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The American Reception of Ivan Turgenev's Writings from the 1860s to the 1920s

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in

Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Languages and Cultures

by

Elena Makarova

2026

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

Elena Makarova

Doctor of Philosophy

in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2026

Professor Vadim Shneyder, Chair

This dissertation centers on Ivan Turgenev, the pioneering Russian novelist whose works first captured significant attention among the American literary public in the mid-nineteenth century. While Dostoevsky and Tolstoy later overshadowed Turgenev in terms of popularity, this study argues that his early impact fundamentally shaped the American discovery of Russian literature, laying the groundwork for subsequent literary and cultural interactions. By tracing the timeline from the initial rise of interest during the American Civil War, through the peak of popularity in the 1870s, and the eventual transition to later Russian authors, the dissertation reconstructs the evolving landscape of American literary taste and the forces that drove it.

One of the components of the analysis is the role of translators — Eugene Schuyler, Leo Wiener, and Elizabeth Hapgood — whose interpretive choices and biographical backgrounds shaped the accessibility and perception of Turgenev's work in the English-speaking world. The dissertation draws on both archival research and comparative analysis of translation practices, emphasizing the mediating role of French as a conduit for Russian literature to reach American

readers. This approach highlights the intricate mechanisms of cultural transmission and the significance of intermediary languages and figures in cross-cultural literary movements.

The study also investigates the responses of leading American critics and writers, including T. S. Perry, William Dean Howells, and Henry James, to Turgenev's prose. Through these case studies, the dissertation explores questions of literary influence, critical reception, and the construction of reputation—most notably, James's view of Turgenev as the “novelist for novelists.” The analysis extends into the early twentieth century, considering how Turgenev's model of the short story and story cycle resonated with American modernist writers such as Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway. These intertextual connections demonstrate the ongoing relevance of Turgenev's narrative strategies across literary generations.

By illuminating the often-overlooked role of Turgenev as a cultural mediator and literary innovator, the dissertation contributes to a deeper understanding of Russian-American cultural exchange and the processes by which literary reputations and influences are constructed across national and linguistic boundaries. The research underscores the importance of examining “secondary” authors and the mechanisms of cultural mediation in tracing the evolution of literary traditions. Ultimately, it reveals how Turgenev's legacy persists in shaping American literary forms and cultural imagination, offering new insights for both Slavic and Comparative Studies.

The dissertation of Elena Makarova is approved.

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2026

To my mom, my sister, and her family, your love, prayers, and encouragement, even from
afar, have made this academic journey possible.

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Introduction.

In the rapidly changing modern world, characterized by an unstable and swiftly evolving political landscape, the question of cultural interconnections between Russia and the United States continues to engage researchers' interest. Among the most illustrative examples of such a connection is the history of the reception of Ivan Turgenev's writings in the United States and the notable interest that emerged around this Russian author. This fascination was shaped by both 19th-century geopolitical and social conditions, culminating in the sudden appearance and circulation of Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons* across the country.

Setting up the groundwork in the historical context of Russian-American relationships, I will address Ivan Kurilla's recent monograph *Zakliatye druzia: istoriia mnenii, fantasy, kontaktov, vzaimo(ne)ponimaniia Rossii i SshA* (2018) as well as his book coauthored with David Foglesong and Victoria Zhuravleva, *Distant Friends and Intimate Enemies: A History of American–Russian Relations* (2025). There, Kurilla argues that both Russia and the United States have consistently regarded each other as a crucial reference point — a "significant other" against which to compare and define themselves.¹ He describes the long-lasting history of the relationships between the two countries as fundamentally "on-and-off," with neither side ever fully disregarding the other.² Kurilla summarizes the overall pattern of interactions throughout the 19th and 20th centuries as an oscillation between periods of complete "breakup" and episodes of close partnership or strategic alliance, highlighting the passionate dynamics of the interconnections.

¹ "For a long time, the two countries captured one another's attention, each functioning as the other's "significant Other"—a society against which comparison enabled each to better understand itself." Ivan Kurilla. *Zakliatye druzia: istoriia mnenii, fantasy, kontaktov, vzaimo(ne)ponimaniia Rossii i SshA* (M, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2018), 10.

² Kurilla, *Zakliatye druzia*, 10.

The reception of 19th-century Russian realist writer Ivan Turgenev in the United States, as explored in this dissertation, spans a broad spectrum of these historical dynamics. It serves as evidence that in periods of close relations, cultural influences intensified and left a clear mark on both societies. Yet even during times of political cooling, cultural reflection and literary exchange continued, demonstrating the persistence of mutual curiosity and the enduring impact of cultural interconnection.

The geopolitical context can partially elucidate this bond between the two nations: both the United States and Russia are large, multinational states with historical and cultural ties to Europe, each sharing a sense of being in a "secondary" or subordinate position relative to European civilization, and of similarly fluctuating relations with it. In Dale Peterson's research, this sense of "provinciality" serves as a point of connection between James and Turgenev, whom he views as similarly positioned as provincial writers within the European literary landscape. According to Peterson, both authors are united by their status as outsiders in relation to "mainstream" Europe, which shapes their literary identities and perspectives.³

The intensity of cultural and diplomatic communication between Russia and the United States was particularly notable in the 19th century, especially throughout the 1860s and 1870s — a period often characterized by close partnership.⁴ The interest in Turgenev's writings first emerged during the American Civil War, laying the groundwork for a growing fascination with Russian authors. Turgenev's popularity then peaked in the 1870s in the circles of Boston's critics, editors and writers, and later American attention increasingly turned to other prominent Russian authors,

³ Dale E. Peterson, *The Clement Vision: Poetic Realism in Turgenev and James* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975), 2.

⁴ Ivan Kurilla, "Rossiisko-amerikanskie otnosheniia v epokhu Avraama Linkol'na i Aleksandra II," in *The Tsar and the President: Aleksandr II and Abraham Lincoln. Liberator and Emancipator* (Moscow: Indrik, 2011), 31.

such as Leo Tolstoy during the 1880s and Fyodor Dostoevsky later at the beginning of the 20th century.

Ivan Turgenev (1818–1883) was a leading Russian realist author and a contemporary of major literary figures such as Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Ivan Goncharov. Unlike many of his peers, Turgenev was recognized early on as an international figure. He studied philosophy at the University of Berlin from 1838 to 1841, an experience that profoundly influenced his worldview and literary development by exposing him to German intellectual traditions and broader European currents of thought.

Following his return to Russia, Turgenev's literary career flourished, yet he soon became closely associated with Western European cultural circles. After meeting the celebrated singer Pauline Viardot, Turgenev established his residence primarily in Paris, living with Viardot while maintaining close ties to both Germany and Russia through frequent travels. During his years in France, he developed enduring friendships and professional relationships with prominent French authors such as Gustave Flaubert and Guy de Maupassant.⁵ This cosmopolitan existence not only shaped Turgenev's literary output but also helped secure his reputation as one of the foremost European writers of his time — bridging Russian and Western literary traditions and contributing to his widespread international acclaim.

A testament to his international stature came on 18 June 1879, when the University of Oxford conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law (D.C.L.) on Ivan Turgenev. Notably, Turgenev became the first Russian novelist — and apparently the first novelist of any nationality

⁵ See more on Turgenev's biography in V. S. Pritchett, *The Gentle Barbarian: The Life and Work of Turgenev* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1977), Leonard Schapiro, *Turgenev: His Life and Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), Iurii V. Lebedev, *Turgenev* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1990).

— to receive this distinction from Oxford, further cementing his legacy as a pioneering figure in world literature.

A revealing phenomenon in the current study is that Schuyler's very first English translation of Turgenev's work was largely disregarded and soon forgotten by American readers. Instead, as Turgenev's popularity in the United States grew, it was chiefly the French translations — versions considered authorized — that shaped his American reception. This dynamic positioned Turgenev at the heart of Francophone literary culture and made his works more accessible to American audiences.

The history of research on this topic begins with Royal Gettman's monograph *Turgenev in England and America* (1941). While it may still be considered an essential source, there is also room for more contemporary studies. Gettman's work specifically explores the reception of Turgenev's writings in England and the United States, concluding that American readers responded more actively to his works.⁶ This conclusion suggests the importance of further research on that American reception. Another valuable source is Glyn Turton's monograph, *Turgenev and the Context of English Literature, 1850–1900* (1992), which examines the general reception in both countries. Additionally, among sources in Russian, Boris Feklin's *The Beautiful Genius: Turgenev v Anglii pervye polveka* (2005),⁷ studies Turgenev's reception in Britain. Furthermore, Dale E. Peterson's book, *The Clement Vision: Poetic Realism in Turgenev and James* (1975),⁸ focuses on the relationship between Turgenev and Henry James. In addition to thorough research on the mentioned topic, it offers solid insights into the broader context of Turgenev's reception in the United States. Another significant source on American literature is the recent research carried out

⁶ Royal A. Gettman, *Turgenev in England and America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1941), 37

⁷ Feklin, M.B. *The Beautiful Genius. Turgenev v Anglii pervye polveka*. Nizhnii Novgorod: NNGU, 2005.

⁸ Dale E. Peterson, *The Clement Vision*.

by Alexandr Nikoliukin in the monograph *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA: Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoevskii, Chekhov* (2023).⁹

While Turgenev's late 19th-century reception drew on both English and Russian sources, his influence in early 20th-century America remains less thoroughly explored. A notable contribution to this area is Paul Miller's essay in Harold Bloom's *Ivan Turgenev* (2003), which highlights Turgenev's significant impact on American Midwest literature, particularly on writers such as Willa Cather and Sherwood Anderson.¹⁰

Several studies have examined Russian influence on American literature, including Alexey Zverev's *Russkaya klassika i stanovlenie realizma v literature SshA* (1987) and Olga Antsyferova's monograph, *Russian Context of American Quest for Realism* (2000).¹¹ Both works establish the foundational context for the reception of Russian realism in America, framing the development of the realist tradition and inspiring my further analysis of James's and Howells's responses, as well as adding another key figure - Perry's influential perspective on Turgenev.

