братья Карамазовы* (1880) respectively—might help put the idealistic but misguided Russian youth on the right track.¹³¹

Apart from this idea of service to truth and society, another important consequence of Belinskii's anti-Romantic campaign was a 'professionalizing' of literature. In contrast to the attitude often adopted by Pushkin—e.g. in 'Поэт и толпа' (1828) and *Моцарт и Сальери* (1831)—of the artist as a 'единого прекрасного жрец',¹³² Turgenev tended to speak of the writer's task in more down-to-earth terms, even calling it a trade on various occasions: 'По-моему, «литератор» такое же звание или определение рода занятий, как «сапожник» или «пирожник». Но есть пирожники хорошие и дурные—и

¹²⁹ Letter to Fet, 23 August/4 September 1862 (P V/44).

¹³⁰ Freeborn (2003:42) does point out, though, that Belinskii, despite his rejection of the established church, retained a strong religious impulse throughout his life.

¹³¹ Cf. Turgenev's letter of 17/29 December 1876 to Kavelin, who had praised *Новь*: '[теперь] я уже знаю, знаю наверное, что я не потерял времени даром и сослужил—и отслужил—службу моему поколению—пожалуй даже моему народу' (P XII₁/39); and Dostoevskii's letter of 10 May 1879 to Liubimov, in which he described the writing of *Братья Карамазовы* as a 'гражданский подвиг' (1972-90:XXX₁/64).

¹³² From Mozart's last words in the 'Little Tragedy' (Pushkin 1949:V/368).

литераторы тоже'.¹³³ Dostoevskii too, whilst more wary of adopting such 'utilitarian' terms, shared this view of writing as a process requiring serious craftsmanship.¹³⁴ In fact, this spirit of professionalism was espoused by almost all Russian artists in the latter half of the nineteenth century—most significantly in music which until then had been largely in the hands of amateurs. Thus, Chaikovskii, who strove to live according to the values of 'labor, modesty, and a deep sense of professional duty viewed as an ethical obligation',¹³⁵ would always lament the dilettante approach of such predecessors as Dargmoyzhskii and even Glinka:

Моцарт, Бетховен, Шуберт, Мендельсон, Шуман сочинили свои бессмертные творения совершенно так, как сапожник шьёт свои сапоги, т.е. изо дня в день и, по большей части, по заказу. В результате выходило нечто колоссальное. Будь Глинка сапожник, а не барин,—у него вместо двух (правда, превосходных) опер было бы их написано пятнадцать [...] Я готов плакать от досады, когда думаю о том, что бы нам дал Глинка, родись он не в барской среде доэмансипационного времени.¹³⁶

To return to the literary theme of the dilettante, though, it is worth noting that by the 1850s it had exhausted its relevance. After the Crimean War and the initiation of the great reforms, matters more important than the unmasking of Romantic subjectivism were vying for Russian writers' attention. Not surprisingly, Turgenev didn't consider the figure of the artistic dilettante worthy of treatment in a novel. In contrast to the short story, where a greater degree of subjectivism was legitimate, the novel was a genre which was supposed to reflect a country's 'общественная, народная жизнь' (XII/310), as Turgenev put it in the 1880 preface to his novels. That may explain why he took such care not to let Shubin appear to be a dilettante, as well as why, apart from the animosity he felt towards Goncharov,¹³⁷ he criticized the portrayal of Raiskii in *Обрыв* so severely:

¹³³ Letter of 16/28 August 1871 (P IX/126). Interestingly, the same analogy had been used by Pushkin, albeit in a more ironical vein: 'должно смотреть на поэзию, с позволения сказать, как на ремесло [...] на конечную свою поэму я смотрю, как сапожник на пару своих сапог: продаю с барышом' (Letter to Viazemskii, March 1823—Pushkin 1949:X/57). This is an idea which recurs a lot in Pushkin's private letters but which he did not dare to acknowledge before his wider readership until his portrayal of the Italian improviser in *Египетские ночи*. See also Tosi 2006:42-43.

¹³⁴ Cf. Dostoevskii's letter of 31 May 1858 to his brother Mikhail: 'Поверь, что везде нужен труд и огромный. Поверь, что лёгкое, изящное стихотворение Пушкина, в несколько строчек, потому и кажется написанным сразу, что оно слишком долго клеилось и перемарывалось у Пушкина' (1972-90:XXVIII₁/311).

¹³⁵ Gasparov 2005:67, who also notes how Chaikovskii belonged to a generation that was greatly influenced by such works as *Накануне*.

¹³⁶ Letter to Grand Duke K. K. Romanov, 18 May 1890 (Chaikovskii 1997:III/329-30).

¹³⁷ An animosity which gave way to compassion in later years when he found out about Goncharov's mental illness. See Turgenev's letter of 1/13 February 1883 to Grigorovich (P XIII₂/160).

Как это всё старо, старомодно, условно, lieu commun! Какое отсутствие настоящей живой правды! [...] Это надо сдать в архив. И что за охота возиться с таким избитым типом, каков Райский, так пространно и любовно его мазать да размазывать, класть в рот и опять вынимать?¹³⁸

Goncharov's novel, in which so much is related from the perspective of an artistic dilettante, inevitably struck Turgenev as too limited in scope and outdated, especially bearing in mind that it appeared in the same year as Tolstoi was producing the final instalments of *Война и мир* (1869). Dilettantism was a relevant problem for Russia in Turgenev's view, but not just that which affected the arts: it was a more general malaise among the educated classes, reflecting the lack of both a clear purpose in life and a favourable environment. Turgenev had been one of the first to address this problem (notably in *Гамлет Щигровского уезда* and *Рудин*),¹³⁹ and he did so by putting it into a wider context: that of the Russian gentry, rather than limiting himself to a psychological study of the failed artist, which would have been less relevant.

That is not to say that the problem of dilettantism in the arts in Russia didn't worry Turgenev: it was, after all, one of the major obstacles to her developing a culture of her own to match her European sister-nations. Turgenev's correspondence, as well as Potugin's tirades in *Дым*, show how keenly he felt this. It is just that he avoided devoting too much space to artistic dilettante figures. Perhaps it was because he sensed a certain affinity to them,¹⁴⁰ not in terms of lack of talent but of productivity, as Belinskii had once reproached him.¹⁴¹ Portraying such characters entailed the risk of falling into that bane of modern literature which he once described to Pauline Viardot as 'le bavardage de l'égoïsme qui s'étudie et s'admire soi-même'.¹⁴² It was therefore with much restraint and irony that Turgenev presented dilettantes in his works but the lessons to be drawn from them are quite serious.

¹³⁸ Letter to Annenkov, 12/24 January 1869 (P VII/278).

¹³⁹ As Dostoevskii recognized when he immediately agreed that Stepan Trofimovich in *Бесы*, a noble dilettante even more 'anachronistic' in the 1870s than Raikii, was very much a 'тургеневский герой в старости'. See his letter to Maikov, 2/14 March 1871 (1972-90:XXIX₁/185).

¹⁴⁰ Significantly, Panshin in *Дворянское гнездо*, whom Lemm dismisses as a 'дилетант' (VII/197), composes a song for Liza the verses of which are from a youthful poem of Turgenev's in the style of Heine.

¹⁴¹ When Turgenev failed to deliver a story that he had promised for *Современник*, Belinskii told him (not unlike Bazarov in his parting words to Arkadii): 'Все вы одного поля ягоды; на словах любите разводить бобы, а чуть коснулось дела, так не шевельнут и пальцем'. *VT* (1983):I/113.

¹⁴² Letter of 26 November/8 December 1847 (P I/273-74).

III.1 The problem of aristocratic dilettantism

During her brief stay in Russia, in 1812, Mme de Staël came to the conclusion that literature in that country was the pursuit of just a few noblemen.¹⁴³ This was a verdict which writers of Turgenev's generation couldn't help agreeing with when they reflected on the majority of their predecessors' and older colleagues' output.¹⁴⁴ However, whereas the situation in literature had changed drastically by the late 1850s—partly thanks to the sense of professionalism encouraged by Belinskii among younger writers, but also because of the increase in numbers and circulation of periodicals, as well as the emergence of matter-of-fact journalism as opposed to the *belles-lettres* of old—this was not so in the other arts. In music, especially, amateurs continued to be a conspicuous presence even in the second half of the century: the chemist Borodin and the government clerk Musorgskii immediately spring to mind. Their 'amateurism' was obviously not a question of lack of talent. Personal factors apart—that is, Borodin's genuine scientific interests and the impoverishment of Musorgskii's family—their failure to dedicate themselves fully to composing had a lot to do with the profession of an independent artist still being so little established in Russia.

The social rank of 'free artist' ('вольный художник') did exist and had been granted to painters, sculptors, and actors—though not to musicians—ever since the eighteenth century, releasing them from taxation and military service.¹⁴⁵ But this was not the same as the ideal of a 'свободный художник' which Shubin invokes in *Накануне* (VIII/24), and which always informed Turgenev's thoughts on the question of the Russian artist. Thus, in his essay *По поводу «Отцов и детей»* (1869), in which he spelt out many of his aesthetic principles, Turgenev would stress that 'нигде так свобода не нужна, как в деле художества, поэзии' (XIV/107). Here it was mainly inner freedom which he had in mind, but he was also aware of the social factors impinging on Russian artists.

¹⁴³ In her book *Dix années d'exil* (1820). See the Academy edition's commentary for Turgenev's critical articles (I/577).

¹⁴⁴ Turgenev cites Mme de Staël's phrase in his 1846 review of a pseudo-historical play by Kukol'nik (I/297). It is interesting that Pushkin himself, in a letter of 16 December 1836 to the French ambassador de Barante, had quoted Mme de Staël and argued that her observation was no longer applicable because literature in Russia had at last become 'une branche considerable d'industrie', in which authors could convert their work into tangible financial gain rather than just aspiring to win the applause of refined society (1949:X/606). Nevertheless, during the 1830s, contributions to the few periodicals that had been allowed by the government (such as Pushkin's own *Современник*) still tended to come from a rather exclusive set of 'gentilshommes'.

¹⁴⁵ Olkhovsky 1983:85.

Now, the independent spirit shown by an early nineteenth-century painter such as Briullov, who once even refused a commission from Nicholas I,¹⁴⁶ was really quite an exception: for not until the secession of 1863 and the emergence of private collectors such as the merchant Pavel Tret'iakov did Russian painters of humble origins begin to approach something of the professional 'freedom' enjoyed by their colleagues in the West. Before that, as we may see from the humiliations suffered by Aleksandr Ivanov at the hands of imperial functionaries on his return to St Petersburg,¹⁴⁷ such artists were treated little better than State employees:

Russian artists in all fields were, as a group, far closer to their government than was the case in any West European nation. Faculty at the Academy of Arts received civil service rank, and their students' stipends were viewed virtually as state wages [...] Lacking any tradition of middle-class independence from the state, Russian painters were the less inclined to view autonomy as a prerequisite for an artist.¹⁴⁸

In view of this, as well as the fact that the rank and salary attainable by painters and sculptors, after many years of training, were nowhere near as high as those which young sons of the gentry could aspire to if they entered the civil service or military, it is understandable why their parents were so reluctant to let them pursue an artistic career. This reluctance was probably even stronger amongst the wealthier gentry families, who had become increasingly jealous of their rights ever since the Charter of the Nobility (1785) and took a rather pragmatic view of State service. Such was the attitude, for example, of Turgenev's mother when he spoke of his wish to devote himself entirely to literature (and abandon his post in the Ministry of Interior):

А я так постичь не могу, какая тебе охота быть писателем? Дворянское ли это дело? Сам говоришь, что Пушкиным не будешь. Ну ещё стихи, такие, как его, пожалуй, а писатель! что такое писатель! По-моему, *écrivain ou gratte-papier* c'est tout un. И тот и другой за деньги бумагу марают. Дворянин должен служить и составить себе карьеру и имя службой, а не бумагомаранием. Да и кто же читает русские книги?¹⁴⁹

For gentry families to let their children spend years training as painters, sculptors, or musicians, was even more unthinkable, since in pre-Emancipation Russia such 'careers'

¹⁴⁶ Mashkovtsev 1961:161. Perhaps Briullov's Huguenot descent played a part in this.

¹⁴⁷ These humiliations were described indignantly by Herzen in his obituary of the painter, published on 1 September and 15 November 1858 in *Колокол* (1954-66:XIII/392). Turgenev also refers to them in his letter of 9 July 1858 to Pauline Viardot, lamenting Ivanov's untimely death (P* III/329).

¹⁴⁸ Starr 1983:98, 103.

¹⁴⁹ As recalled by Turgenev's illegitimate half-sister, Varvara Zhitova. *VT* (1983):I/44.

were associated either with serfs detailed by their masters or with other members of the lower classes seeking to escape poverty. Thus, the sixteen-year-old Raiskii, in Goncharov's *Обрыв*, cannot convince his guardian to let him enrol at the Academy of Fine Arts, for the latter insists that the scion of a noble family has no need to take up a profession which was exercised merely 'ради куска хлеба' (1959-60:V/50). The path which Raiskii is persuaded into is similar to that of many a member of the Russian aristocracy with artistic inclinations: a number of years of service in an élite Guards regiment until an inheritance or the like allowed them to resign their commission and try to dedicate themselves to what the majority of their class looked upon as a mere hobby.

It is quite telling that almost all of the dilettantes who appear in Turgenev's stories are ex-Guards officers as well. For example, Veret'ev, in *Затишье* (1854), is an 'отставной гвардии поручик' (VI/98), and Asya's brother Gagin had been placed by their father in a 'юнкерская школа' from which he proceeded into a 'гвардейский полк' (VII/92). This is an important detail because the Guards regiments were traditionally open only to the wealthiest sons of the aristocracy and they were, moreover, notorious for their drinking excesses. Alcoholism, as a variant of the tragic fate besetting so many Russian artists—including Musorgskii, whose health was undermined early on by the drinking bouts he took part in as an officer of the Preobrazhenskii Regiment—will be discussed in Chapter VI. Suffice it to say here that the alcoholism to which Veret'ev succumbs in *Затишье* is just one of several symptoms of the malaise which in Turgenev's view prevented, with very few exceptions, the sons of the Russian landowning gentry from developing into proper artists.

Another symptom was the lack of professionalism which we have already discussed in the contrast between Shubin and the typical Russian dilettantes. Having decided to devote themselves to their chosen art at a relatively late age, these usually well-off gentlemen lacked the self-discipline that most artists acquire through early regular and formal training, as well as the material incentive to persevere with, and finish, their works. In this respect Goncharov's Raiskii and Gagin in *Ася* are very similar: they both take up painting after having spent a number of years amidst the 'петербургская «золотая молодёжь»' (Goncharov 1959-60:V/79) and prove incapable of day-to-day work. Thus, Raiskii enrolls at the Academy as a private student after leaving his regiment but soon tires of attending drawing classes, horrified by the prospect of having to submit himself to this grind for the eight years that a course there normally lasted. Retreating into flights of

fantasy, like Dostoevskii's Efimov, he fails to complete any of the works that he starts (except perhaps his bust of Vera).

Similarly, Gagin in *Ася* assumes the demeanour of a 'free artist' but allows himself all too readily to be distracted from his easel, preferring instead to philosophize in true Russian fashion with the narrator about the artist's significance in the modern age. None of the sketches in his portfolio is complete and his draughtsmanship is careless. Thus, despite the sympathy he feels for him, the narrator cannot help making the following observation about Gagin: 'От него, несмотря на его шляпу à la Van Dyck и блузу, так и веяло мягким полуизнеженным, великорусским дворянином' (VII/87) and generalizing on how 'Без горького, постоянного труда не бывает художников' (VII/83).

What to some extent redeems these two dilettantes is their self-criticism in moments of clarity—admittedly less frequent in Raiskii, who fails to learn from his mistakes and from the example of the various true artists he comes across, and who at the end of the novel is carried away to Italy by his new-found 'vocation' for sculpture. Nevertheless, he does admit to the nihilist Volokhov that he had taken up painting too late: 'поздно было: какая академия после чада петербургской жизни!' (Goncharov 1959-60:V/231), echoing Gagin's confession: 'Не учился я как следует, да и проклятая славянская распущенность берёт своё' (VII/80).

It would be unfair to attribute the similarities between Gagin and Raiskii solely to Turgenev having—unconsciously or not—used some of the traits which Goncharov revealed to him in 1855 about the hero of the novel that eventually became *Обрыв* (and which at that stage was entitled *Художник*) when writing *Ася* two years later. For *Затишье*, which deals with another model of the aristocratic dilettante, was published a year before Goncharov's revelations about his planned novel, indicating Turgenev's long-standing interest in these matters so close to his own heart. After all, he too was the scion of a privileged gentry family trying to establish himself as a professional artist. Without wishing to disparage the justness of Goncharov's grievances, in the particular case of the dilettante type represented by both Raiskii and Gagin it seems best to subscribe to the verdict of the court of arbitration which in March 1860 tried to settle the feud between the two great novelists by pointing out that their works had emerged from the same 'Russian soil' and were therefore bound to depict similar situations.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Bogoslovskii 1964:303.

The aristocratic dilettante was very much a real feature of Russian society—even in the second half of the nineteenth century, as we may appreciate in the way Vronskii takes up painting after leaving the army and travelling to Italy with Anna. Interestingly, it has been suggested that because in the early drafts of *Анна Каренина* (1874-76) Vronskii's character is called Gagin, Tolstoi had in mind the sympathetic but flawed painter from Turgenev's story as one prototype for this figure.¹⁵¹ Whether or not this was the case, it is clear that the dilettante Vronskii, who doesn't seek inspiration in real life or in his own feelings but instead tries to imitate the Old Masters, provides Tolstoi with a foil to what he believed an artist should be like. As Babaev rightly emphasizes (1981:181-83), the contrast between Vronskii and the ungainly Mikhailov, whose paintings of Christ before Pilate and, later, of Anna do awaken genuine human feelings in almost all who see them, adumbrates Tolstoi's arguments in *Что такое искусство?* (1898) about artificial and true art. Furthermore, this juxtaposition of two different types of artist is not unlike that so beloved of the Russian writers of the forties. It is a theme which can perhaps be traced back to Gogol's story *Портрет* where Chartkov, after becoming a fashionable painter, meets his old classmate from the Academy, who had been living like a recluse in Italy, studying and working with utter disregard for the temptations of worldly success. Just as Gogol there pays tribute to his friend the painter Ivanov, whose self-abnegating zeal he increasingly sought to emulate, so Tolstoi illustrates through Mikhailov his ideal of a true artist.

The singularity of Tolstoi's case is worth pointing out, though, because all his life he showed a certain suspicion, if not disdain, towards professional artists and sided with the amateur who gave himself over to artistic creation only in moments of respite from the cares and worries of life (such as Tolstoi's neighbour Fet, who in between the daily running of his estate produced his lyrical poems). And yet at the same time he understood and felt the need to be an artist 'всеми силами души', as he described it when immersed in the writing of *Война и мир*.¹⁵² It was a paradox which estranged him somewhat from Turgenev, who, despite being interested in the same pedagogic matters as Tolstoi—even to the extent of drafting a plan in 1860 for a Society for the Propagation of Literacy and Primary Education which would set up village schools and publish books appropriate to the needs of peasant readers (XV/247-48)¹⁵³—was unwilling or unable to give them as

¹⁵¹ Pearson 1981:365.

¹⁵² Letter to A. A. Tolstaia, 17 October 1863 (Tolstoi 1978-85:XVIII/609).

¹⁵³ Freeborn (1973:398-400) suggests that this ambitious programme was related to the conception of Bazarov as a 'teacher' and may have been inspired by the example of Tolstoi's school at Iasnaia Poliana.

much attention as to his artistic work. As Turgenev emphasized in a letter of 1864 to Countess Lambert, who had been urging him to return to Russia:

Вы говорите: должно служить отечеству—прекрасно; но Вы согласитесь, что я не могу служить ему ни как военный, ни как чиновник, как агроном или фабрикант; посильную пользу приносить могу я только как писатель, как артист. (P V/278-79)

In Tolstoi, however, he discerned an attitude antagonistic to his own and in various letters he expressed his concern about the younger man's reluctance to treat literature as his main occupation, in which he saw not so much dilettantism (since Tolstoi's talent was beyond all doubt) as, rather, an element of aristocratic wilfulness. Thus, a few months before their famous quarrel he reminded him in a letter from Paris: 'специальность есть признак всякого живого организма,—а Ваша специальность всё-таки искусство';¹⁵⁴ and in 1877, when he heard that Tolstoi had been transcribing peasant folk-songs and had even sent them to Chaikovskii for appraisal, he observed: 'как не пожалеть о том, что этот человек, столь необычайно одарённый, словно вследствие пари делает именно то, что ему не следует делать?!'¹⁵⁵

Tolstoi's pedagogic and social efforts were of course not carried out in a spirit of dilettantism and in many ways they also enriched his writing, but Turgenev had his reasons for warning against such *πολυπραγματεία* (to use the word with which Socrates in Plato's *Dialogues* brands those who engage in many things rather than concentrating on what they know best). In the Russian context it tended to be symptomatic of a lack of purpose, and even if inspired by the best intentions it almost never led to any tangible results. Such, at any rate, is the upshot of Rudin's various enterprises in Turgenev's novel, which initially was to have the ironic title 'Гениальная натура' (VI/569). Whereas Rudin, however, tries to apply himself to non-artistic tasks, there were many aristocrats in Turgenev's day who dabbled in various arts and left little of consequence. This malaise finds a most tragic exposition in the story *Затишье*, in which Veret'ev heaps scorn on such Russian dilettantism in order to justify his own passivity. As he tauntingly says to Masha, whom he drives to suicide by his cynicism:

Хотите вы, чтобы я поступил на службу, сделался агрономом? Хотите, чтобы я издал романы с аккомпанементом гитары, напечатал бы собрание стихотворений, рисунков, занялся бы живописью, ваяньем, плясаньем на канате? (VI/124)

¹⁵⁴ Letter of 14/26 March 1861 (P IV/216).

¹⁵⁵ Letter to Polonskii, 30 December 1876/11 January 1877 (P XII₁/52).

As we shall see in Chapter IV, Veret'ev's bitter words also reflect the problem Russian artists had in trying to achieve something original. Here, though, they are relevant for what they suggest about how difficult it was to take the artist's profession seriously in Russia.

Even those Russian aristocrats who, unlike Veret'ev, did manage to muster the enthusiasm to try to create works of art were often hampered by their privileged position. For their independence of means was rarely such a powerful stimulant to work as the obligations which their Western counterparts had to meet in order to earn their living. In this sense Pushkin's *Евгенийские ночи* (1825/35) is very revealing. Charskii in this remarkable fragment would certainly agree with Mme de Staël's phrase, since he takes more pride in his noble ancestry than in his poetic musings and looks down with disdain on the Italian improviser's greed for profit: 'Звание поэтов у нас не существует. Наши поэты не пользуются покровительством господ; наши поэты сами господа...' (Pushkin 1949:VI/375).¹⁵⁶

Turgenev himself sided with those who discarded such aristocratic contempt for earning one's living by the sweat of one's brow and actually tried to live from the proceeds of their art, but it hadn't always been so. As a young man he had even pretended, in the salons of St Petersburg, that he gave away his poems and short stories to the literary journals for free. Belinskii had taken him to task for this: 'Так вы считаете позором сознаться, что вам платят деньги за ваш умственный труд? Стыдно и больно мне за вас, Тургенев!'¹⁵⁷ This reproach caused Turgenev to change his attitude and shows once again how important Belinskii's role was in fostering a professional ethos in Russian writers.

III.2 Teaching in music and the fine arts

In 1861, the question of artistic professionalism in Russia was addressed in similarly stark terms by Anton Rubinshtein—who was by then a pianist of European renown—in his controversial article entitled 'О музыке в России'. Rubinshtein pointed out that in Russia only amateurs could permit themselves the luxury of taking up music

¹⁵⁶ Charskii is repeating some of Pushkin's own thoughts on the special status of Russian writers: 'Мы не можем подносить наших сочинений вельможам, ибо по своему рождению почитаем себя равными им' (Letter to Ryleev, June-August 1825—Pushkin 1949:X/178). But the Italian's pragmatism (which does not in any way diminish his poetic genius!) reflects Pushkin's even more unique determination to make a livelihood out of his poetry: 'Si je n'écris encore que sous l'influence capricieuse de l'inspiration, les vers une fois écrits je ne les regarde plus que comme une marchandise à tant la pièce' (Draft of a letter to A. I. Kaznacheev, June 1824—X/89).

¹⁵⁷ As recalled by Avdot'ia Panaeva. *VT* (1983):I/107.

and that as long as there were no musicians who actually depended on their art for their daily bread the level of Russia's musical culture would never rise.¹⁵⁸ His arguments for the 'professionalizing' of music (partly by having musicians included in the rank of 'вольные художники') and, especially, his appeal to Russian society to help set up a conservatory which would train Russian-born musicians and music teachers, were immediately scorned by Vladimir Stasov and three of the composers of the 'Mighty Handful', including Balakirev.¹⁵⁹

But even they could deny neither the fact that their revered Glinka had had to spend four years in Berlin and Milan (1830-34) in order to consolidate his knowledge of musical theory because there were no suitably qualified teachers at home, nor the democratic spirit of Rubinshtein's project, so characteristic of the early 1860s. After all, Rubinshtein had argued (1983-86:I/53) that interest in music was most frequently encountered amongst people of humble origins who lacked the means to pay for private music lessons, and who, even if this were not so, wouldn't have been able to benefit from such lessons anyway, since most music teachers in Russia were foreigners catering for the nobility and didn't speak Russian! The efforts with which Balakirev and his friends sought to upstage Rubinshtein were effectively an attempt to fulfil the latter's programme faster than was perhaps feasible in Russia. Thus, in contrast to the fee-charging St Petersburg Conservatory, which was patronized by the German-born Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna and staffed largely by German teachers at first (something that was inevitable given the lack of native expertise), the pupils of Balakirev's Free Musical School, which received hardly any State funding at all,¹⁶⁰ were to be taught by altruistic Russian enthusiasts.

Nevertheless, despite a clear similarity of aims, what divided the two camps in this polemic of the 1860s was the very notion of a 'conservatory' as such. What to Rubinshtein appeared like the overdue creation of an institution which would help Russia to overcome her cultural backwardness with respect to Western Europe, acted like a red rag on Stasov and the 'Mighty Handful'. For them the Conservatory was a foreign graft which would end up stifling Russian originality and creativity. Thus, in an anonymous riposte to Rubinshtein's 1861 article, Stasov warned:

¹⁵⁸ Campbell 1994:65-72.

¹⁵⁹ The other two were Cui and Mussorgskii. As Olkhovsky (1983:89) notes, the fact that their mentor in the art of composition, Balakirev, was largely self-taught, and that their full-time professions at the time were distinctly non-musical (they were both in the army), meant that they had some reason to feel offended by Rubinshtein's attack on amateur musicians.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Garden 1967:95.

[Консерватория] вмешивается самым вредным образом в *творчество* воспитывающегося художника, простирает деспотическую власть [...] на склад и форму его произведений, старается дать им своё направление, вогнать их в известную академическую мерку. (1974-80:II/9)

The parallel drawn here to another institution imported from Europe which Stasov attacked equally vigorously—the Academy of Arts—is obvious.

Despite all the sympathy which Turgenev felt for artists who were seeking to break free from the Academy's mould, and which had informed his portrayal of Shubin, he couldn't endorse any attacks on the Conservatory's teaching of music on the grounds of its supposed 'academicism' or 'routine' (accusations frequently levelled at it by Stasov and Cui in their articles). For a start, the Conservatory's principal task was to train orchestra players, soloists, and singers—not composers (something that Stasov and his composer friends, with their almost Romantic veneration of the 'revolutionary genius', seemed to forget about). And, more importantly, unlike the Academy, which had existed for a good hundred years, the proper teaching of musical theory—without which the composition of more ambitious musical works was impossible—had only just got under way in Russia, so it was sheer folly to reject this for the sake of originality. It was with a similar cautioning against the Russian tendency to build without sure foundations that Bazarov in *Отцы и дети* had explained to Nikolai Kirsanov why it was too early to apply Liebig's discoveries to Russian agriculture: 'Сперва надо азбуке выучиться и потом уже взяться за книгу, а мы ещё аза в глаза не видали' (VIII/220). Turgenev, who would later confess that he shared all of Bazarov's convictions except for his views on the arts (XIV/101-2), clearly also believed in the need to master the basics first.

After literature, music was the art which Turgenev valued the most: 'для меня музыкальные наслаждения выше всех других'.¹⁶¹ His friendship with Pauline Viardot, who had retired from the stage in 1864 and now dedicated herself to composition and teaching, gave him a great deal of insight into the development of musicians. Not surprisingly, he was very sensitive to any signs of amateurishness in this field on the part of his compatriots. For the lack of a solid grounding condemned by Bazarov as a typically Russian flaw made itself felt both in the performance of musical works and in attempts at composition. Thus, in a letter of 1864 to Mme Viardot, Turgenev described an amateur

¹⁶¹ Letter to S. Miller, 12 October 1853 (P II/188). In a conversation with the composer Kashperov in 1874, Turgenev did, however, remark that if he could start his life afresh, he would choose the career of a landscape painter (Zil'bershtein 1967:422).

singer who was highly appreciated in St Petersburg society but whose rendition of some romances he had asked her to sing at sight struck him as awful: ‘elle aussi, comme beaucoup de mes compatriotes, tout en connaissant peu la rhétorique, ignore complètement la grammaire. C’est par la bas que pèchent tous ces *dilettanti*.’¹⁶²

As for the Russian amateurs who fancied themselves composers but in reality lacked the most elemental musical skills, Turgenev had already ridiculed them in his comedy *Провинциалка* (1850), in which Count Liubin confesses to the heroine that during his spare time he was working on an opera: ‘для забавы, знаете ли... sans aucune prétention’ (III/183). It turns out that he can’t play the simplest romance on the piano! The sustainment of music in Russia by amateurs, however, became a matter of serious concern in the 1860s, when Rubinshtein’s ideological opponents sought to elevate it almost to a principle of faith—not in terms of technical incompetence, of course, but in the sense that Russian composers, in their view, had to eschew the professional trappings which Rubinshtein had declared essential for the thriving of music. These included the pursuit of social status and even of financial rewards. Moreover, the self-proclaimed champions of ‘Russian music’ denied the very need for a conservatory on Russian soil.

In this polemic Turgenev, as we would expect, sided with Rubinshtein, and in *Дым* (1867) he made sure to include the complacency of such musical chauvinists amongst the various delusions which, like clouds of smoke, obscured any hope of progress in his home country. Thus, with regard to the description which Turgenev gives of the Russian aristocratic clique that had converged on Baden-Baden—‘тут был граф X., наш несравненный дилетант, глубокая музыкальная натура, который так божественно «сказывает» романсы, а в сущности двух нот разбирать не может’ (IX/144-46)—it is worth noting that Rubinshtein, in his 1861 article, had spoken of those amateurs who, after writing one or two romances, immediately held themselves to be composers.¹⁶³ It was precisely this attitude which Turgenev had in mind when he had Potugin inveigh against Russia’s ‘home-grown geniuses’ and their predilection for writing ‘романсики’ and ‘вальсики’ (IX/232). Despite his love of the Russian drawing-room romance tradition and, in particular, of Glinka’s contribution to it,¹⁶⁴ Turgenev was aware of its associations with dilettantism of the kind shown by Panshin in *Дворянское гнездо*, who fails to convince Lemm that he is a serious musician (VII/143).

¹⁶² Letter of 22 January 1864, *NC*:I/115; and, in Russian, in: P V/207.

¹⁶³ Campbell 1994:67.

¹⁶⁴ In *Вешние воды*, Sanin introduces the Rosellis to Russian culture by singing Glinka’s famous setting of ‘Я помню чудное мгновенье’ (XI/19).

In an article of 1869, Turgenev reminded those of his compatriots who had criticized Mme Viardot for daring to compose Russian songs that, given her faultless musical pedigree and the universality of music, she had a greater right to do so than all those ‘плохие штаб-ротмистры в отставке и полинялые светские дамы, которыми снабжается наш музыкальный рынок и которые набирают свои романсики по слуху, тыкая одним пальцем по фортепианам’ (XIV/296).¹⁶⁵ The affinity to Rubinshtein’s views is once again unmistakable, for in his 1861 article the great pianist had noted how many of the romances by amateurs failed to observe the most elemental rules of harmony and didn’t respect the cadences of the verses (Rubinshtein 1983-86:I/48-49).

One of the chief accusations levelled by Stasov and Cui against the conservatory idea was that its implementation would depend largely on German teachers, and that this would threaten the development of Russia’s own musical idiom. Turgenev didn’t share these fears because he believed in Russia’s ability to assimilate beneficial foreign influences without forfeiting her original character. As Potugin puts it in *Дым*: ‘Вы только предлагайте пищу добрую, а народный желудок её переварит по-своему; и со временем, когда организм окрепнет, он даст *свой сок*’ (IX/171). Nor did it offend Turgenev’s national pride that Germans should be at the helm of such an institution to start with. For all his readiness to poke fun at the Teutonic character in such works as *Накануне* and *Вешние воды*, Turgenev knew only too well that German teachers were the best in Europe. Thus, in a letter defending Potugin’s views, he emphasized the ‘необходимость нам, русским, по-прежнему учиться у немцев,—как немцы учились у римлян’.¹⁶⁶

In the case of music Turgenev had personally witnessed the beneficial effect of German training on Russian native talent during his exile at Spasskoe, as he reported to Pauline Viardot in a letter of 1853:

Je ne sais pas si je vous ai dit que l’un de mes voisins possède un assez bon et nombreux orchestre sous la direction d’un excellent maître de chapelle allemand du nom d’Amtsberg. Ces musiciens jouent vraiment bien—leur répertoire est immense—ils exécutent *toute* la musique classique—et puis—ce qu’il y a de remarquable chez eux—c’est l’unanimité de leur jeu, l’identité de coloris et de nuances. Il n’ya du reste rien d’étonnant à cela. Amtsberg les a presque tous formés lui-même.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ The reference to ‘плохие штаб-ротмистры’ could be a jibe at Cui, who was rapidly rising up the ranks of the tsarist army and was the author of a large number of romances. He had been one of the unkindest critics of Pauline Viardot’s album of songs (FitzLyon 1964:411).

¹⁶⁶ Letter to Borisov, 16/28 June 1867 (P VI/276).

¹⁶⁷ Letter of 4 February 1853 (LI:64).

Even if in other parts of this letter one can detect a certain apprehension at the fact that this was a serf orchestra (see I.3), Turgenev did generally welcome such civilizing influences. In this sense, Potugin's parting words of encouragement to Litvinov, though they refer specifically to the latter's plans for applying back on his estate in Russia what he had learnt while studying agronomy in Europe, can also be interpreted as a vindication of Rubinshtein's conservatory project:

Всякий раз, когда вам придётся приниматься за дело, спросите себя: служите ли вы цивилизации—в точном и строгом смысле слова,—проводите ли одну из её идей, имеет ли ваш труд тот педагогический, европейский характер, который единственно полезен и плодотворен в наше время, у нас? (IX/313)

It is not surprising, then, that until 1874, when Turgenev had the opportunity to listen to a unique private performance of extracts from Musorgskii's two great operas,¹⁶⁸ the only composer of the 'Mighty Handful' for whom Turgenev showed any sympathy was Rimskii-Korsakov. The latter's determination to improve his knowledge of musical theory by diligent study, in order to prove himself worthy of the teaching post that he had been offered by the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1871, won Turgenev's respect on all counts.

The situation regarding teaching in the fine arts during Turgenev's youth was quite different to that of music. There professional training had been the norm ever since the second half of the eighteenth century, and graduates of the Academy did not necessarily have to travel abroad to seek out foreign masters who would teach them the skills that no one could back in Russia (as had been the case with Glinka). Certainly, many of the Academy's gold medallists did seize the opportunity to spend a few years in Italy or France, but the fact was that any student who had successfully completed his course acquired a recognized status in the eyes of Russian society (unless, of course, he happened to be a serf) and could usually expect to find work in either of the two capitals, or in the larger provincial centres. Moreover, the majority of teaching staff at the Academy were Russians, and, just as the sons of priests tended to follow in their fathers' footsteps, some 'dynasties' of Academy professors had even begun to arise (Aleksandr Ivanov, for example, was the son of such a professor).

¹⁶⁸ See Turgenev's letter to Pauline Viardot of 21 May 1874 (NC:I/ 211-12). This letter, full of enthusiastic remarks about *Борис Годунов* and *Хованщина*, as well as of optimism for the future of Russian music, is one of the most important documents from the Viardot family archives brought to light by Alexandre Zviguilsky in the 1970s. See also Gozenpud 1994:91-92.

In this respect it might seem that, even to someone so sceptical of his native country's level of culture as Turgenev, Russia had no cause to feel inferior to the rest of Europe. Indeed, if one were to go by the superlative praise lavished on paintings like Briullov's *Последний день Помпея* (1833) and Ivanov's *Явление Христа народу* (1836-55) by writers with Slavophile sympathies, such as Gogol', or downright Slavophiles like Khomiakov, one would have the impression that Russia had left Europe far behind! Turgenev, however, much as he admired Ivanov's noble but flawed endeavour, was not so optimistic about the state of Russian painting. One reason for this has to do with the nature of the education artists received at the Academy.

