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2011

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From the Elegy to the End of the Novel:
Literary Experiences of Emotion

by

Alyson Louise Tapp

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Slavic Languages and Literatures

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Irina Paperno, Chair

Professor Lyubov Golburt

Professor Dorothy Hale

Spring 2011

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Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy in Slavic Languages and Literatures

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Irina Paperno, Chair

Focusing primarily on Russian literature of the nineteenth century, this dissertation explores the dynamic structures of emotional experience that are embodied in and communicated by literary works. Moving from early nineteenth-century elegies, to Pushkin's novel-in-verse, and to exemplary mature novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, the dissertation concludes with the so-called "crisis of the novel" of the 1920s, seen from the perspectives of both Russia and England. Appealing selectively to work on emotions by literary critics, sociologists and philosophers, this dissertation is a contribution to the study of genre and narrative, as well as the individual works it treats.

The chapters are united by their concern for the particular kinds of emotional experience (hope, embarrassment, desire, empathy) that are articulated by literary means. At the conceptual core of this study is the novel: I show how the representation of emotion in the elegy in the 1800s-1820s produces forms of temporality and sociality that ultimately support the novelistic configuration of author – character – reader through what I call the circulation of feeling. Moving to the high point of the Russian novel in the 1870s, I explore the narrative shapes and textures created by emotions—embarrassment in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and by desire in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. The final chapter discusses the "crisis of the novel" in the 1920s, and shows how, in the face of weakened characters and erased plots, the essential configuration of author – character – reader is reinvented by two readers of Tolstoy, the scholar Boris Eikhenbaum and the English novelist Virginia Woolf. Woolf's modernist novel, *To the Lighthouse*, and Eikhenbaum's scholarly monograph, *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties*, discover new ways to keep author, character and reader linked in circuits of emotional connection.

Since the works I study form an arc that stretches from the first years of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth, I aim to show how emotions in a literary text function as powerful impulses and structural principles which become wedded to the movement of literary history.

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Acknowledgments

Last of all, it is a pleasure to record on the first pages of this dissertation the experience of one more emotion: a debt of gratitude.

I am profoundly grateful to Irina Paperno for her far-reaching and unfailing support and inspiration throughout my time at Berkeley and in the course of writing this dissertation. Her intellectual, professional and practical guidance, and, in equal measure, her generous, warm concern have been of enormous value.

I extend my sincere thanks to my other dissertation advisers, whose warm encouragement also meant a great deal at each stage of the project: Luba Golburt taught me much with her sensitive and rigorous approach to reading my drafts; and Dorothy Hale engaged with my work more thoroughly and energetically than I could possibly have imagined asking of any outside committee member.

The Berkeley Slavic Department has been a wonderful home for the past seven years, and I am grateful to all the faculty, each of whom has made distinct contributions—which I will hold dear—to my experience as a graduate student. I would like to thank Olga Matich, in particular, who has been a constant supportive presence.

The experience of graduate school could have quite different, much harder and much less fun were it not for the company of students in the Slavic Department. It makes me very happy to think of remaining friends and colleagues with them in the years ahead. Most of the chapters of this dissertation have benefitted in some way from discussion at the graduate students' *kruzhok*, and in the past seven years, I have learned a lot from all my fellow students: for that, thanks and admiration are due to the remarkable collective.

For stimulating conversations, good reading tips, support with writing, and particular kindnesses at important moments, special thanks are owed, variously and on multiple counts, to Daniel Brooks, Anne Dwyer, Mieka Erley, Hannah Freed-Thall, David Houston, Zachary Johnson, Anna Lordan, Jessica Merrill, Anne Myers, Amy Petersen, Jillian Porter, Andrew Reynolds, Ben Schofield, and Katy Sosnak.

I thank Matthew Owens, who has been close by me throughout this project, for all his support, and for sharing such delight in laughter and words. In the time it has taken me to write this dissertation, I have learned to play Bach on the cello, and for that gift, too, I thank Matthew.

Finally, I express deep-felt gratitude to my parents: their love has enabled everything I have done.

A Note on Transliteration

Transliterations follow the Library of Congress system, except when an anglicized name has been well-established (e.g. Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Zhukovsky, Mandelstam). The scholarly apparatus, however, follows the LOC system.

Introduction

Literary works express emotions and tell stories about emotions. At the same time, they come to participate in the emotional lives of their readers. The act of reading is a continuous braiding together of our experience of the emotions of others (of characters) and the emotions that are aroused in our own selves. Several strands combine to form the reader's emotional experience of a text: an immediate apprehension—sometimes even a doubling in one's own self—of a character's emotion; a re-evaluation of a character or a scene in the context of the unfolding whole of the work; and an emotion that stems from the specifically *literary* nature of the medium in which this encounter takes place. This last component of a reader's emotional experience is a part of an aesthetic or metaliterary response—elicited by the form and texture of the work or by the manipulation of literary and generic conventions.

This dissertation explores the workings of specific emotions—hope, embarrassment, desire and empathy—in specific works of Russian literature, ranging from lyrical poetry to a scholarly monograph. At the center of this study are two novels that stand out at the head of the Russian nineteenth-century tradition for their remarkable emotional intensity—Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* (1868-69) and Lev Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1873-77). My discussion of literary experiences of emotion in novels by Tolstoy and Dostoevsky is framed, on one side, by the discussion of the Russian elegy of the 1800s to 1820s, informed by the English elegy, and on the other side, by critical reflections on that novelistic tradition from the vantage point of the 1920s, made by Russian literary critics and an English novelist. Beginning with the elegy as one literary template of individual emotional experience, and moving towards the intersubjective and social world of the novel, I explore the dynamic structures of emotional experience that are created in and by literary works. Since the works I study form an arc that stretches from the first years of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth, I aim to show how emotions in a literary text function as powerful impulses and structural principles which become wedded to the movement of literary history.

A theme that recurs throughout the dissertation is movement itself, recognized by the ascendant psychological realism as a property of emotional experience, which unfolds in time and thus is forever in flux. The movements of emotion are various: there is the movement through time and between emotional states, the movement of bodies that display their sensibility and agitation, and the circulation of emotion between characters, authors and readers. Finally—the medium that captures all of these—there is the movement of language and narrative themselves. Thus, movement characterizes three recurring concerns of my study—temporality, sociality, and narrative—in their relation to emotion.

* * *

In recent years, literary scholarship has paid growing attention to the emotions as objects of study that can shed light on texts' aesthetic, ideological and ethical dimensions as well

as on the emotions themselves.¹ Emotions in literary (and other cultural) texts have been historicized, philosophized, theorized, and, equally, liberated from some of these disciplinary attempts to “control” them. By way of an introduction, and to situate my own study, I will comment on just two, related, questions that have been taken up in this burgeoning field of scholarly interest: firstly, the relationship between cognitive-evaluative theories of emotion and aesthetic or phenomenological approaches and secondly, the relationship between concepts of “emotion” and “affect.”

The philosopher Martha Nussbaum, in her extensive body of work, has traded on the idea that there is an essential “connectedness of narrative to forms of human emotion and human choice.”² Nussbaum’s forceful claims that emotions possess narrative structure serve her project of moral philosophy, and thus the *kind* of narrative she attributes to emotions has a particular content. She stresses the cognitive-evaluative content of emotions, according to which emotions are wedded to judgment and reason and therefore speak of the individual’s choices, beliefs and ethical orientation in the world.³ Alighting on the novel (the Victorian novel in particular), as the medium that allows us to cultivate and exercise this “intelligence of the emotions,” Nussbaum argues for the value of novel-reading as an activity that nourishes the ethical imagination.⁴ Nussbaum’s theory of the emotions undergirds a potent argument for the value of the humanities, yet it may seem inadequate to the literary works themselves. One of the most articulate objections to Nussbaum’s thinking about the emotions comes from Charles Altieri, who finds that those who dwell on the cognitive and moral dimensions of emotions are “blinding themselves to the phenomenological considerations that might help explain why we care about affects in the first place.”⁵ By insisting on the relationship of emotions to choices and actions, cognitive theories overlook other “modes of intentionality connected to values like intensity and connectedness.”⁶

I admit both sets of concerns into my study, and see them not as contradictory, but rather as complementary. The discussions of texts in the individual chapters of this dissertation explore the relationship between emotion and narrative—both the idea that emotions possess a narrative structure, and the ways in which particular emotions shape the narrative of different texts. Equally, I am interested in how, with the resources of verbal and narrative art, texts convey emotion, in what kind of—aesthetic and sensuous—emotional experience they create in the zone of intimate contact with their reader.

¹ Important contributions to this field include: Charles Altieri, *The Particulars of Rapture: An Aesthetics of the Affects* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2003); Philip Fisher, *The Vehement Passions* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002); Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The*

² Martha C. Nussbaum, “Narrative Emotions: Beckett’s Genealogy of Love” in *Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 291.

³ This view is developed in Nussbaum’s book-length study, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of the Emotions* (2001).

⁴ See, especially, Martha C. Nussbaum, “Reading for Life” in *Love’s Knowledge*, 230-44, and *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995). In a compelling chapter on teaching *Crime and Punishment*, Robin Feuer Miller appeals to Nussbaum in making a case for the value of reading and studying literature. See Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky’s Unfinished Journey* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), 46-52.

⁵ Altieri, *The Particulars of Rapture*, 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

My discussion of embarrassment in *The Idiot* best exemplifies the coexistence of these two ways of understanding the emotions—the cognitive-evaluative approach vs. the phenomenological and aesthetic approach. On the one hand, this novel that is so beset with embarrassment makes demands on readers' beliefs and judgment, challenging their involvement in the text's circuits of empathy. On the other hand, with its broken rhythms of language and bodily motion and its struggles with temporality, Dostoevsky's novel of bad manners conveys, by literary means, the intensity and insistence of embarrassment. In fact, as I suggest, the sheer intensity of an experience of embarrassment that extends its reach to the confounded reader can even prevent that reader's participation in the ethically edifying dramas of guilt and responsibility that the narrative stages.

No single theory of the emotions is adequate to the workings of literary texts. This is especially true of the novel—for the novel, in its representation of emotional experience, is not shaped by the forces of exclusion and definition that necessarily constitute a theoretical discourse. In its inquiry into human experience, the novel is shaped by its inclusiveness and openness to multiplicity; it examines, counterposes and questions the different varieties of emotional experience that characterize individual and social life.

When it comes to writing about the emotions, in the end, I see the novel and critical discourse as, to some extent, both participating in the same project. The novelist's inquiry into human experience is embodied in individual characters located within a concrete setting, while the critic distills his observation and analysis into prose that possesses a higher degree of abstraction.⁷ Reflecting on his own work as a theorist of affect and his unrealized literary aspirations, Silvan Tomkins observes: "The key to both Science (Psychology especially) and Art is the union of specificity and generality—and this is extremely difficult [...]. For years I have tried to express myself in playwriting and what I now realize is that any incapacity arises from over-abstractness [...] in a sense I am unwilling to immerse myself in the concrete details and lives of others sufficiently to give the play body."⁸ Both the literary (aesthetic) and theoretical representations and analyses of human affect and behavior may spring from the same impulse, realized in different discursive mediums. In my dissertation, I draw on insights of critical and theoretical statements about the emotions, but my intention is to place these statements next to the discoveries and representations of literary works as a parallel discourse, rather than one with primary explanatory power.

Critical discourse about the emotions in literary and cultural studies has developed the distinction (that originated in psychoanalysis) between emotion and affect. A useful summary of this distinction is given by Sianne Ngai, in her work, *Ugly Feelings*:

⁷ Reflecting on his own work as a theorist of affect and his unrealized literary aspirations, Silvan Tomkins observes: "The key to both Science (Psychology especially) and Art is the union of specificity and generality—and this is extremely difficult [...]. For years I have tried to express myself in playwriting and what I now realize is that any incapacity arises from over-abstractness [...] in a sense I am unwilling to immerse myself in the concrete details and lives of others sufficiently to give the play body." Silvan Tomkins, letter to Irving E. Alexander (1969), *Shame and its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, eds. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 251.

⁸ Silvan Tomkins, letter to Irving E. Alexander (1969), *Shame and its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, eds. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 251.

Ngai notes that the “emotion/affect split originated [...] for the practical purpose of distinguishing third-person from first-person representations of feeling, with “affect” designating feeling described from an observer’s (analyst’s) perspective, and “emotion” designating feeling that “belongs” to the speaker or analysand’s ‘I’.”⁹ Theorists of affect have elaborated the distinction still further, arguing that emotion is contained by identity, whereas affect is more diffuse, existing and passing *between* bodies or subjects.¹⁰

Again, when we speak of works of literature both kinds of experience designated by these terms seem to be relevant. Speaking once more of the novel, specifically, we might say, in fact, that novels stage the interactions and transformations between “emotion” and “affect.” The fullness of literary experience of emotion in a novel is an experience of the circulation of feeling between author, character and reader. We read about “emotions” that are contained within discrete subjectivities: novels tell stories about characters and their emotions, and these stories elicit emotions in their readers. In between, there is “affect”—propagated by the tissue of the novel as a whole, which, with its language, structure and imagery, comprises a medium of feeling of its own. In my readings of two Russian novels—*The Idiot* and *Anna Karenina*—I speak of the texts in ways that acknowledge the transmission and transformation of emotion through these different layers of the text. For example, *The Idiot* portrays the blushes and bodily awkwardnesses of specific experiences of the emotion of embarrassment in its characters, but an all-pervasive embarrassment also characterizes the mood, or affect, of the novel. This sense of embarrassment is vague and dispersed, but also cuts to the generic core of the novel and is separately available to characters and readers (once again as “emotion,” rather than “affect”): the entry of the innocent and enigmatic Myshkin into the drawing rooms of Petersburg is a source of awkward confusion to the characters who populate those rooms, while for the reader, the entry of a Christ-like figure into the world of would-be secular society novel proves an embarrassing violation of generic conventions. In *Anna Karenina*, the plot is driven by the desires and erotic emotions of its main characters. Yet the novel’s verbal texture and the movement of its narrative transmit a powerful emotional charge that exceeds the confines of character subjectivity (as well as authorial subjectivity). In the textual spaces between author, character and reader, *Anna Karenina* cultivates an affective intensity that exceeds the limits to representation imposed by Tolstoy’s own unresolved grappling with questions of sexuality and morality. In the end, the narrative designs of *Anna Karenina* and *The Idiot* dramatize and exploit the mobility of feeling between the categories of subject-bound “emotion” and dispersed “affect,” placing feeling into motion in the circuits of connectedness between author, character and reader.

High-points of mature realism, *Anna Karenina* and *The Idiot* also point the way towards modernism’s destabilized and dissolved notions of subjectivity and

⁹ Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, 25.

¹⁰ Ibid., 23, 40. Surveying these distinctions, Ngai cites from Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 23-45. Its recent publication testifying to the institutionalization of the field of affect studies, *The Affect Theory Reader* begins by asserting—in a statement that also reists institutionalization—that “Affect arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*.” Gregory J. Seigworth & Melissa Gregg, “An Inventory of Shimmers,” *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg & Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.

fragmentation of narrative.¹¹ My final chapter looks back at the nineteenth-century Russian novel from the vantage point of the 1920s, addressing the movement of literary history. I trace ways in which the discourse of the so-called “crisis of the novel” in the 1920s, as perceived by both novelists and literary critics and scholars, appeals to notions of narrative movement and hesitation, and does so with the aid of the image of the railroad—so prominent in Tolstoy’s and Dostoevsky’s novels—and its urban counterpart, the streetcar. The movement of narrative stalls and, to borrow the words of Virginia Woolf, the novel’s “remarkable machine for the creation of human character” falters.¹² In the face of attenuated plot and weakened character, the means of representing emotion and maintaining circuits of connection between author, character and reader are much diminished. This final chapter examines the discoveries made by a scholar (Boris Eikhenbaum) and a novelist (Virginia Woolf) of new solutions to these literary problems.

While the attention I pay to the “reader” throughout the dissertation is largely a generalized, a-historical reader, with the presence of Eikhenbaum in the final chapter, I introduce a particular, historical reader (of Tolstoy) into my study. Moreover, Eikhenbaum’s emotional experience—of diminished agency, restored through a form of empathetic contact with Tolstoy (the subject of his scholarly monograph)—is historically located in the context of the Russian 1920s.

In its comparison of responses to the perceived crisis of novelistic form, the concluding chapter of my dissertation obliquely revisits the template of emotional experience I examined in my first chapter on the elegy. A strong elegiac sentiment—a lament for the lost past—underlies many a statement that belongs to the discourse of the crisis of the novel. In the 1920s Eikhenbaum looks to the past, to Tolstoy, in his efforts to assuage an acutely felt “longing for acts, longing for biography,” to restore a sense of agency and feel once more at home in time.¹³

In the wake of the shattering experience of the First World War, the Hungarian critic Georg Lukács wrote, in German, his seminal work, *The Theory of the Novel*, which described the condition of European modernity imprinted upon novelistic form as “transcendental homelessness—the homelessness of an action in the human order of social relations.”¹⁴ Eikhenbaum’s personal lament of the 1920s resonates with the elegiac tenor of Lukács’ important work from the previous decade. Opening in a lyrical key, Lukács’ *Theory of the Novel* intones an elegy for the lost, happy, age of the epic:

Happy are those ages when the starry sky is the map of all possible paths—ages whose paths are illuminated by the light of the stars. Everything in such ages is new and yet familiar, full of adventure and yet their own. The world is wide and

¹¹ Indeed, prominent among the harbingers of modernist narrative in both *Anna Karenina* and *The Idiot* are Tolstoy’s use of a stream of consciousness technique to relay Anna’s impressions on her final carriage journey and Dostoevsky’s grappling with sequentiality, simultaneity and the temporal limits of narrative.

¹² Virginia Woolf, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 3:383.

¹³ B. M. Eikhenbaum, letter of 25 July 1925, cited in M. O. Chudakova “Sotsial’naia praktika i nauchnaia refleksii v tvorcheskoi biografii B. Eikhenbauma,” *Revue des Etudes Slaves* Vol. 35 (1985), 31.

¹⁴ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A historico-philosophical essay on the forms of great epic literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Ma.: The MIT Press, 1971), 61.

yet it is like a home, for the fire that burns in the soul is of the same essential nature as the stars.¹⁵

The seminal *Theory of the Novel* is a recurring point of reference for my dissertation. It is a text strongly influenced by German romantic and pre-romantic thought—which also finds its way into the Russian elegy. Moreover, we should remember that *The Theory of the Novel* is a text intimately, if implicitly, linked to the Russian novel, for the young Lukács intended the work as the preface to an unwritten study of Dostoevsky.¹⁶

As mediators between the self and the external world, emotions can both widen and heal the rift between inner and outer life that Lukács perceived as the affliction of the modern, novelistic, world. In different ways, each of the specific emotions I treat in the chapters of my study—hope, embarrassment, desire and empathy—point towards the integration of the self into a form of social community and/or temporal continuity.

The elegy, however, does not just look to the past; the discussion of elegy in my first chapter emphasizes the genre's projection of a future, held open by the possibility for hope and by the image of another, who will shore up the elegist's voice and vision for perpetuity. Similarly, the elegiacally hued discourse of the crisis of the novel is not exclusively oriented to the past. Crisis is not solely catastrophe, but also opportunity. In the body of essayistic writing that accompanies her novels, Virginia Woolf formulates the potential of the new novel for an age when "emotions which used to enter the mind whole are [...] broken up on the threshold."¹⁷ "Must the duty of the critic always be to the past," she asks, "must his gaze always be fixed backward? Could he not sometimes turn round, and, shading his eyes in the manner of Robinson Crusoe on the desert island, look into the future and trace on its mist the faint lines of the land which some day perhaps we may reach?"¹⁸ Woolf's most famous statement of the future direction of the novel—her exhortation to the writer is to "examine an ordinary mind on an ordinary day"—is accompanied in the essay "Modern Fiction" by a powerful appeal to the accomplishments of Russian literature, to the "comprehensive and compassionate" Russian mind. My final chapter, therefore, pairs Eikhenbaum, the reader of Tolstoy, with Woolf, the reader of Tolstoy—and with them pairs elegiac lament for the loss of the novel with the hope for its future restoration.

Thus, my dissertation moves from the Russian elegy of the 1800s-1820s, informed as it was by the English elegy, to the high point of the great Russian novel in the 1870s, and, finally, to the crisis of the novel, perceived in both Russia and the West in the 1920s, when "readers"—both literary scholars and an English novelist—appeal to the previous century's great novelists, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, in their assessments of the past and new literary projects of the present.

¹⁵ Ibid., 29.

¹⁶ For the context of this unwritten work and its relationship to the extant *Theory of the Novel*, see Andreas Hoeschen, *Das «Dostojewsky»-Projekt: Lukács' neukantianisches Frühwerk in seinem ideengeschichtlichen Kontext* (Tübingen: Max Miemayer Verlag, 1999), 223-79.

¹⁷ Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art" in *Granite and Rainbow* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1958), 16.

¹⁸ Ibid., 11.

Chapter One

From Elegy to Narrative: Loss, Hope and Futurity in Works by Zhukovsky, Viazemsky and Pushkin

*Everything that happens may be meaningless, fragmentary and sad, but it
is always irradiated by hope or memory.*

Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*

Introduction

Works of literature are statements of human potentiality. They imaginatively draw out the potential that is latent in human experience, and, in their orientation towards a reader, literary works project a future context of reception. The elegy, as it appeared in Russian literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century, increasingly incorporates such notions of potentiality and futurity, and imparts new dynamism to the emotional experience it represents.

Elegy is a template of emotional experience. The Russian elegy, vivified by the stylistic discoveries of Nikolai Karamzin's sentimentalist prose and the influence of western European models, significantly broadened and deepened the representation of interiority in its relation to time. As Classicism ceded to Romanticism, the elegy became less a "vers d'occasion," reflecting on a single instance of life's lost harmonious order, and opened into existential scrutiny of the lyrical subject's emotional experience.¹ Emotional states were no longer represented as whole and singular; they were increasingly understood as mixed, irreducible to a single essence, and, consequently, dynamic: a feeling in motion. Now, emotions flow into and out of one another; they unfold a narrative of their own, mapped in time.

The elegy is, of course, a lyric, not a narrative, form. It is, however, founded upon an underlying narrative temporality. The elegy studies the individual's habitation of time and the emotions that make his relationship to both the past and the future. Loss and recollection are the experiences that underwrite the elegy, lending it a strong temporal orientation towards the past and its definitive emotional tenor of grief and sorrow. On the other hand, projecting the future horizon, is the elegy's "search for consolation."²

My understanding of the dynamic work of the elegy as it moves between these two poles of loss and consolation is indebted to Peter Sacks' seminal study of the English

¹ For a survey of the elegy in eighteenth century, see L. G. Frizman, *Zhizn liricheskogo zhanra: russkaia elegiia ot Sumarokova do Nekrasova* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973), 3-38. The eighteenth-century love elegies of Sumarokov exemplify the verses written "na sluchai" (Frizman, 24-25).

² Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985), 1.

elegy, which identifies and interprets the conventions of the genre anthropologically, relating them to the “dense matrix of rites and ceremonies” that accompany the social and psychological manifestations of grief, and overlaying them with the explanatory power of Freudian models.³ The work of Sacks (and others) has suggested that one attribute of the genre is the strong potential of its metapoetic workings—in the elegy as activity—to yield consolation. By “submit[ting himself] to the mediating fabric of language,” the elegist masters the representational form and asserts his own voice, assuring his poetic survival, to counter the threat of mortality.⁴ To state more boldly what is only implicit in Sacks’ model, the metapoetic plane thus looks fixedly toward the future: when the elegy’s own activity of utterance or inscription is marked with self-consciousness, the scene of the poem’s own future transmission and reception becomes incorporated into its meaning-making.

With an emphasis on the future, the emotion that now comes to the fore, and the one that my discussion privileges, is hope. The future is where the elegy’s imagined reader is situated, the one who hears and validates the speaker’s voice, shoring up the elegist’s own poetic survival. Thus, to look to the future in the elegy is to situate the lyric in an intersubjective realm, in its orientation toward another, situated beyond the time of composition, beyond the closed confines of individual subjectivity.⁵

Eventually, this intersubjective realm will become that of the novel. Beginning with its emphasis on hope and futurity, this chapter charts a specific terrain in the elegy that moves us towards the novel. One of the chapter’s themes is movement itself, recognized by the ascendant psychological realism as a property of emotional experience that unfolds in time and thus is forever in flux. I begin by looking at the dynamic understanding of emotion that developed in the thought of Vasily Zhukovsky (1783-1852), taking hope as an exemplary emotion that happens to be prominent in Zhukovsky’s elegiac vision and that allows us to discern an evolving conception of selfhood and consciousness in relation to temporality. Movement also characterizes the circulation of feeling between persons, and I look at ways in which the elegy promotes the circulation of feeling between the lone lyrical subject and imagined others. One way it does this is through the poet’s sounding voice, and through sound set into motion, pointing to the gesturing of language outside of itself. The literary work possesses intentionality in its orientation to the reader, a special type of contact which is emotional in nature, and which is perhaps served better by the metaphor of “movement” than the

³ Sacks, *The English Elegy*, Chapter One “Interpreting the Genre: the elegy and the work of mourning,” 1-37. I should note that while Sacks’ analysis still readily illuminates them, the Russian elegies I discuss here belong to a more broadly conceived notion of the genre: they are not exclusively occasioned by the death of another, but extend their meditations to the experience of loss of love and of youth.

⁴ Sacks, *The English Elegy*, 18, 21. In this connection Sacks appeals to Freud’s account of the *fort-da* game played by the infant, who appears to “master” the absence of his mother by playing with a wooden reel, pushing it away, then retrieving it, accompanied by the words “*fort/da*” (“gone/here”). This becomes the model for a primitive form of mourning, whereby “the child not only comes to terms with the otherness and absence of his first love-object, he also learns to *represent absence* (11).

⁵ Though rich in the insight it yields, one consequence of interpreting the elegy through the psychoanalytical lens is the emphasis that necessarily falls on the isolated individual, on the “repair [of] the mourner’s damaged narcissism” (Sacks, *The English Elegy*, 10). My discussion reads the elegy not as a “therapeutic” restoration of self, but rather as an aspiration toward communion with another.

metaphor of “form.” I emphasize motion and sensory experience for the intentionality they impart to emotion, now conceived as an embodied form of thought and feeling that moves through time and outwards through the world, making relationships to objects and others. In the end, the elegy does more than speak of particular emotions (grief, hope) but, rather, captures the movement that defines all our emotional states.

The movement of narrative is a deep structural element of elegy; the narrativity of the biographical form that underlies elegy reaches both backward and forward through memory and hope. This chapter itself moves from the elegy towards a more explicit treatment of narrative. It culminates in a discussion of the kernel of narrativity lodged in the elegiac form, which finds full expression, I argue, in Pushkin’s novel-in-verse *Evgenii Onegin*. Thus, beginning with poetry, the chapter introduces a constellation of concerns—rather than an explicit suggestion of teleological progress—and opens out onto the dissertation’s subsequent attention to the novel.

Two Entreaties to Hope: Towards Psychological Realism

Могу ль сказать прости надежде? (Karamzin, 1796)
Can I say to Hope, please forgive?

Могу ль сказать живи надежде? (Zhukovsky, 1818)
Can I say, to Hope, please live?

To consider Zhukovsky’s meditations on hope is also to consider the development of psychological analysis in the nineteenth-century Russian literary tradition from lyrical poetry to the novel. Lidiia Ginzburg places Zhukovsky’s early projects of self-observation near the beginning of her account of the development of psychological prose: “The journals of the young Zhukovsky are a monument to the early attempts of Russian thought to analyze the inner human being. The moral program of that self-analysis was oriented toward a kind of self-sufficient ideal of the sensitive and virtuous man.”⁶

Ginzburg’s observations inform A.S. Ianushkevich’s more extended exploration of Zhukovsky’s early journals. He firmly establishes Zhukovsky’s place in the trajectory of Russian literature’s accomplishments in psychological analysis by borrowing from Boris Eikhenbaum’s description of Tolstoy’s early journals. He boldly concludes: “A direct path leads from Zhukovsky’s ‘Diaries’ and reading list of 1804-06 to Lermontov’s ‘Pechorin’s Journal’ and to the young Leo Tolstoy’s quest [for self].”⁷

Before turning to the elegy proper, let us look at instances in Zhukovsky’s personal writings where the theme of hope looms large and where Zhukovsky’s analytical reflection on feeling and temporality advances a dynamic understanding of emotion.

⁶ Lydia Ginzburg, *On Psychological Prose*, trans. Judson Rosengrant (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 30-31.

⁷ A.S. Ianushkevich, *V mire Zhukovskogo* (Moscow: Nauka, 2006), 47-49. Ianushkevich also offers a more critical account of Zhukovsky’s relation to the tenets and legacy of Freemasonry (23-25).

Hope marked Zhukovsky's personal life in the early decades of the nineteenth century: he made earnest efforts to sustain hope in the face of his impossible love for Masha Protasova, the young girl, some nine years his junior, to whom he was a tutor. Their love was deemed to be impossible, because the girl's mother, Ekaterina Protasova, was Zhukovsky's half-sister (Zhukovsky had been born illegitimately to the father they shared, A. I. Bunin): Masha was therefore Zhukovsky's half-niece. Due to the family relationship, marriage between them was forbidden on religious grounds. Zhukovsky's friend, Aleksandr Turgenev, made efforts to find a churchman whose sanctioning of the marriage might be approved by Ekaterina Protasova, but she remained forever unyielding⁸. The relationship with Masha gave Zhukovsky prolonged experience of sustaining hope that was ultimately in vain. These events are frequently noted as a subtext to his verse: readers presume that the experience is cultivated by the same sensibility that informs the poetry. In 1815 he wrote, first in a private notebook, then in a letter to Masha:

I once wrote: happiness does not lie in simple pleasures that follow one another, but in pleasures followed by memories. I compared such pleasures to street lamps lit along a street at nighttime—there are empty spaces between them, but these spaces too are lit, and thus the whole street is lit up, even though not the whole street basks in light. It's the same with happiness. Pleasure is a street lamp lit on the road of life, memory is light, and happiness is a row of beautiful memories, which are fused into one general, quiet feeling, and which lights up the whole of one's life. The more street lamps there are, the brighter one's path. I said: hope is superfluous! It would be better to say that hope is an empty, pernicious word. This word fascinates [youthful] inexperience, for whom the charm of this word lies in the failure to understand it. What is hope? It is the expectation of something in the future, always a vague expectation and often an anxious expectation. [. . .] Let us forget the future so as to live as one should. My dear friend, make use of the present moment for it alone is a means by which one reaches the beautiful, and the safest means, too. Light up a lamp of your own without worrying about those that would be lit later on. The time will come when you will look back and see a well-lit, beautiful road behind you; we will place not *hope but Providence* between the present moment and the yet unknown boundary of life.⁹

⁸ The story of Zhukovsky's love for Masha I derived from I. M. Semenko, *Vasily Zhukovsky* (Boston: Twayne, 1976), 18-35 and A. N. Veselovskii, *V. A. Zhukovskii: poeziia chuvstva i "serdechnogo voobrazheniia* [1904] (Moscow: Intrada, 1999), 99-119 and *passim*.

⁹ Cited by Veselovskii, *Poeziia chuvstva*, 165-66.

[Я когда-то написал: счастье не состоит из удовольствий простых, следующих просто одно за другим, но из удовольствий с воспоминанием. Эти удовольствия сравнивал я с фонарями, зажженными на улице ночью — между ними есть пустые промежутки, но эти промежутки освещены, и вся улица светла, хотя не вся составлена из света. Так и счастье тоже. Удовольствие — фонарь, зажженный на дороге жизни, воспоминание свет, а счастье — ряд этих прекрасных воспоминаний, которые все сливаются в одно общее, тихое, ясное чувство, и которые всю жизнь озаряют. Чем чаще фонари, тем светлее дорога. Я сказал: надежда лишнее! Лучше сказать: надежда пустое, вредное слово. Это слово имеет прелесть для одной неопытности, для которой эта

In the end, Zhukovsky substituted hope (надежда) for belief in Providence (Провидение), and, most concerned for Masha's being able to live and find happiness in the present, he consented, in 1817, to her marriage to another.

As well as being a heartfelt address to his beloved, Zhukovsky's interrogation and rejection of hope and his sustained metaphor of the lanterns that light the course of life demonstrate his analytical reflections on time, selfhood and states of feeling. Feelings oscillate between light and dark, but, according to Zhukovsky's model, memory allows the light of past happinesses to illuminate the present; the past is not a series of discrete events sectioned off from one another and from the present, but an accumulating whole of light and shade, perceptible in the present. Zhukovsky's metaphor, we might add, will be echoed in the twentieth century by the Bergsonian model of temporality and selfhood informed by simultaneity. The extended metaphor of the lantern introduces a notion of temporality to the abiding conviction in the existence of mixed states of feeling. In 1808, for instance, Zhukovsky wrote, in a similar key: "Melancholy is neither grief nor joy: I would call it a touch of joy in the heart of one who is sad, a touch of gloom in the heart of a one who is happy."¹⁰

Admittedly, it is melancholy that one associates more readily with the Romantic and pre-Romantic periods than hope.¹¹ Indeed, in the "anatomy of melancholy" that Ilya Vinitsky's sketches for the Russian literary tradition at the turn of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries Zhukovsky plays a leading role.¹² However, according to Vinitsky, a distinctive feature of Zhukovsky's melancholy lies in his regard for the future—introducing a note of hope into his vision: "Zhukovsky, who shared Karamzin's views on the impossibility of perfect happiness in this world, derives 'a feeling made of mixed grievings and joys' from the condition of 'happy harmony,' which he endows with a kind

прелесть заключена в непонимании этого слова. Что такое надежда? Ожидание чего-то в будущем, всегда неясное, часто беспокойное. Часто и всякое такое ожидание более вредно, нежели полезно: оно всегда уничтожает настоящее. [...] Позабудем о будущем, чтобы жить, как должно. Милый друг, пользуйся настоящею минутою, ибо оно только есть средство, и самое верное, к прекрасному. Зажги *своей* фонарь, не заботясь ни мало об тех, которые удастся зажечь после. В свое время ты оглянешься, и за тобою будет прекрасная, светлая дорога; между настоящею минутою и неизвестным пределом жизни поместим не *надежду*, а *Провидение*.]

Unless otherwise specified, all translations in this chapter are my own.

¹⁰ V. A. Zhukovskii, *Vestnik Evropy*, 1808, no. 41, 167.

[Меланхолия не есть ни горесть, ни радость: я назвал бы ее оттенком веселия на сердце печального, оттенком уныния на душе шастливца.]

¹¹ The social historian finds melancholy prevalent in Western Europe following the sudden rupture with the past brought by the French Revolution; the philosophically oriented literary historian speaks of melancholy in the years after the Napoleonic Wars as a crisis of representation, as historical experience outstrips "an inventory of expressive forms so stratified and rigid." Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); Thomas Pfau, *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790-1840* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

¹² I. Iu. Vinitskii, *Utekhi melankholii. Uchenye zapiski Moskovskogo kul'turologicheskogo litseia, No. 1310, Vypusk 2* (Moscow: Izdanie moskovskogo kul'turologicheskogo litseia, 1997), 107-289. V. N. Toporov also briefly sketches the history of melancholy from Robert Burton's 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy*, through John Milton and Karamzin, that stands behind Zhukovsky's translation of the term (V. Toporov, "'Sel'skoe kladbishche' Zhukovskogo: K istokam russkoi poezii" *Russian Literature*, Vol. 3, 1981, 241, 276-77).

of impulse to development—a ‘desire for novelty,’ a striving for further perfection, a *hope*.¹³ The distinction of Zhukovsky’s thinking about emotions, then, was his belief that they are not static states, but possess intentionality, moving forward and modifying with time. In his writings about theatre from the 1800s and 1810s, Zhukovsky devotes considerable attention to emotions (*chuvstva, strasti*). Again and again, he remarks upon the transition and modification of emotional states: for example, “it seems that the proper measure of progression was not followed in this transition to a different emotion” and elsewhere, “this is what it means to progress gradually from one movement to another!”¹⁴

Writing in 1800 to counsel his friend A. F. Merzliakov against the pursuit of perfect happiness, Zhukovsky writes: “I have to tell you that it is in the nature of a human heart that a perfect joy can not be pure; it is mixed with a certain unpleasantness, and one can say that realization of our desires is the beginning of boredom and sangfroid [. . .] To desire novelty (and to desire means almost the same thing as to hope) is a *Triebfeder* for our daily life.”¹⁵ Desire—or hope (such equivalences and minimal differentiations between categories frequently constitute Zhukovsky’s analytical method)—emerges from the vicissitudes of emotional life as the “drive,” the very movement of life.¹⁶

Triebfeder is a word Zhukovsky most likely absorbed from the work of Friedrich Schiller, in whom, along with the other members of the Friendly Literary Society, and particularly under the influence of Andrei Turgenev, he developed a great interest.¹⁷ The word *Triebfedern* appears as the title of a two-line epigram by Schiller (1796)¹⁸, and

¹³ Vinitskii, *Utekhii melankholii*, 148; emphasis in original.

[Жуковский, разделявший взгляды Карамзина на невозможность совершенного счастья в мире, выводит “смешанное из горестей и радостей чувствование” из состояния “щастливого равновесия”, придав ему своеобразный импульс к развитию — “желание нового”, стремление к большему совершенству, *надежда*.]

¹⁴ V. A. Zhukovskii, *Estetika i kritika* (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1985), 119, 247, 236.

[высокость страсти может оживить целую трагедию, ибо сии переходы из одного положения в другое, неразлучные с сильною страстою, суть душа трагедии; ... в этом переходе к другому чувству, кажется, не соблюдена была надлежащая постепенность; ... вот что значит наблюдать постепенность в переходе от одного движения к другому!]

¹⁵ Letter to A.F. Merzliakov, 22 August 1800. Cited by Vinitskii, *Utekhii melankholii*, 148. [надобно тебе сказать, совершенное наслаждение по натуре человеческого сердца не может быть чистым; оно смешано с некоторою неприятностию, и, можно сказать, исполнение наших желаний есть начало скуки и хладнокровия [...] Желание нового (а желать почти то же, что надеяться) есть *Triebfeder* наших дел.]

¹⁶ Zhukovsky’s formulations seem to anticipate Freudian notions of desire. The notion of “drives” (*Triebe*) would, of course, be taken up by Freud. For example, Freud speaks of “the two most powerful motive forces [*Triebfeder*]-hunger and love” in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899).

¹⁷ Zhukovsky founded the “Friendly Literary Society” (*Druzheskoe literaturnoe obshchestvo*) in Moscow in 1801 together with the Turgenev brothers, A. F. Merzliakov and others. It was here that Zhukovsky’s exposure to and interest in German and English pre-romantic literature grew. Zhukovsky began to translate Schiller as early as 1800, and would translate almost all his ballads throughout his lifetime. For background on the reception of Schiller in the Friendly Literary Society, and with Zhukovsky in particular, see Veselovskii, *Poeziia chuvstva*, 258-90; Rudolf Neuhäuser, *Towards the Romantic Age: Essays on Sentimental and Pre-Romantic literature in Russia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 106-112; Annette Pein, *Schiller and Zhukovsky: Aesthetic Theory in Poetic Translation* (Mainz: Liber Verlag, 1991); L. P. Shamanskaia, *Zhukovskii i Shiller: poeticheskii perevod v kontekste russkoi literatury* (Moscow: Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi otkrytyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 2000).

¹⁸ Freud acknowledges inspiration from a line of Schiller’s: “Hunger and love are what move the world.” For an interesting account of Freud’s indebtedness to Schiller, see Patricia Cotti, “Hunger and Love:

“drives” (*Triebe*), more generally, appear, most notably, in the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (*Briefe über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, 1794), where Schiller enters into a critique of Kantian dualism, seeking his own harmonious reconciliation between man’s sensuous and rational sides, between his desires that demand satisfaction and the obligations that reason compels him, as a free being, to perform.¹⁹

Zhukovsky’s acquaintance with the works of Schiller is a conduit through which the ideas of German pre-romanticism enter and come into contact with the Russian literary milieu. Hope, too, is a theme with conceptual resonance in the discourse of German Idealism; in Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) the last of the three questions he poses after “What can I know?” and “What should I do?” is “For what may I hope?”²⁰ When Kant poses the last of his three questions, “For what may I hope?”, his invocation of hope summons a synthesis of the competing drives of inclination and duty. The question might be put otherwise: what desires of mine might be satisfied within the framework of morality (and practical possibility), or, if I am virtuous, for what may I hope? Kant’s hope thus projects the possibility of man’s wholeness—of the co-ordination of his instincts with morality. The same tension finds a resolution in Schiller’s thought, through the concepts of art and the aesthetic experience of beauty that he advances in the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*.²¹ Art, according to Schiller, provides a means of mediating between man’s competing drives, the *Stofftrieb* (sensuous drive) and the *Formtrieb* (formal drive), thus restoring a union of rational thought and sensual experience. On these grounds, too, art effects a special form of contact and communication, just as the reconciliation of inclination and reasoned duty (in the social sphere) forges a relationship between the claims of the individual and the community. Though I do not speak directly of matters of instinct and morality in the elegy, it is in this sense—in an appeal to an integrated vision of self and other—that this nexus of thought derived from German idealism resonates with my discussion of the intersubjective realm of the elegy and its novelistic potential.

I do not propose a direct transmission or deliberate engagement with a concept of hope from Kant to Schiller to Zhukovsky, but rather I point to the theme’s accommodation and circulation in the heritage of German Idealism—a body of thought

Schiller and the Origin of Drive Dualism in Freud's Work,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. 88 No. 1 (2007): 167-182.

¹⁹ In the letters *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (*Briefe über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, 1794), for example, Schiller writes of man's drives—der *Stofftrieb* (the sensuous drive) and der *Formtrieb* (the formal drive).

²⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), cited in Joseph J. Godfrey, *A Philosophy of Human Hope* (Dordrecht & Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 83. I should also acknowledge the following aid to my understanding: Will Dudley, *Understanding German Idealism* (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2007), 11-14.

²¹ The same tension finds another resolution in Schiller’s influential notion of the “beautiful soul” (*schöne Seele*)—taken up as the embodiment of the sentimentalist moral ideal—the rare being in whom true virtue manifests as a synthesis of freedom and feeling, of reason and sensibility, and for whom there is always congruence between inclination and duty, conferring an element of grace (*Anmut*) on all his actions. Veselovskii discusses the currency of this idea in the Friendly Literary Society, prior to Zhukovsky’s direct and in depth acquaintance with German texts (Veselovskii, *Poeziia chuvstva*, 39-45).

that was formative for Zhukovsky and his circle.²² Moreover, this nexus of thought was also formative for the development of the modern theory of the novel; relying on Kantian concepts, Georg Lukács, in *The Theory of the Novel*, identifies the misalignment of instinct and morals as the ineluctable condition of modernity—and the form-producing impulse of the novel.²³ In terms of the larger trajectory of this dissertation, I also wish to allude to a deeply embedded continuity between the elegy, the novel, and the theory of the novel.²⁴

On the level of broadest commonalities, Schiller and Zhukovsky are linked by the elements of potentiality and dynamic psychologism that are valued in their thought about emotional and aesthetic experience. Zhukovsky assimilates Schiller's notion of "drives" into his own formulations of emotional experience, where they meet with Zhukovsky's instinctive assimilation of emotion to temporality and a narrative-based conception of personhood.

In considering hope as emotion (rather than, say, a virtue), I follow the formulations of Ernst Bloch (1885-1977), a contemporary and friend of Georg Lukács, Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, who made hope the basis of a philosophical, ideological and aesthetic world view in his monumental work *The Principle of Hope (Das Prinzip Hoffnung)*.²⁵ Germane to the present discussion are his formulations on the temporality and intentionality of hope, which he categorizes among the "expectant emotions." These he distinguishes from "filled emotions (like envy, greed, admiration)," that is:

those whose drive-intention is short-term, whose drive-object lies ready, if not in respective individual attainability, then in the already available world. Expectant emotions (like anxiety, fear, hope, belief), on the other hand, are those whose drive-intention is long-term, whose drive-object does not yet lie ready, not just in

²² The relation between Kant, Schiller and the culture of sentimentalism, see Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2000), 74-91. My understanding was also aided by Karl Ameriks (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 86-90, 142-44; Lesley Sharpe, *Friedrich Schiller: Drama, Thought and Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), 131-69.

²³ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel; a Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1971), 65. J. M. Bernstein, for instance, notes that Lukács' formulations derive from Kantian concepts: he "takes it as given that the Kantian critical system provides the most lucid metaphysical portrayal of modernity." J. M. Bernstein, *The Philosophy of the Novel: Lukács, Marxism and the Dialectics of Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 55-56. Paul de Man also finds Lukács' notion of man's alienation to be reminiscent of Schiller's philosophical writings ("Georg Lukács's *Theory of the Novel*," *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 53-54.

²⁴ Thomas Pfau argues for a philosophical and affective connection between German idealism, the elegy (he refers also to Gray's "Elegy") and modern aesthetic and literary theory in "Mourning Modernity: Classical Antiquity, Romantic Theory, and Elegiac Form," *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, ed. Karen Weisman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 546-64.

²⁵ *The Principle of Hope* was written in emigration in the United States 1938-47; revised 1953, 1959; first published 1959. Bloch's thought has found one recent application in the field of literary and cultural studies in the work of Sianne Ngai, who appeals to his discussion of the temporality of emotions to shed light on the nature of envy, one of "ugly feelings" of her book's title (Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 210-11, 389).

respective individual attainability, but also in the already available world [...] All emotions refer to the horizon of time, because they are highly intentioned emotions, but the expectant emotions open out entirely into this horizon. All emotions refer to the actually temporal aspect in time, i.e. to the mode of the future, but whereas the filled emotions only have an unreal future, i.e. one in which objectively nothing new happens, the expectant emotions essentially imply a real future.²⁶

Hope (along with Bloch's other "expectant emotions") is characterized as a truly creative emotion, one which relies on the work of the imagination to project the vision of its "drive-object," i.e., what it aspires towards. In this way, hope implies a creative and transformative vision working towards the future. Hope differs from pure imagination or fantasy inasmuch as it is characterized by a real sense of possibility. For all its idealism, hope, if it is to be both sustaining and sustainable, must always be rooted in the present, or at least be able to construct its imaginary chain of cause and consequence from the horizon of the present to the projected future.

In his poem of 1818 "A Song" ("The dismay of days gone by") ("Pesnia"- "Minuvshikh dnei ocharovan'e") Zhukovsky cites, altering slightly but quite significantly, a line from Karamzin's 1796 poem "Hope" ("Nadezhda").²⁷ Karamzin's lyrical hero had asked, "Могу ль сказать прости надежде?" [Can I say to Hope, please forgive?], and twenty-two years later Zhukovsky's questions otherwise: "Могу ль сказать живи надежде?" [Can I say to Hope, please live?].²⁸ Comparing these two poems joined by intertextual allusion, we see how Zhukovsky has modified the status of hope since it was invoked in the work of his predecessor. Zhukovsky's representation of emotion bears out those principles I have outlined above: he portrays emotional states that are mutable, wedded to a forward-pressing biographical narrative, and set in a dynamic relation to temporality.

Let us look more closely at Karamzin's poem first. The poem begins as a song of praise to his "goddess," hope. Karamzin uses the spatial metaphor of the inhospitable steppe to designate existence and its trials—and it lies within the powers of hope to transform the boundlessness of these sands and labors into the sentimental ideal of domestic shelter and the embrace of loving family life. Hope thus provides shape and contour to the otherwise formless future. It projects a desired known-ness onto what is uncertain and undifferentiated. Karamzin's lyrical hero espouses his personified hope in a blissful union: "мы навек соединимся / И в жизни раем наладимся: / Умрем в

²⁶ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, tr. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 74-75.