A central argument of this research is that American realism in the second half of the nineteenth century was fundamentally shaped by European realist writers, with the general influence of Russian authors — most notably Ivan Turgenev. Turgenev was the first Russian writer to gain significant recognition in the United States, and his reception occurred primarily through the lens of French language and literature, often in direct comparison with French models. This unique channel of transmission foregrounded Turgenev's stylistic qualities and narrative

⁹ A. N. Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA: Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoevskii, Chekhov*, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Moscow: INION RAN, 2023).

¹⁰ P. W. Miller, "Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson—and Ivan Turgenev," in *Ivan Turgenev*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003), 205–215.

¹¹ Alexei (A. M.) Zverev, "Russkaia klassika i stanovlenie realizma v literature SShA," in *Mirovoe znachenie russkoi literatury XIX veka*, ed. V. R. Shcherbina (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 368–392, Olga Antsyferova, *Russkaia literatura i khudozhestvennye iskaniia amerikanskikh pisatelei kontsa XIX veka* (H. James, W. D. Howells, S. Crane) (Moscow: Nauka, 1990).

techniques, distinguishing him as a singular influence in American literary circles. Remarkably, Turgenev's prominence endured well beyond his initial reception: his legacy extended to the next generation of writers and persisted into the early twentieth century, where he was rediscovered amid modernist experimentation. By tracing this line of influence, the dissertation demonstrates how Turgenev served as both a model and a touchstone for American writers — not only in the era of realism but also as American literature evolved toward modernism — revealing the dynamic and ongoing nature of cross-cultural literary exchange.

The dissertation is structured into an introduction, four chapters, and conclusion. The introduction presents the project's core aims, outlining the principal research questions and the hypotheses that guide the analysis. It also identifies the principal sources relevant to the subject, establishing context and situating this work within the broader landscape of prior scholarship.

The methodology is comprehensively outlined in the dissertation's first chapter. This study employs a reception theory framework within the broader discipline of comparative literature, with a particular focus on the dynamics of cultural exchange between nations. I will begin by drawing on the foundational German perspective articulated by Hans Robert Jauss, followed by an analysis of Wolfgang Iser's "reader-response" theory, which gained prominence in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s.¹² Additionally, I will incorporate Iurii Lotman's insights on cultural requests and the mechanisms of decoding within receiving cultures.¹³ Together, these approaches provide a robust and nuanced methodological foundation for my research.

¹²Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti, intro. by Paul de Man (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

¹³Juri Lotman, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Interaction: The Semiotic Aspect," in *Culture, Memory and History: Essays in Cultural Semiotics*, ed. Marek Tamm (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 67–83

In the second chapter, I examine the historical and cultural factors that fostered growing American interest in Russian literature, highlighting the major historical, economic, and cultural connections between the Russian Empire and the United States from the 1860s to the 1920s. My analysis draws primarily on such sources as the monograph *Russian-American Dialogue on Cultural Relations, 1776–1914*, edited by Norman E. Saul and Richard D. McKinzie (1997), as well as Norman Saul's *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867–1914* (1996).¹⁴ I also incorporate insights from recent studies on U.S.–Russia political relations by Ivan Kurilla.¹⁵

To explore the factors underlying Turgenev's popularity and critical reception, my research focuses on early American translators, particularly the lesser-known figures Eugene Schuyler, Leo Wiener, and Elizabeth Hapgood. I provide new insights into their lives and work, drawing on their biographies and conducting archival research—especially at Harvard University for information on Wiener. Special attention is given to their translations, with comparative analysis of two versions, each of *Fathers and Sons* and *A Sportsman's Sketches*. This approach allows me to trace how their individual backgrounds, career paths, and interpretive choices shaped the way English-speaking audiences came to understand Turgenev.

It is notable that both Schuyler and Hapgood worked with French editions alongside the Russian originals, often using the French texts in parallel rather than relying solely on direct translation from Russian. This practice reflects not only the limited knowledge of Russian among American translators at the time, but also broader norms in translation practices and the lack of

¹⁴ Norman E. Saul and Richard D. McKinzie, eds., *Russian-American Dialogue on Cultural Relations, 1776–1914* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), Norman E. Saul, *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867–1914* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996).

¹⁵ Ivan Kurilla, "Obraz Rossii v SShA v 1840–1850-e gg.," in *200 let rossiisko-amerikanskikh otnoshenii: Nauka i obrazovanie. Sbornik statei* (Moscow: Olma, 2007), 22–36; Whisenhunt, William Benton, and Norman E. Saul, eds. *New Perspectives on Russian-American Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2016), etc.

institutional resources for Russian studies in the United States during this period. Furthermore, it reveals how French — considered a more familiar and “Western” language — often served as a cultural intermediary for American readers, shaping both the accessibility and interpretation of Russian literary works for the American public.

The process of Turgenev’s reception in the United States was formed not only by the availability of translations but also by the influential network of American literary critics, writers, and editors who mediated his introduction to American audiences. My third chapter examines the reception of Turgenev in the United States from the 1860s to the 1900s — a period when translations of his works into French, German, and English paralleled the emergence of realist literature in America, which itself often developed in response to the prevailing influence of British literature in the American market.

In this chapter, I analyze the critical responses of three central figures — T.S. Perry, W.D. Howells, and Henry James — to Turgenev’s prose. By considering Perry’s critical approach, Howells’s dual role as editor and writer, and ultimately Henry James’s perspective, I trace the process by which Turgenev’s reputation was established among leading European authors in the United States. A central question addressed here: Why did Henry James come to regard Turgenev as the “novelist for novelists,” and what factors contributed to this distinction?

It is important to note that these individuals were not only leading tastemakers in the American literary scene, but were also closely connected to one another. Their ongoing correspondence and intellectual exchange played a significant role in defining their evolving perspectives on literature. I argue that T. S. Perry was instrumental in introducing Turgenev to both Howells and James. Perry himself became interested in Turgenev largely through the influence of German critics, whose writings on Turgenev he encountered during his own studies and travels in

Europe. This European perspective, in turn, filtered into American literary culture through Perry's recommendations and reviews.

All three — Perry, Howells, and James — were deeply invested in developing a new aesthetic for American literature that looked to European models for inspiration. Their mutual interest in Turgenev stemmed from a desire to refine American taste and to align it with modern European literary trends. Through their reviews, essays, and editorial choices, they not only promoted Turgenev's works but also set the tone for broader discussions about realism, style, and narrative innovation in the United States.

Perry's reviews of Turgenev's works have remained relatively understudied, whereas there is a modest body of scholarship addressing Howells's perspectives. By contrast, the connections between Turgenev and James have been explored in greater depth. In this study, all relevant reviews from American journals such as *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Nation* were analyzed in chronological order. Additionally, it is worth noting that the article published anonymously under the title "Serfdom and the Emancipation Laws in Russia" can be attributed to Perry.¹⁶

Chapter four of my study situates Turgenev within the broader context of modernist literature, examining new dimensions of his reception in the early twentieth century — a period marked by a shift in literary focus from the novel to short stories and prose cycles. During this era, critical attention expanded beyond the novel, and Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* was rediscovered within the context of modernism. Rather than being overshadowed by new literary authorities such as Tolstoy and Chekhov, Turgenev emerged as an influential model for emerging

¹⁶ Anonymous. "Serfdom and the Emancipation Laws in Russia." *North American Review* 105, no. 216 (July 1867): 41–88. A comparison with Virginia Harlow's list of Perry's works confirms that this article is authored by him. See Virginia Harlow's *Thomas Sergeant Perry: A Biography and Letters to Perry from William, Henry, and Garth Wilkinson James* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1950), 359.

writers, demonstrating that mastery of the short story and the story cycle could serve as essential preparation for the novel form.

This influence is particularly evident in the work of Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway, whose books of short stories *Winesburg, Ohio* and *In Our Time* reflect the enduring legacy of Turgenev's approach to short fiction. By investigating the interconnections between Turgenev's narrative strategies and those of these modernist authors, my study demonstrates how nineteenth-century Russian realism continued to resonate across the evolving literary landscapes of the early twentieth century. Together, these approaches illuminate previously less studied lines of reception, translation, and literary influence, offering a fresh perspective on Turgenev's enduring significance.

The importance of this topic lies in its ability to illuminate the complex processes of intercultural interaction, specifically the influence of the Russian writer on two generations of American authors. Central to this study is the concept of a cultural "request" — the active desire and readiness among American readers and critics for new literary models, particularly from Russian and European sources. By analyzing the cultural context and the reception of Turgenev's work, this research shed light on the rich history of Russian-American literary interconnections and demonstrate how Turgenev's influence was not simply imposed, but responded to a distinct American demand for fresh perspectives and artistic innovation. In tracing this cultural "request," the study shows how Turgenev helped shape the evolving landscape of American literature.

This dissertation examines how Turgenev's reputation evolved —from being known as virtually the only Russian author recognized in America, to being celebrated for his particular mastery of style and dense prose. The research approaches Turgenev's American reception through several interconnected scopes: first, by situating it in its historical and cultural context; second, by

studying the role of translations and translators in mediating his works; third, by analyzing the critical responses from reviewers; and finally, by examining the reception and inheritance of Turgenev among American writers themselves. Each of these perspectives scaffolds the next, structuring the overall process as a layered development in which historical context, translation, criticism, and creative inheritance build upon one another. This multifaceted exploration is vital for both Slavonic and Comparative studies, as it offers deeper insights into the dynamics of literary exchange and cultural appreciation.

Chapter 1. Reception Theories and Methodology in a Cross-Cultural Literary Context.

This chapter establishes the theoretical and methodological framework for analyzing the reception of Ivan Turgenev's works in the United States. The study is situated at the intersection of reception theory, reader-response criticism, and theories of cross-cultural communication, approaching reception not merely as an interpretive act but as a historically conditioned process shaped by cultural codes, political and economic contexts, and the expectations of concrete readers.