III.3 Humanistic education

A striking feature of Shubin's characterization in *Накануне* is his wide general knowledge. Not only can he cite Shakespeare, but he can also hold his ground in historical and philosophical debates. For a Russian sculptor or painter at the time this is something quite exceptional. Of course, it has a lot to do with the fact that Shubin belongs to the gentry and was fortunate, too, in having a French mother who took such care over his education. The majority of pupils who passed through the Academy's doors were of distinctly humbler origins. Moreover, even though the Academy's curriculum was supposed to cover all the liberal arts (history, geography, and so on), on top of technical lessons in drawing, it was, in fact, heavily skewed towards the latter.¹⁶⁹ Very few of the humbler students at the Academy, who had their fees paid for them either by the State if they showed great aptitude or—in the case of serfs—by their landowning masters, would have had the spare money and initiative to enrol as auditors at the University, where they might otherwise have been able to attend lecture courses that would have broadened their intellectual horizons beyond the Academy syllabus.¹⁷⁰

Significantly, two writers as seemingly disparate in their views as Dostoevskii and Turgenev were unanimous in lamenting Russian painters' lack of a general humanistic education. For instance, in a review of an exhibition at the Academy in 1861 Dostoevskii discussed in detail a painting by Valerii Iakobi entitled *Партия арестантов на привале*, which in terms of its subject-matter he praised as more relevant to contemporary society

¹⁶⁹ Bowl 1983b:116.

¹⁷⁰ Even so, as Herzen pointed out in an article of 1851, the Ministry of Education under Nicholas I drastically restricted the opportunities for serfs to acquire a higher education (1954-66:VII/82-83).

than all the usual neo-classical works submitted for such competitions. However, he argued that its ‘photographic’ realism was not sufficient for a true work of art:

[Якоби] уже добирается до правды действительной; далее, до остальной, высшей правды он дойдёт уже не академическими работами, не под руководством своих профессоров живописи, а общим развитием, общим образованием, чего, как известно, всегда недоставало не всем, а большинству наших художников.¹⁷¹

In order to avoid mere ‘дагерротипирование’—which in the case of Iakobi’s work seemed to betray a lack of interest in the feelings of the convicts he had painted—Dostoevskii emphasized that students at the Academy should also be allowed and encouraged to attend university courses. If one reads between the lines, it is clear that Dostoevskii was expressing his hope that a broader education would awaken the social conscience of these future artists.

Turgenev, too, on a number of occasions, vigorously rejected slavish ‘photographic’ realism. In his 1845 essay-review of Goethe’s *Faust* he argued that a good translator had to be creative rather than just diligently copy the original wording: ‘Что может быть рабски добросовестнее дагерротипа? А между тем хороший портрет не в тысячу ли раз прекраснее и вернее всякого дагерротипа?’ (I/247). And in an often quoted phrase from an early letter to Pauline Viardot, he affirmed: ‘L’art n’est pas un daguerréotype’.¹⁷² Even though Turgenev in these statements seems more concerned with the need for beauty, albeit one of a realistic kind, in a work of art than with the social awareness and sympathy demanded by Dostoevskii in that article of 1861, it is only too clear that the author of *Записки охотника* and *Муму* created this gallery of unforgettable peasant figures not just for the beauty and originality that they might lend to his prose, but because of his genuine interest in them as human beings.

The origins of what we might call this humanitarian tendency in the works of both novelists are quite easy to trace. One could point to Dickens and George Sand, but, interestingly, we find the very sentiment which led both Turgenev and Dostoevskii to condemn mere objective ‘daguerréotypism’ also expressed in Gogol’s *Портрет* (in the revised version of 1842), where Chartkov muses about the portrait of the old money-lender and its ghastly naturalism:

¹⁷¹ Dostoevskii 1972-88:XIX/156. The review was unsigned, but Leonid Grossman attributed it to Dostoevskii, since it shows all the features of his style and touches on issues close to his heart.

¹⁷² Letter of 5/17 January 1848 (P I/292).

Если возьмёшь предмет безучастно, бесчувственно, не сочувствуя с ним, он непременно предстанет только в одной ужасной своей действительности, не озарённый светом какой-то непостижимой, скрытой во всём мысли.¹⁷³

Turgenev and Dostoevskii would also have remembered how Belinskii, in his last major article (the survey of Russian literature in 1847), had defended the autonomy of art whilst at the same time stressing that the creation of a work of art could never be a process divorced from the artist's feelings and thoughts about the reality surrounding him:

Чтобы списывать верно с природы, мало уметь писать, т.е. владеть искусством писца или писаря; надобно уметь явления действительности провести через свою фантазию, дать им новую жизнь. Хорошо и верно изложенное следственное дело, имеющее романический интерес, не есть роман и может служить разве только материалом для романа, т.е. подать поэту повод написать роман. Но для этого он должен проникнуть мыслию во внутреннюю сущность дела, отгадать тайные душевные побуждения, заставившие эти лица действовать так [...] А это может сделать только поэт. (1953-59:Х/303)

Such depth of understanding as Belinskii was demanding of Russian writers in their approach to the reality of their country could, in the view of this most ardent of Westernists, only be acquired through a proper humanistic education—that which he himself had lacked because of his humble origins and which he zealously tried to make up for by studying the most recent European thinkers with the help of his friends Stankevich and Bakunin.

An insufficient awareness of the philosophical and social strivings that had been emerging in the West and in Russia was certainly one of the things both Turgenev and Dostoevskii had in mind when they lamented Russian artists' lack of a general education such as might be acquired in a lecture hall—if, say, someone like Granovskii was speaking—and in the discussions of student circles. Not because they necessarily wanted painters to give direct visual expression to these strivings, but because knowing about the latter would give them a better sense for how to approach Russian reality if they came to represent it in their works. Thus, Dostoevskii, for example, was to praise Repin's *Бурлаки* (1873; Plate 4A) for its avoidance of any overt accusations of social injustice, arguing that its sympathetic portrayal of the Russian people's humility in adverse circumstances was a

¹⁷³ Gogol' 1952-53:III/80. In the first version of 1835, so sharply criticized by Belinskii, the passage in question is full of Romantic phrases about how that all too life-like portrait violates the mysteries of Nature (III/245-46). When Gogol' reworked his story in 1842, he endowed Chartkov with the views on aesthetics that he himself had developed in writing *Мёртвые души*.

more effective reminder of the ‘неплатный долг высших классов народу’ than any pamphlet or explicitly tendentious work could ever hope to achieve.¹⁷⁴

For Turgenev, the opportunity which a university-like education could give to the talented individual—in particular, of freeing the mind of prejudices and encouraging a serious and philosophical attitude towards life—was one that he wished all artists could enjoy. To an aspiring young writer he once gave the following advice:

Нужно ещё читать, учиться беспрестанно, вникать во всё окружающее, стараться не только уловлять жизнь во всех её проявлениях—но и понимать её, понимать те законы, по которым она движется и которые не всегда выступают наружу.¹⁷⁵

Similarly, in *По поводу «Отцов и детей»* he stressed that no artist could do without education and knowledge (XIV/107).

Turgenev’s description, in *Поездка в Альбано и Фраскати* (1861), of his meeting with Ivanov in 1857, reflects this concern of his quite well, as we may see from the observations he makes about the reclusive painter: ‘К сожалению, воспитание получил он слишком поверхностное, как бóльшая часть наших художников’ (XIV/88). However, as he notes further on, Ivanov was conscious of this deficiency and sought to overcome it by assiduous self-study. Interestingly, other memoirs on Ivanov also dwell on this point. In an article published a few months after the painter’s death, Chernyshevskii quoted what Ivanov had said to him:

Мы, художники, получаем слишком недостаточное общее образование; это связывает нам руки. Сколько сил у меня достанет, буду стараться, чтобы молодое поколение было избавлено от недостатка, от которого мне пришлось избавляться так поздно. Вот теперь я, как видите, должен узнавать с большими затруднениями то, что другие узнают в университете.¹⁷⁶

In contrast to the self-study which Turgenev was referring to—Ivanov’s reading of as many historical works as he could get hold of, in order to get every detail right in his paintings—what Chernyshevskii had in mind when citing the above words was something rather different. The radical leader argued that Ivanov had managed to escape from the

¹⁷⁴ Dostoevskii 1972-88:XXI/74. Other interpretations of Repin’s painting are possible—such as Stasov’s observation about the young hauler’s rebellious pose (Valkenier 1983:165).

¹⁷⁵ Letter to V. Kign, 16 June 1876 (P XI/280).

¹⁷⁶ Chernyshevskii 1939-50:V/337. On his return to Russia Ivanov had apparently been hoping to set up an academy of painting which would provide its pupils with a good general education.

religious and mystic notions which had ruined Gogol' thanks to his having re-educated himself by reading David Friedrich Strauss and Feuerbach! Ivanov had apparently even said to him: 'Художник должен стоять в уровень с понятиями своего времени [...] Соединить рафаэлевскую технику с идеями новой цивилизации—вот задача искусства в настоящее время.'¹⁷⁷ Turgenev doesn't say anything about Ivanov having read Feuerbach—whose attack on theological abstractions in *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841) influenced Chernyshevskii's anti-Romantic aesthetics—but he does mention a visit which Ivanov paid to Strauss in Germany (XIV/87). This would suggest that the painter had indeed been trying to keep abreast with the latest developments in European thought.

At any rate, what is clear from Ivanov's case is a sense of discontent with the kind of education provided at the Academy, the consequences of which were felt more acutely by students of humble origins who had to fill the gaps as best as they could. Repin, for instance, the son of a military colonist, always made sure to read widely. Even so, painters were never really accepted as members of the intelligentsia until quite late in the nineteenth century. As Elizabeth Valkenier (2007:56-57) comments on the group of painters which formed around Kramskoi, 'the Peredvizhniki, diffident and insecure in their sociocultural standing, [were] content to let the recognized intelligentsia speak on their behalf'.

Of course, not everyone agreed with the commonly held view that students of the fine arts should receive a university-style education in addition to their technical classes. Tolstoi—no doubt partly because of unhappy memories of his alma mater Kazan—was firmly against the university system, and, in one of the articles about education which he contributed to his own journal *Ясная Поляна* in 1862, he even wrote that it wouldn't be a bad thing if the universities were to disappear altogether, considering the 'развращающее влияние' which they had on young people (1978-85:XVI/53). The principle on which Tolstoi based his rejection of systematic teaching in primary schools could easily be extended to the humanistic education which Turgenev and Dostoevskii valued so highly. 'Всякое серьезное образование приобретает только из жизни, а не из школы,' he had argued on the pages of his pedagogical journal (1978-85:XVI/24).

Significantly, in *Анна Каренина* Vronskii, Golenishchev, and Anna, who are all unable to appreciate fully the painter Mikhailov (though Anna does so much more than the two men), agree patronizingly 'что в таланте ему нельзя отказать, но что талант его не мог развиваться от недостатка образования—общего несчастья наших русских

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*: V/337, 339.

художников' (1978-85:IX/50). Tolstoi, by putting this somewhat clichéd phrase in the lips of characters as unsympathetic to him as Golenishchev and Vronskii, makes it quite clear what he thought about the supposed need for artists to receive a broader liberal education! The very way in which Mikhailov is shown at work on one of his paintings, achieving what he does by *intuition*, sums up Tolstoi's views on the essence of true artistic creation. It is worth noting that Mikhailov's principal work, the painting of Christ before Pilate, had cost him three years of efforts so far and is still unfinished when Anna and Vronskii meet him. The reason for this is almost certainly that such a subject does not come naturally to him (unlike his painting of the two boys fishing or his portrait of Anna). Rather, this decision to depict Christ as a historical figure seems to have been suggested to him by his reading of Strauss and Renan, as Golenishchev disdainfully remarks (1978-85:IX/39). By showing Mikhailov as not quite satisfied with this painting, Tolstoi probably wanted to hint at the negative influence of those 'nihilistic' journals and books which the painter had been reading in a misguided attempt to educate himself.¹⁷⁸

Tolstoi's emphasis on intuition in art and in other fields struck Turgenev as a dangerous tendency. It had been expressed very clearly in those sections of *Война и мир* which reflect on the nature of historical agency. Referring to the role of individuals in historical events, Tolstoi had asserted: 'Только одна бессознательная деятельность приносит плоды' (1978-85:VII/19). In the novel this is illustrated by Nikolai Rostov and Kutuzov, in particular, who react only to situations immediately affecting them without trying to comprehend the wider picture. Those Russians, in contrast, who had consciously undertaken heroic acts during the war with Napoleon had proven to be the most useless, Tolstoi argued. For Turgenev this notion was unacceptable, and in his 1869 essay *По поводу «Отцов и детей»*, as Batiuto (1967:135-40) has shown in a study of the rough draft, he intended to give a refutation of Tolstoi's view of history. In the manuscript of his essay, after stressing how education was essential for every artist, Turgenev had added: 'и человек, который подобно графу Толстому, мог написать: [что] только одна бессознательная деятельность приносит плоды,—сам начертал свой [собственный] приговор' (XIV/355). In the final text Turgenev limited himself to the following muted criticism of Tolstoi as part of his exhortation to young writers that they should always respect the value of learning:

¹⁷⁸ The complexity of Mikhailov's character has a lot to do with his being based on Kramskoi, who visited Tolstoi several times in 1873 to paint his famous portrait and whom he regarded as a typical Petersburg nihilist (Babaev 1961:177). However, this didn't prevent Tolstoi from recognizing Kramskoi's artistic integrity, to which he paid tribute in the figure of Mikhailov.

Самый печальный пример отсутствия истинной свободы, происходящего из отсутствия истинного знания, представляет нам последнее произведение графа Л.Н. Толстого («Война и мир»), которое в то же время по силе творческой, поэтического дара стоит едва ли не во главе всего, что явилось в европейской литературе с 1840 года! (XIV/107-08)

A year later, Turgenev saw in the Prussian army's victories over France ample confirmation of how wrong Tolstoi had been in ridiculing German military strategists in *Война и мир*: 'Весь его последний роман построен на этой вражде к уму, знанию и сознанию—и вдруг учёные немцы бьют невеж французов!!'¹⁷⁹ It should be said, though, that whilst rejoicing at the fall of Napoleon III, Turgenev was appalled by the Prussians' heavy bombardment of Strasbourg.

Turgenev's defence of the role of the intellect in all spheres of human activity, including art, is very important. It is one reason why Turgenev shouldn't be compared with Schopenhauer, who took a rather condescending view of artists as being unconscious of the ideas they represented in their works. There are, however, several other reasons, chief among which is Schopenhauer's fundamental anti-humanism, which went against the whole Russian literary tradition.

III.4 Schopenhauer refuted

In Turgenev's correspondence the German philosopher's name appears in just three letters. During his polemic with Herzen in 1862 about the future development of Russia, he urged his old friend not to imagine that Russia could follow a different, cleaner path than her European sister-nations and added ironically: 'Шопенгауэра, брат, надо читать прилежнее, Шопенгауэра'.¹⁸⁰ By this he evidently meant that like Schopenhauer, who had so bleakly described the uniformity of human nature (especially regarding its weaknesses and vices) down the ages, Herzen shouldn't delude himself that Russians as a people were intrinsically better than the French or Germans and that Russia could somehow avoid a bourgeoisie by adopting the supposedly socialist principles of the peasant commune. A few weeks later, Herzen, who didn't like to be crossed in arguments, admonished Turgenev: 'ты с твоим Шопенгауэром [...] становишься нигилистом'.¹⁸¹ In his reply Turgenev didn't say anything about Schopenhauer, but he did insist that the

¹⁷⁹ Letter to Borisov, 12/24 August 1870 (P VIII/270).

¹⁸⁰ Letter of 23 October/4 November 1862 (PV/65).

¹⁸¹ Letter to Turgenev, 10/22 November 1862 (Gertsen 1954-66:XXVII₁/264).

accusation of nihilism was unjust because he still believed in the Westernist ideals of his youth.¹⁸² This didn't stop Herzen, however, from elaborating on that accusation in his next letter: 'ты выехал на авторитете идеального нигилиста, буддиста и мертвиста—Шопенгауэра'.¹⁸³ Turgenev protested in his reply: 'я называю Шопенгауэра—ты упрекаешь меня в поклонении авторитету'.¹⁸⁴ In other words, Turgenev had done no more than to mention Schopenhauer as a dose of healthy scepticism against rose-coloured views of Russia's special status, yet the irascible Herzen immediately made him out to be an acolyte of that philosopher!

Their correspondence continued until early 1864, when there was a rupture that lasted a few years until, in May 1867, Turgenev suggested to Herzen that they resume their friendship. Herzen accepted this gesture of reconciliation, but inwardly he was still angry at Turgenev, especially after having read *Дым*, in which Potugin reiterated so many of Turgenev's own Westernist convictions. Thus, in an article entitled 'Ещё раз Базаров' (1868), which in fact has very little to do with *Отцы и дети*, he suggested that the term nihilism could be used to describe not the radical intelligentsia but, rather, those who advocated scepticism and passivity. In that sense, Herzen argued, 'один из величайших нигилистов будет И. Тургенев [...] и, пожалуй, его любимый философ Шопенгауэр' (1954-66:XXI/349). It was a typical case of seeking to have the last word.

Unfortunately, some scholars have taken Herzen's judgement for granted. For instance, Andrzej Walicki claimed that 'Schopenhauer was Turgenev's favourite philosopher from the early sixties until the end of his life' (1962:1). This is an utterly untenable assertion, and even more so the use to which Walicki puts it, accusing Turgenev of a pessimistic, cowardly liberalism: 'It was a liberalism without faith in the future and without faith in freedom' (1962:16). In his intransigence towards other scholars Walicki also took his cue from Herzen. Thus, he attacked Mikhail Gershenzon's splendid book *Мечта и мысль И.С. Тургенева* (1919) on the following grounds: 'Gershenzon erroneously thought that art was for Turgenev a means of "raising personality from the dead" [...] In fact, Turgenev saw art as a means of liberation from personality [...] The main reason for Gershenzon's misinterpretation was the strange fact that he did not notice Schopenhauer's influence on Turgenev' (1962:14). As if that were so self-evident!

¹⁸² Letter of 13/25 November 1862 (P V/73).

¹⁸³ Letter to Turgenev, 17/29 November 1862 (Gertsen 1954-66:XXVII/266).

¹⁸⁴ Letter of 21 November/3 December 1862 (P V/74).

Walicki claims that the poem-in-prose *Смоу!* (1879), addressed to Pauline Viardot, illustrates Schopenhauerian ‘aesthetic contemplation’, that is, the overcoming of the *principium individuationis* (1962:13). However, if one reads this poem without any preconceived notions, it is quite clear that Turgenev here is concerned precisely with the singer’s individuality: ‘В это мгновение ты бессмертна’ (XIII/196). As Viacheslav Golovko has emphasized (1989:153), the aesthetic enjoyment evoked by Turgenev in *Смоу!* and elsewhere doesn’t entail Schopenhauerian negation of the self at all. Moreover, despite Walicki’s dogmatic assertion, Gershenzon was right to say that Turgenev sought, through art, to raise personality from the dead. It is what he did in the case of his dear friend Belinskii, many of whose ideas and character traits he gave to Bazarov and his father in *Отцы и дети* (see Nikitina 1997). One could give many other examples, and Turgenev himself explicitly said that this was his aim as a writer when he defended the portrayal of Sofia in *Странная история* (1870), whose religious zeal some readers had dismissed as irrelevant to contemporary Russia:

Подобные лица жили, стало быть, имеют право на воспроизведение искусством. Другого бессмертия я не допускаю, а это бессмертие, бессмертие человеческой жизни—в глазах искусства и истории—лежит в основании всей нашей деятельности.¹⁸⁵

When Walicki speaks of Schopenhauerian ‘death of the ego’ in the prose-poem *Монах* (1879), one could take a leaf from his book and say that it is strange that he failed to notice the ‘influence’ of Pascal on Turgenev! Pascal came to the conclusion that ‘Le moi est haïssable’ two hundred years before Schopenhauer, and Turgenev does discuss Pascal at length, with a mixture of admiration and bewilderment, in various letters to Pauline Viardot.¹⁸⁶ This observation of Pascal’s can even be related to Turgenev’s self-effacing narrative method. As Freeborn has noted, ‘it is instinctive to Turgenev to hide himself’ (1960:48). Not surprisingly, scholars who disagree with this unjust association of Turgenev, one of the most inspiring of Russian writers, with Schopenhauerian pessimism have emphasized his reading of Pascal, especially clear in Bazarov’s reflections before his death (see Batiuto 1964).

Now, Herzen, for all his intelligence, was not a good judge of people, as suggested, for instance, by his wife’s elopement with Herwegh. Turgenev, who said only good things

¹⁸⁵ Letter to Avdeev, 13/25 January 1870 (P VIII/171-72).

¹⁸⁶ See the letters of 18/30 April 1848 (P I/295) and 8/20 June 1859 (LI:86-87).

about his friend after his death in 1870, admitted as much when he made the following remark in a letter to a literary historian who was writing about Belinskii:

Вообще Белинский, удивительно чуткий критик, был довольно слаб в реальном понимании живых людей, которых судил большей частью в силу предвзятых идей. То же самое замечалось и в другом, столь же даровитом, хотя и вовсе не похожем на Белинского, человеке—в А.И. Герцене. Оба были идеалисты по преимуществу.¹⁸⁷

It was precisely due to such a preconceived idea that Herzen called Schopenhauer Turgenev's favourite philosopher. Significantly, Annenkov, who knew Turgenev over so many years, did not once in his reminiscences speak of Turgenev having been influenced by Schopenhauer in any way. Annenkov did, however, note how their mutual friend Vasilii Botkin in the late 1850s became a disciple of Carlyle and Schopenhauer, adopting the latter's 'глубочайшее презрение к толпе и народным массам' (1960:331). Could one ever say that about the author of *Записки охотника*? Or even of the elderly Turgenev, who in so many of his poems-in-prose expressed his profound sympathy for the less fortunate and his anguish at the thought that thousands of Russian soldiers were being killed in the war with Turkey? Moreover, in those poems where he talks of his own fear of death it is very difficult to discern any affinity with Schopenhauer, because for the latter death was of course a welcome release from this terrible world of selfish and futile desires!¹⁸⁸ Not so for Turgenev, who gratefully accepted the gift of life.

As for Walicki's sweeping assertion that Turgenev's liberalism was one 'without faith in the future and without faith in freedom' (1962:16), that can easily be refuted, too. Henri Granjard, whose sensitive and intelligent book on Turgenev is in an altogether different league to Walicki's pamphlet, also tended to the view that Turgenev succumbed to 'pessimisme philosophique' and 'scepticisme politique' after 1862, and that his defence of Western civilization in his polemic with Herzen is undermined by the 'nihilisme du désespoir' allegedly expressed in *Довольно* (1954:324, 331, 347). In section VI.4 we shall consider why the reflections in *Довольно* should not necessarily be equated with Turgenev's own, but it is worth noting here that in April 1864, just one month after completing *Довольно*, Turgenev wrote his rousing essay on Shakespeare, in which he observed how the principles of 'гуманность, человечность, свобода' had been active ever since Shakespeare's day, and how these would eventually transform all European

¹⁸⁷ Letter to M. De-Pule, 7/19 February 1877 (P XII₁/90).

¹⁸⁸ McLaughlin (1984:112, 125) has noted this too, but she claims that it makes Turgenev into an even bleaker pessimist than Schopenhauer!

society (XV/49). The optimism of this essay anticipates his Pushkin speech of 1880, with its wholehearted declaration of faith in Russia's future and in the liberating force of poetry, which would one day also be felt by Russian peasants thanks to the spread of literacy and improvements in their material conditions (XV/76).

Significantly, neither Granjard nor Walicki mention the Shakespeare essay or the Pushkin speech. This is understandable given that the Academy edition of Turgenev's works wasn't available when they wrote on him. However, Walicki's treatment of Turgenev as a thinker—and one, moreover, to be belittled by association with Schopenhauer—rather than as a great artist is totally unwarranted. In contrast, Sigrid McLaughlin, who did have access to the Academy edition, acknowledges that after 1863-65 Turgenev no longer expressed such pessimistic thoughts as in *Призраки* or *Довольно*, and writes in her conclusion that 'Turgenev wandte sich nicht von der Welt ab (wie es Schopenhauer tat), wohin ihn ein konsequenter Pessimismus hätte führen müssen' because he continued to believe in science and education (1984:154). We should add that he also continued to believe in the value of art.

However, McLaughlin's earlier observation about Turgenev's 'ambivalence' with regard to progress because of his allegedly Schopenhauerian insight into 'ein ewig gültiges statisches Naturgesetz, das jeden Fortschritt unmöglich macht', as a result of which 'Turgenevs Haltung zum Fortschritt blieb sein Leben lang widersprüchlich' (1984:95, 96), must be contested. As we saw in section II.7, when his views on tragedy were discussed, Turgenev, even if he turned away from Hegel after his student years, always retained a dialectic outlook on life and history. It is what enabled him to see that both Bazarov and the Kirsanov brothers were right each in their way, as Batiuto (1990:184) has emphasized. For Turgenev, these 'contradictions' were part of the progress of humanity. It isn't even necessary to invoke Hegelian dialectics here, because already Kant, whose affinity with Turgenev has been noted (in II.6), had understood that an element of struggle was necessary in society for the development of man's talents and capacities: 'Der Mensch will Eintracht; aber die Natur weiß besser, was für seine Gattung gut ist: sie will Zwietracht' (1956: 338). Goethe also expressed the same view of life: 'Das Gleiche läßt uns in Ruhe; aber der Widerspruch ist es, der uns produktiv macht'.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Conversation with Eckermann, 28 March 1827 (Goethe 1985-98:XIX/540).

When interviewed by the American-Norwegian writer Hjalmar Boyesen in 1873, Turgenev, recalling his clash with Carlyle almost twenty years earlier, reflected on the contempt which Carlyle had expressed for democracy in Great Britain:

In my opinion he who is weary of democracy because it creates disorder is very much in the state of one who is about to commit suicide. He is tired of the variety of life and longs for the monotony of death. For as long as we are created individuals, and not uniform repetitions of one and the same type, life will be motley, varied, and even disorderly. And in the infinite collision of interests and ideas lies our chief promise of progress. To me the great charm of American institutions has always been in the fact that they offer the widest scope for individual development, the very thing which despotism does not and cannot do. It is my own life-long experience which has taught me this lesson... It is a law of nature that sickness can never prevail over health; if a negative principle were to become predominant in the world, mankind would no longer have sufficient vitality to continue its existence.¹⁹⁰

In view of these words can one continue to speak of Turgenev's 'pessimism', of his liberalism 'without faith in the future and without faith in freedom'?!

It's also strange that if Schopenhauer was Turgenev's 'favourite philosopher', as Herzen and others have claimed, Turgenev never seems to have discussed Schopenhauer with any of the contemporaries who later wrote reminiscences of him, whereas he was more than willing to speak of Russia, of Pushkin, Shakespeare, and all the many other things that interested him in life.

Apart from those two letters to Herzen in 1862, the third and last time that Schopenhauer's name appears in Turgenev's correspondence is in a letter of 1870 to his friend Fet, who was slowly working on a translation of the German philosopher's works. Again, Turgenev's tone in referring to Schopenhauer, in these mock verses, is far removed from the reverence that one would expect from an acolyte: 'Фет, ну как ваш Шопенгауэр? / Приезжайте посмотреть, / Как умеет русский Вауер / Кушать, пить, плясать и петь'.¹⁹¹ It is, however, significant that Turgenev mentioned Schopenhauer in a letter to Fet, as we shall see in the next section. In 1879, Fet would report to Tolstoi what Turgenev had once said to him: 'Да ведь Шопенгауэр, что же Шопенгауэр, ведь я его вывез в Россию'.¹⁹² There is again an ironic nuance here: if it really was Turgenev who

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Waddington 1980: 35-36.

¹⁹¹ Letter of 8/20 June 1870 (P VIII/242).

¹⁹² Letter from Fet to Tolstoi, 3 February 1879. Quoted in McLaughlin 1984:54.

introduced Fet to Schopenhauer's work, he certainly didn't pride himself on having 'imported' him into Russia because he must have found out, through Fet and other mutual acquaintances, how Tolstoi became an enthusiast of Schopenhauer in the summer of 1869. Although Tolstoi later distanced himself sharply from the German philosopher, at that time he was still capable of exclaiming: 'теперь я уверен, что Шопенгауэр гениальнейший из людей'!¹⁹³

We have already seen how alarmed Turgenev was by Tolstoi's attack on conscious heroism in *Война и мир*. Long before the novel's epilogue appeared in December 1869, Turgenev had discerned Tolstoi's underlying view of history, and he wrote to Annenkov:

Беда, коли автодидакт, да ещё во вкусе Толстого, возьмётся философствовать: непременно оседлает какую-нибудь палочку, придумает какую-нибудь одну систему, которая, по-видимому, всё разрешает очень просто, как например исторический фатализм, да и пошёл писать!¹⁹⁴

Whether or not Tolstoi's meditations on free will and historical necessity in the epilogue were influenced by his reading of Schopenhauer (see Walsh 1979), the point to bear in mind here is that Turgenev was worried by the younger man's tendency to try to reduce the complexity of life to a single system. If Turgenev did find out about Tolstoi's enthusiasm for Schopenhauer in the 1870s—in his correspondence with Fet and others who kept him informed about Tolstoi the subject isn't raised—he must have been even more alarmed!

McLaughlin (1984:58) has argued that Schopenhauer would have appealed to Turgenev because he is a non-systematic philosopher who accepts the 'reality' of life. But Schopenhauer is in fact very much a systematist himself when he purports to reduce all the phenomena of life to the selfish will as the essence of the world. Thus, not unlike Hegel with his famous axiom: 'What is reasonable is true, and what is true is reasonable'—which caused the Russians living under Nicholas I's regime so many headaches, as Turgenev noted in his memoirs of Belinskii (XIV/28)—Schopenhauer allows himself to be driven by his own system to such axiomatic conclusions as: 'The tormenter and the tormented are one and the same'.¹⁹⁵ Philosophically that may well be true (at least according to Schopenhauer's idea that all creatures are subject to suffering because of their very existence), but no Russian who had grown up in the humanitarian traditions so nobly advocated by Belinskii could possibly accept that. One need only think of Ivan

¹⁹³ Letter from Tolstoi to Fet, 30 August 1869 (1978-85:XVIII/682).

¹⁹⁴ Letter of 13/25 April 1868 (P VII/122).

¹⁹⁵ 'Der Quäler und der Gequälte sind Eines' (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, §63).

Karamazov's indignation at the cases of cruelty against children he has read about, and how Alesha, too, agrees that a monster such as the general in his brother's final example should be shot dead. Similarly, there's no sign in *Накануне* that Turgenev thought Insarov's cause was meaningless because the Turkish oppressors and their Bulgarian victims were 'one and the same'.

Of course, Schopenhauer is more famous for his emphasis on compassion as the only real virtue, and it is this aspect of his work which evidently appealed to Tolstoi and other Russians like Strakhov. It may also have appealed to Turgenev, but Schopenhauer was by no means the first thinker to extol compassion! Whilst expressing admiration for Kant elsewhere, Schopenhauer did, however, reject Kant's categorical imperative because in his view moral principles couldn't be imposed on the will, and so only compassion as the result of the insight that suffering is the lot of mankind could induce a person to act generously towards others.¹⁹⁶ Turgenev, in contrast, always believed in duty as an important principle regulating human conduct—not just in those works of the 1850s whose affinity with Kantian ethics we have discussed (see II.6) but also in later works such as *Дым* (1867). In that novel, Litvinov is tormented by the prospect of having to break his betrothal to Tat'iana precisely because 'он понимал важность обязанностей [и] святость долга' (IX/251), and though Tat'iana forgives him, her aunt judges him more strictly: 'Коли мы долга признавать не будем, что ж у нас останется?' (IX/297). It is Litvinov's ability to regain his consciousness of duty that, as James Woodward rightly observes (1984:75), contributes to the novel's message of faith in Russia's ability to shake off the 'legacies of her dark past', that is, of the pre-Emancipation period, during which few Russians had been able to develop a sense of individual dignity and honour.

III.5 *Призраки*: the conscious artist

In Turgenev's sketches for his works and rough drafts—another important record of the ideas with which he was concerned—Schopenhauer's name appears just once: namely, in the plan for *Призраки* (1864). In his outline of the various scenes to which the mysterious Ellis transports the narrator of this story, which is appropriately sub-titled 'фантазия', Turgenev jotted for the penultimate scene featuring Ellis as a spirit: 'Вид земли (Шопенгауэр)' (IX/379). In this scene the narrator describes how he and Ellis were flying over the surface of the Earth, and how he was overcome by a feeling of disgust at

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, §67. For Kant, compassion is one of the natural impulses which help us to perform our duty towards others, where the concept of duty alone may be insufficient.

the sight of ‘этот нарост на огненной песчинке нашей планеты, по которому проступила плесень, величаемая нами органическим, растительным царством’, as well as of ‘эти люди-мухи, в тысячу раз ничтожнее мух’ (IX/106). As Evgeniia Kiiko has pointed out (1967:124), this likening of the vegetation covering the Earth’s surface to ‘mould’ (плесень) can be traced to a passage in Schopenhauer’s principal work, in which he evokes the empirical insignificance of our existence by describing the Earth as one of many spheres floating in infinite space on whose surface a mouldy film (*Schimmelüberzug*) has generated conscious living beings.¹⁹⁷ One of Sigrid McLaughlin’s contentions is that Turgenev would have been attracted by the German philosopher’s vivid style, and here it does seem that this particular image of Schopenhauer’s caught Turgenev’s eye.

However, this passage in *Призраки* mustn’t be taken out of context. Immediately after describing the Earth’s surface and the insignificance of human life on it, the narrator adds: ‘Даже жалости я не ощущал к своим собратьям: все чувства во мне потонули в одном, которое я назвать едва дерзаю: в чувстве отвращения, и сильнее всего, и более всего во мне было отвращение—к самому себе’ (IX/106). It is then that Ellis urges him to abandon these thoughts: ‘Перестань,—шепнула Эллис,—перестань, а то я тебя не снесу. Ты тяжёл становишься’ (IX/106). Although Turgenev himself asked his readers not to look for any hidden allegory in this work, it is still legitimate to try to understand what the figure of Ellis and her relationship to the narrator, especially in this scene, might signify.

The most compelling interpretation of *Призраки* I have come across is that by Gerhard Dudek (1982), who argues that at the heart of this work is a polemic both against the ‘art for art’s sake’ doctrine proclaimed by such critics as Druzhinin and against Chernyshevskii’s condescending view of art as a surrogate of reality. Citing Turgenev’s important letter of 1856 to Druzhinin, in which he defended the legitimacy of *both* Pushkin and Gogol’s approaches to Russian life—‘Стремление к беспристрастию и к Истине всецелою есть одно из немногих добрых качеств, за которые я благодарен природе, давшей мне их’—¹⁹⁸ Dudek emphasizes that for Turgenev it was essential to combine the subjective-ideal with the objective-real in order to arrive at a truthful work of art. Although Ellis in *Призраки* wasn’t consciously conceived by Turgenev as his Muse, it is very likely that she represents some of his aesthetic principles. Thus, according to Dudek (1982:536), the narrator’s flights with Ellis, during which he sees all those wonderful *and* unpleasant

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, supplementary material for §§1-7.

¹⁹⁸ Letter of 30 October/11 November 1856 (P III/30).

scenes, are akin to those moments of inspiration, during which alone the artist is able to rise above mundane reality, as in Pushkin's famous poem 'Поэт' (1827). Otherwise the artist/poet is the most ordinary of people, as is quite clear in the case of the narrator of *Призраки*. Dudek sees Ellis's gradual transformation into a woman of flesh and blood as symbolical of the creation of a work of art, and suggests that as a spirit she had represented that imaginative element in artistic creation which Turgenev sought to uphold against Chernyshevskii's view of art as a mere imitation of reality (539). Not for nothing did Dostoevskii welcome Turgenev's story as a brave defence of 'poetic truth'.¹⁹⁹ The fact that Ellis also transports the narrator to unpleasant scenes, such as the revolt of Stenka Razin or modern Paris and St Petersburg, reflects, as Dudek argues (541), Turgenev's conviction that the artist must, like Gogol', also confront the negative aspects of reality.

Dudek quite rightly cites Pushkin's poem 'Поэт'. There is no need whatsoever to invoke Schopenhauer's view of the artist as someone endowed with the ability to give immediately recognizable form to *ideas* and ultimately to the *essence of the world*, which for Schopenhauer is, of course, the suffering caused by the selfish will.²⁰⁰ McLaughlin contends that Ellis allows the narrator to recognize 'das Wesen der Welt' (1984:119-20) and that Turgenev himself as an artist also revealed this essence. This, however, is questionable. When writing his works Turgenev wasn't concerned with giving form to ideas, let alone the 'essence of the world'. In a letter of 1869 he emphasized: 'Я в течение моей сочинительской карьеры никогда не отправлялся от *идей*, а всегда от *образов*'.²⁰¹ Freeborn, too, stresses that Turgenev always 'started from images' and relied on 'living experience' (1960:184). Readers and critics may certainly try to glean ideas from literary works—and that is what Schopenhauer also did, though predictably only picking those ideas that suited his preconceived notion of the world (hence his preference for tragedies). However, it is quite demeaning to treat artists, as Schopenhauer does, as if their function were merely that of serving as oracles for Platonic ideas about life and the world. As we have seen, Turgenev liked to endow his characters with the traits of people who were dear to him—such as Belinskii in the case of Bazarov and his father—or whom he had fleetingly known—such as the heroine of *Странная история*.