²⁷ Ianushkevich notes how Sentimentalist poems tended to have more limited themes, which was evident in their straightforward titles, such as "Nadezhda" or "Postoianstvo" (Ianushkevich, *V mire Zhukovskogo*, 67).

²⁸ N. M. Karamzin, *Polnoe sobranie stikhotvorenii*, ed. Iu. M. Lotman (Moscow & Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1966), 198.

V. A. Zhukovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati tomakh*, ed. A. S. Ianushkevich, O. B. Lebedeva et al. (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2000), 2: 103. Hereafter references to Zhukovsky's poetry will be given in abbreviated in-text references from this collection, cited as volume and page number.

слиянии сердец” [We will be united forever / And enjoy paradise in our lifetime / And die with our hearts fused]. But then true love comes upon him:

...любим, друг мой, прежде
Чем знаем, должно ли любить:
Полюбим, и в себе не властны;
Умолкнет разум беспристрастный –
Лишь сердце будет говорить.

[[we] love, my friend, before / [we] know whether one should love: / Once
[we] love, [we] loose power over ourselves; / sober reason falls silent / and
the heart alone will speak.]

In the way in which it comes upon and possesses the subject, love is an emotion qualitatively different from hope, which, in contrast, the subject can himself design, cultivate and consciously deploy. The onset of love, though, amounts to a betrayal of hope, eliciting from the lyrical hero the line “Могу ль сказать прости надежде?” [Can I say to Hope, forgive?]. The future-oriented activity of hope has been supplanted by sated desire in the present, the metaphorically embodied deity replaced by the real body of the beloved.

The identical metrical form of “A Song” allows Zhukovsky to recast Karamzin's line, altering only the imperative addressed to hope: “Могу ль сказать: живи надежде?” [Can I say to Hope, live?]. The context for this hypothetical address to hope is different: this poem is of a distinctly elegiac hue, where the lyrical subject is beset by the sudden unbidden return of memories, both audible and visible, of past disappointment and loss.

Zhukovsky's recasting of Karamzin's question now asks if hope is indeed an emotional state which the subject can induce or rationally summon to displace painful memories. It asks whether hope is the opposite of memory, whether the subject does have the power to direct his cognitive activity, and look not to the past through memory, but to the future through hope. The doubt which laces the stanza's series of rhetorical questions would suggest that while hope and memory are opposites, they are not mutually exclusive ones: hope's attention on the future cannot entirely erase or neutralize the insistence of memory. The stanza suggests that the self is a delicate weave of actuality and aspiration, for it asks not only whether the past—what actually *was*—can be commanded into existence (“Скажу ль тому, что было будь?”) but also whether the hopes which belonged to *that past* can be revived: “Могу ль узреть во блеске новом / Мечты увядшей красоту? / Могу ль опять надеть покровом / Знакомой жизни наготу?” (2: 104) [Can I discern in the new splendor / the beauty of a withered dream? / Can I cover once again / the nakedness of the life made familiar?].

The past is comprised of both its outwardly manifest traces—the whispers and scenes that come in memory—and the hidden substance of subjectivity—the individual's desires and dreams—that are associated with that time. Both components are irretrievably

lost for Zhukovsky's lyrical hero.²⁹ An image of selfhood emerges, which is inextricably bound up with temporality and narratives of emotion.

The loss of hope that belonged to the past is what we might call the "elegiac future"—the mourning of potentiality or ideality, the mourning of what might have been. The lost past is mourned not solely as a moment of empirical existence, but as a kernel of time whose potentiality and narrative development—the fulfillment of the hopes and desires attached to that moment—have been thwarted. In my discussion, I highlight other instances where the "elegiac future"—the might-have-been future—comes into view. In the end, I will show how the kernel of narrativity that is lodged in the elegy, the stymying of which is mourned in a lament for the elegiac future, informs the narratorial position, and the novelistic, in Pushkin's novel-in-verse, *Evgenii Onegin*.

But to return, for now, to the poem at hand, "A Song" is suggestive of a more subtle and dynamic relationship between the different layers of time brought into contact with the present through hope and memory. This poem demonstrates the evolution in literary representation towards a more dynamic model of inner life. In contrast to Karamzin's "Hope," Zhukovsky's verse implicitly acknowledges the necessary mutability of hope, whose content moves and changes as the horizon of the present presses forward. Karamzin's earthly personification of hope is proven misplaced, for the trope of personification confers a static immutability onto its object. As literary representation moved toward the discoveries of more individualized emotions, it departed from the practice of personifying particular feelings—a common classicist device,³⁰ which also served sentimentalism's conception of "feeling as a whole, more or less constant complex that is attached to one or another character."³¹ Veselovskii describes how the representation of feeling strained to exceed the model of personification: "Sentimentalist poetry gave form to his feeling, but this feeling, in its uncertainty, wants to be voiced with greater precision; in its monotony, it wants to be expressed with greater variety."³² Zhukovsky's "A Song" of 1818 demonstrates the by now long accomplished surpassing of personification in the representation of emotion: hope is less an entity and more an activity, into which is incorporated the principle of transformation, and the vision of the new.

The juxtaposition of these two poems invites us to consider the distinction of hope from desire. We see in the refined understanding of hope, the concepts that will join the

²⁹ Veselovskii, pursuing the biographical reading, speaks of "Pesnia" in connection to the hopes for a happy romance with Masha Protosova that had finally been exhausted some few years earlier (Veselovskii, *Poeziia chuvstva*, 185). The interrogation of hope certainly echoes the strident prose Zhukovsky had written to Protasova some two years earlier (see above, p. # — though here, in the poem, there is a more tempered response than the outright rejection of hope that occurred there.)

³⁰ Vasily Trediakovsky's translation of Abbé Paul Tallemant, *Ezda v ostrov liubvi* (1730), which can lay claim to being the first novel published in Russian, may serve as an example of this tendency: it is populated by numerous "characters" who are allegorical personifications of emotions and states of mind. See Simon Karlinksy, "Tallemant and the Beginning of the Novel in Russia," *Comparative Literature* Vol. 15 No. 3 (Summer 1963), 226-233.

³¹ L. Ia. Ginzburg, *Tvorcheskii put' Lermontova* (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura), 173. [чувство как единый более или менее неизменный комплекс, прикрепленный к тому или иному персонажу.]

³² Veselovskii, *Poeziia chuvstva*, 387. [Сентиментальная поэзия дала формы его чувству, но оно хочет высказаться точнее в своей неопределенности, разнообразнее в своем однообразии. Оно ищет новых способов выражения.]

elegy to narrativity, and ultimately to the novelistic: concepts of temporality, self, and intersubjective communion, or empathy. In one of his characteristic analytical analogies, Zhukovsky writes: “As long as love grows, it is inseparable from hope.”³³ Hope is clearly a particular modification of desire—but hope has more biographical potential than desire: one hopes for what will *be*; one desires to *have*. In the words of Zhukovsky cited above, the lover does not look toward sated desire, but toward a state of greater happiness and the time when the relationship matches a cherished ideal. Hope takes greater heed of the integrity of temporality that is larger than the desiring subject and desired object. Desire would hasten and overturn time; time is but an obstacle in the achievement of fulfillment. Hope, on the other hand, incorporates time into its essence; it is precisely a vision *of* time. Accordingly, desire projects an endpoint that is its own satisfaction; the scene of sated desire is much narrower, the domain in which the effects of its fulfillment felt is much more circumscribed. Hope, on the other hand, projects a much broader scene, the attainment of a certain state where a set of possibilities are realized or conditions fulfilled, but which are not necessarily finite or entailing the final expenditure of potential.³⁴ This broader scene projected by hope is one where feeling is free to circulate between individuals, rather than being exclusively focused on ends or acquisition. A crucial difference lies in the fact that hope can exceed the self, whereas desire is rooted in the self. Consequently, hope can be empathetic and vicarious.

In the sections that follow I will discuss Zhukovsky’s famous 1802 translation of Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,” and the pair of early elegies from 1803, “On the Death of Andrei Turgenev” and “To K. M. Sokovnina” (“Na smert' Andreia Turgeneva” and “K K. M. S<okovnin>oi”). In the elegy “To K. M. Sokovnina,” Zhukovsky will recognize the possibility for hope to be experienced empathetically; elegy will become a conduit for the circulation of feeling through empathetic connection. In this way, Zhukovsky resolves a tension that emerges in the elegy as genre—a tension between silent reflection on a private sentiment and that sentiment’s passage to communion with another. This tension is evident in the translation of Gray’s “Elegy in a Country Churchyard.” In Gray’s original and still more in Zhukovsky’s translation, as we shall see, ideas of sound and materiality are lent special emphasis in articulating the

³³ V. A. Zhukovskii, *Vestnik Evropy*, 1808, no. 41, 168. [Пока любовь возрастает, до тех пор она неразлучна с надеждою.]

³⁴ Interestingly, for both Zhukovsky and Bloch, separated by more than a century, Raphael's painting of the Sistine Madonna comes to function as a kind of visual representation of hope. Both discern something similar in the painting's representation of space and handling of perspective, and similarly interpret this aspect of the work (though to say 'interpret' in this instance risks sounding misguided, for in each of their accounts the painting appears to communicate far more directly than through the effort of interpretation as such). For Bloch, the Sistine Madonna is an example of where “[w]hat is boundless and the deepest nearness are mutually in league with one another” (Bloch, *Principle of Hope*, 835). Zhukovsky saw the Madonna in Dresden in 1821. Compare his remarks: “I don’t understand how the delimited space of painting can create a sense of the unbounded; before my eyes is a canvas depicting individuals enclosed by lines, and everything is cramped in a small space. Yet in spite of that everything is boundless” (Zhukovskii, *Estetika*, 309). For both, the painting combines a sense of the proximate with the infinite. As such, it functions as a visual representation of hope—a vision of the future connected to the present by perceptible possibility.

elegy's hope for feeling that circulates between individuals and that is shared in communion with another.

Inscribing the Sound of Hope: Zhukovsky's Translation of Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"

Appearing in England in 1751, Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" announced some significant discontinuities with the elegiac tradition that preceded it: as the elegy opens, nobody in particular is being mourned, and the poem is neither a highly ceremonial public expression of mourning, nor as strongly connected to the tradition of pastoral elegy going back to Theocritus as, say, Milton's *Lycidas*.³⁵ Gray's "Elegy" entered the Russian tradition with Zhukovsky's notable 1802 translation "A Country Churchyard" ("Sel'skoe kladbishche"), which appeared in the journal *Vestnik Evropy*, then under the editorship of Karamzin.³⁶ Some fifty years after its original composition, the "Elegy's" force of generic innovation still obtained in this new context. In Zhukovsky's age as in Gray's, as Roger Lonsdale notes, "there was little or no respectable precedent for genuinely introspective poetry."³⁷ In England of the 1750s Gray was caught in a transitional moment that saw signs of growing interest in personal experience (before the romantics' full-fledged exploration of the self), and in Russia of the 1800s, the "Elegy" landed on soil where it participated in this transitional moment anew. One view that retrospectively identifies the transition marked by Zhukovsky's translation, is Vladimir Solov'ev's estimation that "A Country Churchyard," "in spite of its foreign provenance and excess of sentimentality in certain places [...] [was] the beginnings of truly human poetry in Russia."³⁸

Along with an influential new model for the genre, the translation of Gray's "Elegy" also imported onto Russian soil an evolving interest in the problem of consciousness—albeit one deeply embedded in the tissue of formative influences on Gray's verse. Gray was profoundly influenced by the empiricism of John Locke, whose philosophy made the problem of consciousness central and established a new concern

³⁵ On Gray's Elegy in this regard, see Eric Smith, "Gray: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*," *Thomas Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York & New Haven: Chelsea, 1987), 51 and Anne Williams, "Elegy into Lyric: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*" in *Thomas Gray's Elegy*, 105.

³⁶ The 1802 rendition was not Zhukovsky's first attempt at translating the poem (nor his last); he had produced a version the year earlier, and then returned to retranslate the work in 1839, after a trip to England where he visited the graveyard that inspired Gray. The poem itself became for Zhukovsky a site for the commemoration of Andrei Turgenev, who died in 1803: the 1839 version recalls the original dedication, now offered in memory of his friend. Between 1784 and 1803 the poem was translated into Russian (in all different degrees of completeness, fidelity and poetic form) some ten times. Zhukovsky's 1802 rendering became the definitive translation, and further influence of Gray's "Elegy" on Russian literature is attributed exclusively to this version. Toporov, 212-13. On the broader context of the Russian reception of Gray and fellow English poets Edward Young and James Thomson between 1770 and 1820, see Toporov, "'Sel'skoe kladbishche' Zhukovskogo," 212-18.

³⁷ Roger Lonsdale, "The Poetry of Thomas Gray: Versions of the Self," *Thomas Gray's Elegy*, 27.

³⁸ Cited by Toporov, "'Sel'skoe kladbishche' Zhukovskogo," 241.

with what we now call psychology. In the 1740s Gray produced a Latin versification of parts of Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*—a text that plays a central role in Ian Watt's account of the rise of the novel. Locke's explorations of consciousness informed by sensation and sense data helped cultivate, in Watt's genetic narrative, the interdependent notions of individuality and concreteness of setting upon which the novel in turn relies.³⁹ Gray's rendering of Locke in his early Latin translations of the 1740s contains, as Lonsdale observes, moments that bear some relation to his later "Elegy": after dealing at length with the various senses, Gray chooses to describe Locke's moment when "reflection" becomes possible, when the maturing human mind can recognize and contemplate its own activities, with a long simile that includes a lone figure in a silent, shadowed evening-time landscape.⁴⁰ The reflective consciousness is one which knows a degree of separation from itself and from the outside world: such a consciousness clearly distinguishes Gray's elegiac subject, who is alert to the sensory experiences of the landscape around him while practicing his introspective reflection. With Zhukovsky's translation of Gray's "Elegy," in other words, the Russian tradition (which has no such eighteenth-century philosophical tradition of its own) receives—albeit in highly mediated form—one version of a philosophically informed understanding of selfhood and consciousness that is crucial to the development of psychological prose.⁴¹

Sensory experience, especially sound, is an important part of Gray's elegiac world, which Zhukovsky faithfully upholds—not only in translating the images of the original, but in recreating in Russian the exceptional euphony for which Gray's "Elegy" is famed.⁴² Acutely sensitive to the aural element of language, and sharing the romantic tendency to elevate music to an expressive ideal, Zhukovsky invests particular power in sound and music.⁴³ In 1840 Zhukovsky heard Gaspard Spontini's opera "Nurmahal" (based on Sir Thomas Moore's verse and prose cycle *Lalla Rookh* [1817], which Zhukovsky had also rendered into Russian as "Lalla Ruk", 1821). On hearing this music that was already so bound up with his own poetic output, Zhukovsky wrote: "There is some strange, incomprehensible enchantment in the sounds: they possess no substance, yet the past lives and is resurrected in them" and, some three years later on hearing a related composition by Spontini: "There is something immortal in sounds although they do not

³⁹ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* [1957], (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 15-30.

⁴⁰ Lonsdale, "The Poetry of Thomas Gray," 28; Robert L. Mack, *Thomas Gray: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 101, 135, 408-09, 479.

⁴¹ Donna Orwin discusses Locke and his concept of "reflection" in relation to Russian psychological prose, Donna Tussing Orwin, *Consequences of Consciousness: Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 114-15.

⁴² The musicality of Zhukovsky's poetry is described by N. A. Polevoi: "Жуковский играет на арфе: продолжительные переходы звуков предшествуют словам его и сопровождают его слова, тихо припеваемые поэтом только для пояснения того, что хочет он выразить звуками. Бессоюзие, остановка, недомолвка, —любимые обороты поэзии Жуковского" cited by Veselovskii, *Poeziia chuvstva*, 386.

⁴³ For further consideration of this theme and its romantic context, see F. P. Fedorov, "Zhukovskii: slovo i zvuk," *Russian Literature*, Vol. 45 (1999), 121-137.

possess any existence.”⁴⁴ Zhukovsky records the power of the music, despite its apparent immateriality and abstraction, to conjure images of the past. In its sound he finds the wakening of an emotional memory; the experience of the music arouses emotions which bring with them scenes or senses of the past.⁴⁵ The romantic affinity for music does not simply promote the ineffable, but belongs to the moment of heightening psychological analysis in the literary arts, when attentiveness to the particularity of musical experience fostered insight into the life of the emotions and interiority. The sound of the elegy retains within itself a memory of the music that accompanied works in this genre in its earliest forms. (Greek elegiac couplets were traditionally accompanied by the *aulos*, a flute, or oboe-like double-pipe.)⁴⁶

In Zhukovsky’s elegiac world, too, sound—the sounds in the landscape to which the poet attends and his own sounding voice—becomes a bearer of both memory and feeling. As I will show, sound promotes the circulation of feeling both within the elegy and its imagined listener/reader. Enhanced by the euphonic accomplishments of his translation, the poetics of sound in “A Country Churchyard” can, I maintain, be read as much as Zhukovsky’s own, and not solely imported from the source. The elegy articulates hope in its efforts to cultivate a chain of elegiac succession, striving to ensure that the poet’s voice be heard in perpetuity, that sound carries across time. At its conclusion, “A Country Churchyard” finds voice translated into an inscription on stone. While Zhukovsky speaks in wonder at the immateriality of music that may contain or elicit traces of the past, in “A Country Churchyard,” following Gray, he confers material fixity on the sounding voice to shore up its power to “resurrect the past” and perpetuate the elegiac sensibility.⁴⁷ At the elegy’s conclusion, the inscribed epitaph establishes an open-ended context of reception and remembrance which promises to remake elegiac sensibility in future subjects. With its appeal to “a common materiality,” as John MacKay has recently discussed, the place-marking act of poetic inscription summons a community by “gather[ing] together the writer, the wished-for reader and the commemorated object into a circuit.”⁴⁸ Dwelling on not just the materiality of inscription, but also the sensory experience of sound a marker of corporality, I study the ways in which the elegy projects the hope for its own reception. The lyrical hero and the reader are joined in the aural environment of the poem, as well as by the site of

⁴⁴ Странное, непонятное очарование в звуках: они не имеют ничего существенного, но в них живет и воскресает прошедшее...

В звуках есть что-то бессмертное, хотя сами они бытия не имеют.

Cited by Boris Eikhenbaum, *Melodika russkogo liricheskogo stikha* (St Petersburg: OPOIAZ, 1922), 343-44 and Veselovskii, *Poeziia chuvstva*, 208. (Eikhenbaum conflates the two quotes)

⁴⁵ One imagines Zhukovsky was experiencing something of the same order as Tolstoy would later describe in *Detstvo* (*Childhood*, Chapter 11).

⁴⁶ Sacks, *The English Elegy*, 2-3; Abbie Findlay Potts, *The Elegiac Mode; Poetic Form in Wordsworth and Other Elegists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 9.

⁴⁷ Zhukovsky’s later elegy “Slavianka” (1815) is marked in its treatment of the material and immaterial in terms of their capacity to be bearers of feeling and memory: the poem is accompanied by Zhukovsky’s lengthy footnote which describes the actual setting (of the Slavianka river in Pavlovsk) (2: 440). The materiality of the setting is thus an integral component, yet kept decidedly separate from the meditations and evocations of the past contained within the poem itself.

⁴⁸ John MacKay, *Inscription and Modernity From Wordsworth to Mandelstam* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 18.

inscription, and thus sound becomes responsible for establishing contact and exchange between the scenes of impression and expression, and, crucially, composition and reception.

In linking hope and sound in the elegy, I am inspired by Susan Stewart who studies poetic forms “arising out of sense experience and producing, as they make sense experience intelligible to others, intersubjective meaning.”⁴⁹ Stewart makes a link between sound and futurity when she suggests that the sounding voice of the poet issues a “promise”, that is, it projects the future context of reception, where the poet’s voice is to be heard.⁵⁰ I recast this promise, in the elegy, as hope. On the other hand, the evolution of the poet as listener can provide one means of historicizing the lyric. In Irina Semenko’s formulation, the history of Russian verse turns on the altered attention to sound – and the consequent implications for lyric subjectivity: “The sound of a falling leaf heard by the poet ([in Zhukovsky’s] “Slavianka”) is the beginning of a new era in the lyrical poetry. Derzhavin heard the sound of the waterfall.”⁵¹ The sensitivity to such small modulations of sound parallels and externalizes the new attentiveness to the nuances and movements of feeling caught by the poet’s study of interiority. Taking the lead from this means of historicizing the lyric, I accord particular place to the posture of listening within the landscape, and the movement of sound across the landscape. Next to the translated “A Country Churchyard” I will place, and briefly comment on, Konstantin Batiushkov’s “On the Ruins of a Castle in Sweden” (“Na razvalinakh zamka v Shvetsii,” 1814) in order to suggest the independent life of the theme of voice to inscription in the context of the Russian elegy. Zhukovsky and, after him, Batiushkov not only bring to the lyric a new sensitivity to sound, but, I argue, bestow on the elegy an awareness of the materiality of sound. They harness the dynamics of motion in sound’s resonance and transmission for the thematic and affective task of the genre.

Zhukovsky’s elegy charts a time and space through the poet’s sounding voice. At the start of “A Country Churchyard,” the perceptible space of the poem diminishes; the sensory field is depleted as colour drains out of the day and the sound of the cattle recedes beyond the river: “Уже бледнеет день, скрываясь за горою; / Шумящие стада толпятся над рекой” (1: 53; stanza 1) [Now day pales, hiding behind the hill; / Noisy herds crowd at the river].⁵² The darkness and silence of nightfall might foreclose any possibility of the subject’s further engagement with this landscape: “В туманном сумраке окрестность исчезает... / Повсюду тишина; повсюду мертвый сон” (stanza 2) [In misty dusk the environs disappear... / There is quiet everywhere; all is dead asleep].

⁴⁹ Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), ix.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 104 and 332.

⁵¹ I. M. Semenko, *Poety pushkinskoi pory* (Moscow: 1970), 105. [Услышанный поэтом шум от падения листка (“Славянка”) – начало новой эры в лирике. Державин слышал падение водопада.]

⁵² I borrow the English translation of “A Country Churchyard” from Catherine Ciepiela, “Reading Russian Pastoral: Zhukovsky’s Translation of Gray’s Elegy,” *Rereading Russian Poetry*, ed. Stephanie Sandler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 54-57.

The transition from day to night is marked by a shift in the mode of attention. Evening-time fosters a newly attuned sensibility.⁵³ Now, attention is trained onto the smallest sounds of the background and the distance: “Лишь изредка, жужжа, вечерний жук мелькает, / Лишь слышится вдали рогов унылый звон” [Only here and there a beetle, buzzing, flashes, / Only now and then the mournful sound of horns is heard]. Zhukovsky's translation renders these lines with exceptional euphony to match that of Gray's original and captures the oscillations of these sounds as they travel through the night; the first line is patterned by the rasping burr of *zh/sh/ch/k*, while the second is marked by the softer alternation of *l* and *sh*. In his ability to render these sounds, the poet blends the roles of attentive listener and speaking subject; he situates his perceiving consciousness and his voice within that nighttime scene and simultaneously speaks to us, his listener, in our space and time. In the elegy, the passing of sound between these two divided realms symbolically accomplishes the genre's mediation between absence and presence, past loss and future consolation. The poet's voice functions always as an instrument of his presence, but in its command of the figure of onomatopoeia in particular, it foregrounds his ability to mediate between the scenes of impression and expression—the landscape projected by the poem which includes his embodied presence as listener, and the scene of the poem's reception, where his voice will sound in his corporeal absence, now attended to by his own listener-addressees.

Sound and silence divide the living from the dead.⁵⁴ While the lyrical subject is able to commune with the sounds of evening, no such sound crosses into the domain of the graves of those villagers buried in the churchyard in whom the elegy finds its first subjects to mourn:

Денницы тихий глас, дня юного дыханье,
 Ни крики петуха, ни звучный гул рогов,
 Ни ранней ласточки на кровле щебетанье --
 Ничто не вызовет почивших из гробов. (1: 53; stanza 5)

[The quiet voice of dawn, the breath of the young day, / Nor the cock's call,
 nor the resonant horn's bass, / Nor the early sparrow's warbling on the
 roof— / Nothing can call forth the departed from their graves.]

⁵³ Focusing on the visual, rather than aural world of the original poem, one scholar finds the elegist's fundamental sensibility conveyed by his habits of perception, emphasizing, in terms that are useful to my discussion, his heeding of unrealized potential: “It is...only as the glimmering landscape fades, that the essential obscurity of all things is revealed to [the elegist]. What is most real and valuable to this elegist is what is hidden (and perhaps must remain hidden) in the shadows. ... [The shadows] speak eloquently for all that is tentative and unrealized, in life as in death.” Ellen Zetzel Lambert, *Placing Sorrow: A Study of the Pastoral Elegy Convention from Theocritus to Milton* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 188-89.

⁵⁴ Sacks reads Gray's “Elegy,” noting its “fascinating preoccupation with muteness as opposed to sound, or eventually of an epitaphic script as opposed to living voice.” He takes care to first distinguish it from those elegies which his study primarily addresses, “namely a poem of mourning occasioned by a specific death,” but then returns it to the company of these works, on the grounds that it does mourn a particular death over and above those of the nameless villagers—the imagined death of the poet himself (Sacks, *The English Elegy*, 133-37).

The negotiation of this divide between sound and silence is the ongoing task of the elegy: the elegist seeks both a form of communion with the buried villagers and to assemble a community of remembrance around the anonymous “solitary singer,” the “friend of the deceased [villagers]” (a kind of double for the poet himself) who is commemorated in the swain’s speech to a listening passer-by and in the closing epitaph.⁵⁵

At the same time, though, throughout “A Country Churchyard” this aspiration for communion is at odds with the elegist’s essential separation from others. The elegist’s relationship to the landscape is made only in the contracting world of evening, where he listens in the falling darkness, an occluded observer of the pastoral world. As day recedes and evening falls silent, the poem enters the circumscribed inner space of the elegist’s interiority; his sentiment does not open into the world. The villagers, meanwhile, fully inhabit the pastoral world, connected to the landscape by their physical labor in the productive hours of daylight, and even their sweat that falls onto the soil (stanza 6). This opposition between the elegist and the villagers intimates the tension running through “A Country Churchyard”—between the private sentiment of the poet and its passage to community, between the preservation of individual experience and the circulation of feeling. In a stanza which is entirely Zhukovsky’s own addition to the poem, the curious relationship—the opposition, but also syntactic blurring—of их to наш (“their” and “our”) betrays the ambivalence of the elegist’s communion with or separation from the villagers:

Их сердце милый глас в могиле нашей слышит;
Наш камень гробовой для них одушевлен;
Для них наш мертвый прах в холодной урне дышит,
Еще огнем любви для них воспламенен. (1: 56; stanza 25)

[Their hearts hear the dear voice in our graves; / Our burial stone seems filled with life to them; / For them our mortal dust breathes in the cold urn, / Still ignited with the flame of love for them.]

The instability and ambiguity of the pronouns bespeak both the desire and resistance to be joined with the villagers.

The movement toward the epitaph does not only seek to immortalize the dead friend (or double) of the poet in stone, but to place his memory within a context of lived, shared feeling. The poem cultivates succession through a chain of speakers and listeners; its final stanzas before the epitaph imagine a hypothetical scene where a villager now tells of the life of an anonymous other (and seeming double for the elegist) to passer-by: “Быть может, селянин с почтенной сединою / Так будет о тебе прищельцу

⁵⁵ In Zhukovsky’s rendition this is a more clearly differentiated individual—“a friend of the deceased” [«А ты, почивших друг, певец уединенный, / И твой ударит час, последний, роковой»]. In Gray’s original, this other receives no specification; he is simply addressed as “thee:” “For thee, who mindful of th’ unhonour’d Dead / Dost in these lines their artless tale relate.” Quotations of Gray’s *Elegy* are taken from Thomas Gray, *The Complete Poems of Gray*, ed. H. W. Starr and J. R. Hendrickson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 37-43.

говорить” (1: 56; stanza 27) [Perhaps a villager with venerable gray head / Will speak of you thus to the comer]. The attentiveness of the passer-by to voice turns him into another living vessel of memory and figures him as another potential elegist-subject. In contrast to the biblical verse often inscribed on the village gravestones for the purposes of moral instruction (“По коей мы должны учиться умирать” (1: 55; stanza 22) [By which we should learn better how to die]), this elegiac mode of commemoration has a different ethical remit: it seeks to realize the potential for elegiac subjecthood in poets and passers-by alike (to instruct in *how to live*, one might say, rather than “how to die”), to cultivate a sensibility which is as respectfully attentive and receptive to the lives of others as it is to the sounds of the landscape in which it is situated. The concluding three stanzas form an epitaph, which with its exhortation to future wayfarers to utter a prayer on this spot, affirms its powers to find and make understanding listeners/readers. All these will be joined in a community of remembrance by association with this site.

Прохожий, помолись над этою могилой;
Он в ней нашел приют от всех земных тревог;
Здесь все оставил он, что в нем греховно было,
С надеждою, что жив его спаситель—бог. (1: 57; stanza 35)

[Passerby, say a prayer over this grave; / He found in it a refuge from all earthly cares; / Here he abandoned all that was sinful in him, / In the hope that God the Savior lives.]

With its incorporation of a form of direct address (“Прохожий”/Passerby), the epitaph retains a strong sense of the embodiment of a speaker and listener that is entirely absent in Gray’s original.⁵⁶ The epitaph’s explicit hailing of the passerby and its summons to prayer (as well as the statement of the dead poet’s hope or faith) are the invention of Zhukovsky alone (they do not occur in Gray’s original). The poem imagines its own transformation into a different genre of remembrance—the prayer—and concludes by offering a less fraught opening into the world than the painful meditations of the elegist’s circumscribed interiority. Thus, while the elegist remains a lonely outsider in this scene, the elegy’s final accomplishment is an open conduit for the future circulation of elegiac feeling, and the words engraved in stone stand as meta-poetic statement of faith in the circulation of elegiac voice.

The act of the epigraph’s inscription is, I suggest, performed in the stanzas that preceded it—in a feature which is significantly more marked in Zhukovsky’s translation, and again introducing a more pronounced sense of embodiment than is present in Gray’s original. Inscription requires the repeated tracing of letters onto a surface to ensure their fixity and permanence. One such act is performed in “A Country Churchyard” by the villagers buried in the cemetery whose agricultural labors habitually trace movement over

⁵⁶ Sacks comments, on Gray: “When the swain stops speaking, the poem seems to fall silent. The reader falls into an uncanny solitude. There is no longer a voice to interpose between himself and the epitaph” (Sacks, *The English, Elegy*, 136)

the landscape. Their plowing, as both a literal act and frequent metaphor for poetic composition, foregrounds the action of inscription:

Как часто их серпы златую ниву жали
И плуг их побеждал упорные поля!
Как часто их секир дубравы трепетали
И потом их лица кропилася земля! (1: 53; stanza 7)⁵⁷

[How often their scythes harvested the golden meadow / And their plows
conquered the stubborn field! / How often did their axes shake the oak grove
/ And earth was sprinkled with the sweat of their brow.]

While, as in Gray, it is not the villagers themselves who are the subjects here, but their tools, the final line bestows a degree of physicality on the laboring folk that Gray's villagers do not possess. In Zhukovsky's translation the buried villagers are commemorated not just through their tools and their toils, but as men who are embodied, who possess faces and who sweat from the efforts of their labors. Though Zhukovsky's elegist may remain essentially separated from the villagers, he does imagine the embodied particularity of their lives, opening the way to the circulation of sympathetic feeling for these others, however removed from him they may be.

The lyrical subject goes on to distinguish himself from those who hastily judge the lives and simple graves of the villagers by his proclivity to see the potential, realized or not, contained within these lives—for emotion, power or intellect:

Ах! может быть, под сей могилою таится
Прах сердца нежного, умевшего любить,
И гробожитель-червь в сухой главе гнездится,
Рожденной быть в венце иль мыслями парить! (1: 54; stanza 13)

[Oh, perhaps beneath this stone there hides / The dust of a tender heart,
capable of love, / And the grave-dwelling worm nests in the dry skull / Of
one born to be crowned or soar with thought!]

Here, in "A Country Churchyard," we find another lament for the elegiac future, a might-have-been future that went unrealized in these lives.⁵⁸ The refrain-like declaration "как часто" [how often] occurs again in stanza 15, following the elegist's meditations on the lives of the buried villagers that have been cut short, the lives that might have been (this structural parallel is unique to Zhukovsky's translation):

⁵⁷ Compare the equivalent stanza in Gray's *Elegy*: "Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, / Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke; / How jocund did they drive their team afield! / How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!"

⁵⁸ Writing on Gray's *Elegy*, Thomas Pfau comments that the poem "expands the scope of elegiac writing from commemorating or mourning a particular individual to the melancholic recognition of idealities and potentialities betrayed by modernity's conception of historical time as uniformly progressive." "Mourning Modernity," 552-53.

Как часто редкий перл, волнами сокровенный,
В бездонной пропасти сияет красотой;
Как часто лилия цветет уединенно,
В пустынном воздухе теряя запах свой. (stanza 15)

[How often the rare pearl, concealed by the waves, / Shines with beauty in
the bottomless abyss; / How often the lily blooms in solitude, / Losing its
fragrance in the desert air.]

Now, though, the “как часто” [how often] introduces not just habitude, but “как” [how] also serves its function of announcing analogy. Here the poet appeals to metaphor to illustrate his central belief in the existence of potential, whether it be heeded or not. The metaphor of the pearl concealed on the ocean floor or the flower blooming in the desert wields a universalizing force, strengthening the conviction in potential contained by human lives. The work of this metaphor also intimates the striving contained within the elegy as a whole—of the submerged sensibility which seeks an opening into the world for the circulation of commemorative voice.

The iterated “как часто” [how often] performs the work of inscribing the poet's voice into the physical and aural landscape of the poem, and with this formula the poet forges an equivalence between the movement of his voice and that of the laboring peasants on the land, diminishing the distance that separates them and gesturing toward the universalizing potential in his voice that he aspires to release.

In the final section of the poem, when the swain recounts the elegist's life, his movements also acquire a sense of habitude when the word “часто” [often] appears again, still in the same metrical position:

Он часто по утрам встречался здесь со мною, (1: 56; stanza 27)
[He often met me here in the mornings]

Там часто, в горести беспечной, молчаливой,
Лежал, задумавшись, над светлою рекой; (stanza 28)
[There he often, in uncaring, silent sorrow /
Lay lost in thought by the bright river]

Он часто уходил в дубраву слезы лить (stanza 30)
[He often went into the grove to weep]

The repetition of “как / часто” [how / often] equates the work of the villagers, the elegist and poetry. There is a form of poetically achieved community here after all; all share in the physicality of inscriptive task of the elegy, which culminates in the closing epitaph, ending not in silence, but in the exhortation to the passerby to prayer. Sound is kept in motion. As Walter Ong suggests, writing of oral literary transmission, motion is a defining quality of sound:

There is no way to stop sound and have sound. ... If I stop the movement of sound, I have nothing—only silence, no sound at all. All sensation takes place in time, but no other sensory field totally resists a holding action, stabilization, in quite this way. Vision can register motion, but it can also register immobility. ... We often reduce motion to a series of still shots the better to see what motion is. There is no equivalent of a still shot for sound. An oscillogram is silent. It lies outside the sound world.⁵⁹

The elegiac voice, with its rich appreciation of temporality—of lived past and future potential—sounds and traces movement over the landscape. Emotion, too, unfolds with time, and—as we saw in the understanding of emotion that Zhukovsky advanced—resists stasis; there is no still shot for emotion, either, we might add. In capturing the sounds that move across the evening landscape, the onomatopoeic proclivity of the poet's voice is able to mediate between the scenes of impression and expression. Together, this voice and the movement that inscribes its sense into stone maintain the continuity between the contexts of composition and reception, and express the elegist's hope for the circulation of feeling in the sensible world between embodied individuals.

Sound and Movement: Batiushkov's "On the Ruins of a Castle in Sweden"

As a companion to Zhukovsky's translation of Gray's "Elegy," I include here a reading of Batiushkov's elegy, "On the Ruins of a Castle in Sweden" ("Na razvalinakh zamka v Shvetsii"), written some twelve years after "A Country Churchyard" in 1814.⁶⁰ Batiushkov's elegy both moves us in time closer to Pushkin, to whom the last part of this chapter is devoted, and testifies to the independent life of the theme of sound and inscription in the Russian elegiac tradition. In addition, Batiushkov's elegy will incite us to develop further conclusions about the relationship between sound, motion and the circulation of feeling between individuals.

The same transformation of sound into inscription structures Batiushkov's elegy "On the Ruins of a Castle in Sweden." Like "A Country Churchyard" this poem opens with a landscape at evening, in which a lone lyric subject discerns, alongside rows of graves, the traces of human activity from past times. This is no longer the landscape of pastoral, however, but a historical and coastal landscape, whose ramparts and ditches betray acts of war in distant times, when the skalds (courtly poets in the Old Norse tradition) sang to commemorate historic and heroic deeds.

In Batiushkov's elegy, as in Zhukovsky's, the act of remembrance is dispersed and does not belong exclusively to a single subject (recall the villager who relates the life of the poet to the passerby). In "On the Ruins of a Castle in Sweden," while it is the

⁵⁹ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 1982), 32.

⁶⁰ Frizman observes that in 1815 Batiushkov sought a closer affinity, personally and spiritually, with Zhukovsky (Frizman, *Zhizn' liricheskogo zhanra*, 156).

speaking “I” (“Я здесь;” stanza 2) who situates himself in the landscape and wanders among the ruins, the access to the events of the past occurs as if refracted through another—the traveller (путник—who may or may not be this same “I,” now viewing himself from the outside), paused leaning against the gravestones:

Я здесь, на сих скалах, висящих над водой,
В священном сумраке дубравы
Задумчиво брожу и вижу пред собой
Следы протекших лет и славы:
[...]

Всё тихо: мертвый сон в обители глухой,
Но здесь живет воспоминанье,
И путник, опершись на камень гробовой,
Вкушает сладкое мечтанье.
Там, где виется плющ по лестнице крутой
И ветер колышет стебель иссохшая полыни,
Где месяц осребрил угрюмые твердыни,
Над спящею водой,—

Там воин некогда [...] ⁶¹

[I am here, on these rocks hanging over the water, / in the sacred dusk of an oak wood / I roam lost in contemplation and see in front of me / traces of bygone years and glory [. . .] Everything is quiet: the remote abode is dead asleep, / but a memory lives here, / and a wanderer, leaning on the gravestone, / tastes a sweet dream. / There [it happens], where ivy grows on a steep staircase / and the wind rocks the dry stalks of wormwood / where the new moon covers the gloomy stronghold in silver / over the sleeping waters, - / There, once upon a time, a warrior. . .]

An echo hangs in the air of the eventide scene—the call of a fisherman which now and then reaches the lyrical subject through the quiet: “Лишь изредка рыбарь к товарищам вызывает / Лишь эхо глас его протяжно повторяет / В безмолвии ночном.” [Only now and then a fisherman calls out to his mates / and the echo alone repeats his voice / in the night time silence].⁶² The echo, at the end of the first stanza, establishes a template for the movement which is traced in the poem as a whole. Echo is the repetition and movement of sound through time, reflected off solid surfaces. It stands for the transmission of song across times aided by the material remains of the ruin, which contain and precipitate the unfolding memory. As such, echo is an emblematic trope for elegiac poetics of remembrance.

⁶¹ K. N. Batiushkov, *Polnoe sobranie stikhotvorenii*, ed. N. V. Fridman (Moscow & Leningrad, 1964), 172.

⁶² Ibid., 171-72.

The repetition of echo represents the return of memory: along with the echo of the fisherman's call that comes to the poet in the quiet of the evening, come scenes of the past, animated by the voice of the father who entrusts his son with the sword of his forefathers as he departs for battle. The past and the present eventually blur in the heroic singing of the skalds that fills space and crosses times, as if it too is now made audible in the echo that moves between the ruins:

И там, где камней ряд, седым одетый мхом,
Помост обрушенный являет,
Повременно сова в безмолвии ночном
Пустыню криком оглашает,—
Там чаши радости стучали по столам
Там храбрые кругом с друзьями ликовали,
Там скальды пели брань, и персты их летали
По пламенным струнам.⁶³

[And over there, where a row of stones dressed in gray moss / reveals a ruined platform, / and now and then, in the night time silence, an owl / wakes the wasteland with its cry, / there [once upon a time] the cups of joy clinked on the tables / there the men of courage celebrated with friends, / there the scalds sang battle songs, and their fingers flew / over fiery strings.]

Likewise, the song of the skalds blends with that of the elegist; the act of filial succession whereby the father handed his son the sword of their forefathers foreshadows that by which the elegist will perpetuate and echo—and ultimately surpass—the song of the skalds. Thus Batiushkov's poem openly stages the principle of the elegy whereby “elegists seem to submit, by quotation or translation, to the somehow echoing language of dead poets.”⁶⁴ The patterned repetition of echo performs the same work as the regularity of poetic form—the structuring of time that it may “appear as a familiar filled-in medium rather than as an open-ended source of possible catastrophe.”⁶⁵ Like ritual or music, to both of which it is closely related, the elegy accomplishes its work of consolation by renewing the structure of time through repetition and formal observances.

Batiushkov's elegiac subject, like Zhukovsky's, is distinguished by his attention to sound, by his ability to attend to the smallest sounds in his surroundings. Just as the remains of the ruins provide visible traces of scenes of the past, so too, for the elegist, are the sounds of the quiet evening reminiscent of those of this other time. He imagines the sounds that filled this site then, the loudness of sounds of battle and victory and the songs commemorating them (a modality, in both its volume and emotional tenor (восторг), better matching the ode):

⁶³ Ibid., 173-74.

⁶⁴ Sacks, *The English Elegy*, 25. Compare also Ginzburg's definition of the poetics of the elegy: “Элегическая поэтика – поэтика узнавания. И традиционность, принципиальная повторяемость являются одним из сильнейших ее поэтических средств” (Lidiia Ginzburg, *O lirike*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1974), 29).

⁶⁵ Sacks, *The English Elegy*, 23.

Там пели звук мечей, и свист пернатых стрел,
 И треск щитов и гром ударов,
 [...]
 Там старцы жадный слух склоняли к песне сей,
 Сосуды полные в десницах их дрожали,
 И гордые сердца с восторгом вспоминали
 О славе юных дней.

[There [once upon a time] sang the clashing of the swords and the whistle of feathered arrows / and the crash of shields and the thunder of blows . . . / There the elders bended their greedy ears to hear this song, / the full wine goblets trembled in their hands / and their proud hearts recalled, in raptures, / the glory of by-gone days.]

But now, upon this site, he hears only the wind (markedly elegiac in its tone: “уныло”/doleful)—but its whistle sounds as if a faint echo received of the whistling arrows he had evoked in the previous stanza.

Где прежде скальд гремел на арфе золотой,
 Там ветер свищет лишь уныло!

[Where once upon a time a scald sounded his golden harp, / there [now] only the wind whistles dolefully.]

We might say that Batiushkov's elegy stages the shift from the odic to elegiac sensitivity to sound.⁶⁶ The echo of the bellicose whistling arrows heard in the mournfully whistling wind rehearses a shift similar in sound effects to Derzhavin hearing the thunderous waterfall and Zhukovsky's heeding the rustle of a falling leaf.

In the same way that sound is supplanted by stone at the end of “A Country Churchyard,” and the movement across landscape figuratively performs the inscription with which the poem concludes, so too does the echo which moves across the site of Batiushkov's ruins culminate in the fixity and silence of inscription. The wanderer through these parts may stop to decipher the runes and read of bygone times:

Погибли сильные! Но странник в сих местах
 Не тщетно камни вопрошает
 И руны тайные, преданья на скалах

⁶⁶ For a discussion of different musical instruments associated with literary works during the Classicist epoch, see Ioakhim Klein, “Truba, svirel', lira i gudok (Poetologicheskie simvol'y russkogo klassitsizma),” *Puti kul'turnogo importa: Trudy po russkoi literature XVIII veka* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2005), 219-34. The delicate relationship between the odic and elegiac sensibility is discussed by Luba Golburt, “Derzhavin's Ruins and the Birth of Historical Elegy,” *Slavic Review* Vol. 65 No. 4 (Winter 2006), 670-693. See also Harsha Ram's discussion of historical elegy and the “elegiac sublime,” Harsha Ram, *The Imperial Sublime: A Russian Poetics of Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 160-211.

Угрюмой древности, читает.

[The strong ones have perished! But it is not in vain that a wanderer questions the stones in these lands and reads the enigmatic runes and stories of by-gone doleful days on the rocks.]

Unlike “A Country Churchyard,” however, the living voice does have the last word in this poem, as a local elder implores the passerby to heed the graves of his forefathers:

Оратай ближних сел, склонясь на посох свой,
Гласит ему: «Смотри, о сын иноплеменный,
Здесь тлеют праотцов останки драгоценны:
Почти их гроб святой!»

[The plower of near-by villages, bending over his staff, / tells him: ‘Look, o son of foreign tribes, / here the precious remains of our forefathers decay: / honor their sacred tomb!’]

The command to honor (почти) is not entirely distinct from the incitement to read (прочти). The final stanza, just like that of “A Country Churchyard,” establishes an open-ended context of reception and remembrance which promises to remake the memory and the sensibility attuned to memory in future elegiac subjects. As one recent writer on the lyric observes, the monument and epitaph always comprise a tacit expression of *hope*, “the hope that poems will continue to be read in the future and [for the] epitaphic commemoration of the mortal poet.”⁶⁷

The echo—which sounds at the poem's start and, conceptually, continues to make itself felt and heard as its movement reverberates throughout—represents memory become manifest in the external world; it is an emblematic trope for an elegiac poetics which is located in the material world and speaks for a sensible selfhood.

I would like to suggest one more way in which lyric subjectivity is enriched by poets’ heeding the materiality of sound. Similar in form to the reverberation of echo, images of motion, notably rapid oscillations and alternations (*trepetan'e*) occur often in the elegy. They are a marked feature, for instance, of Zhukovsky’s “Evening. An Elegy” (“Veчер. Elegiia,” 1806) where such tremors are closely allied to the small nuances of sound discerned by the elegist in the evening landscape: “Как тихо веянье зефира по водам / И гибкой ивы трепетанье! [...] // Чуть слышно над ручьем колышется тростник” (1: 75) [How quiet is the blowing of Zephyr over the waters / and the trembling of the lithe willow! . . . // The reeds quiver over the brook with hardly a sound]. The qualities of light and sound that compose the evening scene are most prominent in its initial presentation, and the elegist sees the reflection of a distant town quiver and waver in the ripples of the water illuminated by sunset.⁶⁸ These images seem to blend the

⁶⁷ William Waters, *Poetry's Touch: On Lyric Address* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 106.

⁶⁸ И в зеркале воды колеблющийся град / Багряным блеском озаренны (1: 75).

qualities of the scene with the elegist's own sensibility: the quivering motion observed in nature is at once a marker of the emotional sensitivity of the lyrical subject, an instrument of perception like the finest filament, acutely tuned to the external world and registering the impressions made upon it. The small oscillations of *trepeta*'e are increasingly amplified in the resonating sound of the poem, in the echoes of its rhyme, and in the temporal design it projects—backwards between *now* and the recollected *then*, and forwards, between the *now* of composition and the work's future reception. Just as rhyme seeks its partner and the work seeks its reader, so do the oscillations of sound seek out complement and accord in another—by means of sympathetic vibrations—which animate the strings of a stringed instrument, for instance).