Methodologically, this research draws on three complementary theoretical traditions that emerged in Europe in the late 1960s and 1970s: Iurii Lotman's theory of cultural semiotics,¹⁷ Hans Robert Jauss's aesthetics of reception,¹⁸ and Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory.¹⁹ Although these approaches developed within distinct academic contexts, they share a common effort to rethink the relationship between author, text, and reader and to foreground reception as a dynamic and historically variable phenomenon. Together, they provide the conceptual tools necessary for examining how literary works circulate across cultural boundaries and are reinterpreted within new literary systems.

¹⁷ Iurii Lotman, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Interaction: The Semiotic Aspect," in *Culture, Memory and History: Essays in Cultural Semiotics*, ed. Marek Tamm (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 67–83, see also V. M. Zhirmunskii, "Problemy sravnitel'no-istoricheskogo izucheniia literatur," in *Sravnitel'noe literaturovedenie. Vostok i Zapad* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1979), 383–403, A. N. Veselovskiy, *Istoricheskaya poetika* (Moskva: LKI, 2008).

¹⁸ Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti, intro. by Paul de Man (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

¹⁹ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

While Stanley Fish's concept of interpretive communities has been highly influential in U.S. reader-response criticism,²⁰ this study draws primarily on Lotman, Jauss, and Iser because their theories allow reception to be analyzed as a historically grounded and culturally situated process rather than as an unrestricted interpretive practice. This methodological choice is particularly important for a cross-cultural study, where the historical conditions of reception and the transfer of literary forms across national traditions are central.

Accordingly, this study approaches its subject through the lens of reception history rather than traditional literary history, focusing not on the evolution of the texts themselves, but on the circumstances in which they were read, interpreted, and evaluated within their specific cultural and historical context.

A. Iurii Lotman: The Dynamics of Cross-Cultural Reception.

Within theories that conceptualize reception as a form of cross-cultural communication, Iurii Lotman's work is particularly significant for understanding how literary texts function within broader cultural systems. Associated with the Tartu School of Semiotics, Lotman devoted much of his scholarship to nineteenth-century Russian literature, particularly the Pushkin era, while also producing foundational work in cultural semiotics. Lotman's theoretical contributions focus on the relationship between sign and meaning and on the mechanisms through which cultural texts circulate within and across cultural boundaries. His major works — *Culture and Explosion* (2009) and *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (1990) — introduced concepts such as the

²⁰ See for example Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 2001)

semiosphere, cultural codes, and textual dynamics to an English-speaking audience, significantly expanding the international reception of his ideas.²¹

Lotman argues that world literature operates as a dynamic evolutionary process in which foreign literary elements are absorbed by receiving cultures in response to internal cultural demands,²² therefore the initial *openness* from the receiving side is implied. External influences, in this model, do not impose change from outside but rather accelerate tendencies already present within the receiving literary system. Reception thus functions not as a moment of passive borrowing but as an active process shaped by the needs and expectations of the receiving culture. As a result, foreign and domestic texts coexist within a continuous cultural stream rather than forming clearly separated categories. From this perspective, reception becomes an integral part of literary evolution. Lotman analyzed Viktor Zhirmunsky's theories, quoting and building upon his idea "that every outside influence only accelerates a culture's imminent literary development,"²³ and referred to this dynamic as "evolutionary unity."²⁴

Within this model of cultural integration, the success of reception depends on the degree of overlap between the cultural codes of the receiving and source cultures. Regarding the reception process, specific reactions from the receiving side are substantiated by the overlap in the "code"

²¹ Juri Lotman, *Culture and Explosion*, ed. Marina Grishakova, trans. Wilma Clark (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2009), Juri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

²² Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, 126–130.

²³ Lotman, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Interaction," 68.

²⁴ Another significant theoretical overlap is Aleksandr Veselovsky's concept of "vstrechnye techeniia" ("countercurrents"), which was later reinterpreted by Zhirmunsky. Veselovsky argued that literary borrowing does not occur in a vacuum, but rather presupposes in the receiving culture a "countercurrent"—a similar direction of thought and analogous imaginative forms. As he wrote: "Borrowing, says Veselovsky, presupposes not an empty space in the recipient, but a countercurrent, a similar direction of thinking, analogous images of imagination. Thus, the theory of 'borrowing' calls forth the theory of 'foundations,' and vice versa..." V. M. Zhirmunskii, "A. N. Veselovskii i sravnitel'noe literaturovedenie," in *Sravnitel'noe literaturovedenie: Vostok i Zapad: Izbrannye trudy* (Leningrad: Nauka, Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1979), 102.

between domestic culture and foreign literature. The success of “decoding” in that case will depend on the “shared zones” in the cultural code between the two communicative sides: the wider these shared zones are, the easier it will be to decode.²⁵ Here, Iurii Lotman proposed “the decoding of foreign cultural behavior using a system of domestic codes.”²⁶

This understanding of reception as a process of decoding grounded in the receiving culture finds a close parallel in later communication theories that also emphasize the active role of the audience in meaning-making. Stuart Hall invented the two-phase model, in which the creator's encoding of a message and the audience's decoding provide an adequate response.²⁷ Both theories argue that “decoding” is a flexible process shaped by the receiver's cultural background.²⁸ For example, early American responses to Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* show that his depiction of serfdom was often interpreted through the familiar lens of slavery in the United States.²⁹ This demonstrates how shared social reference points can enable meaningful cross-cultural reception.

B. Hans Robert Jauss: Historical Reception and the Horizon of Expectations.

Where Lotman approaches reception primarily at the level of cultural systems and literary evolution, Hans Robert Jauss shifts the focus to the historical conditions under which literary works are perceived and evaluated by readers. Working at the University of Konstanz, Jauss formulated the foundations of reception aesthetics in his lecture *Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory* (1967), in which he proposed *Rezeptionsgeschichte* as an alternative to linear

²⁵ Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, 36–38.

²⁶ Iurii Lotman, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Interaction”, 78.

²⁷ Stuart Hall, “Encoding—Decoding (1980),” in *Crime and Media: A Reader*, ed. Chris Greer (London & New York: Routledge, 2019), 44–55.

²⁸ Hall, “Encoding—Decoding,” 47.

²⁹ See E. Robinson, “Slavery in Russia,” *North American Review* 82, no. 181 (1856): 293–318, Anonymous, “Serfdom and the Emancipation Laws in Russia,” *North American Review* 105, no. 216 (1867): 41–88.

literary history.³⁰ Instead of treating literature as a sequence of texts progressing through time, this approach emphasizes the historically variable reception of literary works and the role of readers' expectations in shaping meaning.³¹

Jauss conceptualized literature as both a product of social conditions and an aesthetic phenomenon, arguing that literary meaning emerges through the interaction between text and historically situated readers. Analyzing Marxist and formalist concepts he identified that from one perspective literature was “evidence to the social process” and on the other side “monument of the literary evolution.”³² In his new method, Jauss sought a balance between viewing literature solely as a product of socioeconomic forces (as in Marxist criticism) and treating it purely as an aesthetic form (as in formalist approaches). He argued that aesthetic response occurs within a specific historical context. Moving beyond both Marxist and formalist methodologies, Jauss developed a new model of reception that integrates both the aesthetic function of literature and its social preconditions. Opposite to the traditional study of literary history, he introduced a non-linear model, where the interpretation of the text may vary in different historical epochs.³³ Jauss also emphasized the role of the reader and the potential of change in the horizon of the readers' expectations in his theory. His notion of the “horizon of expectations” (*Erwartungshorizont*) explains how readers' prior literary experience, genre conventions, and cultural norms shape reception and how these expectations may be challenged or transformed over time.³⁴

³⁰ Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2010), 54

³¹ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 21

³² Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 10

³³ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 21

³⁴ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 19

By emphasizing historical readership and the variability of interpretation across periods, Jauss provided a framework for analyzing reception as a dynamic process embedded in cultural and temporal contexts rather than as a fixed response to textual form.

C. Wolfgang Iser: Reader-Response Theory.

While Jauss emphasizes the historically variable horizon of expectations shared by a reading public, Wolfgang Iser narrows the focus to the individual act of reading and the process through which textual meaning is realized. Initially influenced by phenomenology and Jauss, Iser explored the dynamic interaction between text and reader, distinguishing between the artistic dimension of the work (the text itself) and its aesthetic realization by the reader: “the text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization by no means [is] independent of the individual disposition of the reader.”³⁵

Iser’s reader-response criticism includes the concept of the “ideal reader”—an imaginary figure implied by the text who can fully appreciate its meaning.³⁶ However, rather than concentrating on this theoretical construct, my study prioritizes the “real reader”³⁷: the actual historical individuals who engaged with Turgenev’s work at the time of its American reception. In this context, I define “real readers” as the translators and reviewers who actively interpreted and mediated Turgenev’s writings for the U.S. audience during the selected period. This approach allows for a concrete analysis of how Turgenev’s texts were received, understood, and re-shaped within their historical moment.

³⁵ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 20.

³⁶ Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 27.

³⁷ Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 27.

On this theoretical basis, the present study distinguishes between two modes of reception: individual and general (cross-cultural). Individual reception refers to the spontaneous interaction between the reader and the text, through which meaning is actualized during the reading process. In this context, reader-response theory provides the primary analytical framework, emphasizing the variability of interpretation and the role of individual disposition. Beyond the level of individual reading, reception also operates as a broader cultural process involving the transfer and integration of foreign literary texts. General reception examines how such texts are incorporated into a target national literature, a process shaped by political, economic, and cultural connections between societies.

In the case of Turgenev's reception in the United States, general reception was facilitated by relatively close political and economic ties between Russia and the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These connections fostered an openness to cultural exchange and contributed to the formation of a literary demand shaped by American readers' horizon of expectations, particularly in relation to the development of the novel as a dominant genre.