Призраки itself, for all its fantastic content, drew on 'living experience' in the sense that many of the scenes are known to have been based on dreams or memories from

¹⁹⁹ See his letter to Turgenev, 23 December 1863 (1972-90:XXVIII₂/61).

²⁰⁰ Cf. *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, §37f.

²⁰¹ Letter to Polonskii, 27 February/11 March 1869 (P VII/328).

Turgenev's youth. Now, to return to that scene which was inspired by Schopenhauer's image of the Earth's 'mouldy' crust, and in which the narrator was overcome by disgust with the world and with himself. He even admits that he felt no pity for his fellow-men. As Dudek has stressed, the narrator here reaches 'eine Haltung, die im diametralen Gegensatz zur gesamten russischen Literatur stand, in der das Mitleid mit den Menschen oberstes Prinzip war' (1982:543). That is why Ellis, in whom it is certainly legitimate to see a figurehead of Turgenev's aesthetics, admonishes him to abandon these pessimistic thoughts. It is a warning that inspiration will elude the Russian artist if he forsakes compassion and adopts an anti-humanistic stance.²⁰²

The fact that Ellis dies after the following scene, which presents an apocalyptic vision of death as a ghastly reptile (comparable to Ippolit's hallucination in Dostoevskii's *Идуом*), is very significant. As is the narrator's shock when he awakens and sees her almost lifeless body lying in the grass: 'Разве она не бессмертна? Разве и она обречена ничтожеству, разрушению? как это возможно?' (IX/108). Dudek points out (1982:539) that Ellis must have represented a principle which Turgenev had hitherto held to be immortal, and that in view of the almost simultaneous laments in *Довольно* (see VI.4) about the transience even of art, as well as the symbolism of Ellis's gradually becoming a real woman, this principle is clearly art. However, as Dudek so rightly stresses (543), the death of Ellis is *not* Turgenev's last word, for in his Pushkin speech of 1880 he would reaffirm his faith in the immortality of art. Indeed, it is a faith which he professed all his life, as he wrote in an early letter to Pauline Viardot: 'Le Beau est la seule chose qui [est] immortelle [...] Le Beau est répandu par tout, il s'étend même jusque sur la mort'.²⁰³ The great Romantic poet Keats memorably expressed the same faith:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness.

It's difficult to say what exactly caused Turgenev to have doubts about the immortality of art in the early 1860s—perhaps it was Mme Viardot's retirement from the stage and the thought that audiences would soon forget her—but reading Schopenhauer cannot have unsettled him. The fact that he borrowed that image of the 'mouldy' Earth from his book

²⁰² McLaughlin (1984:119-20) also sees in Ellis's words a warning that artists must feel compassion, but unlike Dudek (whom she cites only partially), she interprets everything in Schopenhauerian metaphysical terms without linking Turgenev to the Russian literary tradition.

²⁰³ Letter of 31 August 1850 (P I/389).

and used it as a warning against misanthropic tendencies suggests quite clearly what he thought of Schopenhauer and also why it is so perverse to see in the latter a kindred spirit to Turgenev, one of the most life-affirming of Russian writers.²⁰⁴

Neither Schopenhauer's philosophy of life nor his aesthetics, as noted earlier, can do justice to Turgenev's works or what he was seeking to achieve as an artist. This is above all because Schopenhauer was essentially a systematist who tried to reduce the complexity of life to one or two basic formulae.

A few years before his protest over Tolstoi's hostility against reason in *Война и мир*, Turgenev had waged a similar polemic against Fet, who believed that artists had to create unconsciously. Although Turgenev did agree that the unfathomable depths of the artist's inner world were part of the creative process—as we can appreciate in *Фауст* and other works—he took issue with Fet's exaltation of 'unconscious creativity' precisely because of its one-sided nature:

Это между нами—нескончаемый спор: я говорю, что художество такое великое дело, что целого человека едва на него хватает—со всеми его способностями, между прочим и с умом;—Вы поражаете ум остракизмом—и видите в произведениях художества—только бессознательный лепет спящего. Это воззрение я должен назвать славянофильским—ибо оно носит на себе характер этой школы: «Здесь всё чёрно—а там всё бело»—«правда вся сидит на одной стороне»...²⁰⁵

Here Turgenev was carrying on the legacy of Belinskii, who had so often stressed that writers had to use all their faculties, including their intelligence. As Batiuto has noted (1990:84-85), that is why Turgenev wrote those overtly polemic pages in *Дым*: tendentiousness and satire were sometimes required to make people think about important issues.

At the same time, when accused by Fet of having been tendentious in *Отцы и дети*—that is, of having deliberately made Bazarov superior to all the other characters—Turgenev insisted that at the time of writing his feelings about Bazarov had not been clear: 'я не знаю, люблю ли я его или ненавижу!' and that he had portrayed Bazarov and all the other figures just like a painter would: 'я все эти лица рисовал, как бы я рисовал

²⁰⁴ This is unfortunately one of the conclusions advanced by Galina Time in her otherwise stimulating study of Turgenev's reception of German philosophy (1997:126).

²⁰⁵ Letter to Fet, 23 January/4 February 1862 (P IV/330).

грибы, листья, деревья'. This concern for 'истина прежде всего',²⁰⁶ as he put it in this letter, is Turgenev's most important aesthetic principle.

It is something that he picked up from Pushkin. As Annenkov observed, even Turgenev's first works were distinguished by 'та внутренняя правда мысли и ощущения, которой он научился у Пушкина' (1960:382). Turgenev himself was the first to acknowledge this. In a letter he described Pushkin as 'мой идол, мой учитель, мой недостижимый образец',²⁰⁷ and in his speech of 1880 he emphasized how everyone who read the great poet became his pupil.

²⁰⁶ Letter to Fet, 6/18 April 1862 (P IV/370-71).

²⁰⁷ Letter to Stasiulevich, 15/27 March 1874 (P X/213).



Plate IA *A Girl with a Broom* (1651) by Rembrandt

Illustration courtesy of Olga's Gallery (www.abcgallery.com)

Turgenev spoke enthusiastically of this painting in 1879: 'Какая сила жизни в этом лице! Да вот это мастерство: суметь закрепить её на полотне. Это лучше всяких мадонн' (*VT* (1983): II/334), and in an interview for a French newspaper in 1869 he said that Rembrandt was his favourite painter.



Plate IB *A Milkmaid* (1820s) by Aleksei Venetsianov

Oil on canvas, 31.5 x 24.5

Illustration taken from *Gosudarstvennyi Russkii Muzei* (Gos. izd. izobr. iskusstva: Moscow, 1954)



Plate 2A *Brutus* (1540) by Michelangelo. Marble, height 95 cm.

Illustration courtesy of Olga's Gallery (www.abcgallery.com)



Plate 2B *Victor Hugo* (1842) by David d'Angers
Original plaster, height 67 cm.

Illustration courtesy of the Courtauld Institute of Art (www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/)



Plate 2C *Victor Hugo* (1832) by Jean-Pierre Dantan. Plaster, height 17cm.

Illustration courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art (www.wga.hu/)



Plate 3A *The Last Day of Pompeii* (1833) by Karl Briullov

Oil on canvas, 456.5 x 651

Illustration courtesy of Olga's Gallery (www.abcgallery.com)



Plate 3B *The Appearance of Christ to the People* (1855) by Aleksandr Ivanov

Oil on canvas, 172 x 247

Illustration courtesy of Olga's Gallery (www.abcgallery.com)



Plate 4A *Boat-Haulers on the Volga* (1873) by Il'ia Repin

Oil on canvas, 131.5 x 281

Illustration courtesy of Olga's Gallery (www.abcgallery.com)



Plate 4B *Forgotten* (1874) by Vasilii Vereshchagin

Illustration taken from <http://vystavka.pp.net.ua/>

This sketch is all that has survived of Vereshchagin's painting, which he decided to burn in despair at the accusations of 'клевета на русское воинство' that were levelled at him by various generals. The painting inspired one of Musorgskii's songs.



Plate 5 *Portrait of the Composer M. P. Musorgskii* (1881) by I. Repin

Oil on canvas, 69 x 57

Illustration courtesy of Olga's Gallery (www.abcgallery.com)

CHAPTER IV

*THE QUEST FOR ORIGINALITY***Introduction**

During their conversation at the beginning of *Накануне*, Shubin unburdens himself to Bersenev about his sense of being but a mere epigone when compared to the artists of Ancient Greece: ‘Им [древним] весь мир принадлежал; нам так широко распространяться не приходится: коротки руки’ (VIII/9). Of course, what we are told about the sculptor later on in the novel suggests that he hasn’t allowed this sense of inferiority to paralyze his creative impulses. Shubin’s self-irony is always devoid of that bitterness with which Veret’ev, in *Затишье*, argues that there is nothing new left to create and first cultivates his ‘большой талант к подражанию’ (VI/115), revelling as it were in his own unoriginality, before descending into apathy and drink. With Shubin, rather, conscience of being an unworthy epigone reflects the true artist’s modesty. Turgenev himself expressed this feeling on many occasions—perhaps most eloquently in a letter of 1880 to Pauline Viardot, in which he described his awe at seeing the recently unearthed friezes of the Pergamon Altar in Berlin:

J’ai vu, de mes yeux vu, les immortels, les divins, les incomparables fragments des hauts-reliefs colossaux de Pergame, représentant la guerre des Dieux et des géants [...] C’est le triomphe de la Grèce, de la lumière, de la beauté, sur les forces violentes et sombres [...] Ah! il n’y a que les Grecs et nous sommes tous des épigones.²⁰⁸

If we go from the field of sculpture to that of literature, it is clear that Turgenev readily acknowledged his insignificance before the great writers of the past. Commenting on the first separate edition of *Записки охотника* (1852), Turgenev observed that his stories had some merits, but immediately added:

До полноты создания всё это ещё далеко, и стоит прочесть какого-нибудь мастера, у которого кисть свободно и быстро ходила в руке, чтобы понять, какой наш брат маленький, маленький человек.²⁰⁹

The master he was referring to in this letter was Molière, but more often than not it was Pushkin, his paragon and ‘teacher’ in the realm of Russian literature. More generally, though, it was again the Ancients whose mastery of form and subject he found impossible

²⁰⁸ Letter of 26 January/7 February 1880 (LI:214).

²⁰⁹ Letter to Annenkov, 14 September 1852 (P II/64-65).

to match. He realized this, for example, when writing *Певцы*: ‘mes chanteurs me faisaient penser à Homère. Je n’y ai plus pensé dans la suite—car la plume me serait tombée des mains’.²¹⁰ Nevertheless, despite this confession of his inadequacy (which it would be wrong to interpret as false modesty in someone as honest as Turgenev), the fact is that it didn’t stop him from taking up his quill again and again, after periods of dejection (such as that described in *Довольно*—see VI.4) and inactivity. Nor did it stop him from producing works which were recognized as truly original both by Russians and Western Europeans—in particular, *Записки охотника*, one of which led George Sand to exclaim in 1874: ‘Tous nous devons aller à l’école chez vous’.²¹¹

One reason for this courage in venturing to create new works of art, in spite of all that had been achieved already over several millennia of European culture, was a certain rebellious streak in Turgenev’s character which caused him to sympathize with the most famous of the Titans who defied the Gods: with Prometheus! Indeed, the myth of Prometheus cannot but appeal to any artist who is trying to break free from the hold of the past and create his own world (just as the Titan formed and gave life to his clay images). This is how Goethe interpreted it in his famously defiant poem *Prometheus*, which Turgenev once recited in an impromptu French translation during a meal in Flaubert’s house in 1875.²¹² Almost thirty years earlier, in a letter to Pauline Viardot, Turgenev had praised the grandeur of Calderón’s plays, with their annihilation of the individual before the divine Will, but hastened to add: ‘Cependant, je préfère Prométhée, je préfère Satan, le type de la révolte et de l’individualité’.²¹³

More generally, Prometheus for Turgenev was a symbol of artistic vitality, which was essential to make a work both original and lasting. Thus, in that essay on Russian literature which he wrote for a Parisian journal in 1845, he observed how, apart from Gogol’, almost all contemporary Russian writers lacked ‘cette inspiration vive et profonde qui anime les œuvres comme le flambeau de Prométhée’ (XII*/506).²¹⁴ It’s therefore significant that Turgenev made Shubin a sculptor. Even if the name of Prometheus isn’t mentioned explicitly in *Накануне*, this mythical prototype of the creative artist—and one who is effectively a sculptor—informs Turgenev’s attempt to explore, in Shubin, the

²¹⁰ Letter to Pauline Viardot, 26 October 1850 (LI:42).

²¹¹ Turgenev cited George Sand’s praise in his letter to Annenkov of 4/16 April 1874 (P X/225).

²¹² *VT* (1983):II/268.

²¹³ Letter of 7/19 December 1847 (P I/279).

²¹⁴ Turgenev was referring to such poetasters as Kukol’nik and Gedeonov, whose pseudo-historical plays he sharply criticized elsewhere. The first works of Dostoevskii, Goncharov, and Grigorovich had not yet appeared in 1845.

qualities he felt a Russian artist needed to overcome all adversities. Not unlike Prometheus, Shubin's fate also turns out to be quite tragic, but what matters in the end are his real achievements.

Now, a clear Promethean trait in Shubin is his irreverence for authorities, be they the Academy of Fine Arts or Elena's father—something that, again, he shares with Bazarov—but it is essential to stress that he isn't at all like those 'home-grown geniuses' ('самородки') whom Potugin will later castigate so severely in *Дым*. Shubin refuses to have anything to do with the Academy not because he rejects the great masters or the value, so important for Turgenev, of historical continuity in art.²¹⁵ On the contrary, he is well-versed in the canon of classical and Renaissance sculpture: the important association he makes between Insarov and Michelangelo's bust of Brutus, and from there to Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, was discussed in section II.5. Shubin's anti-academicism and vivid interest in real life and people—even peasants—are, rather, tokens of a positive originality, very much in the spirit of Russia's most progressive artists in the first half of the nineteenth century, such as Venetsianov (see Plate 1B) and Turgenev himself.

Never does Shubin deny the cultural heritage to which Western Europe had so far been the predominant contributor, and to which he and other Russian artists could only hope to add something of lasting value if they learnt from (as opposed to imitating) the great European masters. For Prometheus was ultimately not just a rebel in Turgenev's eyes, but also a 'символ прогрессирующей цивилизации'.²¹⁶ Those Russians who rejected this in the name of some ill-defined autochthonous originality were, as Turgenev saw it, doomed to failure. But at the same time he sympathized with them to some extent because the 'quest for originality' was one of the most pressing concerns of the Russian educated classes.

IV.1 Russia's complicated sense of inferiority

The problem of originality is one of the main themes of Russian literature in the nineteenth century—from *Горе от ума*, in which Chatskii laments precisely the lack of anything original in Moscow society, and wishes 'чтоб истребил Господь нечистый дух / Пустого, рабского, слепого подражания' (Griboedov 1951:103); through *Евгений Онегин* and *Герой нашего времени*; and on to the works of Dostoevskii and Turgenev.

²¹⁵ See Seeley 1991:287 for an excellent discussion of how Turgenev himself exemplified this notion in the frequent use he made of themes and figures from world literature.

²¹⁶ As N. Khal'fina argues in Egorov 2001:221.

Despite being a self-avowed Westernist, Turgenev was deeply concerned about the way in which Russia could finally attain true originality and be accepted by her European sister-nations as their equal. As he stressed in his reminiscences of Belinskii, his Westernism, like that of his unforgettable friend and mentor, sprang not merely from a firm belief in the ‘превосходство западной науки, западного искусства [и] западного общественного строя’, but because:

Принимать результаты западной жизни, принимать их к нашей, соображаясь с особенностями породы, истории, климата—впрочем, относиться и к ним свободно, критически—вот каким образом могли мы, по его [Белинского] понятию, достигнуть наконец самобытности, которою он дорожил гораздо более, чем обыкновенно предполагают... (XIV/42)

The much-maligned Potugin shared all these convictions of Belinskii’s, as Askol’d Muratov has pointed out (1972:83).

Of course, this problem wasn’t a uniquely nineteenth-century one. In the wake of the Petrine reforms many Russians had begun to think about their country’s position with regard to Western Europe. Lomonosov, for example, in one of his odes commemorating the accession of Elizaveta Petrovna to the throne, famously expressed the hope that, with the help of her Imperial patronage, the Russians would prove to the rest of Europe ‘Что может собственных Платонов / И быстрых разумом Невтонов / Российская земля раждать’.²¹⁷ It was, however, in the early nineteenth century that the urgency of this problem became so acute in the eyes of educated Russians as to polarize society into two camps, each offering its particular ‘solution’ to what Chaadaev, in his first *Lettre philosophique* (1836), had correctly diagnosed as Russia’s backwardness.

This was a very sore point especially where art was concerned, and in this respect there developed a certain ambivalence towards Europe that April FitzLyon describes as follows when discussing Pauline Viardot’s first season in St Petersburg with the Italian Opera company (1843/44):

Visitors from Western Europe found the Russians not only eager to learn, but also painfully conscious of their backwardness, both political and cultural, as compared to other nations. This consciousness was coupled with a certain touchiness—the touchiness of a precocious and gifted adolescent, misunderstood, aggressive, yet lacking self-confidence [...] The Russians were aware that their literature, music and art were in their infancy, yet

²¹⁷ Lomonosov’s ode is included in Drage & Vickery 1969:71.

they were proud of what they had already achieved, irritated by Western ignorance about Russia, and anxious to make a good impression on foreigners. (1964:145)

Turgenev himself was faced with such ‘Western ignorance’ during his meeting with Thackeray in London, in 1858. Though it was just a few years after the Crimean War, Turgenev didn’t consider it humiliating to call on an English author whose works he liked, but he was upset when Thackeray refused to believe that Russia had a literature of her own and even burst out laughing when Turgenev started reciting to him, in Russian, a poem by Pushkin (see Waddington 1980:53-55). In that respect Carlyle, who admired German literature and was deeply moved by Turgenev’s *Муму* when he read it in French, was much less insular than Thackeray.

As for the Russians’ ambivalence, this expressed itself, for example, in the way that despite the doctrine of Official Nationality, which had seemingly found its musical apotheosis in Glinka’s *Жизнь за царя* (1836),²¹⁸ the St Petersburg public flocked to see and hear Pauline Viardot and her Italian colleagues in an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm (‘италиянобесие’, as contemporaries called it), with Nicholas I applauding frenetically from the imperial balcony during her performances (FitzLyon 1964:150, 180). Whether this was due to a growing refinement of musical taste in Russian society as a whole is doubtful. Prince Odoevskii, one of the finest musical critics of the time, was probably not wide of the mark when, in an 1843 article on Glinka’s *Руслан и Людмила* (1842), he observed that many of Russia’s so-called music-lovers rushed to performances of the Italian Opera with star soloists not because they were interested in the music itself but because of their sense of inferiority *vis-à-vis* Europe: ‘Как же иначе! Не равно нас примут в Европе за варваров!’ (1956:208). This is echoed by Shubin’s ironic lament to the waters of the Moscow River: ‘Мы не греки, о нимфа! Мы толстокожие скифы’ (VIII/16). That is how Russians often feared they were perceived by foreigners.

The other aspect of this ambivalence—that of smouldering national pride—came to the fore in the way the St Petersburg audiences raised their enthusiasm even further still after Pauline Viardot, who had been taking Russian lessons with Turgenev, started singing romances by Glinka as encores at her recitals. She was instantly fêted by the Russians as ‘наша примадонна’ (FitzLyon 1964:151)!

²¹⁸ Nicholas I decreed that *Жизнь за царя* was to open each new opera season at the Imperial theatres (Gasparov 2005:24).

With the higher aristocracy, despite its formal obeisance to Official Nationality, it was, however, preference for all things European which clearly predominated, and this had repercussions on the fate of Russian artists because the latter (that is, painters, sculptors, and musicians—writers far less so) were largely dependent on aristocratic patrons for their success. Glinka, for instance, had gone to Europe in 1830 not just to study musical theory but because he knew that he had no chance of being accepted as a composer by Russian high society unless he returned with some form of European ‘accreditation’. Even after he had composed his two great operas, and was planning to perform some excerpts from them at a concert in Paris, in April 1845 (which turned out to be quite successful, in fact) some of his illustrious compatriots had ridiculed the idea: ‘при отъезде из Петербурга [мне говорили]: «ты не осмелишься с твоею музыкою вступить в Париж на поприще артиста, потому что там тебя охают»’.²¹⁹ The more modest success of *Руслан и Людмила* in Russia – which, unlike the earlier opera, had little to commend it from the point of view of Official Nationality—was in no small measure due to the inability of these aristocratic ‘music-lovers’ to appreciate the originality of *Руслан* and their preference for the familiar, mellifluous Italian repertoire. In his article of 1843, Odоеvskii noted how Glinka, drawing inspiration from Russian folksong, had succeeded in creating a new musical idiom, but unfortunately it was still the case that:

Многие сомневаются в существовании народной музыки [...] Это сомнение происходит оттого, что мы не можем смотреть на все предметы нас окружающие иначе, как сквозь западные очки. (1956:209)

This Western orientation of the Russian aristocracy in matters of taste, even in the heyday of Official Nationality, was something that Russian artists had to reckon with during most of the nineteenth century. Not only in music, but even in literature, too, although in that field the broader make-up of the reading public ensured that writers didn’t have to pander to the tastes of the aristocracy in order to survive. Nevertheless, in *Выбранные места из переписки Gogol’* had observed that Russian poetry couldn’t be appreciated properly by most readers because they had been brought up on foreign models and ideas (1994:VI/179-80). With sculpture and painting the situation was almost as bad as with music, as far as the likelihood of creating something originally Russian was concerned. For the need to spend a number of years in Europe, winning one’s spurs there (as Briullov had done with *Последний день Помпея*, which was exhibited in Rome and

²¹⁹ From a letter which Glinka sent to his family from Paris in 1845 (Livanova & Protopopov 1955:16).

Paris) before returning to Russia, inevitably meant that young artists were weaned away from Russian topics and themes. Thus, Aleksandr Ivanov lamented himself that

Со времени Брюллова исторические живописцы приняли за необходимость уже являться из Рима в отечество с чем-нибудь значительным, отэкзаменованным в чужих краях: с этим только аттестатом можно у нас найтись и поставить себя на ноги.²²⁰

One of the reasons why Turgenev felt such sympathy for Ivanov and praised him as a ‘замечательный, оригинальный, умный, правдивый и мыслящий человек’,²²¹ despite his reservations about *Явление Христа народу*, was obviously this painter’s courage in eschewing the usual route of professional advancement (leading to an appointment at the Academy) and his willingness to endure poverty, so as to dedicate himself entirely to the realization of his ideal.

It was, however, in music that the career of a creative artist, at least until the late 1860s, was most encumbered by the Russian aristocracy’s indiscriminate preference for everything European. Thus, the permanent Italian Opera in St Petersburg received much more State funding than the Russian Opera (which, paradoxically, had very few operas by Russian composers on its repertoire: its function was mainly the staging of *Italian* operas sung in Russian).²²² Apart from that, a Theatre Regulation approved by Nicholas I in 1827 limited the total earnings which a Russian composer could make by selling an opera to the Imperial Theatres Directorate to just 3,000 rubles; whereas no such restrictions applied to foreign artists. To facilitate comparison: Nicholas I was prepared to give 30,000 rubles on the spot to Pauline Viardot, so that she would promise to return to Russia for the following season! This humiliating regulation, which was not revoked until 1871 (thanks to a vigorous press campaign by Stasov and Cui), made the situation very dire indeed for anyone seeking to create, and have performed, Russian music in Russia. As Yuri Olkhovsky (1983:85) observes:

The 1827 discriminatory regulations discouraged Russian composers and performances by limiting their financial rewards. In addition, foreigners enjoyed automatic preference as music teachers. Third, Russian compositions were not encouraged by the official Theatre Directorate or the private concert societies.

²²⁰ Quoted in Mashkovtsev 1961:207.

²²¹ Letter to Annenkov, 31 October/12 November 1857 (P III/160-61).

²²² Olkhovsky 1983:52-56.

Turgenev was certainly aware of this situation because of his friendship with the composer Vladimir Kashperov, who, like Glinka, had gone to Berlin to study musical theory, and who in 1859 achieved a modest success in Milan with his opera *Maria Tudor*. Kashperov, however, didn't live up to the hopes that Turgenev placed on him—namely, that he would return to Russia and become Glinka's heir: 'сделайтесь наследником Глинки, подарите нам живую русскую оперу!'²²³ Kashperov did return to Russia in 1866 and went on to write operas on such Russian subjects as Ostrovskii's *Гроза* (premiered in 1867) and Gogol's *Тарас Бульба* (in 1887), but these have been wholly forgotten today.

Still, it is relevant to our topic that Kashperov, too, suffered the usual predicament of the Russian composer who was always uncertain as to whether he could make any headway professionally in Russia. Moreover, he knew that it was folly to return to Russia and hope to establish himself as a composer there without having obtained the European 'accreditation' that even Glinka, an artist of genius, had needed. Thus, in a letter he sent to Turgenev in 1865 from Italy, he discussed various possible Russian subjects for a libretto, and added:

Видите, как меня тянет русская музыка [...] К чему меня поведёт продолжение карьеры итальянского композитора? Лишь для того, чтобы показаться придворным русским *показистее*?—Неужели без этого в самом деле нельзя обойтись?... Кажется, что нет,—не только для того, чтобы дороже ценили ваш труд в России, но даже и для того, чтобы значить что-либо в общественном мнении.²²⁴

The appreciation that Kashperov refers to here was more of a financial nature, since in the same letter he mentions that in order to be able to maintain himself and his family in Moscow, he would need an annual income of at least 1,500 rubles, which, he hastens to add, it was impossible to obtain by composing operas alone (because of that 1827 regulation), meaning that it was necessary to find extra work by giving music lessons and publishing romances. But it is with bitter irony that he then asks Turgenev:

Вы Москву знаете, можно ли там трудом музыканта выработать эти 1500? Настолько ли они в самом деле люди, что у них уже имеется потребность этого рода эстетических наслаждений?²²⁵

²²³ Letter of 17 December 1859 (P III/389).

²²⁴ Quoted in Golovanova 1964:403.

²²⁵ Golovanova 1964:404. Despite his misgivings, Kashperov did manage to secure a teaching post at the Moscow Conservatory.

The origins of that sceptical comment Turgenev made to Polonskii in 1881 about the state of music in Russia (see I.3) lay clearly in such first-hand evidence of how modest a Russian composer's hopes of success in his home country were. Even Serov, a man of greater character and talent, had forced himself to swallow his contempt for Italian music and wrote his first opera, *Юдифь* (1863), in keeping with the Italian style (even originally using an Italian libretto!), so as to be sure of success both with the fickle theatre-goers of St Petersburg and those of other European capitals, since, like Kashperov, he too reasoned that European fame was essential in order to gain acceptance as a composer in Russian society.²²⁶

Not surprisingly, Russian writers, who thanks to the wide circulation of literary journals had the opportunity to reach a much less socially exclusive public, and who were themselves mostly drawn from the lower ranks of the gentry, saw a rich mine for satire in the aristocracy's blind veneration of everything European, especially in the artistic sphere. Griboedov and Pushkin had been among the first to poke fun at such aristocratic foibles, but of greater relevance to our topic is, again, Gogol's *Портрет* (in the 1842 version). In one characteristic scene from this story, the painter Chartkov (before his uncanny transformation into a fashionable artist and professor of the Academy) tries to pay the rent for his garret by offering his landlord any one of his paintings. The latter, however, refuses:

Нет, батюшка, за картины спасибо. Добро бы были картины с благородным содержанием, чтобы можно было за стену повесить, хоть какой-нибудь генерал со звездой или князя Кутузова портрет, а то вон мужика нарисовал, мужика в рубаше. (1952-53:III/86)

A bit later, an aristocratic lady who comes to Chartkov's atelier, to commission a portrait of her daughter, seems to show greater sympathy for the realistic subjects that Chartkov had been sketching, albeit largely because of their novelty: 'C'est charmant! А вот на другом холсте женщина, моющая лицо,—quelle jolie figure! Ах, мужичок! Lise, Lise, мужичок в русской рубашке! смотри: мужичок!' (1952-53:III/92). And yet any hopes that this lady and her daughter might be gradually arriving at an appreciation of the school of genre painting initiated by Venetsianov are soon dashed after we see her insisting to Chartkov that Lise's portrait had to look exactly like those she had seen in Italy!

²²⁶ Cf. Taruskin 1993:45. It was only after his idols Wagner and Liszt expressed their disapproval for *Юдифь* that Serov started work on a Russian subject: *Рогнеда* (also premiered in 1863), the unexpected success of which secured him a life pension of 1,000 rubles from Alexander II, and thus made him 'the first musician ever to be so honoured in Russia, and the first creative artist since Gogol' (Taruskin 1993:79), but also guaranteed him the hostility of the Mighty Handful (125).

With Turgenev the situation is, in fact, more complex still: though not a satirist by nature, he couldn't either resist the temptation of ridiculing the aristocracy's urge to keep up with Europe at all costs, so as not to be taken for 'barbarians'. For this slavish adherence to European fashions meant that they couldn't really be effective protectors of the arts in Russia, as some of them liked to think themselves, in accordance with the patriotic mood of those years. Thus, in the huntsman's sketch *Татьяна Борисовна и её племянник*, the lazy Andriusha is taken under his wing by Benevolenskii, a self-styled Maecenas of the Russian arts and 'страшный патриот'. This typical 'вельможа' of the reign of Nicholas I gathers painters, poets, and singers in his house, since, as the narrator wryly remarks:

У нас уже так на Руси заведено: одному искусству человек предаваться не может— подавай ему все. И потому нисколько не удивительно, что эти господа-любители также оказывают сильное покровительство русской литературе. (IV/207)

For all the praiseworthy intentions such aristocrats may have had in sponsoring Russian artists, it seems likely that they caused more harm than good by forcing these artists to purvey works which conformed to the familiar European canon. That they had no idea of native Russian art is certainly suggested by the narrator's observations about how patrons like Benevolenskii would rush from one exhibition to the other, with some famous name like Raphael or Correggio constantly on their lips, and exclaiming: 'на юг бы нам, на юг!... ведь мы с тобою греки душою, древние греки!' (IV/207).

It was precisely such enthusiasts of 'патентованные произведения искусства' that Chernyshevskii was to mock in his 1855 dissertation (1939-50:II/75). Even two decades later, the situation hadn't improved much, as far as the aristocracy was concerned, for in *Анна Каренина* we find Count Vronskii, another self-styled patron of the arts, treating his humble compatriot Mikhailov with condescension and showing a marked preference for the pre-Raphaelite art that was then so in vogue in Europe. In *Накануне*, Shubin, too, suffers his share from the capricious tastes of the Russian aristocracy. In the epilogue we are told of the statue of a Bacchante he had sculpted after settling in Rome:

Русский граф Бобошкин, известный богач, собирался было купить её [Вакханку] за 1000 скуди, но предпочёл дать 3000 другому ваятелю, французу *pur sang*, за группу, изображавшую «Молодую поселянку, умирающую от любви на груди Геня Весны» (VIII/167)

The ambivalence referred to at the outset of this section—that is, the Russian educated classes' admiration for the Western European cultural heritage and at the same time their urge to break free from it and create something original—was very much a part of Turgenev's psyche. Thus, in *Ася* the young 'hero', in whom it isn't difficult to discern autobiographical traits, at first finds no other way of ordering his initial impressions of Gagin's sister than by comparing her to Galatea as portrayed by Raphael: a painting he had recently seen in the Villa Farnese. The following day, however, she reminds him of a simple peasant girl like those he had seen when growing up on his family estate. These contradictions, which Asya herself also suffers from because her peasant blood rebels against the gentry education she had received, are characteristic of the Russian nobility as such, and they made it quite difficult for the artists who emerged from its midst to have the courage to go their own way.

The fact that Turgenev frequently included allusions to great works of European art in his stories and novels—something that Dostoevskii cruelly parodied in the figure of Karmazinov in *Бесы*—created the false impression that he was entirely in thrall to these and unable to appreciate anything originally Russian. And in many memoirs about him, despite the general affection in which he was held by contemporaries, we find unfair comments about his deference to established European 'authorities'. Thus, Repin, for example, writing in 1928, recalled that Turgenev always agreed with Louis Viardot in his opinions on painting, and that 'Уважать авторитеты—это было в нём ещё университетская традиция'²²⁷

Vladimir Stasov, who wrote some very valuable recollections of Turgenev (his perennial antagonist in almost all questions of art) claimed that the great novelist, in his musical tastes, had stood still in his reverence for Gluck, Mozart, and Beethoven, and had therefore been unable to appreciate the 'new Russian school' of music—a very unfair conclusion, as Abram Gozenpud (1994:91-92) has pointed out by referring to that remarkable letter of 1874 in which Turgenev discusses Musorgskii (see III.2). Stasov even went as far as to write, in an 1862 article on Ivanov, taking issue with Turgenev's observations about the painter in *Поездка в Альбано*, that he was incapable of recognizing original Russian talent because he always took the Old Masters as his touchstone:

²²⁷ Quoted in Nazarova 1967:403.

Какая [у Тургенева] печальная близорукость, какие жалкие плоды вкоренённых предрассудков и слепого фетишизма перед врытыми прочно «классическими авторитетами!» (1968:50)

The unfairness of these ironical comments by Stasov becomes clear if we bear in mind that despite his sincere admiration for the *Sistine Madonna*,²²⁸ Turgenev had been among the first to criticize Russian tourists' thoughtless veneration of 'famous' art-works (XV/9-10). Like such antipodes in character and outlook as Chernyshevskii or Tolstoi, he too was reluctant to take any authorities for granted, as he emphasized in a letter of 1872 to Stasov:

Почему Вы полагаете, что я—не музыкант и не живописец, да, сверх того, уже и старый человек, которому всякая фальшь наскучила и который слушается только собственных впечатлений—почему Вы полагаете, что я заражён фетишизмом и преклоняюсь перед европейскими авторитетами? Да провались они совсем! Я восторгаюсь от глуковских речитативов и арий не потому, что авторитеты их хвалят—а потому, что у меня от первых их звуков навёртываются слёзы...²²⁹

Even Repin, despite his jibes at Turgenev's deference to authorities, acknowledged that the writer had shown great sympathy for his work and that: 'По разносторонности своей натуры он [Тургенев] увлекался всем и был всегда независим в своих увлечениях и ценил новизну'.²³⁰ And, indeed, there was nothing that Turgenev yearned for more than that there should appear Russian artistic and musical works which would captivate Western Europeans too by virtue of their originality, as he stressed in that same letter to Stasov: 'Нет, любезный Владимир Васильевич, родному художеству радоваться я буду первый!' (P IX/285).

However, although he might bring himself to say, in a private letter, that all authorities should 'провалиться совсем', Turgenev understood that it wasn't so easy to free oneself completely from them—nor was it even desirable as the excesses of the Slavophiles made clear to him.

²²⁸ See his letter of 26 August 1878 to Claudie Viardot after a recent re-visiting of the Dresden gallery: 'On prétend que je suis un réaliste dans mes écrits et je le crois aussi et j'aime le réel dans l'art, le réel poétique—c.à.d. tellement vrai qu'il en devient beau—mais j'avoue que l'idéalisme de cette... Madone me *foudroie*—c'est le mot—et je crois bien que c'est le dernier mot de l'Art' (LI:277). It is worth comparing this to what he would later say about Rembrandt's *Girl with a Broom* (see the caption below Plate 1A).

²²⁹ Letter of 14 June 1872 (P IX/285).

²³⁰ Quoted in Nazarova 1967:404.

IV.2 The burden of authorities

It is all too tempting, in the arts as in any other field, to claim originality by disparaging one's predecessors. The Russians, however, took this to an extreme which inevitably alarmed a convinced Westernist like Turgenev. When studying Kirsha Danilov's collection of Russian *byliny* during his exile in Spasskoe, Turgenev's attention was caught by the folk hero Vas'ka Buslaev, who kicks aside a gigantic head which he comes across on one of his quests and which had tried to give him some advice. Soon afterwards Vas'ka breaks his own neck when he tries to jump over a gigantic rock! For Turgenev, this was a perfect allegory of what the Slavophiles were doing with regard to the West, as he put it in a letter to Konstantin Aksakov: 'Мы обращаемся с Западом, как Васька Буслаев (в Кирше Данилове) с мёртвой головой—побрасываем его ногой—а сами...' ²³¹

Even almost thirty years later Turgenev would still cite Vas'ka Buslaev as a typical example of the Russian tendency to reject the counsel and authority of one's elders, that is, the other European nations, and described him as a 'в своём роде нигилист'. ²³² It will be remembered that in *Отцы и дети*, which did so much to popularize this word, Arkadii, for the benefit of his uncle, defines a nihilist as follows: 'Нигилист—это человек, который не склоняется ни перед какими авторитетами...' (VIII/216). And it is certainly true that many Russian artists around the middle of the nineteenth century, both gifted and ungifted, behaved like nihilists in their attitude to the European masters. Thus, Potugin in *Дым* speaks indignantly of the Russian 'home-grown geniuses' or 'rough diamonds' (самородки) who, like the Slavophiles and the folk hero Vas'ka Buslaev, were 'великие охотники пихать ногою всякие мёртвые головы да гнилые народы' (IX/312), without being able to produce anything of value themselves.