* * *

These are metaphors for subjectivity and fellow feeling that seem well made for poetic form. “Can [prose] chant the elegy?” Virginia Woolf asked in an essay of 1927 that addresses the future of novelistic form. “I think not. That is the penalty it pays for having dispensed with the incantation and the mystery, with rhyme and metre.”⁶⁹ Woolf's poetic prose, however, did not altogether dispense of rhythm and incantation, and she wrote novel-elegies; she even proposed “elegy” as new generic label for her fictions.⁷⁰ Given that the movement from elegy to novel characterizes both this chapter and the longer arc of the dissertation as a whole, reaching into the twentieth century, I will take the liberty of concluding this portion of my discussion with reference to Woolf's long elegiac novel, *The Waves* (1931). In this work, intensely concerned with the aural imagination and the aural landscape (of the city, predominantly), Bernard muses: “Am I not, as I walk, trembling with strange oscillations and vibrations of sympathy, which, unmoored as I am from a private being, bid me embrace these engrossed flocks?”⁷¹ The “vibrations of sympathy” overcome the essential separation between this mourner and the crowds on the city street in the same way as that between Zhukovsky's elegist and the villagers in his pastoral scenes.⁷² The circulation of feeling is imagined between sensible, embodied individuals; the hope for communion is made sensible in the elegist's responsive resonance with the sounds (and other living souls) in the landscape and cityscape.

⁶⁹ Virginia Woolf, “The Narrow Bridge of Art,” *Granite and Rainbow* (San Diego & New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1958), 20.

⁷⁰ Woolf wrote in her diary in 1925: “I have an idea that I will invent a new name for my books to supplant ‘novel’. A new - by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?” (Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume 3 1925-30*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (Penguin: London, 1982), 34.

⁷¹ Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (New York: Harcourt, 1931), 114. Incidentally, Gray's “Elegy” is mentioned in passing in the novel (84). For a fascinating study of *The Waves* in relation to music, and to Beethoven's String Quartet No. 13 in particular, see Elicia Clements, “Transforming Musical Sounds into Words: Narrative Method in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*,” *Narrative* Vol. 13 No. 5 (May 2005), 160-181.

⁷² Elisabeth Le Guin notes that the stringed instrument had been a metaphor for human corporeal responsiveness to the divine since Plato. By the eighteenth century, though, she notes, “what is new in the...use of this metaphor, however, is its emphasis on the idea of bodies resonating not only with God or with the organization of the universe, but *in sympathy with one another*.” (Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 184; emphasis in original.

In bringing together, briefly, the elegiac works of Gray, Zhukovsky and Woolf, we find a curious symmetry established between the two figures who frame the span of this dissertation. In this first chapter, I show how, informed by a growing understanding of temporality and dynamic emotional experience, the elegy becomes a conduit for the sharing and circulation of feeling between individuals, ultimately pointing towards a novelistic configuration of authorial and character consciousness in narrative. In *The Waves*, Woolf's most experimental and poetic novel, all the novel's solidity of setting has melted away, but what remains are speaking voices—lyrical, elegiac subjectivities—exploring ways of mingling and weaving together with other consciousnesses. At the other end of my dissertation, in the final chapter, I will place Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*, a novel which still has conventional setting, and I will explore other new means the novel creates for representing character and the emotion that moves between and around characters.

Hope, Elegy and Empathy: Zhukovsky's Elegy "To K. M. Sokovnina"

To return to the nineteenth century, let us take Zhukovsky's elegy "To K. M. Sokovnina" ("K K. M. S<okovnin>oi"), written in 1803, the year after "A Country Churchyard." In this work, Zhukovsky discovers in the elegy a conduit for the circulation of feeling and empathetic connection with another. In the end, Zhukovsky's valorization of hope allows for the emergence of novelistic potential: a relationship between an "I" (an author or narrator) and an embodied other whose own agency is heeded (a character).

"To K. M. Sokovnina" is the second of a pair of elegies that Zhukovsky wrote in 1803. The first was written upon the death of his good friend, Andrei Turgenev (and bears that name, "Na smerti A<ndreia Turgeneva>").⁷³ This elegy produces a particular vision of hope. As the elegy plots the perplexity and eventual consolation of the lyrical hero's grief, there is a significant transformation in the self's orientation in time, which amounts also to an altered conception of selfhood. The first stanza speaks of "fate" (пок)—unhappy fate that brought his friend's death—while the third and final stanza

⁷³ О друг мой! неужли твой гроб передо мною!
Того ль, несчастный, я от рока ожидал!
Забывшись, я тебя бессмертным почитал...
Святая благодать да будет над тобою!

Покойся, милый прах; твой сон завиден мне!
В сем мире без тебя, оставленный, забвенный,
Я буду странствовать, как в чуждой стороне,
И в горе слезы лить на пепел твой священный!

Прости! не вечно жить! Увидимся опять;
Во гробе нам судьбой назначено свиданье!
Надежда сладкая! приятно ожиданье! --
С каким веселием я буду умирать! (1: 59)

speaks of “hope” (надежда)—the consoling hope that assures a future union in the afterlife. ‘Fate’ and ‘hope’ each project a different vision of the future. “Future” by itself is an undifferentiated extension of time, unoccupied and unshaped by any subject's presence. “Fate” already depicts a scene with an actor; it inserts the individual into time and projects the story of an unfolding life. Yet it strips the individual of agency; it allows only for emotions which are a response to experience, not shaping forces of time and experience. “Hope,” on the other hand, is the subject's own projection of that future, marked and shaped by his own desires and aspirations. Hope is time and emotion fused into one, the habitation of time by a self, their alignment into a mutually determining relationship. And so, by the end of “On the Death of Andrei Turgenev,” the lyrical hero's reconciliation with his own mortality and affirmation of hope is a healing of the spatial-temporal disorientation of grief, a recovery, one might say, of the state of being ‘at home’ in time. The elegy affirms the restoration of hope and a creative, future-oriented vision of time, the lyrical hero is able to incorporate the image of the absent other in the very outlines of that shape which holds open the space of future possibility.

Ekaterina Sokovnina also mourned the death of Andrei Turgenev. Sokovnina was the sister of a school friend of Zhukovsky, Sergei Sokovnin, whose house Zhukovsky often visited together with the Turgenev brothers, Andrei and Aleksandr. Andrei began an affair with Ekaterina, but true feeling existed only on her part. As Andrei's confidant and correspondent, Zhukovsky knew of the relationship and was privy to his friend's view of it. After Andrei's death, Zhukovsky addressed his verses to the grieving Sokovnina as a gesture of friendly consolation, presenting to her, as a gift, the vision of hope that emerged in his first elegy for Turgenev.

К К. М. С<оконнин>ой

Протекших радостей уже не возратить;
 Но в самой скорби есть для сердца наслажденье.
 Ужели все мечта? Напрасно ль слезы лить?
 Ужели наша жизнь есть только привиденье
 И трудная стезя к ничтожеству ведет?
 Ах! нет, мой милый друг, не будем безнадежны;
 Есть пристань верная, есть берег безмятежный;
 Там все погибшее пред нами оживет;
 Незримая рука, простертая над нами,
 Ведет нас к одному различными путями;
 Блаженство наша цель; когда мы к ней придем
 Нам провидение сей тайны не открыло.
 Но рано ль, поздно ли, мы радостно вздохнем:
 Надеждой не вотще нас небо одарило. (1: 59-60)

[“To K. M. Sokovnina”

One can not recover past joys / but grief itself offers a delight to one's heart. /
 Could it be that everything is a only dream? Could our tears be in vain? /
 Could it be that our life is nothing but a ghost / and the difficult path leads us

to nothingness? / Oh no! dear friend, let us not be hopeless, / there is a safe refuge, there is a peaceful shore, / over there everything that has perished will come back to life for us again, / and the unseen hand that leads us / takes us by different routes to the same goal; / bliss is our goal, but when would we reach it? / providence has not opened this mystery to us. / But, sooner or later, we will sigh with joy: / it has not been in vain that heaven gave us hope.]

Zhukovsky's verses of consolation make for an elegy written on behalf of another. They promote a means for the circulation of feeling in the lyric, grounded in empathy, while preserving the particularity of individual experience. The object of loss is shared by both—Turgenev is mourned by both Zhukovsky and Sokovnina—and the poet is able to convert his own experience into an empathetic address to another, the poem's personalized and named reader.

Zhukovsky mourns loss brought about by death, but his poem for Sokovnina, though also written after Turgenev's death, places its emphasis on the loss of unrequited love, now doubled and compounded in its impossibility by death. The metaphorical equivalence between the losses of love and death is commonly invoked in the elegy as genre, but here the two poles of the metaphor belong to the reality of two individuals' experience. The equivalence binds poet and addressee; Zhukovsky's gesture of consolation takes it as a source of empathetic insight, but preserves the specificity of each of their perspectives and experience.

The named addressee of the poem, Sokovnina is both an embodied and voiced other. The lyric subject enters most directly into his addressee's thoughts with the questions he poses, as if doubling her voice in its despair: “Ужели все мечта? Напрасно ль слезы лить? / Ужели наша жизнь есть только привиденье / И трудная стезя к ничтожеству ведет?” [Could it be that everything is a only dream? Could our tears be in vain? / Could it be that our life is nothing but a ghost / and the difficult path leads us to nothingness?]. These questions express the fear of unreality and purposelessness of the past's expended emotion; the uncorroborated, unrequited feeling threatens to leave a diminished sense of selfhood, a mere "ghost" of the self. “Напрасно” [in vain] is a dominant modality of the elegy—it encapsulates the futility and despair of the elegiac subject, whose actions are deprived of effectualness in his setting.

The antidote to “напрасно”, and the substance of the poem's consolation is the existence of hope: “Надеждой не вотще нас небо одарило” [it has not been in vain that heaven gave us hope]. As in the elegy to Turgenev, the possibility for hope is granted here by a religiously inflected belief in the afterlife, but the greater emphasis is placed on the hope which exists in this life. Zhukovsky recreates for Sokovnina in this poem not the content of hope, the image or object to hold in her mind, but the very possibility of hope, its structure and design. As he iterates at the poem's end, hope itself is not given in vain; it is given as a human possibility, a template for emotional experience, a means of situating oneself in relation to time. Zhukovsky is expressing what Bloch would later succinctly formulate: “Hope is not taken *only as an emotion*, as the opposite of fear

(because fear too can of course anticipate), but *more essentially as a directing act of a cognitive kind* (and here the opposite is then not fear, but memory).”⁷⁴

The subject is not at the mercy of emotional insurgence; rather, Zhukovsky advocates possession of this emotional design as a creative principle for future life. Hope gains in its powers of solace through its ability to restore and validate the feeling self, the reality of whose emotional life had been made vulnerable by the losses of unrequited love, and denied all means of finding reconciled incorporation into the future. Thus, this elegy-on-behalf-of-another, like most other conventional elegies, affirms the survival of the mourner: hope is as great and active an instrument of creative potential for this elegiac subject at a remove, as is the voice, whose perpetuity is shored up by the elegy, for the poet himself.

Zhukovsky's gesture in “To K. M. Sokovnina” bares the working of empathy and reveals a special means for the circulation of feeling in the lyric. Though the experience of another remains essentially impossible to possess as one's own, an empathetic understanding is granted by possession of the structural possibility of the emotional response, of understanding the shading and shape of lines which draw the scene and join the feeling subject and the objects of her emotion. While Zhukovsky's verse to Sokovnina, issuing from their situations of loss in friendship and love respectively, already constitutes an empathetic act, the poet's presentation to his addressee of the very capacity and possibility for hope uses the mechanism of empathy—the recognition of the means across which emotional experience is shared—to restore agency and selfhood to the other.

The biographical experience that lies behind the elegy (grief at the death of Turgenev) belongs not just to the lyrical hero (an author) but to another (a character). With his elegy as empathetic act, written on behalf of Sokovnina, Zhukovsky gives potential voice to an embodied other—an act which constitutes one step closer towards the novel.

The Future and the Image of the Other in Pushkin's Elegies of the 1820s

Moving forward to the 1820s and to Pushkin's elegies of this decade, we will continue to discern here the two sources of novelistic potential that are lodged within the elegy: its kernel of narrativity and treatment of temporality that allow for biographical development and the opening up of a relationship between an “I” and an “other.”

With Pushkin's elegies of the 1820s, the genre acquired a new degree of psychological concreteness. This was achieved, as Lydia Ginzburg has shown, through the elegy's encounter with the friendly epistle, so that a concretely biographical authorial image now coincided with the abstract lyrical hero of the elegy. The elegies of Pushkin (and Baratynsky) portrayed a “unified, psychologically concrete lyrical event.”⁷⁵ Often, this “event” relies on the incorporation of the image of the other—be it the beloved or an

⁷⁴ Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 12; (emphasis in original).

⁷⁵ Ginzburg, *O lirike*, 201.

implied reader. The other—now a person, not an echo or an inscribed stone—becomes the guarantor that the poet's voice is sustained, the figure in whom hopes are lodged that hold open in the elegy the space of the future.

Focusing on a number of Pushkin's elegies from 1821-24, I continue to discern the future that these works imagine, projected variously in the poems in question: thematically, through changing considerations of the theme of hope; rhetorically, through questions framing expectation or uncertainty, through future tense or future-oriented assertions; and metapoetically, by incorporating a degree of self-consciousness of the scene of the poem's own future transmission and reception into its meaning-making.

The 1820s sees an increasing orientation toward the future in Pushkin's elegiac consciousness. Tracing the element of futurity in Pushkin's elegies from the 1810s, where the orientation to the future speaks simply of the unsurpassable value of the present moment, to the 1820s, Savelii Senderovich finds this future orientation culminating in the "Elegy" of 1830 ("Extinguished joy of my mad years" / "Bezumnykh let ugasshee vesel'e"): "Но не хочу, о други, умирать; / Я жить хочу, чтоб мыслить и страдать" [But, oh friends, I do not want to die, / I want to live, to think and suffer.]⁷⁶

By altering its temporality, the increasingly dominant orientation toward the future results, according to Senderovich, in the diminution of form of the elegy: "the long shadows of the past are replaced by the short shadows cast by the future onto the present."⁷⁷ My discussion, rather than seeing the increased emphasis on futurity as simply dwindling the reserves of material for elegiac contemplation, draws out a constellation of related ideas, always under modification among Pushkin's elegies of the 1820s. I also venture to find, if not quite a causative line of progression from Pushkin's elegies to *Evgenii Onegin*, then at least traits that give an intimation of principles which will be at work here, where the verse and novel meet.

Recalling our interest in images of trembling motion and sound, let us take, by way of a bridge from the concerns of the previous sections, Pushkin's laconic elegy "I have outlived my desires" ("Ja perezhil svoi zhelan'ia," 1821). At its beginning, this elegy seems to deny upholding any vision of the future.

Я пережил свои желанья,
Я разлюбил свои мечты;
Остались мне одни страданья,
Плоды сердечной пустоты.

Под бурями судьбы жестокой
Увял цветущий мой венец –
Живу печальный, одинокой,
И жду: придет ли мой конец?

⁷⁶ Savelii Senderovich, *Aleteiia. Elegiia Pushkina "Vospominanie" i problemy ego poetiki* (Wiener Slawistischer Almanach Sonderband 8, 1982), 154-56.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

Так, поздним хладом пораженный,
Как бури слышен зимний свист,
Один – на ветке обнаженной
Трепещет запоздалый лист!...⁷⁸

[I have outlived my desires, / I have fallen out of love with my dreams, / only sufferings are left for me, / those fruits of empty heart. // In the storms of cruel fate / my blooming wreath has withered, / and, sad and lonely, I live, / and wait: when will my end come? // In the same way, a late leaf trembles alone on a naked branch, pierced with frost when the winter whistle of a storm sounds.]

The first two lines, striking in their bold, prosaic statement of fact, suggest finitude, the exhaustion of potential in both their meaning and in the linguistic resources they deploy; the language seems to forcibly exclude the possibility of image or metaphor. A metaphor does follow, though, in the final line of the stanza (“Плоды сердечной пустоты”), and in the course of three short stanzas, the poem systematically breaks down the defiance of future development. It brings the elegiac subject out of his sealed-off orientation towards a spent past and into a metaphoric scene which opens into a timeless horizon. Although, on one level, the subject is left vulnerable and facing a hostile fate, I would argue that this elegy in fact accomplishes the redemptive, consolatory task of elegy and that its opening out of temporality is the equivalent of its own poetically achieved vision of hope.

The subject is increasingly decentered as the stanzas progress. While the first stanza strongly asserts the lyrical subject’s “I”, the second contains only verbs without pronouns, and in the third the personalized subject is absent altogether, supplanted by poetic image. What is more, in a reversal of the typical elegiac departure from the present to zoom in on the lost past, the seemingly unyielding past tense of the opening statements is eventually replaced by present tense utterances. After the first stanza’s statement of finitude, its defiance of movement in time, the second stanza allows for the temporal horizon to open out somewhat. Though its final question is concerned only with death, the very utterance of a question rhetorically grants an aspect of futurity by positioning the speaker in expectation of response (underscored by the “жду” [I wait] which introduces this question). The third stanza attains a kind of timelessness as it delivers the subject into metaphor, the poetic medium. Now the subject is transformed into the solitary leaf that clings onto the branch trembling in the storm.

There is an implied subject too, endowed with the sense of hearing—the one to whom is audible that “зимний свист” [winter’s whistle]. A fragile link exists between the subject and the landscape—the contact of audibility—that is able to arouse motion in the solitary leaf that trembles as it clings to the branch. The sound is both heard and felt: the wind whistles and sets the single leaf atremble (much like the rhyme of *svist* and *list*

⁷⁸ A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, ed. M. A. Tsiavlovskii, B. Tomashevskii, et al., 17 vols. (Leningrad: Akademiia nauk, 1937-54), 2.i: 165. Hereafter references to Pushkin’s work will be given in abbreviated references from this collection, cited as volume and page number.

is audible, while also making felt the contact between the words). At its conclusion this elegy assures a kind of poetic perpetuity; it reasserts the poetic voice in its command of metaphor and restores a subject who exists in a relationship to the sound and the aural environment, who is sensitive to and animated by sound. The timelessness of the metaphoric scene attests to the consolation of poetry. I point to the subject's restored relationship with the aural environment in this poem as a symbolic gesture of re-establishing contact and exchange between the scenes of impression and expression, composition and reception.

If "I have outlived my desires" assures, by its end, a poetic perpetuity by reasserting the poetic voice in its command of metaphor and restoring the subject's relationship to the sound and the aural environment, then the theme of the continuity of the sounding voice is taken up more explicitly by the later elegy "Soon I shall fall silent!..." ("Umolknu skoro ia!..." 1821; first published 1826). Here, in addition, the need emerges for the image of the other in order to maintain the sounding voice—a principle which will recur and be subject to development in Pushkin's subsequent elegies.

"Soon I shall fall silent!..." is a self-elegy, describing the poet's hopes for the preservation of his memory and perpetuation of his love. The opening words project the space of the poem as a future whose dimensions are held open by the sounding voice. Looking ahead to the time of his death, the poet lists four hypothetical events upon which his rightful commemoration rests. The conditional words "Но если..." [But if...] are repeated four times before their deferred fulfillment. Such syntax recasts the same temporal design as the poem's opening words; it also draws out time into the future, all the while with the final closure of the conditional statement in sight and presumed by the utterance's structure.

The poem charts the passage of the poet's memory through different agents, where, at every turn (in the subjects of each of the "Но если..." [But if...] clauses), it is associated with some element of sound or degree of silence, progressing from the most impersonal to the most intimate, from the play of stringed instruments, to the silent reflection of young friends, and finally to the beloved "you" who utters verses of lament into the hush. The poet singles out his language to be loved before he himself becomes the subject of the fourth conditional utterance, "Но если я любим" [But if I am loved]. This movement toward the increasingly intimate comes to rest in his own person, and allows the voice of his beloved and the tune of the lyre to mingle there:

Но если я любим...позволь, о милый друг,
Позволь одушевить прощальный лиры звук
Заветным именем любовницы прекрасной!... (2.i: 208)

[But if I am loved . . . let me, o my dear friend, / let me bring to life the
farewell sound of my lyre / with the sacred name of my beautiful beloved]

The ventriloquized voice of the beloved is woven in with and enabled by the poet's own, completing the rhymes he initiated from the preceding two lines:

Когда меня навек обымет смертный сон,

Над урной моей промолви с умилением:
Он мною был любим, он мне был одолжен
И песен и любви последним вдохновеньем.

[When I will be forever enveloped by deadly sleep, / Do say with tender
emotion over my urn: / he was loved by me, he was indebted to me for the
last inspiration of both his songs and his love.]

The poem accomplishes the restoration of the poet's voice through that of the beloved other (albeit subordinate to his own will), crediting her with the powers of the muse and providing her the words to commend his memory and his poetry and to sound on into the silence of the poem's close. The commemoration that the elegy finally imagines for the poet thus incorporates all three of the elements of the preceding conditional phrases—music, voice and respectful silence. Joining the lyre and the voice of his beloved is also, we might imagine, the respectful silence of the reader (doubling the silent pose of the young friends who marvel at the poet's long suffering in love). The poem substitutes its opening promise of silence with a fulfilled exhortation to speak aloud, and replaces the circumscribed future of the opening line with an open-ended guarantor of memory.

Two subsequent elegies, "I love your obscure twilight" ("Liubliu vash sumrak neizvestnyi," 1822) and "While youthfully breathing sweet hope" ("Nadezhdoi sladostnoi mladensheski dysha," 1823) share a common theme, each juxtaposing two competing visions of the future: youthful hopes for the consolation of lost love in the afterlife are supplanted by a materialist-atheist stance which sees the total annihilation of consciousness after death. Both poems also adhere to and develop the principle laid out in "Soon I shall fall silent!..." namely, the need to grant the poet and his voice longevity by incorporating the image of the other.

"I love your obscure twilight" opens with an apostrophe to poetry in praise of its "благословенные мечты" [noble dreams], its vision and creations—specifically those of an elegiac scene: the paradigmatic twilight setting, in which the "тайные светы" [secret blooms] are suggestive of the elegiac subject's concealed interiority and its lyrical reflections (2.i: 255). Singled out and cherished, these elements of poetry remain part obscure in nature, unyielding to full disclosure. Indeed, the poem as a whole does not fully disclose which of the two possibilities for views of life after death it ultimately ascribes to—the spectral visitations to earth which offer reunion and consolation or the definitive extinguishing of consciousness and sensation.

Pushkin conforms to a tradition by beginning with an evocation of evening time—though the elegiac topos is present here less as physical setting, and rather in the abstract, for it is the common motif of the genre that is hailed by the speaker (the "your" of the first line might almost refer to the genre of elegy itself). The apostrophized evening time is now wed to the purpose of questioning the assumptions and remit of the elegy, thereby renewing the symbolic value of one of its most common topoi. The evening scene functions here not as a pathetic fallacy or a symbolically liminal time, a landscape into which the subject and his thoughts on the boundary of life and death dissolve; it underlies not the emotive mood of the poem, but rather its analytical structure. The eventide poise

and transition mimics the advance of the lyric's own discursive consideration of successive viewpoints, its consideration of the two possible visions of life after death. After the opening four-line apostrophe, each possibility is described in twelve lines, but the single visible break on the page comes after sixteen lines, marking the point where the speaking subject passes from numbering himself among the living to envisaging his own death. The first stanza focuses on the collective experience of the living, to whom the elegiac poets offer the possibility of consolation and contact with the departed. This gestures to one remit of the elegy—to restore or compensate for the place occupied by the dead in a communal world of relationships. In the second stanza, where the speaker contemplates the prospect of his total annihilation, the nature of the elegiac task shifts. Now, as the speaker wonders “Тоску любви забуду я?” [Will I forget the yearning of love?], the issue that comes to the fore is the preservation of individual memory and feeling. The question looks back to the otherwise undisclosed biography of the poet (his past love), and projects his own death with the threatened doubled loss of that memory.

Between these two stanzas there is also a shift in the audibility of the poet's voice; the poet's slide from the company of the living into his projected death is accompanied by a rhetorical silencing of voice. The dominant mode of apostrophe in the first stanza and its direct address to the poets who have furnished their willing believers with consoling images of the hereafter signals the sounding out loud of the voice. Though the first addressee of the poem is the personified “noble dreams” of poetry, it summons community around the elegy by appealing to those familiar with its conventions and topoi. In the second stanza, on the other hand, the absence of a direct addressee coupled with more hesitant rhetoric (“Но, может быть, мечты пустые” [But may be these are empty dreams]) is suggestive of this voice's quietening. Now it sounds either in the silence of interiority or in imagined solitude.

The poem brings to the surface the same tension as is at work in “A Country Churchyard,” the painfully occluded sensibility of the elegist and its aspiration to find an opening into the social world. However, with the incorporation of the metapoetic design—the poem's self-consciousness of its own utterance and implicit hopes for its own future transmission—the poem offers a resolution which displaces the stark opposition of envisioned futures, without entirely foreclosing the possibility for truth in either of them. As in “Soon I shall fall silent!...” the sounding voice is granted longevity by incorporating the image of the other—this time not through a replacement-successor to that voice, but through a validating, participating interlocutor.

The unanswered question with which it closes perpetually sounds a note that opens into the future, gesturing toward the preserved memory of both the poet and his love, and seeking the dialogic moment. Imagining, in the second stanza, the strict materialist's view of the annihilated consciousness and sensation after death, the lyrical subject speaks not of “existence” that is devoured, but of the “imperfection of existence”: “Где чистый пламень пожирает / Несовершенство бытия, / Минутных жизни впечатлений / Не сохранит душа моя” [Where the pure fire devours / the imperfection of being, / there my soul will not preserve/ the fleeting impressions of life].

A surprising degree of emphasis falls on “imperfection” (or “incompleteness,” несовершенство) rather than “existence” per se. Contained in these lines is a suggestive image of personhood—as an assembly of all life's small and fleeting impressions—a sum

of experience which is not equal to the totality of existence; rather, this accumulated experience is brought to bear on each context and aligned in each moment of contact.

The poem's conclusion confirms the status of those "noble dreams" hailed at its start—that the only certainty of consolation lies in poetry itself. Whether the poet's fate is to join the feast of shades or submit to the finality of death remains unresolved, but the redemptive moment of contact and union is enacted in the encounter between the poem and its reader, where the "incompleteness of existence" finds consummation, and the collection of "fleeting impressions" are aligned in a lyrical event.

The elegy of the following year, "While youthfully breathing sweet hope" is thematically very close to "I love your obscure twilight." It too expresses the revision of youthful hopes in the afterlife—but it is more adamant about the replacement of such hope with the certainty of annihilation in death. Like "I love your obscure twilight," "While youthfully breathing sweet hope" ends by projecting a future. Now this is not in the uncertain form of a question, but in the bold assertion of a desire: "И долго жить хочу, чтоб долго образ милый / Таился и пылал в душе моей унылой" (2.1: 295) [I want to live long, so that the dear image may hide long and burn in my doleful soul].

The vague shapes of time—"когда бы," "некогда," "давно бы" [whenever, once upon a time, a long time ago]—and their ethereal dreams—"Где мысль одна плывет в небесной чистоте" [Where the thought alone floats in the purity of the sky]—are replaced by the firmly molded future in the twice repeated "долго" [long] and the strong, finite, future-oriented verb "хочу" [I wish] of the penultimate line. The youthful hopes allow the poet to imagine flight to an otherworldly ether awash uniquely with the thought of his love. With the espousal of the materialist's point of view and the resolve to live long, the dream of finding everywhere the traces of love is replaced by secure knowledge of its inwardly guarded image and memory: "чтоб долго образ милый / Таился и пылал в душе моей унылой" [so that the dear image may hide long and burn in my doleful soul]. Such a shift exchanges not just the otherworldly for the lived, but also the rejection of finding one's own subjectivity reflected everywhere in favor of its concentrated reserves accessible within—a shift which parallels Pushkin's noted avoidance of pathetic fallacy elsewhere in the poems of the 1820s.

The poem pivots on the word "тщетно" [in vain]—a common modality (expressed also by its synonym "напрасно") of the elegy and the elegiac subject's thwarted strivings—but now those efforts in vain are applied to the would-be redemptive activity of the elegy itself: "Но тщетно предаюсь обманчивой мечте; / Мой ум упорствует, надежду презирает..." [But it is in vain that I indulge in a delusive dream, / My reason is stubborn and it despises hope...] The elegy cannot be said to fail or undermine the genre, however. For one, it upholds the convention of affirming the voice and presence of the speaking subject (in the only true finite verbs connected to the lyrical "I", "гляжу" and "хочу" in the final lines). Moreover, although "I love your obscure twilight" and "While youthfully breathing sweet hope" overturn the model of elegiac consolation exemplified, say, in Batiushkov's "The Shade of a Friend" ("Ten' druga," 1814)—spectral communion in this world or the next—they propose a different kind of solace: the preserved memory of the loss, not its restoration or substitution, and the incorporation of the image of the other in the self as constant presence rather than its externalization as attainable object.

Read metapoetically, the poet's final proclamation of the life to be lived long asserts also the longevity of the poem, whose transmission will preserve and remake the image of the beloved—and, in addition, enact a new instance of contact at each scene of its reception, where the reader or recipient of the poem comes to fulfill the sustaining role of the other's image, joining in the act of co-creation.

The variety of hope that the poem scorns we might describe in the terms of Bloch as a “filled emotion,” “one in which objectively nothing new happens”—only the attainment of the already conceived object. It is replaced, though not named as such, by hope which is a truly “expectant emotion”—one which “essentially impl[ies] a real future”—the long life extends forward, counterbalanced by the richness of memory, held open with the aid of the image of the other. The pulse of biographical movement in this renewed brand of hope is not so much movement towards—or the gratification of desire—as movement together—or co-creation.

‘First Snow’ and Firstness in *Evgenii Onegin*: Elegy, Empathy, Narrative and the Novel in Verse

What bearing might the present discussion of the elegy—of Pushkin and his predecessor's—have on that genre's presence in *Evgenii Onegin* (1823-31)?

I began by asserting the narrative movement that underlies elegy: the sequentiality of the movement from loss to future consolation is the ontological premise on which the genre is founded regardless of whether this narrativity is explicitly represented. I have drawn particular attention to the futurity that the elegy projects and the emotion of hope which holds open that future. One variety of the future I have referred to as the “elegiac future,” the “might have been.” The leading example of this comes in “A Country Churchyard,” with the elegist's meditations on the unrealized lives of those buried in the village graveyard. If it were a grammatical tense, the elegiac future would be a negated “will have been,” a mourned future possibility that never was, the loss of ideality or potentiality together with the loss of the empirical or biographical past. The imagining of an elegiac future asserts the impulse to narrativity inherent in biography, but at the same time thwarts its development. In turning my attention to *Evgenii Onegin*, I am interested in how elegy and narrative proper converge in the hybrid genre of novel-in-verse.

Scholarship on *Evgenii Onegin* has, of course, already undertaken to investigate the place of the elegy in *Evgenii Onegin*: Bakhtin has famously shown how the incorporation of elegiac language in the author-narrator's presentation of Lensky's song (6: 35; Chapter two, stanza X), provides a salient example of “чужой язык” (the language of the other), advancing *Evgenii Onegin*'s claim on the novelistic and Bakhtin's definition of the novel.⁷⁹ Scholarship has also discussed how the highly equivocal treatment of the elegy in Pushkin's novel in verse: the author-narrator juxtaposes the elegy and ode and engages with Kiukhel'beker's 1824 invective against the

⁷⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse,” *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, tr. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 43-47.

contemporary elegy (6: 86-87; Chapter Four, stanzas XXXII-III).⁸⁰ Then, though he mocks the elegiac verse Lensky composes before his death, (6: 125-27; Six, XXI-XXIII), the author-narrator's reflections on his own aging later embrace the elegiac mode and bring it close to his own person (6: 136-37; Six, XLIV).

I too am interested in the relation of the elegy to the novelistic and the narrator's elegiac bent. However, I approach the question from a different perspective. I am interested in the different temporal shapes that elegy and narrative confer on experience—that is to say, memory's retrospective cast in the elegy versus narrative insistence on sequentiality, or the suspended moment of lyric time versus the forward pressing movement of narrative and plot. How and to what effect is the elegy, as a paradigmatic template of emotional experience, incorporated into narrative temporality? How is lyric, and specifically elegiac, subjectivity incorporated or transformed in the intersubjective realm of novelistic narrative? How does this meeting of elegy and narrative define the emotional tenor of creation for the author-narrator of *Evgenii Onegin*?

I also focus on a different instance of elegy in *Evgenii Onegin* from Lensky's parodied verse—Prince Viazemsky's elegy of 1819, "First Snow" ("Pervyi sneg"). This elegy informs Pushkin's novel in verse from the very start: it provides the epigraph to the first chapter: "И жить торопится, и чувствовать спешит" (6: 5) [To live, it hurries, and to feel it hastes].⁸¹ Through the epigraph, "First Snow" introduces *Evgenii Onegin*'s important theme of maturation. In addition, Viazemsky's elegy designs a specific template of experience—which I term "firstness"—and which, I suggest, is of special significance to the positions of creation and reception that are modeled in *Evgenii Onegin*.

By "firstness" I mean the marked quality of an experience that is had for the first time, typified by the experience of first love. (We might recall here that Olga, we are led to believe, is Lensky's first love.) Viazemsky's "First Snow" offers a sustained meditation on the condition of firstness by aligning two instances of it: the first snow of winter and the first frissons of romance. The detailed description of the winter scene that comprises the first half of the poem becomes the setting for the memory of a moment of amorous delight and erotic anticipation.

Счастлив, кто испытал прогулки зимней сладость!
Кто в тесноте саней с красавицей молодой,
Ревнивых не боясь, сидел нога с ногой,
Жал руку, нежную в самом сопротивленье,
И в сердце девственном впервой любви смятенья,
И думу первую, и первый вздох зажег,
В победе сей других побед прияв залог.⁸²

⁸⁰ References to *Evgenii Onegin* will include the Chapter and stanza number after the volume and page number.

⁸¹ The epigraph was added only in 1829. References to Viazemsky's poem return in the later descriptions of winter, and the poet is even granted a character appearance with Tatiana, offering her brief respite from the tedium of society life (6: 160; Seven, XLIX).

⁸² P. A. Viazemskii, *Stikhotvoreniia*, ed. L. Ia. Ginzburg (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1958), 131.

[Happy is the one who has experienced the sweetness of a winter ride, / who cooped up in a narrow sleigh with a young beauty / leg pressed to leg, without fearing the jealous ones, / who held her hand that was tender even as it resisted, / and who has roused the first perturbations of love, and the first thought, and the first sigh in a virginal heart, and who has taken this first victory for a promise of yet other conquests to come.]

The moment's delight comes from its intimation of what will follow—its erotically charged firstness, full of desire and hopeful expectation. The moment of firstness is always conjured in successive moments of passion—just as the first snow of winter returns with each year—and though love may not have lasted and feelings are expended, the moment of firstness, cleaves to memory and proves inviolable.

И самая любовь, нам изменив, как ты,
Приводит к опыту безжалостным уроком
И, чувства истощив, на сердце одиноком
Нам оставляет след угаснувшей мечты.
Но в памяти души живут души утраты.
Воспоминание, как чародей богатый,
Из пепла хладного минувшее зовет
И глас умолкшему и праху жизнь дает.
...
О первенец зимы, блестящей и угрюмой!
Снег первый, наших нив о девственная ткань!⁸³

[And love itself, having deceived us, as you did, / leads us to experience by way of its cruel lesson. / And having exhausted the feelings, it leaves on our lonely heart traces of an extinguished dream. But the losses of our soul keep living in the memory of our soul. The memory, like a resplendent magician, conjures the past from cold ashes, / gives voice to what has fallen silent and gives life to the dust. . . . Oh you, firstborn of the splendid and doleful winter! The first snow, you are the virginal cover of our fields!]

The winter amorousness in turn gives way to reflection on the accumulation of experience and the workings of memory. The trace—след—left in memory is linked to that trace left by the sledge passing over fresh snow.

But memory preserves both the soul's losses and its hopes. And its hopes, though faded, still contain the vision of possibility attendant at the moment of firstness. Thus the first, recollected, contains a double plentitude of both all that follows and all that *might have* followed. It is not just for its stimulus to memory that the poet celebrates winter's onset over spring's fresh dew, but for the restoration of this state of firstness, of live

⁸³ Ibid., 131-32.

potential. There is a space left in the poem for “the elegiac future”—the recollection or imagination of a future that stems from a past moment now lost.

There is, then, a distinction to “First Snow,” that is shared, conceptually, with “A Country Churchyard,” and that comes to define the narratorial stance in *Evgenii Onegin*. The live potential of a “might have been” future contained within a remembered state of firstness bears some resemblance to the unrealized potential that Zhukovsky’s elegist heeded in the lives of the buried villagers. The live potential of firstness also promotes a vision—or narrative—of the future that is open to contingency.

“First Snow” is an elegy that contains a kernel of narrativity, or rather, it brings out the narrativity that is latent and deeply embedded in the genre. In its most basic template, the elegy possesses a closed, retrospective form, opposed to the accommodation of contingency (an attempt to counter the ultimate contingency of death that lies at its generic core). In the case of “First Snow,” however, the workings of memory allow for a modification of the elegy’s typical retrospective cast and incorporate a vision of the future, open to all contingencies. With this, the potential for narrative sequentiality opens out of the lyric moment of suspended time or the closed circuit of elegiac retrospection.

As I noted earlier in this discussion, Pushkin’s own elegies of the 1820s, in the period preceding and overlapping with the composition of *Evgenii Onegin*, are marked by an increasing emphasis on futurity. One might see this growing future orientation of Pushkin’s elegies as finding one culmination in the presentation of Lensky’s double fate, finally admitting to the generic space of the elegy a distinct openness to contingency.

The narrator of *Evgenii Onegin* bestows an “elegiac future” on Lensky in his presentation of the dead poet’s two possible fates (or might-have-been futures): a great poetic talent may have been deprived of its flourishing, or the elegist manqué may have been delivered from a thoroughly unpoetic fate of dressing-gowned old age (6: 133-34; Six, XXXVII-XXXVIII). *Evgenii Onegin*’s conflicting attitudes around the elegy find a means of co-existing here in the author-narrator’s response to Lensky’s death. Though he may be mocked as cliché-dependent elegist, Lensky is, in the end, ennobled by the author-narrator’s inclusive vision of the future. Yuri Lotman finds an important principle for the work encapsulated here—the juxtaposition of outcomes illustrates the generosity of irony in Pushkin’s text and the plenitude of co-existing potentials to which this irony ultimately attests: “What is important for Pushkin is the thought that a human life is nothing but one of the possibilities for the realization of his inner potential, and that the true essence of one’s character is revealed only in the whole complex of both realized and unrealized potentials.”⁸⁴

It is my contention that the operation of memory presented in “First Snow” can spawn its own gesture Pushkinian generosity. “First Snow” lays value upon the ability to heed the specificity of the moment of firstness detached from all that followed. Heeding the principle of firstness not just in our experience, but in the experience of others, contains, I argue, the possibility of breeding a certain form of empathy. The ability to see

⁸⁴ Iurii Lotman, *Roman A. S. Pushkina “Evgenii Onegin.” Kommentarii* (Leningrad: Prosveshchenie, 1980), 308. [Для Пушкина важна мысль о том, что жизнь человека—лишь одна из возможностей реализации его внутренних данных и что подлинная основа характера раскрывается только в совокупности реализованных и нереализованных возможностей.]

and preserve the value in firstness should enable one to empathically grant others the firstness of their own experience—a stance increasingly required to be adopted with age, as younger generations come to repeat the experience of their elders.

Transferred from the lyric, to the intersubjective realm of the novel, the template of emotional experience for heeding firstness determines relationships between narrators and characters, authors and readers. Studies of Pushkin have laid much emphasis on the poet's awareness of the institutional requirements for the propagation of literature, but he is also attentive to the psychological conditions of story-telling. I would suggest that *Evgenii Onegin* recognizes the condition of firstness as important for the circulation of stories and the creation of relationships that attend at their telling.

The narrator brings forth a scene of generational difference in his analogy comparing the emotional attitudes of tellers to their stories in Chapter Two.

Когда прибегнем мы под знамя
Благоразумной тишины,
Когда страстей угаснет пламя,
И нам становятся смешны
Их своевольство иль порывы
И запоздалые отзывы, —
Смирение не без труда,
Мы любим слушать иногда
Страстей чужих язык мятежный,
Так точно старый инвалид
Охотно клонит слух прилежный
Рассказам юных усачей,
Забывший в хижине своей. (6: 39; Two, XVIII)

[When we've retreated to the banner
of calm and reason, when the flame
of passion's out, and its whole manner
become a joke to us, its game,
its wayward tricks, its violent surging,
its echoes, its belated urging,
reduced to sense, not without pain —
we sometimes like to hear again
passion's rough language talked by others,
and feel once more emotion's ban.
So a disabled soldier-man,
retired, forgotten by his brothers, in his small shack, will listen well
to tales that young moustachios tell.]⁸⁵

The scene of the aging veteran who listens to the tales of young moustachio'ed officers reveals that even when we regard our own experience with the distance of cool

⁸⁵ Alexander Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*, trans. Charles Johnston (London: Penguin, 1979), 72.

reflection, we can still grant fullness to others' live passions and derive pleasure from the stories animated by these passions. This condition is favorable—necessary, even—to the telling and transmission of stories. This stanza captures not a scene of literary transmission in its institutional context, but presents story-telling in its experiential aspect for both teller and listeners. There are two ages of story-telling—youth and maturity. Narrative community and continuity depend on the gap between them being bridged by the granting of firstness.

The stanza quoted above provides the motivation for the emergence of a third person narrator-function. Generational succession introduces the principle of narrative sequentiality, which allows for the distance of reflection to open up, and, in turn, for the formal and rhetorical detachment of a novelistic narrator.

The author-narrator of *Evgenii Onegin*, the novel in verse, bears a resemblance, then, to Viazemsky's elegist. The subject of "First Snow" recognizes the fervor of youth, its impatience for passion, its desire to hasten and concentrate in the present all it believes it knows already through expectation (the sentiment contained in "И жизнь торопится, и чувствовать спешит" [To live, it hurries, and to feel it hastes]). But in the end, Viazemsky's elegist also relishes the pleasure of maturity, the pleasure that comes with the repetition in each winter's return rather than the headlong rush to novelty. The poet's heralding of first snow announces his fidelity to the specificity of memory and feeling, but is combined with a meditative regard for the future, won with experience. We have here a formative template for the biographical form of the novel.

In this sense, then, "First Snow" seems to encapsulate, in miniature, a model for the maturation of *Evgenii Onegin*'s author-narrator, whose biography and own elegiac reflections run through the work: it introduces consciousness of a shift that comes with age from the headlong rush into one's own experience towards the recognition of others' novelty in their experience. The solipsistic elegiac reflections of the aging self are opened out into inter-generational relations. The suspended lyric moment with its closed circuit of temporality (the *I now* and the *I then*) is replaced by the forward moving present of narrative—the present inhabited by the *I now* and the *other now*. What has emerged is the novelistic configuration of author, narrator and character.

As something of an aside, I would like to suggest that in the context of the belatedness of the Russian novel *Evgenii Onegin* grants an experience of firstness. The impossibility of firstness is a cultural anxiety felt in Russian literary history, with its dependence on imitation and borrowing from western European models. In an altogether different instance of firstness, Viazemsky coined the word "*narodnost*" (national character) in 1819 in a letter to Alexandr Turgenev in which he speaks of the poem.⁸⁶ "First Snow" modifies the elegiac template so that its dominant mood is not one of melancholic recollection, but a recognition and celebration of firstness. And with its celebration of the Russian winter (which Pushkin was also to acknowledge in *Evgenii Onegin*), neither does the poem express the melancholy of exhausted cultural forms. The "*narodnost*" of "First Snow" lies in the lengthy and heady description of winter that takes up the first half of "First Snow" has the effect of making the emotions described in

⁸⁶ Letter to A. I. Turgenev of November 22, 1819, cited in N. I. Mordovchenko, *Russkaia kritika pervoi chetverti XIX veka* (Moscow & Leningrad: Akademiia nauk), 296.

the second half appear to be distinctly and uniquely Russian. Taken together, “First Snow” and *Evgenii Onegin* also express their generosity in granting and valorizing an experience of firstness on the plane of Russian literary history, where firstness in the context of belatedness takes on a special conciliatory value. In its blend of the poetic and the prosaic, the realia of Russian life and lyrical digression, and its play on the boundaries of literary and non-literary convention, *Evgenii Onegin* revives and celebrates literature’s intrinsic potential and salvages it from a fate of simply reiterating tired generic forms.

To conclude this discussion of elegy and narrative, though, and open the way to the discussion of prose forms which follows in the remainder of this dissertation: I hope to have shown how, as the counterbalance to the memory and the regard for the lost past in the elegy, the genre also looks to and projects a future. In the special case of elegiac temporality and subjectivity that I call “firstness,” memory as the impulse to elegiac reflection actually opens the way to the imagination of the future, to might-have-beens, to narrative sequentiality and to the forking paths of possibility that plot manipulates.

Looking ahead to the reading of novels in this dissertation, the principle of firstness obtains an equivalence in the relationship between authors and their readers: the “experienced” creators of worlds of fictions benevolently grant their “inexperienced” readers their own novelty upon entering. Such “firstness” is a luxury that scholarly or critical readers are rarely permitted.⁸⁷ A reader’s emotional experience of reading for the first time is, of course, quite different to a re-reading. Our emotional responses unfold in “real time,” as it were, in the novel’s own manipulations of its temporal form. A first reading is an act of novel-reading that seems like what Nicholas Dames has called “a performance—a performance enacted in and by the nerves—rather than an encounter with an object.”⁸⁸ Though not claiming to be readings “for the first time,” the readings of the three novels that follow—of *The Idiot*, *Anna Karenina* and *To the Lighthouse*—all take heed of the novel’s temporality in the sense that the movement of their narratives influence the ways we are moved as readers. and its consequences for literary experiences of emotion. Submitting to the novel’s own temporality, the movement of narrative and of time passing, we, as readers, experience the novel’s emotion “performed in our own nerves,” or embodied in our own selves.

⁸⁷ Gary Saul Morson, has recently advocated the value of reading “as if for the first time” (Gary Saul Morson, *Seeing More Wisely: Anna Karenina in Our Time*), 58-59.

⁸⁸ Nicholas Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel: Reading, Neural Science, and the Form of Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11.

Chapter Two

Embarrassment in *The Idiot*

The novels of Dostoevsky are seething whirlpools, gyrating sandstorms, waterspouts which hiss and boil and suck us in. They are composed purely and wholly of the stuff of the soul. Against our wills we are drawn in, whirled round, blinded, suffocated, and at the same time filled with a giddy rapture. Out of Shakespeare there is no more exciting reading. We open the door and find ourselves in a room full of Russian generals, the tutors of Russian generals, their step-daughters and cousins, and crowds of miscellaneous people who are all talking at the tops of their voices about their most private affairs. But where are we? Surely it is the part of a novelist to inform us whether we are in an hotel, a flat, or hired lodging. Nobody thinks of explaining.

Virginia Woolf, "The Russian Point of View"

In her 1925 essay, "The Russian Point of View," Virginia Woolf describes what it feels like to be in the world of Dostoevsky's fictions.¹ She translates the combined emotional and cognitive effects of this world into physical sensation, speaking of the reader's involvement on the same plane as the characters—our imagined physical presence in the rooms that they populate—and also of the extra-diegetic plane—the reader's interaction with the narrator, where "*Nobody thinks of explaining*," nobody thinks of setting the scene or clarifying the action.