Within this framework, translators and reviewers—for example, William Dean Howells, Henry James, and Leo Wiener—functioned as key mediators of reception. Earlier responses, such as American reviews of *Sportsman's Sketches* and Eugene Schuyler's translation of *Fathers and Sons* (1867), reveal both the exotic perception of Russian culture and the recognition of shared social conditions, including parallels between serfdom and slavery and comparable processes of modernization.

In summary, this study approaches the reception of Turgenev's works in the United States as a form of cross-cultural dialogue shaped by historical, cultural, and literary conditions. Drawing on Lotman's theory of cultural interconnections, reception is understood as part of a continuous

process of literary evolution in which foreign texts are incorporated into the receiving culture. Jauss's concept of the horizon of expectations provides a framework for analyzing how American readers evaluated Russian literature in relation to their own literary norms and the cultural request for a new genre of realistic novel, while Iser's emphasis on the real reader allows for a focus on translators and reviewers as historically situated agents of reception.

On this basis, the study adopts a reception-historical methodology that integrates cultural systems, historical readership, and individual reading practices. The following chapter applies this framework to an examination of the political, economic, and cultural contexts that shaped the reception of Russian literature in the United States, thereby establishing the conditions under which Turgenev's works were read, interpreted, and incorporated into American literary discourse.

Chapter 2. Turgenev's American Journey: Russian-American Relations and the Role of Translators, 1860s–1920s.

A. Building Bridges: Political, Economic, and Literary Contexts of Turgenev's Early American Reception.

To provide broader context for Russian-American interconnections, I examine key political and cultural relations between the two countries from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Drawing on Juri Lotman's theory of “shared codes” in cross-cultural communication, I highlight how close political ties during this era created the conditions for literary exchange and shaped American perceptions of Russia.

The groundwork for Russian-American partnership was established between 1830 and 1850, particularly during the reign of Emperor Nicholas I. Seeking collaboration with the United States in trade and engineering, the Russian Empire invited American engineers to assist in building railroads — most notably the line between Saint Petersburg and Moscow — and purchased naval ships from the U.S. As Ivan Kurilla notes, the 1830s marked a period when Russia's drive for technical modernization made it essential to import advanced technologies from abroad. However, Russia's “main source for these advancements, Great Britain, was becoming a rival on the world stage and was increasingly reluctant to share its ‘high-tech’ secrets.”³⁸ As a result, Russian engineers and naval officers began to view America as an alternative source for the technical innovations that were crucial for maintaining competitiveness with Britain.³⁹

This rapprochement was mutual. As Kurilla notes, contemporary American history

³⁸ Ivan Kurilla, “Rossiisko-amerikanskii otnosheniia v epokhu Avraama Linkol'na i Aleksandra II,” in *The Tsar and the President: Aleksandr II and Abraham Lincoln. Liberator and Emancipator* (Moscow: Indrik, 2011), 31.

³⁹ Kurilla, “Rossiisko-amerikanskii otnosheniia v epokhu Avraama Linkol'na,” 31-48

textbooks from the 1840s and 1850s reveal a marked shift in the portrayal of Emperor Nicholas I — from negative to positive rhetoric.⁴⁰ Analysis of books and articles by American diplomats from this period further underscores an increasingly favorable image of Russian cultural traditions, the emperor's personality, and Russian politics overall.⁴¹

However, the perception of Russia in public discourse during the 1840s and 1850s was complex and varied. It was not solely an optimistic view that dominated discussions in articles, books, and lectures about this exotic country. Instead, American views of the Russian Empire spanned two extremes — a duality that would go on to shape future relations between the two nations. On one hand, some admired Russia as a modern, rapidly developing nation and even expressed respect for its emperor, as it was mentioned above. On the other, public rhetoric often condemned Russia for its despotic government. For example, in Henry Davis's book *The War of Ormuzd and Ahriman in the Nineteenth Century* (1852), Russia is depicted as a repressive autocracy that suppresses freedom, standing in stark contrast to the United States as a champion of liberty and democracy.⁴²

The period from the 1850s to the 1880s — including Lincoln's presidency (1861–1865) and Alexander II's reign — marked a turning point in Russian-American relations, characterized by unprecedented political and cultural exchange. Notably, the 1863 visits of Russian naval squadrons to New York, signaling Alexander II's support for Lincoln during the Civil War, and the 1867 purchase of Alaska, both captured public attention and intensified American interest in Russian culture. This close partnership was rooted in the strong diplomatic ties forged during

⁴⁰Ivan Kurilla, "Obraz Rossii v SShA v 1840–1850-e gg.," in *200 let rossiisko-amerikanskikh otnoshenii: Nauka i obrazovanie. Sbornik statei* (Moscow: Olma, 2007), 23.

⁴¹Kurilla, "Obraz Rossii v SShA," 24–25.

⁴²Kurilla, "Obraz Rossii v SShA," 31.

Lincoln's presidency. Amid this heightened interest, Ivan Turgenev — already esteemed in Russia and Europe — gained significant recognition among American readers. My research focuses on the 1863 arrival of Russian naval squadrons, an event directly linked to the early history of Turgenev's reception in the United States.

During the Civil War (1861–1865) and Reconstruction, Russian-American partnership thrived, marked by frequent diplomatic exchanges led by Russian ambassador Eduard de Stoeckl and American ambassador Cassius Marcellus Clay. The two diplomats had notably distinct personalities: Clay was a Southern abolitionist and Kentucky landowner, while Stoeckl's background was more cosmopolitan — so much so that it remains uncertain whether he even spoke Russian.⁴³

Beneath these close diplomatic ties lay deeper socio-political connections. Both the United States and the Russian Empire shared opposition to Great Britain, a stance solidified during the Crimean War (1853–1856) when the U.S. supported Russia, aligning their diplomatic interests against a common rival.

Another key factor in establishing a common socio-political foundation was the rapid industrial growth that characterized both countries in the second half of the nineteenth century. Russian interest in American engineering, which began during Nicholas I's reign, led to notable achievements such as the construction of the St. Petersburg–Moscow railroad (1843–1851). In 1863, work began on an ambitious transcontinental telegraph to connect Russia and America via Siberia and Alaska, but the project was abandoned in 1867 after the successful completion of the

⁴³ For more details about these diplomats and their backgrounds, see Norman E. Saul, "Saving the Union: The Roles of Russian and American Diplomats During the American Civil War," in *Americana: Russia and the American Civil War*, vol. 13 (Volgograd, 2012), 27–47.

transatlantic cable, which fulfilled the era's communication needs.⁴⁴

If I were to briefly highlight two additional themes reflected in U.S. public discourse of the 1850s–1860s, they would be the American perception of religious freedom and the recognition of religious diversity within Russia. American journals of the time often discussed the existence of various faiths in Russia — not only Orthodoxy, but also Catholic and Protestant communities — helping to shape a more nuanced understanding of Russian society.⁴⁵

Finally, public discourse in both countries drew comparisons between their respective local conflicts. Observers noted significant parallels between Russia's war in the Caucasus and the United States' confrontations with Native American populations. Additionally, the media frequently highlighted similarities between the Russian conflict with Turkey and the Mexican-American War.⁴⁶

Besides mutual interest toward each other, the United States and Russia shared a comparable position on the global stage. Both were often regarded as provincial and “culturally” young in contrast to established European powers. As Royal Gettmann notes, there was a sense of shared “youthfulness of the culture and civilization of the Slavs and the Americans; both were countries of the future.”⁴⁷ This perception fostered a sense of possibility and ambition in both nations, encouraging them to look to each other as models and partners in cultural and societal development.

In both the United States and the Russian Empire, the wealth of the upper classes depended on systems of unfree labor — serfdom in Russia and slavery in the American South. Among

⁴⁴ Kurilla, “Rossiisko-amerikanskii otnosheniia v epokhu Avraama Linkol'na,” 45.

⁴⁵ Ivan Kurilla, “Obraz Rossii v SShA,” 34–35

⁴⁶ Ivan Kurilla, “Obraz Rossii v SShA,” 35

⁴⁷ Royal A. Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1941),

educated circles in those countries, debate over how to address these institutions was widespread, with a general consensus on the need for reform. American interest in Russia was heightened by the parallel timing of major transformations: Russia's abolition of serfdom through government reform and the United States' abolition of slavery through the upheaval of civil war.

In search of "common ground," unfree labor emerged as one of the earliest parallels between the Russian Empire and the United States, with both serfs and slaves subjected to widespread corporal punishment. However, the fundamental nature of serfdom and slavery differed significantly — a distinction thoroughly explored in Peter Kolchin's *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*.⁴⁸ In the Russian Empire, serfdom developed gradually, binding peasants to noble landlords and becoming officially codified under Empress Catherine the Great in the 18th century. This system extended throughout the empire and encompassed various categories of serfs, including landless individuals wholly dependent on their landlords, as well as peasants attached to the land. These groups faced different obligations, ranging from specific labor requirements to various forms of payment.

In contrast, slavery in the United States was rooted in human trafficking and the forced trade of enslaved people, primarily for agricultural labor in the southern states. Enslaved individuals were denied any opportunity to own land or secure personal autonomy. Despite these distinctions, Kolchin also emphasizes notable parallels between the two systems: "American slavery and Russian serfdom exhibited fundamental similarities and significant differences... Russian serfdom by the second half of the eighteenth century became essentially a variant of slavery, much closer to American chattel slavery than to the serfdom of, say, medieval France."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ See Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990)

⁴⁹ Kolchin, *Unfree Labor*, x.