Of course, this nihilistic attitude wasn't exclusive to artists. Already in *Рудин*, the embittered sceptic Pigasov scoffs at authorities like Hegel and at the value of education as such: 'Очень нужна она эта хваленая образованность! Гроша медного не дам я за вашу образованность!' (VI/262). By this aggressiveness Pigasov seeks to cover up his own ignorance because, as the narrator observes, 'в сущности [он] знал слишком мало' (VI/249). And in *Дым* we find the 'scholar' Voroshilov quite content to refer to eminent thinkers of the past, like Adam Smith and Macaulay, as 'дураки' whose works had been left obsolete by the most recent scientific discoveries (IX/154). But despite Turgenev's

²³¹ Letter of 16 January 1853 (P II/108).

²³² As recalled by Polonskii. *VT* (1988):402.

life-long interest in history and philosophy, it was in the arts that his compatriots' iconoclasm hurt him most.

One of the most notorious examples of this was Pisarev's 1865 article on Pushkin, in which, among other things, the poet had been condemned as a 'возвышенный кретин' for his cult of the beautiful (1955-56:III/399). Turgenev, as he confessed in his memoir of Belinskii, had been appalled by this article, which, moreover, struck him as quite gratuitous at a time when there was no longer any need to attack 'pure' poetry because the Russian public's attention was now concentrated on such vital matters as the *zemstva* and legal reforms (XIV/36). With Pisarev's assault on Pushkin still stinging in his mind, Turgenev, in another of his literary memoirs of 1869, reminded his readers how for his own generation the great poet had been like a demi-god, in stark contrast to what was happening now: 'Мы действительно поклонились ему. Поклонение авторитетам в последнее время подвергалось, как известно, насмешкам, осуждению, чуть ли не проклятию' (XIV/12).

The origins of this cultural iconoclasm in Russia are quite easy to trace: a critical frame of mind had been a distinctive feature of the intelligentsia for a long time. Pushkin himself, in an article from 1836, had already lamented this dismissiveness towards hallowed names of the past and, like Turgenev a generation later, pointed to some of the reasons for it:

Неуважение к именам, освящённым славою (первый признак невежества и слабomyслия), к несчастью, почитается у нас не только дозволенным, но ещё и похвальным удалством. (1949:VII/407)

Chernyshevskii's dissertation of 1855 also contributed to this trend. For although he insisted that 'достоин сожаления человек, не преклоняющийся пред великими произведениями искусства' (1939-50:II/52), Chernyshevskii created a dangerous precedent for rejecting that historical continuity in culture which was so important to Turgenev by arguing that no work of art was ever 'eternal':

Ни в живописи, ни в музыке, ни в архитектуре не найдётся ни одного произведения, созданного за 100 или 150 лет, которое не казалось бы ныне или вялым, или смешным, несмотря на всю силу гения, отпечатленную на нём. (1939-50:II/50)

By giving brief examples of supposed 'deficiencies' in the Ancient Greek tragedies, in Shakespeare, Raphael, Mozart, and Beethoven, as well as in more recent works by Dickens and George Sand, Chernyshevskii, inadvertently perhaps, paved the way for later

journalists like Pisarev and Cui, who would excel at finding faults in works of art, both European and Russian.

Artists, too, were infected by the ‘зараза’ of nihilism, as Pavel Kirsanov calls it in *Отцы и дети*, although it tended to be the less gifted ones who were the most aggressive in their attitude towards the Old Masters. Turgenev had seen plenty of this during his stay in Italy in the winter of 1857, and with the sole exception of his meeting with Ivanov, his impressions of the Russian painters working there were very negative:

Остальные здешние русские артисты—плохи. Сорокин кричит, что Рафаэль дрянь и «всё» дрянь, а сам чепуху пишет; знаем мы эту поганую рассейскую замашку. Невежество их всех губит.²³³

It is precisely this which the elder Kirsanov has in mind when he condemns the new tendencies that were gaining ground even amongst *pensionnaires* of the Academy of Arts:

Мне сказывали, что в Риме наши художники в Ватикан ни ногой. Рафаэля считают чуть не дураком, потому что это, мол, авторитет; а сами бессильны и бесплодны до гадости. (VIII/247)

Painters who did have genuine talent, such as Repin and Kramskoi, both of whom Turgenev respected, might well seek to distance themselves from ‘authorities’ like Raphael, but, in general, they tried to do them some justice.

Kramskoi, for instance, the model for Mikhailov in *Анна Каренина*, argued that Raphael’s portrayals of Christ had become outmoded and that the only way forward was in the direction indicated by Ivanov, but he at least acknowledged the beauty of Raphael’s work.²³⁴ Repin, who was often liable to contradict himself, did once refer disparagingly to Raphael, but, again, this was in a private letter, shortly after his arrival in Rome, in the summer of 1873:

[Рим] мне совсем не нравится: отживший, мёртвый город [...] Там один «Мойсей» Микель-Анджело действует поразительно, остальное, и с Рафаэлем во главе, такое старое, детское, что смотреть не хочется [...] Я здесь долго не пробуду, дай Бог пробыть два года, и то едва ли, надо работать на родной почве. [...] так мне противна теперь Италия с её условной до рвоты красотой.²³⁵

²³³ Letter to Annenkov, 31 October/12 November 1857 (P III/160).

²³⁴ Cf. Babaev 1981:179.

²³⁵ Letter to Stasov, 4/16 June 1873 (Repin 1969:I/67).

It was to Repin's great embarrassment that Stasov, to whom this letter was addressed, published it as part of an article on the young painter in 1875, in which he wanted to demonstrate at all costs that the author of *Бурлаки* was in no danger of succumbing to foreign influences during his stay abroad.

The fact that Turgenev didn't hold these remarks against Repin, whom he met quite frequently when the latter was in France (1873-76), suggests that the painter had soon repented of them and was unwilling to be cast into the nationalist mould which Stasov had projected for him.²³⁶ For Stasov was very good at projecting his own views (such as his dislike of Raphael) and his ideals of an independent, original Russian school of art on those artists whom he was championing. Turgenev realized this, and it was not against the artists themselves, but rather against their propagandist and his exaggerations that he directed his light satirical weaponry in *Новь*. This novel includes a brief anecdote about the 'всероссийский критик' Skoropikhin, in whom readers easily recognized Stasov, and his dismissive attitude towards the European cultural heritage: 'Послушать Скоропихина, всякое старое художественное произведение уже по тому самому не годится никуда, что оно старо' (XII/19). It is known that Stasov encouraged the painters whom he took under his wing to show a healthy disregard for Raphael, and, similarly, as Irene Pearson has observed, 'Skoropikhin (as his name implies) is apparently in a hurry to elbow aside all past works of art' (1981:368).

In fact, Stasov's position was more complicated than might appear at first glance, and certainly not what most Soviet interpretations made it out to be, since he was not a cultural chauvinist. As Yuri Olkhovsky observes, Stasov's 'entire struggle for the national realistic arts in Russia rested on the principle of cultural independence and integrity for any nation and any people, including the Russian people'.²³⁷ Despite his aversion to Raphael, he never actually denied the achievements of the great European artists—which is probably why Turgenev always remained on friendly terms with him, even though they had effectively agreed to disagree on almost everything that concerned art! But Stasov did have a point in attacking the excessive veneration in which some European works of art or artistic institutions were held in Russia, and Turgenev must have sympathized with this a little, given that in his youth he, too, had written ironically about the pilgrimage so many Russian tourists made to Dresden, to see the *Sistine Madonna*.

²³⁶ Илья Зил'берштейн (1945:78) argued that in the course of his stay in France Repin distanced himself from some of Stasov's aesthetic ideas and moved closer to Turgenev's.

²³⁷ Olkhovsky 1983:142.

Moreover, the iconoclastic reaction against Raphael which Turgenev had observed amongst Russian artists in Rome was in no small measure due to the fact that for so many years the art critics in Russia and the professors of the Academy had rejected all new currents in painting and ‘continued to uphold the criteria of certain Old Masters, above all Raphael’.²³⁸ Significantly, in Gogol’s *Портрет*, Chartkov, once he has become famous and secured a professorship at the Academy, begins to sing the praises of Raphael and other Old Masters ‘не потому, что убедился вполне в их высоком достоинстве, но потому, чтобы колоть ими в глаза молодых художников’ (1952-53:III/101). When he was still an unknown painter and committed to the cause of realism, he had actually spoken quite critically about Raphael! The implication is that when one is trying to create something original, one cannot avoid distancing oneself from one’s predecessors (as Gogol himself did with regard to the Romantic school): in other words, a young and ambitious artist, provided he has genuine talent, must have something of that Promethean rebelliousness discussed earlier.

One Russian painter who very early on realized the need to resist the burden of ‘classical’ authorities, but without going to the extreme of iconoclasm, was Briullov. When living and working in Italy from 1823 to 1835, he had been entrusted with keeping an eye on the young *pensionnaires* sent there by the Academy, and, although he would tell them to start by copying Raphael’s *Transfiguration*, he always stressed that there was no point in imitating blindly the Old Masters or him for that matter: ‘художник всё должен найти в себе самом [...] он должен изучать древних художников, но передразнивать никого из них не должен’.²³⁹ When he himself had arrived in Rome for the first time, despite starting off by copying another major work of Raphael’s—*The School of Athens*—he had had the courage to write to the professors of the Academy, arguing that one needn’t imitate the Old Masters in everything: ‘могло ли бы искусство в продолжение трёх веков идти вперёд, приняв произведения смертного за непреложный закон Божий?’²⁴⁰ As one of Briullov’s pupils later recalled:

Он был горячий сеятель правды в искусстве; до него же слепое изучение антиков вовлекало художников в крайность. Брюллов первый из наших художников искал естественности и правды.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Bowlt 1983b:119.

²³⁹ Quoted in Mashkovtsev 1961:80 & 174.

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*:178-79.

²⁴¹ *ibid.*:187.

Now, throughout his life Turgenev made no secret of his contempt for Briullov's style, that is, his 'трескучие картины с эффектами, но без поэзии и содержания' (XIV/95). It seems that Turgenev judged him unfairly just on the basis of *Последний день Помпея* (see Plate 3A), which it is indeed difficult not to call bombastic,²⁴² rather than by his much subtler portraits. Had he known that Briullov was such an earnest teacher and mentor of the young, and that despite receiving high honours from Nicholas I the painter detested aristocratic society, he might perhaps have tempered his criticism and looked favourably upon Briullov's emphasis on individual originality.²⁴³ For Briullov had upheld the same principle which he was later to welcome in Repin and Kramskoi: that of being true to oneself. Still, this hostility towards Briullov on Turgenev's part was perhaps inevitable, given the painter's proximity to the period of Official Nationality and the fact that his style was not all like the warm realism of Rembrandt and Velázquez, Turgenev's favourite painters.

Aleksandr Ivanov, the artist whom Turgenev, in *Поездка в Альбано* (1861), held up against Briullov as an inspirational example for young Russian painters, was in some respects on the other extreme of the scale. His reverence for 'classical' authorities and his humility were so great that they almost prevented him from completing the work on which he had spent twenty-five years of his life: *Явление Христа народу* (see Plate 3B).

As Turgenev observed with sincere admiration, Ivanov wasn't at all like those Russian artists in Rome who spurned Raphael: 'все его суждения были дельны и проникнуты уважением к «старым мастерам». Перед Рафаэлем он благоговел' (XIV/86). At the same time, his reverence hadn't been such as to let himself be influenced by the Nazarenes (the school of German painters in Rome which formed around Overbeck and Cornelius), who in their religious works were trying to turn the clock back even before Raphael. As Turgenev emphasizes, it was precisely Ivanov's Russianness which saved him from this false route: 'русский здравый смысл удержал его на пороге того искусственного, аскетического, символического мира, в котором потонул германский художник [Overbeck]' (XIV/86). We have already come across Turgenev's notion that abstract systems were out of place in Russia (see II.6), and in the last chapter of *Рудин* the same point about Russian common sense prevailing over nebulous German philosophy had been made by Lezhnev: 'Философические хитросплетения и бредни

²⁴² Pushkin, however, thought highly of this painting and, in a letter of 4 May 1836 to his wife, called Briullov a 'настоящий художник' (1949:X/575).

²⁴³ In his reminiscences Annenkov pointed out that Turgenev had been unfair to criticize Briullov so harshly because the painter had been a force for progress in Russian art (1960:414).

никогда не привыются к русскому: на это у него слишком много здравого смысла'. But just as Lezhnev goes on to defend Rudin's philosophical idealism as a 'честное стремление к истине и к сознанию' (VI/349), so Turgenev respected Ivanov for the religious ideal which guided him.

Still, Turgenev makes it quite clear in his essay that Ivanov, for all his diligence and striving towards a high ideal, lacked the most important qualities an artist needed: 'творческая мощь [и] свободное вдохновение' (XIV/94). Referring to the way Ivanov composed the figures in his painting—e.g. the head of John the Baptist was arrived at by first drawing the head of the Apollo Belvedere hundreds of times, then that of a figure in a Byzantine icon, and finally by combining the two sets—Turgenev concluded: 'Не так творят истинные художники!' (XIV/95).²⁴⁴ This attempt, so it seemed to him, to piece together a painting out of faithfully assembled copies of great works of the past was like the 'рассудочный (индуктивный) приём учёного'²⁴⁵ and had little to do with true creative art.

Predictably, there were many artists and critics who, for patriotic reasons or otherwise, vigorously disputed Turgenev's observations on Ivanov. For instance, Stasov protested that it was absurd to deny that the figures of Christ and John the Baptist in the painting were truly inspired. But, like Turgenev, he did also point out that Ivanov had been obsessed with emulating the ideals of the early Greek and Italian schools of painting—something that, in Stasov's view at least, he had more than succeeded in, but which wasn't a particularly important task and whose futility Ivanov himself, according to Stasov, had recognized after 1848, when his eyes were opened to the 'современное движение тогдашней Европы'. Nevertheless, for Stasov there was no doubt that before this 'переворот' in his consciousness Ivanov had been impaired by his training at a 'заведение, способное развивать только механическую технику и ничего не подозревающее об интеллектуальном, внутреннем человеке' (1968:42). An important factor in the Academy's inability to equip its pupils with sensitivity towards social questions was its emphasis on classical models, as Stasov saw it. Just as Belinskii had lamented the state of Russian painting because of its barren neoclassicism:

²⁴⁴ Réau also argues that 'cette décevante alchimie lui a été fatale' (1951:232). Iurii Lotman, on the other hand, defended Ivanov's method, calling it not so much a 'method' as an artistic system related to the utopian socialism of the 1840s. In his view, Ivanov wanted to represent each figure in the crowd surrounding John the Baptist as close as possible to the 'общечеловеческая норма' of classical statues, thereby providing a 'залог возможности возрождения этой разношерстной толпы к братству' (2005:555-56).

²⁴⁵ As Turgenev put it in a conversation with Repin in 1871 (Zil'bershtein 1945:11).

Как будто не замечая кипящей вокруг него жизни, с закрытыми глазами на всё живое, современное, действительное, это искусство ищет вдохновения в отжившем прошедшем, берёт оттуда готовые идеалы, к которым люди давно уже охладели, которые никого уже не интересуют.²⁴⁶

—so Stasov argued that the only way forward for Russian artists was to break free entirely from this enthrallment to the Old Masters which were held up as ideals to be emulated in the Academy's classes. The drive towards such liberation had lain at the heart of the 1863 secession led by Kramskoi, whose demands Stasov was to summarize as follows (in his 1888 obituary of the painter):

Художник должен учиться с самых молодых лет не на чём-то безразличном, небывалом и идеальном, а на том, что существует действительно, и притом что близкое, своё выражает, на том, что в один тон и шаг идёт со всею остальною жизнью и складом, нас окружающим во весь наш век. (1968:100)

Now, although Turgenev as a writer insisted on the freedom to deal with themes that had apparently nothing to do with contemporary social issues—that is, on the ‘право и уместность разработать чисто психических (не политических и не социальных) вопросов’—²⁴⁷ he would certainly have agreed with Stasov that real life was the best source of inspiration for an artist. After all, in the 1880 preface to his collected novels he said that for any talented writer it was always the case that ‘оркужающая его жизнь даёт ему содержание—он является её сосредоточенным отражением’ (XII/310). And, similarly, Turgenev also felt that the originality and hence value of a work of art had a lot to do with its closeness to the spirit of the artist's nation. As he put it in a letter of 1882 to Kramskoi, whom he helped to set up an exhibition of Russian painting in Paris:

Несомненно то, что французское общество заинтересовалось русским искусством именно с тех пор, как оно получило самостоятельность и выказало оригинальность, стало русским, народным. (То же самое произошло во Франции и с нашей литературой).²⁴⁸

Where, however, he clearly differed with Stasov was in his assessment of the role of classical models in an artist's education. Turgenev didn't consider these to be a threat to originality if the artist studying them had genuine talent.

²⁴⁶ From his survey of Russian literature in 1847 (Belinskii 1953-59:X/311).

²⁴⁷ Letter to A. Filosofova, 18/30 August 1874 (P X/282).

²⁴⁸ Letter of 6/18 December 1882 (P XIII₂/121).

This is clear from Turgenev's reflections, in a feuilleton he wrote for *Современник* in 1847, on the sculptor Ivan Vitali, who after completing his highly praised bas-reliefs for the southern façade of St Isaac's Cathedral was working on the sculptures of the Apostles for its interior. Turgenev noted in this article how Vitali had never travelled outside of Russia and how this was a pity, for an artist of such calibre would only have benefited from seeing the works of the Old Masters with his own eyes:

России он никогда не покидал—что, может быть, ещё более упрочило самобытность его дарования. Впрочем, этим мы несколько не хотим сказать, будто бы поездка в Италию, классическую страну искусства, бесполезна для начинающих художников; напротив, она необходима. Такие счастливо одарённые природы, как г. Витали, слишком редки; в другой стране верный и здравый смысл, чувство истины и простоты, отличительные качества дарования г. Витали, ни в каком случае не дали бы ему впасть в подражание, в манеру, принять условные типы школы. Как бы ни было сильно впечатление, произведённое на людей с самостоятельным талантом образцами великих мастеров, оно никогда в них не проявится рабской подражательностью. (I/304)

As was suggested in the introduction to Chapter I, some of Turgenev's reflections on Vitali, who was of Italian parentage but very much regarded as a Russian artist, may have informed his later portrayal of Shubin in *Накануне* (whose mother is French). For in this novel's epilogue we find Shubin in Rome, producing statues which are classical in theme and inspiration (such as a Bacchante), but which have their stamp of originality. At any rate, they aren't mere imitations of the sculptures of Antiquity, as is clear from the narrator's ironical remarks about the purists who found fault with his work:

Строгие пуристы находят, что он [Шубин] не довольно изучил древних, что у него нет «стиля», и причисляют его к французской школе, от англичан и американцев у него пропасть заказов. (VIII/166-67)

True, just a few chapters earlier Turgenev had poked fun at the English tourists going round the museums of Venice (VIII/152) and he didn't generally have a high opinion of Englishmen's aesthetic sensibility,²⁴⁹ but he did believe in the 'сила, прочность [и] дельность' of the English as a people (XIV/244) and was full of even greater admiration

²⁴⁹ Cf. his letter of 28 May/9 June 1871 to Ludwig Pietsch: 'Unwiderlegbares Axioma: «*Kein* Engländer hat auch die *leiseste* Ahnung, was Kunst heisst. Sein Ur-Naturrell ist ur-antikünstlerisch» [...] (NB. Ich spreche natürlich nicht von Literatur, von Poesie)' (P IX/104).

for the young, enterprising American nation.²⁵⁰ So this detail about Shubin's work being in high demand among Americans and Englishmen is almost certainly meant as a confirmation of his merits as a sculptor! Overall, from what we are told about Shubin it seems that he is indeed a true artist who isn't discouraged by his awareness of the greater beauty of the works of the past, and who doesn't try to imitate these slavishly.

IV.3 National originality

Turgenev's thoughts about Russian literature revolved round similar issues as his observations on the sculptor Vitali. In that article he wrote for a French journal in 1845 he had argued that, except for Derzhavin and Krylov, all the writers who preceded Pushkin were devoid of true originality. He did acknowledge the contribution of Karamzin and Zhukovskii towards making Russian prose and poetry more fluent, but noted that: 'd'ailleurs, complètement dénués d'originalité personnelle, tous deux ne firent que traduire et imiter' (XII*/502).²⁵¹ And, similarly, except for Lermontov and Gogol', almost all of the writers who had come after Pushkin were mere imitators of foreign models (of Walter Scott's novels, or Schiller and Shakespeare's plays). All these novelists, playwrights and poets offered 'rien de neuf, de saisissant, d'original, de vraiment russe' (XII*/503).

In his 1846 review of Gedeonov's pseudo-historical play *Смерть Ляпунова*, Turgenev—before going on to demonstrate how the author had borrowed all too obviously from Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* and Schiller's *Wallenstein*—generalized on this situation as follows:

История искусства и литературы у нас на Руси замечательна своим особенным, двойственным развитием. Мы начинаем с подражания чужеземным образцам; люди с талантом чисто внешним, говорливые и деятельные, представляют в своих произведениях, лишённых всякой живой связи с народом, одни лишь отражения чужого таланта, чужой мысли—что им не мешает самодовольно толковать об оригинальности, о народности. (I/258)

Again, the influence of his mentor Belinskii in this passage is unmistakable. The great critic had often ridiculed the 'полуталанты', the dilettante writers of the 1830s and 40s (such figures as Benediktov and Kukul'nik) for what he called their 'пленной мысли

²⁵⁰ On 13/25 December 1847, he had written to Pauline Viardot: 'À mon avis, les plus grands poètes contemporains sont les Américains qui vont percer l'isthme de Panama et parlent d'établir un télégraphe électrique à travers l'Océan' (P 1/282).

²⁵¹ In his articles about Pushkin (1843-44), Belinskii had also asserted: 'До Пушкина русская поэзия была не более, как понятливую и переимчивую ученицей европейской музыки' (1953-59:VII/432).

раздраженье' (1953-59:IX/40). The latter phrase is a quotation from Lermontov's poem: 'Не верь себе' (1839), in which this bitterest of Russia's poets had advised all aspiring writers to keep the fruits of their 'inspiration' to themselves, since these often expressed either subjective feelings which meant nothing to people with real worries ('Какое дело нам, страдал ты или нет?'), asks this poem's most famous verse), or they were just the result of 'пленной мысли раздраженье'—that is, of having read the works of great writers and wishing to emulate them. Significantly, Turgenev often used this phrase to describe the predicament of so many modern artists—both Russian and foreign—whose talent wasn't sufficiently strong to produce original works.²⁵²

The influence of great predecessors' works, however, wasn't to be feared in the case of those writers who were endowed with fully-fledged talent, and in Russia the finest example of this for Turgenev was, of course, Pushkin. He was one of those 'мастера, у которых кисть свободно и быстро ходила в руке' whom Turgenev so envied (P II/65), and in a way Pushkin was representative of the whole development of Russian literature.

For, in Turgenev's view, as he set it forth in that 1845 French article, Pushkin had started off by imitating Byron in *Цыганы* (begun in 1824) but very soon afterwards had produced such works as *Евгений Онегин* and *Борис Годунов* (1831) in which there was nothing imitative whatsoever (XII*/503-04). Certainly, this interpretation can be questioned. Dostoevskii, for one, in *Дневник писателя* and in his Pushkin speech of 1880, whilst not denying the influence of Byron on Russia's greatest poet, insisted that already *Цыганы* was an entirely original and independent work. Pushkin himself had modestly acknowledged that he had 'imitated' Shakespeare, Karamzin, and the old Russian chronicles when writing *Борис Годунов*.²⁵³

Still, Turgenev's interpretation of Pushkin's development reflected his most cherished hopes for Russia's cultural progress, the impetus to which, in his view, had been given by the ever strengthening ties with Western Europe that the Petrine reforms had brought about. In his Pushkin speech of 1880 he would emphasize that the great poet had very early on displayed a remarkable independence in his altogether 'свободное творчество', imitating in his best works neither any 'европейские образцы' as such, nor

²⁵² He used it, for instance, in his discussion of the Nazarene school of painting in an 1847 article (I/316), as well as in a letter to Stasov of 12/24 December 1874 to describe a piano cycle by Nikolai Shcherbachev (one of Balakirev's pupils) which Turgenev considered to be a pale imitation of Schumann and Liszt (P X/338).

²⁵³ 'Шекспиру я подражал в его вольном и широком изображении характеров, в небрежном и простом составлении типов. Карамзину следовал я в светлом развитии происшествий, в летописях старался угадать образ мыслей и язык тогдашнего времени' (Quoted in Abyzova 1986:74-75).

the Russian ‘народный тон’ which inferior talents sprinkled into their works so as to make them more authentic (XV/68).²⁵⁴ By securing Russia’s place in the family of European national literatures and by proving himself such an original pupil of Shakespeare, amongst others (especially in the baron’s monologue in *Скупой рыцарь*), Pushkin was a splendid example of that ‘мощная сила самобытного присвоения чужих форм’ (XV/71) which Turgenev considered to be the most promising quality of the Russian nation.

It is telling that in this very same speech he pointed to a certain affinity between Pushkin and Peter the Great (XV/67) for whom Turgenev, like Belinskii (but unlike, say, Herzen and even Dostoevskii),²⁵⁵ always professed unqualified admiration as the ‘великий преобразователь России’ (I/296). Pushkin’s originality—which, as Turgenev knew, was readily appreciated by those Western Europeans who had a knowledge of Russian, such as Mérimée—was the best vindication one could imagine for Peter’s faith in the creative forces which had hitherto lain dormant in the Russian nation. This is a motif which recurs in Turgenev’s works—from the first of the *Записки охотника*, in which the peasant Khor’ reminded the huntsman of Peter the Great: ‘Русский человек так уверен в своей силе и крепости, что он не прочь и поломать себя: он мало занимается своим прошедшим и смело глядит вперед’ (IV/18); even through the ‘sceptical’ phase in which *Дым* was written, as is clear from Potugin’s already-cited optimistic words (IX/171); and culminating in the famous *Русский язык* (1882), which was the concluding piece in the cycle of poems-in-prose published in Turgenev’s lifetime and so was therefore regarded by his countrymen as his final message of faith in Russia (XIII/198).

A detailed comparison of Turgenev’s Pushkin speech with Dostoevskii’s much more enthusiastically received address the following day, is beyond the scope of this project, but it is significant that for all their differences, both writers identified Pushkin’s originality or, rather, uniqueness with his ability to give such perfect expression to Russia’s most essential national qualities. Still, where Dostoevskii emphasized the prophet and diviner in Pushkin (‘угадчик и пророк’) whose ‘преклонение перед правдой народа русского’ had saved him from becoming an imitator of Byron, Turgenev emphasized the

²⁵⁴ Those works which Pushkin had written in the style of Russian folklore (such as *Руслан и Людмила* or his fairy-tales) Turgenev, like Belinskii, considered to be his weakest. Dostoevskii, in contrast, praised *Сказка о медведихе* as a token of Pushkin’s kinship with the Russian common folk (1972-90:XXVI/144).

²⁵⁵ In his 1850 essay *Du développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie*, Herzen conceded that Peter the Great had been the first Russian sovereign of independent spirit, but criticized his ‘terrorism’ which aggravated the rift between the government and the Russian people (1954-66:VII/39). Dostoevskii, in 1861, had also emphasized how the Petrine reforms had torn the educated classes asunder from the common folk (1972-90:XVIII/35). It wasn’t until his Pushkin speech that he found in Peter’s reforms the same striving for ‘всечеловечность’ that for him defined Russia’s mission in the world (1972-90:XXVI/147).

artist, seeing in Pushkin Russia's first 'художник-поэт' who had picked up so quickly the skills of his craft from his European predecessors.²⁵⁶

Thus, although the life of Russia and her people's finest virtues ('простота, откровенность и честность') infused all of Pushkin's works, these also served to confirm Turgenev's cherished notion of the continuity ('преемственность') of culture, which anchored Russia firmly in Europe. A talent of Pushkin's magnitude had no reason to consider himself an epigone and no need to fear the burden of authorities. To emphasize this, Turgenev quoted a French saying: 'Le génie prend son bien partout où il le trouve' (XV/68), which Molière, one of his favourite French writers, famously invoked when he was accused of having 'stolen' some scenes from a play by Cyrano de Bergerac.

To return, though, to the aspect which is common to both Turgenev and Dostoevskii's speeches on Pushkin—namely, the emphasis on the poet's 'national spirit' (or 'народность', a term which Turgenev consciously avoided applying to Pushkin but which nonetheless informs many of his observations)—this is something that is quite peculiar to Russia. Goethe and Schiller, for example, were praised for their quest to revivify classical values in the modern age rather than for any inherent 'Germanness' in their works. Admittedly, Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* became a focus of patriotic sentiment after the Battle of Leipzig and in the years leading up to German unification. But literary and artistic works in nineteenth-century Germany were still judged mainly according to aesthetic rather than national criteria.

In Russia, however, these two criteria were merged. This was the case for both Westernists and Slavophiles. Thus, as Edward Brown has noted (1957:359), it was thanks to Stankevich's interest in evidences of the national spirit and of peasant creativity that Kol'tsov, whom Stankevich called a 'самородный поэт', was able to have his first poems published in 1831. Belinskii, too, who was greatly influenced by Stankevich at the start of his career as a critic (again, see E. Brown 1957), frequently invoked the concept of 'народность', which in his view had to express the ideal of both the educated class and the spirit of the people. As for the Slavophiles, Konstantin Aksakov pointed out in an essay of 1856 that only in Russia, where the educated classes had been imitating foreign models for such a long time, was it necessary to argue about 'nationalness'. In France, Germany, and England, he observed, such debates were unnecessary because 'у этих народов народность действует постоянно, чувство её живо, мысль вытекает прямо из неё и

²⁵⁶ For a more detailed juxtaposition of the two speeches, see the final chapter of Budanova 1987. See also Martin 1988 for the range of responses to, and criticisms of, Dostoevskii's speech.

стремится к общечеловеческому' (1981:200). His brother Ivan would repeat this notion twenty-five years later. In his Pushkin speech of 1880, the younger Aksakov pointed to the 'странное явление, которому почти нет подобного в других странах, именно: что сама народность в народе становится объектом сознания [...] что возможны у нас вопросы о народности художника' (1981:266).

As we shall see in the next chapter, Turgenev was very much in the thick of these debates. Despite sharing Stankevich's rejection of any narrow concept of 'national character', Turgenev wholeheartedly believed that the value of an artistic work resided first and foremost in its national individuality. Thus, discussing *Wilhelm Tell* in an 1843 article, he said that Schiller had attained 'высшее для художника счастье: выразить сокровеннейшую сущность своего народа' (I/207). However, there were a number of factions in Russia with distinct views about their country's 'national essence', which they tried to impose on the artists who fell into their orbit. Turgenev considered these factions to be a threat to the arts in Russia. If an artist was to convey the essence of Russia as fully as Pushkin had, he would have to steer carefully past them.

CHAPTER V

*OFFICIAL NATIONALITY AND SLAVOPHILISM***Introduction**

One minor, yet highly symbolical figure in *Накануне* is the retired cornet Uvar Ivanovich, who lives as a hanger-on in the house of Elena's parents. Here Turgenev may indeed have borrowed from Goncharov's *Обломов*, which was serialized between February and May 1859, just before he set to work on *Накануне*. Like Oblomov, Uvar Ivanovich displays that mixture of lethargy and hidden talents which seemed so characteristic of Russia in the eyes of many observers. Even the Slavophiles didn't deny that a certain tendency towards laziness was characteristic of the Russian people (see Riasanovsky 1952:124-25). In the second part of *Мёртвые души*, Gogol' had lamented how in Russia 'полмилльона сидней, увальней и болванов дремлет непробудно' and how rarely did someone emerge capable of uttering the almighty word: 'Вперёд' (1952-53:V/280). Before starting *Накануне* Turgenev would have been reminded of this lament because Dobroliubov had used it as the epigraph for his article on *Обломов*, which, as was discussed in section II.2, impinged on Turgenev's creative plans. Alongside the foreigner Insarov, a conscious hero, we therefore have Uvar Ivanovich, a sluggard who embodies that traditional Russian inertia which Gogol' and other writers had deplored.

Significantly, in Turgenev's novel it is the artist Shubin who most often comes into contact with Uvar Ivanovich, towards whom he shows an ironic yet affectionate attitude. At one point he addresses him, half in earnest and half in jest, as 'черноземная вы сила' (VIII/44). Even though Uvar is no peasant, Shubin deliberately chooses a phrase resonant with Slavophile ideas about the peasantry or, more generally, the Russian people. In his 1846 dissertation on Lomonosov's contribution to Russian letters, Konstantin Aksakov, the most ardent of the Slavophiles, had made much of the folk hero I'lia Muromets, especially his peasant origins and the fact that for thirty years he had 'сидел сиднем' in his village, gathering strength until, finally, 'он поднялся со дна русской земли, откуда бьёт чистый ключ веры и простой жизни' (1981:50). The notion of great strength lying fallow was also central to Herzen's thoughts about Russia, as we may appreciate in his 1863 obituary of Mikhail Shchepkin, where he said of the latter and of another great serf actor, Mochalov: 'оба принадлежат к тем намёкам на сокровенные силы и возможности русской натуры, которые делают незыблемой нашу веру в будущность России' (1954-66:XVII/268-69).

Although Turgenev shared with the Slavophiles, and later the Populists, their sympathy for the common folk, as well as their optimism about Russia's future, he was wary of those who drew all too rosy conclusions 'из едва понятой и понятной субстанции народа', as he put it during his 1862 polemic with Herzen.²⁵⁷ Consequently, in the equation of Russia with slumbering or hidden strengths—a formula which had great appeal throughout the nineteenth century—Turgenev tended to emphasize the qualifying adjectives which cast doubt as to whether these strengths would ever manifest themselves.

Uvar Ivanovich, for instance, is presented as a 'человек тучный до неподвижности, с сонливыми жёлтыми глазами' (VIII/40), and the only occasion on which natural talent seems to emerge from under this lethargy is during the excursion to Tsaritsyno, when he surprises everyone by his ability to imitate the calls of various forest birds! It is also on the way to Tsaritsyno, when Uvar and Shubin are sitting in the same carriage, that the narrator makes the following very significant remark: 'между «черноземной силой» и молодым художником существовала какая-то странная связь' (VII/70).

This phrase contains two instances of what Aleksandr Chudakov called Turgenev's 'открытое использование чужого слова' (1987:245). The first is, of course, the title enclosed in quotation marks which Shubin had earlier given to Uvar, making fun of certain Slavophile ideas. The second, however, is drawn from *Мёртвые души*. Just as Shubin invokes Gogol's artistic method when showing his caricatures to Bersenev (see II.4), so Turgenev here is quoting from the famous lyrical digression by the narrator in Gogol's novel—at the end of the first part, when Chichikov's carriage is travelling through the expanses of Russia:

Русь! чего же ты хочешь от меня? Какая непостижимая связь таится между нами? Что глядишь ты так, и зачем всё, что ни есть в тебе, обратило на меня полные ожидания очи? [...] Что пророчит сей необъятный простор? Здесь ли, в тебе ли не родиться беспредельной мысли, когда ты сама без конца? Здесь ли не быть богатырю, когда есть место, где развернуться и пройти ему?²⁵⁸

Although this is one of the passages that would later be ridiculed by Pisarev for what he regarded as absurd patriotism, inconsistent with the scenes of provincial life portrayed elsewhere in *Мёртвые души*, it wasn't for the sake of irony alone that Turgenev alluded to

²⁵⁷ Letter of 26 September/8 October 1862 (P V/51-52).

²⁵⁸ Gogol' 1994:V/201-02. This allusion to *Мёртвые души* hasn't been noted in the commentaries to *Накануне* in either of the two Academy editions of Turgenev's works.

this impassioned appeal by Gogol' to Russia. On the contrary, as we shall see in Chapter VI, this sense of a 'непостижимая связь' between an artist and his native country was something that Turgenev himself felt deeply, as shown by those letters in which he reflects on the fate of having to write on Russia from abroad (as Gogol' had done with *Мёртвые души*).