My discussion of *The Idiot* (1868-69) is grounded in the idea that so often what it feels like to be in the world of this novel, on both planes, is, simply, embarrassing, sometimes excruciatingly, viscerally so. The "crowds of miscellaneous people [...] all talking at the tops of their voices about their most private affairs" that Woolf refers to were no doubt a particular affront to her contemporaries—those readers who came to Constance Garnett's 1913 translation of *The Idiot* more accustomed to the decorous social world of the English novel. Of all Dostoevsky's novels, *The Idiot* is the closest, with its marriage plots and drawing room conversation, to a novel of manners, yet its embarrassments stem from actions far more dissonant and transgressive than the social slips and errors of judgment of, say, the novels of Jane Austen. To readers of all eras, Dostoevsky's "novel of bad manners" appears as a kind of embarrassment of genre, violating both generic and behavioral norms.²

¹ Virginia Woolf, "The Russian Point of View," *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 4: 184

² In her study of the blush in the English novel, which begins with Austen, Mary Ann O'Farrell identifies "the novel of manners as the form that—in part by teaching the legible blush—teaches the body to behave in public." Mary Ann O'Farrell, *Telling Complexions: The Nineteenth-Century English Novel and the Blush* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997), 8. In Dostoevsky's novel of bad manners,

Embarrassment dominates the affective tenor of *The Idiot*.³ It is a novel studded with the blushes, outbursts, verbal and physical breakdowns that acute embarrassment brings on. As we read, moving along in pursuit of narrative, we cringe, both compelled and repelled by the dreadful expectation of a scandal's impending breaking point. And once completed, the novel is preserved in memory most readily as a series of emotionally charged, densely populated scenes that each culminate in high drama and shattered decorum—the notorious Dostoevskian scandal scenes. A slanderous newspaper article is read aloud, damning in its public insinuations, and followed by the exposure of its mendacious authors. A tormented heroine strikes an officer with a riding crop before the public assembled to hear an orchestra play at the vauxhall pleasure gardens. A young consumptive declaims a lengthy speech before attempting, and failing, to commit suicide in the presence of guests at a Prince's birthday party. Embarrassment is palpable in the novel in these—and other—climactic moments of revelation and transgression, but it also suffuses the novel's atmosphere more generally. Agitated and unstable, the society depicted in *The Idiot* lacks a coherent or organic network of social ties; it is suspended in a constant, precarious state of anxiety-embarrassment. Loosened from any kind of established order or hierarchy, its characters operate in a state of anxiety at the ever-present possibility of unchecked transgression and its attendant embarrassment. At the same time, these inhabitants of Petersburg are beset by an anxious insecurity in the absence of any tacit but intuitable consensus on decorum; embarrassment does not work as an effective mechanism of social control in *The Idiot*. Such are the dominant emotional dynamics that determine the possibilities of participation in this world, on the planes of both action and narration. As readers, we are drawn in by experiencing embarrassment with and on behalf of the characters whose behavior we witness, and we are infected by anxious insecurity and the threat of embarrassment on the plane of interpretation as we struggle to locate a reliable narrator in whom we neither can identify a source of authority nor consensus.

Embarrassment is a fundamentally social emotion, whereas shame—another emotion that predominates in Dostoevsky's worlds—is fundamentally moral.⁴ These two

embarrassment ultimately fails to perform this regulatory function; unlike the blush that O'Farrell finds in Austen, neither is Dostoevsky's embarrassment indicative of pleasure in reading novels that enforce lessons of manners.

³ For a study of embarrassment in Dostoevsky's early work (in *The Double*), which also appeals to the works of sociologist Erving Goffman, see Jillian Porter, "Money and Mad Ambition: Economies of Russian Literature 1830-1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2011). I acknowledge with gratitude the conversations I had with Jillian Porter that aided me in formulating ideas about embarrassment in *The Idiot*.

⁴ For treatments of shame in Dostoevsky, from different disciplinary positions, see Deborah Martinsen, *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky's Liars and Narrative Exposure* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003) and John P. Moran, *The Solution of the Fist: Dostoevsky and the Roots of Modern Terrorism* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009). My discussion naturally shares some concerns with Martinsen's, but, testament to the depth and breadth of Dostoevsky's treatment of the shame – embarrassment spectrum of affects, my study emerges as its complement. Though we converge in our interest in the reader's affective engagement in the novel, the directions in which our interest in these kindred emotions leads us is quite different: Martinsen's principal interests are in lying, exposure, and selfhood, while mine are in genre, temporality and the social world. The differences in our approaches may

emotions are close kin; they both depend on intersubjective and—in the familiar, axiomatic, terms of Dostoevsky criticism—dialogic relations. Both embarrassment and shame involve the subject's reaction to his violation of the conventions or standards (actual or imagined) of the social situation or group in which he desires inclusion and seamless participation. But while one can feel shame when one is alone, embarrassment requires an audience to witness the breach of conduct, whether it be an audience of just one or of many. For this reason embarrassment is always an event rather than an abiding state or trait; as David Southward observes, this fact distinguishes embarrassment from its close cousins shame and modesty for “there can be no such thing as ‘embarrassed character.’”⁵ Since embarrassment is fundamentally a social emotion, it will be a means of studying the social world of the novel—in relation to its emotional atmosphere and effects—its “seething whirlpool” and “crowds of miscellaneous people.” Embarrassment brings out the alignment of individuals within the social world, their embeddedness in or distance from its governing conventions and norms, yet the physically manifest signs of embarrassment—the blush, broken speech, bodily awkwardness—cause social interaction to stall. In this way, embarrassment articulates a fault-line between social cohesion and social disintegration. In both its plot development and narrative structure, *The Idiot* constantly struggles to reconcile these two competing forces.

Dostoevsky's proposed salve to social disintegration is the reestablishment of a guiding theological imperative, which he introduces into the novel embodied in Prince Myshkin. Yet the presence of Myshkin in Petersburg society proves to be an embarrassment, felt both in the represented world of its characters and, on the metaliterary plane, by its readers. Underlying all the novel's embarrassment, I will suggest, is the embarrassing collision of these two generic imperatives: the society novel and a strong theological imperative.

Embarrassment will focus our attention onto the genre and narrative form of *The Idiot*, and, in turn, on the reader's emotional experience of the text, where embarrassment both engages and thwarts empathetic and judgmental participation. My discussion will move back and forth between, on the one hand, considering embarrassment an instant blot of affect (a blush, as it were) that colors a scene and pervades its atmosphere, without adding discursive or cognitive content, and, on the other hand, allowing the socially plotted structures and narrative rhythms of embarrassment to yield analytical insight. With embarrassment as both an object and tool of analysis, then, we double the novel's own ongoing negotiation of different ways of knowing and transmitting knowledge: narrative and non-narrative, verbal and non-verbal, through logic and through emotion.

be explained by the fact that shame is a fundamentally moral emotion (though also socially conditioned) while embarrassment is a fundamentally social emotion (though frequently not without moral salience).

⁴ In her study of the blush in the English novel, which begins with Austen, Mary Ann O'Farrell identifies “the novel of manners as the form that—in part by teaching the legible blush—teaches the body to behave in public.” Mary Ann O'Farrell, *Telling Complexions: The Nineteenth-Century English Novel and the Blush* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997), 8. In Dostoevsky's novel of bad manners, embarrassment ultimately fails to perform this regulatory function; unlike the blush that O'Farrell finds in Austen, neither is Dostoevsky's embarrassment indicative of pleasure in reading novels that enforce lessons of manners.

⁵ David Southward, “Jane Austen and The Riches of Embarrassment,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 36, no. 4 (1996), 765.

The Embarrassing Insistence of the Theological Imperative in the Society Novel: Genre, Narrative, Temporality

'My dear Prince, [...] paradise on earth is not easily achieved; but all the same you are counting on paradise in a way; paradise is a difficult thing, Prince, much more difficult that it seems to your wonderful heart. We'd better stop, otherwise we may all get embarrassed again, and then...'
Prince Shch. to Myshkin⁶

Embarrassment is such an interesting object of analysis in *The Idiot* because it joins two layers of the novel: on the one hand, the society novel or would-be novel of manners and, on the other, the metaphysical novel with its prevailing theological imperative. Precisely the clash of these two generic imperatives is one of the novel's principal sources of embarrassment.

Writing in the same age as Dostoevsky, Charles Darwin, in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), points to the differing moral tenors of shame and embarrassment: he observes that man does not blush before God, but only before his fellow men.⁷ Darwin's observation serves as a commentary on Dostoevsky's world too: these are men who no longer live in the presence of God.⁸ Into this world walks Prince Myshkin, a product of Dostoevsky's attempt to "portray a perfectly beautiful man."⁹ The presence of the Christ-like Myshkin is an embarrassment in the secular world of the would-be society novel. When Myshkin enters the room where the three Epanchin girls are breakfasting, he has entered the space of the marriage plot—one could recast this scene with the three Bennett sisters from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*—but instead of engaging in flirtatious chat, he speaks in enigmatic parables. The violation of the novel's contractual relation to its reader produces embarrassment in characters and readers alike.

An indication of the embarrassment brought on by this generic dissonance comes when Myshkin is received for the first time by Lizaveta Prokofievna and the three

⁶ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Granta, 2003) 341. Hereafter, all in-text references to *The Idiot* will be from this translation, cited as page number. [«Милый князь [...] рай не земле нелегко достается; а вы все-таки несколько на рай рассчитываете; рай – вещь трудная, князь, гораздо труднее, чем кажется вашему прекрасному сердцу. Перестанемте лучше, а то мы все опять, пожалуй, сконфузимся, и тогда...» F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-90), 8: 282.] Hereafter references to Dostoevsky's work will be given in abbreviated references from this collection, cited as volume and page number.

⁷ Though the point is Darwin's, it is cited and highlighted by Christopher Ricks in what is the first sustained literary treatment of embarrassment, *Keats and Embarrassment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 56.

⁸ Compare also Lukács' claim that "[t]he novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God," Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A historico-philosophical essay on the forms of great epic literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 1971), 88.

⁹ [изобразить вполне прекрасного человека (28: 2).]

Epanchin daughters, to whom he tells his stories of the mock execution and the prisoner on the scaffold. When he has finished the second story, Aglaya addresses the Prince: “When you finish a story, you immediately feel ashamed of having told it [...] Why is that?” (66).¹⁰ Myshkin can deliver his stories uninhibitedly from within one generic position — as a parable or Christ-like teaching.¹¹ To acknowledge his role, Adelaida proclaims to the Prince: “You’re a philosopher and have come to teach us” (59).¹² But the tone and narratorial stance of Myshkin’s lengthy “parables” are a generic aberration when the scene in the drawing room is set for an incipient marriage plot. The self-contained monologues disturb the rhythm of speech and conversational exchange that would be expected from social discourse in this domestic setting, to say nothing of their unusual subject matter. Though Myshkin speaks his stories freely, it is as if, upon returning to the world of conventional chatter and exchange, to the social, novelistic world, he experiences embarrassment at his sudden awareness of the discord produced by his speech.

On the whole, though, at the beginning of the novel Myshkin is strikingly *unembarrassable*. He is disarmingly open and resistant to any embarrassment, not apprehending the snide remarks of his fellow passengers on the train that brings him back to Petersburg and later proclaiming to the Epanchins: “I know very well that it’s shameful to talk about your feelings with everyone, yet here I am talking with you, and with you I’m not ashamed” (75-76).¹³ His meeting with General Epanchin becomes awkward because his reason for visiting—solely for the pleasure of making the Epanchins’ acquaintance, and for “no particular purpose at all”—cannot be accommodated by the General’s assumption that someone would only visit to advance their own interests and agenda. The prince rises to leave this meeting after the General effectively declines to invite him to stay, “laughing even somehow merrily, despite all the apparent embarrassment of his situation,” and saying ““There, by God, General, though I have absolutely no practical knowledge either of local customs or of how people normally live here, things went with us just now as I thought they were certain to go”” (26).¹⁴

Myshkin is an outsider not only to the social world of Petersburg, but to the social world as a determinant of behavior in general, and, consequently, to the novel as genre. Dostoevsky’s “perfectly beautiful man” arrives in Petersburg from Switzerland in a state of perfect wholeness. He is Christ-like, or, in the terms that Georg Lukács puts forward in his *Theory of the Novel*, an incarnation of the epic hero: his words and actions issue

¹⁰ [«Вы, как кончите рассказывать, тотчас же и застыдитесь того, что рассказали [...] Отчего это?» (8: 57)]

¹¹ On Dostoevsky’s use of parable as narrative form, see Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky’s Unfinished Journey* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), 68-85.

¹² [«вы философ и нас приехали поучать» (8: 51).]

¹³ [«Я очень хорошо знаю, что про свои чувства говорить всем стыдно, а вот вам я говорю, и с вами мне не стыдно» (8: 65).]

¹⁴ [«приподнялся князь, как-то даже весело рассмеявшись, несмотря на всю видимую затруднительность своих обстоятельств. -- И вот, ей-богу же, генерал, хоть я ровно ничего не знаю практически ни в здешних обычаях, ни вообще как здесь люди живут, но так я и думал, что у нас непременно именно это и выйдет, как теперь вышло» (8: 23).]

solely out of accordance with his inner life, out of a world-view that is based on the perfect accord of inner impulse and outward display.¹⁵

When Myshkin first visits the Epanchin household, we, as reader, witness and participate in embarrassment as the epic hero and the theological imperative enter the novelistic world.

Embarrassment in the Anteroom

Arriving at the Epanchins, Myshkin is unaware of the protocol for visitors and their interactions with servants. He elects to remain in the anteroom with the servant, rather than proceed to wait alone in the reception room until he is officially announced (20-21/8: 16). We might read this early scene in the novel as a vignette in which a constellation of concerns emerge: the embarrassment of Myshkin's entry into the novel and into Petersburg society, the threat of disruption to narrative and social order, and the positioning of the reader in this unstable social and narrative environment.

The scene reveals, in miniature, the fate of Myshkin's unabashed perfect innocence in that world. The servant is a barometer of responses to the prince, some of which the reader may share; the servant is, by turn, startled, confused, embarrassed, suspicious, all but afraid. The narrator reports the servant's evaluation of the prince through an ambiguous and initially unmarked instance of free indirect discourse, momentarily according his judgment special weight as an endorsed statement of fact:

Though the prince was a little fool—the lackey had already decided that—all the same the general's valet finally found it unsuitable to continue his conversation with the visitor, despite the fact that for some reason he liked the prince, in his own way, of course. But from another point of view, he provoked in him a decided and crude indignation (21).¹⁶

Between the servant's ambivalent feeling and the ambiguity on the part of the narrator as to whether he is endorsing the servant's views, the reader is provided with no stable or reliable evaluation of the prince to readily adopt. This scene models the dilemmas of interpretation and reader-response that will persist throughout the novel, and reveals them to be set against a particular affective backdrop—embarrassment.

The lackey is flustered and disconcerted by the unusual circumstances. What makes the scenario so unsettling is that Myshkin displays no understanding that an individual performs numerous roles in different contexts. According to sociologist Erving Goffman's seminal analysis, embarrassment occurs when the individual—who comprises multiple selves—finds, in certain scenarios, that these selves are not all validated by a given audience or interlocutor. Thus “the individual may find he is required both to be present and to not be present on certain occasions. Embarrassment

¹⁵ See the chapters “Integrated Civilizations” and “Epic and Novel” in Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, especially 29-30, 62-66.

¹⁶ [Хотя князь был и дурачок, -- лакей уж это решил, -- но все-таки генеральскому камердинеру показалось наконец неприличным продолжать долее разговор от себя с посетителем, несмотря на то что князь ему почему-то нравился, в своем роде конечно. Но, с другой точки зрения, он возбуждал в нем решительное и грубое негодование (8: 19).]

ensues: the individual finds himself being torn apart, however gently. Corresponding to the oscillation of his conduct is the oscillation of his self.”¹⁷ The flustered servant foregrounds these dynamics. The role of servant defines and circumscribes a particular self in the given context; he is meant to be purely functional, un-individuated, un-present. Myshkin expects something different from him—expects him to be present—and the servant’s embarrassment stems from unlikely forces pulling at the alignment of his multiple selves and roles whose co-existence convention customarily determines.

The servant is, in a sense, a curious double for the reader. For the reader who is deprived of a stable evaluative perspective and also pulled by the narrative between different alignments, there arises the possibility for a reader response and interpretation that is emotionally charged as anxious and embarrassing.

Myshkin’s encounter with the servant defies both social and narrative convention on a second, formal, level. Myshkin disregards the servant’s lowly status and treats him as if an equal. While his social gaffe is clear, in narrative terms, the encounter swells the novelistic world’s containment of character by desiring to accord to a supremely minor character more space than is usual. Servants exemplify the status of minor characters in the novel; their presence is purely functional.¹⁸ In this scene in *The Idiot*, on the contrary, the servant requires the faintest outlines of an interiority as his responses to Myshkin’s behavior are registered in the narrative. As the prince begins his story about the execution, the servant listens: “The valet watched him with sympathetic interest and seemed unwilling to tear himself away; perhaps he too was a man with imagination and an inclination to thinking” (22-23).¹⁹

The allusion to the unknown depths of the servant’s mind remind us of the extent to which both his social and narrative position circumscribe the representation of his character; there is a fullness of person which far exceeds the minorness of his character status. At this moment the servant is again an unlikely double for the reader: the extent and autonomy of the reader’s response is, in the same way, present in the text only as potential and otherwise evades representation. Allowing a minor character to exceed the bounds of his minorness would distort and disrupt the allocation of attention to major characters upon which the novel’s plot and structure depend.²⁰ In other words, if we carried on like this, the novel might never leave the anteroom.

¹⁷ Erving Goffman, “Embarrassment and Social Organization,” *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior* (Chicago: Adeline Publishing Company, 1967), 110.

¹⁸ Alex Woloch writes in his study of minor characters and novel form, “Servants illustrate in the crudest form what has been a central process of the narrative: the utilization of minor characters [...] hinges on a distorted representation that radically flattens them,” Alex Woloch, *The One vs. The Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 122.

¹⁹ [Камердинер с сочувствующим интересом следил за ним, так что оторваться, кажется, не хотелось; может быть, тоже был человек с воображением и попыткой на мысль (8: 20).]

²⁰ See Woloch, “Characterization and Distribution,” *The One vs. The Many*, 12-42. Establishing the literary problem that is the focus of his study (namely the apportioning of attention between major and minor characters), Woloch cites Dostoevsky who explicitly acknowledges this issue in metaliterary aside towards the end of *The Idiot*: “in spite of all our efforts, we find ourselves in the decided necessity of giving a bit more attention and space to this secondary character of our story than we had hitherto intended” (484/8: 402). Cited in Woloch, 12.

This scene gestures towards the novel's ongoing problems with holding its constellation of characters in balanced harmony, in social and narrative order. In the novel as a whole, such problems reflect the disintegrating social fabric and collapse of decorum. But here, in the anteroom, we see how these problems spring also from the imperatives of portraying of Myshkin, the "perfectly beautiful man." Here, at the beginning of the novel, Myshkin is in an as yet uncompromised state of wholeness. He has no need or understanding (in himself or others) of the ways in which the modified and multiplied facets of self are constantly being concealed and revealed in the social world. However, both social convention and novelistic narrative form require that one be adept in managing and decoding self-presentation according to these strategies of selectivity and framing.

We might compare this moment to the opening of Gogol's *Dead Souls*, where, in violation of the reader's expectations of a novel's introductory moves, a disproportionate amount of narrative attention is lavished upon the description of a man who merely witnesses the arrival of Chichikov's carriage but is entirely inconsequential to the story and subsequently abandoned.²¹ In this case, though, there is no embarrassment—because there is no sociality and no psychology. This is a matter of representation wholly confined to the plane of narration, which in no way engages the participation of the characters. The carefully introduced man with the pistol-shaped tie-pin, like the famous Homeric similes that follow, bespeaks the problematic relationship between general and particular, background and foreground in Gogol's novel. These representational quandaries spring from an aspiration towards wholeness that belongs to the epic, or from a fundamentally romantic longing for that aesthetic ideal. In *Dead Souls* the undifferentiated vision that blurs background and foreground belongs to the author/narrator. Meanwhile, in *The Idiot*, the inclusiveness that does not know such hierarchical distinctions as those between background and foreground, between major or minor characters, springs from Myshkin's vision.²² Myshkin enters the novel and the world of Petersburg in a state similar to that of the epic hero, in whom wholeness characterizes both conduct of the self and hermeneutic orientation to the other. Myshkin does not comprise the fragmented, multiple selves which serve mutable social contexts and therefore he is, in his original state, unembarrassable. Such a model of selfhood may be adequate to an epic or biblical narrative but is an ideal incommensurable with the conventions of social and novelistic narrative form. The embarrassment that Aglaya discerns in him after he has finished telling his stories is the first sign of an awareness of discord between his role and the social context and the first sign of the breakdown he will eventually endure in this society.

²¹ Iurii Tynianov discusses parodic transformations of Gogol in Dostoevsky's works, including *The Idiot* (Iurii Tynianov, "Dostoevskii i Gogol": K teorii parodii" (Petrograd: OPOIAZ, 1921).

²² Anna Berman, in her reading of Myshkin's character in relation to romantic aesthetics, suggests that *The Idiot*'s innovation in psychological prose lies in shifting the locus of the romantic struggle between the real and the ideal from the authorial plane to inside the main hero. Anna Berman, "The Idiot's Romantic Struggle", *Dostoevsky Studies*, Vol. XII (2008), 81-103.

Embarrassment, Social Organization and Social Disintegration

Erving Goffman's seminal essay on embarrassment "Embarrassment and Social Organization" discusses the socially conditioned nature of embarrassment. He describes embarrassment in terms that might apply to *The Idiot*'s scandal scenes:

The moment of crisis is of course socially determined: the individual's breaking point is that of the group to whose affective standards he adheres. On rare occasions all the participants in an encounter may pass this point and together fail to maintain even a semblance of ordinary interaction. The little social system they created in interaction collapses; they draw apart or hurriedly try to assume a new set of roles (103).

Embarrassment both articulates the existence of social order and brings about its momentary disintegration. Embarrassment asserts—in the possibility of their transgression—the existence of some collectively held normative standards (values which bind the group), yet at the same time, embarrassment ruptures social cohesion.²³ It brings the social machinery grinding to a halt: embarrassment brakes speech, renders the body awkward and thwarts further interaction.²⁴ The individual loses his composure, and equilibrium is lost in the scene as a whole as a disproportionate amount of attention falls heavily on one participant. And embarrassment potentially spreads: "Having no settled and legitimate object to which to play out their own unity, the others find themselves unfixed and discomfited. This is why embarrassment seems to be contagious, spreading, once started, in ever widening circles of discomfiture."²⁵

The fault-line that embarrassment articulates between social cohesion and social collapse runs right through the thematic and structural core of *The Idiot*. What Goffman calls the "little social system" is particularly fragile and unstable in *The Idiot*; individuals are never secure in the knowledge of what the group's "affective standards" might be, contributing to the novel's persistent atmosphere of agitation and unease.

The "crowds of miscellaneous people" who populate Dostoevsky's fictional scenes is an indication of the social disintegration that the author saw in his age. The collapse of social hierarchy sees rooms filled with people whose position and fortune have oscillated wildly and who previously would never have been drawn together. Witness, among these crowds, the drunkard general Ivolgin, the upstart Epanchin and his noble-woman wife, the idiot-prince (now a pauper, now a rich heir), the disinherited heir Rogozhin and the disheveled rabble that accompanies him, the bland Ptitsyn, "who had risen from destitution and become a moneylender" (46), and the corrupted innocent

²³ We might compare the way that embarrassment attests to the existence of some underlying, collectively held set of norms and values to what Peter Brooks, in his study of melodrama, calls the "moral occult", which he defines as "the domain of operative spiritual values which is both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality." Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 5.

²⁴ Cf. "the individual cannot mobilize muscular and intellectual resources for the task at hand although he would like to. He cannot sustain conversation smoothly" (Goffman, "Embarrassment and Social Organization," 100).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

turned femme fatale—Nastasya Filippovna. *The Idiot's* unstable and disintegrating social world begets a situation where opportunities for embarrassment are rife. Let us enter one of the novel's rooms and read the scene that unfolds there with an eye to the social dynamics and sociological determinants of embarrassment.

The novel's sociologically attuned gaze reveals living arrangements in flux and an ensuing concentration of incongruous types in domestic space. Myshkin rents a room from the Ivolgins, another of whose tenants is the "salacious buffoon" Ferdyshchenko (46). Two months prior to the novel's start, we are told, the Ivolgins moved to a multi-roomed apartment that was beyond their means, where due to the need to take in lodgers, the family lives in cramped quarters and "the retired General Ivolgin himself, the father of the family, [...] was obliged to go in and out of the apartment through the kitchen and the back door" (89/8:76). That such a living arrangement is even possible already betokens the perceived loss of decorum and decline of fiscal responsibility, and it is a source of great shame to Ganya that the family is obliged to let out rooms in order to obtain extra income:

Ganya scowled and kept calling the tenants an outrage; after that it was as if he began to be ashamed in society, where he was in the habit of appearing as a young man of a certain brilliance and with prospects. All these concessions to fate and all this vexatious crowding—all of it deeply wounded his soul. For some time now, every little thing had begun to annoy him beyond measure or proportion (89).²⁶

The brief excursus away from the unfolding action of the present to establish the extent and history of Ganya's embarrassment at this domestic arrangement sets the key for the episode that follows. The loss of "measure" or "proportion" will prove to be the characteristic rhythm of embarrassment. This episode begins with Myshkin being shown to his quarters in the Ivolgin apartment, escalates with the unexpected arrival of Nastasya Filippovna, and, on her heels, Rogozhin and his retinue, and reaches its final culmination in Ganya's slapping Myshkin. Ganya's embarrassment punctuates the scene, amplifying as the conditions change and acting as an irritant to his other anxieties and to the general escalating atmosphere of edgy discomfiture.

Still vexed by his belief that Myshkin spoke of his plans to marry at the Epanchins, Ganya's embarrassment feeds his anger. His response is an attempt at denying the embarrassing reality and a retaliation that tries to displace the embarrassment onto Myshkin. (Ferdyshchenko's buffoonery and laughter later on is a similar attempt to deny reality and diffuse embarrassment.) The angered Ganya exclaims to the prince, looking round with disdain,

²⁶ [Ганя хмурился и называл содержание жильцов безобразием; ему стало как будто стыдно после этого в обществе, где он привык являться как молодой человек с некоторым блеском и будущностью. Все эти уступки судьбе и вся эта досадная теснота -- всё это были глубокие душевные раны его. С некоторого времени он стал раздражаться всякою мелочью безмерно и непропорционально. (8: 76).]

‘Pah, what a vile room...dark and windows on the courtyard. You’ve come to us inopportunately in all respects... Well, that’s none of my business, I don’t let rooms.’ [...] He hastily abandoned the prince and went out, though he had wanted to say something more, but was obviously hesitant and as if ashamed to begin; and he had also cursed upon the room as if from embarrassment” (92).²⁷

We witness here the impotent stalling that accompanies and only worsens embarrassment: Ptitsyn’s summoning him away and Ganya’s inability to speak further only undermine his claims on authority and independence, and the narrator draws attention to the impotence of Ganya’s embarrassed anger by noting the curses he throws at the room. (As an aside, we might note that this final observation is an odd quirk of narration: it is a quick loop back in time to describe something that has since been succeeded. Neutral, conventional narrative commentary would have observed strict chronology, noting Ganya’s curses before the summons of Ptitsyn. We could take this as an instant of narrative’s difficulty in conveying events that are instantaneous, or even see it as the narrator’s participation in Ganya’s humiliation. In any case, I do think this small aberration adds a degree of subjectivity and individuation to the narrative voice; this is not an omniscient narrator who merely mechanically registers the chronological unfolding of events, but one who pauses to have afterthoughts as his business of narration proceeds. As I will suggest below, the subjective and individuated narrator is also potentially prone to embarrassment.)

Upon her arrival—which has immediately set the assembled company on edge—Nastasya Filippovna taunts Ganya and makes him blush with her questions about the family’s living quarters and tenants (8: 88). His embarrassment reaches one more of its succession of acute peaks when his father, the General, appears all smartly groomed before Nastasya Filippovna. Ganya blushes, the embarrassments multiplying and compounded: “One more unforeseen but most awful torture for a vainglorious man—the torment of blushing for his own family in his own house—fell to his lot” (106).²⁸ With his self-regarding image to protect, the vain individual is much more highly susceptible to the mortifications of embarrassment.

The presence of Nastasya Filippovna persistently has such a destabilizing effect on whatever company she enters because the whole group senses that there are no restraints that might limit her behavior. Renowned as a fallen woman, she has been shamed—and is now shameless. The threat that she poses to decorum issues from this shamelessness, because “shamelessness counts as a defiance of social convention just as much as a display of embarrassment expresses conformity to it.”²⁹ Attuned to the

²⁷ [«Фу, какая скверная комната, [...] -- темно и окна на двор. Во всех отношениях вы к нам не вовремя. Ну, да это не мое дело; не я квартиры содержу.» Заглянул Птицын и кликнул Ганю, тот торопливо бросил князя и вышел, несмотря на то что он еще что-то хотел сказать, по видимо мялся и точно стыдился начать; да и комнату обругал, тоже как будто сконфузившись (8: 79).]

²⁸ [Еще одно непредвиденное, но самое страшное истязание для тщеславного человека -- мука краски за своих родных, у себя же в доме, выпала ему на долю (8: 90).]

²⁹ W. Gerrod Parrott and Rom Harré, “Embarrassment and the Threat to Character,” *The Emotions: Social, Cultural and Biological Dimensions*, eds. Rom Harré and W. Gerrod Parrott (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 56.

potential for embarrassment in others, Nastasya Filippovna is able to exploit her shamelessness and, with no checks on her own behavior, do whatever will inflict embarrassment upon them. In this way, from her contemptible position, she can wield a perverse power over others. Yet, in the end, she always remains more controlled by than controlling of the power dynamics in the group's "little social system." If the expectation of embarrassment and scandal hangs over the scene at the Ivolgins', then Nastasya Filippovna appears to submit to the inevitability of its determining her behavior and the course of events. This becomes most apparent early on in the proceedings, even before Rogozhin's arrival, when Nina Alexandrovna replies to her daughter's query as to whether she will leave. "No, Varya," she replies, "I'll sit it out until the end." Her remark implies her expectation of a climactic outcome, and has a visible effect on Nastasya Filippovna, seeming to spur her on to further interaction: "[She] could not help hearing both the question and the answer, but it seemed to increase her gaiety still more" (108).³⁰ Ultimately Nastasya Filippovna is more controlled by the narrative templates for the possibilities of embarrassment than she controls them.³¹ Individual agency is as if surrendered to the dynamics of the group. The uneasy relationship between individual will and the binding dynamics of the group—foregrounded in the moment of embarrassment—is central to the novel's thematic and structural concerns.

Embarrassment and "Need"

Dostoevsky's representation of the social disintegration of his times results in the population of his novel's rooms with "crowds of miscellaneous people"—incongruous characters who have rapidly gained or lost position in the social hierarchy and are brought together in unlikely alignments, clamoring and struggling for legitimacy. Dostoevsky portrays the very process of corroding morality and disintegrating decorum that he perceives going on right before him: transgressive behavior still encounters some vestiges of an old order—or pretensions to a new higher order—and it is precisely this configuration that causes embarrassment to press so close to the surface and be so ripe for precipitation. Embarrassment is both the product of this unstable social world and, to the extent that it also seeks to regulate behavior, a straining towards its stability and cohesiveness. Alongside embarrassment, therefore, we find another recurring condition of the novel's social collective—the expression of individuals' "need" for one another.

The scene we have just read, at the Ivolgins' apartment, gives a sense of how embarrassment plays out socially on the stage of the novel. Continuing to read this scene, we will discover that the outwardly manifest embarrassment in the disintegrating social world is accompanied by an inwardly felt "need" for connection and social harmony.

This need is felt in the novel's striving, on the metaphysical plane, guided by authorial ideology, for the "binding idea" (*sviazuiushchaia mysl'*) that would counter the

³⁰ [«Нет, Варя, я досижу до конца.»

Настасья не могла не слышать вопроса и ответа, но веселость ее оттого как будто еще увеличилась (8: 92).]

³¹ Compare, as an image of her submission and disempowerment, Myshkin's horrified vision of Nastasya Filippovna in chains or behind bars when he sees her at Pavlovsk.

atomizing forces of modern society and the ascendancy of materialism.³² To borrow words that one scholar has recently applied to the modernist novel, *The Idiot* needs and seeks “ways to reconstruct a sacred community in the absence of churches.”³³ Dostoevsky places the statement of this need in the mouth of the buffoon Lebedev, who compares the present day to medieval times, lamenting the loss of the “binding idea” in the age of the railroad (8: 315 / 379). Searching for the metaphysical “binding idea,” the novel also struggles to hold its characters in a constellation of balanced design, where attention is distributed between them—clearly distinguishing between major and minor characters—according to the conventions that govern novelistic plot and narrative. The crowding and jostling is also felt on the level of plot and narrative construction, where the two overlapping pairs of triangular relationships (involving Myshkin, Nastasya Filippovna, Rogozhin and Aglaya) around which the essential plot moves, are overlaid and overgrown with other character configurations and plot-lines. The Ivolgins seem to demand a whole novel and plot of their own; with both the “Burdovsky affair” and Ippolit’s speech, minor characters with tangential interests of their own, assume center stage for prolonged episodes at crucial moments.

If we continue to read the episode of Nastasya Filippovna arrival at the Ivolgin household on that first day of Myshkin’s lodging there, we find a scene that might be taken as a moment emblematic of the fraught character relations of the whole novel. As the tension builds in the Ivolgin apartment, the assembled company suddenly and unexpectedly grows when Rogozhin appears with his retinue. The presence of a crowd is a typical component of Dostoevsky’s scandal scenes. Generally, the crowd is of little interest in itself, but its presence transforms the tenor and import of the scene as a whole. In this instance, however, the attention that falls on the nature of the crowd itself provides a significant statement of the novel’s abiding concerns.

Ganya stood as if stupefied on the threshold of the drawing room and gazed silently, allowing ten or twelve people to enter the room one after another unhindered, following Parfyon Rogozhin. The company was extremely motley, and was distinguished not only by its motleyness but also by its unsightliness. Some came in just as they were, in overcoats and fur coats. None of them, incidentally, was very drunk; but they all seemed quite tipsy. They all seemed to need each other in order to come in; not one of them had courage enough by himself, but they all urged each other on, as it were. Even Rogozhin stepped warily at the head of the crowd, but he had some sort of intention, and he looked gloomily and irritably preoccupied. The rest only made up a chorus, or, better, a clique of supporters (112).³⁴

³² Robin Feuer Miller titles the final chapter of her seminal study “The Search for a Binding Idea,” Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky and The Idiot* (Cambridge, Ma. & London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 200-222.

³³ Pericles Lewis, *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 31.

³⁴ [Ганя стоял как бы в оцепенении на пороге гостиной и глядел молча, не препятствуя входу в залу одного за другим человек десяти или двенадцати, вслед за Парфеном Рогожиным. Компания была чрезвычайно разнообразная и отличалась не только разнообразием, но и безобразием. Некоторые

The motley crew comprises Rogozhin's hangers-on, mostly unnamed others, minor or incidental characters, thronging and jostling in the doorway. As motley and unformed a rabble as they appear, there is an agitated cohesion among them: "They all seemed to need each other in order to come in; not one of them had courage enough by himself." The narrator emphasizes the extent of their disunity and unsavoriness: "The company was extremely motley, and was distinguished not only by its motleyness (*raznoobrazie*) but also by its unsightliness (*bezobrazie*)." "*Bezobrazie*" is a loaded word in Dostoevsky's aesthetics, full of aesthetic and theological import. Robert Louis Jackson explicated an opposition which he saw as foundational for Dostoevsky's art: "The moral-aesthetic spectrum of Dostoevsky begins with *obraz*—image, the form and embodiment of beauty—and ends with *bezobrazie*—literally that which is "without image," shapeless, disfigured, ugly. [...] Aesthetically, *bezobrazie* is the deformation of ideal form (*obraz*)."³⁵ Theologically, *bezobrazie* is the loss of the image of God in man, the loss of harmonious order in creation. The social, aesthetic and theological meanings of *bezobrazie* are all at work in the tableau formed by Rogozhin's crew: the crowd of new arrivals is distinguished by its unsightliness, its crude, corrupt behaviour and its formlessness. It is even demoted from the more dignified "*khor*" (with its evocations of Greek tragedy and its aesthetic form) to the common "*shaika*" (rabble).

The formlessness of the group derives from an uneasy relationship between the assertion of individual will and the binding dynamics of the group. Each man struggles to assert himself and enter the room, requiring the presence of the others to bolster his confidence. But in spite of their efforts to assert themselves, the rabble's members are all inescapably subordinate minor characters in this scene to Rogozhin, who stands at their head. There is both a struggle within the crowd to assert oneself, and, in its members' apparent "need [of] each other," an insistence on social cohesion. A similar discord between the individual and the group marks the typical scene of embarrassment within a social collective: in that instance there is both the regulatory insistence on the group's normative values and the attention that falls too heavily on the one who violates them, disrupting the composure of all concerned. Here, in the jostling rabble in the doorway, the two forces of individual assertion and group cohesion are not balanced or reconciled to one another; the crowd is "*bezobraznaia*"—a counter-example to Dostoevsky's moral and aesthetic ideal. The image of this crowd might be seen as emblematic of the tensions and structures that govern character relations in the novel as a whole, members of the society that lacks an adequate "binding idea."

The statement of characters "needing" one another recurs a number of times throughout the novel. It is striking for its curious bareness, suggesting something urgent

входили так, как были на улице, в пальто и в шубах. Совсем пьяных, впрочем, не было; зато все казались сильно навеселе. Все, казалось, нуждались друг в друге, чтобы войти; ни у одного не достало бы отдельно смелости, но все друг друга как бы подталкивали. Даже и Рогожин ступал осторожно во главе толпы, но у него было какое-то намерение, и он казался мрачно и раздраженно-озабоченным. Остальные же составляли только хор, или, лучше сказать, шайку для поддержки (8: 95)].

³⁵ Robert Louis Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form: A Study of His Philosophy of Art* (New Haven and London: 1966), 58.

and fundamental; it expresses a straining towards cohesion, the exact nature of which is left unspecified. The vagueness of “needing” masks the complex and conflicting motivations that inform each character’s actions. The young Kolya, for instance, is said to be “necessary” to both Myshkin and Gania: “The prince needed Kolya” (130); “One might have thought that Kolya was sometimes now even necessary to Ganya” (188).³⁶ At Lebedev’s dacha, Myshkin observes Lebedev’s pleasure on entering into long conversations with the General, in which they sometimes shouted and argued. This too is formulated as a relationship of “need:” “One might even have thought that [Lebedev] needed the general” (237).³⁷

“Needing” is not a motif, in the sense of an image whose repetition patterns the narrative at a level determined by or indicative of authorial design; this “need” speaks of an impulse that strains towards articulation, towards connection and communication, and that is shared by the novel’s characters, narrator and author. I would argue that, this “need” is, to some extent, a response to the same predicament as the novel’s frequent embarrassment—a response to the chaotic and disintegrating social world. The expression of need for others springs from the metaphysical core of the novel and from speculation about characters’ interiority, while embarrassment is the outwardly manifest behaviour at the scenes of group interaction characterizing the would-be society novel.

Acute embarrassment and “need” come together in the novel’s longest inserted monologue, Ippolit’s confession. It is the same “need” for connection and community that sounds in the title of Ippolit’s monologue, “My Necessary Explanation” (Моё необходимое объяснение), the would-be suicide note he reads aloud to an assembled company. Though the wrathful bitterness of his consumptive state leaves Ippolit spiritually and socially estranged, the “necessity” of his confession lies in making one final attempt to communicate to others before he ends his life. Though he rails against the notion of a providential order, Ippolit issues a powerful statement of the means by which men are connected to one another in ways enabling the transmission of good: “Individual goodness will always abide, because it is a personal need, a living need for the direct influence of one person on another” (403).³⁸

With Ippolit’s bungled suicide attempt, however, the confession reaches a climax of acute embarrassment. The spectacle of Ippolit’s public failure in this most extreme of acts strains at the limits of what the script for embarrassment can account for. Whereas embarrassment usually stems from violating what Goffman called “the standards of the little social system,” here its cause lies in the failure of enacting a taboo—which sends the scene lurching into a different realm of extreme discomfort. In the immediate aftermath, where the taboo (public suicide) has obliterated the possibility of the individual’s feeling secure in any tacit consensus on an accepted response, malicious laughter issues from those whose own selves are threatened and unsettled by the spreading embarrassment.

³⁶ [Князю нужен был Коля (8: 110); Можно было подумать, что теперь Коля иногда даже становился необходимым Гане (8: 156-57).]

³⁷ [Подумать можно было, что он [Lebedev] даже нуждался в генерале (8: 197).]

³⁸ [«Единичное доброе дело останется всегда, потому что оно есть потребность личности, живая потребность прямого влияния одной личности на другую» (8: 335).]

As the longest of the novel's inserted narratives, the length and rising urgency of Ippolit's statement is a violent imposition into the narrative; a previously wholly minor character becomes the exclusive focus of attention (and bearer of the novel's core ideas) for three tensely high-pitched chapters. The prominence of Ippolit in this part of the novel and the attention he commands is one more indicator for the muddling of the metaphysical and social planes of the novel. On the metaphysical plane, Ippolit is a "main character" in the sense that he is a bearer of a "main idea." In the world of the society novel, though, he is nothing but a painful embarrassment.

The Rhythms of Embarrassment: Narrative, Composure, Temporality

In contrast to shame, which can be an enduring, private, existential state, embarrassment is focused in an event, requiring a publicly manifest working out of its mechanisms. For this reason, embarrassment can possess and produce narrative structure and, as I will show, has the ability to be directly implicated in matters of temporality.

The nature of time and its transformation is a question that presses urgently in the novel: the singular temporality of the condemned man who faces execution is a special emblem pinned on the novel at its start, receiving threefold emphasis in the three variations on the story of the condemned man that Myshkin tells upon his arrival at the Epanchins. According to Myshkin's stories, the moments before a seemingly certain execution assume infinite dimensions and become exceptionally charged, maximally filled with perception and sensation.³⁹ In turn, Myshkin's epileptic fits and Ippolit's certain death from consumption evoke a paler version of this existential state; I will show how embarrassment offers one more iteration of this condition in the novel.

Embarrassment disrupts the rhythms of language, social interaction and the body; it brakes and fragments speech and renders the body awkward. As embarrassment overtakes assembled company, the workings of the social machine come grinding to a halt. Embarrassment both ruffles composure and disrupts narrative composition; embarrassment has the power to imprint itself onto the experience of temporality, to stamp a scene with, as it were, its "time signature."⁴⁰

Continuing to resort to musical imagery to describe the effects of embarrassment, we might speak, too, of its production of dissonance: the embarrassing act or utterance sounds as if a false note in the unfolding social discourse, bringing on a sudden loss of harmony among its players. We might imagine, then, that it is not accidental that one of the novel's scandal scenes—its most public—is set against the backdrop of music (of the orchestra playing in the pleasure gardens at Pavlovsk). The narrator adds an element of sensationalism to the scene at the outset by hinting at the possibility of scandal and the public's reveling in spectacle (346/8: 286). With the other ingredients of melodrama in place—emotional excess culminating in physical display as Nastasya Filippovna strikes

³⁹ Myshkin tells of how the condemned man "remembered everything with extraordinary clarity and used to say he would never forget anything from those minutes. [...] He said those five minutes seemed like an endless time to him, an enormous wealth" (61/8: 51-52). For the other variations on the story, see 22-23 and 64-65 / 8: 20-21, 55-56.

⁴⁰ I borrow the idea of applying the musical term "time signature" to a novel from Nicholas Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel: Reading, Neural Science, and the Form of Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

the officer with a whip—the presence of music in the background heightens the agitation and increases this scene’s claims on the original theatrical genre of melodrama. Peter Brooks writes on the connection between melodrama and music (originally a constitutive element of the genre):

Even though the novel has no literal music, the connotation of the term melodrama remains relevant. The emotional drama needs the desemanticized language of music, its evocation of the “ineffable”, its tones and registers. Style, thematic structuring, modulations of tone and rhythm and voice—musical patterning in the metaphorical sense—are called upon to invest plot with some of the inexorability and necessity that in pre-modern literature derived from the substratum of myth.⁴¹

Whether it be from “the substratum of myth” or not, it is undeniable that those elements of a novel that Brooks refers to as “musical patterning in the metaphorical sense” contribute to a text’s representation and transmission of emotion. In the account of Nastasya Filippovna’s name-day party there is a frequent insistence on disrupted and distorted rhythm, betraying, in the scene’s temporal textures, the emotional strains that are felt. Moreover, we might read the “*petit jeu*” (the confessional parlor game that the guests enter into) as a model for the relationship between embarrassment and narration, for the game foregrounds the importance of modulations of tone and voice for controlled emotional effect in narrative production.

Temporality is pushed to the fore in this scene at the outset by Nastasya Filippovna’s inquiry as to what time it is and frequent checks of her watch. The rhythm that punctuates the scene is one of convulsive, broken movement. It issues from Nastasya Filippovna, who is in a state of nervous agitation, verging on what the narrator calls hysteria, and it infects the others around her. Her movements and her speech are sharp and rapid. The following extract of the narrator’s commentary on the scene does not only describe Nastasya Filippovna’s state, but also, through its own rhythms and style, gives an impression of the physical and emotional composition of the scene:

Totsky also took his glass, hoping to harmonize the new tone that was setting in, possibly giving it the character of a charming joke. Ganya alone drank nothing. In the strange, sometimes very abrupt and quick outbursts of Nastasya Filippovna, who also took wine and announced that she would drink three glasses that evening, in her hysterical and pointed laughter, which alternated suddenly with a silent and even sullen pensiveness, it was hard to make anything out. Some suspected she was in a fever; they finally began to notice that she seemed to be waiting for something, glanced frequently at her watch, was growing impatient, distracted (141).⁴²

⁴¹ Brooks, *Melodramatic Imagination*, 14. Also cited by Miller, *Unfinished Journey*, 132.

⁴² юТоцкий взял тоже свой бокал, надеясь угаармонировать наступающий новый тон, придав ему по возможности характер милой шутки. Один только Ганя ничего не пил. В странных же, иногда очень резких и быстрых выходках Настасьи Филипповны, которая тоже взяла вина и объявила, что сегодня вечером выпьет три бокала, в ее истерическом и беспредметном смехе, перемежающемся вдруг с молчаливою и даже угрюмою задумчивостью, трудно было и понять что-нибудь. Одни

The smooth flow of the first sentence conveys the oily Totsky's efforts to smooth over the awkwardness; his hopes for producing a "charming (*milyi*) joke" and for "harmonizing" the tone sound somewhat ironically from the violator of Nastasya Filippovna and convey his predilection for amoral decency and good taste. Meanwhile, from the short sentence describing Ganya, we imagine him standing frozen in fearful horror at what might unfold. As well as conveying the abrupt alternations in her speech and behavior, the long, confused sentence about Nastasya Filippovna gives an indication, with its own rhythms, of her agitated condition.

The sharp, rapid rhythms of agitation continue to be felt, by bodies, and in the unfolding of the scene as a whole: Nastasya Filippovna repeatedly suppresses a shiver ("at moments (по временам) seemed to suppress a violent shiver"); looks are exchanged rapidly back and forth, and Ganya, as if in response, stirs convulsively (141).⁴³ As Nastasya Filippovna's hysteria mounts, she "fusses about, laughing convulsively and fitfully" (143).⁴⁴ The use of the word "fitfully" (припадочно) evokes Myshkin epileptic condition, and produces a kind of rhyme between this scene of Nastasya Filippovna's hysterical agitation and Myshkin's fits, particularly the one in public, at the Epanchin's one when he smashed the Chinese vase. The "confessions" of this gathering are as if a rhyme for the "prophecy" at that later one.