However, in this context, overseas, the politics of serfdom in the Russian Empire were seen through the shift towards emancipation in the mid-1850s. E. (T.) Robinson, in the article “Slavery in Russia,” articulates the emperor's position at the time as rather liberal. “The two Emperors, Alexander and Nicholas, were both decidedly in favor of emancipation, and during the early periods of their reigns, the chains of slavery were made lighter by several laws.”⁵⁰

Reflecting prevailing American perspectives on serfdom, Robinson provides a comprehensive and insightful historical overview of how Russian peasants became enslaved. In assessing Russian serfdom, she is particularly struck by its unique racial dynamics: unlike other systems of unfree labor, Russian serfs shared the same ethnicity as their landlords yet remained bound to the land, while various other nationalities within the empire were often granted the status of “free people:” “But the most surprising feature of the case is, that while the peasantry of the genuine Russian stock, in whose veins the same blood runs that flows in those of the domineering race, was and is thus enslaved, not only the Cossacks, but all the different barbarian races who inhabit the vast Russian Empire, Tartars, Tsheremisses, and Tshonvaches, are free, and slavery in any shape is unknown to them.”⁵¹

The article identifies several books on Russia published between 1850 and 1855, including Ivan Turgenev’s *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, which was translated into German as *Aus dem Tagebuche eines Jägers (From the Diary of a Hunter)*. This marks the first appearance of Ivan Turgenev’s name in American journals. In addition to Ivan “Tourgueneff,” Robinson also references “his uncle,”⁵² Nicholas Tourgueneff, who was already familiar to American readers thanks to his

⁵⁰ Robinson, “Slavery in Russia,” 310.

⁵¹ Robinson, “Slavery in Russia,” 309.

⁵² Despite sharing the same last name, Ivan Turgenev and Nikolai Turgenev (1789–1871) were not related; Nikolai belonged to a different branch of the Turgenev family that resided in Siberia (see E. K. Bessalova and E. K. Rykova, *Simbirskii rod Turgenevykh* (Ul'ianovsk: UIGTU, 2011), Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridsati tomakh. Sochineniia v dvenadtsati tomakh*,

French-language book *Les Russes à la Russie*, previously published in the United States.⁵³

The reviewer expresses clear admiration for Turgenev's work, describing *A Hunter's Diary* as offering "a series of pictures of Russian country life of an incomparably graphic genuineness."⁵⁴ In the section devoted to Turgenev, Robinson uses his writing to set the stage for the article's concluding reflections about serfdom in the Russian Empire. She includes substantial excerpts from the story "Lgov," which, through a dialogue between the hunter and the peasant, reveals the realities of peasant life and the complexities of their relationship with the landlord.

Finally, in comparing the two forms of oppression, Robinson is more positive towards the policies in the Russian Empire, concluding that the serfs are still more protected by law than slaves in the U.S.: "For while the Negro is almost abandoned by the law of the land, and the scanty privileges he enjoys here and there are merely the results of the goodness and Christian principles of his master, the Russian law protects the serf in various ways, and his wrongs, so far as they are not owing to his serfdom itself, are principally occasioned by abuses."⁵⁵

Robinson's perspective highlights the legal and cultural complexities underpinning American views of Russia at the time. With the first mentions of Turgenev's stories in the American press, the early reception of Russian literature in the United States during the 1850-s-1860-s began — initially defined almost exclusively by the relationship between Turgenev on one side and American critics on another. As Ksenia Miloslavskaja notes, this first phase of Russian-American

vol. 11, *Literaturnye i zhiteiskie vospominaniia; Biograficheskie ocherki i nekrologi; Avtobiograficheskie materialy; Nezavershennye zamysly i nabroski, 1852–1883* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 417. It is possible that Robinson was confused by the similarity of names, as Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev did have an uncle named Nikolai Nikolaevich Turgenev.

⁵³ Robinson, "Slavery in Russia," 294.

⁵⁴ Robinson, "Slavery in Russia," 314.

⁵⁵ Robinson, "Slavery in Russia," 318

literary relations centered on Turgenev's unique connection with the United States.⁵⁶

In examining the reception of Turgenev's work through the lens of publishing history, it appears that his first publication in the United States was mentioned in Robinson's article excerpts from *A Sportsman's Sketches*. These initially appeared in German translation in the Sunday supplement of the German-language newspaper *New Yorker Herold: Morgenblatt*, specifically in the *New Yorker Revue*. This publication is further substantiated by a letter from Alexander Herzen to M.K. Reichel, dated September 29–30, 1853, in which Herzen notes that Turgenev's hunting stories had been translated and published in America: "В Америке в «Revue» немецком переведены Тургенева рассказы охот(ника). Меня тоже там с симпатией читают. Русь занимает всех — кроме наших москвичей."⁵⁷ Both this letter and E.(T.) Robinson's article suggest that the German translation of *A Sportsman's Sketches* was circulating among American readers by 1854.

At this time, the American reception of Turgenev's work was shaped by its European transmission, as his stories reached readers not only through German but also mediated by French translations. In 1854, excerpts from "Khor and Kalinych," "Bailiff," "Two Landowners," "Singers," and "Bezhin Meadow" appeared in U.S. journals under the title "Photographs from Russian Life," accompanied by an introduction. These selections were translated from the French version prepared by Ernest Charrière,⁵⁸ reprinted from Britain's *Fraser's Magazine*, and published

⁵⁶K. S. Miloslavskaya, "Turgenev v otsenke svoikh amerikanskikh sovremennikov," in *Literatura SShA* (Moscow, 1973), 7.

⁵⁷ "In America, Turgenev's hunter stories have been translated in the German 'Revue.' They read my stories there as well, and with sympathy. Russia interests everyone—except our Muscovites." Aleksandr I. Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh*, vol. 25: *Pis'ma 1853–1856 gg.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1961), 119, https://imwerden.de/pdf/herzen_sobranie_sochineny_tom25_1961_ocr.pdf

⁵⁸ The French version's title was *Mémoires d'un seigneur russe; ou Tableau d⁵⁸e la situation actuelle des nobles et des paysans dans les provinces russes*.

in both *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science and Art* and *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature and Art*. This trajectory illustrates how Turgenev's texts initially traveled from Russian to French, then to English in Britain, and finally reached American audiences.

Meanwhile, the initial French translation took considerable liberties with the original and was shaped by a strong political agenda, seeking to cast the Russian Empire in a negative light during the Crimean War. By emphasizing the hardships faced by peasants, the translation reinforced this unfavorable portrayal.

Notably, the comparison to Harriet Beecher Stowe's book was introduced to American readers through the preface to the translated passages, published in *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* (1854). In the introduction, the translator compared Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* — both published in 1852 — noting that *A Sportsman's Sketches* could be seen as “a Russian *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but without its blood and gunpowder.”⁵⁹ This observation underscores the thematic similarities between the two works while emphasizing their contrasting tones and approaches to depicting violence.

The appearance of Turgenev's stories in the United States highlights the significant influence of European literature and culture on American audiences in the 1850s. This example reveals two key dynamics: first, the rapid reception and adoption of the German translation by August Vidert, *Aus dem Tagebuche eines Jägers* (1854–1855), in the U.S.; and second, the complex cultural fusion involved, as the stories often reached American readers through multiple layers of translation—from Russian to French, reprinted in a British magazine, and then German.

⁵⁹ *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* 33 (October 1854): 232.

Two early articles in the *North American Review* used *A Sportsman's Sketches* to draw comparisons between Russian serfdom and American slavery. The first, "Slavery in Russia" by E. (T.) Robinson, appeared in 1856 and has already been discussed above. The second, published anonymously in 1867 under the title "Serfdom and the Emancipation Laws in Russia," continued this comparative analysis eleven years later.⁶⁰ The 1875 article "Recent Literature" can be attributed to T. S. Perry; a comparison with Virginia Harlow's bibliography confirms Perry's authorship.⁶¹

The author observes that, at the time, the full text of *A Sportsman's Sketches* had yet to appear in English translation. Instead, he highlights the 1875 publication of *Skizzen aus dem Tagebuche eines Jägers*, a German translation of Turgenev's work. This indicates that, even without an English version, Turgenev's stories were already finding their place within the American literary context. "We have often spoken in these columns of the excellent German translation of Tourgueneff's novels now appearing, and praised its accuracy and elegance; and now that we have a German version of a book that has never been put into English, it is doubly necessary to speak of it again."⁶²

The comparison to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* highlights the significant impact both books had in shifting societal views on serfdom and slavery: "They treat almost entirely of scenes in the life of serfs, and although the author writes apparently without animus, there can be no wonder that this book did in its time for Russia what *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did in the way of helping to form an opinion hostile to slavery."⁶³

⁶⁰ Anonymous, "Recent Literature," *Atlantic Monthly* 35, no. 212 (1875), 748.

⁶¹ Virginia Harlow. *Thomas Sergeant Perry: A Biography and Letters to Perry from William, Henry, and Garth Wilkinson James* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1950), 359.

⁶² "Recent Literature," 748.

⁶³ "Recent Literature," 748.

T.S. Perry remarks on the poetic qualities in Turgenev's style but notes that the prevailing emotion of sadness in the stories remains somewhat ambiguous and requires further interpretation. He contends that the main purpose of these stories is to record the reality of the world the narrator encounters, with the hunter serving as "a chronicler of what he knows from his own experience."⁶⁴ Ultimately, the observer judges Turgenev's saddest nostalgic notes in a book as a feature of melancholy, even referring to it as something unhealthy to the readers: "Then too, despair, however well suited for certain tastes at certain times, has been frequently convicted of unhealthiness, and is not what readers want."⁶⁵

Perry pointed out on the inclusion of three additional stories — "The End of Chertopkhanov," "The Living Relic," and "The Clatter of Wheels" — which Turgenev had added during the 1870s. As a result, their appearance in U.S. editions via German translations closely reflected the author's ongoing revisions to his work.⁶⁶ Each new story received attention in the review. Among them, "The Living Relic" evidently left the most significant impression on the reviewer, probably with the shadow of being too naturalistic at the moment. The observer remarked, "It is indeed a wonderful picture Turgenev has drawn here, and although the reader lays the book down with a lump in his throat, he cannot help admiring the writer's skill."⁶⁷ The other two stories were rated in descending order of quality: "The Clatter of Wheels" and then "The End of Chertopkhanov." "The Clatter of Wheels" was compared to the "most carefully manufactured novels" of the English detective novelist Mr. Wilkie Collins.⁶⁸

As translations of various Turgenev novels began to be published in the U.S. during the

⁶⁴ "Recent Literature," 748.