To return, though, to the 'strangeness' which Turgenev ascribed to Russia, it is on this point that he was most at odds with the Slavophiles, who were so eager to make affirmative conclusions about Russia and her national essence. Following Belinskii, who, in his fifth article on Pushkin (1844), had spoken of the 'неуловимая для определения субстанциальная стихия' represented by the 'народ' (1953-59:VII/333), Turgenev also believed that this national essence eluded definition. This can be seen in a letter he wrote to Pauline Viardot from Courtavenel, in 1850, explaining why he was postponing his return to Russia as far as possible:

La Russie attendra; cette immense et sombre figure, immobile et voilée comme le sphinx d'Œdipe. Elle m'avalera plus tard [...] Sois tranquille, sphinx, je reviendrai à toi, et tu pourras me dévorer à ton avis si je ne devine pas l'énigme! Laisse-moi en paix pendant quelque temps encore! Je reviendrai à tes steppes!²⁵⁹

This likening of Russia to an enigmatic sphynx was partly a rhetorical device for challenging the Slavophiles' confident assertions about the Russian people, and Turgenev used it on several occasions: most memorably in the engraved ring which Pavel Kirsanov had given to the mysterious Princess R. (VIII/223). Recalling Konstantin Aksakov's habit of wearing traditional Russian clothes, Turgenev would lament in his poem-in-prose *Сфинкс* (1878): 'Увы! не довольно надеть мурмолку, чтобы сделаться твоим Эдипом, о всероссийский сфинкс!' (XIII/182).²⁶⁰

As a writer, Turgenev's attitude to Russia was that of an observer—not an impassive one, of course, but still with the aim of studying his country without any foregone conclusions. Writing to the Viardots in May 1852, when he was due to be exiled to Spasskoe, he said: 'Je continuerai mes études sur le peuple russe, sur le peuple le plus étrange et le plus étonnant qu'il y ait au monde'.²⁶¹ His willingness to portray both the positive and negative aspects of his own people stemmed from his 'dialectic' approach to

²⁵⁹ Letter of 4/16 May 1850 (P I/382). Mme Viardot was on tour in Berlin at the time.

²⁶⁰ James Woodward (1984:70; 1995:230), in particular, has explored this and other motifs used by Turgenev to convey the sinister and unfathomable recesses of the 'Russian soul'.

²⁶¹ Letter of 1 May 1852 (P II/56).

life and history, and this in turn was part of his striving ‘к Истине всецелой’, as he put it in that important letter to Druzhinin (see p.94). After his death, Tolstoi would single out precisely that quality of his: ‘Главное в Тургеневе—это его правдивость’.²⁶²

It was truthfulness which Turgenev valued highest in other artists, too, and which he feared could be undermined by any rigid system of ideas, such as Slavophilism. That is why he was so alarmed by certain aspects of *Война и мир* which seemed to betray Slavophile influences and thus detracted not just from the novel’s truthfulness in its portrayal of history but also from Tolstoi’s integrity as an artist:

Боюсь я, как бы славянофильство, к которому он, кажется, попал в руки, не испортило его прекрасный и поэтический талант, лишив его свободы воззрения [...] Художник, который лишается способности видеть *белое и чёрное*—и направо и налево—тот уже стоит на краю гибели.²⁶³

Another system of preconceived ideas which could deprive Russian artists of a sense of perspective was that of the doctrine of Official Nationality, as formulated by the Minister of Education Uvarov in 1833: ‘Православие, самодержавие и народность—вернейший залог силы и величия нашего отечества’.

Certainly, this doctrine was never accepted wholesale by the intelligentsia, and it was discredited by the Crimean War, but all the same the nationalism which it encouraged was in Turgenev’s eyes a stumbling-block for the development of the arts in Russia—not just in the 1830s and 40s but even in the 1870s, as the case of the painter Vereshchagin was to show.

V.1 Russia, a ‘giant with clay feet’

In Turgenev’s last novel *Ночь* (1877) Nezhdanov, shortly after he has started ‘going to the people’ but without any real faith in the cause, commits to paper a poem entitled ‘Сон’ which presents a desolate picture of Russia’s stagnation: everyone, the peasantry included, is fast asleep. The poem concludes:

Один царев кабак—тот не смыкает глаз;
И, штоф с очищенной всей пятерней сжимая,
Лбом в полюс упершись, а пятками в Кавказ,
Спит непробудным сном отчизна, Русь святая! (XII/231)

²⁶² Quoted in Lomunov 1987:124.

²⁶³ Letter to Borisov, 15/27 March 1870 (P VIII/200).

Nina Budanova (1987:149-50) has established that the inspiration for this grotesque image of the alcohol-dazed Russian ‘giant’—which, like *Дым* ten years earlier, infuriated Dostoevskii—came from a poem by Benediktov which Belinskii had brilliantly torn to pieces in an article of 1845.²⁶⁴ The verses in question from Benediktov’s poem, which extols the geographical vastness of Russia, are:

Чудный край! через Алтай
 Бросив локоть на Китай,
 Темя вспрыснув океаном,
 В Балт ребром, плечом в Атлант,
 В полюс лбом, пятой к Балканам
 Мощный тянется гигант...²⁶⁵

However, as Budanova has pointed out (1987:150), these verses were in their turn inspired by a poem of considerably greater artistic merit and yet no less fervent patriotism—namely, ‘Клеветникам России’ (1831), in which Pushkin had defied the Western nations who sympathized with the Polish cause:

... Иль мало нас? Иль от Перми до Тавриды,
 От финских хладных скал до пламенной Колхиды,
 От потрясённого Кремля
 До стен недвижимого Китая,
 Стальной щетиною сверкая,
 Не встанет русская земля?.. (1949:III/223)

Turgenev must have had both these poems in mind when he composed his ironic allegory of Russia as a hopelessly slumbering ‘giant’ in *Новь*. In the case of Benediktov this sort of literary joke on Turgenev’s part is understandable, since he had already parodied that poet’s exaggerated style in the figure of Maidanov in *Первая любовь*. But that he should do the same with a poem by his revered Pushkin (or even just an image from it) demands some explanation.

As Ivan Aksakov emphasized in his speech of 1880, Pushkin had never been a champion of Official Nationality as such: ‘Сохраняя всегда во всём полную нравственную свободу и независимость художника, Пушкин не был певцом ни

²⁶⁴ Dostoevskii attacked this ‘distorted view’ of Russia in the February 1876 issue of *Дневник писателя* (1972-90:XXV/38). For a very interesting re-interpretation of the antagonism between Turgenev and Dostoevskii in their views on Russia, see Batiuto 1979:62-64.

²⁶⁵ Quoted in Belinskii 1953-59:IX/44.

официальных торжеств, ни официального величия' (1981:279). Nevertheless, Pushkin did share in what Boris Gasparov has described as an 'upsurge of national pride in Russia [after the Polish revolt of 1830-31], a mood that found expression in a host of patriotic poems and dramas, Glinka's first opera among them' (2005:33). Pushkin's 'Клеветникам России' belonged to that trend.

Turgenev was usually able to distinguish between the artistically valuable and those works which merely catered to the prevalent nationalism—hence his admiration for another 'legitimist' poem of Pushkin's, 'Пир Петра Петрово' (1835), of whose beauty he tried to convince Tolstoi during a visit to Iasnaia Poliana in 1878.²⁶⁶ The radical intelligentsia, however, were less forgiving. Anything that could be construed to lend support to the autocratic State, even if written by Pushkin, was worthy of condemnation. It was in this sense that Belinskii, in his famous 1847 Letter to Gogol', emphasized:

Вот почему так скоро падает популярность великих поэтов, искренно или неискренно отдающих себя в услужение православию, самодержавию и народности. Разительный пример—Пушкин, которому стоило написать только два-три верноподданических стихотворения и надеть камерюнкерскую ливрею, чтобы вдруг лишиться народной любви. (1953-59:X/217)

Younger radicals were less forgiving still, and Turgenev captured their attitude towards Pushkin when he had Bazarov express his disdain for the great poet by quipping that he must have served in the tsarist army because: 'у него [Пушкина] на каждой странице: На бой, на бой! за честь России!' (VIII/326). The ironic bitterness here is aggravated by the fact that just a few years earlier (the novel is set in 1859) this patriotism hadn't prevented Russia's defeat—a defeat which was in part due to the Russian administration's 'недостаток в честных людях' so accurately diagnosed by Bazarov (VIII/245).

Like most educated Russians of his generation (both Westernists and Slavophiles), Turgenev believed that an artist should never be a servant of the State. His works might serve Russia in the long run, but that was a different matter. For writers it was easier to maintain their independence than for other artists—especially painters, who often came from humbler backgrounds and were accustomed to docility during their years at the Academy because that was the only way of securing the coveted scholarships for further study in Italy.²⁶⁷ Those writers, therefore, who nevertheless jumped on the bandwagon of

²⁶⁶ As recalled by Sergei Tolstoi (1956:305-06).

²⁶⁷ Bowlt 1983b:122.

Official Nationality came to be generally reviled. Thus, Turgenev, in his articles of the 1840s and 50s, following the example of Belinskii, skilfully exposed to ridicule the pseudo-historic dramas of Kukol'nik and Gedeonov and ultra-patriotic verses of Viazemskii which exalted the might of Russia, thereby complementing the various grandiose projects in architecture and painting sponsored by Nicholas I. And in his reminiscences of Belinskii, he summed up the atmosphere of those years:

Явилась целая фаланга людей, бесспорно даровитых, но на даровитости которых лежал общий отпечаток риторики, внешности, соответствующей той великой, но чисто внешней силе, которой они служили отголоском. (XIV/38)

This 'purely external force' was a veiled reference to the Russia of Nicholas I which had turned out, in retrospective confirmation of Diderot's famous phrase, to be a 'colosse aux pieds d'argile'—a giant with clay feet—during the Crimean War.²⁶⁸

But before this disaster, which opened the floodgates for criticism of Russia from all quarters, especially in the writings of such radicals as Pisarev, many were the artists whose (sometimes quite genuine) achievements were trumpeted as proof of Russia's supposed greatness. This wasn't something unique to Nicholas's reign, for already under Catherine the Great blind patriotism had led some to compare Sumarokov to Voltaire. As Turgenev ironically noted in one of his articles: 'русские во время младенчества нашей словесности говорили о своих Молиерах и Вольтерах' (I/297).

What was new in the climate of Official Nationality was the tone of such declarations. It was no longer sufficient to claim that Russia had its own Molières and Voltaires: now Russian art was declared to be in its own league altogether and in some cases even superior to anything the West had ever produced. The Stankevich circle, in particular, scorned this attitude, and, as Edward Brown has observed (1957:353), it was partly in reaction to such hyper-patriotism that Belinskii, in his first major article, 'Литературные мечтания' (1834), claimed that Russia had as yet contributed nothing to human culture.

Another friend of Stankevich's, Neverov (whom Turgenev later also befriended during his studies in Berlin) wrote an article in 1836 for the Ministry of Education's official journal which, on the contrary, exuded patriotic self-confidence:

²⁶⁸ Cf. Starr 1983:107. Turgenev actually quoted Diderot's phrase in his 1842 memorandum on Russian agriculture, asserting (rather prematurely) that it was no longer valid and that the other European nations were gradually coming to respect Russia (I/471).

Теперь мы смело можем сказать, что у нас есть национальное искусство: иностранцы признают самобытность нашей школы живописи; но им ещё не известно, что у нас есть также национальная опера и национальная скульптура: мы укажем им на «Жизнь за царя», на статую г. Пименова «Бабочник». Да, с именами гг. Глинки, Брюллова и Пименова—начинается новая эра для художественного гения России!²⁶⁹

This exaltation of Briullov would have provoked Turgenev's disbelief, since, as we have seen, he regarded that painter's work as typical of the empty grandiloquence of the era of Official Nationality. Significantly, in *Дым* Potugin would expostulate: 'Двадцать лет сряду поклонялись этакой пухлой ничтожности, Брюллову, и вообразили, что и у нас, мол, завелась школа, и что она даже почище будет всех других' (IX/232).

With regard to Glinka, so enthusiastically praised by Neverov in his article (which was actually a review of *Жизнь за царя*), and Turgenev's attitude to his music, the situation is rather more complicated. On the one hand, it is true that *Жизнь за царя* and especially its rousing 'Славься!' chorus came to be regarded as the apotheosis of Official Nationality and remained a focus of patriotic sentiment throughout the nineteenth century, with Chaikovskii, for instance, quoting the melody of the 'Славься!' in his overture *The Year 1812*. Even Stasov, otherwise Glinka's most fervent champion, didn't hesitate to criticize *Жизнь за царя* for its legitimist message:

Никто, быть может, не сделал такого бесчестья нашему народу, как Глинка, выставивший посредством гениальной музыки на вечные времена русским героем подлого холопа Сусанина, верного как собака.²⁷⁰

It seems to have been partly the opera's ultra-monarchic libretto which put off the young Turgenev when he attended the première in St Petersburg on 27 November 1836.

This, however, wasn't the only reason. With his first opera Glinka really had achieved something quite original and progressive: never before had a Russian peasant appeared onstage as a tragic hero, and never before had the sad melodies of Russian folksong (the 'протяжная песня')²⁷¹ been used as the basis of an opera. And this originality wasn't immediately appreciated by everyone—especially by those who were used to the Italian operas which dominated the repertoire of the imperial theatres! For instance, the young Nikolai Miliutin, who would later play such an important role in the drafting of the Emancipation Edict, wrote to his parents that he had fallen asleep during a

²⁶⁹ Quoted in Livanova & Protopopov 1955:II/214.

²⁷⁰ From an 1861 letter to Balakirev (Gozenpud 1994:57).

²⁷¹ Cf. Frolova-Walker 1997:35.

performance of the opera, imagining himself to be at some post-station surrounded by ‘ямщики, которые заливаются в своих бесконечных напевах, всегда однообразных и утомительных’.²⁷² It was with such comments about Glinka’s ‘coachmen’s music’ in mind that Anna Petrova-Vorob’eva—the wife of the bass Osip Petrov who created the role of Susanin, and herself the first Vania—would later recall how the première of *Жизнь за царя* hadn’t awakened much enthusiasm: ‘чудесные речитативы Сусанина не были поняты. Уж слишком это шло вразрез с италианщиной: многие находили их скучными’.²⁷³

The seventeen-year-old Turgenev was no exception to this general attitude. As he admitted many years later, recalling his attendance at the premières of both Gogol’s *Ревизор* and Glinka’s first opera in 1836: ‘В «Жизни за царя» я просто скучал...’, immediately adding, however, that despite the poor performance of some of the singers: ‘но музыку Глинки я всё-таки должен был понять’ (XIV/16). This regret at having failed to appreciate *Жизнь за царя* at the time confirms that Turgenev, once his musical sensitivity had matured, did genuinely come to like Glinka’s music, however much the nationalistic fervour which it gave rise to might otherwise have prejudiced him against it. In his very prescient review of the première Odoevskii had asserted:

С оперой Глинки является то, чего давно ищут и не находят в Европе—новая стихия в искусстве, и начинается в его истории новый период: период русской музыки. Такой подвиг, скажем, положи руку на сердце, есть дело не только таланта, но гения!²⁷⁴

For all the truth of these words, they might be read as implying that Russia was now entirely self-sufficient and could do without any guidance from the West.

Not surprisingly, Turgenev was appalled by the way in which Glinka’s legacy was invoked by later critics like Stasov and Cui in order to justify ‘a new and quite spurious Russian musical messianism’, as Richard Taruskin has called it (1977:156). Thus, Cui wrote in 1864 about *Руслан и Людмила* (1842): ‘вот опера, в которой, по разнообразию и свежести фантазии, Глинка становится вслед за Бетховеном выше всех других композиторов’ (1952:43). It is against the hubristic tone of such declarations that Potugin repeatedly warns:

²⁷² Livanova & Protopopov 1955:I/184.

²⁷³ *ibid.*:II/196.

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*:I/201.

И в этом случае мы не могли обойтись без хвастовства! Сказать бы, например, что Глинка был действительно замечательный музыкант, которому обстоятельства, внешние и внутренние, помешали сделаться основателем русской оперы,—никто бы спорить не стал; но нет, как можно! Сейчас надо его произвести в генерал-аншефы, в обер-гофмаршалы по части музыки да другие народы кстати оборвать: ничего, мол, подобного у них нету. (IX/232)

Turgenev was afraid that such panegyrics to Glinka could harm the development of music in Russia by encouraging the delusions of self-sufficiency that had been so rife in the years of Official Nationality.

Upholding the precepts of Stankevich and Belinskii, who had frequently attacked the Russian tendency to exaggeration and called for greater self-criticism, Turgenev tried, both in his novels and public declarations, to make it clear that Russia's progress in all fields depended on avoiding any sort of arrogance towards the rest of Europe. As he once wrote to Annenkov:

Настоящий патриотизм не имеет ничего общего с заносчивой, чванливой гордыней, которая ведёт только к самообольщению, к невежеству, к ошибкам неисправимым.²⁷⁵

Turgenev's eventual appreciation of Glinka (in which Pauline Viardot played no small part) was marked precisely by this 'true patriotism'. He acknowledged Glinka's achievement in having created the first distinctively Russian musical works, without denying his debt to foreign masters or drawing any rash conclusions about the youthful freshness of Russian music as Stasov and Cui would do. Writing in 1857, shortly after receiving news of Glinka's death in Berlin, Turgenev observed prophetically: 'Имя его [Глинки] не забудется в истории русской музыки—и, если суждено ей когда-нибудь развиться,—от него поведёт она своё начало'.²⁷⁶

Even if Official Nationality faded away after the Crimean War, exaggerated notions about Russia's 'special destiny' prevailed well into the second half of the nineteenth century, and they also continued to impinge on the debate about the development of Russian culture. There was, however, one section of Russian society which still clung on to the delusions of Official Nationality—namely, the circles closest to the imperial court who filled the top ranks of the military and bureaucracy. It is worth considering briefly their

²⁷⁵ Letter of 27 July/8 August 1870 (P VIII/263-64).

²⁷⁶ Letter to Kashperov, 23 February/7 March 1857 (P III/95). See also Gozenpud 1994:61.

treatment of the painter Vasiliï Vereshchagin, since he was one of the younger Russian artists whom Turgenev actively supported.

The St Petersburg exhibition in 1874 of Vereshchagin's Turkestan series of paintings—based on what he had witnessed during the Russian army's campaign in Central Asia and including *Апофеоза войны* (1871) and *Забывтый* (1874; see Plate 4B)—was condemned by several generals as anti-patriotic and injurious to the army's honour. Turgenev, on the other hand, was greatly impressed by Vereshchagin's courage in showing the horrors of war and refusing to succumb to chauvinism. He subsequently helped to organize two exhibitions of Vereshchagin's paintings in Paris (in 1879 and 1881), and wrote letters to French friends and newspapers, drawing attention to them. The following extract from one of these open letters is interesting for the way Turgenev invokes Gogol's legacy of 'truthfulness' as one of the guiding principles of Russian art:

Cette tendance au vrai, au caractéristique, qui depuis notre grand écrivain Gogol, a posé son empreinte sur toutes les productions de la littérature russe, se manifeste également dans l'art russe sous le pinceau de Véréschaguine [...] Ce sont des scènes militaires, mais pas prises dans le sens chauvin. Véréschaguine ne pense pas à poétiser l'armée russe, à lui raconter sa gloire, mais à rendre tous les côtés de la guerre, les pathétiques, les grotesques et les terribles aussi bien que les autres, les psychologiques surtout... (XV/181-82)

Similar charges of anti-patriotism as those levelled at Vereshchagin by tsarist generals had been made against Gogol' in his time by conservatives and supporters of Official Nationality.

The threat posed by this doctrine to the Russian artist had been mainly of an external kind, since despite resting on 'clay feet' the Russian State under Nicholas I did have a formidable machinery of repression at its disposal. Dostoevskii, in particular, was to feel its weight for having dared to openly discuss Belinskii's Letter to Gogol', that defiant refutation of all that Official Nationality stood for. The threat posed by Slavophilism, however, was perhaps more dangerous still because it could easily find its way into the mind and heart of many a Russian artist.

V. 2 Slavophile ideas and Russian art

In the 1840s, Gogol's significance as an artist became the subject of an intense debate between Westernists and Slavophiles, and the arguments advanced by Belinskii against the latter would have a lasting influence on Turgenev's thoughts about the

development of Russian culture. This quarrel was somewhat unexpected, as at first both Belinskii and the Slavophiles had concurred in their praise for the genuine ‘national spirit’ which shone through Gogol’s Ukrainian and Petersburg stories in comparison to the clumsy attempts by the adherents of Official Nationality to make their works as Russian as possible.

In 1842, however, Konstantin Aksakov wrote his notable essay on the recently published first part of *Мёртвые души*, in which he argued that Gogol’ deserved to be compared with Homer and Shakespeare for the epic sweep, greatness, and simplicity of his *поэма*, so unique amidst the decadence of the modern European novel, and that the invocation of Russia at the end of this first part was a source of great hope:

И когда здесь, в конце первой части, коснулся Гоголь общего субстанциального чувства русского, то вся сущность (субстанция) русского народа, тронутая им, поднялась колоссально [...] Здесь проникает наружу и видится Русь, лежащая, думаем мы, тайным содержанием всей его поэмы. И какие эти строки, что дышит в них! и как, несмотря на мелочность предыдущих лиц и отношений на Руси, как могущественно выразилось то, что лежит в глубине, то сильное, субстанциальное, вечное, не исключаемое нисколько предыдущим. (1981:145)

Belinskii himself, in an article written in 1841 (but not published in his lifetime), had also spoken, in Hegelian terms, of the ‘субстанция русского народа’ which promised a great future for Russia, but, crucially, he had observed that it was as yet impossible to determine what this ‘субстанция’ consisted of (1953-59:V/649). Aksakov’s essay therefore could not but act as a red rag on him. Apart from Aksakov’s disparagement of contemporary European literature, this affirmative conclusion about Russia’s ‘national substance’ seemed to gloss over all the squalor described in the preceding chapters of *Мёртвые души*.

Belinskii’s response was an article full of brilliant irony in which, without denying Gogol’s talent for one moment, he questioned the right to draw such heady conclusions about the soundness of Russia’s ‘national spirit’. The result of this, as Annenkov later noted, was to make the rift between Belinskii and the Slavophiles irreparable (1960:240). In almost all of his subsequent articles Belinskii did not fail to include some barb against his antagonists.

The importance of this quarrel for Turgenev’s attitude to Slavophilism becomes clear if we bear in mind that throughout the 1840s Konstantin Aksakov dismissively branded him, alongside Dostoevskii and other young talents discovered by Belinskii, as

one of the ‘санктпетербургские литераторы’. These writers, so Aksakov argued, were marred by artificial, aristocratic sentiments, by ‘оторванность от русской земли’ and contempt for the Russian people, and their works were nothing but paltry imitations of Pushkin and Lermontov, in the case of Turgenev’s early poems (*Разговор* and *Помещик*), and of Gogol’ in the case of Dostoevskii’s first novels (*Бедные люди* and *Двойник*).²⁷⁷

These sharp and rather unjust criticisms can only have strengthened Turgenev’s determination to carry on Belinskii’s struggle against anything that smacked of Slavophile doctrine. For so many of Aksakov’s judgements were indeed doctrinaire: apart from his revered Gogol’, works that dealt with the city or the landowning aristocracy, such as Turgenev’s *Помещик*, were automatically trivial!

In 1878 Turgenev explained his hatred for the Slavophiles by saying that they were worse than the Germans in their rigid adherence to preconceived ideas: ‘они систематики, а систематичность чужда русскому человеку’.²⁷⁸ Any system of beliefs that had to be taken for granted was an obstacle to that ‘freedom of manoeuvre’ which, as Freeborn has stressed (1960:16), Turgenev held to be essential for all artists. As we have seen, it was from this perspective that he lamented what he perceived to be Slavophile tendencies in Tolstoi’s *Война и мир*. Turgenev was most of all alarmed by Tolstoi’s Slavophile-like refutation of the value of conscious reason in favour of the ‘peasant wisdom’ embodied by Platon Karataev. Shortly after reading the Karataev episode he exclaimed: ‘В своём поклонении бессознательному невежеству он [Толстой] скоро дойдёт до апофеозиса Ивана Яковлевича, московского юродивого’.²⁷⁹

If in the field of philosophy the Slavophiles gave precedence to faith over the intellect, in the process of artistic creation, too, they stressed the role of the irrational. Thus, Ivan Aksakov, in his splendid 1874 essay on Tiutchev called it a miracle that someone who felt more at home in Europe and the Europeanized salons of St Petersburg than in the Russian countryside, who spoke and wrote in French far more frequently than in his native tongue, had been able to produce Russian verses of such profound beauty. Aksakov attributed this to the strength of the ‘national spirit’ within Tiutchev:

²⁷⁷ To be fair to Konstantin Aksakov’s literary discernment, he did find some words of praise for *Бедные люди*—in particular, for Varen’ka’s memories of growing up in the countryside. The phrase ‘оторванность от русской земли’ (later taken up by Apollon Grigor’ev and Dostoevskii) appears in an 1847 article by Aksakov (1981:194).

²⁷⁸ As recalled by Lukanina. *VT* (1983):II/204.

²⁷⁹ Letter of 30 May/11 June 1869 to Zhemchiuzhnikov (P VIII/43).

Из глубочайшей глубины его духа была ключом у него поэзия, из глубины, недостижимой даже для его собственной воли; из тех тайников, где живёт наша первообразная природная стихия, где обитает самая правда человека... (1981:327)

Turgenev, who had been one of the earliest champions of Tiutchev (having helped in the publication of the first volume of his verses in 1854), was wary of such attempts by the Slavophiles to claim the poet as their own. Shortly after hearing of Tiutchev's death, Turgenev compared him to Khomiakov:

Тютчев—это другое дело. Глубоко жалею о нём. Он тоже был славянофил—но не в своих стихах; а те стихи, в которых он был им—те-то и скверны. Самая сущная его суть, le fin du fin, чисто западная—сродни Гёте.²⁸⁰

The Slavophiles' exaltation of the subconscious in art seemed to Turgenev something that was quite inappropriate in Russia given her need to catch up with the West through conscious effort in all aspects of culture. As noted earlier (see III.5) when discussing why Schopenhauer's view of artists as mere vessels for Platonic ideas received by inspiration (or what he called 'ahnende Antizipation') cannot do justice to Turgenev's aesthetics, it is worth stressing again that Turgenev fully shared Belinskii's conviction that no artist could renounce the use of his intellectual faculties. In 1847 the great critic had ironically asked those who claimed that art was a matter of inspiration alone: 'А для искусства не нужно ума и рассудка?' (1953-59:X/305).

Turgenev had good reason to remind his countrymen of the importance of intellectual effort. As we have seen, he was dismayed by the opposition from some quarters to the establishment of Russia's first music conservatory, and had Potugin in *Дым* stand up for professionalism and education: 'Не поощряйте, ради Бога, у нас на Руси мысли, что можно чего-нибудь добиться без учения! Нет; будь ты хоть семи пядей во лбу, а учись, учись с азбуки!' (IX/231). More alarming perhaps than the vain dilettantism of Russia's 'home-grown geniuses' was the onslaught against reason and the intellect which Tolstoi carried out in *Война и мир*—and which was all the more compelling because of Tolstoi's genius. As Turgenev lamented:

То, что всякому мужику понятно, как польза хлеба—а именно польза человеческого ума, рассудка—то-то и нужно искоренить!! То-то и есть чепуха! И нужно же, чтобы

²⁸⁰ Letter to Fet, 21 August/2 September 1873 (P X/143).

эдакая ерунда залезла в голову самого даровитого писателя во всей современной европейской литературе.²⁸¹

The fact that this remarkable novel displayed an underlying hostility towards intellectual values was in Turgenev's view the result of Tolstoi having come under the influence of Prince Urusov, whom Turgenev considered a Slavophile.²⁸²

Whether or not Turgenev was right in his accusations against Urusov and Tolstoi is less important than the fact that he took such a principled stance against anything that reminded him of Slavophilism. And such notions as 'unconscious creativity' and 'intuitive understanding' were indeed an essential part of Slavophile aesthetics and contributed to the messianic view of Russian art which, as far as literature is concerned, found its most eloquent expression in Dostoevskii's speech of 1880, describing Pushkin's 'всемирная отзывчивость' as something miraculous and prophetic (1972-90:XXVI/146-47).²⁸³ As we shall see in the next section, Turgenev always criticized such messianism, for it ran contrary to his faith in the continuity of culture and might well tempt his countrymen to ungrateful arrogance towards the West.

Let us, though, return to Gogol' again and to how the Slavophiles tried to win him over to their cause. Sergei Aksakov cited, in his invaluable biographical essay of 1854 on the great writer, a letter which Gogol' had sent him from Rome towards the end of 1840, speaking of his 'сильное чувство любви к России'. Aksakov explains this as the result of Gogol''s visit to Russia in the spring of that year during which he had made the acquaintance of his son Konstantin, the most fervent of the Slavophiles, who had explained to Gogol' 'всё значение, весь смысл русского народа'.²⁸⁴ It is indeed likely that Konstantin's ideas did to some extent inspire Gogol''s unexpected invocation of Russia's vast potential at the end of the first part of *Мёртвые души*. Similarly, the reflections of the young Italian prince in *Рим* (also completed in 1842) about the popular festivities for the Carnival could easily be read as a typical Slavophile declaration about the Russian peasantry:

Всё это показывало ему [князю] стихии народа сильного, непочатого, для которого как будто бы готовилось какое-то поприще впереди. Европейское просвещение как

²⁸¹ Letter to Borisov, 12/24 March 1869 (P VII/341-42).

²⁸² Letters to Borisov of 31 January/12 February and 12/24 August 1870 (P VIII/184, 270).

²⁸³ See also Kashina 1975:106-115.

²⁸⁴ Mashinskii 1952: 132.

будто с умыслом не коснулось его и не водрузило в грудь ему своего холодного усовершенствования. (1952-53:III/224)

Significantly, Konstantin Aksakov, who had previously derided Turgenev as a ‘петербургский литератор’, immediately hailed *Записки охотника* because of the way they confirmed certain cherished Slavophile ideas. Referring to *Хорь и Калиныч* (1847), the first of these sketches, Aksakov enthused:

Вот что значит прикоснуться к земле и к народу: вмиг даётся сила! [...] Он прикоснулся к народу, прикоснулся к нему с участием и сочувствием, и посмотрите, как хорош его рассказ! [...] Дай Бог г. Тургеневу продолжать по этой дороге! (1981:192-93)

And in an article of 1857 he again praised Turgenev for having drawn from the ‘живая вода народная’ in these sketches which had a refreshing effect on the reader, ‘приближая его к той великой тайне жизни, которая лежит в русском народе’ (1981:192-93). All this illustrates how the Slavophiles were keen to seize on any works of art that might serve their cause—perhaps because they were unable to create anything of artistic value themselves.²⁸⁵

In both cases, however, they reckoned without the complexity of every true artist’s nature. For Gogol’ soon dismayed his Slavophile friends by trying to answer directly the questions posed by the first part of *Мёртвые души* rather than embarking on the completion of his work. And Turgenev, however flattered he might have felt by the Aksakovs’ sympathy, realized that he couldn’t just continue on the same path and keep adding to the *Записки охотника*. As he put it in a letter to Annenkov, shortly before making his first attempts at a full-length novel of Russian educated society:

Надобно пойти другой дорогой—надобно найти её—и раскланяться навсегда с старой манерой. Довольно я старался извлекать из людских характеров разводные эссенции—triples extracts—чтобы влить их потом в маленькие стляночки—нюхайте, мол, почтенные читатели—откупорьте и нюхайте—не правда ли пахнет русским типом? Довольно—довольно.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ As Dostoevskii noted ironically in an article of 1861, referring to how the Slavophiles were so disparaging about Russian literature after Gogol’: ‘Да ведь вы сами литераторы, господа славянофилы. Ведь вы хвалитесь же знанием народа, ну и представьте нам сами ваши идеалы, ваши образы. Но, сколько нам известно, выше князя Луповицкого вы ещё не поднимались...’ (1972-90:XIX/63). *Князь Луповицкий, или Приезд в деревню* (1856) was a comedy by Konstantin Aksakov.

²⁸⁶ Letter of 28 October 1852 (P II/278).

There was perhaps really only one principle in aesthetics in which Westernists like Belinskii and Turgenev agreed with the Slavophiles—namely, in the need for Russian artists to abandon their ‘подражательное направление’, which had been going on ever since the Petrine reforms, and achieve a ‘самобытное русское воззрение’.²⁸⁷

Admittedly, there were considerable differences in opinion as to how this was to be attained. Turgenev would have no truck with the religious dogmas of Khomiakov, for example, who claimed that Aleksandr Ivanov had succeeded in breaking free from the individualism that had marred Western painting from the Renaissance onwards thanks to his humility and monastic dedication which had allowed his soul to become an ‘отражение всенародного Русского духа, просвещённого Православною Верою’ (Khomiakov 1900:III/359). But if in his abhorrence towards any sort of Russian messianism Turgenev was firmly opposed to the Slavophiles, he did share Konstantin Aksakov’s hopes that Russia should find her own rightful and distinct place alongside the other European nations, for only then would she be able to contribute to the spiritual patrimony of mankind.

What alarmed Turgenev, as Charles Moser has observed, was that ‘on those few occasions when some genuinely remarkable Russian artist did appear, his countrymen hastened to exaggerate his significance out of all proportion’ (1972:81). This was a consequence of Russia’s complicated sense of inferiority, and it wasn’t just Slavophiles who were prone to exaggeration.

V.3 Russian cultural nationalism

Long before the eulogies of Glinka by Stasov and Cui in the 1860s, *Жизнь за царя*, the first truly Russian opera, had been given a significance bordering on the messianic by critics who didn’t belong to the Slavophile circle. Thus, Stankevich’s friend Neverov wrote in his review of the première in 1836:

Этой свежей мысли уже давно ищет в себе Европа и не находит. В одной только России есть ещё богатое будущее: юная, свежая, она своей национальностью должна обновить дряхлеющую художественную жизнь своей наставницы и внести в неё новые элементы.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ As Konstantin Aksakov argued in an article of 1856, though he was thinking not just of Russian artists but also of scholars, scientists, and indeed all Russian educated society (1981:200).

²⁸⁸ Livanova & Protopopov 1955:II/214.

Odoevskii, in his slightly more objective articles on *Жизнь за царя* and *Руслан и Людмила*, made similar reflections on how European music seemed to have exhausted itself, and how Glinka was destined to replenish it. It is interesting that at the time the Slavophiles themselves, whilst fully aware of the significance of Glinka's achievement, were careful to avoid such raptures. This was because, as we have seen, Glinka's first opera lent itself to associations with the doctrine of Official Nationality that was so odious to the Slavophiles. It was in this sense that Ivan Aksakov wrote to his father in 1844: 'официальность, которую дают этой опере [*Жизни за царя*], как-то опошляет и мысль о такой опере. Это жаль и мешает понимать эту прекрасную, вполне русскую оперу'.²⁸⁹ And Khomiakov, in an article also written in 1844, attempted a Slavophile interpretation of the opera, arguing that Susanin was not so much a hero as a humble peasant, family man and member of the 'братская община', who merely accepts the role imposed on him by fate; and that the epilogue in Moscow celebrated not just the unity of the Russian lands but the brotherhood of all Slavic peoples (1900:III/101-2)!

The misgivings which the young Turgenev had about *Жизнь за царя* in view of its association with Official Nationality, and which contributed to his failure to appreciate Glinka's music at the time, were nothing compared to the dismay he felt in the 1860s when Stasov and especially Cui invoked Glinka's legacy to support an unashamed musical nationalism. Using arguments that must have reminded Turgenev of Herzen's attempts during their 1862 polemic to prove the decrepitude of European bourgeois civilization which Russia might be able to escape thanks to her youth, Cui confidently asserted in 1864 that music in the West was in its last throes and that the future lay with Russia:

В Европе музыка одряхла и не может подбодриться, несмотря на все гармонические и оркестровые приправы, а русская музыка полна сил и свежести. Там музыка отжила свой век, а у нас только начинает жить [...] Среди всеобщего застоя или предсмертных усилий музыка *от нас* получит своё обновление и начнёт новую эпоху. (1952:37)

As Peter Brang has noted (1979:275-76), this idea of Russia's youth was one that had enjoyed great currency ever since the eighteenth century and had been taken up by figures in Russian intellectual life as diametrically opposed as Pogodin, the champion of Official Nationality, and Belinskii, as well as Herzen after his disillusionment in the 1848 revolutions.

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*:I/194.

In Cui's articles about the new Russian school of music, it resurged in conjunction with a cavalier attitude towards the European heritage. His various 'презрительные отзывы о Бахе и Генделе, Гайдне и Моцарте' were effectively on the same level as Shevryev's formulation about the 'гнилой Запад'.²⁹⁰ Even someone as opposed to violence as Turgenev was provoked by Cui's articles to exclaim: 'г-на Кюи, за его сквернословие о Моцарте, всё-таки надо убить, проломив его пустую голову непременно грязным камнем'.²⁹¹ Although Stasov, in contrast, showed far greater respect for the European masters, his high-flown tributes to Glinka's genius and assertion that *Руслан и Людмила* had laid the foundations for a 'будущая самостоятельная русская школа' did help to shape 'that vision of a "special destiny" for Russian music shared by Balakirev and his nationalist league' which Turgenev couldn't reconcile himself to.²⁹² If we also take into account Stasov's no less fervent declarations about Russian painting, it isn't surprising that Turgenev felt obliged to refute him so often—both in private letters and conversations and in his novels (*Дым* and *Новь*). As Andrei Kriukov has noted (1963:108), Turgenev saw in Stasov's propaganda of Russian art a veiled form of Slavophilism.