As the rhythms of the scene threaten to stall and social interaction to collapse, Ferdyschenko instigates the *petit jeu* where the guests offer up confessions of their worst deeds. (The available material comprises an "*embarras de richesses*," Ferdyschenko exclaims; 144/8: 122). By inciting the guests to take up narration themselves, Ferdyschenko is introducing a new rhythm to the scene. As confessions, the guests' stories reprise a favorite Dostoevskian theme: the corrupt, double-edged nature of confessional narrative as truth-telling. According to Ferdyschenko, that is exactly "what's so enticing" about the game, "to see how the person's going to lie." (143/8: 121). "Truth is then possible only accidentally, through a special sort of boasting mood in the very worst tone, which is unthinkable and quite improper here," Totsky continues (143-44).⁴⁵ The guest-narrators' corrupt confessions turn this game into one of fiction-making, where the command of style and tone is paramount. As Goffman notes, "[m]any of our games and sports, commemorate the themes of composure and embarrassment: in poker, a dubious claim may win money for the player who can present it calmly."⁴⁶ In this game of narration, the speakers' intended effect—the manipulation of their listeners to see them in a particular light—depends on their maintaining composure throughout.

подозревали в ней лихорадку; стали наконец замечать, что и она как бы ждет чего-то сама, часто поглядывает на часы, становится нетерпеливою, рассеянною (8: 119).]

⁴³ [как будто по временам сдерживавшая в себе сильную дрожь. [...] Генерал и Тоцкий еще раз переглянулись, Ганя судорожно шевельнулся (8: 120).]

⁴⁴ [суетилась, смеялась судорожно, припадочно (8: 121).]

⁴⁵ [«Да уж одно то заманчиво, как тут будет лгать человек.» [...] «Правда возможна тут только случайно, при особом рода хвастливом настроении слишком дурного тона, здесь немислимом и совершенно неприличном» (8: 121-22).]

⁴⁶ Goffman, "Embarrassment and Social Organization," 104.

The *petit jeu* bares the theatrical premise that lies behind the “dramaturgical” model of embarrassment (and indeed all social discourse) advanced by sociologists such as Goffman.⁴⁷ The individual comprises multiple selves, different configurations of which are “performed” on different occasions: “The elements of a social encounter...consist of effectively projected claims to an acceptable self and the confirmation of the claims on the part of the others.”⁴⁸

A blatant incitement to embarrassment, the *petit jeu* demonstrates the workings of embarrassment through the attempts to control it: the main thrust of the ‘confessions’ shifts from the moral import of their contents, to the social success of the stories’ ‘performance’ and the speakers’ claims on the identities that they advance. Maintained composure and averted embarrassment express a powerful effort to control the identity the speaker wishes to project and the meaning of each story for its listeners.

We might even go as far as saying that in this sense, these individual acts of narration and self-composure struggle with the same forces as the narration of the novel as a whole. Both the narrator of the novel and the confessional narrators participating in the *petit jeu* are essentially unreliable. The confessional narrators muster self-composure, possessing a strong imperative to close down and limit the assumptions made on the basis of their stories. The narrator of the novel itself, in contrast, struggles with the conflicting imperatives to be a disinterested observer or to advance particular attitudes about and judgments on the novel’s characters. (Recall for now the marginal example I gave above of the hint of subjectivity and individuation that came with the quirk of narration where the narrator returned to add a comment on Ganya’s behavior, as if an afterthought.⁴⁹) The narrator’s occasional fretful discussion of the problems of narration also signal his own discomposure in the face of these competing imperatives and his own problems of making “effectively projected claims to an acceptable self and [of finding] the confirmation of the claims on the part of the others.” The problematic narrative cohesion of *The Idiot* therefore stems, in part, from the same vulnerability to embarrassment that besets the characters themselves in their insecure social world.

Let us turn now to a different way in which embarrassment is implicated in the temporality of the novel. In *The Idiot*, embarrassment replicates, on several occasions, a certain narrative arc: a particular brand of suspense created by the sense of inevitability that the scene will eventually reach a breaking point. This dreadful expectation is what gives contour to the novel’s infamous scandal scenes. Goffman describes this effect: “An encounter which seems likely to occasion abrupt embarrassment may, because of this, cast a shadow of sustained uneasiness upon the participants, transforming the entire encounter into an incident itself” (100).

When Nastasya Filippovna makes her first actual appearance in the novel—after her name and portrait have already been in circulation—just such a shadow of uneasiness is cast upon those present in Ganya’s apartment. “Nastasya Filippovna’s arrival,

⁴⁷ On “dramaturgical” theories of embarrassment, see W. Gerrod Parrott and Rom Harré, “Embarrassment and the Threat to Character,” 43-56.

⁴⁸ Goffman, “Embarrassment and Social Organization,” 105.

⁴⁹ These conflicting and shifting positions of the narrator are fully explored by Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky and The Idiot*, passim.

especially at the present moment, was a most strange and bothersome surprise for them all” (102).⁵⁰ Instantly, all are bound in a sense of scarcely articulable foreboding: “A general hush fell: everyone looked at the prince as if they did not understand him and—did not wish to understand.”⁵¹ The punctuation of this sentence—the dash that separates the “did not wish to understand”—almost stages the moment of clarifying understanding in the onlookers that something will play out here in the relationship between Myshkin and Nastasya Filippovna that has ramifications for the hopeful Ganya—an understanding that is then hastily suppressed. Dostoevsky will repeatedly draw attention in the course of the novel to such moments of collectively held knowledge and sudden understanding that move through different degrees of consciousness. How and when exactly—without verbal expression or specific communication between individuals—does such knowledge come to the surface and come to be shared? The emphasis placed on the time of Nastasya Filippovna’s arrival (“especially at this present moment;” *особенно в настоящую минуту*) narrows and concentrates attention on the present and its particular configuration of people in this room.

With the arrival of Nastasya Filippovna, time is both drawn out into extended suspense and concentrated into a single charged instant. The instant of her arrival is a precursor of the inevitable transgressive climax (inevitable yet undetermined in the precise form it will take). Both of these temporalities—prolongation and concentrated instantaneity—belong to the experience of a precariously poised social group where scandal and embarrassment lie close to the point of precipitation. The coincidence of these two temporalities is registered in the language of Goffman’s analysis, where “the shadow of sustained unease” transforms the “entire encounter” (something of duration) into an “incident.” In this way, in *The Idiot*, the temporal and narrative structures of embarrassment—on the plane of the novel’s social world—double the model of temporality that lies at the metaphysical and spiritual core of the novel: the infinite expansion of time in the face of the moment of certain death (the experience of the condemned man—and of Dostoevsky himself—that Myshkin relates in his stories). Myshkin’s epileptic fits (themselves a source of embarrassment) are an incarnation of this experience of time, in which sensation and self-awareness increase and intensify in moments that “flashed by like lightning” (225/8: 188). To these symbolic examples of altered temporality, we might add the embarrassment of the scandal scenes.

The transformed experience of time under the sign of certain death represents what Michael Holquist calls “the mysterious stasis of a transcendent world,” divine time as opposed to the “linear, merely human, cause-and-effect-time.”⁵² If Myshkin’s stories of the condemned man introduce, but hold at a distance, the example of transcendent, altered temporality into the novel, then his epileptic fits provide an embodiment of this temporal experience in the world of the novel’s own action. In turn, the embarrassment of the scandal scene brings this experience right into the social world, into the most

⁵⁰ [Приезд Настасьи Филипповны, и особенно в настоящую минуту, был для всех самую странною и хлопотливою неожиданностью (8: 87).]

⁵¹ [Общее молчание воцарилось: все смотрели на князя, как бы не понимая его и—не желая понять (ibid.).]

⁵² Michael Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 102-03.

“novelistic” tissue of the novel. In this way, the scandal scene stages the embarrassment produced by the presence of the theological in the world of the society novel.

In the novel’s final major scandal scene, where Myshkin, in a pre-epileptic state, smashes the Chinese vase at the Epanchins, the impending threat of an inevitable embarrassing climax is recast as prophecy fulfilled. The narrative arc that is wholly secular and determined by the social world collides and blurs with one that is theological or divine. The same dreadful expectation and shadow of unease hangs over this scene as over all the other social gatherings of the novel, augmented, in this case, by Aglaya’s warning about breaking the Chinese vase, but in the moment that the vase does smash, any notion of scandal or embarrassment is explicitly displaced by the sense of prophecy: “But we cannot omit mention of one strange sensation that struck him precisely at that very moment and suddenly made itself distinct in the crowd of all the other vague and strange sensations: it was not the shame, not the scandal, not the fear, not the unexpectedness that struck him most of all, but the fulfilled prophecy!” (548).⁵³

The smashing of the vase and Myshkin’s subsequent epileptic fit come after Myshkin’s passionate speech about atheism and faith—his final attempt to “express an idea directly, to state, in Dostoevsky’s words, a ‘sacred conviction.’”⁵⁴ As Miller notes, at this point the vase is a physical extension of Myshkin’s personality and its smashing represents his final breakdown and inability to impose order on his thoughts. We might also see its smashing as the final collision between the two generic positions: Myshkin’s monologue represents the embarrassing insistence of the theological imperative in the world of the society novel, and, by extension, in the contemporary society.

Much like the name-day gathering at Nastasya Filippovna’s discussed earlier, this scene is strongly marked by distorted rhythms in speech and bodily movement. If, as Nicholas Dames puts it, “the novel’s time signature is essentially, more than any thematic fact, its generic signature,” then the distorted rhythms of embarrassment and epilepsy that mark this scene are a sign of a corrupted time signature and the collision of genres.⁵⁵ The prince becomes excited at the mention of Pavlishchev and the presence that evening of another of his purported relatives. Then embarrassment takes him over as he fears he has made insinuations about the man’s magnanimity. The pace of his speech changes and he begins to stutter: “Ah, my God!” cried the prince, embarrassed, hurrying, and becoming more and more animated. “I’ve...I’ve said something stupid again, but...it had to be so, because I...I...I...though again it’s not what I mean!” (541).⁵⁶ His agitation grows and he begins to tremble; his emotions mismatch the general theme of the conversation: “The prince was even trembling all over. Why he suddenly became so agitated, why he became so emotionally ecstatic, for absolutely no reason, and, it seemed out of all

⁵³ [Но не можем не упомянуть об одном странном ощущении, поразившем его именно в это самое мгновение и вдруг ему выяснившемся из толпы всех других смутных и странных ощущений: не стыд, не скандал, не страх, не внезапность поразили его больше всего, а сбывшееся пророчество! (8: 454)]

⁵⁴ Miller, *Dostoevsky and The Idiot*, 150.

⁵⁵ Dames, *Physiology of the Novel*, 54.

⁵⁶ [«Ах, боже мой!» -- вскричал князь, конфузясь, торопясь и воодушевляясь всё больше и больше, «я... я опять сказал глупость, но... так и должно было быть, потому что я... я... я, впрочем, опять не к тому!» (8: 448)]

proportion (*ne v meru*) with the subject of the conversation—it would be hard to tell.”⁵⁷ Meanwhile, Ivan Petrovich, the purported relation of Pavlishchev, speaks with a strange quirk of rhythm in his voice: the text frequently indicates how his words are broken up and prolonged. (Take, as one typical example, the following: “‘You greatly ex-ag-ge-rate,’ Ivan Petrovich drew out with some boredom and even as if embarrassed at something.” 544).⁵⁸ General rhythmic disorder overtakes the scene, most evident of all in the characters’ speech. The phrase “*ne v meru*” is repeated again in relation to Myshkin as he launches into the main part of his speech “in extreme agitation and much too sharply (*ne v meru rezko*)” (543).⁵⁹ There is a loss of proportion or scale, or of measure or rhythm, which reminds us, too, of Myshkin’s explanation of his condition earlier in the novel (and repeated in similar terms after his final fit): “My gestures are inappropriate, I have no sense of measure” (342).⁶⁰ Like Goffman’s model embarrassed individual, Myshkin “answers to a new set of rhythms, characteristic of deep emotional experience.”⁶¹ As he continues to speak at high speed (*ужасно скоро*), Myshkin’s thoughts eventually seem to outstrip time altogether, insisting on a kind of maximally filled simultaneity—the transcendent time akin to the pre-execution condition of the condemned man:

This whole feverish tirade, this whole flow of passionate and agitated words and ecstatic thoughts, as if thronging in some sort of turmoil and leaping over each other, all this foreboded something dangerous, something peculiar in the mood of the young man (546).⁶²

The narrative itself also faces the problem of temporal ordering here too, finding that it has exceeded the limits of linear narration. It too recounts a moment of simultaneity, necessarily protracting and drawing out time. Myshkin’s speech breaks off with ellipsis as “an incident suddenly occurred,” and the narrator keeps this moment suspended as he describes first Myshkin’s state and that of the embarrassed onlookers, who “marveled fearfully (and some also with shame) at his outburst. Then, with a second paragraph and another temporal shift, we backtrack and are given an overview of the action from the moment Myshkin had first entered the room. The narration then resumes from where Myshkin’s last words left off, and the vase tumbles.

To summarize, then: I am suggesting that with the threat of inevitable embarrassment and climax that overshadows them, the novel’s scandal scenes allow two

⁵⁷ [Князь даже весь дрожал. Почему он вдруг так растревожился, почему пришел в такой умиленный восторг, совершенно ни с того ни с сего и, казалось, нисколько не в меру с предметом разговора— это трудно было бы решить (*ibid.*)]

⁵⁸ [«Вы очень пре-у-вели-чиваете» - протянул Иван Петрович с некоторою скукой и даже как будто чего-то совестясь (8: 451).]

⁵⁹ [в чрезвычайном волнении и не в меру резко заговорил опять князь (8: 450).]

⁶⁰ [«У меня нет жеста приличного, чувства меры нет» (8: 283).]

⁶¹ Goffman, “Embarrassment and Social Organization,” 103.

⁶² [Вся эта горячая тирада, весь этот наплыв страстных и беспокойных слов и восторженных мыслей, как бы толкавшихся в какой-то суматохе и перескакивавших одна через другую, всё это предвещало что-то опасное, что-то особенное в настроении так внезапно вскипевшего, по-видимому ни с того ни с сего, молодого человека (8: 453).]

temporalities to collide: on the one hand, the instant of simultaneity that concentrates the premonition of transgression and its actual occurrence into one densely charged moment, and on the other hand, the unfolding, linear, narrative of cause and effect that leads to the culmination of the scandal. All the novel's scandal scenes point towards this final one and the smashing of the vase, where the inevitability of scandal is re-dubbed prophecy.

In this way, the scandal scenes stage the clash of temporalities (and therefore genres) that lie at the center of *The Idiot*: the conflict between divine, transcendent time (the simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present) and human, secular, linear time. The scandal scenes stage this clash in terms of narrative and emotional experience, while Myshkin's epileptic fits, we might say, stage the same collision in terms of anti-narrative and bodily experience.

In the end, the collision of these two generic impulses—the theological and the society novel—is, in turn, a major source of embarrassment for the novel and narrative itself. Embarrassment is felt in the distorted rhythms and broken measure of speech and bodily movement, and in the rhythmic aberrations of disrupted generic conventions, such as Myshkin's "parables" delivered in the drawing room on the set of the marriage plot.

Embarrassment, Empathy, the Novel and the Reader

Although I have acknowledged that embarrassment depends upon a degree of social cohesion (however fragile) that can propagate a body of collectively held norms and values, I have so far emphasized the ways in which embarrassment is essentially destructive, thwarting the production speech and the smooth running of the social machinery. However, embarrassment can also open up channels of communication and connection of its own—through the possibility of feeling embarrassed on behalf of another and the experience of empathy that is involved in this variety of embarrassment. The potential exists here, too, for the reader to be drawn into active involvement in the novel's circuits of embarrassment and empathy. While any emotional experience of another (encountered in life or on the page) might be shared empathetically, the case of empathetic embarrassment is distinctive because, it more readily produces a visceral and even outwardly legible effect (the blush). In this way, *The Idiot* lays claim on producing a curiously embodied reader.

We can find several marked moments of empathetic embarrassment in *The Idiot*. After the reading aloud of the slanderous article about Myshkin's alleged exploitation of his benefactor, for example, the young Kolya is terribly shamed and the rest of the assembled company in a state of awkward embarrassment. As for Myshkin, "he was so abashed by what others had done, he felt so ashamed for his visitors, that he was afraid at first even to look at them. Ptitsyn, Varya, Ganya, and even Lebedev—they all seemed to have a somewhat embarrassed look" (266).⁶³ Later, an explicit statement of the value of

⁶³ о[н до того застыдился чужого поступка, до того ему стало стыдно за своих гостей, что в первое мгновение он и поглядеть на них боялся. Птицын, Варя, Ганя, даже Лебедев – все имели как бы несколько сконфуженный вид (8: 221).]

a display of empathetic embarrassment is placed in the mouth of Myshkin: “I can see that you are perhaps more ashamed for me than anyone else, Evgeny Pavlovich; you’re blushing, that’s the sign of a beautiful heart” (341-42).⁶⁴ This remark of Myshkin’s is oddly abrupt and devoid of immediate context or consequence, which has the effect, I think, of highlighting its thematic import. There is an ongoing—and inconclusive—treatment of modes of empathy or sympathy in *The Idiot*, and here Dostoevsky explicitly signals the pertinence of embarrassment to these questions.⁶⁵

In a conversation between Myshkin and Aglaya following the acute embarrassment of Ippolit’s failed suicide, different models of empathy/sympathy are set forth. The embarrassment that overtakes the assembled group, who break out into malicious laughter, is, in effect a form of thwarted empathy. To empathize with Ippolit, the dying consumptive, would require his listeners to place themselves in his position; such a fearful fantasy of occupying his place would entail a confrontation with mortality and an uncomfortable threat their own sense of selfhood.

Speaking with Aglaya after the incident, Myshkin displays a sympathetic understanding of Ippolit. Myshkin explains (in a somewhat instructive mode to Aglaya) how Ippolit’s actions were motivated by the desire for communication and affirmation—from people in general, and, though he may not have been consciously aware of it, perhaps from Aglaya in particular (given that he had requested that she read his confession).

Only he surely wanted everyone to stand around him and tell him that they love and respect him very much, and start begging him to remain alive. It may well be that he had you in mind most of all, since he mentioned you at such a moment...though he may not have known himself that he had you in mind (426).⁶⁶

Myshkin’s sympathy, it turns out, is based on his idea of universal needs (“everyone is inclined to think that way,” he says, justifying his explanation of Ippolit’s craving an audience). Suggesting that Ippolit’s most desired interlocutor may have been Aglaya, Myshkin enters into the specifics of Ippolit’s situation, but this emerges as less of a

⁶⁴ [«Я вижу, что вам, может быть, за меня всех стыднее, Евгений Павлович; вы краснеете, это черта прекрасного сердца» (8: 282).]

⁶⁵ The term “empathy” was, of course, not available to Dostoevsky. The German term *Einfühlung* was first used by Robert Vischer in 1872 (and eventually translated into Russian as *vchuvstvovanie*.) See “Empathy” in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Scribner, 1973), 2: 85-89 and “Vchuvstvovanie” in *Bol’shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, ed. O. Iu. Shmidt (Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1926-47), 13: 660-61. In twentieth-century usage, in the field of psychology, “empathy” and “sympathy” are differentiated in meaning. To empathize is to feel the emotions of others (I feel your pain); to sympathize is to feel *for* another (I feel pity for your pain). Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century usage of “sympathy,” (for example by Adam Smith, David Hume, George Eliot) incorporates some of what we today understand as “empathy”. For definitions of empathy, sympathy and observations on the historical use of the terms by a literary scholar, see Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4-6, 42-55.

⁶⁶ [«Только ему, наверно, хотелось, чтобы все его обступили и сказали ему, что его очень любят и уважают, и все бы стали его очень упрашивать остаться в живых. Очень может быть, что он вас имел всех больше в виду, потому что в такую минуту о вас упомянул... хоть, пожалуй, и сам не знал, что имеет вас в виду» (8: 3454).]

feeling for or with Ippolit, than an utterance from an analytical perspective: Myshkin interprets the situation and claims to see and understand more than Ippolit does himself. To Aglaya, the existence, much less the penetration of this opaque realm of another's mind, is mystifying and ultimately objectionable. As her thoughts unfold, she reveals that mechanism of sympathy which works by making analogy with one's own experience to gain insight into another's. In her account of her adolescent thoughts of suicide, empathy comprises self-revelation or confession itself. But Aglaya considers Myshkin's assessment of Ippolit to be a judgment, not an exercise of sympathy: "...and on your side I find all this very bad, because it's very rude to look at and judge a man's soul the way you're judging Ippolit." Aglaya's words also obliquely raise the question of whether sympathy springs from reason or from feeling and imagination; she reproaches Myshkin for seemingly operating from reason alone, which, in her view, is opposed to tenderness of feeling: "You have no tenderness, only truth and that makes it unfair"(426).⁶⁷

The exchange between Myshkin and Aglaya remains somewhat obtuse and inconclusive. Recognizing in Ippolit impulses that he sees as common to all, Myshkin restores the consumptive teenager to a community from which wrathful shamelessness has excluded him. Yet Aglaya's response suggests that he has not exerted sufficient imagination and feeling to understand the particularity of Ippolit's situation. Indeed, it is Myshkin's capacity to love only according to a universal feeling of compassion that renders him unable to choose between Aglaya and Nastasya Filippovna. Though he lacks the terms that psychology would later place at our disposal, Dostoevsky explores the nuances of modes of fellow-feeling: while empathy may be grounded in the recognition of motives or needs that are universal, it also depends on a relationship to the particularity of the individual. These would-be universal tenets may be learned, stated or transmitted within a community, but empathetic understanding of another individual tempers that axiom with imagination.

Another 'instructive' dialogue that follows shortly afterwards points to the role of embarrassment in cultivating sensibility and decorum. Embarrassment signals the existence of a form of community; it joins those who share a set of social and behavioral norms. In this way, embarrassment establishes connection between individuals as an aid to what we might call 'sentimental education'—the transmission of values and emotions within a community.

When Aglaya asks a provocative question in an otherwise dignified exchange between Lizaveta Prokofievna and the Prince, her mother replies "didactically": "You know that up to now I have never had occasion to blush before you...though you might have been glad if I had.' [...] 'Delicacy and dignity are taught by one's own heart, not by a dancing master'" (438).⁶⁸ Attunement to embarrassment, Lizaveta Prokofievna's words imply, can advance a form of sentimental education and instill a sense of decorum:

⁶⁷ [«А с вашей стороны я нахожу, что все это очень дурно, потому что очень грубо так смотреть и судить душу человека, как вы судите Ипполита [...] У вас нежности нет: одна правда, стало быть—несправедливо» (8: 354).]

⁶⁸ [«Ты знаешь, что мне пред тобой краснеть еще ни в чем до сих пор не приходилось... хотя ты, может, и рада бы была тому» -- назидательно ответила Лизавета Прокофьевна. [...]

«Деликатности и достоинству само сердце учит, а не танцмейстер» (8: 365).]

blushes of regret at Aglaya's lack of delicacy would throw into relief the values and behaviour that are approved in that social setting. In short, embarrassment schools the individual in tact.

Tact, like empathy, is a form of mutable knowledge. Writing on different forms of knowledge in the human sciences Hans-Georg Gadamer asserted: "By 'tact' we understand a special sensitivity and sensitiveness to situations and how to behave in them, for which knowledge from general principles does not suffice".⁶⁹ Tact binds individuals in a socially fraught world where man suffers from the rift between his inner consciousness and the outer world.⁷⁰ The exercise of tact, like that of empathy, is a means of healing and compensating for this rift. Just as empathy is knowledge which heeds the boundaries of alterity and the particularity of the other, so is tact a form of knowledge irreducible to universals. Rather, it proceeds with a blind spot, contingent upon the particularity of any given circumstances.

When she speaks for the sentimental education that may be advanced through the legibility of embarrassment and its inculcation of tact, Lizaveta Prokofievna is also giving voice to the author's conviction in the power and value of fiction. Her words gesture towards the possibility of sentimental education of the reader. Just training in tact is not given by a dancemaster, neither do Dostoevsky's fictions sound a clear didactic voice. But just as attunement to embarrassment and its lessons in delicacy seeks to extend social cohesion and stabilize decorum, so too does the novel seek to extend and build community among its readers. Training in tact (to quote Gadamer on different forms of knowledge) is "not nourished on the true but on the probable, the verisimilar."⁷¹ Literature, too, can provide this same form of sentimental education; the power of fictionality lies in probability or plausibility, and in its verisimilitude to life. In being implicated in the novel's own circuits of embarrassment, the reader of *The Idiot* is herself instructed in the exercise of tact, delicacy and empathy.

While the thematic and metafictional concerns of *The Idiot* do point to such a reading of the novel's embarrassment, its confused narrative structure may also make for a rather less edifying emotional experience for the reader. Recall Woolf's vivid description of the world of Dostoevsky's novels with which I began this chapter, where she notes the absence of a narratorial presence which might aid the reader's orientation in this troubling environment: "Nobody thinks of explaining." Woolf's account anticipates the issue that has driven the most productive and comprehensive scholarly inquiry into *The Idiot*, Robin Feuer Miller's groundbreaking study of the reader's participation in and negotiation of the complex and unstable relationships between the novel's characters and narrator. Remarkable for the scope and sensitivity of its insight, to which my own work is also indebted, Miller's study, with the aid of a critical apparatus of narratological concepts, imposes a high degree of order and design on the novel. Supplementing Wayne

⁶⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 16.

⁷⁰ Lukács points to the importance of tact to the novel form: "Tact and taste [...] here [in the novel] acquire great constitutive significance: only through them is subjectivity, at the beginning of the novel's totality and at its end, capable of maintaining itself in equilibrium." For Lukács, tact is akin to irony as a means by which the novel compensates for the non-identity between the internal and external world (Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 74)

⁷¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 21-22.

Booth's influential concepts of "implied author" and "implied reader" with the "narrator's reader," Miller demonstrates how, as the novel proceeds, "all the unities between the narrator's voices and the reader's expectations break down." Such an approach yields powerful conclusions about the specificity and achievement of Dostoevsky's narrative art:

The effect on the reader of this breakdown is to bring out various aspects of himself and temporarily elevate them into full-fledged reading selves. [...] This fragmentation of one's reading self could lead, *if successful*, to the kind of reading of *The Idiot* that Dostoevsky intended: in the course of the novel, the act of reading develops from an activity fueled by interest and entertainment into a highly-charged re-creation of moral experiences in which the reader finds himself inextricably involved.⁷²

Forced by the device of the "reliable yet unreliable narrator" into recognizing within himself these multiple reading selves ("the narrator's reader," "the implied reader"), the reader who emerges from Miller's study becomes involved, along with the novel's characters, in an ethical drama of guilt and responsibility.

As Miller acknowledges, however, this ambitious narrative design leads to the reader's sophisticated ethical participation only "*if successful*." What happens if it fails? How does the reader who fails to live up to the model of "the critic's reader" feel? Quite possibly somewhat embarrassed. This reader feels pulled in opposing directions as he seeks to make sense of and evaluate the novel's characters, their relationships and actions, but finds it harder to assume the analytical perspective that translates these feelings of confusion into the elevated moral activity of a reflective, participatory reader.

In this case, the "fragmentation of one's reading self" could, now unsuccessful, double the predicament of embarrassment. Miller's fragmented reading self is suddenly transformed into Goffman's embarrassed individual whose multiple selves do not find the stable point of reference and validation they require to avoid discomfiture. The profound analogy between reader response and the dynamics of embarrassment has been elaborated by Christopher Ricks, in his study of Keats, the earliest sustained literary treatment of embarrassment. Ricks finds that the "oscillation of [...] self" that is at the core of Goffman's embarrassment translates, in the scene of literary reception, into

an oscillation [...] between the sense in which the role of a reader is truly passive [...] and the sense in which the role of a reader is truly active. Some people find this duality more than they can take, and are fretful or embarrassed by not knowing what they are to do as a reader; it is not just their attention to the book, but the book's attention to them, which discomposes and even threatens them.⁷³

For the reader who "does not know what to do" when confronted with *The Idiot*, there arises the possibility for a scene of reader response and interpretation which is emotionally charged as anxious and embarrassing.

⁷² Miller, *Dostoevsky and The Idiot*, 228 (emphasis added).

⁷³ Ricks, *Keats and Embarrassment*, 186.

The complex, disorderly narrative structure of *The Idiot* seems to promote the frustration of the reader's desire to understand and interpret, preventing an edifying reader response of the kind that Robin Feuer Miller outlines. Rather than participating in the narrative dramas of guilt and responsibility, the reader may simply become flummoxed by the forces that pull his evaluative instincts in opposing directions, and end up feeling plain embarrassed. Such a reading is, in critical and scholarly terms, a failure, yet I do maintain that it belongs to the variety of potential emotional experiences that the novel produces. Embarrassment is wholly opposed to the activity of criticism: one of its effects is precisely to close down the longer perspective of reflection and analysis, producing instead braked thought and speech and the discomfort of drastically foreshortened perspective. The embarrassed individual is momentarily oppressed by the impossibility of escaping his own erring self or the attention that falls upon him; he cannot possibly attain the impersonality or detached distance of the critic.

As a form of reader response, the reading experience that Miller's study of *The Idiot* promotes can, in a sense, only be accessed or produced by writing, analyzing and synthesizing one's way towards it. The *writing* of literary criticism can itself be one particular mode of experiencing or *reading* a literary text. In saying this, then, I certainly do not dismiss or diminish the value of Miller's reading of *The Idiot*. Indeed, to conclude, I offer my own analysis that aligns the reader's experience of embarrassment and the novel's representation of embarrassment with the edifying and ethically privileged possibilities of the novel.

Embarrassment is inevitable, or even necessary in the novel. The conditions that give rise to embarrassment are the same ones that allow for empathetic contact between individuals. As I noted in my discussion of Myshkin in the anteroom, the novel (in contrast to the epic) is a world of refracted and fragmented selfhood; individuals select and adjust the roles they play in the social world, manipulating and modifying the parts of their selves that are on display. In a world where wholeness of self prevails, embarrassment would not arise, for, as Goffman showed us, it is the misalignment of these multiple, fragmented, selves that produces situations of embarrassment. This condition begets embarrassment – and it also promotes and necessitates empathy. The condition of fragmentation defines a social world – that is, the modern world—in which wholeness of self is not accessible in any encounter. Myshkin—the perfectly beautiful man, but unfit novelistic character, to whom embarrassment is alien at the novel's start—still believes in the accessibility of wholeness: “Now [...] that you have told me all your inmost truths,” he says to Keller, “it seems to me that it's impossible to add anything more to what you've already said” (308).⁷⁴ But towards the end of the novel he expresses his frustration: “Why can we never know *everything* about another person?” (583).⁷⁵

We can never know everything about another person because we remain essentially outside of them, separated by the boundaries of the body. Myshkin ultimately fails in romantic love—love which is based upon the embodied particularity of another

⁷⁴ [«вы мне всю подноготную вашу представили; по крайней мере, мне кажется, что к тому, что вы рассказывали, теперь больше ведь уж ничего прибавить нельзя, ведь так?» (8: 257)]

⁷⁵ [«Почему мы никогда не можем *всего* узнать про другого?» (8: 484)]

being.⁷⁶ When Evgeny Pavlovich says of Aglaya at the novel's end that she "loved as a woman...as a human being...not as an abstract spirit," we also hear this as an indictment of Myshkin—who could love only a general idea of humanity and goodness (583).⁷⁷

What is not represented in the novel, but suggested—and required—by the failure of Myshkin's compassion to bring good to the world he has entered, is a form of empathy that would take full heed of the other's alterity, confronting the limits of that which cannot be known. It is an act of communion and shared feeling which at the same time acknowledges the particularity and difference of the other.

This particular understanding of empathy is privileged by Bakhtin in his early work "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" (1920-23). Here, Bakhtin contrasts sympathetic identification with a literary character with what he calls "vzhivanie" (translated as "live entering").⁷⁸ *Vzhivanie* is Bakhtin's coinage, and a modification or

⁷⁶ Anthony Cascardi finds in Myshkin an implicit critique of "the beautiful soul" for whom love is possible only as an abstraction and who cannot heed the condition of embodiment and its necessity to human community and knowledge. Anthony J. Cascardi, *The Bounds of Reason: Cervantes, Dostoevsky, Flaubert* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1986), 130-32, 154-56.

Cascardi's work provides an interesting counterpoint to Michael Holquist's. Both are philosophically inclined literary critics who valorize particularity as the distinguishing feature of novelistic ethics and epistemology, yet their work produces (or implies) contradictory conclusions. Michael Holquist writes eloquently on Christology in *The Idiot* "as the dilemma of unique persons, a problem sustained at the level of individual psychology rather than of systematic theology. That is, [Dostoevsky] re-enacts the life-death-and-transfiguration of Christ, *as if Christ were not the messiah, but as if he were an individual*. What in the Bible is a series of acts interpreted according to their exterior universal meaning, is rehearsed by Dostoevsky as the actions of particular men, whose meaning is inner, particular. In its thrust against generalization *The Idiot* most clearly defines itself as a novel." (*Dostoevsky and the Novel*, 107; emphasis in original). In Holquist's view, then, Myshkin is the embodiment of particularity thus fit to be a novel's hero (and his "problem" is to "achieve a universality that can endow his particularity with meaning," 111). In this reading, what is positively valorized above all is the aesthetic ideology of Dostoevsky's novel (and, by implication of the novel in general)—its openness to contingency. Holquist identifies Myshkin with this ideology, but, significantly, he takes Myshkin less as autonomous character (as a *person*) in the novel, and more as the emanation of an authorial idea (as the translation of an absolute, a mythic Christ, into a particular individual).

Cascardi, like Holquist, also valorizes particularity, identifying it (*pace* Ian Watt) as the defining feature of the novelistic representation of reality. Whereas Holquist's reading implied that Myshkin was an emanation of the ethically valorized novelistic particularity, Cascardi focuses on specific instances of Myshkin's conduct and speech and produces a much less sympathetic reading, drawing attention to his failure to heed embodiment as a condition of knowledge. In Cascardi's view, Myshkin's "love" is "possible only as long as love is an abstraction, an idea, a mere possibility, uncommitted to the actuality of other living individuals. ... [Myshkin] cannot prove his love in tangible ways. ... [He] is unwilling or unable to recognize that his ability to know others, to love them, requires his commitment to their physical 'fallen' nature, a commitment which also must be of his body." (130-31; 154).

It seems wholly characteristic of the "dialogism" of Dostoevsky's work that critics can locate the same values on different planes of the novel (the aesthetic-ideological plane of authorial creation; the plane of actual character representation) and reach, if not entirely contradictory, then certainly diverging conclusions.

⁷⁷ [«Аглая Ивановна любила как женщина, как человек, а не как...отвлеченный дух» (8: 484).]

⁷⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist & Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 25, 61-80. Alina Wyman has discussed Bakhtin's concept of *vzhivanie* in relation to Dostoevsky's novels, finding in Alyesha Karamozov the successful embodiment of the principle that failed in Myshkin (Alina Wyman, "The Progress of Dostoevsky's Ideal Hero: From *The Idiot* to *The Brothers*

more precise specification of existing terms for related phenomena such as empathy (*vchuvstvovanie*) or co-experiencing (*soperezhivanie*).⁷⁹ The distinction of *vzhivanie* is that the empathizer retains a degree of outsidedness (and thus acknowledging their embodiment) to the individual he empathizes with; he does not simply double the feelings or experience of the other, but enriches it.⁸⁰ Bakhtin's notions of *vzhivanie* and "outsidedness" (*vnenakhodimost'*) are forerunners of his later full-blown concept of dialogism, and of novel theory's subsequent privileging of the novel as a site for the experience of alterity.

Embarrassment is a dialogic condition, arising out of the interaction between the individual and the social context. In the exploration of the dialogic condition in *Crime and Punishment* it is the porousness of Raskolnikov's consciousness that allows both the dialogic fertilization of the idea of murdering the pawnbroker (the overheard fragments of conversation that increase his resolve) and the redemptive, empathetic communion with Sonya. In *The Idiot* Dostoevsky shows us the tragic, ineluctable condition of modernity—the fragmented, modern self in the godless, atomized world, but the art of his narrative fiction also points the way to the redemptive potential that is inherent in this world: the possibility of empathetic connection that does not depend on the accessibility of a whole self (indeed requires its very non-accessibility). We find here an attempt to resolve the problem by which Lukács characterized the novel and modernity; indeed his *Theory of the Novel* concludes with an intimation that in the works of Dostoevsky we will find a new epic.⁸¹ Into the atomized and morally bankrupt world Dostoevsky places, as an experiment, Prince Myshkin, his "perfectly beautiful man," innocent, whole and Christ-like. Yet Myshkin's presence in this world proves to be an embarrassment—and incompatible with novelistic form (recall how his insistence on universally heeding wholeness threatened to prevent the novel leaving a minor character to his minorness in the anteroom). In the end, what prevails is not the universal compassion practiced by Myshkin, but the redemptive potential that is inherent in the modern, novelistic, world.

Embarrassment, as a kind of thwarted empathy, shows the way to this salient aspect of Dostoevsky's novelistic ethics and epistemology. Admittedly, in order to experience this ethically privileged form of empathy in Dostoevsky's novel, we rely heavily on overlaying Bakhtin's ethical writings on to Dostoevsky's fictions. As Russell Scott Valentino notes, "[w]hether Bakhtin's *vzhivanie* was inspired by Dostoevsky or

Karamazov" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for Teachers of Slavic and Eastern European Languages, Pasadena, California, January 6-9, 2011).

⁷⁹ Bakhtin's treatment of these terms takes place in the context of their appearance in the discourse of psychology. See note 65.

⁸⁰ "In what way would it enrich the event if I merged with the other? [...] And what would I myself gain by the other's merging with me? If he did he would see and know no more than what I see and know myself [...] Let him remain outside of me, for in that position he can see and know what I myself do not see and know [...] And in this sense his ordinary sympathizing (сочувствие) with my life is not a merging of the two of us into a single being and is not a numerical duplication of my life, but constitutes an essential enrichment of the event of my life, because my life is co-experienced by him in a new form" (Bakhtin, "Author and Hero," 87-88).

⁸¹ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 152-53.

devised to account for his artistic practice is difficult to say.⁸²” Experiencing the narrative of *The Idiot* as an incitement to “*vzhivanie*,” or to empathy in the face of radical alterity, is not the kind of experience one has *while reading* the novel. In addition, I don’t think it really is an experience that is obviously or successfully *represented* in the character relations in the novel. It can only be arrived at afterwards in the course of analysis. Bakhtin seeks to account for this difference himself. As he suggests in “Author and Hero,” while we are actually apprehending an artwork, we can only experience the inner state of its characters separately and individually. In order to experience the aesthetic whole of a work, we must be in position outside each of its participants as well as outside all of them taken together.

In cases of this kind, the *author* is invoked for help: we gain possession of the *whole* of a work by co-experiencing it with its author. While each hero expresses only himself, the whole of a work is said to be the expression of the author. [...] Co-experiencing with the author, insofar as he has expressed himself in a given work, is not a co-experiencing of his inner life [his emotions] in the same sense as our co-experiencing with the hero is. Co-experiencing with the author is a sharing of the actively creative position he has assumed in relation to what is presented, i.e. it is not co-experiencing any longer, but co-creation.⁸³

The kind of experience that Bakhtin’s model of empathy and alterity (*vzhivanie*) allows us (as readers) to have of *The Idiot* is grounded in our emotional participation in the world of the novel—in its embarrassing society scandal scenes—but also supposes our participation in or co-creation of the author’s ethical and theological imperatives.

⁸² Russell Scott Valentino, “The Oxymoron of Empathic Criticism: Readerly Empathy, Critical Explication, and the Translator’s Creative Understanding,” *Poro* 4:1 (2005), 111.

⁸³ Bakhtin, “Author and Hero,” 65-66.

Chapter Three

Moving Stories: Emotion and Narrative in *Anna Karenina*

Next to *The Idiot*, in my study of emotion and the novel, I place Lev Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1873-77). As works of exceptional emotional intensity and complexity, *Anna Karenina* and *The Idiot* are high points in the nineteenth-century Russian novel, and in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky we find the century's and the genre's two foremost and most frequently counterposed representatives.

The serialization of *Anna Karenina* began in 1873, some four years after the completion of *The Idiot*, and both novels were shaped by evolving imperatives in the process of their composition. Both are society novels that smuggle into this genre a strong theological imperative, augmenting the philosophical or metaphysical charge around the emotions that animate their plots and social worlds. In the case of both novels, closure ultimately depends on the negotiation between the theological imperative within the world of the society novel: Dostoevsky's experiment of placing the Christ-like hero into Petersburg society runs its course to a tragic conclusion and breakdown of the hero, while Tolstoy, beset by doubt and disgust at his vocation as a writer of fiction, concludes his novel with the account of Levin's spiritual conversion. At the same time, both novels also depend on the marriage plot for their narrative movement: *The Idiot* unravels a fraught and ultimately abortive marriage plot centered on Myshkin, while *Anna Karenina* places Levin's marriage plot next to the adulterous romance of its eponymous heroine. The two novels transmit and transform these strong plot-shaping energies and emotions in ways which leave distinct marks on their narrative structure and texture.

The absence of sexuality and desire in Myshkin renders the conventional unfolding of a marriage plot impossible and the presence of the Christ-like "perfectly beautiful man" becomes an embarrassment in the world of the society novel. The broken rhythms of speech and body produced by embarrassment are emblematic of the narrative's own problematic movement as it struggles to negotiate two incompatible generic impulses. As I have shown in the previous chapter, the experience of embarrassment lends the novel its dominant affective tone and temporal textures.

In *Anna Karenina*, on the other hand, the emotion that courses through the novel, receiving such contrasting treatment in its two plot-lines (that of Anna and that of Levin) is unquestionably that of sexual desire. In this chapter I will discuss the clear presence and subtle workings of emotion in Tolstoy's intricately linked narrative of desire in the age of railroad travel, showing how a work of literature expresses and involves the emotions of both its characters and readers in its plot scenarios, its verbal textures, and the movement of its narrative. In the chapters that have come before this one, there has been a clear link between emotion and a lyrical or authorial subjectivity. In contrast, the workings of emotion that I discover in *Anna Karenina* exceed authorial subjectivity; they cohere in the reader, yet, in some sense, are impersonal, and borne by the narrative itself.

Narrative is a form of motion. We speak of a text *conveying* meaning, of *transporting* the reader to another world, and we find that the textual practices of metaphor and translation have ideas of movement at their core.¹ Plot moves forwards, carrying its characters and its readers. It is still easier to claim, with recourse merely to the dictionary, the relationship between emotion and actual physical motion. Indeed, the single letter that separates motion from emotion does little to disguise their near-synonymous relationship. The primary, albeit now obsolete, meanings of emotion are connected to movement: a moving out, migration, transference from one place to another; a moving, stirring, agitation, perturbation (in physical sense).² The etymology suggests a relationship of both causality and equivalence, which in turn suggests the question guiding this study: Does the movement of narrative find its impulse and its double in the movement of emotion?

A forceful statement on the relationship between narrative and emotion has been made by Peter Brooks in his groundbreaking study, *Reading for the Plot*. Brooks asserts that it is a powerful emotion—desire—which propels narrative. He works principally with plot and takes the motor as his emblematic image, the engine of desire, and the force which drives novelistic narrative. He finds this central image in the (largely French) novels of the nineteenth century which abound in motors and machines, displaying their era's fascination with technology and progress. According to Brooks, plots are driven by the erotic and aggressive desires of their protagonists, and by the desire cultivated in the reader to pursue the text's meaning along a chain of signifiers. Here the forward-pressing movement of plot is compounded by the embodiment of desire in language: Brooks appeals to a Lacanian understanding of desire perpetuated by the slippage of metonymy which defers the closure of meaning and the final satisfaction of that desire.³

Few novels yield to a study of emotion as readily as Lev Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, a work in which the image of the engine—represented by the railroad – and the machinations of emotion are so prominent.⁴ Ideas of movement and emotion penetrate different layers of meaning in *Anna Karenina*, extending their implications into the psychological, the aesthetic and the philosophical. Consequently, inspired in part by Brooks, I seek to go beyond an understanding of how emotion animates just plot. The reading I offer is neither Lacanian nor Freudian. The psychoanalytical approach offers a powerful explanatory model (dependent in its own way on the dynamic potential in narrative). My interest, however, extends to how emotion is cultivated by the textures of narrative and by the novel's design in ways that are more readily available to the reader's

¹ Metaphor, when taken apart, literally means “carrying beyond” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, eds. J. A. Simpson & E. S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 9: 676. The primary definition of *translate* is “to bear, convey or remove from one person, place or condition to another; to transfer, transport” (*OED*, 18: 409).

² *Oxford English Dictionary*, 5:183.

³ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, Ma & London, 1992), 37-61.

⁴ David Herman's study of *Anna Karenina* also appeals to Brooks' model. He re-dubs Brooks' narrative desire “narrative passion” and discusses manifestations of passion in the characters, in the process of artistic creation, and in the reception of the work of art. David Herman, “Allowable Passions in *Anna Karenina*,” *Tolstoy Studies Journal* Vol. 8 (1995-96), 5-32.

direct experience of the text. I deliberately choose to speak of emotion, rather than desire, in order to resist the relentlessly aggressive, forwards-pressing motion of plot and the inextricable linearity of the Lacanian formulation of metonymy, upon which Brooks' concept of narrative desire rests. Emotion is not just the stuff of plots, but resides deeply within the intricately linked structure of narrative. We read not just to have our desires satisfied by the resolution of plot scenarios, but to feel ourselves positioned within the intimate folds of narrative.

The intimacy of the engagement in reading invites a reading that is *closer* than an end-focused conception of plot. The critical gaze that heeds the text in this fashion takes in the whole arc of plot, standing back, as it were, to always keep the end in sight. Yet in the process of reading we are submerged in the temporal flow of narrative, responding to its more immediate oscillations of emotional states, of tensions and release. Alongside the reader who experiences the plot-map of the whole, there is also, as Nicholas Dames has recently argued with reference to the Victorian novel, the reader who experiences the narrative "as a series of affective 'moments', or, in other words, as a rhythm."⁵ A novel of length, of parallel plots and multiple characters, *Anna Karenina* is shaped by a series of "episodes" or "moments," and many of the most highly charged moments are ones where characters experience motion—be it travel by railroad or carriage, horse-racing, dancing, ice-skating, the motions of physical labor. Many of these scenes and activities foreground the very nature of rhythm (Vronsky's error of rhythm as he drives Frou-Frou on in the steeplechase; Levin's falling into rhythmic unison with the mowing peasants; the lively rhythm of the mazurka, which Kitty feels will bring on the decisive moment with Vronsky at the ball.)

We might compare the episodic narrative rhythm of *Anna Karenina* to that of *The Idiot* in order to feel these two works' contrasting treatment of temporal flow and the associated emotional effects. As I discussed in the previous chapter, *The Idiot* is dominated by long scenes centered on social gatherings that culminate in inevitable scandal. These scenes establish the episodic rhythm of the novel and its emotional tenor: the persistence of embarrassment with its repeated arcs of dreadful expectation instantaneous flashpoints of culmination.

Whereas Dostoevsky repeats several times one essential rhythmic and affective pattern (which, as I hope to have shown, supports many of the novel's principal thematic concerns), in *Anna Karenina*, the episodes are generally more clearly delineated, shorter in length and more varied in content and tone. In Tolstoy's novel, I would argue, what is conveyed by the episodic rhythm, and made available in the reading process, is the very quality of affective experience itself. I would like to suggest that culminating in the dancing at the Shcherbatskys' ball, the first part of *Anna Karenina* establishes the rhythmic nature and psychological movement of the reading process as it conducts with its reader a kind of dance, foregrounding temporal flow and patterns of affective identification and distancing.