⁶⁵ "Recent Literature," 749.

⁶⁶ Turgenev added these three stories to the collection long after its initial publication: *The End of Chertopkhanov* in 1872 and *The Living Relic* and *The Clatter of Wheels* in 1874.

⁶⁷ "Recent Literature," 749.

⁶⁸ "Recent Literature," 749.

1870s, general comparisons were frequently made between his style and other novels, although specific titles were not mentioned.

B. The Civil War and the Introduction of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* through Eugene Schuyler's Translation.

A significant milestone in the American reception of Turgenev's prose was the publication of the first English translation of *Fathers and Sons*, which appeared in the United States before its British counterpart. This early introduction was shaped in large part by the political and diplomatic climate following the Civil War, which fostered interest in Russian literature and paved the way for Turgenev's *Ottsy i deti* to reach American readers. At that time, Great Britain and France supported the Confederacy, aiming to curb American global ambitions. In contrast, the Russian Empire emerged as a key supporter of the Union, influenced by lingering tensions with Britain and France following the Crimean War.

In July 1863, amid the Polish uprising and rising diplomatic tensions in Europe, France prepared a formal note urging Russia to support the Polish cause, raising fears that the conflict might expand into a broader European war. Against this backdrop, the Russian Empire demonstrated its support for the Union by dispatching two naval squadrons to the United States. Admiral S. S. Lesovsky's squadron sailed from Kronstadt to New York, arriving unexpectedly and surprising both Europeans and Americans. Simultaneously, Admiral A. A. Popov's squadron set course for San Francisco across the Pacific. Although the squadrons did not engage in combat, their presence had a significant political impact. The admirals were also instructed to be prepared to defend their ships against possible Confederate attacks. Norman Saul highlights the significance of this gesture from the Russian Empire in U.S. history: "With Stoeckl and Gorchakov fully

committed to support for the North and two naval squadrons sent to demonstrate in August 1863, Russia was crucial in bolstering the morale of the North and in preventing any European intervention into the conflict.”⁶⁹ Prince Alexander Gorchakov was the Russian Empire’s foreign minister, playing a key role in shaping Russia’s diplomatic stance during the American Civil War.

According to Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, the arrival of the Russian navy in the United States proved to be very timely, as the federal government feared intervention by England and France in the American Civil War. Secret instructions to the squadron commanders stated that in the event of a war between Russia, England, and France, their ships should cut off the sea communications of these powers and launch privateering operations against their fleets.⁷⁰

The squadrons attracted significant attention from American society during that period. The Russian ambassador, Eduard Stoeckl, reported to St. Petersburg not only about the warm reception the Russian navy received in the United States but also about the strong impression this display of Russian-American friendship made on England and France.⁷¹

Russian officers actively participated in various receptions in New York from August-September to November 1863, including balls, celebrations, and other social events. The presence of Russian naval officers at high-profile social events in New York, followed by visits to the White House and Secretary Seward’s home.⁷² During that period, the diplomatic partnerships were characterized by a high level of closeness and productivity. According to Saul, “By that time, early 1864, the Russian and American diplomats had sealed the “alliance” for saving the Union, and were appropriately thanked by an official American fleet visit to St. Petersburg in 1866, and the

⁶⁹Norman E. Saul, “Saving the Union: The Roles of Russian and American Diplomats During the American Civil War,” in *Americana: Russia and the American Civil War*, vol. 13 (Volgograd, 2012), 40.

⁷⁰ N. N. Bolkhovitinov, *Istoriya SShA*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 453

⁷¹ Bolkhovitinov, *Istoriya SShA*, 1:453.

⁷² Saul, “Saving the Union,” 40.

purchase of Alaska. Russian-American relations were never before – nor since – so harmonious.”⁷³

The arrival of the Russian naval squadron in the U.S. paved the way for the appearance of Ivan Turgenev’s novel in the country. At a New York reception, an officer from the squadron *Aleksandr Nevsky* brought with him the recently published novel *Ottsy i deti* (*Fathers and Sons*). While contemporary newspaper coverage confirms that the principal reception took place at New York City Hall, it is possible that there were other, smaller gatherings as well. Unfortunately, details about the specific officer or the exact location of the meeting remain unknown. What is known, however, is that at one of these receptions, the officer met Eugene Schuyler (1840–1890), then a young Ph.D. candidate studying law at Columbia University. Schuyler quickly became fascinated by the novel and was inspired to translate it. He began seeking Russian language instruction, which he eventually received from an Orthodox priest at a New York church. Schuyler went on to complete the first English translation of Turgenev’s novel and later applied for a position as American consul in Moscow.⁷⁴

In examining Schuyler’s motivation, it is evident that he was attracted to the prospect of exploring a new and somewhat exotic field; as Ronald J. Jensen notes, Schuyler “had a taste for exotic cultures” during this period.⁷⁵

Schuyler was a true pioneer: he not only produced the first English translation of Turgenev — *Fathers and Sons* in 1867 — but also met the author in Europe and later introduced American audiences to Leo Tolstoy by translating *The Cossacks* (1878). Schuyler’s translation of *Fathers and Sons* marked a turning point, establishing a direct literary connection between Russia and the

⁷³ Saul, “Saving the Union,” 40.

⁷⁴ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 93.

⁷⁵ Norman E. Saul and Richard D. McKinzie, eds., *Russian-American Dialogue on Cultural Relations, 1776–1914* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 167

United States beyond the previously dominant French and German intermediaries. His efforts in the 1860s significantly boosted Turgenev's American profile and paved the way for growing interest in other Russian writers. In addition, Schuyler's numerous insightful reviews of Russian literature further cemented his reputation as an expert on Russian culture, a status he maintained well into the 1880s.⁷⁶

The early translations by Schuyler, Wiener, and Hapgood are seldom regarded as canonical, especially when compared to Constance Garnett's celebrated English versions produced between 1894 and 1899. Both Schuyler and Hapgood relied in part on contemporary French editions, rather than working solely from the original, which affected the quality of their work. Nevertheless, these three cultural mediators played a crucial role in introducing Russian literature to American audiences and exemplify the diverse motivations and challenges of early translation efforts.

Schuyler's sudden interest in the Russian novel marked not only the beginning of Turgenev's reception in America but also the broader discovery of Russian writers by American readers. Beyond a general fascination with exotic cultures and a pioneering spirit, Schuyler's background as a member of the New York intellectual elite circles likely played a significant role in shaping his interest in Russia. A Yale graduate (class of 1861) and one of the first recipients of a Ph.D. from an American university, Schuyler also studied law at Columbia Law School, graduating in 1863. He began practicing law in New York while pursuing literature and journalism in his spare time, eventually contributing articles to *The Nation*.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 184

⁷⁷ Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 16 (Robert-Seward) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 472–73, accessed August 4, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/dictionaryofamer16amer/page/470/mode/2up?view=theate>.

Schuyler's interest likely stemmed from a combination of scholarly ambition, cosmopolitan outlook, and the era's growing appetite for engagement with new literary and cultural frontiers. His pioneering efforts in translation reflect both personal initiative and the broader intellectual climate that encouraged exploration of lesser-known cultures and literatures.

The translation might also have been part of a hidden strategy for achieving wider career opportunities. The young journalist applied for a position as U.S. Consul in Russia and waited three years before the State Department offered him a role at the Consulate in Moscow: he was appointed consul in Moscow on June 15, 1867, and later successfully proceed with his career - after two years, "he was transferred to Reval, and then served as secretary of the American embassy in St. Petersburg (1870–1876)."⁷⁸ Before the appointment, his translation was completed, and the text was published in 1867 in New York by Leopold and Holt, the same year Alaska was purchased by the United States (see Appendix B).

On his way to the Russian Empire, the translator had a chance to meet with Turgenev in Europe. Schuyler stopped in Baden-Baden, where he presented *Fathers and Sons* to the author in the fall of 1867. In the introduction, the Schuyler noted that this famous work of Russian literature "will, to some extent, help the two great nations learn more about each other."⁷⁹ He provided Turgenev with four copies of English text, and in return, Turgenev wrote letters of recommendation for his friends in Russia, including Leo Tolstoy. Turgenev also encouraged Schuyler to translate Tolstoy's novella, *The Cossacks*.

Turgenev's reaction to this English translation appears in a letter to Botkin dated October 6 (September 24), 1867, in which he remarks that Schuyler had relied on the French edition of the

⁷⁸ A. I. Nikoliukin, "I. S. Turgenev – Yu. Skaileru," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 9 (1989): 123.

⁷⁹ Gennady Kuropiatnik, "Russians in the United States: Social, Cultural, and Scientific Contacts in the 1870-s" in *Russian-American Dialogue on Cultural Relations, 1776-1914*, 140

novel and points out the translator's limited proficiency in Russian at the time: "По переводу заметно, что он сделал с французского и что знания в Русском языке г-на Скайлера довольно ограничены. Он назначен Северо-Американским Консулом в Москву и уже уехал туда."⁸⁰

That same year, the text was reprinted in London by the British publisher Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, and Turgenev expressed interest in obtaining a copy. In a letter to Botkin dated September 22, 1867, he asked his friend to send him the book from London.⁸¹ At the time, Turgenev did not anticipate that Schuyler would soon present the translation to him in person — a meeting that took place shortly after his request to Botkin.

In the meantime, Turgenev was likely aware of the American translation project. Aleksandr Nikoliukin suggests that Schuyler corresponded with the Russian author to obtain his permission,⁸² while Olga Tiuniaeva elaborates on that and supposes Schuyler may have included a preface to the book with his letter to further secure Turgenev's approval.⁸³ The demand for the translation is also proved by the text appearing simultaneously in England.