There was actually little Slavophilism as such in Stasov's views—except perhaps in his articles about the success of Glinka's operas in Prague and about the Slavic concert conducted by Balakirev in St Petersburg in honour of the delegates attending the first congress of the Slavic Committee in May 1867.²⁹³ But what Stasov certainly did advocate was the need for 'national content' in Russian art (preferably drawing on themes from the pre-Petrine period) and at the same time a liberation from the Western canon which was dangerously close to ingratitude in Turgenev's eyes. After all, in his 1842 memorandum on Russia's agrarian development, he had already warned his countrymen:

Сохрани нас Бог впасть в слепое поклонение всему русскому потому только, что оно русское; сохрани нас Бог от ограниченных и, скажу прямо, неблагодарных нападков на Запад' (I/471-72)

The relevance of this warning was even greater in the 1860s, when despite the fact that Official Nationality had long since been discredited and orthodox Slavophilism was on the wane, ideas common to them both began to make a comeback. Just as Turgenev called

²⁹⁰ As Chaikovskii's friend Herman Laroche ironically noted in an article of 1873 (Campbell 1994:217).

²⁹¹ Letter to V. Kartashevskaiia, 16/28 February 1868 (P VII/66).

²⁹² Brown 1983:69.

²⁹³ Cf. Olkhovsky 1983:95ff. and Stasov 1974-80:II/109. It was in his review of this concert that Stasov coined the phrase 'могучая кучка'.

Herzen's newly acquired faith in the 'армяк' of the Russian peasant a self-delusion akin to those of the Slavophiles (IX/170), so he dismissed the frequent declarations by Cui and other critics about how Russia was destined to revivify European art:

Явись, например, великий русский живописец—его картина будет лучшей пропагандой, чем тысячи рассуждений о способностях нашего племени к искусству.²⁹⁴

All this well-intentioned patriotism was in itself not sufficient to guarantee that truly significant and original Russian works of art would emerge, as Turgenev tried to demonstrate in the more polemic chapters of *Дым*—for example, in this comical description of the enthusiast Bambaev:

Бамбаев тоже поговорил о будущности России и даже расписал её в радужных красках, но в особенный восторг привела его мысль о русской музыке, в которой он видел что-то «ух! большое» и в доказательство затанул романс Варламова, но скоро был прерван общим криком, что: «он, мол, поёт Miserere из «Тратора»... (IX/163)

From the 1870s onwards, however, nationalist tendencies predominated outright in Russian art—especially in painting. As Elizabeth Valkenier has noted (2007:48), this coincided with the official course Russia was taking in foreign affairs and reflected 'the rise of a Slavophilism and pan-Slavism that stressed Russia's separate traditions and destiny'. This would culminate in the 1890s, when the itinerant painters (*peredvizhniki*), once the most independent-minded of Russian artists, were taken under the wing of Alexander III. Turgenev didn't live to see this, of course, but in his capacity as secretary of the Society for the Mutual Aid of Russian Artists in Paris he did get to know a number of young Russian painters who were sent to the French capital by the Academy and thus became aware of these tendencies.

As we would expect, Turgenev supported the veteran landscape painter Aleksei Bogoliubov (with whom he had co-founded the Society in 1877) in his attempts to open up the horizons of these young artists by familiarizing them with the latest currents in French painting.²⁹⁵ For Turgenev, whilst always concerned that Russian art should be both national and original, didn't approve of works that merely indulged in 'Russianness' and failed to address the negative aspects of Russian reality.

²⁹⁴ Letter to Herzen, 30 November/12 December 1867 (P VI/355).

²⁹⁵ See Blakesley 2007 for details on Bogoliubov's activities in Paris and Saratov; and Jackson (1998:400) for an account of Stasov's indignant reaction when he found out that Repin had been painting Parisian themes and experimenting with new techniques!

That is why in his already cited letter of 1882 to Kramskoi, Turgenev emphasized that for the forthcoming exhibition of Russian art in Paris works such as Repin's *Бурлаки* and Vereshchagin's war paintings ought to be selected. By virtue of their truthfulness these were the best examples of the Russian school. Paintings, however, which did no more than convey 'typical' Russian genre scenes were to be avoided:

Произведения нашей школы, в которых ещё высказывается *тенденциозность, подчёркивание* (обыкновенный признак всего ещё молодого, незрелого) должны быть удалены, как несвободные воспроизведения народной жизни, как обременённые задней мыслью...²⁹⁶

Always true to the precepts of Belinskii, who in 1844 had remarked: 'Бедна та народность, которая трепещет за свою самостоятельность' (1953-59:VII/436), Turgenev issued a similar warning against 'nationalism' in all the arts in his Pushkin speech of 1880:

Выставлять лозунг народности в искусстве, поэзии, литературе свойственно только племенам слабым, ещё не созревшим или же находящимся в порабощённом, угнетённом состоянии. (XV/69)

Russia by the second half of the nineteenth century was clearly not in this unfortunate position, and yet for the reasons discussed in this chapter, Russian artists often found it difficult to attain that freedom with respect to their own country which Turgenev considered to be essential:

Нет! без правдивости, без образования, без свободы в обширнейшем смысле—в отношении к самому себе, к своим предвзятым идеям и системам, даже к своему народу, к своей истории,—немыслим художник. (XIV/108)

There were, however, other reasons why even a Russian artist equipped with such inner freedom, education, and talent might run aground eventually. In Turgenev's eyes—though not only his—*fate* often seemed to be conspiring against Russian artists.

²⁹⁶ Letter of 6/18 December 1882 (P XIII₂/121).

CHAPTER VI

*THE RUSSIAN ARTIST'S TRAGIC FATE***Introduction**

When Shubin, in *Накануне*, loses all hope of winning Elena's love, he fashions a bust of himself as a hopeless drunkard—an 'испытый, исхудалый жуир'—and gives it the title: «Будущность художника Павла Яковлевича Шубина» (VIII/100). Such bitter self-irony rightly provokes Bersenev's indignation: 'Да и что за вздор? В тебе нет тех залогов подобного развития, которыми до сих пор, к несчастью, так обильно одарены наши артисты' (VIII/100-1). How true, though, is this remark of Bersenev's about Russian artists often succumbing to alcoholism.

It was a lamentable phenomenon which Turgenev had occasion to observe throughout his life. Thus, in a letter of 1850 to Pauline Viardot he described a conversation in one of the aristocratic salons of St Petersburg whose subject had been 'la grande quantité de Russes remarquables par leurs talents, morts d'ivresse'.²⁹⁷ Turgenev was aware of how alcohol had been one of the causes of Glinka's premature death in Berlin in 1857. Almost twenty years later, during that private concert in 1874 at which Turgenev was able to appreciate Musorgskii's music, he again had something similar to report back to Mme Viardot: 'Moussorgski a un faux air de Glinka; seulement il a le nez complètement rouge (malheureusement, c'est un ivrogne), des yeux pâles, mais beaux'.²⁹⁸ This impression is more than confirmed by Repin's magnificent portrait of Musorgskii (see Plate 5), painted just a few weeks before the composer's death in a military hospital.

Of course, Turgenev wasn't the only Russian writer to note this tendency towards alcoholism, which afflicted painters, sculptors and musicians rather more frequently than it did men of letters. The violinists Efimov, in Dostoevskii's *Неточка Незванова*, and Al'bert, in Tolstoi's eponymous story of 1858, readily take to the bottle, whilst the cynical nihilist Volokhov, in Goncharov's *Обрыв*, mocks Raiskii's artistic ambitions:

Много этаких у нас было и есть: все пропали или спились с круга. Я ещё удивляюсь, что вы не пьёте: наши художники обыкновенно кончают этим. Это все неудачники!
(1959-60:V/231)

Unfortunately, in reality it wasn't just failed artists who might seek refuge in drink, but also true geniuses like Glinka and Musorgskii. We have already referred to Abram

²⁹⁷ Letter of 21 October 1850 (*LI*:40).

²⁹⁸ Letter of 21 May 1874 (*NC*:I/ 212).

Gozenpud's suggestion that the introduction of Herr Lemm as a tragically isolated artist figure into the canvas of *Дворянское гнездо* was inspired by Turgenev's first-hand observations of Glinka and Ivanov in their last years:

С новой силой вопрос об участии артиста предстал перед Тургеневым в ту пору, когда он обдумывал свой роман [*Дворянское гнездо*]. Один за другим сошли в могилу в 1857 году—Глинка, а в 1858-м—художник А. А. Иванов. Тургенев встретился с композитором и был свидетелем того, как тяжело тот переносил равнодушие общества, пытался найти утешение и забвение в вине. (1994:123)

The explanation provided here for Glinka's alcoholism may be inadequate, but Gozenpud was quite right in emphasizing how Turgenev's thoughts during the 1850s often returned to the question of the tragic fate befalling so many Russian artists. When he learnt of the painter Ivanov's death due to cholera, Turgenev observed: 'Нет, решительно: ни России, ни порядочным русским не везёт'.²⁹⁹

Most importantly, Turgenev never forgot the effect which Gogol's death on 21 February 1852 had had on him. In a letter to Pauline Viardot, he said: 'C'est comme une épine que je porte dans le coeur'.³⁰⁰ He was shocked by the news that the great writer had burnt almost all of his manuscripts, especially since only four months earlier he had visited Gogol in Moscow and seen encouraging signs that he might be returning to creative work. In his obituary of Gogol, which would cost him almost two years of internal exile, Turgenev spoke on behalf of all Russia:

Он умер, поражённый в самом цвете лет, в разгаре сил своих, не окончив начатого дела, подобно благороднейшим из его предшественников... Его утрата возобновляет скорбь о тех незабвенных утратах, как новая рана возбуждает боль старинных язв. (XIV/72)

As we shall see, Shubin's fate at the end of *Накануне* reflects one aspect of Gogol's tragic destiny with which Turgenev could identify—namely, the implications which long absences abroad had for the task of writing about Russia. Another aspect, the 'мистическое направление' which, according to Annenkov (1960:123), Gogol had taken in the last decade of his life, influenced Turgenev's concerns about Tolstoi, whom he readily acknowledged to be Russia's greatest living writer.

²⁹⁹ Letter to Cherkasskii, 9 July 1858 (P III/228).

³⁰⁰ Letter of 21 March 1852 (LI:57).

The notion of the tragic fate of the Russian artist was very widespread. Turgenev invoked it in his 1880 tribute to Pushkin, where he spoke of the ‘трагическая судьба’ which had carried away both Pushkin and Lermontov, albeit softening the tone of his words by describing these deaths as ‘трагические случайности, тем более трагические, что они случайны’ (XV/71). An obituary which appeared shortly after Musorgskii’s death on 16 March 1881 made the following reflections:

Шевелилось невольно горькое чувство, невольно думалось о странной судьбе наших русских людей. Быть таким талантом, каким был Мусоргский, иметь все данные стоять высоко и жить—и вместо того умереть в больнице, среди чужого люда... Что за фатум преследует наши дарования?...³⁰¹

Observers who were less bound by the constraints of censorship didn’t content themselves with blaming chance. Thus, in 1845, still in exile in Siberia, the Decembrist Kiukhel’beker wrote a poem called ‘Участь русских поэтов’, in which he reflected on the cruel fate that had sent Ryleev to the gallows and other noble idealists into prison and exile; that had allowed the hand of a ‘презренный любовник’ to lodge a bullet into the ‘священное чело’ of his friend Pushkin; and had incited the mob in Teheran to tear Griboedov to pieces. Turgenev and many a younger contemporary would certainly have agreed with the opening verses of Kiukhel’beker’s poem: ‘Горька судьба поэтов всех племён; / Тяжеле всех судьба казнит Россию’.³⁰²

The Geneva and London emigrés could afford to be even more explicit still. Ogarev blamed the deaths of Pushkin and Lermontov on the intrigues of Nicholas I’s court and officer corps; whilst Herzen, in his 1851 essay *Du développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie*, compiled a list of all the writers whose premature deaths were on the conscience of the tsarist regime and Russian society in some way or other:

Un sort terrible et sombre est réservé chez nous à quiconque ose lever la tête au-dessus du niveau tracé par le sceptre impérial; poète citoyen, penseur, une fatalité inexorable les pousse dans la tombe. L’histoire de notre littérature est un martyrologe ou un registre des bagnes. (1954-66:VII/77)

Belinskii, too, had noted something similar in a private letter to Gogol’ in 1842:

Судьба же давно играет странную роль в отношении ко всему, что есть порядочного в русской литературе; она лишает ума Батюшкова, жизни Грибоедова, Пушкина и

³⁰¹ Quoted by Abyzova 1986:143.

³⁰² Quoted by Brang 1961:335.

Лермонтова—и оставляет в добром здоровье Булгарина, Греча и других подобных им негодяев в Петербурге и Москве.³⁰³

Turgenev also had his bone to pick with the reactionary elements of Russian society, as we can appreciate from the satirical pages of his novels, but his thoughts on the Russian artist's tragic fate touched on more complex issues than Herzen's philippics against the tsarist regime. They can be usefully linked, in fact, to Gogol's own reflections in *Выбранные места из переписки с друзьями* (1846) about Russian literature:

Слышно страшное в судьбе наших поэтов. Как только кто-нибудь из них, упустив из виду своё главное поприще и назначенье, бросался на другое или же опускался в тот омут светских отношений, где не следует ему быть и где нет места для поэта, внезапная, насильственная смерть вырывала его вдруг из нашей среды. (1994:VI/179)

Gogol's remark about how there was no room for a poet in aristocratic society is to some extent part of the Romantic tradition which he never fully broke with. The conflict between the sensitive artist and frivolous high society had been at the heart of E.T.A. Hoffmann's great novel *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* (1821), with its tragic biography of the musician Johannes Kreisler, which influenced not just Gogol but even younger writers like Dostoevskii (*Неточка Незванова*), and Turgenev (Lemm in *Дворянское гнездо*).

More significant is Gogol's observation about how a Russian artist was doomed if he lost sight of his true vocation. It is this danger which Turgenev himself so feared in the case of Tolstoi—namely, that the latter might, like Gogol, abandon creative work for the sake of moral introspection. For even after his quarrel with Tolstoi, which wasn't patched up until 1878, Turgenev had continued to keep track of his younger colleague and was alarmed by the news of Tolstoi's ill-health that reached him on one occasion:

Л.Толстой, эта единственная надежда нашей осиротевшей литературы, не может и не должен так же скоро исчезнуть с лица земли, как его предшественники Пушкин, Лермонтов и Гоголь.³⁰⁴

Death, though, wasn't the worst fate that could befall a Russian writer. Rather, it was the betrayal of one's vocation, which explains why Turgenev, in another letter to Pauline Viardot, indignantly called Gogol's destruction of his manuscripts before effectively starving himself to death a 'moral suicide': 'Mais de quel droit emporter tous ces trésors

³⁰³ Letter of 20 April 1842 (Belinskii 1953-59:XII/107-08).

³⁰⁴ Letter to Fet, 2/14 July 1871 (P IX/110).

avec soi? N'étaient-ils déjà pas devenus notre bien à tous?'³⁰⁵ Similarly, the attitude of many Russians, including Turgenev, towards Tolstoi's writing of moral and religious tractates was a mixture of bewilderment and lament.

Somewhat less tragic was the fate which Turgenev himself experienced, and to which he alluded in Shubin's situation at the end of *Накануне*—namely, that of willingly absenting himself from Russia for long periods. This predicament can also be linked to Gogol', of whose voluntary 'exile' in Italy, with only sporadic visits to Russia during these twelve years (1836-48) Turgenev was very much aware.

Although in Turgenev's case this didn't quite amount to betraying his vocation, since he did keep writing about Russian life and society, he was all too conscious of the fact that living outside Russia made his task much harder. It was with bitter resignation that he replied the following to the Kashperovs, who asked him during a visit to Moscow in 1874 why he didn't return to Russia permanently so that he could work more effectively on *Новь* (rather than relying on material about the young *narodniki* sent to him by friends):

Такова, должно быть, судьба русского человека; что он ни делает, как он ни парит, а в конце концов или сопьётся, или заиграет в карты, или уедет за границу, словом, так или иначе пропадёт.³⁰⁶

On the other hand, Turgenev knew that artists in general are rarely ever blessed with happiness, and that this was even a necessary part of their destiny which they had to accept: 'Да и не может быть счастливых художников: счастье—покой, а покой ничего не создаёт'.³⁰⁷ Again, these words show Turgenev's affinity with Kant and Goethe's dialectic view of life: adversity can be a blessing in disguise because it encourages people to develop their talents.

VI. 1 Far from Russia

At the end of the epilogue to *Накануне* the narrator quotes the most recent letter Shubin has written to Uvar Ivanovich from Rome, asking this worthy representative of the Russian 'sphinx' once again the question which had prompted Turgenev to write his novel: 'будут ли у нас люди?' (VIII/167). Of particular relevance to our topic is the way in which Shubin opens this question: 'О черноземная сила! И вот теперь я отсюда, из моего «прекрасного далека», снова вас спрашиваю...' (VIII/167). This is yet another

³⁰⁵ Letter of 4 March 1852 (NC:I/64).

³⁰⁶ Quoted by Zil'bershtein 1967:420.

³⁰⁷ A remark made by Turgenev during the last years of his life (Zil'bershtein 1964:373).

example of what Aleksandr Chudakov called Turgenev's use of 'чужое слово' (1987:247), since even without the quotation marks contemporary readers would have instantly recognized that Shubin is citing Gogol's lyrical invocation of Russia at the end of the first part of *Мёртвые души*: 'Русь! Русь! вижу тебя, из моего чудного, прекрасного далека тебя вижу' (1952-53:V/229).³⁰⁸

It isn't too far-fetched of Shubin to borrow this phrase, since just as he is dedicating himself to art in the Eternal City, so Gogol' wrote most of the first part of *Мёртвые души* amidst the beautiful landscapes of Italy and Switzerland. Of course, the specific tasks Shubin is pursuing as a sculptor are not as ambitious as those which Gogol' felt himself called upon to fulfil after Pushkin's death by writing his *poema* of Russia. Turgenev, though, cites these words not just to illustrate Shubin's situation in Rome, but also with some self-irony. He would have remembered how Belinskii quoted them most poignantly in his Letter to Gogol' in 1847:

Вы глубоко знаете Россию только как художник, а не как мыслящий человек, роль которого Вы так неудачно приняли на себя в своей фантастической книге [*Выбранные места*]. И это не потому, чтоб Вы не были мыслящим человеком, а потому, что Вы столько уже лет привыкли смотреть на Россию из Вашего прекрасного далека, и ведь известно, что ничего нет легче, как издалека видеть предметы такими, какими нам хочется их видеть. (1953-59:X/213)

Turgenev himself would be upbraided in similar terms by Dostoevskii in 1867 for having written *Дым*, and during their conversation in Baden-Baden his visitor famously advised him to buy a telescope so that he could see Russia better.³⁰⁹

But already in 1859, during the writing of *Накануне* (which he started planning in Rome), Turgenev had been criticized by some compatriots—especially Countess Lambert—for seemingly preferring the comforts of European civilization to living in Russia and participating in the preparations for Alexander II's reforms. It's not surprising, then, that Turgenev could identify with Gogol' to some extent, since the latter had been accused by his great admirers, the Aksakov family, if not of sybaritism (for they knew and respected Gogol's ascetic frame of mind), then certainly of partiality for the more agreeable atmosphere of Italy. As Sergei Aksakov admitted in his 1854 memoir of Gogol':

³⁰⁸ The commentaries on *Накануне* in the two Academy editions of Turgenev's works assume that Russian readers are familiar with this phrase, since the quote from Gogol' isn't pointed out in the notes. Richard Peace (2002:ch. 3) has also drawn attention to Shubin's citation of Gogol'.

³⁰⁹ See Dostoevskii's letter to Maikov, 16/28 August 1867 (1972-90:XXVIII₂/211).

Нам очень не нравился его отъезд в чужие края, в Италию, которую, как нам казалось, он любил слишком много. Нам казалось невероятным уверение Гоголя, что ему надобно удалиться в Рим, чтоб писать об России; нам казалось, что Гоголь не довольно любит Россию, что итальянское небо, свободная жизнь посреди художников всякого рода, роскошь климата, поэтические развалины славного прошедшего, всё это вместе бросало невыгодную тень на природу нашу и нашу жизнь.³¹⁰

There is no reason, though, to doubt, as Aksakov did, the truth of Gogol's assertion that he had to be far from Russia in order to write about her. In his *Авторская исповедь* (penned in the summer of 1847, in reply to Belinskii's letter, but not published until 1855), Gogol insisted that 'удаление от России' was essential to him, so that he could observe and think about contemporary Russia with the serenity required of an artist (1994:VI/219).

Indeed, one could say that all great Russian writers who came after Gogol recognized the need to 'distance themselves' from Russia in some way or other. Thus, impartiality 'даже к своему народу' (XIV/108) was one of the tenets of Turgenev's aesthetic credo, strengthened by the critical tendencies of his mentor Belinskii. Even Dostoevskii, who wanted Russian society to overcome what he perceived to be the Westernists' and liberals' lack of patriotism, didn't deny the value of self-criticism in the development of Russia's consciousness, as he argued in 1860:

Способность отрешиться на время от почвы, чтоб трезвее и беспристрастнее взглянуть на себя, есть уже сама по себе признак величайшей особенности [России].
(1972-90:XVIII/37)

Where this separation from Russia was also physical and permanent, or nearly so—as was the case with Turgenev, since after July 1856 he fixed his main places of residence abroad, visiting Russia usually only for a few weeks at a time—the consequences could be fatal. Especially for someone like Turgenev, who believed that for an artist 'нужно постоянное общение с средою, которую берёшься воспроизводить' (XIV/106-07), as he put it in *По поводу «Отцов и детей»*, that important manifesto of his aesthetic principles. Similarly, ten years later, in his Pushkin speech he praised the great poet for being a 'художник [и] человек, близко стоящий к самому средоточию русской жизни' (XV/70-71). In Turgenev's case, therefore, it wasn't so much a question of committing errors of judgement about Russia as Gogol had done in *Выбранные места*. (Belinskii

³¹⁰ Mashinskii 1952:121.

had pointed out that it was very easy to sing the praises of Russian autocracy while living in the ‘прекрасное далеко’ of Italy!) Rather, it was the danger of his very inspiration as an artist drying up because of his being torn from the heart of Russian life.

On the other hand, it’s not difficult to see why Russian artists were so attracted to Western Europe and especially to Italy if they were painters or sculptors like Shubin, who complains about Russia’s dreary landscapes and folklore during his walk with Bersenev along the Moscow river:

Поди ты с твоими русалками! На что мне, ваятелю, эти исчадия запуганной, холодной фантазии, эти образы, рождённые в духоте избы, во мраке зимних ночей? Мне нужно света, простора... Когда же, Боже мой, поеду я в Италию? (VIII/16)

It would be a mistake to ascribe Shubin’s opinion here about the deficiencies of Russian nature to Turgenev, the author of *Записки охотника*, with their wonderful evocations of the countryside. And yet Shubin’s yearning for the light of Italy, shared by so many real Russian artists,³¹¹ obviously did strike a chord with Turgenev. In this respect it is worth referring to a letter he wrote in 1862 to a young Russian woman who had grown up in Italy and had only recently come to Russia for the first time, to settle with her husband in Perm’. She had described the local countryside to Turgenev, and this is what he replied:

Россия некрасива, приходится сознаться, в особенности для глаз, с детства привыкших отражать божественные контуры Италии. Не хочу отрицать, что существуют компенсации—но вполне ли они вознаграждают?

All the same, he closed this very letter by citing from memory Tiutchev’s 1855 poem ‘Эти бедные селенья’ which extols the spiritual beauty of Russia shining through its ‘сучная природа’ and material poverty.³¹²

Thus, like a number of Russian writers, Turgenev had mixed feelings about his homeland, and, likewise, Potugin in *Дым* expresses a love-hate declaration for Russia modelled on Catullus’s *odi et amo*: ‘Я и люблю и ненавижу свою Россию, свою странную, милую, скверную, дорогую родину’ (IX/174). Turgenev may well also have been thinking of Lermontov’s famous poem ‘Родина’ (1841): ‘Люблю отчизну я, но странною любовью! / Не победит её рассудок мой’. Already in Turgenev’s first novel,

³¹¹ As reflected by the title of J.C. Taylor’s essay ‘Russian Painters and the Pursuit of Light’ (1983). In a letter of 4 May 1836 to his wife, Pushkin wrote of the painter Briullov: ‘Он мне понравился. Он хандрит, боится русского холода и прочего, жаждет Италии, а Москвой очень недоволен’ (1949:X/575).

³¹² Letter to M. Zubova, 6/18 December 1862 (P XIII₂/202). Dostoevskii, another fervent admirer of Tiutchev, was particularly fond of this poem and quoted its final two verses in his Pushkin speech of 1880.

Rudin had said: ‘Порицать, бранить имеет право только тот, кто любит’ (VI/273), and it is precisely because of his love for Russia that Potugin is able to see her defects and so wishes that they might be corrected. Unfortunately, many Russian readers—Dostoevskii being the most prominent—saw just the ‘hate’ element in Potugin’s declarations about Russia. They furiously attacked the author, refusing to accept that one could, like Belinskii or Turgenev himself, be a true Russian patriot and at the same time seek to draw attention to those faults which the influence of European civilization would hopefully remedy.

To return, though, to Shubin’s yearning for Italy. This detail is all the more authentic given that the fine arts were still often perceived in Russia as something exotic. Not for nothing did Gogol’, in *Невский проспект* (1835), point out how the very notion of a ‘Russian artist’ was paradoxical. Here is how he introduces the ill-fated painter Piskarev:

Это был художник. Не правда ли, странное явление? Художник петербургский! Художник в земле снегов, художник в стране финнов, где всё мокро, гладко, ровно, бледно, серо, туманно... (1952-53: III/14)

The resemblance of this passage to Shubin’s ironic remarks to Bersenev about Russian nature suggests once again that Turgenev was thinking of Gogol’ when he wrote *Накануне*. However, the young sculptor’s despair at being stuck in dreary Russia is also meant to illustrate the times in which the novel is set. After all, already in 1844 Nicholas I had introduced stricter measures regarding foreign travel for his subjects: the considerable sum of 100 rubles was set as the price for a six months’ passport.³¹³ And after the revolutions of 1848, travelling abroad became even harder still: ‘поездки за границу становились невозможны’, as Turgenev noted in his reminiscences of Belinskii (XIV/50). Bearing this in mind, we can appreciate why Shubin is so downhearted at the prospect of never being able to visit Europe. His chances of obtaining permission to travel are reduced further still by his lack of personal wealth and by the fact that, having broken with the Academy because of its neo-classicist canon, he cannot count on receiving a State scholarship.

Not surprisingly, Turgenev was convinced of the value of spending time abroad for all Russians (not just those who were artists). In his article ‘Из-за границы: письмо первое’ (1858), which he sent to the newly-founded *Атеней* journal from Rome, he feigned agreement with the Slavophile view that Russians had no need to visit Europe because there were plenty of spiritual riches at home, but immediately afterwards added:

³¹³ Tarasov 1988:83.

Но путешествие в чужой стране то же, что знакомство с чужим языком; это—обогащение внутреннего человека, а нашему брату не для чего прикидываться, что ему своего за глаза довольно. Надобно только уметь пользоваться чужим богатством [...] Самобытность русского человека и в хорошем и в дурном по меньшей мере равна его восприимчивости,—а потому я плохо верю в так называемый вред путешествий. (XV/11)

Turgenev himself was an admirable example of this: by the end of the 1850s, thanks to his long spells in France and other countries, as well as to his friendship with the Viardots, he had made the acquaintance of many distinguished European artists and men of letters. Even if he sometimes clashed with them, as was the case with Carlyle, this opportunity to exchange ideas, as April FitzLyon has pointed out, ‘enabled him to see Russia and Russian thought in perspective’ (1964:219). It gave his Westernism that strength of conviction which managed to resist the various attacks from so many of his compatriots.

Yet, at the same time Turgenev’s ‘самобытность’ had allowed him to write the greater part of arguably his most important contribution to Russian literature—*Записки охотника*—while living in Courtavenel and Paris! He even confessed once that had he not found himself in France during the critical years of 1847-48, when it seemed quite likely that he wouldn’t see Russia again (as proved to be the case with Herzen), he might never have completed his cycle of sketches. For living abroad had made him appreciate more than ever before what was dearest to him back in Russia:

Когда я писал [эту книгу] [*Записки охотника*]—я был за границей и—окружённый не русской стихией и не русской жизнью—невольно проводил карандашом два раза по каждому штриху.³¹⁴

With regard to how the *Записки охотника* were written, Turgenev was in a certain sense following in the footsteps of Gogol’, for, as we have already noted, the latter repeatedly emphasized how being abroad had sharpened his thoughts about Russia and allowed him to embark on *Мёртвые души*. Annenkov, who shared lodgings with Gogol’ in Rome in the summer of 1841, described how the great writer had been enchanted by the Italian landscape and yet at the same time continually kept talking about Russia:

Вообще мысль о России была в то время, вместе с мыслью о Риме, живейшей частью его существования. Он вполне был прав, утверждая впоследствии, что никогда так

³¹⁴ Letter to I. Aksakov, 28 December 1852 (P II/99).

много не думал об отечестве, как вдали от него, и никогда не был так связан с ним, как живя на чужой почве. (1960:104)

During the period that he was effectively a resident of Paris (1856-63), Turgenev increasingly experienced similar feelings, since the reforms launched by Alexander II filled him with fresh optimism for Russia's future. In 1856, he wrote to Sergei Aksakov that his return to France had had the same effect on him as nine years earlier, when he had started writing *Записки охотника* there: 'Всё, что я вижу и слышу—как-то теснее и ближе прижимает меня к России, всё родное становится мне вдвойне дорого'.³¹⁵ And in 1858, anticipating Shubin's letter to Uvar Ivanovich at the end of *Накануне*, he confessed to Countess Lambert: 'Я здесь в Риме всё это время много и часто думаю о России'.³¹⁶

Turgenev and Gogol' were by no means the only Russian artists who felt the 'strange bond' tying them to their native land as a result of living abroad. The painter Ivanov, who resided uninterruptedly in Italy for almost thirty years, conceived *Явление Христа народу* very much in terms of what this painting would mean for Russians back home, as Louis Réau has emphasized (1951:231). Glinka, who often complained about the indifference towards music of his countrymen, nevertheless came to the conclusion, during his stay in Paris in 1844-45, that he was incapable of composing for the French salons: 'Живя за границей, я более и более убеждаюсь в том, что я душою русский и мне трудно подделываться под чужой лад'.³¹⁷

It was in literature, though, that such reflections played a decisive role, and the situation presented by Gogol' at the end of the first part of *Мёртвые души*—that of the artist trying to fathom the mystery of Russia from the 'прекрасное далеко' of Europe—is one that influenced many subsequent writers and thinkers. Ivan Aksakov, for example, in his 1874 essay on Tiutchev, invoked it to explain how despite spending so much of his life abroad, the poet independently reached the same conclusions about Russia as the Slavophiles:

За границей, в его германском или итальянском далеке, Россия представлялась ему [Тютчеву] не в подробностях и частностях, а в своём целом объёме, в своём общем значении. (1981:321)

Dostoevskii addressed this theme through characters belonging to the general class of educated Russians rather than artists as such (Aleksei Ivanovich in *Игрок*, Myshkin when

³¹⁵ Letter of 1/13 November 1856 (P III/31).

³¹⁶ Letter of 22 December 1857/3 January 1858 (P III/179).

³¹⁷ Livanova & Protopopov 1955:II/14.

recalling his years in Switzerland). In contrast, Turgenev did present an artist figure, Shubin, whose situation at the end of *Накануне* invites direct comparisons with Gogol'. However, it can also be said to anticipate a specific problem which Turgenev would face in the 1860s and 70s.

For despite the positive effect which looking at Russia from afar might have on an artist, if this separation lasted too long, his work was bound to suffer as a consequence. Dostoevskii expressed this poignantly in the same letter from Geneva in which he vented his anger at Turgenev's seemingly complacent Westernism:

И как можно выживать жизнь за границей? Без родины—страдание, ей-Богу! Ехать хоть на полгода, хоть на год—хорошо. Но ехать так, как я, не зная и не ведая, когда ворочусь,—очень дурно и тяжело. От идеи тяжело. А мне Россия нужна, для моего писания и труда нужна (не говоря уже об остальной жизни), да и как ещё! Точно рыба без воды; сил и средств лишаешься.³¹⁸

If Dostoevskii had known that Turgenev had experienced much the same feelings, he might not have judged his old rival so harshly. Many of the letters Turgenev wrote to his Russian friends from Paris in the early 1860s bear witness not just to his understandable disgust at the capital of Napoleon III's Empire, but also to a growing nostalgia for his native land: 'Егорьев день, соловьи, запах соломы и берёзовых почек, солнце и лужи по дорогам—вот чего жаждет моя душа'.³¹⁹ He was happier in Baden-Baden, to where he moved with the Viardots in the spring of 1864, and later that year, he replied the following to Countess Lambert, who was again urging him to return to Russia:

Нет никакой необходимости писателю непременно жить в своей родине и стараться улавливать видоизменения её жизни—во всяком случае нет необходимости делать это постоянно.³²⁰

But in his heart of hearts Turgenev knew better, for soon afterwards he told another compatriot: 'Нельзя не сознаться, что родной воздух необходим для художника'.³²¹

To understand these laments from someone like Turgenev who was after all so attached to Western European culture, we must bear in mind what Moser rightly describes as 'the depth of Turgenev's commitment to the belief that a Russian writer could be

³¹⁸ Letter to Maikov, 16/28 August 1867 (1972-90:XXVIII₂/204). Dostoevskii was working on *Идуот* at the time.

³¹⁹ Letter to O. Khilkova, 19/31 January 1861 (P IV/191).

³²⁰ Letter of 22 August/3 September 1864 (P V/279).

³²¹ Letter to Kashperov, 25 October/6 November 1864 (P V/293). Turgenev was congratulating the composer on his decision to leave Italy and return to Russia.

successful only if he wrote about his homeland' (1972:73). There was never any question of Turgenev falling back on non-Russian subjects for his writing, except in such experimental works as *Песнь торжествующей любви* (1882). Moreover, by the end of the 1850s he had moved on from the *Записки охотника*. For these sketches of the Russian countryside he had been able to draw on past memories, and the nostalgia he felt while writing them in France also worked in his favour, but the task he had subsequently set himself—that of recording in his novels the 'быстро изменявшаяся физиономия русских людей культурного слоя' (XII/303)—most definitely did require his presence in Russia.

It was precisely because of this that Turgenev could never bring himself to sell off his ancestral home in Spasskoe, despite all the worries ensuing from the estate's mismanagement by various corrupt stewards. He knew that by holding on to Spasskoe he had something which forced him to return to Russia every now and then. Thus, after a few years in Baden-Baden he confessed that he was looking forward very much to returning to Spasskoe, even though he was going to have to sort out the mess left by his rapacious uncle: 'Надо, надо понюхать родного воздуха, чем бы он ни отзывался'.³²² Besides, it was when surrounded by his native countryside that Turgenev felt most inspired to work: 'Пишется хорошо, только живя в русской деревне. Там и воздух-то как будто «полон мыслей!»'³²³ There is an echo of this in *Призраки* (1864), where the mysterious Ellis—in whom Gerhard Dudek so compellingly sees the embodiment of Turgenev's most cherished aesthetic principles (see III.5)—forces the narrator, a figure with clearly autobiographical traits, to part with the beauty and warmth of Italy and return to Russia again (IX/93).

After the almost universally hostile reception of *Дым* in 1867 Turgenev began to feel that even these more or less regular visits to Russia were still not enough to nourish his writing. He gave excuses such as the following to the editors of Russian journals who asked him for new works: 'Живя за границей, в отдалении от русской почвы—я точно так же больших повестей сочинять уже не в силах'.³²⁴ For, as already noted, Turgenev considered it not just his duty to write about Russia—rather, it was essential that he do so for his works to have any value and freshness at all. This much he had already expressed in his first novel through the figure of Lezhnev, who criticizes Rudin's superficial knowledge of Russia: 'Космополитизм—чепуха, космополитизм—нуль, хуже нуля; вне народности ни художества, ни истины, ни жизни, ничего нет' (VI/349). On this point

³²² Letter to Borisov, 8/20 April 1868 (P VII/117).

³²³ Letter to E. L'vova, 27 November/9 December 1879 (P XII₂/186).

³²⁴ Letter to Avdeev, 21 September/3 October 1869 (P VIII/86).