Tolstoy shows how temporality draws lines—extending back and forward into past and future—that are always shaded with emotion. As Kitty contemplates her

⁵ Nicholas Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel: Reading, Neural Science, and the Form of Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 57.

feelings at the beginning of the novel for Levin and Vronsky, her emotions toward each oscillate according to reflection on the past or the future. She can recall Levin tenderly, easily and with pleasure, but Vronsky only with an indeterminate awkwardness. Yet the simplicity and clarity she feels towards Levin turns to cloudiness when she considers the future, while with Vronsky “the most brilliantly happy prospects rose before her.”⁶ How, in other words, do we make sense of the vicissitudes of emotional life?⁷ The shapes of selfhood and of the silent reader’s consciousness draw close here: how do we interpret something (selves, stories) that is always in flux when we are ourselves always situated in that flow of feelings?

Several times in quick succession in the first part of the novel, and culminating in the interrupted waltz at the Shcherbatskys’ ball, Tolstoy draws attention to moments of physical proximity but psychological distance. Finishing their dinner and having shared intimate conversation about love, marriage and desire, Levin and Oblonsky suddenly fall into a state of “extreme estrangement” where “even though they were friends, though they had dined together and drunk wine that should have brought them closer, each was thinking only of his own things, and they had nothing to do with each other” (42).⁸ A similar, but more painful, awareness takes over Kitty when she experiences such joy at Levin’s proposal but nonetheless rejects him: “How close she had been to him just a minute ago, how important for his life! And now how alien and distant from him she had become!” (48).⁹ Finally, the still more painful partner to this scene comes at the ball, when the music suddenly stops playing and Kitty “looked into [Vronsky’s] face, which was such a short distance from hers, and long afterwards, for several years, that look, so full of love, which she gave him then, and to which he did not respond, cut her heart with tormenting shame” (80).¹⁰ The emotional intensity of this moment is heightened still further by the overlaying of the spatial proximities and distance with temporal ones; the pain of both the moment and its memory is recorded by the sudden (and rare) insertion of a perspective of future remembrance. This sequence, which all pertains to the Levin and Kitty subplot, charts a movement of physical and emotional proximity and distance. Likewise, for the reader, whose attention and attitude towards different characters is in constant flux as the novel unfolds, the narrative marks a rhythm of alternation between

⁶ Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York & London: Penguin, 2001), 47. Hereafter, all in-text references to *Anna Karenina* will be from this translation, cited as page number.

[перед ней вставала перспектива блестяще-счастливая (L. N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 90 vols., ed. V. G. Chertkov (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1928-58), 18: 51).] Hereafter references to Tolstoy’s work will be given in abbreviated references from this collection, cited as volume and page number.

⁷ The same question confronts the young Nikolai Irten’ev in the opening chapters of Tolstoy’s fictional autobiography, *Detstvo* (1852).

⁸ [они оба почувствовали, что хотя они и друзья, хотя они обедали вместе и пили вино, которое должно было бы еще более сблизить их, но что каждый думает только о своем и одному до другого нет дела (18: 46).]

⁹ [Как за минуту тому назад она было близко ему, как ваюна для его жизни! И как теперь она стала чужда и далека ему! (18: 53)]

¹⁰ [Кити посмотрела на его лицо, которое было на таком близком от нее расстоянии, и долго потом, чрез несколько лет, этот взгляд, полный любви, которым она тогда взглянула на него и на который он не ответил ей, мучительным стыдом резал ее сердце (18: 85-86).]

affective identification and estrangement; the reader is herself engaged in a dance of proximities and distances.¹¹

Reading on beyond these early scenes in *Anna Karenina*, I shall show how emotion permeates the novel as a whole, allowing its work to be done by the movement of metaphor, patterning by motifs, the novel's rhythmic episodic form, and even occasionally by sound and the inflections of rhythm. I shall pursue the intimation that the textual practice of metaphor (with its underlying meaning "to carry beyond") belongs to the nexus of narrative, motion and emotion. The etymological movement that links motion to emotion also joins these words to *motif*.¹² I suggest that, in addition to plot and metaphor, a different kind of movement is offered by the patterning of motifs. Scholars who have devoted attention to the function of the motif in narrative structure are drawn to *Anna Karenina* to aid in their formulations, further elaborating the principle of narrative construction set out by Tolstoy himself when he wrote to Strakhov of the "system of linkages" characterizing his most recent novel in the frequently cited letter of April 1876 (62: 268-69). In a series of practical readings and theoretical statements that advance our understanding of the function of motifs in works of literature, Boris Gasparov defines the literary motif as a "*mobile unit*" which exists and generates meaning only in a blending process with other textual components.¹³ By way of conclusion, Gasparov appeals to *Anna Karenina*:¹⁴ to the railroad one may add, as numerous critics already have, candles, bread-rolls, red bags and wilful curls.¹⁵

Motifs send the attentive reader forwards and backwards through the text, in loops and on diversions, demanding that old ground be re-trodden.¹⁶ Indeed, in considering the work of literary motifs, we should, along with Jan van der Eng, place special emphasis on the role of the reader as the one "who co-ordinates the motifs, who finds out the comparable elements, who discovers the dominant features."¹⁷ Van der Eng's account of

¹¹ Indeed, the movement between the main plot (of Anna and Vronsky) and the subplot (of Levin and Kitty) is itself a mode of oscillation in the distribution of affective energies. Whereas Brooks views the relationship between plot and subplot in terms of retardation and deferral of the pleasure of an ending, Dames rejects the notion of subplot and posits instead "only one level of plot, a kind of alternation between relaxation and nervous discharge, a form of temporality that is not unidirectional..." (Dames, *Physiology of the Novel*, 55-56).

¹² *Oxford English Dictionary*, 9: 1127-32.

¹³ Boris Gasparov, *Literaturnye leitmotivy: ocherki russkoi literatury XX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1994), 301; emphasis added.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 303.

¹⁵ Boris Eikhenbaum was the first to note the importance of recurrent images in the novel, such as the candle and the railroad; (B. M. Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoy: Semidesiatye gody* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1974), 185-90. Stenbock-Fermor's structural analysis elaborates on their discussion; Elisabeth Stenbock-Fermor, *The Architecture of Anna Karenina: A History of Its Writing, Structure, and Message* (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1975), 41-51 and 65-74. Vladimir Nabokov draws attention to Anna's red bag, which he describes as "grow[ing]", as it gathers weight of significance with each reappearance; Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, *Lectures on Russian Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 177-78.

¹⁶ Donna Orwin notes how motion itself becomes a motif of the novel: "[Anna] is condemned to constant motion, which becomes a motif accompanying her until her death." Donna Tussing Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art and Thought, 1847-1880* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), 182.

¹⁷ Jan van der Eng, *On the Theory of Descriptive Poetics: Anton P. Chekhov as Story-Teller and Playwright: Essays* (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1978), 44.

the reader's role in perceiving the patterning by motifs and Gasparov's recourse to the musical provenance of the term "leitmotif" converge in one other formulation of the nature of the literary motif – that made by Marcel Proust – who also lends an emotional and erotic charge to this narrative device:

the motifs [...] at times emerge from [the music], barely discernible, immediately to dive under and disappear, known only by the particular pleasure they give, impossible to describe, recall, name, ineffable – if memory, like a laborer working to put down lasting foundations in the midst of waves, by fabricating for us facsimiles of those fleeting phrases, did not allow us to compare them to those that follow them and to differentiate them. [...] This time [Swann] had clearly distinguished one phrase rising for a few moments above the waves of sound. It had immediately proposed to him particular sensual pleasures which he had never imagined before hearing it, which he felt could be introduced to him by nothing else, and he had experienced for it something like an unfamiliar love. With a slow rhythm it led him first here then there, then elsewhere, towards a happiness that was noble, unintelligible and precise.¹⁸

Swann's musical experience blends the movement, discovery and recognition which are such essential elements of Gasparov and van der Eng's theoretical accounts of the literary motif. To those elements are added the working of memory and an erotic charge – both of which, as I shall show, are implicated in movement of narrative articulated by motifs in Tolstoy's novel.

The accumulation of motifs lend the text a certain momentum, and their patterned repetition becomes an index of movement through the narrative. Motifs are both motivated and motivate. They are details plucked out the realm of the accidental and endowed with a significance, an emotional weight, which exceeds their immediate local context in the text, articulating meaning and movement through the narrative. The occurrence of these details in the text ceases to be neutral, but becomes the centre of an emotionally charged field. The emotional weight of the motif is frequently at least partly attributable to its metaphoric significance.

I too re-tread some familiar ground in my discussion: many of the episodes I select are well-known and have attracted much attention – precisely because they are emotional high points of the novel, demonstrating how the impetus to criticism and scholarship is frequently provided by a work's emotional power. Arguably, the pairing of motion and emotion is central to *Anna Karenina*, which abounds in scenes in which characters are placed in motion, and experience states of emotional transport. On a most basic level, scenes of travel aboard train and carriage facilitate the plot construction by linking the locations of action and moving the characters between them. Such scenes also give occasion, realistically motivated by the narrative, for the observation of a character's inner life. In particular, one can often observe the effect of physical sensations received from the outside world on the character's state of mind. In these instances, the pairing of motion and emotion engages the question of the body/soul

¹⁸ Marcel Proust, *The Way by Swann's*, trans. Lydia Davis (New York: Viking, 2003), 212-13.

dichotomy which Tolstoy probed repeatedly, and ultimately posed as a test of the truth of Christian beliefs.¹⁹ My purpose is more particular: to guide the reader through the connections between motion and emotion in *Anna Karenina* – in specific situations, in plot movements, and in the verbal texture and practices of narrative itself, and to reveal the extent to which emotion suffuses and implicates the structure of the text as a whole.

Let us begin with the locomotive, the engine of desire, which occupies such a prominent position in the plot and patterning of *Anna Karenina*. The railroad is, of course, one of the novel's organizing motifs, and is central to the coupling of motion and emotion.²⁰ As a textual detail and as the main location associated with Anna and Vronsky's affair, the railroad acquires a sexually charged significance, and the representation of the actual experience of railroad travel heightens this charge.

The railroad journey came to be one of the symbolic experiences of the nineteenth century. In *The Education of the Senses*, the first volume of his extensive exploration of *The Bourgeois Experience* across Europe, Peter Gay characterizes the nineteenth century as one of "vertiginous mobility" where "physical events and mental states were, as always, inseparable."²¹ As Wolfgang Schivelbusch showed in his penetrating study of the railroad experience, the railway journey, which enabled unprecedented mobility at dizzying velocity, remade the social and economic landscape, as well as the passengers' relationship to the physical landscape as they moved through it. The speed of rail travel became emblematic of the speed of social changes and the railroad became a focus for diagnosing the ills of the age brought about by the rapid onset of modernity.²² Tolstoy himself saw the railway in this light, the symbolic culprit in the destruction of traditional peasant ways of life. As Tolstoy scholars have shown, his diaries and letters attest to his aversion to train travel which badly affected his nerves and physical well-being.²³

In 1862 *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, published its investigation into "The Influence of Railway travelling on Public Health," identifying potentially detrimental physical, nervous and moral side effects in train travel: "there is the swaying of the train from side to side or the jolting over uneven rails and ill-adjusted points; and

¹⁹ Further consideration of how ideas of movement resonate with spiritual concerns and with the scientific debates of Tolstoy's day falls outside the scope of this chapter. Major works which treat these strains in Tolstoy's thought appeal to related notions of motion and emotion. See, for example, Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art and Thought*, 61).

²⁰ The railroad motif in *Anna Karenina* has been well-documented. See Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoi: Semidesiatye gody*, 185-90; and Stenbock-Fermor, *Architecture of Anna Karenina*, 65-74). Other important observations were made by M. S. Al'tman, "'Zheleznaia doroga' v tvorchestve L. N. Tolstogo," *Slavia* Vol. 34 No. 2 (1965), 251-59; V. E. Vetlovskaja, "Poetika *Anny Kareninoi*. Sistema neodnoznachnykh motivov," *Russkaia literatura* Vol. 22 No. 4 (1979), 17-37; Gary R. Jahn, "The Image of the Railroad in *Anna Karenina*," *Slavic and East European Journal* Vol. 25 No. 2 (1981), 1-10; Sydney Schultze, *The Structure of Anna Karenina* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1982).

²¹ Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience. Victoria to Freud. Vol. 1: Education of the Senses* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 56.

²² Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 9-12, 57-77. Reading the accounts of railroad travel in *Anna Karenina* through the filter of Schivelbusch's interpretation of this defining phenomenon of modernity was productive of many of the ideas in this chapter.

²³ See, for example, Stenbock-Fermor, *Architecture of Anna Karenina*, 68 and Tolstoi, 83: 208.

the general effect of these upon the temper, the muscles and the moral nature.”²⁴ In noting the effect on the “moral nature,” *The Lancet*’s report is tacitly acknowledging that which Freud was later to make explicit, and what would have undoubtedly been his diagnosis of Tolstoy’s discontents with the railway, were he to attempt one: the emotional agitation of train travel is linked to the arousal of sexual desire by the “pleasurable sensations of movement”, and it is to this fact that he attributes the fascination for the railroad displayed in young boys in particular.²⁵ The anxiety, and even physical symptoms of nausea, experienced by some train passengers results from the repression of these feelings. Serezha’s railway game illustrates perfectly Freud’s case for the attraction of young boys to the railway. Serezha is rebuked by his tutor for running around and playing at trains, “that dangerous game” (728).²⁶ This moment is obviously one of the recurring motif of the railroad, central to the novel’s narrative structure, building the dramatic irony and sense of fatalism around the image of the railway. However, it is also indicative of the urge to curb unrestrained movement as something potentially harmful and destructive, to keep sexuality under control. In the same vein, Serezha is chastised by his father for rocking in his seat, implying that unmotivated and uncontrolled movement is undesirable as it betrays an underlying emotional agitation which is a threat to propriety (524).²⁷ Society finds unbridled motion unacceptable in adults and children alike, and devises controlled outlets where its potentially destructive forces can be harmlessly released. Ice-skating and ballroom dancing are two such modes of permissible motion, carefully choreographed and properly contained, although even these activities become an occasion for the expression of rising emotion. As they skate, Levin is compelled to voice his feelings to Kitty, as his answer to her question about how long he intends to stay slips out: “I don’t know. It all depends on you” (31).²⁸ Both the ice-rink and dance floor are locations of activities which are sexually highly charged, but socially permissible. Horse-racing, so prominently featured in *Anna Karenina*, provides an occasion for the male riders to discharge an overtly sexual form of energy in another socially sanctioned manner. The public nature and spectacle of the races offer an outlet of emotion to all through the vicarious experience of movement; by the end of the races “everyone was in agitation” (210).²⁹

In Vronsky, who embodies a powerful, and for the moral purposes of the novel, ultimately destructive sexuality, we can observe the stimulus of motion arouse feelings of sexual potency and desire. This occurs first of all when Vronsky and Stiva meet at the railway station. The two men are standing on the platform, but the noises, sights and commotion which accompany the arrival assault their senses, and they experience the train’s motion, as its vibrations are transmitted through the platform itself:

²⁴ Cited in Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 117.

²⁵ Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols., ed. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth Press & Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953-74), 7: 202.

²⁶ [это опасная игра (19: 306)]

²⁷ [«Не качайся!» (19: 96)]

²⁸ [«Не знаю. Это от вас зависит» (18: 35).]

²⁹ [все были в волнений (18: 221)] Among the many commentators on the sexual connotations of the steeplechase, two analyses which inform my study are Dmitry Merezhkovsky, *Tolstoi as Man and Artist* [1902] (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1970) and Helen Muchnic, “The Steeplechase in *Anna Karenina*,” *Russian Writers: Notes and Essays* (New York: Random House, 1971), 126-38.

Indeed, the engine was already whistling in the distance. A few minutes later the platform began to tremble, and, puffing steam that was beaten down by the frost, the engine rolled past, with the coupling rod of the middle wheel slowly and rhythmically turning and straightening, and a muffled-up, frost-grizzled engineer bowing; and, after the tender, slowing down and shaking the the platform still more, the luggage van began to pass, with a squealing dog in it; finally came the passenger carriages, shuddering to a stop (60).³⁰

Moreover, in the verbal texture of the narrative, the arrival of the train is heralded by the building of rhythm through the repetition of many multi-syllabic words, which themselves possess a certain mechanical clunkiness, fitting to the subject they describe. Against the backdrop of accumulating sensory impressions which accompany the train's arrival, Vronsky is reflecting on the news gleaned from Stiva that Kitty is not yet betrothed to Levin. The combination of the external sensory stimulation and his own inner thoughts produce both involuntary physical effects and elation in Vronsky: "What he had just learned about Kitty had made him excited and happy. His chest involuntarily swelled and his eyes shone. He felt himself the victor" (60).³¹ Vronsky's desires are woken by the news that he may be able to win Kitty as a sexual conquest and by the physical stimulus of the train's motion, and he experiences his own prowess both physically and psychologically. This episode lends a sexual and suspenseful charge to the field of associations around railroad in the immediate prelude to Vronsky's first sighting of Anna, their intense exchange of looks, and their subsequent shared train journey back to St Petersburg.

Journeys, by train and by carriage, move the narrative along by moving the characters between its various settings, providing a kind of liminal space between the established venues and institutions. Vronsky and Anna's love affair is initially closely associated with the railroad, not with the stable and decorous location of a household. The in-between, un-marshaled, moving space of the train carriage or horse-drawn carriage allows for exemption from continuity and from the values governing society, thereby inviting and accommodating the violation of those values. It is therefore perhaps not a coincidence that Anna makes the confession of her affair in an outburst to Karenin as they ride home in the carriage after the races (213/18: 224). It comes not just as the culmination of the events of the steeplechase, but is additionally enabled by the immediate remove from the surroundings where the consequences of such a confession would have any ramifications.

³⁰ [Действительно, вдали уже свистел паровоз. Через несколько минут платформа задрожала, и пылая сбиваемым книзу от мороза паром, прокатился паровоз с медленно и мерно насупливающимся рычагом среднего колеса и с кланяющимся, обвязанным, заиндевелым машинистом; а за тендером, все медленнее и более потрясая платформу, стал проходить вагон с багажом и с визжавшею собакой, наконец, подрагивая пред остановкой, подошли пассажирские вагоны (18: 65).]

³¹ [То, что он сейчас узнал про Китти, возбуждало и радовало его. Грудь его невольно выпрямлялась и глаза блестели. Он чувствовал себя победителем (18: 65).]

Thoughts of an impermissible or emotional nature may be ‘safely’ experienced in the enclosure of a train compartment or horse-drawn carriage, which offers the same kind of containment as the ice-rink or the dance-floor. This is the case with Dolly, who, in the carriage on the way to the estate at Vozdvizhenskoe, entertains the idea of a romance of her own along the same lines as Anna’s, but the thoughts do not escape the daydream or the carriage (608-09/19: 182-83). For Dolly, the trip between estates provides a moment of escape into an imagined alternative reality in full knowledge of the continuity of her life at the points of departure and destination. In contrast, Anna’s train ride from Moscow to Petersburg at the end of the first part of the novel allows her to slip between the alternative realities that present themselves to her at either end of the train line. On boarding the overnight train to return to Petersburg, Anna clings to the thought that the journey also marks the end of the disquieting episode of the encounter with Vronsky, and a return to her real life, her “good and usual life, just as it was before” (99; translation amended).³² However, it does not work out this way. Could it be that the night-train promises a peculiar kind of transport as it delivers its passengers to their destination in darkness while they sleep, with no consciousness of the time or distance covered? Such a journey gives the impression of experiencing two disparate spheres of one’s life in immediate succession. The boundary between them becomes dream-like, and the slippage across seemingly not subject to the usual continuity of space and time.

Let us now dwell in some detail – from the perspective of emotion – on the account of Anna’s overnight return to Petersburg, an important scene in the novel, which has attracted the attention of many readers.³³ Anna’s experience of this train journey is indeed dream-like, inasmuch as it occurs exclusively in the confines of her own interiority. The beginning of her separation from society is signaled by her rejection of conversation with her fellow-passengers to retreat further into the isolation which the confined space of the carriage already imposes. The repetitive sound and motion of the train, the blizzard and the impending darkness outside compound this isolation, creating a kind of sensory vacuum around Anna and forcing her inwards into her own subjectivity. The close confines of the compartment function as a double of the space of Anna’s subjectivity, a kind of magnified interiority where the oscillations of the emotions are drawn larger and more boldly. “Further on it was all the same; the same jolting and knocking, the same snow on the window, the same quick transitions from steaming heat to cold and back to heat, the same flashing of the same faces in the semi-darkness (100).³⁴

³² [моя жизнь хорошая, привычная, по-старому (18: 106)]

³³ Robert Louis Jackson gives a penetrating reading of this transitional moment in Anna’s drama, with particular attention paid to the interplay of the physiological and the psychological, Robert Louise Jackson, “The Night Journey: Anna Karenina’s Return to St Petersburg,” *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina*, ed. Liza Knapp & Amy Mandelker (New York: Modern Language association of America, 2003), 150-60. Other treatments of the episode which observe the sexual undercurrent in the train ride include Edward Wasiolek, *Tolstoy’s Major Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 134-36; Richard Gustafson, *Leo Tolstoy: Resident and Stranger. A Study in Fiction and Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 302-09; Amy Mandelker, *Framing Anna Karenina: Tolstoy, the woman question, and the Victorian novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993), 130-38.

³⁴ [Далее все было то же и то же; та же тряска с постукиванием, тот же снег в окно, те же быстрые переходы от парового жара к холоду и опять к жару, то же мелькание тех же лиц в полумраке (18: 106).]

The train's movement is conveyed here by formal linguistic means; the recurring construction “*to zhe*” (the same) conveys the rhythmic repetition of the motion. The physical movement of the train is doubled by the oscillations in subjective perception which Anna experiences; the alternation of extremes of hot and cold echo the patterned repetition and difference of the very motion of the train. Motion here serves to intensify emotion. Anna's subjectivity is magnified still further by the overlaying of a third sphere, that of her reading, which provides an alternative space of escape from the carriage. However, it is no less confining or restrictive of movement than the narrow physical surroundings. Anna is subjected to the motion of the train and transported into the realm of the novel before her, but she cannot be satisfied by this passive or vicarious experience and wants to assume the active roles in what she reads: she wants to walk, speak and ride, perform the characters' actions herself, as if only movement can provide the provide the affirmation of life and the realization of her desires.

As if to affirm her physical existence, Anna presses her hot cheek up against the cold glass of the compartment window, experiencing the pure physical sensation of temperature. This is also an attempt to get closer, to merge with the physical motion of the train, as by coming into contact with the outside edge of the vehicle, its movement is transmitted through her body.

By way of a short digression, I would compare Anna's experience of becoming at one with physical movement to Levin's unison with the motions of the mowing peasants. Whereas Anna experiences increasing tautness of the emotions as the train's motion possesses her senses, Levin overcomes bodily sensation and individual subjectivity as he falls in with the natural rhythms of the peasants' movements. These two opposed forms of motion – the mechanical train and the organically performed work of mowing – are both marked in the text by a rhythm given to the prose which fittingly characterises the movement in question. As in the case of passages which evoke the train's movement, the account of the mowing employs rhythmic syntax: “It was only hard work when he had to interrupt this unconscious motion and think; when he had to mow round a hillock or a tuft of sorrel (253).³⁵ The repeated two-syllable structure of the first seven words, all ending in an ‘a’ sound, convey the regular, effortless rhythm of the mowing, interrupted only by the longer, relatively more clumsy and deliberate words, which describe the disruption of the unconscious movement by conscious thought. Tolstoy's rhythmic, “expressive syntax”, to borrow Gustafson's term, is a means of conveying to the reader the experience of both Levin's movement and state of mind.³⁶ Rhythm is a physical quality of language, palpable on its very surface. It can render the impression of movement – of the train and of the mowing, for example – and its momentum and pattern sustains some localized movement of the narrative. In addition, I would argue that the particularly marked motion of prose narrative articulated by rhythm creates a certain heightened emotional effect for the reader. This need not necessarily be the emotional experience of a character, but constitutes emotion which is that of the text itself, its inner life breaking

³⁵ [Трудно было только тогда, когда надо было прекращать это сделавшееся бессознательным движение и думать, когда надо было окашивать кочку или невыполонный щавельник (18: 267).]

³⁶ Gustafson demonstrates how “expressive syntax” and it is employed in the narrative to “[make] people feel what Tolstoy wants them to feel” (Gustafson, *Resident and Stranger*, 380-89).

onto the surface, as it were, and manifesting itself in motion – just as Anna's inner life aspires to break to the surface in her urges to echo the movements of the heroines of her own reading.

Indeed, let us return to Anna: on board the train she is immediately roused by the sensation of the train's movement she receives transmitted through her body, and almost laughs out loud, suddenly and unaccountably overcome with joy (101/18: 107). Vronsky is also a passenger on the train, but their proximity is thwarted by the isolation of the compartments. The nearing of Anna's body to the outside edge of the train therefore brings her into a communion with Vronsky, with the rhythmic jolting and swaying of the train joining them in this experience. What follows could be read as the building of sexual arousal and the surrender of the self to pure sensation in the moment of climax: "She felt her nerves tighten more and more, like strings on winding pegs. She felt her eyes open wider and wider, her fingers and toes move nervously; something inside her stopped her breath (116).³⁷

Anna then loses command of her senses and appears to merge with the sensation of the train's movement. She experiences pure sensation with nothing to connect it to anything outside of itself, and she cannot even tell if the train is moving backwards or forwards (116/18: 107). Finding herself reduced to this state, an organ of sensory perception alone, Anna feels her person split in two: "And what am I then? Myself or someone else?" (116).³⁸

If, for Anna, the heightened physical and emotional sensation of motion causes the sense of self to rupture, then, for Vronsky, it produces the opposite effect, affirming his physicality and confidence in himself. For example, in spite of his sleeplessness, Vronsky emerges from that same night-train with his senses sharpened, feeling "animated and fresh" (105/18: 112).

A still more striking instance of heightened physicality and acutely tuned emotions occurs during another carriage ride later in the novel, when Vronsky takes leave of Sepukhovskii to go to Anna for a lovers' rendez-vous. Vronsky stretches out in the fast-paced carriage. Shaped and stimulated by the rapid motion and fast-moving vistas from its window, Vronsky's thoughts evolve from "a vague awareness" to an identification with the sight and impression of the landscape: everything was "as fresh, cheerful and strong as himself" (313).³⁹ The pleasure and anticipation which Vronsky feels do not find a full conscious or verbal articulation. Instead, they combine into one "general joyful feeling of life" (ibid.).⁴⁰ The word "чувство" (feeling) allows for physical and psychological feeling, and Vronsky experiences both. He issues an involuntary smile, and enjoys the heightened sense of his own physicality, aroused by the awareness of pain in his leg which was injured at the races: "He had often experienced this joyful awareness of his body, but never had he so loved himself, his own body, as now. He enjoyed feeling that slight pain in his strong leg, enjoyed feeling the movement

³⁷ [Она чувствовала, что нервы ее, как струны, натягиваются все туже и туже на какие-то завинчивающиеся колышки. Она чувствовала, что глаза ее раскрываются больше и больше, что пальцы на руках и ногах нервно движутся, что в груди что-то давит дыхание (18: 107).]

³⁸ [И что сама я тут? Я сама или другая? (18: 107)]

³⁹ [свежо, весело и сильно, как он и сам (18: 331).]

⁴⁰ [общее впечатление радостного чувства жизни (ibid.)]

of his chest muscles as he breathed” (ibid.).⁴¹ The carriage’s motion enhances this awareness of and communion with his own corporeality. The unyielding response of the carriage to the terrain and the transmission of vibration through its structure, serves to highlight the living, elastic movements of Vronsky’s own body as he breathes, verifying and asserting his own powerful existence. The word “возбудительно” in the context of his experience of motion, describing the invigorating effect of the cold air outside, again signals the sexual connotations of this arousal. As the latent synonymy between motion and emotion would suggest, both should be subject to the same intensification with the increase of speed. Vronsky attempts to capitalize on this by urging the carriage driver to go faster – “*Poshel! Poshel!*” (18: 331) – as if seeking to prolong and intensify his elation.

The carriage is already moving quickly and to the sensory impressions are added the rapidly changing visual stimuli of the view from the window. The visual perception which is attributed to Vronsky through the omniscient narrator’s voice also displays this heightened sensory awareness. Vronsky is receptive to both line and colour, seeing the pale light of the sunset, the outlines of fences and buildings, people outside on foot and shadows cast on the ground. He registers “the motionless green of the trees and grass, the fields with regularly incised rows of potatoes, the slanting shadows cast by the houses, trees, and bushes and the rows of potatoes themselves” (313).⁴² This is a panorama derived from a moving vantage point, where a certain relativity of movement becomes observable across the receding field of vision. Objects in the foreground pass by very quickly, while those in the distance appear to move much more slowly. Hence, the green seems immobile as the fields and trees recede far back into the view, and shadows are noticeable even from the potato plants because they too are set back far enough for there to be time for them to register. The description concludes: “Everything was as beautiful as a pretty landscape just coated and finished with varnish” (ibid.).⁴³

The panorama is symptomatic of the nineteenth century’s changing trends in vision which Schivelbusch, following another interpreter of the onset of modernity, Dolf Sternberger, associates with the newly possible faster speeds of travel. The varnished vista exemplifies the mode of perception Sternberg considers prevalent in Europe in the nineteenth century – the tendency to see the discrete indiscriminately. “The views from the windows of Europe,” he wrote, “have entirely lost their dimension of depth and have become mere particles of one and the same panoramic world that stretches all around and is, at each and every point, merely a painted surface.”⁴⁴ Objectified, framed and aestheticized, the landscape, also a feminine space to be penetrated and conquered, suffers the same fate as Anna.

⁴¹ [Он и прежде часто испытывал радостное сознание своего тела, но никогда он так не любил себя, как теперь. Ему приятно было чувствовать эту легкую боль в сильной ноге, приятно было мышечное ощущение движений своей груди при дыхании (18: 330-31).]

⁴² [неподвижная зелень деревьев и травы, и поля с правильно прорезанными бороздами картофеля, и косые тени, падавшие и от домов, и от деревьев, и от кустов, и от самых борозд картофеля (18: 331).]

⁴³ [Все было красиво, как хорошенький пейзаж, только что оконченный и покрытый лаком (18: 331).]

⁴⁴ Cited in Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 61.

It is to Anna that Vronsky's thoughts turn as he retreats back inwards and directs his gaze inside the carriage "gazing at the ivory knob of the bell between the windows and imagining Anna as he had seen her the last time" (313).⁴⁵ These words provide an instance where the narrative bares the device, as it were, and shows its production of movement, of a *train of thoughts*, *khod myslei*. Vronsky looks at the ivory knob and pictures Anna. We may recall that at the ball in Part One Anna's skin has been described as ivory, as her black velvet dress exhibits "her full shoulders and bosom, as if shaped from old ivory" (79).⁴⁶ As his eyes rest on the ivory knob, at an unconscious level the sight of it triggers the memory of Anna. For Vronsky the ivory knob offers a visual link to Anna, while the word "ivory" furnishes the reader with the textual link (and one for which the inclusion of such a seemingly idiosyncratic detail might prompt a search). Here, then we witness the merging of character and narrative consciousness, that is, of a character's memory of his experience with the text's own memory of its narrative. It is a merging, too, of visual and verbal co-ordinates, of details from the projected realist canvas and the textual fabric, a merging which demonstrates the production of a chain of thought and the movement of the narration. It is the paths of equivalence mapped by metaphor and memory which link Anna's ivory complexion to the ivory knob upon which Vronsky's eyes fall.⁴⁷

In drawing its comparisons across sensory and conceptual categories, the movement of metaphor belongs to the imagination, the site of subjectivity, and as such is a movement which both articulates and is articulated by emotion. Vronsky's faculties are honed by the prospect of his imminent meeting with Anna. His perception of the ivory of the carriage's interior is motivated by the image of her in his mind, while the reader is incited to recall this image and detail from the earlier chapter. Temporalities entwine as recollection of the past and a projection of the future pivot on this detail. Emotional arousal conditions both perception and memory; the emotion underlying the mechanism of metaphor which equates the ivory of Anna's complexion with the ivory of the carriage interior dissolves lines of sensory and temporal categories. The chain of interpretation linking Vronsky to the reader reconstructs the very act of reading, which relies on memory and imagination, on a meandering movement through the text, and on the sensual apprehension of textual and physical detail. Metaphor, in which these practices of motion and emotion are concentrated, emerges as the emblematic figure of reading.

Metaphor is not just an ornament, but a productive force of narrative. In the scenes evoked earlier, the travel by railroad and carriage functions as a metaphor for

⁴⁵ [...глядя на костяную шишечку звонка в промежутке между окнами и воображая себе Анну такую, какою он видел ее в последний раз (18: 331).]

⁴⁶ [ее точеные, как старой слоновой кости, полные плечи и груд (18: 84).]

⁴⁷ The activity of interpreting the ivory can be accounted for in the terms of the reading methodology proposed by Vladimir Alexandrov in *Limits to Interpretation*. The ivory of Anna's complexion and of the carriage's interior occupies the role of "hermeneutic index" in Alexandrov's model, matrix-like moments in the text. When joined by the act of "glossing" – reconstructing the field of associations from the different linguistic codes and contexts implicated in the utterance – planes of meaning emerge (Vladimir E Alexandrov, *Limits to Interpretation: The Meanings of Anna Karenina* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 38-46.) In Alexandrov's model, and in the example which I bring here, it is not simply the case that the meaning is immanent in the text, but the very activity of the text's creation of meaning is found there too.

desire and sexuality. On another level, the sheer motion of travel also works as a metaphor – for the narrative-producing potential of locomotion. This potential was acknowledged by Freud when he used the analogy of the train to elicit free association from his patients during sessions of psycho-analysis: “Act as though, for instance, you were a traveller sitting next to the window of a railway carriage and describing to someone inside the carriage the changing views you can see outside.”⁴⁸ As in Freud’s patients, in *Anna Karenina* the experience of movement sets in motion trains of thought, which grow into narrative. Nowhere in the novel is this principle demonstrated in such a striking fashion as in Anna’s final carriage rides before her suicide.⁴⁹ Here, as many have noted, the narrative of Anna’s interior monologue anticipates the modernist technique of stream of consciousness.⁵⁰

We are immersed in Anna’s thoughts as they run through her mind and the scene from the carriage window changes. She is at the mercy of the carriage’s movement. The description of the passing views allow us a glimpse into her psyche, as if she were also describing the scenes which moved through that inner space. At this point, Anna’s consciousness merges with the text of the novel as a whole. By this I mean that her thoughts rely on and reactivate moments which belong not to her own experience as a character, but to the narrative at large. I will give one example to illustrate this: as Anna’s carriage travels on, she sees the sign for Filippov’s rolls, “*kalachi*”, and thinks to herself, “I’ve heard he sends his pastry to Petersburg (757; translation emended).”⁵¹ Of course, the image of bread rolls has been loaded with symbolic associations evoking adultery earlier in the novel. The reader may remember, whereas Anna cannot, how Stiva, to Levin’s horror, likens the temptation of an extra-marital affair to the allure of a freshly baked roll that smells so good it cannot be resisted, even after a satisfying meal (40/18: 44-45). Anna was never privy to this exchange, but now sees herself in this roll/role – the tempting consumable, whose transportation by railroad between Moscow and St Petersburg turns her into the same kind of commodity as Filippov’s baked goods.⁵² It is as if instead of emerging as a character from the text, that text is now located wholly within her; her memory, or her unconscious, possesses the same memory as the text. Emotional intensity is frequently marked by some kind of rupturing or excess in the text: Anna’s torn sense of self, her urge to imitate the movements of the heroines of her reading, for instance. It seems fitting, then, that as we approach the climax of the novel, the lines which separate narrative and character consciousness are ruptured. Anna can no longer be contained by the text and she is overrun by both the real and metaphorical engines of the novel – its narrative momentum and an approaching locomotive.

⁴⁸ Freud, *Standard Edition*, 12: 135.

⁴⁹ An instance of a different kind where movement produces narrative for a character is the carriage ride Karenin takes, during which he mentally composes the letter he would send to Anna (305-06/18: 299-300).

⁵⁰ Lydia Ginzburg, for instance, extends the discussion of the stream of consciousness technique in relation to this scene (Lydia Ginzburg, *On Psychological Prose*, trans. Judson Rosengrant (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 358).

⁵¹ [«Говорят, что они возят тесто в Петербург» (19: 336).]

⁵² Schivelbusch notes Marx’s identification of the railroad in bringing products to market, transforming the product into a commodity (Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 40).

From the carriage window Anna sees signs advertising businesses: a dentist, which makes her resolve to confess to Dolly everything, giving a presentiment of relief. Via the association with the dentist, this may be equated with the relief felt by Karenin, who left alone in his carriage after Anna's confession, finally feels his turmoil and jealousy diffuse, like the freedom from a long endured toothache which comes after having the tooth extracted (282/18: 294). Here, the fluidity of character consciousness and narrative consciousness extends both backwards and forwards: Vronsky will suffer from acute toothache as he departs for the front by train, the sight of which will prompt the memory of Anna's injured dead body (780/19:362).

But let us return to Anna's final journey. The movement of the carriage is explicitly linked to the generation of motion in thought as Anna seeks to resume her train of thought on reseating herself in the carriage (762/19:342). The rapid succession of images, impressions and memories intensifies nervous stimulation, and is constantly making and breaking the relationship of past to present. Individual units are ripped out of continuity and piled up, with no respect for restoring a natural, overarching temporal framework. All of this provides the final impetus for Anna to tear herself out of life's continuity, and throw herself under a train.

Another hundred pages on, the novel's final scene transposes Anna's sensation of the relativity of movement on the train onto the cosmic level as Levin contemplates the apparent movement of the stars around the earth. More important than the knowledge of whether it is the earth or the heavens that move is the value of having a single stable horizon from which to study these movements. For Levin, this stable horizon is finally guaranteed spiritually and emotionally by Christianity (816-17/19: 398-99). *Anna Karenina* does not end when its heroine's life is cut short by an oncoming locomotive, when the engine of the desire that powers the novel leads ultimately to destruction. Desire moves along in pursuit of an ever-changing horizon of signification. The novel can only end, its narrative can only come to rest when this changing horizon is replaced by a fixed, single meridian which encompasses all. In the end, Levin's vision of cosmic movement assimilates the theological imperative that shaped the final stages of Tolstoy's work on *Anna Karenina* to the novel's overall design and imagery. Whereas Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* problematizes the assimilation of the theological imperative to the novel within his novel itself, Tolstoy would let this problem be felt most acutely in his own biography, and subsequently renounced all his fictional works.

Some readers do experience the drying up of their own desire to read to the conclusion after Anna's suicide, but the novel is a body of writing with its own organic unity. Continuing to read after the dénouement of Anna's plot is a further exercise in reconciling part to the whole, the final eighth part to the whole of the novel. As well as the resolution of the subsidiary plot-lines, continuity is in some measure sustained by the further deployment of motifs which pattern the rest of the novel, such as the railroad and the toothache. The movement of metaphor and of motifs, with their loops interlaced through the text's temporality and layers of narrative and character consciousness, embrace the reader in their folds, not so much satisfying the inextricably forwards-pressing narrative desire, as appeasing the desire for narrative intimacy, where the text's emotion is articulated and apprehended.

Enveloped in the intimate dimensions of narrative, like Anna in the close confines of the train compartment, the reader is subjected to the motion that functions as a powerful metaphor for sexuality, the driving force of the novel. Motion is a metaphor for narrative, as preserved in language by the turn of phrase “*train of thoughts*” and attested to in Freud’s instruction to imagine train travel as a condition for narrative production. This metaphor hides the sexual element in Tolstoy’s novel more deeply than, say, the infamous carriage ride which functions as a textual disguise for the consummation of Emma and Léon’s relationship in Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1857). In *Anna Karenina*, both the night-train and the steeplechase represent metaphorical consummations of Anna and Vronsky’s relationship. The same processes of sublimation are at work in the making of this metaphor as in the discharging of sexual energy in the sanctioned motion of activities such as horse-riding, ice-skating and ballroom-dancing. Motion and emotion, as their near-synonymy might have it, occupy comparable positions in the life of society and the life of the novel; both are to be feared for the intimation of powerful sexuality which lurks beneath their surface, and thus require control and restraint. Sexual energies of the characters are diffused in organized and choreographed motion, while the text converts this layer of its meaning into metaphor. The metaphor frequently reveals itself at the text’s surface, but also resides deeply in the structure and texture of the novel, in the movement of its narrative, or in the system of its linkages. Motion becomes a metaphor which does indeed “carry beyond” – beyond censure and convention, perhaps beyond the limits to representation imposed by Tolstoy’s own unresolved grappling with questions of sexuality and morality – allowing the subject in which the novel is so deeply invested to course freely through it.

Guiding the reader through connections between motion and emotion in *Anna Karenina*—in situations, plot movements, motifs, in verbal texture and metaphor—I have hoped to pose a larger problem: the clear presence and subtle workings of emotion in a work of literature—that is, in a pre-eminent work of literary realism. The emergence of the stream of consciousness technique and the blurring of character and narrative consciousness at the end of *Anna Karenina*, however, presage the techniques of literary modernism. In the final chapter, I will turn to discuss new realizations of the relationship between emotion and narrative after the perceived demise of the realist novel, when the example of Tolstoy—his life and his lifelong narrative experimentation—still proves to be a formative touchstone for critic and novelist alike.

Chapter Four

The “Crisis of the Novel” in the 1920s: Boris Eikhenbaum and Virginia Woolf as Readers of Tolstoy

A small station on the line to Russia. Four parallel rails run straight, out of sight, in opposite directions.

Robert Musil, *The Confusions of the Young Törless* (1906)

[T]he great Russian writers are like men deprived by an earthquake or a railway accident not only of all their clothes, but also of something subtler and more important—their manners, the idiosyncrasies of their characters.

Virginia Woolf, “The Russian Point of View” (1925)

This final chapter connects a line across Europe between Russia and England—with some metaphorical aid from the railroad—in the 1920s, when scholars and writers alike perceived a crisis in novelistic form. The opening line of Musil’s novel (a late *Bildungsroman*), written somewhere in the heart of the continent half way between Russia and England, announces the rootlessness and disorientation that beset the individual at the beginning of the twentieth century, and that only intensified with the shattering experience of the First World War.¹ A similar condition infuses one of the twentieth century’s most influential theories of the novel.² Writing after the start of the war in 1914-15, the Hungarian philosopher and critic Georg Lukács famously defined the novel as the genre of “transcendental homelessness,” a formula which applied as urgently to the condition of modernity in his own day as in the age of the nineteenth-century novel.³

Continued and concentrated in critical essays of the 1920s, the discussions of the crisis of the novel expressed the inadequacy and exhaustion of the forms and functions of

¹ Franco Moretti cites Musil’s *The Confusions of the Young Törless* (*Die Virwirrungen des Zöglings Törless*, 1906) as one among several *Bildungsromane* of the turn of the century which exhibit rootless, displaced or exiled heroes. Moretti concludes his study of the European *Bildungsroman* by suggesting how historical and epistemological rupture un-made the genre. See the appendix “‘A Useless Longing for Myself’: The Crisis of the European *Bildungsroman*, 1898-1914” in Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Verso, 2000), 229-245.

² For a discussion of notions of homelessness in Bakhtin’s, as well as Lukács’, theories of the novel, see John Neubauer, “Bakhtin versus Lukács: Inscriptions of Homelessness in Theories of the Novel,” *Poetics Today*, Vol. 17 No. 4 (1996), 531-46.

³ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A historico-philosophical essay on the forms of great epic literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 1971), 41.

artistic prose.⁴ At the centre of this crisis lay the fate of literary character and of “biography”—felt as both a representational and an existential problem by a generation of European writers. The crisis of genre belonged by no means to an exclusively formalistic literary domain, but sounded as an acute diagnosis of modernity. Based, it must seem, on the implicit belief that the novel realizes, in narrative form, a particular fullness of human experience, the discussion of attenuated literary form in the first decades of the twentieth century becomes a commentary on the fate of the individual in the social and historical milieu. So it is that the crisis of the novel finds the scholar, the novelist, and the hero, all besieged by a historically located sense of loss—of home, self, biography, and a loss of the genre (the novel), which had held all these together. This sense of loss, articulated as a poignant emotion, pervades, we find, even works of literary criticism.

The two principle protagonists of my study—the Russian literary scholar Boris Eikhenbaum (1886-1959) and the English novelist Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)—come from either side of the dividing line between literary criticism and literary practice. My intention in this pairing is to give special emphasis to the relationship between the two components of the crisis of the novel—the experiential and the literary. Through the example of Eikhenbaum, we understand how “the crisis of the novel”—an epochal malaise—is acutely *felt* in individual experience (and subsequently manifest as an autobiographical strain in his scholarly work). In his diary of 1925, the scholar gives plaintive voice to the existential problem, writing of his “longing for acts, longing for biography.”⁵ He speaks for many for whom the age of modernism threatened to unsettle subjectivity by washing away that biographical line to which a person raised on reading nineteenth-century novels felt himself entitled.

Woolf, as critic and essayist, gives elegant voice to the novel’s troubled system of representation, finding, in 1923, that in its role as “a very remarkable machine for the creation of human character,” it is now failing. “And it is because this essence, this character-making power, has evaporated that novels are for the most part the soulless bodies we know, cumbering our tables and clogging our minds.”⁶ For Woolf the novelist, crisis is fertile ground for innovation: with her poetic, plotless forms, Woolf finds a new platform for the novel’s representation of character. Her narrative

⁴ While innumerable studies treat modernist form and experimentation in its historical context, there are fewer dedicated discussions which explicitly discuss “the crisis of the novel” and invoke that terminology. See Wolfgang Kayser, “Die Anfänge des modernen Romans im 18. Jahrhundert und seine heutige Krise,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 28 (1954): 417-446; Leslie A. Fiedler, “The Death and Rebirth of the Novel,” *The Theory of the Novel: New Essays*, ed. John Halperin (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 189-202; Arnold Hauser, *The Sociology of Art*, trans. Kenneth J. Northcott (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1982); John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness, or, The Remembered Past* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), 119-124. (Some of these pertain in part, or in addition, to the discussions surrounding the French *nouveau roman* of the 1950s).

⁵ B. M. Eikhenbaum, letter of 25 July 1925, cited in M. O. Chudakova “Sotsial’naia praktika i nauchnaia refleksii v tvorcheskoi biografii B. Eikhenbauma,” *Revue des Etudes Slaves* Vol. 35 (1985), 31. [тоска по поступкам, тоска по биографии.] Unless otherwise noted, translations in this chapter are my own.

⁶ Virginia Woolf, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 3: 383-384.

experimentation and development of the stream of consciousness technique counters the problems of the faulty character-making machine with “the unprejudiced, precise, interior and exterior representation of the random moment in the lives of different people.”⁷

The pairing of Woolf and Eikhenbaum—a novelist and a scholar—is also intended to highlight the location of the crisis of the novel at precisely the intersection of (and blurring the dividing line between) literary practice and literary criticism, where it bestows a new, strangely enlarged, role on the literary critic or scholar. We find the autobiographical impulses of a literary scholar (embedded in and alongside his scholarly monograph) and the critical impulses of a novelist (exercised in the large body of essays accompanying her fiction). The 1920s saw not only the crisis of the novel, but also the growing professionalization and institutionalization of literary criticism. Both writers and scholars were pushed to reflect on the personal, and thus emotional, quality of their engagement with literature and its future, which gave rise to strange mutations in genres of criticism: the literary essay as practiced by Woolf and the completely idiosyncratic sub-genre, the single issue of a one-man journal (a concept somewhat akin to Dostoevsky’s *Diary of a Writer*) produced by Eikhenbaum.