Schuyler's translation was reviewed in the same year by the London *journal The Saturday Review*, which offered an assessment similar to Turgenev's. In response to critiques suggesting he relied more on the French text than the Russian original, Schuyler defended his approach. In 1867, he wrote a brief letter to *The Nation* clarifying the distinctions between his translation and the French version: "It also neglected to state the many obvious differences between this and the

⁸⁰ "The translation clearly shows that it was made from the French and that Mr. Schuyler's knowledge of Russian is rather limited. He has been appointed United States Consul in Moscow and has already left for his post." Ivan Turgenev, "Pismo Turgeneva Botkinu ot 24 sentiabria/6 oktiabria 1867 g.," in Botkin, V. P. i Ivan Turgenev. *Neizdannaiia perepiska, 1851–1869* (Moscow–Leningrad: Academia, 1930), 271–272.

⁸¹ Ivan Turgenev, *Pismo Turgeneva Botkinu ot 22 Sent. 1867*, 269

⁸² Nikoliukin, "I. S. Turgenev – Yu. Skaileru," 123.

⁸³ O. Tiuniaeva, "Ivan S. Turgenev's 'Fathers and Sons' in the USA: First Impressions," *Lomonosov Moscow State University Bulletin*, vol. 82, no. 1 (2023): 79–86.

French translation, especially in *the use of proper names and in the rendering of the points of the dialogues*. The greater part of the book was translated directly from the Russian, though recourse was often had to the French version for a word or a phrase used by Mr. Turgenev which has not yet found a place in any Russian dictionary - either French or German - for there is no even passably [*sic*] good Russian-English dictionary. Some of the latter chapters were, owing to a press of time translated directly from the French, but were afterward more or less carefully compared with and corrected by the Russian. The translation was thus substantially from the Russian.”⁸⁴ The translator clarified that he coordinated the final chapters with the French text because he was committed to the publishing house, which expected his text sooner, and he emphasized his primary focus on the Russian text. However, Schuyler’s defense — citing changes to proper names and the formatting of “points” of dialogue — seems a rather modest claim for originality, suggesting that his reliance on the French version went beyond mere linguistic convenience and may have influenced the substance of his translation more than he acknowledges.

Norman Saul also argues that Schuyler's knowledge of Russian was still weak when he arrived in the country. However, he was fluent in French and had a keen interest in literature, history, and geography. Schuyler was an active member of high society in both Moscow and, later, St. Petersburg. In Moscow, for instance, he regularly attended salons hosted by prominent figures, such as Prince Vladimir Odoevskii.⁸⁵ During his time in Moscow, he was affected by the rising Russian nationalism expressed in those salons in the late 1860s. Additionally, he adopted the ideology of the city elite, which “was fascinated by neomaterialism, science, and statistics.”⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Eugene Schuyler, "Letter to the Editorial Board," *The Nation* 5 (July–December 1867): 496

⁸⁵ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 93

⁸⁶ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 94

At one of the salons, Schuyler met Tolstoy and subsequently visited him at Yasnaya Polyana. Notably, it was Turgenev's recommendation that introduced Schuyler to Tolstoy, ultimately leading Tolstoy to grant Schuyler permission to translate *The Cossacks*. Schuyler was careful to cultivate personal connections and always sought recommendations and permissions before translating particular texts. He completed his translation of *The Cossacks*, which was published in 1878. In this way, Schuyler once again played a crucial role in introducing a major Russian writer — this time Tolstoy — to the American audience, establishing a direct literary connection between the two cultures.⁸⁷

During his time as the U.S. ambassador to Russia, Schuyler served both in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, frequently contributed articles to American national magazines and newspapers that highlighted Russian customs, politics, society, and culture. The ambassador resided in Russia until 1876 and traveled extensively throughout the country, especially to the south, where he explored Central Asia and Siberia. He wrote in detail about his journeys for the National Geographic Society in the United States and produced a thorough report for the State Department.

Additionally, Schuyler authored two books: one documenting his travels in Central Asia, titled *Turkistan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Khokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja* (1876), and a biography entitled *Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia: A Study of Historical Biography* (1890), which reflected his deep interest in Russian history and the emperor's program of Europeanization. After leaving Russia in 1876, he took a position as U.S. Consul General in Constantinople (Istanbul) before eventually moving to Egypt.

Schuyler's interest in language and culture likely stemmed from his fascination with a wide

⁸⁷ Besides *The Cossacks*, Tolstoy's "*Sevastopol in 1855*" was also translated by Schuyler for Scribner's *Hours at Home* 8, 4-6 (February-April 1869): 328-36, 416-22, 526-31, according to Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 93

range of knowledge and a chance encounter with Russian navy officers in New York. This interest was further influenced by the political climate of the time. His translation of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* significantly broadened his career opportunities at the age of 27. However, he chose not to pursue translations of other works by Turgenev and translated only one piece by Tolstoy. Ultimately, Schuyler's engagement with Russian literature marked a brief but impactful chapter in his diverse intellectual and diplomatic career.

Schuyler's translation remains easily accessible nowadays. The title includes the full name of the author along with the patronymic "Ivan Sergheïevitch Turgenev." Notably, the last name is spelled in the French manner (I have also seen "Turgen(i)eff" used by Henry James for example). The strong French influence is unsurprising, given that Turgenev lived in Paris for much of his life and his works were widely circulated in French translation. A special note in this edition states, "Translated from the Russian with the approval of the author." I suspect this phrasing was influenced by the earlier French translation of *A Sportsman's Sketches*, which was rendered by Ernst Charrière. That translation introduced significant deviations from the original, including a changed title and considerable alterations to the text. Turgenev reacted negatively to this French version — a response that was likely known to American publishers, who may have added the approval note to assure readers of the translation's authenticity.

Schuyler's influence is also evident in the English title of Turgenev's novel. Although the Russian word "deti" literally translates as "children," Schuyler chose the title *Fathers and Sons* for his translation. While subsequent translators such as Hapgood and Garnett opted for the more literal *Fathers and Children*,⁸⁸ it was Schuyler's title that became standard among American

⁸⁸ Versions under the title *Fathers and Children* belong both to Constance Garnett (1895) and Isabel Hapgood (1903).

readers. Even though Schuyler's translation itself is not considered canonical, his choice of title has had a lasting impact, shaping how the novel is known in the English-speaking world. Importantly, the title *Fathers and Sons* is not at odds with the novel's content, and its enduring use reflects the strong influence of Schuyler's early mediation.

In the preface to his translation, Schuyler provides a historical overview of Russian literature, eventually leading up to Turgenev's current position. He begins by mentioning the 18th-century writers "Lomonosof" and Derzhavin, then points to major writers and poets from the first half of the 19th century. Schuyler identifies Turgenev as the leading figure of the natural school (natural'naia shkola), calling him the "chief" member of this movement.⁸⁹ I assume the translator relied on other sources, possibly related to Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches*—which is closer to the *natural'naya shkola* movement than the later novel. In *Fathers and Sons*, the novelist made a notable step beyond the *natural'naia shkola*; however, *A Sportsman's Sketches* was influenced by Vissarion Belinsky's ideas, who was a key figure in the movement. The effort to introduce American readers to the works of Aleksandr Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, and Nikolai Gogol by listing their major works seems quite significant at that time.⁹⁰

In many cases, this early translation served as an intermediary, bridging Russian literature with other European translations. Initially merging into the broader European literary context, it eventually helped establish Russian works as distinct entities in the eyes of American readers.

⁸⁹ Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons: A Novel*, trans. Eugene Schuyler (New York: Ward, Lock & Co., 1883), v.

⁹⁰The translator could not claim to be the first to introduce 18th- and 19th-century Russian writers to American audiences. For instance, T. Robinson—who also wrote under the pseudonym Talvj—was an expert in Russian literature and Slavic languages during the 1840s and 1850s. Her major contribution, the book *Historical View of the Languages and Literature of Slavic Nations, with a Sketch on Their Popular Poetry* (New York, 1850), presented important Russian authors such as Aleksandr Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, and Nikolai Gogol to American readers.

Overall, Schuyler's translation is thorough and includes valuable cultural notes, such as explanations of Russian names and important rituals, with footnotes to help American readers understand unfamiliar aspects of Russian life. However, aside from its heavy reliance on the French version, the translation also suffers from Schuyler's limited command of Russian grammar, making it difficult for him to accurately capture Turgenev's syntax and style and affecting the overall flow of the text.

Olga Tiuniaeva analyzes both the French and English translations of *Fathers and Sons* and concludes that Schuyler's work partially relied on the 1863 French edition of the novel, which was produced with Turgenev's collaboration alongside Louis Viardot. She argues that Schuyler drew on both sources: in some sections — such as footnotes and explanatory notes — he relied on the French text, while in other portions he translated directly from the Russian original.⁹¹

Building on this context, I now turn to a close analysis of two key episodes from the novel, each of which plays a significant role in shaping the plot. One episode marks the onset of future conflict, while the other occurs toward the end of the narrative. By examining these specific passages, I aim to illustrate how translation choices can affect the representation of tension in Turgenev's dialogues and character actions, as well as how both subtle and significant details may shift in the process of rendering the text into English.

In the first episode, in Chapter II, Bazarov is introduced to the reader. His portrait is followed by the typical 19th-century greeting gesture: a handshake between men. However, this part immediately reveals Bazarov's reluctance to participate in traditional rituals with his friend's father. The description of his hands hints at his non-noble background, and this small moment sets the stage for the novel's main conflict.

⁹¹ Tiuniaeva, "Ivan S. Turgenev's 'Fathers and Sons' in the USA," 79–86.

In Turgenev's writing, the style is quite dense with dynamics, and the characters often express their emotions and intentions through their gestures: "*Николай Петрович быстро обернулся и, подойдя к человеку высокого роста в длинном балахоне с кистями, только что вылезшему из тарантаса, крепко стиснул его обнаженную красную руку, которую тот не сразу ему подал*."⁹²

Schuyler keeps the actions of the scene but replaces the detailed description of the "naked" or "bare" hand with just "large": "*Nicholas Petrovitch returned immediately and advanced towards a tall young man who had just descended from the tarantass, enveloped in a long coat covered with frogs; he shook very strongly and heartily the large red hand that was undemonstratively extended to him*."⁹³ Notably, in the passage portraying the main character's outfit, Schuyler used the word "frog." The word might suggest an "ornamental coat fastener or braid" along with its primary meaning as an animal, possibly indicating a deliberate pun that hints at Bazarov's future scientific experiments.