Turgenev did concur with the Slavophiles, who, as his friend Botkin pointed out in 1847, had been the first to sense ‘что наш космополитизм ведёт нас только к пустомыслию и пустословию’ and that Russia needed to develop a genuine national culture.³²⁵

Even though Turgenev would later devise such a champion of Western civilization as Potugin and take issue with Stasov’s demands that Russian painting and music should be full of ‘national content’ at all costs (see V.3), Turgenev throughout his life held on to his conviction that cosmopolitanism was worthless. Thus, Henry James later wistfully recalled how his own works had failed to interest Turgenev because he found their style too elaborate and their content too ‘cosmopolitan’!³²⁶

Bearing all this in mind, it is understandable why he felt that without constant immersion in Russian life, which was denied to him by his fateful attachment to the Viardot family, it was better to stop writing altogether:

Я очень хорошо понимаю, что моё постоянное пребывание за границей вредит моей литературной деятельности—да так вредит, что, пожалуй, и совсем её уничтожит: но и этого изменить нельзя.³²⁷

Like all great writers, though, Turgenev managed to surprise his readers by overcoming these self-doubts and embarking in the 1870s on a project of whose ‘value’ for Russian society he was convinced: his novel *Новь*, for which he had prepared himself painstakingly by reading hundreds of letters and diaries of young *narodniki*, sent to him by friends in Russia.³²⁸

Unfortunately, his zest for creative work was quenched yet again by the negative reviews which this novel received when it came out in 1877. From today’s perspective we can see how undeserved many of these criticisms were, but as far as Turgenev was concerned at the time, the accusation that he had lost touch with Russian reality was one with which he felt obliged to agree. Thus, the ‘failure’ of *Новь* led him to make the following admission of defeat:

Нет! нельзя пытаться вытащить самую суть России наружу, живя почти постоянно вдали от неё. Я взял на себя работу не по силам. [...] В судьбе каждого из русских несколько выдающихся писателей была трагическая сторона: моя—абсентеизм.

³²⁵ Letter to Annenkov, 14 May 1847 (Botkin 1984:271).

³²⁶ *VT* (1988):278.

³²⁷ Letter to Polonskii, 27 February/11 March 1869 (P VII/328).

³²⁸ See his letter to Kavelin of 17/29 December 1876 (P XII₁/38-39).

причины которого было бы долго разыскивать—но влияние которого неотразимо высказалось в этом последнем—именно последнем, произведении.³²⁹

As this letter shows, Turgenev was the first to reproach himself for his ‘absenteeism’ from Russia. In the 1880 preface to his collected novels he would again admit that those who accused him of ‘отдаление от родины’ were right (XII/309).

In his brief depiction of Shubin in Rome at the end of *Накануне* Turgenev may well have had an inkling of his own fortunes in the 1860s and 70s—when many critics would dismiss him as having lost all relevance for Russian society. For even if Shubin is treated with less overt irony than, say, Pavel Kirsanov in the epilogue to *Отцы и дети* (where we meet him again as *der Herr Baron von Kirsanoff*, whiling away his days in Dresden), there is something equally sad about the young sculptor’s fate. It seems likely that he isn’t as happy in the ‘прекрасное далеко’ of Italy as he might once have expected. At any rate, the neo-classical statues he is now working on, however accomplished they may be, are a far cry from what he was doing in Russia. There, it will be remembered, he would go out into the fields, like the painter Venetsianov, like Turgenev himself, seeking inspiration for his work in the reality of Russian life.

It is interesting that so many contemporaries, even if they weren’t Slavophiles, tended to draw a line between Turgenev the author of *Записки охотника*—passing over the fact that he wrote most of them in France—and Turgenev the *citoyen du monde*. For instance, Natal’ia Tuchkova-Ogareva wrote in her memoirs:

В его произведениях, особенно в «Записках охотника», так виден поэт, что он не мог бы ужиться в другом мире. Для Виардо он покинул Россию, отвык от неё, она становилась всё дальше, дальше, будто в тумане; он продолжал писать, но талант его изменился, угасал...³³⁰

In his obituary of the writer Ivan Aksakov similarly praised *Записки охотника* (as well as the first four novels) before reflecting on how Turgenev’s ‘Russianness’ expressed itself in his works in spite of his convictions, which he described as an ‘идеализм сильно космополитический, ощущавший себя на Западе Европы несравненно более дома, чем в родной стране’ (1981:282).

In reality, things weren’t as simple as that. Turgenev didn’t feel at ease in Western Europe to the extent claimed by his detractors. As Charles Moser rightly concludes:

³²⁹ Letter to Stasiulevich, 7/19 March 1877 (P XII₁/116).

³³⁰ *VT* (1988):140.

There can be no doubt that Turgenev had very deep emotional ties to Russia [...] Although he felt alienated from Russia at times, and especially so around 1865, by the 1870s he often regarded himself as a representative of Russia abroad. (1972:83)

It was in fact in this capacity of an ‘ambassador’ of Russian culture that Turgenev continued to serve his country even when living abroad. He generously helped to introduce Tolstoi to the French public, organized exhibitions of painters like Vereshchagin and Repin, and with the help of Pauline Viardot arranged for works by Rimskii-Korsakov, Chaikovskii, and Borodin to be included in concerts in Paris.³³¹

As for the supposed decline of his talent as a result of leaving Russia, the unfairness of this accusation is evident from *Несчастливая, Веиные воды*, and all the other fine works Turgenev wrote whilst based in Germany and France (although some of them were actually drafted in Spasskoe over the summer). What cannot be denied, though, is that the nature of his works changed: with the exception of *Новь*, he no longer attempted to convey the ‘body and pressure’ of contemporary Russian society, but, rather, drew on the treasure trove of memories that he carried with him wherever he went.

Still, Turgenev knew only too well that ‘relevant’ literature was essential in a rapidly changing country like Russia in the nineteenth century. It was in his inability to produce such works any more (again with the exception of *Новь*) that the tragedy of his ‘absenteeism’ from Russia lay. And it is, again, in this respect that Turgenev could identify with Gogol’ and make that bitter observation about how one of the ways in which Russians so often ended up squandering their gifts was by going abroad.

Gogol’ himself had admitted that Belinskii was right in pointing out, in his Letter, that he had become estranged from Russian reality as a result of living abroad for so long:

Покуда мне показалось только то непреложной истиной, что я не знаю вовсе России, что много изменилось с тех пор, как я в ней не был, что мне нужно почти сызнова узнавать всё, что ни есть в ней теперь.³³²

Even though Gogol’ did then spend the last few years of his life in Russia, he was ultimately unable to fulfil Belinskii’s (and the Slavophiles’) exhortation to redeem himself for the disgrace of *Выбранные места* by writing something worthy of his earlier works. One of the reasons for this, as Annenkov noted, was his having lost all sense for contemporary developments in Russia. This also struck Turgenev when he met Gogol’ in

³³¹ See Mikhail Alekseev’s seminal 1948 essay ‘Тургенев: пропагандист русской литературы на Западе’ (Alekseev 1989).

³³² Letter from Gogol’ to Belinskii, 29 July/10 August 1847 (Veresaev 1990:415).

Moscow (just a few months before his death) and had to shudder inwardly at how the great writer tried to justify the government's censorship measures (XIV/66). It's not implausible, therefore, that already at the time of writing *Накануне* in 1859, when he was himself beginning to spend whole months away from Russia again, Turgenev should have reflected on the consequences of such 'absenteeism' for his future work, and that this is why he showed Shubin in a similar situation in the epilogue.

This being said, Turgenev wasn't as unfortunate in this regard as his friend Herzen, who was never to see Russia again after he and his family set off for Europe in 1847. Speaking to a visitor in 1865, Herzen confessed that he would now gladly exchange his life as an émigré for hard labour in Siberia, since: 'Я не знаю на свете положения более жалкого, более бесцельного, как положение русского эмигранта'.³³³

Turgenev never had to make such an irrevocable choice between his native land and the 'прекрасное далеко' of Europe, for he could always visit and leave Russia whenever he wished to. All the same, it is significant that after returning to Paris from the enthusiastic ovations he had received from students in Moscow in April 1879 he seriously considered settling in Russia again:

Я теперь чувствую тягость житья за границей—нельзя отрываться от родины и быть там только наездом, нельзя стоять одной ногой там, а другою здесь. Придётся вернуться туда и жить там, конечно, не в Петербурге и не в Москве, а в деревне или во внутренних городах...³³⁴

Among the reasons why Turgenev, when contemplating the possibility of returning to Russia, was so keen on avoiding St Petersburg and Moscow—apart from the depressing political atmosphere in the last years of Alexander II's reign—was his experience of how the two capitals were rarely conducive to artistic work.

VI.2 The artist's milieu

Turgenev was convinced that coming into contact with the aristocratic circles of Moscow and St Petersburg, however alluring they might seem, posed a danger for any artist. Although he didn't himself belong to the cream of the Russian aristocracy, he was of sufficiently noble birth and demeanour to be invited to the fashionable salons of the two capitals. Indeed, for a while in his youth he had affected a certain aristocratic air which was

³³³ Quoted in Brodskii 1956:272-73. Reference provided by Freeborn 1984:14.

³³⁴ As recalled by Lukanina. *VT* (1983):II/209.

not at all to the liking of such friends as Belinskii. With greater maturity, however, as well as under the influence of the ideas about the artist's civic duty which were being propagated by his new acquaintances in France on the one hand (especially George Sand), and by Belinskii on the other, Turgenev soon realized where his priorities should be as one of Russia's most promising young writers. Besides, this spurning of the *haut monde* in favour of more enduring values of human integrity already had a strong tradition in Russian literature: from Chatskii's attacks on Moscow society in *Горе от ума*, Tat'iana's confession to Onegin in St Petersburg of how little she cared for the 'постылой жизни мишура, / [и] мои успехи в вихре света' (Pushkin 1949:V/189), to Gogol's warning, through the figure of Chartkov in *Портрет*, of how a once modest and hardworking artist might be corrupted by worldly success.

In the latter case Gogol' may perhaps have merely been adapting a popular Romantic theme, but it is worth bearing in mind that just two years after completing this story he saw with his own eyes what high society was capable of doing to a real Russian artist—to Pushkin, whom Gogol' so admired, and whose death was squarely blamed on this society by Lermontov in 'Смерть поэта' (1837), where he asked lamentingly:

Зачем от мирных нег и дружбы простодушной
Вступил он в этот свет завистливый и душный
Для сердца вольного и пламенных страстей?

The sentiments expressed by Lermontov in these verses would later inform Gogol's thoughts in *Выбранные места* about the 'strange fate' of Russia's poets who so often forfeited their vocation by plunging into the 'омут светских отношений' (1994:VI/179). By an ironic twist of fate Gogol', too, came to be considered by his contemporaries as having been harmed, if not ruined, by his association with certain members of the aristocracy.

Thus, referring to the 'moralizing' tendency which Gogol' veered into after the publication of the first part of *Мёртвые души*, Sergei Aksakov attributed it to the influence of such figures as Count A. P. Tolstoi (who was noted for his extreme piety), the repentant society lioness Aleksandra Smirnova-Rosset, and Zhukovskii, in whose various houses in Italy, Germany, and Russia Gogol' spent most of the last decade of his life. All would have been different, Aksakov believed, if Gogol' had instead stuck to his loyal Slavophile friends:

Всё это наделала продолжительная заграничная жизнь вне отечества, вне круга приятелей и литераторов, людей свободного образа мыслей, чуждых ханжества, богомольства и всяких мистических суеверий.³³⁵

Belinskii, in his Letter to Gogol', had also alluded to the exclusivity of the circle in which the writer moved in his 'прекрасное далеко' of Italy, which prevented him from coming into contact with the new ideas that were sweeping across Europe.

The question of Gogol's decline as an artist, and to what extent his new aristocratic friends contributed to it, cannot be explored fully here. The point, though, is that Turgenev was in no doubt that they had exerted a baleful influence—especially Aleksandra Smirnova, as we can tell from the diary of Fedor Buslaev, who recorded in May 1852 what Turgenev had told him about Gogol's last years. Apparently, Turgenev had been a guest at Smirnova's house a few days after the great writer's death, and she had shown him some of the letters which Gogol' had written to her, as well as claiming (if we can trust Buslaev's partisan account)³³⁶ that it was she who had exhorted him to burn the second part of *Мёртвые души* and concentrate on the salvation of his soul:

Тургенев, передававший эти подробности, читал рукописные письма Гоголя к этой даме, и тяжёлое чувство оставили они в его душе: постоянно имя Бога, постоянно набожность—но ясности, свойственной такому предмету, нет.³³⁷

In his 1869 essay on Gogol', Turgenev duly remarked that it would be a good idea if the future editors of Gogol's letters left out all those that were addressed to 'society ladies' like Smirnova, since 'более противной смеси гордыни и подыскивания, ханжества и тщеславия, пророческого и прихлебательского тона—в литературе не существует!' (XIV/68). Similarly, when recalling in this essay how during their meeting on 2 November 1851, in the middle of some very interesting observations about the writer's craft, Gogol' had suddenly begun to praise censorship as a means of inuring authors to Christian humility and patience, Turgenev noted sadly:

В подобных измышлениях и рассудительствах Гоголя слишком явно выказывалось влияние тех особ высшего полёта, которым посвящена бóльшая часть «Переписки»; отсюда шёл этот затхлый и пресный дух (XIV/66)

³³⁵ Mashinskii 1952:207.

³³⁶ Buslaev was close to the Slavophiles, and they had a very unfavourable opinion of Smirnova, whose beauty had once been sung by Pushkin and Lermontov, but famously spurned by Khomiakov in his 1832 poem 'Иностранка' because of her indifference to the Slavophiles' ideals (Khomiakov 1969:97).

³³⁷ Quoted in Gromov 1969:359.

This is one aspect of Gogol's tragic fate which we do not find reflected in the depiction of Shubin in *Накануне*—the sculptor does attend social gatherings in the house of a certain Prince Chikurasov, but only to poke fun at this self-styled Maecenas! (VIII/48-49).

Still, Turgenev did address this issue elsewhere in his fiction. Not to the same extent, of course, as Dostoevskii in *Село Степанчиково и его обитатели* (1859), with its brilliant parody of Gogol's the author of *Выбранные места* in the figure of Foma Fomich, but it is worth noting that Turgenev was the first to portray the 'Russian Tartuffe'—in *Рудин*, a novel which Dostoevskii admired.³³⁸ Even if the dashing and eloquent Rudin resembles his direct prototype Bakunin much more than he might Gogol's, his situation in the house of the erstwhile society belle Dar'ia Lasunskaiia, whom Turgenev is known to have based on Smirnova, does bring to mind Gogol's role as a kind of spiritual adviser to that lady. Not for nothing does Lezhnev say about his former friend:³³⁹

Ну, скажите сами, что за роль его [Рудина] у Дарьи Михайловны? Быть идолом, оракулом в доме, вмешиваться в распоряжения, в семейные сплетни и дразги—неужели это достойно мужчины? (VI/294)

The fact that Rudin ends up having to leave her house and quotes Don Quixote's words to Sancho about the blessing of liberty as they ride out of the Duchess's castle (VI/335) reflects Turgenev's belief that a freedom-loving spirit was incompatible with the conventions of high society.

Bazarov, who had commented on Odintsova to Arkadii upon their arrival at her luxurious estate: 'Герцогиня, да и полно' (VIII/274), quotes, not Cervantes's novel, but still an 'excellent Spanish saying' to the same effect shortly after they leave her dominion: 'мужчина должен быть свиреп' (VIII/307).³⁴⁰ Bazarov's 'staunchly Quixotic singleness of mind' has been noted by Freeborn (1960:122), and just as Don Quixote had been treated by the Duke and Duchess as an object of amusement during his stay at their castle, so Bazarov, a more conscious hero than the Castilian knight, realizes that despite the genuine love which he had come to feel for Odintsova, he, too, had been but a mere object of curiosity for this lady. As Turgenev memorably put it in that letter to Sluchevskii: 'Ей бы

³³⁸ See the commentary in Dostoevskii 1972-90:III/502-03.

³³⁹ It is also Lezhnev who comments on the parallel (or, rather, contrast) between Rudin and Molière's sanctimonious hero: 'В том-то и дело, что он даже не Тартюф. Тартюф, тот по крайней мере знал, чего добивался; а этот, при всём своём уме...' (VI/295).

³⁴⁰ Tat'iana Bron (1964:310) has noted that this saying, which Turgenev also used in his letters, doesn't appear in the standard dictionaries of Spanish proverbs.

хотелось сперва погладить по шерсти волка (Базарова), лишь бы он не кусался’.³⁴¹ It is after his disappointment in Odintsova’s character—for, unlike Elena or Shakespeare’s Portia (see II.5), she is too pampered to share a life of hardship—that Bazarov reminds himself of the manly, yet also wolfish, virtue of ‘fierceness’ which he will need to get down to work again. Significantly, when he visits her estate a second time he remarks to Arkadii: ‘С тех пор как я здесь, я препакостно себя чувствую, точно начитался писем Гоголя к калужской губернаторше’ (VIII/371). The irony of these words is that shortly afterwards Bazarov will have to play briefly a role similar to that of Gogol’ in Aleksandra Smirnova’s house (she was the wife of the governor of Kaluga)—that is, act as an adviser to Odintsova when Arkadii asks for her sister’s hand (VIII/378-79). In that respect, too, Bazarov turned out not to be such an ‘antipode’ to Rudin as Turgenev had originally intended!

For artists, there were other, more obvious risks involved in coming into contact with the high life of the Russian aristocracy. Turgenev witnessed these at close quarters during his meetings with Glinka shortly before the composer’s death. Reporting back to Pauline Viardot on musical life in St Petersburg in 1856, Turgenev mentioned: ‘Glinka est ici et continue à *s’enivrer* et à ne rien faire’.³⁴² And, a year later, after receiving an account from Kashperov about Glinka’s last days in Berlin—an account which suggested that the great composer had sunk into a state of moral decadence—³⁴³ Turgenev replied sadly:

Был у него [у Глинки] большой талант—но попал он в болото петербургской жизни, хватил заразы высочайшей протекции—кстати, тут явились прирождённая лень, паразиты-приятели, вино, гениальничание, ломание—и пошло всё к чёрту! Эх, как подумаешь, сколько ещё порядочных людей должно погибнуть и лечь навозом на почву—чтобы эта почва, наконец удобрённая, принесла обильные и благотворные плоды!³⁴⁴

The image of a swamp (‘болото’) is one that Turgenev often used when referring to the world of the aristocracy. However, it had also become a more general metaphor for the stagnation of Russian society ever since Dobroliubov had used it as such in his article on *Обломов* (1972:29). As Freeborn has pointed out (1960:93), it is in this sense, too, that Shubin invokes this image when telling Uvar Ivanovich of how envious he was of the

³⁴¹ Letter of 14/26 April 1862 (P IV/381).

³⁴² Letter of 15 April 1856 (*LI*:72).

³⁴³ Abram Gozenpud (1994:61-62) argues that this account was slanderous and puts it down to Kashperov’s resentment of Glinka’s genius.

³⁴⁴ Letter to Kashperov, 13/25 March 1857 (P III/111).

noble task awaiting Elena and Insarov in Bulgaria: ‘Это не то, что сидеть по горло в болоте да стараться показывать вид, что тебе всё равно...’ (VIII/141). In his reminiscences of Belinskii Turgenev spoke even more openly of this stagnation in the first half of the 1850s, when there were no longer any hopes of reform:

Поездки за границу становятся невозможны, путной книги выписать нельзя, какая-то тёмная туча постоянно висит над всем так называемым учёным, литературным ведомством [...] между молодёжью ни общей связи, ни общих интересов, страх и приниженность во всех, хоть рукой махни! (XIV/50)

It was under precisely these circumstances that many talented Russians of Turgenev’s generation sought refuge in drink, especially if their faith in the philosophical and social ideals of the 1840s had been broken by the seeming impossibility of their ever coming true in Russia. This didn’t happen with Turgenev, of course, but it did affect less stoically-minded contemporaries like Ogarev. In this respect it is interesting that Malwida von Meysenbug, who taught Herzen’s daughters in London for a number of years, observed in her memoirs how Russians tended to drown their sorrows in drink, and that ‘judging from Turgenev’s stories’ this was a widespread phenomenon in Russia.³⁴⁵

One of the stories which she probably had in mind was *Затишье* (1854), to whose anti-hero Veret’ev we have already referred. His descent into alcoholism, which provokes the suicide of the woman who loves him, is all the more tragic because of the talent with which he is clearly endowed, and in a sense it can be seen as a consequence of the stifling atmosphere under Nicholas I. Veret’ev himself admits that it is the sensation of absolute freedom that he looks for in drink: ‘Так вот я для чего пью, Маша, чтобы испытать те самые ощущения, которые испытывает эта ласточка... Швыряй себя куда хочешь, несись куда вздумается. (VI/124). Another factor in Veret’ev’s moral decline is his consorting with aristocratic friends in St Petersburg who consider him a genius. The narrator’s bitter observation: ‘Эти люди ошибались: из Веретьевых никогда ничего не выходит’ (VI/157) almost seems to anticipate Turgenev’s later remarks, quoted above, about how Glinka was ruined by his association with a clique of dilettantes and carousers. Of course, the figure of Veret’ev wasn’t directly based on Glinka (there is no evidence that at the time of writing *Затишье* Turgenev was aware of these lamentable aspects of the composer’s life), but, rather, on observations of a more general malaise in Russian society.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Brodskii 1956:349.

To return, though, to Malwida von Meysenbug's observation, drawn from her reading of Turgenev's stories, we must not forget that alcoholism in Russia was not merely restricted to the upper reaches of society. A few of the *Записки охотника* provide hints of how the peasantry, too, was afflicted by this ill—most notably *Певцы*, where even the gifted and sensitive Iashka joins in the drunken revelry after the contest, causing the huntsman to turn away his eyes and move on. This was in fact Turgenev's own attitude when writing these sketches: he felt it would have been unfair on the peasants, in view of all the hardships they were suffering, to dwell on the more sordid aspects of their everyday life. But he was certainly aware of how alcoholism was one of the factors involved in the 'трагическая сторона народной жизни', as he put it in a letter to Konstantin Aksakov.³⁴⁶

As late as 1881 he could still recall the case of a serf boy on his mother's estate who had early on showed an aptitude for drawing and was sent to Moscow, to be trained as a painter. There, during his course, he was even selected to decorate the ceiling of the Bolshoi Theatre. However, after his return to Spasskoe Turgenev's mother had ordered him to paint flowers and nothing but flowers, for she was very fond of them. The young serf took to drink in despair and died soon afterwards.³⁴⁷ If we also think of such works as Dostoevskii's *Неточка Незванова*, where the violinist Efimov's tendency to escapism leads him to drink, or Gogol's *Портрет*, in which we are told that Chartkov, when he is still struggling with poverty and lack of recognition, often felt the urge to 'бросить всё и закутить с горя назло всему' (1952-53:III/78), then it becomes clear that alcoholism was also a threat for Russian artists of humbler origins. Thus, Shubin's ironic bust of himself as a drunkard was very much rooted in Russian reality.

Artists born into the aristocracy or gentry—especially in the first half of the nineteenth century—faced another, subtler, problem in that they grew up in a culture which often valued outwardly successes far more than the diligence and concentration required to create lasting works of art. As was discussed in Chapter III, Turgenev touched on this issue in such stories as *Татьяна Борисовна и её племянник* and *Ася*, as well as through the invectives of Potugin in *Дым* against the Russians' tendency to proclaim someone a genius at the merest sign of talent. Ivan Aksakov made some general observations on this situation

³⁴⁶ Letter of 16 January 1853 (P II/108).

³⁴⁷ As recalled by Lukanina. *VT* (1983):II/213. Dr Alexander Etkind alerted me to the works of a talented serf painter Grigorii Soroka (1823-64) who, despite having studied under Venetsianov for two years, was forced to work as a gardener by his master. Richard Stites (2005:334-36) discusses the numerous cases of suicide among serf artists who suffered under 'arbitrary seignorial power'.

in his 1874 essay on Tiutchev, describing first how the poet already as a boy had shown great promise:

Скажем, кстати, что ничто вообще так не балует и губит людей в России, как именно эта талантливость, упраздняющая необходимость усилий и не дающая укорениться привычке к упорному, последовательному труду [...] особенно [...] при той материальной обеспеченности, которая была уделом образованного класса в России во времена крепостного права. (1981:290)

Aksakov further noted how it was almost a miracle that poets like Tiutchev and Pushkin had emerged from the frivolous aristocratic milieu of their youth with their integrity unscathed and able to write the finest verses in the Russian language (1981:293):

Не следовало ли ожидать, что и [Тютчев], подобно многим нашим поэтам, поклонится кумиру, называемому светом, приобщится его злой пустоте и в погоне за успехами принесёт немало нравственных жертв и ущерб и правде и таланту?

Although Turgenev was never in any real danger of succumbing to these temptations of high society, even during his brief phase of aristocratic posturing, a number of contemporaries did reproach him for what they perceived to be gentlemanly laziness. Dostoevskii, who prided himself on being a ‘proletarian’ writer, rightly resented the higher fees which his rival could command from the editors of Russian journals and vented some of his frustration into the figure of Karmazinov.³⁴⁸ Turgenev, however, despite his spells of apparent inactivity, had every right to reply as he did in 1859 to Countess Lambert, who had expressed her concern that after the success of *Дворянское гнездо* he might start resting on his laurels: ‘В нашем ремесле удовольствий довольно мало—да оно так и следует: все, даже артисты, даже богатые, должны жить в поте лица’.³⁴⁹

But just as others reproached him, so Turgenev was always particularly concerned about one contemporary: Tolstoi, whose talent he considered to be the greatest in Russian literature since Pushkin and Gogol’. At the start of their acquaintance he was worried about Tolstoi’s reluctance to commit himself wholeheartedly to literature as a profession, but in later years he began to fear for the influences which his younger colleague was exposed to. As noted earlier (see V.2), Turgenev discerned certain Slavophile tendencies in *Война и*

³⁴⁸ Writing from Semipalatinsk to his brother on 9 May 1859, Dostoevskii protested against the injustice of his fate: ‘Я очень хорошо знаю, что я пишу хуже Тургенева, но ведь не слишком же хуже, и наконец, я надеюсь написать совсем не хуже. За что же я-то, с моими нуждами, беру только 100 руб. [с листа], а Тургенев, у которого 2000 душ, по 400?’ (1972-90:XXVIII₁/325).

³⁴⁹ Letter of 27 March 1859 (P III/282).

мир, which he attributed to Tolstoi's friendship with Prince Urusov, and his misgivings seemed to be borne out by the first chapters of *Анна Каренина* when the novel began to be serialized in 1875:

С его талантом забрести в это великосветское болото и топать и толкаться там на месте—и относиться ко всей этой дребедени не с юмором—а, напротив, с пафосом, серьёзно—что за чепуха!! Москва загубила его—не его первого, не его последнего. Но жаль его больше, чем всех других.³⁵⁰

Again, as with Glinka, Turgenev uses the image of the aristocratic 'swamp' to express his alarm that yet another Russian artist of genius was being drawn into a milieu in which true art could not thrive. He hadn't forgotten the tragic case of Gogol' in his final years, unable to create any more. Turgenev blamed this not just on his friendship with Aleksandra Smirnova and other Russian grandees, but also on the influence of the Slavophiles: 'Я ненавижу славянофилов. Они всех губили, кто приходил с ними в соприкосновение, и Кохановскую и Гоголя...'³⁵¹ He feared that something similar might happen to Tolstoi—namely, that, driven by the religiosity which prevailed in certain circles of the Muscovite nobility, Tolstoi would, like Gogol' before him, abandon his true vocation. The text of *Исповедь*, which Tolstoi arranged for a friend to deliver to Turgenev in Paris towards the end of 1882, confirmed his worst fears.

VI.3 Repudiation of one's works

At the end of his article on *Выбранные места*—which, given that it was to be published in *Современник*, could not be as drastic as his letter from Salzbrunn—Belinskii had still warned Gogol' in quite clear terms:

Горе человеку, которого сама природа создала художником, горе ему, если, недовольный своею дорогою, он ринется в чуждый ему путь! На этом новом пути ожидает его неминуемое падение, после которого не всегда бывает возможно возвращение на прежнюю дорогу. (1953-59:X/77)

It was precisely because Turgenev considered Tolstoi to have also embarked on an 'alien path' when he met him again in Russia in the summers of 1878-81 that, from his deathbed,

³⁵⁰ Letter to Toporov, 20 March/1 April 1875 (P XI/49-50).

³⁵¹ As recalled by Lukanina. *VT* (1983):II/204.

he appealed to the author of *Война и мир*: ‘Друг мой, вернитесь к литературной деятельности! Ведь этот дар Вам оттуда же, откуда всё другое.’³⁵²

What this alien direction that Tolstoi had taken consisted of in Turgenev’s eyes, we can appreciate from what he told the young *narodnik* Sergei Krivenko in the spring of 1879, during one of his last visits to Russia:

Вот на ком непростительный грех, что не пишет, вот кто мог бы быть теперь чрезвычайно полезен—Лев Толстой; но что же вы с ним поделаете: молчит и молчит, да мало ещё этого—в мистицизм ударился.

Emphasizing that Tolstoi had no equal in the whole of contemporary European literature, Turgenev continued his lament:

Весь с головою ушёл в другую область: окружил себя библиями, Евангелием, чуть ли не на всех языках, исписал целую кучу бумаги. Целый сундук у него с этой мистической моралью и разными кривотолкованиями. Читал мне кое-что,—просто не понимаю его. Говорил ему, что это не дело, а он отвечает: «Это-то и есть самое дело»³⁵³

All this must have reminded Turgenev of Gogol’ in his final years—not so much perhaps what he himself had observed during their one meeting in 1851 as what Sergei Aksakov and Annenkov were able to tell him about the great writer. Despite their ideological differences, both Aksakov and Annenkov had been alarmed by the sight of so many religious books on Gogol’'s desk and, in general, by his ‘нравственно-наставительное направление’.³⁵⁴

Although Tolstoi was more balanced and anchored in the real world than Gogol’, and Turgenev had no reason to fear that he would starve himself to death or anything like that, there was still something in *Исповедь* which he could not help shuddering at. It was partly Tolstoi’s emphasis on philosophical, moral, and religious questions, the resolution of which, in Turgenev’s eyes, was beyond the artist’s remit: ‘Дай Бог любому автору понять и выразить жизнь—где ему мудрить над ней или поправлять её’.³⁵⁵ This doesn’t mean, of course, that Turgenev rejected Tolstoi’s striving to lead a better life. Just before he received his copy of *Исповедь* he had in fact written to Tolstoi, expressing

³⁵² Letter of 29 June/11 July 1883 (P XIII₂/180).

³⁵³ *VT* (1983):I/417.

³⁵⁴ Mashinskii 1952:206 & 307.

³⁵⁵ Letter to I. Aksakov, 28 December 1852 (P II/99). Chekhov would argue similarly that the artist was only obliged to present a problem correctly, not to find a solution to it (Valency 1966:67).

sympathy for his moral self-probing, as well as the hope that he would soon return to creative work: ‘Конечно, Вы правы: прежде всего нужно жить, *как следует*; но ведь одно не мешает другому’.³⁵⁶ But after actually reading *Исповедь* he was very worried by the tendencies it expressed:

[Это] вещь замечательная по искренности, правдивости и силе убеждения, но построена она вся на неверных посылках—и в конце концов приводит к самому мрачному отрицанию всякой живой, человеческой жизни. Это тоже своего рода нигилизм.³⁵⁷

One of the most important aspects of life negated by Tolstoi in *Исповедь* was the value of art, and not for nothing did Turgenev cite the word ‘nihilism’ here. Bazarov, too, had rejected art as something that distracted people from more important matters, albeit not moral self-perfection as in Tolstoi’s case but the improvement of material conditions in rural Russia.

In *Исповедь*, Tolstoi made disparaging comments on the ‘сословие литераторов’ in St Petersburg, to which he himself had briefly belonged after returning from Sevastopol, and on what he perceived to be their Hegelian self-delusions about the role of art in contributing to the progress of mankind. He chastised himself for also having succumbed to this flattering delusion at the time: ‘Я наивно воображал, что я—поэт, художник, и могу учить всех, сам не зная, чему я учу’ (1978-85: XVI/111). Now, as noted earlier (see I.1), Turgenev, like Goethe, didn’t consider the artist’s task to be that of teaching people directly, but he always believed in the morally uplifting effect of art and literature. Turgenev’s friend Botkin had asserted, in his 1857 article on Fet’s poetry:

Ничто так не делает человека лучшим, ничто так не исцеляет его от загрубелости нрава, черствости чувств, эгоизма, как духовное наслаждение. Всякий, почувствовавший наслаждение от какого-либо произведения искусства, непременно, хоть на самое короткое время, делается лучше. Вот в чём заключается благотворное действие литературы на общество. (1984:233)

Another of the St Petersburg men of letters, Annenkov, would emphasize in his reminiscences how in the 1840s and early 50s art and literature were the only opportunity for an ‘общественное дело’ in Russia, and how Turgenev and many of his contemporaries had placed all their hopes on literature, in particular, as the principal civilizing element in

³⁵⁶ Letter of 19/31 October 1882 (P XIII₂/74).

³⁵⁷ Letter to Grigorovich, 31 October/12 November 1882 (P XIII₂/89).

their country (1960:340-41). Since Turgenev, too, in his speech in Moscow in March 1879, had stressed the vital role played by literature in the ‘история русского просвещения’ (XV/59), it must have appalled him to see Tolstoi deny this in *Исповедь*.

Of course, *Исповедь* does not go as far as *Что такое искусство?* (1898), in which Tolstoi would condemn not just his own works and the whole European literary heritage (with a few exceptions), but also symphonic and chamber music, which Turgenev was so eager for Russia to assimilate. Yet already in this early record of his ‘conversion’ we find Tolstoi describing the years he spent working on *Война и мир* as a ‘ничтожный труд’ because it had been undertaken for the sake of fame and money. This, too, must have upset Turgenev, given that a few years earlier he had been recommending the first French translation of this very novel to his Parisian colleagues and friends in such enthusiastic terms: ‘Le roman est bien près d’être un chef-d’œuvre; c’est ce que la littérature russe a produit de plus remarquable’.³⁵⁸

Tolstoi’s repudiation of his earlier works, a tendency that is incipient in *Исповедь*, again had a certain precedent in Gogol’. For quite similar reasons, namely as the result of a period of intensive introspection, Gogol’ by 1845 had come to the conclusion that his masterpieces—*Ревизор* and *Мёртвые души*—were worthless, and that only now, in writing *Выбранные места*, would he truly contribute to the spiritual regeneration of Russian society. In this respect it’s worth referring to an entry under May 1845 in the diary of the censor Aleksandr Nikitenko, who three years earlier had authorized the publication of the first part of *Мёртвые души*. Nikitenko cites a letter addressed to one of the tsar’s ministers, in which Gogol’ had accused himself of being unworthy of the pension he was receiving: ‘Всё, написанное мною до сих пор, и слабо, и ничтожно до того, что я не знаю, как мне загладить перед государем невыполнение его ожиданий’. Commenting on this, Nikitenko notes how sorry he was to see such ‘печальное самоуничижение со стороны Гоголя!’.³⁵⁹ Belinskii, too, in his Letter to Gogol’, would point to this ‘неудовольствие своими прежними произведениями’ as one of the symptoms of the great writer’s moral decline (1953-59:X/217).

The publication, in 1847, of *Выбранные места*, which Gogol’ at the time considered to be ‘моя до сих пор единственная дельная книга’,³⁶⁰ can be compared to Tolstoi’s *Исповедь*, in that, amongst other things, both writers tried to come to terms with

³⁵⁸ Letter to Anatole France, 3/15 January 1880 (P XIII₂/224).

³⁵⁹ Quoted in Veresaev 1990:379.

³⁶⁰ Letter to Pletnev, 18/30 July 1846 (Veresaev 1990:393).

their previous works in a very self-critical manner. Thus, Gogol' insisted in his book that it was no longer possible to dedicate oneself to art for the sake of aesthetic pleasure; the artist had a duty to contribute actively to the spiritual regeneration of society (1994:VI/183-84). Tolstoi, who admired Gogol''s talent as a story-teller and his religious sentiments, would, however, argue in his brief essay 'О Гоголе' (1909) that such expectations of art as a force for enlightenment were exaggerated (1978-85:XV/328). The great public benefit which the Slavophiles and others had posited in *Мёртвые души* and its completion was in the elderly Tolstoi's view characteristic of that faith in progress through culture which he now regarded as a self-delusion.

It is worth emphasizing that when Turgenev met Gogol' in Moscow in 1851, the latter, though still surrounding himself with religious books, really did seem to be determined to finish the second part of *Мёртвые души*. He was assiduously gathering material from all over Russia to help him with his task. As Turgenev later confessed in his reminiscences, he was delighted and surprised to find Gogol' so full of creative zest (XIV/66). If we can trust another extant account of their conversation, Gogol' had even told the younger writer: 'Если бы можно было воротить назад сказанное, я бы уничтожил мою «Переписку с друзьями», я бы сжёг её'.³⁶¹

Whether or not Gogol' actually said this, it is true that he did repent of *Выбранные места*—almost as soon as the book was published, in fact, for in a letter to Zhukovskii he admitted that he had been wrong in assuming the role of a preacher, and that he would henceforth dedicate himself solely to the completion of *Мёртвые души*: 'Искусство и без того поученье. Моё дело говорить *живыми образами*'. Even though he would now deviate from his former manner and seek out positive qualities in the Russian people—because only then, Gogol' argued, would art fulfil its mission of introducing 'порядок и стройность в общество'—³⁶² it is clear that he now saw himself first and foremost as an artist. Gogol''s death only a few months after their meeting was a terrible blow for Turgenev, but at least he had seen him reconciled to his artistic vocation.

This was not the case with Tolstoi. Unlike Turgenev, who was essentially content to remain a writer all his life, Tolstoi had never really felt at ease in the role of a man of letters, not even in the years of his collaboration with the *Современник* journal. By the

³⁶¹ The account is by the grandson of the actor Shchepkin, who accompanied Turgenev on his visit to Gogol' (Mashinskii 1952:530).