For all the differences in the specificity of their respective cultural contexts, Woolf and Eikhenbaum are also joined by the tradition of the European novel—a tradition which names more than simply the works of the specific genre, but includes the reflective and critical discourse around it. The crisis of the novel and the projects of Eikhenbaum and Woolf as a whole are intimately bound up with the birth of modern literary scholarship. Woolf’s critical essays engage with early studies of the novel, such as those by Percy Lubbock and E. M. Forster, which shaped later, institutionalized, literary study. Her essays also presage concerns that would later be taken up extensively by literary scholarship, such as reader-response and feminist criticism.

Meanwhile, Eikhenbaum had been one of the founders of Russian Formalism, the earliest attempts to practice literary criticism as a science. By the 1920s, when Formalism had met with its own methodological impasses and fell foul of Marxist ideology, Eikhenbaum proposed to extend literary study to incorporate “the literary environment” (*literaturnyi byt*)—attention to the socio-historical milieu of the writer.⁸ In short, in assuming the study of the individual in the socio-historical, economic and ideological milieu, the methodology proposed by the concept of *literaturnyi byt* took on,

⁷ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 552. Auerbach (1892-1957) himself belongs to the same generation as Woolf and Eikhenbaum. Woolf is the focus of the final chapter of his classic study, written in exile in 1942-45.

⁸ B. M. Eikhenbaum, ‘Literaturnyi byt’ in *Moi vremennik* (Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo pisatelei, 1929). An earlier version, “Literatura i literaturnyi byt” was published in *Na literaturnom postu* in 1927. The project “*literaturnyi byt*” is neither a return to earlier practices of biographical and social criticism, nor an acquiescence to the official Marxist brand of sociological criticism that studied the writer’s class ideology and deduced literary forms from socio-economic structures. Victor Erlich describes Eikhenbaum’s new position as “a curious attempt at ‘immanent’ sociology. Instead of literary scholarship becoming a subdivision of social history, as was the case with some Marxist theoreticians, sociology was injected here into literature, translated, as it were, into literary terms. Literature was considered [...] a social institution, an economic system in its own right.” Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History, Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), 125-26.

in no small measure, the work of the novel itself. In the face of the weakened novel, the new critical and hybridized genres come to share in the duties of human inquiry.

When, in an essay of 1925, Woolf described the “great Russian writers” as victims of “an earthquake or railway accident” she was, in the first instance, referring to the fate of their nineteenth-century texts in translation, to the inevitable loss of style, nuance and cultural inflection that they suffered.⁹ However, I would concur with another critic’s suggestive reading of this passage that sees additional associative meanings at work.¹⁰ The railroad was, as the historian Peter Gay reminds us, a “potent metaphor for the bewildering, anxiety-making speed of the nineteenth century.”¹¹ At the beginning of the twentieth century it still retains its charge as a metaphor for the cultural calamity of modernity, and together with its newer rail-bound relation, the electric streetcar, emerges as something of a recurring motif in discussions around the crisis of the novel. Thus, in the sight of “men deprived by [...] a railway accident not only of all their clothes, but also of [...] their manners, the idiosyncrasies of their characters” we also find another image of post-revolutionary and post-war trauma, of individuals bereft of a clearly defined, secure position in the world and of a milieu in which they can attain full self-expression and self-realization. These men, “stunned by a railway accident,” are victims of the same historical catastrophe that, according to the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, had “thrown [Europeans] out of their own biographies.”¹²

The railroad was a symbol for the experience of nineteenth-century modernity; it was an image responsible for patterning and upholding the tissue of one the great and emblematic novels of that century, Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*, and had also featured prominently in Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot*.¹³ In the age of the crisis of the novel the railroad continues (together with related transports) to function as a potent image in which anxieties about literary form and the experience of modernity collide, accruing and dispersing, as we shall see, its metaphorical charge.

⁹ Woolf, “The Russian Point of View” in *Essays*, 4: 184.

¹⁰ Natalya Reinhold, “‘A Railway Accident’: Virginia Woolf Translates Tolstoy” in *Woolf Across Cultures*, ed. Natalya Reinhold (New York: Pace University Press, 2004), 244-45. Reinhold, establishing “in a suggestive and cross-cultural way, an essentially modernist background for Virginia Woolf as a world writer,” also connects this passage to Mandelstam’s words about “railroad prose” in *The Egyptian Stamp* (245).

¹¹ Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud. Volume One: Education of the Senses* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984), 64. See also Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

¹² O. E. Mandel’shtam, “Konets romana” in *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990), 2: 204.

¹³ See Chapter Three of this dissertation, which discusses the image of the railroad in *Anna Karenina*. On the image of the railroad in *The Idiot* as implicated in Dostoevsky’s critique of materialism and modernity, see Roger Anderson, “*The Idiot* and the Subtext of Modern Materialism,” *Dostoevsky Studies* 9 (1988), 80.

Generational Experience and the Search for a Genre

Virginia Woolf, writing in 1923, defined a generation by their awareness of the literary problem of the novel:

To bring back character from the shapelessness into which it has lapsed, to sharpen its edges, deepen its compass, and so to make possible those conflicts between human beings which alone arouse our strongest emotions—such was their [the Georgians'] problem. It was the consciousness of this problem, and not the accession of King George,¹⁴ which produced, as it always produces, the break between one generation and the next.¹⁵

Indeed, the crisis of the European novel rests upon a sense of the shared generational experience—which joins those in the Soviet 1920s to those in Western Europe—of social and historical circumstances and their impact on the literary environment and literary form. Both Woolf and Eikhenbaum, born within four years of one another, belong—to quote Walter Benjamin's 1936 essay "The Storyteller"—to "the generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar." Subjected to the political and quotidian upheavals of the turn of the century—war, revolution, urban modernity, the discoveries of science—this generation found much in modern life that was painfully unsettling. Never, before this generation's life, Benjamin writes, had "experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power."¹⁶ The modern sense of personhood was radically altered; the individual suffered from a sense of diminished agency. Loosened from a sense of connection to the organizing and ordering forces of everyday experience, the individual was no longer a point in whom meaning cohered—a condition which was felt acutely and simultaneously as a problem of individual biography and as a problem of novelistic form and the literary representation of character.

Benjamin chooses a commonplace object—the horse-drawn streetcar—as that which defines a generation (and whose lives were soon to see horse-power outstripped). He was not alone in drawing on the indexical power of the vehicle: together with its successor, the electric tram, as well as the railroad proper, its recurrence can, I think, be read as a marker of common generational experience. In addition, the image of the streetcar embeds this discourse in a distinctly urban setting, indicating the strong relationship between the crisis of the novel and the city—the site where the experience of modernity is most concentrated.¹⁷ The special charge attached to the railroad motif also

¹⁴ King George V, who reigned from May 1910 – January 1936.

¹⁵ Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" in *Essays*, 3: 387.

¹⁶ Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov" in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 84.

¹⁷ Of the many treatments of this theme, see the recent work (which includes chapters on both Woolf and

works as one of the forces maintaining the continuity of the literary tradition, for at least one of the cases I mention here (in Osip Mandelstam's *The Egyptian Stamp (Egipetskaia marka*, 1928)), the railroad is that same one which patterned Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*.

Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), friend of Eikhenbaum and fellow Formalist, was born one year after Walter Benjamin (1892-1940). He too characterized his own youth with the image of the now supplanted horse-drawn streetcar (*konka*): "I'm old already. When I was a boy people were still falling underneath horse-drawn streetcars."¹⁸ (He seems to imply that the vehicles that replaced *konka* represented a still graver threat.)

At the end of his 1921 essay on Vasily Rozanov, Shklovsky mused—in a disjointed narrative suggestive of the jerky stop-and-start movement of a streetcar—on the formal problems of endings:

So how to conclude?

One must finish one's work. I am thinking of finishing it here. One could tie up the end with a little bow, but *I am certain that the old canon of the synthetic review article or lecture has died*. Thoughts synthesized into artificial rows are transformed into a single roadway, into the tracks of the writer's thought. The whole multiplicity of associations, all the countless paths that run in all directions from each thought are smoothed away. But since I am full of respect for my contemporaries and know that they must either 'serve up an end' or write at the bottom that the author has died and so there will be no end—therefore may there be an ending here:

“.....
.....Upturned sleepers. Smudge pots. Sand.
Stone. Trenches.

“What is this? Roadworks?”

“No, it's the 'Works of Rozanov.' And the tram runs assuredly over the iron rails.”
(on Nevsky, roadworks)

I am using it for myself.¹⁹

the Russian modernist Andrey Bely) by Robert Alter, *Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel* (New Haven and London: 2005.) On the tram, in particular, see 128-29.

¹⁸ V. B. Shklovskii, “Tret'ia fabrika” in *«Eshche nichego ne konchilos'!...»* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2002), 341.

[Я уже старый. Когда я был мальчиком, то еще попадали под конку.]

¹⁹ V. B. Shklovskii, “Rozanov” in *Gamburgskii schet* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990), 139. Original citation from Vasilii Rozanov, *Opavshie listia. Korob pervyi* (1913). Emphasis added.

[Нужно кончать работу. Я думаю кончить ее здесь. Можно было бы завязать конец бантиком, но я уверен, что старый канон сведенной статьи или лекции умер. Мысли, сведенные в искусственные ряды, превращаются в одну дорогу, в колеи мысли писателя. Все разнообразие ассоциаций, все бесчисленные тропинки, которые бегут от каждой мысли во все стороны, сглаживаются. Но так как я полон уважения к своим современникам и знаю, что им нужно или «подать конец», или написать внизу, что автор умер и потому конца не будет, поэтому да будет здесь концовка:

«.....
.....Вывороченные шпалы. Шашки. Песок. Камень. Рывины.
- Что это? - ремонт мостовой?

Harnessing the image of the tram deployed by another for his own ends, Shklovsky tacitly acknowledges its emblematic power and augments the charge of metaphorical associations around it. Shklovsky's remarks, as well as their syntax, suggestive of the broken, disjointed motion of the streetcar and of narrative itself, reveal the uneasy relationship between narrative form and the sense of self, or of narrative subjectivity, that emerged after modernism. This is a difficult moment of, if not quite wordlessness, then of narrative hesitation and discontinuity (captured in the image of a street car travelling over rails under repair). The requirement for narrative closure poorly accommodates modernism's no longer unified sense of the individual and his life. Shklovsky finds his solution in the works of Vasily Rozanov—another consummate compiler of fragmentary narratives, a collector and assembler of aphorisms and situational reflections—and in the tram, which runs over the roadworks in progress. A line of sense may be traced through narrative, attesting to the integrity of authorial presence, but it combines with the certainty of its rail-bound movement a thorough-going openness to contingency in all that those rails cross and encounter. Shklovsky's words sketch, and locate in the modern metropolis, if you will, a commonplace analogy to Lukács's classic nexus for the production of novelistic form: the contingent world (that is, the ceaseless life of the city) and the problematic individual (that is, the dismantled, modern, self).²⁰

Shklovsky is talking here not about a novel, but his words imply that the death of the “old form” stems from the same ill as that which Osip Mandelstam was to famously diagnose as the “atomization of biography”, and which spelled the “End of the Novel,” according to his well-known essay of 1922 of that name.

The future development of the novel will be no less than the history of the atomization of biography as a form of personal existence; what is more, we shall witness the catastrophic collapse of biography.

The sense of time that man possesses in order to act, to conquer, to perish, to love—this sense of time gave the European novel its basic tonality, for, I repeat, again: the compositional measure of the novel is human biography. [...]

Today Europeans are thrown out of their own biographies, like balls out of the pockets of billiard tables, and the same principle that governs the collision of billiard balls governs the laws of their actions: the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection. A man devoid of biography cannot be the thematic pivot of the novel [...]

The modern novel was thus simultaneously deprived of both plot, that is, of the individual acting in accord with his sense of time, and psychology, since it could no longer support action of any sort.²¹

- Нет, это “Сочинения Розанова”. И по железным рельсам несется уверенно трамвай.»

(на Невском, ремонт)

Я применяю к себе.]

²⁰ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 78.

²¹ O. E. Mandelstam, “The End of the Novel” in *Mandelstam: The Complete Critical Prose and*

According to Mandelstam, the subject is deprived of ‘biography.’ (One should note here that Lukács too assumes that “[t]he outward form of the novel is essentially biographical.”)²² “Biography,” in Mandelstam’s sense, refers to that embeddedness in time which grants agency and allows for the assertion of a fulfilled and ethically integral self—a self which can “act, vanquish, perish and love.”²³ The poet implies a lost reciprocity between the individual and time, where time is both the medium in which he is buoyant and the material upon which he creatively acts.

A sense of the disrupted correspondence between the individual and his surroundings is a fundamental concern of many a statement on the crisis of the novel.

According to Lukács’ well-known formulations, the epic is the age of a still whole totality: “The world is wide and yet it is like a home, for the fire that burns in the soul is of the same essential nature as the stars; the world and the self, the light and the fire are sharply distinct, yet they never become permanent strangers to one another.” In the age of the novel, on the other hand—or, most dramatically of all, in Lukács’ own age—something has come out of joint; there is a “rift between ‘inside’ and ‘outside,’ a sign of the essential difference between the self and the world, the incongruence of soul and deed.”²⁴

Writing in our days, Franco Moretti, in his study of the European *Bildungsroman*, offers a refined definition the nature of this lost reciprocity in his account of the demise of the novel. He links the decline of the *Bildungsroman* to the emergence of social institutions, which, he notes, facilitates the integration of the individual into the social system, but, “it neglects the subjective side of the process: the legitimation of the social system inside the mind of individuals, which had been a great achievement of the *Bildungsroman*.”²⁵

The Russian discussion around the crisis of the novel speaks, in its own idiosyncratic and recurring terms, of its search for a milieu where this rift between

Letters, trans. Jane Gary Harris and Constance Link (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 200-201 (translation slightly emended).

[Дальнейшая судьба романа будет не чем иным, как историей распыления биографии как формы личного существования, даже больше чем распыления—катастрофической гибели биографии.

Чувство времени, принадлежащего человеку для того чтобы действовать, побеждать, гибнуть, любить,—это чувство времени составляло основной тон в звучании европейского романа, ибо еще раз повторяю, композиционная мера романа—человеческая биография. [...]

Ныне европейцы выброшены из своих биографий, как шары из бильярдных луз, и законами их деятельности, как столкновением шаров на бильярдном поле, управляет один принцип: угол падения равен углу отражения. Человек без биографии не может быть тематическим стержнем романа...

Современный роман сразу лишился и фабулы, то есть действующей в принадлежащем ей времени личности, и психологий, так как она не обосновывает уже никаких действий. Mandel’shtam, “Konets romana,” *Sochineniia*, 2: 203-04]

²² Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 77.

²³ For a discussion of the specific problem of “biography” in the Russian context, see Angela Brintlinger, *Writing a Usable Past: Russian Literary Culture, 1917-1937* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 6-11.

²⁴ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 29.

²⁵ Moretti, *The Way of the World*, 230.

psychic interior and exterior is restored. A number of the authors who discuss the crisis of the novel can, I think, be drawn into a community of common concern—the intimate allegiance of “literary domesticity” (*literaturnaia domashnost’*), an alternative institution that counters the bureaucratic institutionalization of both literature and experience. It is not a coincidence that Mandelstam was another admirer of Rozanov’s works. He valued Rozanov above all for his “gravitation towards literary domesticity.”²⁶ “Literary domesticity” runs counter to the competing forces of the bureaucratic institutionalization of literature—and, by association, to the surrender of individual agency to the emerging social order. “Literary domesticity” restores a form of intimacy to the literary milieu. The same sense of loss is also felt, along with the thorough contradiction of individual experience, in Benjamin’s “The Storyteller,” which laments the demise of the intimacy and immediacy of orality in the transmission of stories.

Through his long life, even Lev Tolstoy comes to overlap with “the generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar.” One of the first vignettes from Aleksandr Goldenveizer’s *Vblizi Tolstogo* (translated as *Talks With Tolstoy*), the 1922 publication of intimate conversations with the writer, describes an episode from 1896 when the two men were aboard a horse-drawn streetcar in Moscow and Tolstoy made an origami cockerel out of the ticket. I will quote the scene at length, both for its anecdotal charm and because it brings several of the protagonists of this chapter into close contact—under the sign of endangered intimacy, moreover. The English translation of Goldenveizer, which appeared in 1923, was published by the Hogarth Press, the publishing house run by Virginia and Leonard Woolf, and the translation is attributed to the collaboration of Virginia Woolf with her Russian friend S.S. Koteliansky (intimately known as Kot), although later accounts report that Woolf’s attempts to learn Russian were not terribly successful and that her involvement was limited to the editing of the English text.²⁷

Once I met Lev Nikolaevich in the street. He again asked me to walk with him. We were somewhere near the Novinsky Boulevard, and Lev Nikolaevich suggested we should take the tram. We sat down and took our tickets.

Lev Nikolaevich asked me:

“Can you make a Japanese cockerel?”

“No.”

“Look.”

²⁶ Mandel’shtam, “O prirode slova,” *Sochineniia*, 2: 178.

²⁷ For details on the remarkable fact of Woolf’s engagement with the translation of Russian works, see Reinhold, “A Railway Accident”; Laura Marcus, introduction to *Translations from the Russian* by Virginia Woolf and S. S. Koteliansky, ed. Stuart N. Clarke (Southport: Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain, 2006), vii-xxiv; Roberta Rubinstein, *Virginia Woolf and the Russian Point of View* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 7-10.

Tolstoy took his ticket and very skillfully made it into a rather elaborate cockerel, which, when you pulled its tail, fluttered its wings.

An inspector entered the car and began checking the tickets. L.N., with a smile, held out the cockerel to him and pulled its tail. The cockerel fluttered its wings. But the inspector, with the stern expression of a business man who has no time for trifling, took the cockerel, unfolded it, looked at the number, and tore it up.

L.N. looked at me and said:

“Now our little cockerel is gone...”²⁸

Boris Eikhenbaum also draws on Goldenveizer’s text, in an article of 1924, where he declared that prose was “In Search of a Genre” (“V poiskakh zhanra”)—a search in which the scholar and his own writing (as a craft) would also participate with special intensity. The article pronounces a diagnosis on the current climate of literary production: “We are suffering now from an absence of genres and with the search for them. The problem of genre is the central problem of great literary epochs, and we, it seems, are approaching such an epoch”.²⁹ In speaking of the “problem of genre”, it is, of course, one generic ailment in particular that Eikhenbaum has in mind, and that was the subject of much reflection in that decade in Petrograd-Leningrad—the demise of the novel.

Eikhenbaum and Woolf meet in closest proximity over Goldenveizer’s text. It is, I think, no accident that they should meet here, in the presence of Tolstoy, the previous century’s great novelist, speaking, in his final years, almost directly to them in their own age. Moreover, as a record of its author’s conversations with Tolstoy, this text grants special, documentary access both to “character” and to a literary imagination. As well as readers’ specific interests in Tolstoy, one might imagine that the opportunity for such direct, intimate acquaintance with character (and a character of the old century at that) held special appeal, especially at the moment the text acquired new life in English translation in 1923.

In his 1924 article Eikhenbaum brings Tolstoy into the initiation of the modern discussion of the attenuation of literary form, and in introducing Tolstoy into this debate, he is keen to bring the concerns of writers and literary critics together: “Many people think that the exhaustion and obsolescence of genres and styles is invented by theoreticians, and that it is no actual significance in the history of art itself or in the work

²⁸ A. B. Goldenveizer, *Talks with Tolstoi*, trans. S. S. Koteliansky and Virginia Woolf in *Translations from the Russian*. The original Russian appears in A. B. Gol'denveizer, *Vblizi Tolstogo* (Moscow: Kooperativnoe izdatel'stvo i Golos Tolstogo, 1922), 1: 3.

²⁹ B. M. Eikhenbaum, “V poiskakh zhanra,” *Literatura: teoriia, kritika, polemika* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1927), 292. [Мы сейчас больны отсутствием жанров и исканием их. Проблема жанра—центральная проблема больших литературных эпох, а к такой эпохе мы, повидимому, приближаемся.]

of the artist.”³⁰

Eikhenbaum’s article contains a section titled “A spot of rain which might just as well not have fallen” (“Dozhdik, kotoryi mog by ne itti”). The phrase is taken from Tolstoy’s words (as recorded by Goldenveizer), who decried the arbitrariness and vacuity of fiction in 1902, and who is cited in full in Eikhenbaum’s essay:

...and the maiden’s foolish feelings and a spot of rain—it’s all necessary only so that B. might write a story. As usual when there’s nothing to speak about, people speak about the weather, and so it is with writers: when there’s nothing to write about, they write about the weather, and it’s time to put a end to this. And well, there was a spot of rain which might just as well not have fallen.³¹

And as Eikhenbaum wryly continues in his own words:

And this spot of rain still falls today, sometimes replaced by a snowstorm. And the calamity is not in the spot of rain itself, but in the fact that it falls only in order to fill a dearth of material—it long ago lost its former generic significance. As did the maiden.³²

Here too, a lost reciprocity lies at the crux of the matter. These lines imply that the loss of generic integrity is most keenly felt in the severed relationship between character and setting, now diminished to the wholly arbitrary. Eikhenbaum joins Tolstoy and extends the discussion of attenuated literary form from 1902 to the 1920s. When maidens and raindrops are only tenuously linked in literature, in life the individual is denied full participation in the material and social world, and suffers an enervating impotence of agency.

Eikhenbaum himself shared in this feeling, and there is a striking consonance between the sentiments expressed in the poet Mandelstam’s essay on the demise of the novel (recall the “atomization of biography”) and in the personal documents produced by the literary scholar Eikhenbaum in 1925. In that year Eikhenbaum wrote in a letter to Shklovsky, his close friend, of his “longing for acts, longing for biography.”

In his curious publication of 1929, the one-man, single-issue, pseudo-journal *My Periodical* (*Moi vremennik*) Eikhenbaum includes an essay titled “Literaturnaia domashnost’” (“Literary Domesticity”). This formula again echoes Mandelstam—this

³⁰ Eikhenbaum, “V poiskakh zhanra,” 293. [Многие думают, что изживание, устарение жанров и стилей выдуманно теоретиками, а что в истории самого искусства и в работе художника это не имеет никакого значения.]

³¹ Ibid., 293; Eikhenbaum cites these remarks from A. Gol’denveizer’s *Vblizi Tolstogo* (*Talks with Tolstoy*, 1922). [...и глупое чувство девицы и дождик, все нужно только для того, чтобы Б. написал рассказ. Как обыкновенно, когда не о чем говорить, говорят о погоде, так и писатели: когда писать нечего, о погоде пишут, а это пора оставить. Ну, шел дождик, мог бы и не итти с таким же успехом.]

³² Ibid.. [А дождик этот до сих пор идет, иногда сменяясь метелью. И беда не в самом дожде, а в том, что он идет только для того, чтобы заполнить пустоту материала – прежнее свое жанровое значение он давно утерял. Утеряла его и девица.]

time in his estimation of that quality of Rozanov's writing.³³ (Indeed the whole volume of *My Periodical*—which combines theoretical and critical articles, a series of autobiographical sketches and a miscellany of contemporary observations, all by a single author—manifests its own brand of “literary domesticity.”) In the essay Eikhenbaum comments on the state of contemporary literature: “The fact of the matter is that literature now has neither its own auditoriums or home [...] nor its own study. Literature leads a nomadic way of life nowadays.”³⁴ In its “nomadic way of life,” the state of contemporary literature mirrors the condition of the author's own existence. The motif of “wandering” structures the autobiographical fragments which precede the critical essays in *My Periodical*, where Eikhenbaum presents his own youthful wanderings in the years prior to the Revolution under the subtitle “Along Bridges and Prospects” (“Po mostam i prospektam”—yet another instance of the metaphorical twinning of physical and narrative motion). Eikhenbaum's call for “literacy domesticity” in the face of universal homelessness (perhaps an unwitting echo of Lukács's famous coinage, “transcendental homelessness”) represents one more statement of belief in a counter-institutional milieu that would appease literature's and the writer's search for a home. The valorization of “literary domesticity” suggests the desire for a direct, intimate relationship between literary works and the milieu that supports the quotidian and professional life of the writer.

The affinity between Eikhenbaum and Mandelstam (as well as their membership in a larger, disjointed community of authors plagued by a sense of homelessness and crisis of genre) may also be borne out in Mandelstam's 1928 semi-autobiographical, densely allusive and weirdly disjunctive prose work, *The Egyptian Stamp*.³⁵ Eikhenbaum may well read himself into its pages—another Jew inhabiting the same city of Petersburg as Parnok, meta-literary hero of Mandelstam's work which, as is widely acknowledged, embodies the sentiments of the essay on the demise of the novel.³⁶ Parnok is a character in search of a genre, an individual who fails hopelessly at assuming the dimensions of a novelistic hero: “Parnok was the victim of his preconceptions as to how a love affair (*roman*) must proceed.”³⁷ His efforts in love are thwarted as he tries to share with a

³³ Mandel'shtam, “O prirode slova,” *Sochineniia*, 2: 172-87.

³⁴ B. M. Eikhenbaum, *Moi vremennik* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo pisatelei, 1929), 125. [Дело в том, что у литературы сейчас нет не только своей залы или своего дома [...] но и своего кабинета. Литература ведет сейчас бродячий образ жизни.]

³⁵ The argument advanced by James Curtis in his recent biographical study of Eikhenbaum implicitly makes a similar case, numbering Eikhenbaum among a generation, which includes Mandelstam, of assimilated Jews whose scholarly and creative engagement with Russian literature was a means of further legitimizing their relationship to Russian culture (Dzheims Kertis, *Boris Eikhenbaum: ego sem'ia, strana i russkaia literatura* (St Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2004).

³⁶ The connection between *Egipetskaia marka* and Mandelstam's essay, “The End of the Novel” is well documented by scholars, including Boris Filipoff, “Proza Mandel'stma,” *Osip Mandel'stm: Sobranie sochinenii*. eds. G. P. Struve and B. A. Filipoff, (New York: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1971) p. i; Charles Isenberg, *Substantial Proofs of Being: Osip Mandelstam's Literary Prose* (Columbus: Slavica, 1987), pp. 98-100. For a reading of *The Egyptian Stamp* in the context of European modernism and modernity see Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin, 1982), 274-80.

³⁷ Osip Mandelstam, *The Noise of Time: The Prose of Osip Mandelstam*, trans. Clarence Brown (San

woman he loves his collection of the tram's sounds, but, alas, he is met only with incomprehension. He is not aided by his attachment to life's "streetcar prattle;"³⁸ the tram, after all, engendered no great novel—unlike the railroad. The narrator of *The Egyptian Stamp* laments: "The railroad has changed the whole course, the whole structure, the whole rhythm of our prose. It has delivered it over to the senseless muttering of the French *mujik* out of *Anna Karenina*."³⁹ As well as acknowledging the role of the railroad as structuring motif in *Anna Karenina*, Mandelstam's words invokes another sense of "railroad"—"railroad literature," or popular fiction bought at railway stations to be swiftly consumed during journeys⁴⁰—a metaphor which also finds its home in Tolstoy's novel, where Anna reads an unnamed English novel on the train. Moreover, as one critic, Omry Ronen, suggests, this infamous proclamation on the state of contemporary prose at the end of *The Egyptian Stamp* may well refer to one of the suggestive images in Eikhenbaum's discussion of the crisis of the novel in the essay "In Search of a Genre": "Railroad literature has moved from the station into the city—this is symptomatic, but there is no prophetic sense in it."⁴¹ It was only possible to bemoan the increasing prevalence of these second-rate popular novels now that the nineteenth-century works of social and psychological realism had been venerated as the highpoint of novelistic and aesthetic accomplishment. A major deficiency of "railroad literature," according to Eikhenbaum and Mandelstam, lay in the lost integrity of character and setting—a literary problem which found its counterpart in the disorientation and sense of "homelessness" that beset the lives of this generation.

In one further gesture which joins scholar and poet with a line extending from the high Formalist days of the late 1910s to the precarious late 1920s, might we even say that Parnok from *The Egyptian Stamp* is not merely an incarnation of Gogol's Akakii Akakievich (from the 1842 story "The Overcoat"), but of the Akakii Akakievich of Eikhenbaum's famous essay "How is Gogol's Overcoat made?" ("Kak sdelana shinel' Gogol'ia?" 1918) – divested not just of his coat, but of *siuzhet*, *fabula* and of historical situation? Literary characters may acquire, perhaps, a newly independent life in critical

Francisco: North Point Press, 1986), 139. The Russian word "*roman*" here puns on the double meaning romance/novel. [Парнок был жертвой заранее созданных концепций о том, как должен протекать роман. Mandel'shtam, *Egipetskaia marka* in *Sochineniia*, 2: 66.]

³⁸ Mandelstam, *The Noise of Time*, 138; translation emended. [трамвайный лепет; 2: 65]

³⁹ Ibid., 162. [Железная дорога изменила все течение, все построение, весь такт нашей прозы. Она отдала ее во власть бессмысленному лопотанью французского мужика из «Анны Каренины» (2: 87).]

⁴⁰ The genre of "railroad literature" is mentioned in a differently accented account of the demise of the novel, from the perspective of some fifty years later, by Leslie Fiedler, who posits the emergence of the popular fiction as the success following the so-called death of the novel: 'But an even more radical departure from the traditional ways of making books accessible... was the creation of the railway-station bookstall in England, as certain entrepreneurs realized the sense in which the railway had made possible new opportunities for reading while travelling... Finally, the railroad station and airport bookstall has become the model for the bookshelf in the supermarket, on which novels appear as the commodities they are, ready always for the impulse-buyer—and competing in allure against soapflakes and breakfast cereals with their bright jackets and catchy slogans.' 'The Death and Rebirth of the Novel', *The Theory of the Novel: New Essays*, ed. John Halperin (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 191.

⁴¹ Eikhenbaum, "V poiskakh zhanra," 292. [Железнодорожная литература перешла со станций в город—это симптоматично, но никакого пророческого смысла в этом нет.] Connection suggested by Omry Ronen, *An Approach to Mandelstam*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1983), 289.

works, supplementing , or even supplanting, the fictional texts they inhabit.⁴²

The textual encounter between Eikhenbaum, Mandelstam, and his character Parnok dramatizes the crisis in prose form, dissolving the distinctions between criticism and belles lettres, between scholars, writers and literary characters. And yet, I argue, as a result of this crisis, which brought about the dissolution of genres and the freedom of movement between them, some highly idiosyncratic channels open up for the circulation of feeling between “characters”—which now includes authors, scholars, and fictional figures alike. As I hope to have shown, all of them participate in a single project in the search for a genre. In the following section, I consider the particular instance of Eikhenbaum’s biographical study *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties* (*Lev Tolstoi: Piatidesiatye gody*, 1928), in which the critic Eikhenbaum joins Tolstoy, the great writer of the epoch that has come to a close with the crisis of the novel, in this search.⁴³

Eikhenbaum, Tolstoy and the Restoration of Biography

Eikhenbaum’s words to Shklovsky of 1925, his “longing for acts, longing for biography,” came at the height of a period of professional and personal crisis. An academic career was painful and difficult to negotiate in the 1920s. The beginning of the decade had seen Formalism come in for Marxist critique for its neglect of social and economic forces in literary study; in 1924 Eikhenbaum had the preface to his book on Lermontov removed and replaced with one that invited proper Marxist conclusions to be made from the material he presented; the university was increasingly subject to the control of the Bolshevik regime, and scholarship, Eikhenbaum felt, was frequently compromised by academics’ compliance with party doctrine.⁴⁴

Dispirited with his work and depressed by the seeming impossibility of finding any way of working that would be both feasible and satisfying, he wrote in his diary later in 1925 of an aspiration towards “creation as an act.”⁴⁵ (It is notable that the literary scholar and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin also made the “act” (*postupok*) a central

⁴² We might do well to recall here that while the nineteenth-century novel had been purified of such metafictional boundary blurring, earlier works, such as *Tristram Shandy* and *Don Quixote*—both of central importance for Viktor Shklovsky’s critical and literary project—engaged in precisely such playful strategies.

⁴³ There are two more volumes devoted to the subsequent decades of Tolstoy’s life: *Lev Tolstoi. Shestidesiatye gody* (1931) and *Lev Tolstoi. Semidesiatye gody* (1960). Focusing on the 1920s, I treat only the first volume. The full body of Eikhenbaum’s work on Tolstoy is discussed by Carol Any, *Boris Eikhenbaum: Voices of a Russian Formalist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), especially 115-29, 181-83.

⁴⁴ For more details of Eikhenbaum’s life in this period (and others), see Any, *Voices of a Russian Formalist*, 80-103.

⁴⁵ Eikhenbaum, diary, 2 December 1925, cited by E. Bérard-Zarzycka, ‘La genèse des travaux sur le *litteraturnji byt* d’après le *Journal* d’Ejxenbaum’, *Revue des Etudes Slaves* 35 (1985), 88. [творчество—как поступок.]

category of ethical evaluation in writings of these years.)⁴⁶ A certain kind of creative act, he implies, might appease the longing for fuller self-realization (“biography”) and reciprocal determination in the social and historical milieu.⁴⁷

Two, related, projects that Eikhenbaum undertakes at the end of the 1920s see the desire for “creation as an act” realized: the curious one-off pseudo-journal, *My Periodical* and the first volume of his study of Tolstoy, *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties*. Thematically, the two works—and the writers’ two lives—are joined by a common concern, the clash between the individual author and his socio-political environment.

The one-man pseudo-journal, *My Periodical*, combines theoretical and critical articles with a series of autobiographical sketches and a miscellany of contemporary observations. A degree of levity is felt in the multiplicity of models inspiring this compendium text: an eighteenth-century precedent for journals containing the works of a single author, the poet-dilettante’s album of the early nineteenth century, and, primarily, the ‘thick journals’ of the later nineteenth century. The volume is an expression of Eikhenbaum’s desire to participate in and shape the future dynamics of literary production. And so in *My Periodical* Eikhenbaum boldly states: “Literature needs to be found anew—the path to it lies in the realm of intermediary and applied forms.”⁴⁸ He appropriates the genre of mock-journal in the spirit of the literary dynamics of the nineteenth century, when the journal was a key institution in determining the emergence of Russian literature. The curious generic hybrid of *My Periodical* is precisely one of those “intermediary forms” which Eikhenbaum here charges with the task of renewing contemporary literature. While the allusion to *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*, a prominent “thick” journal instituted by Aleksandr Pushkin in 1836, and revived by Nikolai Nekrasov in 1846) declares the work’s affiliation to contemporaneity, it is not so much contemporary as temporary—*vremennyi*. Having fulfilled its ambitious but modestly implied aims of reinvigorating the field of literary production, the experimental intermediary genre would be redundant.

But Eikhenbaum is not so given to bold narrative or generic experimentation as his friend Shklovsky or the poet and essayist Mandelstam. While Mandelstam embodies post-revolutionary disorientation and ideas about the end of the novel in a semi-autobiographical novella replete with bewildering, surreal imagery, Eikhenbaum continues to work within the parameters of literary scholarship and an academic career.

Though a successful scholarly monograph in its own right, *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties* is intimately linked to the experimental, partly autobiographical work *My Periodical*. The underlying imperative of both is to “solve the problem of behavior”, a formula that circulates, as if a refrain, in Eikhenbaum’s work of these years.⁴⁹ (He wryly

⁴⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vladimir Liapunov, trans. Vladimir Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

⁴⁷ Marietta Chudakova was the first to discuss the inseparability of Eikhenbaum’s scholarly and theoretical work from his intense reflections on his personal situation within a specific historical context. See, in particular “Sotsial’naia praktika i nauchnaia refleksii v tvorcheskoi biografii B. Eikhenbauma,” 27-44.

⁴⁸ Eikhenbaum, *Moi vremennik*, 122. [Литературу надо заново найти – путь к ней лежит через области промежуточных и прикладных форм.]

⁴⁹ As Lidia Ginzburg concludes in an essay about her former teacher, the personal significance (“intimnyi smysl”) of Eikhenbaum’s major scholarly works was the “problem of the historical behavior of the

applies the formula, for example, to his own childhood angst, speaking, in *My Periodical*, of a night filled with feelings of alienation and displacement spent roaming the streets of Voronezh and sleeping out: “One had to solve the problem of life and behavior”).⁵⁰ Specifically, the “problem of behavior” that is begging to be solved is the one pertaining to the writer: “The question, ‘how to write,’ has been supplanted, or at any rate given a new complexity, by the question, ‘how to be a writer.’ In other words, the problem of literature per se has been overshadowed by the problem of the writer.”⁵¹ Republished in *My Periodical* in close proximity to the autobiographical sketches, the well-known 1927 essay “The Literary Environment” (“Literaturnyi byt”) from which these lines come, is both a programmatic call to widen the study of literature to embrace the extra-literary, and an urgently voiced diagnosis of the professional status of the writer in relation to the social and economic forces of his times. The methodological approach proposed by “The Literary Environment” and the impulse to “solve the problem of behavior” direct Eikhenbaum in both his scholarly (biographical) and autobiographical narrative projects at the end of the 1920s.

Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties covers the decade prior to the writing of *War and Peace*; it discusses Tolstoy’s early fiction in relation to his life and times. Tolstoy was set in earnest opposition to his contemporaries and all established ideological positions of the day. Yet, as Eikhenbaum shows, there was also much in his circumstances and inclinations that was wholly “typical” of his times. From this blend of typicality and strident opposition to conventionality emerges a highly idiosyncratic literary career. Eikhenbaum’s biography of Tolstoy thus becomes a sustained study of the problem of the historical behavior of the individual.

For Tolstoy, in his times, as for Eikhenbaum in his own, the question of “how to be a writer” pressed unrelentingly and urgently. In the 1850s, and indeed his whole life long, Tolstoy struggled not so much to write as to derive an adequate sense of the meaning of life from his occupation. In the early years of the decade Tolstoy lived, Eikhenbaum writes, as four people, or in four different roles—the artilleryman who dreamed of the higher rank, the estate landowner, the family man and the writer “as if combining in himself four characters from some novel. [...] A strong moral and philosophical spirit ascended above all these, like the authorial voice above his characters, minutely analyzing appetites and endlessly defining the purpose of life.”⁵² As well as suggesting a continuity between Tolstoy’s self-cognition and his narrative voice

individual.” She cites Eikhenbaum’s own formulation of this urge in another letter to Shklovsky in 1929. (L. Ia. Ginzburg, “Problema povedeniia (B. M Eikhenbaum)” in *Zapisnye knizhki. Vospominaniia. Esse* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 2002), 441 and 445.)

⁵⁰ Eikhenbaum, *Moi vremennik*, 21. [Надо было решать проблему жизни и поведения.]

⁵¹ Boris Eikhebaum, ‘Literary Environment’, *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, eds. L. Matejka and K. Pomorska (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 58. [Вопрос о том, «как писать», сменился или, по крайней мере, осложнился другим – «как быть писателем». Иначе говоря, проблема литературы, как таковой, заслонилась проблемой писателя (Eikhenbaum, *Moi vremennik*, 51).]

⁵² Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoi. Piatidesiatye gody* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1928; reprint, Munich: W. Fink, 1968), 104; emphasis added. [как бы совмещая в себе четыре персонажа какого-то романа [...] Над всем этим возносится, как авторский голос над своими персонажами, строгий дух морали и философии, детально анализирующий страсти и без конца определяющий цель жизни.]

in fiction, Eikhenbaum's commentary on Tolstoy's diverse occupations indicates the enduring inclination, for a generation raised on reading nineteenth-century novels, to resort to novelistic structure and character as a prism through which to consider individual biography.

Analogies to the novel proliferate in Eikhenbaum's study. They illuminate different planes of experience of both biographer and subject: here Tolstoy's life is understood as a novel peopled with competing characters; elsewhere Eikhenbaum likens his own work to a novel. In the introduction Eikhenbaum notes how Tolstoy inhabits the text like a literary hero, moving in and out of focus, ceding the way at times to the depiction of other characters and circumstances: "In some chapters Tolstoy is entirely absent—just as in a novel the author sometimes abandons his hero in order to develop some sidelines."⁵³

Still more strikingly, Eikhenbaum's introductory remarks give an intimation of the autobiographical current which resides deeply in the work of scholarship: "The author of the first chapters is somewhat different from the author of the last ones. An evolution unfolds in the course of a book—that is a law of nature."⁵⁴ The act of writing this work, which he characterized as "semi-belles-lettres or memoir,"⁵⁵ became for Eikhenbaum an evolution of his own person, a work in which an autobiographical current lies inscribed. These lines suggest that Eikhenbaum regarded his work on Tolstoy as document of self-cognition. The self remains hidden and subordinate to the material, clothed in literary scholarship. And the scholarly work consists not of ideas formulated solely as abstractions on the basis of the material at hand, but is produced when the substance and import of those ideas have been experienced by the author himself at the level of thought which is constitutive of his own person.

The autobiographical strand and the consummation of writerly activity—the fulfillment of the ethical imperative for "creation as an act"—fuse in the conclusion of the Tolstoy volume. The biography concludes with a moment of Eikhenbaum's identification with Tolstoy-the-reader, and a key stage in the empathetic fusion between biographer and subject is enacted rhetorically through the convergence of a particular metaphor—of doing battle with one's times—deployed by the two writers.

The unifying line of narrative running through the work—the problem of historical behavior—is expressed in military metaphors. The metaphor is obviously apt to Tolstoy's thematic concerns as a celebrated war writer and one-time occupation as a military officer, but it had been present as a motif in *My Periodical* too. (The Hebrew poem by Eikhenbaum's grandfather was titled "The Battle," while another vignette presents warring factions of school-pupils in the Voronezh of Eikhenbaum's childhood).⁵⁶ Originally, the metaphor is applied to Tolstoy as if solely of Eikhenbaum's

⁵³ Ibid., 6; emphasis added. [В некоторых главах Толстой совсем отсутствует—так как в романах автор иногда покидает своего героя, чтобы развернуть боковой материал.]

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7-8. [Автор первых глав несколько другой, чем автор последних. Эволюция сказывается на протяжении книги — это закон природы.]

⁵⁵ Eikhenbaum, letter to Shklovsky 15 April 1928; cited in Chudakova, "Sotsial'naia praktika i nauchnaia refleksia," 36. [полубеллетристика или мемуар.]

⁵⁶ Any notes the presence of the battle motif in *Moi vremennik* and identifies other moments of its surfacing in Formalist scholarship and related narrative enterprises, observing how it 'grew naturally out of

own making; he speaks of the “problem of historical behaviour” as a battle with one’s times: “If [one’s times] are the *enemy*, that means one must devise a *strategic plan*, and not just count on one’s *forces and bravery*, not just *charge forwards*, as has been the way until this day.”⁵⁷ Tolstoy, that “battling archaist” is cast as a great military tactician, whose activities—as soldier, land-owner or pedagogue—are all “strategies” in the ongoing idiosyncratic shaping of a literary career, be it amidst the “civil war” between the editors of *Sovremennik*,⁵⁸ or in his decision to retreat to his estate at Yasnaya Polyana.

Eikhenbaum’s narrative then brings us to the same military metaphors, spilled over into Tolstoy’s personal writings. Eikhenbaum cites, at some length, a letter to Fet from 1860, in which Tolstoy appeals to the field of the military metaphor himself: “Your letter was awfully pleasing to me, my dear friend Afanasii Afanas'evich. Our ranks have swollen, and an excellent soldier has reported for duty. I am certain that you will be an excellent landowner.”⁵⁹ The sudden appearance of the military metaphor in Tolstoy’s own words after its extensive deployment by Eikhenbaum comes as if a discovery made by the narrative itself, revealing how the biographer and his subject have momentarily drawn close. The citation of Tolstoy’s letter conveys not only a certain convergence of experience, but also the process of capturing it in the emotionally charged cognition and language of metaphor. Eikhenbaum’s discourse blends with Tolstoy’s so that the analytical scope of the battle metaphor is generated and shared by the two writers, expressing their respective “battles [...] with contemporaneity.”⁶⁰

Metaphor can function as an “invitation to intimacy,” Wayne Booth notably suggests in his discussion of the relationship between the author and implied reader. The interpretation of metaphor, Booth maintains, enacts a figurative bonding. The reader must retrace the movement of the metaphor deployed in the text, and is invited into the intimacy of understanding where he occupies a position identical to that of the implied author. Thus, metaphor forges a relationship between implied author and implied reader, a point of contact able to transmit the ethical charge which Booth seeks to restore to literature and literary criticism.⁶¹ In the case of Eikhenbaum and Tolstoy, the movement of metaphor is traced not just in the act of reading, but is cemented in writing.

At the very end of *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties*, Eikhenbaum reaches the most intense degree of empathetic engagement with Tolstoy, and this emotion resonates in the words from Tolstoy’s letter that from autumn 1863 that Eikhenbaum cites at length:

I have never felt my mental or even all my moral energies to be so free and so

Formalism, with its view of the author’s struggle against his literary fathers’, *Voices of a Russian Formalist*, 115-16.

⁵⁷ Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoi. Piatidesiatye gody*, 364; emphasis added. [Если оно [время] враг – значит, надо выработать *стратегический план*, а не рассчитывать только на свои *силы и храбрость*, не брать *натиском*, как было до сих пор; emphasis added.]

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 364. [Ваше письмо ужасно обрадовало меня, любезный друг Афанасий Афанасьевич. Нашему полку прибует, и прибует отличный солдат. Я уверен, что вы будете отличный хозяин.]

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 365.

⁶¹ Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 187-91.

ready for work. And I have this work. This work is a novel from the period of the 1810s and '20s [...] Now I am a writer with all the energies of my soul, and I am writing and thinking like I have never written or thought before. [from Tolstoy's letter to A. A. Tolstaia of autumn 1863]⁶²

Compare Eikhenbaum's own writing, from his diary – the words echoing this sense of unprecedented and invigorating application, liberating and at the same time all-consuming, that the critic has pinpointed in Tolstoy's letter:

I am writing strangely—not at all how I did before: in the style of semi-belles-lettres or a memoir. That's what necessary.⁶³
I was writing with great passion—like never before. [...] This is turning out, I think, like no other previous work. The main thing is absolute freedom and range. I feel entirely happy.⁶⁴

We have seen that the scholarly monograph is underwritten by a strain of the critic's personal emotional involvement, which reaches its culmination in the final pages. There is a sense of wonder as Eikhenbaum's affinity with Tolstoy reaches its apogee at the end of *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties*. Wonder underlies the scholarly enterprise; it weds the experience of knowledge to emotion, and it is an emotion that binds object and beholder. Here, in the identificatory encounter between scholar and subject, the reader is momentarily awestruck at the seeming interpenetration of subjectivities. In this moment it is affect that now supplants biographical context as the basis for reception and connection.

This mode of engagement, as one of several possible between critic and text, was described by the Belgian critic George Poulet (a proponent of phenomenological criticism in the 1950s and 60s) as the experience of “a certain feeling of surprise with me. I am a consciousness astonished by an existence which is not mine, but which I experience as though it were mine.”⁶⁵

Eikhenbaum's monograph is a narrative harboring the novelistic privilege—the experience of alterity, of empathetic proximity to character. Eikhenbaum's identification with Tolstoy-the-reader is amplified by the coincidence of personal fulfillment that this moment precipitates for both: the Tolstoy of the Eikhenbaum monograph, after long seeking a means to reconcile himself to an acceptable mode of authorship, embarks in earnest on *War and Peace*; Eikhenbaum, with his monograph, has found himself, after a

⁶² Ibid., 392. [Я никогда не чувствовал свои умственные и даже все нравственные силы столько свободными и столько способными к работе. И работа эта есть у меня. Работа эта – роман из времени 1810 и двадцатых годов [...] Я теперь писатель *всеми* силами своей души, и пишу и обдумываю, как я еще никогда не писал и не обдумывал.]