³⁶² Letter of 29 December 1847/10 January 1848 (Gogol' 1994:VI/ 239-41).

1880s he tended to the view that the kind of literature to which he, too, had devoted many years of his life was to be spurned because it was accessible only to a privileged élite.

For all his prescience, Turgenev had no way of telling that the intensive spiritual introspection and studying of the New Testament with which Tolstoi occupied himself in the years 1879-83 would later yield such fruits as *Смерть Ивана Ильича* (1886) or *Хозяин и работник* (1895). He seems not to have read the earliest of Tolstoi's literary works following his 'conversion'—namely, *Чем люди живы?*, which was published at the end of 1881 and prompted Ivan Aksakov to make the following tribute:

Много было толков о новом, якобы мистическом направлении автора, о том, что он уже погиб для искусства... Напечатанный рассказ свидетельствует о противном. Художник-реалист не погиб в нём, но только стал художником внутренне просветлённым, для которого освятилось искусство, раскрылся целый новый мир художественного творчества и нравственного служения [...] Гр. Толстой может успокоится: его художественная деятельность вполне благотворна,—пусть только он сам не хоронит в себе Божьего дара. (1981:281)

Even if a copy of this little masterpiece did reach Turgenev in France, his reading of *Исповедь* in the following year can only have renewed his fears that Tolstoi might indeed hide his light under a bushel and abandon literature altogether.

VI.4 The value of art reaffirmed

The self-criticism shown by Gogol' and Tolstoi was shared by many other Russian writers in the nineteenth century, especially from the second half of the 1850s onwards, when the utilitarianism of such radicals as Chernyshevskii exerted great influence on public opinion. It was difficult for artists to avoid a guilty conscience when there were so many social and economic problems in Russia that called for practical action. Even after the resounding success of *Обломов* in 1859—a novel whose social significance had after all been commended so highly by Dobroliubov—Goncharov reproached himself for not doing something directly useful: 'Не есть ли писание романов и вообще изящное творчество—роскошь, а не долг?'³⁶³

This tension between the aesthetic realm and civic responsibility was also felt in the fine arts, which had been kept apart from the social reality of Russia for so long, and whose ability to influence public opinion was therefore considerably more limited than that

³⁶³ From a letter quoted by Geiro 2000:89.

of literary works. The situation presented by Garshin in his short story *Художники* (1879), where the talented artist Riabinin is so distraught by the plight of a foundry-worker whom he had painted that he stows away his easel for good and decides to retrain as a village school-teacher, is characteristic of the period.

In fact, already in Chernyshevskii's arguments we can detect the seeds of Tolstoi's later condemnation of the professional European (and Russian) artist as a 'потешатель богатых людей'.³⁶⁴ Thus, in the notes he added to his 1860 translation of John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, Chernyshevskii had emphasized that the creation of works of art was an unjustifiable luxury if there was a 'недостаток предметов первой необходимости', such as bread for everyone (1939-50:IX/65). It is this view which Bazarov upholds when he tells Pavel Kirsanov that talking about art and other elevated matters was a disgrace 'когда дело идёт о насущном хлебе' (VIII/245).

Some scholars have spoken of Turgenev courting the esteem of the radicals and forcing political issues into his works even though they were alien to his artistic sensibility.³⁶⁵ This view, however, fails to do justice to Turgenev's interest in all aspects of life, including the social and political struggles of the day. Annenkov noted how Turgenev could never have remained in Italy contemplating beauty for long because 'он искал событий, живых лиц, волн и разбросанности действительного, работающего, борющегося существования' (1960:417). Even before reading Chernyshevskii's dissertation, Turgenev had emphasized in an already-cited letter: 'есть интересы высшие поэтических интересов' (P II/282), and he knew that this was especially true in the period of reforms following the Crimean War.

As Iurii Lotman argued in an illuminating essay on Tolstoi's antecedents in Russian literature (2005:524), this tension between the civic and the artistic had impressed itself on Russian writers' consciousness ever since the Decembrist poets. It underlies Turgenev's portrayal, in *Дворянское гнездо*, of the idealistic Mikhalevich, who before reading his poem to Lavretskii admits: 'Послушай, ты знаешь, я пописываю стихи; в них поэзии нет, но есть правда' (VII/201)—a remark which Galina Antonova (1969:233) has traced to the Decembrist Ryleev's famous assertion: 'Я не поэт, а гражданин'. In that sense Mikhalevich can be said to anticipate such figures as Elena and Bazarov, who see more important tasks in life than poetry or art.

³⁶⁴ The phrase is from *Что такое искусство?* (Tolstoi 1978-85:XV/185). Tolstoi's religious thrust in *Исповедь* is of course not to be found in any of Chernyshevskii's writings, but all the same the resemblance between some of their views is striking.

³⁶⁵ See, for example, Matlaw 1957—an article which is very critical and unfair towards Turgenev.

It is indeed partly thanks to the influence of Mikhalevich's visit that Lavretskii in the end manages to set about the duty which his social conscience was urging on him. In her attempt to read Schopenhauerian pessimism into Turgenev's works, Sigrid McLaughlin cites Lavretskii's thoughts in the epilogue: '«Здравствуй, одинокая старость! Догорай, бесполезная жизнь!»' (VII/293) as evidence that despite having devoted himself to the welfare of the peasants on his estate, Lavretskii, like Turgenev, questions the value of all practical activity 'angesichts des Todes und der gleichgültigen Natur' (1984:99). This, though, means to disregard completely the earlier part of Lavretskii's meditation as he watches the youngsters in the garden: '«Играйте, веселитесь, растите, молодые силы,—думал он, и не было горечи в его думах,—жизнь у вас впереди, и вам легче будет жить»' (VII/293). In these words and in the whole composition of the scene there is again an echo of Turgenev's beloved poem by Pushkin: 'Брожу ли я...', which, as was discussed in section II.7, Turgenev repeatedly uses to convey his own elegiac, yet positive view of life as one generation succeeds another. Lavretskii has done what he could by tilling the land, and he believes in the better future awaiting those who come after him.

There is, however, one work of Turgenev's which at first glance lends itself to accusations of pessimism: *Довольно*. This sketch, subtitled 'Отрывок из записок умершего художника' concludes with a series of questions as to what could possibly induce a statesman or a scholar or an artist to take up his work again in view of the futility of all endeavours to enlighten mankind, as well as the transience of life; followed by the 'Довольно...' refrain repeated thrice; and finally ending with a quotation of the dying Hamlet's words: 'The rest is silence...' (IX/122)

When *Довольно* was published in the last volume of the 1865 edition of Turgenev's works, it caused some disbelief among readers. Turgenev seemed to be throwing in the towel, and the sixty-five-year-old Odoevskii wrote an article entitled 'Недовольно', in which he stressed that a writer didn't belong to himself but to society and so had no right to lay down his pen. Another critic decreed that with the appearance of this sketch, 'общественно-литературное служение Тургенева кончилось'.³⁶⁶ Turgenev himself would regret having published *Довольно* because of its 'subjective' nature, by which he evidently meant both the reminiscences of his love for Pauline Viardot in some sections and the melancholic tone of the rest.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Quoted in the Academy edition's commentary (IX/493).

³⁶⁷ Letter to Stasiulevich, 8/20 May 1878 (P XII₁/322).

Predictably, *Довольно* was seized upon by Walicki as evidence that Turgenev had accepted Schopenhauer's solution: 'an exalted "resignation" annihilating will and resulting in complete passivity' (1962:6). Again, this is a case of a Lilliputian trying to tie down Gulliver, that is, Turgenev the artist, who towers above all his latter-day detractors. For a start, as Elizabeth Cheresh Allen has so rightly emphasized, the narrator of *Довольно* cannot be simply equated with the author, even though the latter did recognize it to be a subjective work. As the sub-title suggests, we are reading the lamentations of 'an artist who has indeed died, because, unlike Turgenev, he cannot creatively alter his point of view' (1992:175). Allen points out the irony inherent in the fact that this artist cannot even author his own conclusion but has to quote Shakespeare! There is a further irony in this final quotation because only a few years earlier, in *Гамлет и Дон-Кихот*, Turgenev had contrasted the moving scene of Don Quixote's death with Hamlet's: 'взор Гамлета не обращается вперёд... «Остальное... молчание», говорит умирающий скептик—и действительно умолкает навеки' (VIII/191). The artist in *Довольно* is clearly a sceptic.

He is, however, also a pessimist, since he speaks of the transience ('бренность') of even the most beautiful works of art before unfeeling Nature:

Она [природа] так же спокойно покрывает плесенью божественный лик фидиасовского Юпитера, как и простой голыш, и отдаёт на съедение презренной моли драгоценнейшие строки Софокла. (IX/120)

The fact that Turgenev, in contrast to this deceased artist, *was* capable of altering his point of view is demonstrated by the tribute to Shakespeare which he wrote in April 1864, just one month after completing *Довольно*. Originally intended as a speech to be read in St Petersburg to commemorate Shakespeare's 300th anniversary, Turgenev emphasized here how the English bard had conquered the whole world, and how there would be no end to the growth of his fame and to the generations of readers and artists whom he inspired:

Подобно своему единственному сопернику, величайшему поэту древнего мира, Гомеру, который, доживая своё третье тысячелетие, весь сияет блеском бессмертной молодости и неувядаемой силы, величайший поэт нового мира создан для вечности—и будет жить вечно! (XV/50)

The radiant optimism of these words anticipates the Pushkin speech of 1880, in which Turgenev—despite being aware, like the artist in *Довольно*, that moths had indeed devoured the manuscripts of some (but not all) of Sophocles's tragedies—observed how the soul of Ancient Greece had come down to us thanks to her culture (XV/67). The truth

of Turgenev's specific tribute to Shakespeare in 1864 as a source of inspiration for artists would be resoundingly confirmed five years later when the young Chaikovskii composed his *Romeo and Juliet* overture.

The emphasis in Russian public opinion at the time, of course, was not so much on these timeless values as on the artist's service to his country then and there. That was how Turgenev, too, was judged by his contemporaries. Thus, after his death all wings of the Russian intelligentsia would acknowledge his contribution to the liberation of the serfs. For instance, Ivan Aksakov wrote in his obituary of Turgenev: 'Своими «Записками охотника»—едва ли не самым лучшим из его созданий—сослужил он своему отечеству и народу поистине добрую службу' (1981:282).

As we saw above, the appearance of *Довольно* in 1865 caused some readers to think that Turgenev had reneged on his duty as a Russian writer. However, he was able to overcome the mood of despondency which had been reflected in that sketch, and which was partly due to the hostile response to *Отцы и дети* in 1862. Despite having lost the sympathy of many young Russians for what they wrongly considered to be the slanderous portrayal of Bazarov, and despite being dismissed as a spent force by the Russian press, Turgenev undertook his next two novels very much with the aim of rendering a useful service to his country. When *Новь*, too, was received hostilely in 1877, it again caused him to think of giving up writing for good. Even so, in the poem-in-prose *Услышишь суд злупца* written the following year, Turgenev compared himself to the unknown traveller who had introduced the potato into Russia, but who had seen how the farmers he wished to help rejected this new crop. Now the potato allowed many villages to survive in the harsh Russian winters. 'What should one do in the face of hostility from one's contemporaries?', this poem asks. The answer is not the misanthropic one given by the deceased artist of *Довольно*. Rather, it is Turgenev's own: 'Будем стараться только о том, чтобы приносимое нами было точно полезною пищей' (XIII/152).

Turgenev genuinely believed in the nourishing value of literature and art. In this he was at one not just with the 'aesthete' Botkin—until the latter became a reactionary towards the end of his life—but also with Dostoevskii, who defied the radical utilitarians in his 1861 articles on Russian literature:

Искусство есть такая же потребность для человека, как есть и пить. Потребность красоты и творчества, воплощающего её,—неразлучна с человеком, и без неё человек, может быть, не захотел бы жить на свете. (1972-90:XVIII/94)

Like Dostoevskii, Turgenev was aware of what Chernyshevskii had said in his dissertation about how the ideal of beauty for a hard-working, healthy peasant was different to that of an effete aristocrat, but this simplistic argument didn't unsettle him. Before going on to lament the transience even of works of art, the artist in *Довольно* had said: 'Но не условность искусства меня смущает' (IX/119), and here it is the true Turgenev who is speaking. For years later he would defend the absolute value of artistic beauty in the following terms:

В ответ на Ваш вопрос позвольте мне сказать, что поэзия никому и ни в какой век собственно не нужна; она—роскошь, но роскошь доступная всякому, даже беднейшему: в этом её смысл и красота и польза.³⁶⁸

With education and improvements to their material welfare, Russian peasants, too, would come to appreciate the beauty of Pushkin's verses, as Turgenev asserted with such optimism in his speech of 1880. Again, not unlike Keats, who believed that 'beauty is truth, truth is beauty', Turgenev spoke of the value of poetry to a young Russian medicine student in Paris in 1879: 'Красота имеет право на существование, она в конце концов вся цель человеческой жизни. Правда, любовь, счастье—всё соединяется в красоте'.³⁶⁹

It is this faith in the value of art as such that caused Turgenev to implore Tolstoi to return to creative work. In the above-cited conversation of 1879 with the *narodnik* Krivenko he had observed how Tolstoi could be 'extremely useful' if he were to start writing again, and by this Turgenev perhaps meant that in the critical times Russia was going through, with increasingly frequent terrorist acts in response to the government's repressive policies, a new work by Tolstoi might cause young Russians to reflect on whether violence really could achieve the justice and truth they were aspiring to.

In *Alesha Karamazov's* Speech by the Stone, Dostoevskii would invoke the value of beautiful memories from childhood and youth as essential for a person's later conduct in life. Tolstoi himself experienced this, and many of his most cherished memories had to do with the reading of Turgenev's works in his youth, as we learn from the diary of Sergei Taneev, who was a frequent visitor to Iasnaia Poliana in the 1890s. Thus, when someone during a conversation in June 1896 mentioned *Затишье*, Tolstoi 'сказал, что с этой повестью у него соединено самое приятное воспоминание'. He had been given a copy

³⁶⁸ Letter to an unknown addressee, 12/24 December 1872 (P X/43).

³⁶⁹ As recalled by Lukanina. *VT* (1983):II/206-7.

of Turgenev's story during the siege of Sevastopol when literature was the last thing on his mind, and yet 'он получил большое удовольствие от чтения'.³⁷⁰ Significantly, in *Воскресенье* (1899), the peasant-girl Katiusha will be shown reading with great enthusiasm Turgenev's stories, including *Затишье*, which Nekhliudov recommends to her when he first meets her. Although he goes on to ruin her life, his later repentance is driven in part by a yearning to recover the innocence of his youth, of which Turgenev's stories were an important part.

Describing how they had started reading aloud *Дворянское гнездо* at Iasnaia in July 1896, Taneev further noted in his diary:

Л. Н. сказал, что есть сочинения, которые приятно слушать и не знаешь почему— потому ли, что они хороши, или по воспоминаниям. «Вот я услышал имя Лаврецкого, и мне стало приятно»³⁷¹

Tolstoi often spoke of Turgenev and his works long after his death, and even if now and then he made unfair criticisms about them (especially his novels), the way in which he always held a place in Tolstoi's heart confirms Turgenev's belief in the immortality of art and its ability to unite people.

³⁷⁰ Entry for 14 June 1896 (Taneev 1981-85:I/160).

³⁷¹ Entry for 23 July 1896. *ibid.*:I/173.

CONCLUSION

Ever since the Romantic period artists have been popular as literary figures, and sometimes even heroes, in stories, novels, and plays. Russia in the early nineteenth century was no exception to this trend. The quintessential conflict between the sensitive artist and the unfeeling world around him so vividly portrayed by E.T.A. Hoffmann in his biography of the musician Johannes Kreisler was taken up, for example, by the Russian Romantic writer Odоеvskii in such stories as *Последний квартет Бетховена* (1831) and *Себастьян Бах* (1841). With the appearance of Gogol', however, and the use made by Belinskii of his works to advance the cause of socially engaged writing, the Romantic theme of the artist came to be perceived as irrelevant to Russian reality.

Gogol' himself had divested the painter Chartkov in *Портрет* of some of his too obviously Romantic traits when he revised that story in 1842, partly under the influence of Belinskii's criticism of the original version. Not surprisingly, it was with considerable irony that Dostoevskii treated the violinist Efimov in *Неточка Незванова* (1849), showing how this artist's self-delusion as to his unrecognized genius blinds him to his family's sufferings. In general, writers coming after Gogol' who devoted their attention to the psychology of the artist rather than to 'relevant' issues of Russian society ran the risk of losing their readers' favour. This is what happened to Tolstoi when he wrote *Альберт* in 1857, a story about another violinist (though, unlike Efimov, not of Russian birth) who takes to drink due to unrequited love for a young lady. Nekrasov at first refused to publish this remarkable story because of what he saw as its 'весьма избитый сюжет',³⁷² by which he evidently meant Al'bert's resemblance to such figures as Kreisler or the painter Piskarev in Gogol''s *Невский проспект* (1835). Unlike Gogol', however, Tolstoi had eschewed all irony in his portrayal of Al'bert and wanted readers to take him seriously.

We also find echoes of Kreisler in Herr Lemm in *Дворянское гнездо* (1859), of whom Stasov once said that Turgenev had fallen for the 'немножко рутинное старое представление о «бедном неузнанном художнике»'.³⁷³ The reasons why Turgenev introduced the figure of Lemm into his novel—the 'most musical of his works' as Edmund Heier has observed (1989:123)—were quite legitimate, though. Apart from the historical authenticity of showing a German music teacher in provincial Russia, Lemm plays an important role in making us aware of Liza's qualities, and the music she inspires him to

³⁷² See the commentary in Tolstoi 1978-85:III/466. One notable feature of *Альберт* is that music is shown as having the power to awaken noble sentiments, in stark contrast to the later story *Крейцера соната* (1889).

³⁷³ Quoted in Gozenpud 1994:121.

compose fills one of the novel's most memorable scenes (VII/237-38). Moreover, as a standard-bearer of German classical music in Russia he can also be said to represent those beneficial civilizing influences which Turgenev so believed in.

Still, it cannot be denied that Lemm as a foreigner stands somewhat aside from the important issues of Russian life. Besides, as Annenkov later remarked (1960:426-27), *Дворянское гнездо* was a largely nostalgic work which dwelt on the finest aspects of the gentry culture of pre-Emancipation Russia. *Накануне* (1860), in contrast, addressed the country's immediate present, and Turgenev's decision to include a *Russian* artist in this novel's almost contemporary setting is one of its striking features.

In view of Shubin's wittiness, as well as the delight he takes in living up to the Romantic stereotype of the irresponsible 'free artist', it is very likely that Turgenev was seeking to throw down a gauntlet at Chernyshevskii, who in his dissertation of 1855 had argued somewhat pedantically that art should serve as an 'учебник жизни' (1939-50:II/90). There are, however, more complex aspects to Shubin's role in *Накануне*. For a start, the lack of seriousness for which Dobroliubov, in particular, reproved Shubin is deceptive: the young sculptor displays not only a genuine capacity for hard work but also great insight. Some Soviet critics, taking their cue from Dobroliubov, dismissed Shubin as a 'поклонник чистого искусства' (e.g. Pirogov 1959:262-63), but this, again, means to overlook the fact that despite his admiration for the Hellenic ideal of sculpture (VIII/9), Shubin sometimes deviates from the canon of 'pure art', as when he fashions that caricature of Insarov and justifies himself by invoking Gogolian aesthetics (VIII/99).

Such contradictions in Shubin, to which we might also add the way in which he pokes fun at the Slavophiles (VIII/60), yet at the same time acknowledges the 'странная связь' tying him to his native land, personified by the lethargic Uvar Ivanovich (VIII/70), are part and parcel of his artistic nature. Already Belinskii, in his 1835 article on Gogol's stories, had noted how true poets often contradicted themselves because they looked at the characters and situations they depicted from all possible angles (1953-59:I/278-79). Turgenev, whose life-long adherence to many of Belinskii's aesthetic principles Anatolii Batiuto has rightly emphasized (1990:87), also believed that artists had to be able to see both sides of the coin. As he put it in his polemic with Fet over the latter's systematic insistence on 'unconscious creativity' (see III.5), it was better to accept 'что правда и там и здесь, что никаким резким определением ничего не определишь'.³⁷⁴ Turgenev

³⁷⁴ Letter of 23 January/4 February 1862 (P IV/330).

endowed Shubin in *Накануне* precisely with his own striving for objectivity and truthfulness.

In this sense, as was argued in Chapter II, Shubin acts as the author's *alter ego* not just because he expresses views which can be traced to Turgenev's letters, but in the very way that his observations of Insarov anticipate Turgenev's attempt to 'size up' Bazarov in *Отцы и дети* (1862). Just as Shubin is at first ill-disposed towards the Bulgarian, yet eventually pays tribute to him as a hero who is tragically ahead of his times by comparing him to Brutus (VIII/141); so Turgenev was initially hostile towards Bazarov, yet in the course of writing his novel came to sympathize with his 'nihilist' hero to such an extent that only a few years later he was capable of declaring: 'за исключением воззрений Базарова на художества,—я разделяю почти все его убеждения' (XIV/100-2). The way in which Bazarov, originally conceived as an 'антипод Рудина' because of his lack of faith and enthusiasm (XII*/566), finally became a figure of such heroic stature that reactionaries like Katkov were appalled, shows how Turgenev as a true artist was capable of correcting his initial prejudices.

As we have also seen, Bazarov's rejection of the arts so as not to be distracted from the noble cause of working for progress in Russia is already implicit in Elena in *Накануне*, and it is significant that the artist Shubin feels these anti-aesthetic tendencies so keenly. In his Pushkin speech of 1880 Turgenev would reflect on how during the aftermath of the Crimean War 'явились вопросы, на которые нельзя было не дать ответа... Не до поэзии, не до художества стало тогда' (XV/73). Shubin's frequent self-deprecating remarks about his own uselessness aren't just an ironic gesture of paying lip-service to the radicals, but also a result of his (and Turgenev's) awareness that there were indeed more important matters to attend to in Russia than the cultivation of artistic beauty.

Still, Turgenev never abandoned his faith in the absolute value of art, as well as the spiritual nourishment which it gave. Thus, Bersenev, after Shubin has promised not to waste his talent on producing more caricatures, exclaims: 'да здравствует вечное, чистое искусство!' and the sculptor agrees with his friend: 'Да здравствует! С ним и хорошее лучше и дурное не беда!'. The very ending of this scene: 'Приятели крепко пожали друг другу руку' (VIII/101) illustrates Turgenev's notion that art could unite people. A few years later, during the heyday of utilitarianism in Russia, he would observe: 'Что там ни говори молодёжь, а Искусство умереть не может—и посильное служение ему

будет всегда тесно соединить людей'.³⁷⁵ Although this was addressed to a fellow-writer, Turgenev certainly believed that this unifying effect also made itself felt in those who enjoyed works of art. Here again Turgenev was at one with his mentor Belinskii, of whom Freeborn has stressed that he saw the development of literature in Russia as 'a means of unifying people in a social sense' (2003:132). Of course, Turgenev understood that some preparation was necessary in order to appreciate art properly, but his insistence, in the *Faust* essay of 1845, that 'непосредственная, несомненная, общедоступная красота—необходимая принадлежность всякого художественного создания' (I/215) shows how democratic his view of art was. Not for nothing would he praise, in his 1880 speech, the sincerity and clarity of Pushkin's verse before expressing the hope that one day Russian peasants, too, would be able to appreciate the great poet (XV/70, 76).

Turgenev shared this democratic ethos with all the great Russian artists who were his immediate contemporaries—with fellow-writers like Dostoevskii and Tolstoi, the *peredvizhniki* painters, and the composers of the 'Mighty Handful'. Even Chaikovskii, whom Musorgskii once ironically described as an aristocratic sybarite,³⁷⁶ wanted his works to reach as wide an audience as possible not merely for the sake of achieving fame, but above all because he believed in the human value of music. A few weeks after the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Chaikovskii wrote to his benefactress Nadezhda von Meck that composing music in such difficult times might seem selfish, 'но ведь всякий по-своему служит общему благу, а ведь искусство есть, по-моему, необходимая потребность для человечества'.³⁷⁷

As we saw in Chapter III, this notion of art as service was also deeply ingrained in Turgenev, even if he repeatedly defended the artist's right to create independently of external agendas: 'талант настоящий никогда не служит посторонним целям и в самом себе находит удовлетворение' (XII/310). In *Египетские ночи* (1835), his literary 'teacher' Pushkin had asserted this freedom even more boldly: 'Поэт сам избирает предметы для своих песен; толпа не имеет права управлять его вдохновением' (1949:VI/379). Nevertheless, in *Exegi monumentum* a year later Pushkin would proudly state:

И долго буду тем любезен я народу,
Что чувства добрые я лирой пробуждал,

³⁷⁵ Letter to A. Maikov, 18/30 March 1862 (P IV/360).

³⁷⁶ Letter to Stasov, 26 December 1872 (Musorgskii 1971-72:I/142).

³⁷⁷ Letter of 30 April 1878 (Chaikovskii 1934-36:I/315).

Turgenev won the sympathy even of his radical contemporaries precisely because he, too, had stirred such feelings. Thus, the satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin, in a very moving obituary, observed how Turgenev had achieved a lot for the Russian common folk by raising the moral level of the educated classes and by initiating a whole literature which concerned itself with the people and its needs. In this respect, Saltykov added, Turgenev was Pushkin's worthiest successor:

Так что ежели Пушкин имел полное основание сказать о себе, что он пробуждал «добрые чувства», то то же самое и с такою же справедливостью мог сказать о себе и Тургенев. Это были не какие-нибудь условные «добрые чувства», согласные с тем или другим преходящим веянием, но те простые, всем доступные общечеловеческие «добрые чувства», в основе которых лежит глубокая вера в торжество света, добра и нравственной красоты.³⁷⁸

Similarly, the jurist Anatolii Koni would recall thirty years later how Turgenev's works, especially *Записки охотника*, had helped young Russians growing up in the cities to understand the peasants and their concerns better (1989:101).

This social resonance of Turgenev's works is another reason why, as has already been stressed, comparisons between him and Schopenhauer are fallacious. Schopenhauer's writing on aesthetics is indeed very eloquent, but his notion that art serves as a palliative from the insatiable desires of the will once again betrays the individualistic stamp of his thought—that is, the way in which his whole world-view is tailored on himself. It has nothing in common with the generous Russian tradition to which Turgenev belonged.

Certainly, Schopenhauer inspired other artists, notably Richard Wagner, who in his *Ring* cycle tried to convey the German philosopher's message of renunciation of the will as the only way to redeem our fallen world. But Turgenev did *not* believe that the world needed to be redeemed. It is very telling that, musical considerations apart, he disliked Wagner's works precisely because they featured walking allegories rather than living people. The young Taneev, whom Turgenev helped to find his feet in Paris in 1877, reported a conversation they had had about Wagner, and how Turgenev had said that he could hardly empathize with such figures as Lohengrin or Brünnhilde because their emotions were not human:

[Вагнер] отыщет где-то наверху идею и старается её в человека втиснуть. Я люблю совсем обратное движение: не сверху вниз, а снизу вверх. Пускай будет стремление

³⁷⁸ *VT* (1988):433.

кверху, ввысь, только чтобы шло оно от земли, от земного. Как дерево растёт к небу, а корни в земле.³⁷⁹

Significantly, Taneev's teacher Chaikovskii also rejected Wagner's mythical heroes (though not his music) because 'их страдания, их чувства, их торжества или несчастья чужды нам совершенно'.³⁸⁰ For his own operas and songs Chaikovskii was always drawn to texts involving characters who showed genuine human feelings. These he sought to convey truthfully, and in this respect, Chaikovskii insisted, 'я реалист и коренной русский человек'.³⁸¹

That 'realism' in the sense of truthfulness was one of the distinguishing features of Russian art, which would soon contribute to its great appeal for foreigners, had been recognized early on by Mérimée, who, in connection with his reading of Pushkin in the 1850s, once said to Turgenev: 'русское искусство через правду дойдёт до красоты'.³⁸² Turgenev never forgot these words of his friend, and in his 1880 speech he would cite Mérimée's observations on Pushkin copiously (XV/70).

Like Pushkin, who stands at the fount of the Russian current of realism, Turgenev accepted life as it was, with its joys and sorrows: 'в жизни всё-таки нет ничего лучше жизни, как она ни бывает подчас тяжела'.³⁸³ Already in that letter of July 1840 on Stankevich's death, Turgenev had expressed what we might call his 'dialectic' world-view:

Из сердца Творца истекает и горе и радость—Freude und Leid; часто их звуки дрожат родным отголоском и сливаются: одно неполно без другого. Теперь черед горю...³⁸⁴

He always retained this attitude, and as was argued in Chapter II, it illuminates the sad, yet beautiful final pages of both *Накануне* and *Отцы и дети*. It is precisely because, to quote Henry James (1984:1010), 'he felt and understood the opposite sides of life' that Turgenev's works cannot be analyzed through the prism of a philosopher like Schopenhauer, who cared to see only the seamy sides.

Schiller, who had devoted several years to intense philosophical study, famously wrote to Goethe shortly after reading the first instalments of *Wilhelm Meister*: 'der Dichter

³⁷⁹ Quoted in Gozenpud 1994:48.

³⁸⁰ Letter to Nadezhda von Meck, 8-10 September 1884 (Chaikovskii 1934-36:III/311).

³⁸¹ Letter to V. Pogozhev, 6 January 1891. Quoted in Protopopov 1980:193.

³⁸² As recalled by Lukanina. *VT* (1983):II/204.

³⁸³ Letter to Mar'ia Tolstaia, 2 March 1855 (P II/265).

³⁸⁴ Letter to Granovskii, 4/16 July 1840 (P I/193). The German words are probably a reminiscence of Klärchen's song 'Freudvoll und leidvoll' in Goethe's *Egmont*—a song which Turgenev would translate into Russian later that year (I/338).

ist der einzig wahre Mensch, und der beste Philosoph ist nur eine Karikatur gegen ihn!³⁸⁵ Likewise, treating Turgenev's works as if they were case-studies in Schopenhauerian ideas is to make a travesty of them.

Apart from those remarks made by Herzen in moments of spite (see III.4), the 'evidence' most frequently cited by scholars who have contrived to associate Turgenev with Schopenhauer is what they deem to be the Russian writer's 'pessimism'. At first glance there might seem to be some truth in this, since, after all, Pauline Viardot called Turgenev 'le plus triste des hommes',³⁸⁶ and Henry James, too, recalled how 'the element of melancholy in his nature was deep and constant' (1984:1008). It was, however, a melancholy with respect to his own life—especially when he lamented that because of his fateful attachment to Mme Viardot he would never have a 'nest' of his own—but not with respect to his hopes for others and for his country. That is why he so liked Pushkin's elegy 'Брожу ли я...' (see II.7), and that is why he so generously helped younger Russian artists who came to Paris.

Like all sensitive people, Turgenev had bitter thoughts sometimes, but pessimism is not the right word to use. As Batiuto has repeatedly stressed (1990:7-8, 211-13), Turgenev was saddened by the precariousness of individuals' lives, but this was so because he *valued* the gift of life. In contrast, pessimists like Schopenhauer grumble at life rather than grieve over it because they see only the worst (*pessimus*). When Goethe met Schopenhauer in 1814, he wrote these telling verses in the young man's album: 'Willst du dich deines Wertes freuen, / So mußst der Welt du Wert verleihen' (1985-98:IX/127)!

Turgenev never intended that his personal melancholy should colour his works. As he put it in a letter to Annenkov from Rome in 1857:

Увы! я могу только сочувствовать красоте жизни—жить самому мне уже нельзя. Тёмный покров упал на меня и обвил меня; не стряхнуть мне его с плеч долой. Стараюсь, однако, не пускать эту копоть в то, что я делаю; а то кому оно будет нужно? Да и самому мне оно будет противно.³⁸⁷

Again, this shows how, like all the great Russian artists of his age, Turgenev was concerned about the *usefulness* of his works for people in his country. Certainly, it cannot be denied that some pages in Turgenev's works are 'diffused with sadness for the human condition', as Patrick Waddington has noted in his admirable comparison of Turgenev with

³⁸⁵ Letter to Goethe, 7 January 1795 (Schiller 1992-2002:XI/778).

³⁸⁶ See Turgenev's letter to Countess Lambert, 2/14 March 1862 (P IV/349).

³⁸⁷ Letter of 31 October/12 November 1857 (P III/161).

George Eliot, ‘yet this sadness rarely sank into the pessimism of a Schopenhauer, at least not in their most public writings’, for both novelists ‘were always conscious of the best, as well as of the worst, in universal life and destiny’ (1980:170-71).

One could, though, go further than Waddington and say that Turgenev’s sadness *never* had anything in common with ‘pessimism’. Here it is helpful to refer to an article by Shostakovich in 1943, in which he argued that it was wrong to read pessimism into Chaikovskii’s music, particularly the *Pathétique* Symphony:

This misconception stems from the fact that certain contemporary researchers confuse pessimism with a vivid sense of the tragic. In all the centuries of world art, man’s tragic conception of the world has never been better expressed than in the Greek tragedies. Yet no one would ever think of reproaching them for pessimism. Tchaikovsky has the same sense of the tragic, conflicting development of human life.³⁸⁸

As was suggested in sections II.6 and II.7, a tragedy such as Sophocles’s *Antigone*, which Turgenev admired, can be usefully compared to *Накануне* in that the ‘fatalism’ of both works is not of a pessimistic kind. Rather, it involves facing up courageously to the laws of Fate, including death. Moreover, despite the ‘vivid sense of the tragic’ reflected in these works, there is hope in them. Antigone’s suicide causes Creon to realize how wrong he was in his draconian application of the law. After Insarov’s death Elena remains loyal to his cause and departs for Bulgaria to work as a nurse.

In Turgenev this hope shines even more radiantly because, though not a Christian in the orthodox sense,³⁸⁹ he did believe in the apostolic message of love. Cited explicitly at the end of the 1860 essay *Гамлет и Дон-Кихот* (VIII/191), this message underlies the beautiful poem-in-prose *Воробей* (1878): ‘Любовь сильнее смерти и страха смерти. Только ею, только любовью держится и движется жизнь’ (XIII/163).

True works of art are also stronger than death because, drawing on the richness of individual and national life, they are capable of inspiring people down the ages. Except for a few moments of doubt—reflected in *Довольно* (1864), yet only fleetingly as was emphasized in section VI.4—Turgenev always believed in the immortality of art. He expressed this most eloquently in the opening to his Pushkin speech of 1880:

Искусство народа—его живая, личная душа, его мысль, его язык в высшем значении слова; достигнув своего полного выражения, оно становится достоянием всего

³⁸⁸ Quoted in Bartlett 1998:315.

³⁸⁹ As he remarked in a letter of 6/18 September 1871 to Fet: ‘я не верю ни в какую *Alleinseligmacherei*’ (P IX/133).

человечества [...] [оно—] душа неумирающая, ибо может пережить физическое существование своего тела, своего народа. Что нам осталось от Греции? Её душа осталась нам! (XV/67)

Although Turgenev disagreed with many of Carlyle's views, this idea that art is the living soul of a nation does recall the Scotsman's argument as to how in contrast to the 'great dumb monster' of Russia, Italy could speak because 'Dante's voice is still audible' (1993:97). This resemblance is not so surprising, since they had both assimilated the traditions of German Romanticism going back to Herder. It was, however, to refute Carlyle's opinion that Russia was 'dumb' and 'had no voice of genius'—an opinion held by many Western Europeans well into the second half of the nineteenth century—that Turgenev was so eager for original Russian artists to emerge in all fields, especially in music and painting, which, in contrast to literature, still seemed to him to be under-represented.

Both during his lifetime and afterwards Turgenev was often accused of being so in thrall to Western European civilization that he had ceased to care about Russia. For instance, Mariia Savina, recalling her meeting with Turgenev after the notable production of *Месяц в деревне* in St Petersburg in January 1879, in which she had played Verochka, confessed that when Turgenev complimented her by comparing her to a famous French actress: 'я выпалила монолог против его западничества и в защиту русского искусства, которым он «не интересуется, как забытой им Россией»'³⁹⁰ The unfairness of these reproaches should hopefully be clear from the keen interest which Turgenev took in such younger colleagues as Tolstoi and, later, Garshin; the painters Repin and Vereshchagin; the sculptor Antokol'skii; and the composers Chaikovskii and Musorgskii.

Refuting those contemporaries who had accused Turgenev of a lack of patriotism for living abroad, Annenkov stressed that all of his late friend's works conveyed 'постоянная пламенная дума о своём отечестве' (1960:339). This is another trait which Turgenev shares with his *alter ego* in *Накануне*, for Shubin, despite finding himself in the 'прекрасное далеко' of Italy at the end of the novel, cannot forget about Russia either.

³⁹⁰ VT (1988):247.

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Journal titles: *LN* (*Literaturnoe nasledstvo*), *TS* (*Turgenevskii sbornik: Materialy k Polnomu sobraniu sochinenii i pisem I. S. Turgeneva*, ed. by M. P. Alekseev and others, 5 vols (M / L: Nauka, 1964-69)

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- b) Contemporary non-fictional works (including memoirs, letters, essays, and critical articles)

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