⁶³ Eikhenbaum, diary, 7 March 1928; cited in Chudakova, 35. [Пишу странно – совсем не так, как раньше: в стиле полубеллетристики или мемуара. Так и нужно.]

⁶⁴ Eikhenbaum, diary, 30 March 1928; cited in Chudakova, 35. [Писал с огромным увлечением – как никогда. [...] Получается, по-моему, как ни в одной прежней работе. Главное – полная свобода и размах. Я чувствую себя прямо счастливым.]

⁶⁵ Georges Poulet, “Phenomenology of Reading,” *New Literary History* 1:1 (1969), 60.

period of painful uncertainty, engaged in a literary project of his own with a renewed sense of conviction. The conclusion of *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties* sees the resolution of the plot in which both its biographical subject (Tolstoy) and its author (Eikhenbaum), in his own life struggle, participate. Eikhenbaum's question of "how to be a writer" and the metaphor of waging battle with historical circumstance have repeated with the insistence of a musical theme throughout *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties*, and now find resolution at the work's conclusion as Eikhenbaum's own voice joins Tolstoy's. This confluence of scholarship and autobiography transpose the notion of *literaturnyi byt* (literature in the socio-political milieu—the concept and title of Eikhenbaum's essay "The Literary Environment") into a matter pertaining to *bytie* (existence, being).⁶⁶

To recapitulate: I have sought to show how Eikhenbaum's diminished sense of agency—his "longing for acts, longing for biography"—was related to the crisis of the novel in the 1920s. Eikhenbaum's own generic experimentation—the blending of scholarly, autobiographical and novelistic modes—becomes a means of finding his own answer to the question of "how to be a writer", and of recovering the fullness of being in his social and historical milieu. He achieved this in the work on his scholarly monograph, *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties* in 1928, which can therefore be read as a text in which Eikhenbaum's own emotional experiences, in the 1920s, of loss and consolation are deeply embedded. In addition, this text enacts Eikhenbaum's empathetic engagement with Tolstoy—a brand of writerly intimacy which marks the restoration of individual "biography" and literary "character" and opens new conduits for the narrative circulation of feeling.

In the following section, I will discuss how—with more oblique appeal to Tolstoy—the works of Virginia Woolf also discover new means to restore the novel's representation of character and circulation of feeling. If, in some sense, there is little that is "modern" in Eikhenbaum's appeal to Tolstoy in resolving the "crisis of the novel," (his casting Tolstoy as "literary character" is grounded in, and seeks to recover, a nineteenth-century notion of the novel), then Woolf's solution is decidedly modern, and looks self-consciously to the future of the novel. What is Eikhenbaum's crisis turns out to be Woolf's opportunity.

Virginia Woolf and the Crisis of the Novel

Writing in England in the 1920s, Virginia Woolf gave elegant voice, in her critical essays and personal writings, to the crisis of the novel as felt by the generations who came after the great traditions of the Victorians and who had lived through the First World War. Woolf's essays speak both for a generation of writers and readers, and for own fictions.

⁶⁶ In Russian "byt" (a notoriously untranslatable word) refers to everyday life; "bytie" (sharing a common root in the verb "byt"—"to be") pertains to the existential plane. Chudakova and Toddes note the dual resonance of the "literaturnyi byt" formulation, shaded with nuances of 'bytie'. M. O. Chudakova and E. A. Toddes, "Nasledie i put' B. Eikhenbauma" in *O literature: raboty raznykh let* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1987), 21.

The essays issue her own assessments of modernity, literary history and the current state of the novel, and form the backdrop to the innovations in narrative form and character representation—the stream of consciousness and poetic novel—with which she is so associated.

In 1925 Woolf expressed her generation's problem of experience and literary production as a problem of the emotions: "In the vast catastrophe of the European war our emotions had to be broken up for us, and put at an angle from us, before we could allow ourselves to feel them in poetry or fiction.... It was not possible for them to be direct without being clumsy; or to speak simply of emotion without being sentimental."⁶⁷ Her formulation also betrays her tendency to think of emotion with the aid of spatial metaphor, in terms that relate the palpable form of emotion to literary form and genre (a tendency whose full expression will be discussed later in this chapter). In a subsequent essay of 1927, she returns to the theme: "Emotions which used to enter the mind whole are now broken up on the threshold."⁶⁸ Now, though, the spatial image (the "threshold") is not just metaphorical. Domestic space is no longer safe from the reach of trauma and catastrophe that are inescapable and that modern technologies of communication bring right into the home; private life and emotional life are reconfigured and old literary forms are no longer adequate:

What has changed, what has happened, what has put the writer now at such an angle that he cannot pour his mind straight into the old channels of English poetry? Some sort of answer may be suggested by a walk through the streets of any large town. The long avenue of brick is cut up into boxes, each of which is inhabited by a different human being who has put locks on his doors and bolts on his windows to ensure some privacy, yet is linked to his fellows by wires which pass overhead, by waves of sound which pour through the roof and speak aloud to him of battles and murders and strikes and revolutions all over the world.⁶⁹

Woolf points not only to an atomized urban society, but also to the severing of a strongly causal, direct relation between emotions and actions: "There is no violence in private life," she writes, "we are polite, tolerant, agreeable, when we meet. War even is conducted by companies and communities rather than by individuals. Duelling is extinct. The marriage bond can stretch infinitely without snapping. The ordinary person is calmer, smoother, more self-contained than he used to be."⁷⁰ Just as in "The Storyteller," where Benjamin found individual experience to be "thoroughly contradicted," here Woolf too identifies an altered mode of agency. In modern society the lines that link strong emotional impulses to particular types of behavior, Woolf observes, have become blurred and weakened, or the behavior itself has become extinct. The attenuation of these relations, it is to be implied, imperil the representation of literary character and the

⁶⁷ Virginia Woolf, "On Not Knowing Greek" in *Essays*, 4:47-48.

⁶⁸ Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art" in *Granite and Rainbow* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1958), 16.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

relationship crucial to the novel which characters' actions articulate—the relationship between character and setting, or between interiority and the external world.

“The most elementary remarks upon modern English fiction can hardly avoid some mention of the Russian influence”⁷¹

Woolf's sense of the crisis of the novel is linked to that of her contemporaries in Russia not only by a common background of social and historical experience of modernity; in addition, Woolf's reading of nineteenth-century Russian literature, as documented in her critical essays, informs and reveals much of her thought about the shape of the new, modern fiction.⁷²

When Woolf turns, in the essay “Mr. Brown and Mrs. Bennett” (1923), to address the novel's failure in “character-making,” she names the works of Dostoevsky, brought to the English reading public by Constance Garnett's translations, as “...another force which made much more subtly against the creation of character.”⁷³ She continues:

After reading *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*, how could any young novelist believe in ‘characters’ as the Victorians had painted them? For the undeniable vividness of so many of them is the result of their crudity. [...] But what keyword could be applied to Raskolnikov, Mishkin [*sic*], Stavrogin, or Alyosha. These are characters without any features at all. We go down into them as we descend into some enormous cavern. Lights swing about; we hear the boom of the sea; it is all dark, terrible and uncharted.⁷⁴

The characters of the Victorians are known from the outside—solid and crudely molded shapes whose every angle is visible—whereas Dostoevsky's are dark, erratically lit interiors, never wholly known or knowable. Woolf describes her sense of Dostoevsky's character with recourse to a spatial metaphor, the expansive, uncharted space of “some enormous cavern.” In another closely related essay of the following year, “Character in Fiction,” a more circumscribed spatial form helps Woolf navigate the perception and presentation of character. She presents her observations of a woman, dubbed Mrs. Brown, with whom she shared a train compartment on the journey from short from Richmond to Waterloo, with the intention of illustrating how a novel's “character” may be found: “I believe that all novels begin with an old lady in the corner opposite,” Woolf

⁷¹ Virginia Woolf, “Modern Fiction,” in *Essays*, 4: 163.

⁷² “The Russian writers significantly influenced [Woolf's] thinking about the representation of interior states and feelings, character, narrative form and time,” writes Roberta Rubinstein in her monograph, *Virginia Woolf and the Russian Point of View* (4). A comprehensive survey of Woolf's literary relations with the Russians, Rubinstein explores in detail, based on Woolf's essays and notes, the influence on Woolf's fiction of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev and Chekhov. While the study is admirable for its comprehensiveness (and includes some previously unpublished manuscript material), many of Rubinstein's cases for “influence” are often rather overstated to my mind. In my discussion of Woolf and Tolstoy, I am less concerned with influence *per se* than with specific narrative strategies in a specific historical context and with a Tolstoy who is a temporal hybrid, read from the time of Woolf.

⁷³ On Woolf and Dostoevsky (and Constance Garnett) see Peter Kaye, *Dostoevsky and English Modernism, 1900-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), especially 66-95.

⁷⁴ Woolf, “Mr Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” 3: 386.

writes.⁷⁵ The confined space of the railway carriage offers an, albeit temporary, solid setting for the perception and definition of character, in all its concentrated particularity, from whom story and narrative may then emanate. One cannot help but recall Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*, which begins with Myshkin and Rogozhin, future rivals for the love of Nastasya Filippovna, but still strangers to one another, placed inside a train compartment of their own. It is tempting to think of Woolf's vignette as an oblique commentary on what is arguably Dostoevsky's most precarious and chaotic novel, which relies here on narrow and solid spatial dimensions in order to stabilize its initial presentation of character.

In Dostoevsky's works—and in the age which they presage—the novelistic stability of representation teeters at the brink of collapse (or of reinventing itself as something new). Gone is the “solidity of setting” (Ian Watt's phrase from his famous account of the realist novel)⁷⁶—something Woolf discerns when she calls Dostoevsky's novels “seething whirlpools.”⁷⁷

Woolf's own novels increasingly dispense with a conventional “solidity of setting” (in *The Waves* it is entirely absent), but the physical world of objects and material forms are an integral part of the experience and exploration of emotion and personhood. In the end, Woolf's novels are able to convey a certain “solidity of feeling;” they find new ways of representing and transmitting emotion in spite of the twentieth-century attenuation of character and plot that had been recognized by discussions of “the crisis of the novel.”

“Not form which you see, but emotion which you feel”

In the face of weakened characters and plots, the connection between reader and text was an element of the reading experience also under threat. In her essays of the 1920s, Woolf outlines a nascent phenomenology of reading that restores emotion to the connection between reader and text, and it is Lev Tolstoy, dubbed by Woolf “the greatest of all novelists,”⁷⁸ who turns out to be implicated in this project. With the aid of Tolstoy, Woolf brings to full expression, in her critical writings, ideas that link emotional experience to the physicality of form and material objects. In turn, these ideas come to full artistic expression, as I will later show, in her novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927).⁷⁹

In her 1922 essay, “On Rereading Novels,” Woolf engages with Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* (1921), a work which acts as a spur to Woolf in her own development of a conception of literary form. Woolf's spatial imagination ensures that “form” is a concept natural and dear to her: she speaks elsewhere, for example, of how a novel's reader becomes acquainted with “an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building: but words are more impalpable than bricks; *reading is a longer*

⁷⁵ Woolf, “Character in Fiction,” in *Essays*, 3: 425.

⁷⁶ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), 26.

⁷⁷ Woolf, “The Russian Point of View,” 4: 186.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 4: 187.

⁷⁹ For an account of the reception of Tolstoy, by others as well as Woolf, in Bloomsbury, see Galya Diment, “Tolstoy and Bloomsbury,” *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 5 (1992), 39-53.

and more complicated process than seeing.”⁸⁰ The novel assumes structural or spatial form, be it noble or common—“a barn, a pigsty, or a cathedral”—but this metaphorical notion is not quite adequate, Woolf implies—for it does not incorporate a dynamic sense of temporality. This points to the moment of divergence between Woolf and Lubbock: Woolf aspires toward a notion of form that incorporates the long drawn-out process of reading that extends in time. Lubbock, on the other hand, speaks of novels exclusively as whole entities—reconstructed by the detached critic—that exist outside of the time of reading. The actual experience of reading, Lubbock claims, gives of only a “glimpse” of the novel that is “too fleeting, it seems, to leave us with a lasting knowledge of its form.”⁸¹ Echoing Henry James’ notorious assessment of the Russian novels as “loose baggy monsters,” Lubbock critiques the formless-ness of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*: its formal incoherence produces “so much in the book to distract attention from its form [...] the perplexity is a challenge to the exploring eye.”⁸² In a rejoinder to Lubbock, Woolf makes the bold statement that “the ‘book itself’ is not form which you see, but emotion which you feel.”⁸³ Now, the organ for the perception of form is not the eye, but the reader’s capacity for feeling. Feeling extends and unfolds in time, in the process of reading, whereas “form that is seen” is available only from a distance—immediate and static—when the act of reading has been erased. Woolf’s published essay does not mention Tolstoy outright, but an unpublished section, titled “War and Peace” contains her pointed redress to Lubbock’s view, based on her own experience of reading Tolstoy: “there is no other definition of form/Surely you can’t see form apart from the/emotion wh (*sic*) makes it.”⁸⁴

Woolf’s accounts of reading repeatedly emphasize intersubjective experience—the relationship between reader and writer or reader and character. Even when the literary work itself, as a whole, is the object of direct experience concentrated in the self, the fundamental impulse is towards communion with another; “From the twist and turn of the first sentences,” the literary work “will bring you into the presence of a human being unlike any other.”⁸⁵ The literary text is an expressive unity of the dynamic, creating consciousness, to which we draw near in the process of reading. The “twists and turns” of the sentences emphasizes how this is an encounter that unfolds in time, kept in motion by narrative.

For Woolf, then, both the materiality of the metaphor of literary “form” and the

⁸⁰ Virginia Woolf, “How Should One Read a Book?” in *The Second Common Reader*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1986), 259 (emphasis added).

⁸¹ Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, (New York: J. Cape and H. Smith, 1931), 5. Cited by Woolf, “On Re-reading Novels” in *Essays*, 2: 124.

⁸² Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, 27-28.

⁸³ Virginia Woolf, “On Re-reading Novels” in *Essays* 2:126.

⁸⁴ Cited by Emily Dalgarno, “A British *War and Peace*? Virginia Woolf Reads Tolstoy,” *Modern Fiction Studies* Vol. 50, No. 1 (2004), 131. Dalgarno, who proposes *The Years* as a “British *War and Peace*”, has examined the unpublished holograph notes for this essay (Notebook XXVI.i.B.33). Dalgarno notes that Woolf repeats “emotion” on nearly every page of her notes. Whereas Lubbock wrote of *War and Peace* that “its inadequate grasp of a great theme . . . is scarcely noticed—on a first reading of the book” (41), Woolf countered, “to feel the thing—that is the first essential/that is the first reading” (fol. 59).

⁸⁵ Woolf, “How Should One Read a Book?”, 259.

movements of human consciousness and its emotions are felt in the novel. The physicality of form and emotion are indivisible; the literary work is an object with sensuously apprehended contours, whose human made-ness expresses those contours with embodied emotion. In the face of weak characters or attenuated “biography,” the literary work itself (and, as we shall see in the case of *To the Lighthouse*, its material, domestic objects) doubles the contours of personhood and is newly cast as a conduit for emotion.

There is a certain resemblance here to the thought of Mandelstam. In the same decade as the poet pronounced “The End of the Novel,” he articulated a philosophy of language which claimed the palpable “inner form” of language as a means of maintaining continuity and community in the wake of the historical rupture of revolution and “the catastrophic collapse of biography.”⁸⁶ Mandelstam wrote of what he called the “Hellenistic nature of the Russian word,” where “Hellenism” is

an earthenware pot, oven tongs, a milk jug, kitchen utensils, dishes; it is anything which surrounds the body. Hellenism is the warmth of the hearth experienced as something sacred; it is anything which imparts some of the external world to man. [...] Hellenism is the conscious surrounding of man with domestic utensils instead of impersonal objects; the transformation of impersonal objects into domestic utensils, and the humanizing and warming of the surrounding world with the most delicate teleological warmth. Hellenism is any kind of stove near which a man sits, treasuring its heat as something akin to his own body heat.⁸⁷

Just as domestic utensils are touched and handled in their use in the home, so too does the word gather traces from its usage in history, a form of history, we understand, that now has the same intimacy as the home restored to it. With his tactile poetics of proximity Mandelstam offers a salve for the sundered relationship between the individual, the community and the environment that so troubled novelistic form too.

Woolf, also writing in the age of the “atomization of biography,” finds and collects traces of personhood dispersed upon material forms (of literary works and domestic objects), recognizing them as bearers of and participants in human narratives and emotions. In advancing her own aesthetics of touch and emotion, Woolf restores the novel’s economy of feeling, reasserts its integrity of character and setting and proposes a powerful model for affective relations between the reader and the text.

⁸⁶ The concept of “inner form” Mandelstam borrowed from the Russian linguist Aleksandr Potebnia. For a recent account of Potebnia’s and Mandelstam’s philosophy of language, see Thomas Seifrid, *The Word Made Self: Russian Writings on Language, 1860-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 73-78.

⁸⁷ Mandelstam, “The Nature of the Word,” 127. [Эллинизм — это печной горшок, ухват, крынка с молоком, это домашняя утварь, посуда, все окружение тела; эллинизм — это тепло очага, ощущаемое как священное, всякая собственность, приобщающая часть внешнего мира к человеку [...] Эллинизм — это сознательное окружение человека утварью вместо безразличных предметов, превращение этих предметов в утварь, очеловечение окружающего мира, согревание его тончайшим телеологическим теплом. Эллинизм — это всякая печка, около которой сидит человек и ценит ее тепло, как родственное его внутреннему теплу (О. Е. Mandel’shtam, “O prirode slova,” *Sochineniia*, 2: 181-82).]

Woolf's and Tolstoy's "ordinary days": consciousness and aesthetic cognition

The deepest affinity between Woolf and Tolstoy, I think, lies in the two writers' shared psychological realism, of a kind which recognizes in the ordinary and the everyday principles of epistemological and aesthetic possibility. This common feature of the two writers' fictional worlds stems from similarities in their conceptions of consciousness.

Speaking out, most famously, to the would-be writers of a new, modern fiction, Woolf issued her command: "Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day"⁸⁸ Some seventy-five years or so earlier, the young Lev Tolstoy had set about that very task in an early narrative fragment (it is unclear whether this was an outgrowth of a diary entry or properly intended as a fictional piece):

I am writing a history of yesterday not because yesterday was extraordinary in any way, for it might rather be called ordinary, but because I have long wished to trace the intimate side of life through an entire day. Only God knows how many diverse and diverting impressions, together with the thoughts awakened by them, occur in a single day. Obscure and confused they may be, but they are nevertheless comprehensible to our minds.⁸⁹

Although the chronology of lives which allows one to speak of 'influence' is on our side here, Woolf could not have read Tolstoy's "A History of Yesterday" before beginning her own exploration of ordinary minds on ordinary days: Tolstoy's text, though written in 1851, was not discovered (let alone translated) until 1928—by the Russian Formalist scholars, Viktor Shklovsky and Boris Eikhenbaum who immediately recognized its importance to Tolstoy's artistic development. However, the confluence of thought is striking: both Woolf and Tolstoy are aware of the plenitude of consciousness, and of the necessary but miraculous process by which this limitless 'raw data'—Woolf's "myriad impressions," and "incessant shower of innumerable atoms"—are organized into intelligible experience, how they somehow "shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday."⁹⁰ And in both Woolf's essay and Tolstoy's sketch, this unceasing process is intimately linked to the question of 'how to write.' A very different notion of subjectivity and "life," if not biography, is implied here. In the command to "examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day" there is no plot and no novel. Instead, a continuum opens between art and life; consciousness and the activities of psychic life, at their most

⁸⁸ Woolf, "Modern Fiction", 4: 160.

⁸⁹ Leo Tolstoy, "A History of Yesterday" (1851), trans. George L. Kline, *Russian Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1949), 142. [Пишу я историю вчерашнего дня, не потому, чтобы вчерашний день был чем-нибудь замечателен, скорее мог назваться замечательным, а потому, что давно хотелось мне рассказать задушевную сторону жизни одного дня. Бог один знает, сколько разнообразных, занимательных впечатлений и мыслей, которые возбуждают эти впечатления, хотя темных, неясных, но не менее того понятных душе нашей, проходит в один день (Lev Tolstoi, "Istoriia vcherashnego dnia" in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvadtsati tomakh* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1960-65), 1: 377).]

⁹⁰ Woolf, "Modern Fiction," 4: 160.

ordinary—with their processes of reception, selection, distillation and organization—partake of the same aesthetic activity as is manifest, in its highest form, in art itself.

Here I echo the formulation of the Russian literary scholar and writer, Lydia Ginzburg: “Aesthetic activity goes on unceasingly in the human mind; art is merely its ultimate, highest stage, just as science is the ultimate stage of logico-cognitive activity, which also goes on unceasingly.”⁹¹ Ginzburg’s study of the human personality in documentary and literary prose begins with personal documents, including the most fragmentary, and culminates in an analysis of the psychological novel and the “artistic cognition of individual spiritual life and behavior”, at the head which tradition she locates the work of Tolstoy, and implies his relationship to literary modernism by placing him alongside Proust.⁹²

My discussion of Woolf’s 1927 novel *To the Lighthouse* that follows also brings Tolstoy alongside the modernists. Tolstoy is a distinct presence in the novel: *Anna Karenina* crops up as a subject of dinner table conversation as the diners enjoy Mrs. Ramsay’s famous boeuf en daube.⁹³ Indeed, in 1926, when Woolf was at work on *To the Lighthouse*, she was re-reading (and made notes on) the novel.⁹⁴ However, rather than offering a case study of Tolstoy’s influence on Woolf or *To the Lighthouse*, I hope to reveal affinities between the two writers that are mutually illuminating and to show how Tolstoy becomes a ready point of identity in a period when the urgency and intensity of the search for literary forms is felt on the epochal scale. In his narrative experimentation, Tolstoy was driven by what we might distinguish, above all, as an internally imposed quest for truth in representation. Woolf, as her famous statement that “on or about December 1910 human character changed” suggests, is driven as much by a historical imperative.⁹⁵ In this moment, in the first decades of the twentieth century, when conceptions of character and personhood were radically altered, Woolf’s narrative innovations—the stream of consciousness and the poetic novel—evolved new modes of character representation, which, in turn, promoted new ways in which feeling circulates within the novel, both between characters and within that world of the novel which the reader enters.

Thus my invocation of Tolstoy in this discussion of Woolf’s novel warrants some clarification: the Tolstoy I invoke is rather a Tolstoy re-read *after* Woolf, a Tolstoy who fuses two historical horizons—that of the novel read for the plot, and that of a non-novel that examines for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. Read from the perspective of the 1920s, Tolstoy can emerge, as he did for Eikhenbaum in the midst of the crisis of the novel, as the nineteenth-century literary forebear who is able to aid in connecting two ruptured narrative economies of feeling.

⁹¹ Lydia Ginzburg, *On Psychological Prose*, trans. Judson Rosengrant (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 4.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 221.

⁹³ Diment reads this episode, coming as it does after the detailed description of the fruit bowl, for its tribute to Tolstoy’s acuity of vision, and she draws inspired attention to a letter Woolf received from E. M. Forster in 1927, where Forster remarked that Tolstoy could “vitalise...tea tables” (“Tolstoy and Bloomsbury,” 48).

⁹⁴ Rubinstein notes how an earlier draft had *War and Peace* instead of *Anna Karenina* (Rubinstein, *Virginia Woolf and the Russian Point of View*, 110-111).

⁹⁵ Virginia Woolf “Character in Fiction” in *Essays*, 3: 421.

We have seen how both Woolf and Tolstoy both make an implicit statement of belief in the aesthetic nature of cognition—which, in turn, embeds the perceiving consciousness in a network of reciprocal relationships with the surrounding milieu; making sense of externally received impressions simultaneously gives meaningful aesthetic structure to the self as well as to the object-world and social life in which it participates. This same activity is also the form-producing impulse of the literary work, and attributes an element of autobiography to all writing, or, rather, reconstructs the experience of a self without necessarily being self-preoccupied. Indeed, both authors consistently produce works which harbor autobiographical currents, while at the same time distancing themselves from the autobiographical posture. In a letter to Hugh Walpole, Woolf confesses “In fact I sometimes think only autobiography is literature—novels are what we peel off, and come at last to the core, which is only you or me”.⁹⁶

The novel, of course, has long been suited to the illicit harboring of the autobiographical.⁹⁷ But now in the context of the crisis of the novel, we have seen it elsewhere, with underlying acts of self-reflexivity bringing it to show too in Eikhenbaum’s scholarly biography of Tolstoy. In this particular literary historical context, the phenomenon performs a special function, I would argue: given the sense of attenuated biography, the illicit autobiographical consciousness harbored within the work becomes a potential means of exerting emotional and ethical capacities. In *To the Lighthouse*’s most experimental narrative section, “Time Passes,” Woolf goes still one step further, as I will show, and presents consciousness, or the work of art’s form-producing impulse, divested of any person to clothe it, as a bearer of those emotional and ethical capacities.

Tactile form and emotion in To the Lighthouse

If the new, modern fiction is to restore the integrity of character and setting, then it must discover “how [to] represent both psychological interiority and realism rooted in things shared.”⁹⁸ It is through the representation of “things,” quite often, that Woolf is able to represent interiorities and the emotions that are shared between them.

In *To the Lighthouse* physical objects participate in the relations between characters, as instruments of relations and communications. The contact with material shapes becomes an investment of the beholder’s emotions in the object world; material objects are as if *felt* by the extended touch of emotion; they become bearers of hope, desire, love, care and fear. Their shapes are known through the feeling touch that they meet with the resistance of their own solidity, and through the pressure they exert back, their shapes also come to define the contours of the self. As Susan Stewart observes, “Of all the senses, touch is the most linked to emotion and feeling. To be ‘touched’ or ‘moved’ by words or things implies the process of identification and separation by which

⁹⁶ Letter of 28 December 1932. Cited by Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (New York: Vintage, 1999), 17.

⁹⁷ For a pertinent study that also brings Woolf into contact with the Russians, this time Ivan Goncharov, see Galya Diment, *The Autobiographical Novel of Co-Consciousness* (Gainesville : University of Florida Press, 1994).

⁹⁸ Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 59.

we apprehend the world aesthetically”.⁹⁹ Moreover, material objects become a field of communication between individuals, a place where their emotional experience meets, with all the reciprocity involved in the sense of touch.

Mrs. Ramsay’s shawl, repeatedly associated with her in the text, is one material object which comes to take on these properties most significantly. It is used to wrap and disguise the boar’s skull which scares the children—dissipating fear and replacing it with protecting and comforting love as it transforms a shape’s outline.¹⁰⁰ And it is as if responsible for occasioning the contact between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay: he admires his wife, fearing to disturb her, but longing for her sympathy, and “he would have passed her without a word had she not, at that very moment, given him of her own free will what she knew he would never ask, and called to him and taken the green shawl off the picture frame, and gone to him. For he wished, she knew, to protect her” (65). His passing by turns into the kind that is physical contact, and she rises to take his arm, with the retrieval of the scarf as if a sign of the contract between them, their reciprocal relations of giving and receiving sympathy and protection.

The opening scene of the novel establishes a relationship between tactile and emotional experience and physical form, which will be developed throughout, becoming particularly prominent in the highly experimental middle section, “Time Passes.”¹⁰¹ The novel opens, though, with Mrs. Ramsay’s promise, dependent on the weather, to her son James, that tomorrow they will visit the lighthouse. The first articulations, which follow, of *To the Lighthouse*’s dimensions of time and space are lines shaded with the emotional coloring of James Ramsay’s perceptual participation in the world. James hears only joyful certainty in his mother’s conditional promise of tomorrow’s trip: “the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years it seemed, was, after a night’s darkness and a day’s sail, within touch” (3). In these articulations of narrative’s time and space, emotion is all; the lines barely draw any other represented object. James looks forward not to the lighthouse itself, but to the wonder which attends this image, and which creates its own dimensions of time. (Or, given that “wonder” can name both the feeling and the object that elicits it, the lighthouse and the emotion are fused into one.) A child’s perception of time does not range far, but its limited span is acutely experienced, lengthened and intensified by excitement and anticipation into “years and years”. But now “the wonder [...] was [...] within touch”. The most usual idiomatic phrasing would place the wonder “within reach”, still implying, but, in its neutrality, not insisting, upon proximity to the subject’s body. The marked slight shift—to be “within touch”—now emphasizes the palpability, the sensuous experience of emotion. The shape of the refrigerator James cuts out from the Army & Navy catalogue, “fringed with joy”, is a vivid illustration of emotion’s defining the contours of a shape to which it extends its

⁹⁹ Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002) 162.

¹⁰⁰ Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1927), 114-15. Subsequent references to the novel will be given in parentheses in the text.

¹⁰¹ Woolf described the structure of *To the Lighthouse* as “two blocks connected by a corridor”—once again betraying her spatial grasp of form—where “Time Passes” is the linking “corridor.” (*Holograph Draft*, app. A 48, cited by Mark Hussey, “‘For Nothing Is Simply One Thing’: Knowing the World in *To the Lighthouse*” in *Approaches to Teaching Woolf’s To the Lighthouse*, eds. Beth Rigel Daugherty and Mary Beth Pringle (New York: MLA, 2001), 42.

feeling touch. Emotional experience which incorporates tactile participation therefore favors relationships of proximity rather than distance, and children's play and behavior—privileged modes of perception in this novel—exemplify the principle of investing one's interests and emotions in the proximal—in both space and time.

To the Lighthouse and Tolstoy's Childhood

To the Lighthouse contains scenes of carefully mapped relations of proximity and distance, giving processes of emotional identification and separation spatial form, and ensuring that the lines which draw the narrative dimensions of setting emanate from and are fused with character consciousness.

We might also appeal to Tolstoy's semi-autobiographical work *Childhood* (*Detstvo*, 1852) in this connection.¹⁰² Woolf's novel and Tolstoy's early novella display a similarity in the way the parent figures are represented. In Tolstoy's *Childhood* the image of the mother is diffused throughout the text; a clear-cut, physical description of her is lacking; she is rather an emotional presence, that which enables the form of the whole, the idealized personification of "*dobrota*"—goodness and love—strong enough to inspire the selection of detail and narrative-producing force of memory—to do, we might add, the work of love that Lily Briscoe formulates in *To the Lighthouse*, to "choose out the elements of things and place them together and so, giving them a wholeness not theirs in life (192). In Tolstoy, Nikolai Irten'ev's father, on the other hand, is more remote from the emotional life of the household; we first encounter him engrossed in the fiscal concerns of estate management. His character clearly delineated in a chapter of its own, "What kind of a man was my father?" which adopts a notably analytical tone, viewing him from the distance which can discern his historical typicality.¹⁰³ Trying to recollect his mother, the narrator comments, "her general appearance eludes me."¹⁰⁴ Her image consists only of the particular features observed in close, tactile proximity: "I can see only her nut-brown eyes, always with that same expression of kindness and love in them, the birthmark on her neck a fraction below the spot where there were some tiny curly hairs, her white embroidered collar, and the thin tender hand that had so often caressed me."¹⁰⁵ Compare too, Woolf's own statement in her openly autobiographical text, "A Sketch of the Past," describing the centrality of her mother in the memories of childhood experience: "the general feeling I had of living so completely in her atmosphere that one never got far away enough from her to see her as a person. [...] She was the whole thing;

¹⁰² There is no direct evidence of Woolf's having read Tolstoy's *Childhood*. However, when she began work on *The Waves* (published 1931), Woolf wrote in her diary, "Autobiography it shall be called", but then, "this shall be Childhood; but it must not be *my* childhood". Diary, May 28 and June 23, 1929. Cited in Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 17. This capitalized Childhood, one might imagine (though Hermione Lee, citing the line in her biography of Woolf, does not), could well refer to Tolstoy's *Childhood*—the most marked feature of which, arguably, is its ambiguous hovering around the autobiographical.

¹⁰³ Leo Tolstoy, *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth*, trans. Michael Scamell (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

Talland House was full of her; Hyde Park Gate was full of her.”¹⁰⁶

Similarly, in *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs. Ramsay fosters wholeness and unity amongst the lives and objects of her household. This quality becomes most abundantly apparent in her place at the creative, but unassertive organizing center of the dinner party. The feeling reach of her character, of her love, is the form-enabling medium (of the novel as a whole as well as of this scene). A visible sign of this form-enabling emotion appears before Mrs. Ramsay’s eyes: as she looks into the earthenware pot containing the boeuf en daube she has prepared as the center of the meal, her husband, children and friends around her “seemed now for no special reason to stay there like a smoke, like a fume raising upwards, holding them safe together” (105).

Mr. Ramsay’s world, meanwhile, is one of discrete facts and principles—the elements of his thought “like the keyboard of a piano, divided into so many notes, or like the alphabet is ranged in twenty-six letters all in order” (33). Sitting in same the room with his wife and son, he falls to contemplating his “splendid mind” and intellectual prospects, and sees “but now far, far away, like children picking up shells, divinely innocent and occupied with little trifles at their feet and somehow entirely defenseless against a doom which he perceived, his wife and son, together, in the window” (33). These lines trace and interlace the movement back and forth between near and far, contrasting the two types of relation. Mr. Ramsay, who guards the privacy that allows him to abstractly philosophize but renders him remote from his family, now sees his wife and son at a remove, as if they are far back in the field of the vision, *through* the window, rather than seated close at hand, framed *in* the window. Such remoteness contrasts with the proximity that governs the embedded scene of analogy—the distant children collecting shells he likens them to, but who are themselves concerned with what is immediately close to their touch.

In both Tolstoy’s *Childhood* and Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*, these two models of spatially charted relations—distance and discreteness as opposed to closeness and contiguity are associated with the mother and father respectively and reflected in the narrative means used to represent them. It could be that the inherent cognitive structure of remembering (scenes and impressions from childhood) relies upon spatial form and movement (a phenomenon apparent from the time of the ancient Greeks), and thus is responsible for these similarities found in narratives separated by over seventy years.¹⁰⁷

But reading Tolstoy after Woolf, we can also see these affinities as evidence of the works’ common spatial aesthetics; each character projects, as it were, onto the household a map of different kinds of emotional terrain, fusing characters’ emotional attitudes with the plotted dimensions of setting and with the narrative form. In Woolf’s novel, now that the old narrative economies of feeling have become faulty, spatial dimensions and the tactile forms of objects are conductors and articulators of emotion.

¹⁰⁶ Virginia Woolf, “A Sketch of the Past” in *Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 83.

¹⁰⁷ See Patrick Hutton, “The Art of Memory Reconceived: From Rhetoric to Psychoanalysis,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1987), 371-92.

*The Touch of Time's Passing*¹⁰⁸

The work of Woolf's aesthetic cognition, involving a sensuous and emotional participation in the material world, is carried out by the novel's central metaphor, which acquires tactile form: "the *stroke* of the Lighthouse", which presides over all the novel's rhythms of perception, and "came now in the softer light of spring mixed with moonlight gliding gently as if it laid its caress and lingered stealthily and looked and came lovingly again" (132-33). This is the work of consciousness, rendered now impersonally as the lighthouse beam and as the movement of the sense of touch. Its fusion of motion and emotion underwrites the form-producing impulse of the literary work.

In the curiously impersonally narrated "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf gives free rein to this form-producing impulse, which we might imagine as consciousness that has discarded the personhood which clothes it. The work's form-producing impulse represented as the "airs" which move through the house, discovering the very shapes that embody their "questioning and wondering" that is the impulse of novelistic narrative conventionally embodied by character (126). Physical form is defined by the resistance its contours meet; this is what the "airs" seek and have direct their movement as they pass through the house, here and there meeting "nothing that wholly resisted them, but only hangings that flapped, wood that creaked" (129). They find the clothing that "people had shed and left", which had "kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated" (129). The "airs" may be the impersonal, disembodied agents of perception in absence of a perceiving subject, but their work is still sensuous. They are the movement of time passing, and movement must always be sensible. The movement of time passing is almost imperceptible as it comes to be at one rhythmically with the nighttime breathing of the house. But this time brushes by objects, its passing accidentally shading into the proximity of tactile contact:

Then smoothly brushing the walls, they passed on musingly, as if asking [...], Were they allies? Were they enemies? [...] So some random light directing then with its pale footfall on stair and mat, from some uncovered star, or wandering ship, or the Lighthouse even, the little airs mounted the staircase and nosed round bedroom doors. But here, surely, they must cease. Whatever else may perish and disappear, what lies here is steadfast. Here one might say to those sliding lights, those fumbling airs that breath and bend over the bed itself, here you can neither touch or destroy. Upon which, wearily, ghostlily, as if they had feather-light fingers and the light persistency of feathers, they would look once on the shut eyes, and the loosely clasping fingers, and fold their garments wearily and disappear (126-27).

¹⁰⁸ For interesting discussions of the "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse* that have some points of contact with my own, see Randi Koppen, "Embodied Form: Art and Life in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*," *New Literary History* 32, no. 2 (2001), 375-389 and Leslie Kathleen Hankins, "A Splice of Reel Life in Virginia Woolf's 'Time Passes': censorship, cinema and 'the unusual battlefield of the emotions,'" *Criticism* 35: 1 (1993), 91-115. Hankins argues that "Time Passes" is informed by cinematic aesthetics, in which Woolf finds a solution the problem of conveying emotion without sentimentality that modernism militated against.

A near-personified, “ghostlily” embodied time passes through the house, the “little airs”, “detached from the body of the wind”. The ghostliness of its touch is suggested in the spectral “as if” of the simile attributing the airs a sense of touch “as if they had feather-light fingers and the light persistency of feathers”. The prose itself, with its insistent lingering on the sounds of “li”, gently probes the folds and surfaces of the home. Many of the verbs describing the airs emphasize the physicality of contact that comes with their movement through the house: “fumbling”, “nosed”, “rubbing”. The passage’s pattern of assonances—the palpable form of language—hold the sentences together in a delicate lyricism, like the “scroll of smoke” held in the sky “as if the air were a fine gauze which held things and kept them softly in its mesh” (182). There, again, the air becomes a form-enabling medium.¹⁰⁹

Impersonal though they may be, the airs still bearers of emotion: as they come to rest, “all sighed together; altogether gave off an aimless gust of lamentation” (127). The touch of their movement is still a feeling touch. The airs can mourn Mrs. Ramsay; they are a counterpart to the feeling touch of Mr. Ramsay which makes known in the text the death of Mrs. Ramsay in the parenthetical report that comes a shock to many readers in its manner of narration—but it too is felt: “[Mr. Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms though stretched out, remained empty]” (128).

The impulse towards impersonality was intensely and variously theorized in modernism, the most famous formulations belonging to T. S. Eliot and his 1919 essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” where he writes that “[p]oetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality [...] The emotion of art is impersonal.”¹¹⁰ Woolf’s variety of narrative impersonality, which knows and feels domestic interiors, stands in stark contrast to that of Eliot’s essay, which is replete with scientific and chemical metaphors; Woolf’s is a feminine impersonality, practiced by the woman who writes from the room of her own.¹¹¹

Woolf’s mode of aesthetic cognition, blending sensuous, tactile and emotional experience, breeds an ethically valorized participation in the world of objects. In the absence of actual human agents, as in “Time Passes”—and in the face of weak characters, or subjects, and the erasure of the plot as time passes from the nineteenth century into modernity—we are shown how art itself, its form-producing impulse and its modes of

¹⁰⁹ And later, at the end of the novel, it will become most explicitly charged with this task in connection with Lily’s painting: “One wanted most some secret sense, fine as air, with which to steal through keyholes and surround [Mrs. Ramsay] where she sat knitting, talking, sitting silent in the window alone; which took to itself and treasured up like the air which held the smoke of the steamer, her thoughts, her imaginations, her desires” (198).

¹¹⁰ T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” in *The Sacred Wood and Major Early Essays* (New York: Dover, 1998), 33.

¹¹¹ See also Woolf’s essay “Women and Fiction” (1929). Here she announces that the “novel will cease to be the dumping ground of personal emotions” and identifies the “greater impersonality of women’s lives” as a rich poetic source. Her observation that “often nothing tangible remains of a woman’s day” points to the idea of emotions and energies preserved in and circulating through the domestic and material objects of the home. “Women and Fiction” in *Granite and Rainbow*, 82 and 84.

perception of cognition exercises human ethical capabilities. In “Time Passes”, this principle comes into relief most boldly as the knowing feeling touch of the narration dwells on the seemingly sensate crockery, which registers the shock and violence of the distant war (the same war that prompted Mandelstam in his outburst on the death, or at least, traumatic injury, of the novel)¹¹²:

[T]here came later in the summer ominous sounds like the measured blows of hammers dulled on felt, which, with their repeated shocks still further loosened the shawl and cracked the tea-cups. Now and again some glass tinkled in the cupboard as if a giant voice had shrieked so loud in its agony that tumblers stood inside a cupboard vibrated too.

[...]

[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous] (133).

Like the death of Mrs. Ramsay, felt and mourned in the shapes she has left empty, the distant death of Andrew Ramsay is felt in the objects that are within reach of physical apprehension and whose contours embody the narratives of domestic life and human relations in which they participate. “[T]he thud of something falling”, these intuited sounds of war, intermittently seem “to drop into this silence, this indifference, this integrity”. While “indifference” accounts for the impersonality of this section of the narrative, “integrity” (an odd word choice here, perhaps, prompting us towards a more searching interpretation) provides the ethical response which “indifference” would otherwise seem to abnegate. We might understand this “integrity” in both senses of the word—as simultaneously the property enabling the wholeness of form to emerge from the organizing cognition of “myriad impressions”, and also, in its other sense, the quality of wholeness which is moral integrity.

This novel possesses integrity in its two senses: it keeps the promise made on its first page; James does reach the lighthouse after a night’s darkness and a day’s sail—the intervening ten years of “Time Passing” are simultaneously only a single night’s sleep. And the integrity of form grants the possibility to see the potential for meaningful associative connections—of the same nature as those used to organize and make sense of life in general, but now in greater abundance. And so, might we imagine that these teacups in the cupboard are come into associative contact with the “tenpenny tea-set” that could make Cam “happy for days” (59). What are toys, if not the material objects which most honestly foreground their role as the bearers of the emotions invested in them? They attain full meaningfulness animated by imagination and feeling in the world of children’s play—a microcosm of spontaneous artistic activity.

So it is that Woolf’s innovative narrative techniques that are founded on the relations between the individual and the material world express emotional and ethical

¹¹² For a quite differently accented discussion of “Time Passes,” the language of the passage that follows in particular, and the war, see Vincent Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 294-97.

relations.¹¹³ For Woolf, responsibility and sensibility are shared in the material world of objects rendered sensate by their participation in humans' emotional life. Material objects (such as Mrs. Ramsay's shawl or the cracked tea-cups) in their impersonality, or interpersonality, can be conductors or vessels of emotions invested in them by different individuals, and so participate in exchange between them, compensating for, without trying to idealistically overcome, the limits of knowing other minds.

Concluding Remarks

The distance between late Tolstoy and my protagonists from the 1920s is the space in which the novel comes to a crisis. Reading Tolstoy after Woolf and after Eikhenbaum, we imagine a modernized Tolstoy, read not in the light of the Napoleonic Wars experienced by his parents' generation and which inspired him to *War and Peace*, and nor of the Crimean War of the *Sebastopol Stories* (1855-56), but in the light of the First World War that started barely four years after his death. From this perspective, Tolstoy becomes, for Woolf the novelist as he did for Eikhenbaum the scholar, a means of connecting the two ruptured systems of representation and narrative economies of feelings.

In the case of Eikhenbaum, the connection to Tolstoy stemmed from the perceived commonality in what one might call the writers' emotional biography—in the urgency and profundity with which that question of “how to be a writer” shaped and directed a life; this was, the enormous differences in social and historical circumstances in their lives notwithstanding, a psychological affinity (rooted in the ideological). In the case of Woolf, the affinity is literary (rooted in the aesthetic). It stems from the affinities between Woolf's and the young Tolstoy's conceptions of consciousness and their searching impulse toward representation, leading both beyond the literary conventions of their day. We see how Tolstoy's narrative representation of consciousness contains something which is capable of also providing a means of rescuing the troubled genre in Woolf's day; there is something capacious enough in the nature and evolution of Tolstoy's literary practice that enables us to see the whole literary history of the psychological novel in it.

In describing the problem that lay at the center of the crisis of the novel in the 1920s, I have outlined a crisis of action: the hero is thrown out of his biography, robbed of agency, denied reciprocal relations within the material and social world. Eikhenbaum, too, as I have shown, acutely felt this in his own work and life. In the end, a solution to the entwined epochal and personal crises of genre and authorship was found in this literary scholar's move to find vicarious fulfillment in the experience of a writer from a preceding generation—Tolstoy, the author in whose novels characters possessed their

¹¹³ Martha Nussbaum discusses epistemological and ethical concerns in *To the Lighthouse*, incorporating it into her oeuvre's over-arching concerns for reading and ethics (Martha C. Nussbaum, “The Window: Knowledge of Other Minds in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*,” *New Literary History* 26, no. 4 (1995): 731-753).

own biographical plots, and the person who, as steadfast assertor and defender of his own relations to the social and literary world, fully inhabited “biography.” In this sense, the appeal to Tolstoy in this literary scholar's search to resolve the crisis of the novel is somewhat retrospective: it is grounded in, and seeks to recover, a nineteenth-century conception of literary character. In contrast, the relationship between Woolf and Tolstoy yields a decidedly modern understanding and representation of character.

What the respective projects of Eikhenbaum the scholar and Woolf the novelist have in common, though, is their perpetuation of another special province of the novel—its aesthetics of alterity, its status as a site for the meeting and intertwining of subjectivities.¹¹⁴

At the beginning of this dissertation I showed how a site for the encounter of subjectivities emerges from the elegy and from the vision of future potentiality the elegy projects through hope. Recall, for instance, Zhukovsky's elegy “To K. M. Sokovnina” – an empathetically bestowed gift of hope, and an elegy written to and on behalf on another. Here we find not a lone lyrical hero, but the emergence of an “author” who envisions Sokovnina as both “reader,” and as voiced, embodied other—as “character.” This configuration of relations is the essential kernel of the novel, and the nexus which produces the specifically novelistic experience of emotion. As I have shown in this final chapter, even when the novel is in a period of so-called crisis, this nexus of relations and the circulation of feeling between author, reader and character is maintained. Throughout this dissertation I have tried to show the novel from its high point in the Russian 1870s, in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, to its crisis in the 1920s, across Europe, as a site for the circulation of feeling between author, character and reader.

In *To the Lighthouse* and, most strikingly, in its middle section, the wartime prose elegy, “Time Passes,” material and domestic objects become bearers of and participants in humans' emotional lives, conductors of the feelings that move between individuals. In addition, Woolf advances a conception of literary form that is the site for an encounter between live subjectivities: the literary work is perceived emotionally in the act of reading in its temporal duration, and always contains “somewhere in what is written down [...] the form of a human being.” Meanwhile, although it would be an overstatement to call Eikhenbaum's Tolstoy monograph a novel, what is striking is that in this age of unsettled subjectivity and weak literary characters, *Lev Tolstoy: The Fifties* stages an encounter between the subjectivity of its author (Eikhenbaum) and the subjectivity of a Tolstoy, who is conceived as a novelistic character of sorts. The resulting structure is able to support and hold open new conduits for the circulation of feeling. What emerges as somehow redemptive in this moment is the rediscovery, in a new place, of the mutually animating connections between author, reader and character, linked by emotion.

¹¹⁴ Dorothy Hale discusses the “aesthetics of alterity” as the defining feature of the novel that emerges in twentieth-century English novelists' appraisal of the genre. Dorothy J. Hale, “The Art of English Fiction in the Twentieth Century,” *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*, ed. Robert L. Caserio (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 13.

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