In order to compare Schuyler's translation with another English version, I use the one completed by C.J. Hogarth in 1921.⁹⁴ Hogarth's version reflects evolving translation practices and a different linguistic sensibility, yet it still leaves room for improvement. Comparing Schuyler and Hogarth allows for an exploration of how approaches to rendering Turgenev's style and meaning shifted over time, and highlights the ongoing challenges of translating Russian literature into English. In this later version, the interpreter retains all of Turgenev's description and the dynamic of the phrase: "*At once Nikolai Petrovitch wheeled round, and, approaching a tall man who, clad*

⁹² Ivan Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v 30 tomakh*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 11.

⁹³ Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. Schuyler, 6.

⁹⁴ Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. C.J. Hogarth (London and New York: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1921).

in a long coat with a tasseled belt, had just alighted from the tarantass, pressed the bare red hand which, after a pause, the stranger offered him.”⁹⁵

In capturing the awkwardness of the moment — specifically Bazarov’s brief hesitation before the handshake — both translators face the challenge of rephrasing Turgenev’s complex sentence structure, which uses an adjectival clause. The original Russian sentence begins the second part with “которую” (meaning “which” or “that”), as in “которую тот не сразу ему подал,” which conveys that “which he did not immediately extend to him.” Both translators must navigate this subtlety while preserving the nuance of hesitation in their English renderings. Schuyler’s version uses a passive construction starting with “that” and includes the adverb “undemonstratively,” indicating the slowness and less desire for the handshake being formally close to Russian sentence. Hogarth, on the other hand, maintains the original active voice, avoiding direct translation and paraphrasing, and still preserves the phrase’s original dynamic and meaning from Russian: “after a pause, the stranger offered him.”

By the way, the detail of Bazarov’s outfit also seemed challenging for the second translator. The robe or coat with tassels, which a student might wear after graduation, Hogarth replaced with a “tasseled belt”.

Searching for a more thorough and detailed translation, I can compare the two versions above with Constance Garnett’s adaptation of *Fathers and Children* (1907): “*Nikolai Petrovitch went back quickly, and going up to a tall man in a long, loose, rough coat with tassels, who had just gotten out of the carriage, he warmly pressed the ungloved red hand, which the latter did not immediately hold out to him.”⁹⁶ Ultimately, the phrase “coat with tassels” parallels the original*

⁹⁵ Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. C.J. Hogarth (London and New York: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1921), 6.

⁹⁶ Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Children*, trans. Constance Garnett (London: W. Heinemann, 1920), 8.

“балахон с кистями.” The “ungloved red hand” preserves the original phrase’s emphasis on Bazarov’s lower social status compared to his hosts. While not a literal translation of “naked,” the choice of “ungloved” maintains both the dynamic imagery and the intended meaning of the original. The translation of the final phrase, “которую тот не сразу ему подал,” – “which the latter did not immediately hold out to him” maintains the original syntax and closely aligns with Turgenev’s text. Garnett’s rendering here carefully preserves Turgenev’s narrative style and texture.

Another pivotal episode marked by intense tension between the characters occurs in Chapter XXVII, when Odintsova visits Bazarov on his deathbed. Throughout the novel, Bazarov has steadfastly rejected all traces of romanticism. Yet in this moment, his farewell to Odintsova is unexpectedly tender, as he uses the metaphor of a candle dimming to express his feelings:

“Он разом принял руку и приподнялся.

— Прощайте, — проговорил он с внезапной силой, и глаза его блеснули последним блеском. — Прощайте... Послушайте... ведь я вас не поцеловал тогда... Дуньте на умирающую лампаду, и пусть она погаснет...”⁹⁷

Schuyler’s translation is notably more literal, opting for a word-for-word rendering that, once again, sacrifices some of the dynamism and nuance found in Turgenev’s original text: “*Good bye!*” he said with a sudden energy, and his eyes shone for the last time. — “Good bye! — Listen — I did not kiss you the other day — blow on the dying lamp, and let it go out.”⁹⁸

Hogarth’s translation places greater emphasis on the characters’ actions in that moment, while still preserving Turgenev’s overall narrative style: “*With a combined movement he took her*

⁹⁷ Ivan Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v 30 tomah*. Vol. 7, 183.

⁹⁸ Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. Schuyler, 241.

*hand and raised himself a little. "Good-bye," he said with a sudden spasm of energy and a last flash of his eyes. "Good-bye.... I kissed you that time, did I not, when, when —?... Ah, breathe now upon the expiring lamp, that it may go out in peace."*⁹⁹ Here, the translator also changed the initial phrase: while the original text shows regret for not having the courage to kiss Odintsova, his versions express ambivalence about the actions — perhaps the protagonist is lost in thought at some point, experiencing his last agony. In Hogarth's paragraph, although the phrase was altered, the lyrical intent of the sentence is clearly conveyed.¹⁰⁰

However, in both translations, the original word “лампада,” which refers to an oil lamp, an icon lamp, or a candle used in church services and sometimes at home, has been replaced with the word “lamp”, which has a more general meaning for the “device for giving light”. This modification alters the context of Bazarov's statement, which initially highlighted not only his “last romanticism” but also his underlying empathy towards religion — a subject he neglects throughout the novel until this moment.

If I compare those two versions again with Constance Garnett's translation, her text will very much resemble the original: “*He at once took his hand away, and raised himself. “Goodbye,” he said with sudden force, and his eyes gleamed with their last light. “Goodbye. ... Listen ... you know I didn't kiss you then. ... Breathe on the dying lamp, and let it go out ...*”¹⁰¹ However, the phrase “He at once took his hand away” is actually the opposite of the Russian “принял руку”, which more accurately means “he took (accepted) his hand.” Garnett's choice here not only misses the intended nuance but inverts the action, illustrating how even the most faithful translations can introduce subtle but significant shifts in meaning. Besides that, all syntactic structures are

⁹⁹ Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. Hogarth, 268.

¹⁰⁰ That could serve as an example of later translation with some deviations from the original text.

¹⁰¹ Turgenev, *Fathers and Children*, trans. Garnett, 349.

unaltered, no additional words or phrases added, keeping Turgenev's style. For example, "с внезапной силой" is equal to "with sudden force." The narrative does not seem heavy and schematic, on the contrary it is lightweight.

Here, Schuyler's version, which contains a word-by-word translation ("blow on the dying lamp"), is closer to Garnett's version: "breathe on the dying lamp." Not to mention, there are no alterations in phrases either, which proves Schuyler's original intent of conveying the initial meaning rather than rewriting the story.

I view Schuyler's translation of *Fathers and Sons* as a crucial transitional step that strengthened direct connections with Russian writers — a tradition continued by Leo Wiener and Isabel Hapgood into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Schuyler's experience in the Russian Empire deepened his expertise, leading him to become a prominent reviewer of books on Slavic countries in the U.S. and shaping American understanding of Russia; as Saul notes, his authority as an expert endured well into the 1880s.¹⁰²

Stylistically, Schuyler's translation leans more toward paraphrasing than fully capturing the nuances of the original in English, and it is generally regarded as secondary to Constance Garnett's later version. Nevertheless, a close examination of key episodes reveals no significant departures from Turgenev's text. Published soon after the novel's original release, Schuyler's translation played a crucial role in introducing Turgenev to English-speaking audiences in the nineteenth century. It became a foundational text for the novel's reception in both the U.S. and Great Britain, remaining the sole English translation until Isabel Hapgood's version appeared in the early twentieth century.

¹⁰² Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 184

C. “Envisioning Russia” and Cultural Interconnections during the 1880s-1920s.

Although the intensity of direct contact diminished in the following decades, Russian-American relations continued to be actively maintained, with both nations sustaining a mutual interest in each other. The increase in U.S. attention towards Russia over the late 19th century can be attributed to two pivotal political events that spurred a significant rise in literary and academic publications concerning the country. The first event was the assassination of Emperor Alexander II in 1881, which marked a turning point in Russian political stability and governance. The second event involved the escalating tensions between Russia and the United Kingdom regarding foreign policy, primarily driven by divergent imperial ambitions.

Beginning in 1882, Russia initiated territorial expansions that pushed its borders closer to Afghanistan. By 1884, Russian advances had brought them near Herat, provoking significant concern and opposition from British authorities. This escalating tension culminated in the Panjdeh Incident of 1885, which led Britain to prepare for the possibility of war with Russia. During this period, speculation and rumors about a potential conflict between the United Kingdom and Russia circulated widely within the United States.¹⁰³ These developments not only influenced the diplomatic landscape of the period but also catalyzed a broader engagement with Russian culture, politics, and history among American scholars and the public alike.

Regarding economics, both countries experienced significant industrial growth around the turn of the century, characterized by the emergence of a capitalist class that established major factories and plants. During this period, successful connections were maintained, with business and technical exchanges contributing to a perception of stable and ongoing harmony.¹⁰⁴ The

¹⁰³ Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America*, 113.

¹⁰⁴ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 233

American industrial experience was considered particularly valuable overseas. As an example of collaborative project, locomotives from two American companies, Baldwin Locomotive Works and American Locomotive Company, were imported into the empire as part of Sergei Witte's railway expansion efforts. Additionally, American engineers participated in the massive project of constructing the Trans-Siberian Railroad, sharing their expertise in building bridges and managing the construction (1890-1916).

During this period, the American literary scene was saturated with French and German translations of Russian texts, reflecting a continuation of earlier patterns of reception. At the same time, the number of works translated directly from Russian by American translators was gradually increasing. During the peak of Turgenev's popularity in the 1870s, Schuyler's translation of *Fathers and Sons* was still circulating among readers. According to the list of publications on Turgenev in English, the sequential publications of the Russian writer's prose continued with *Liza* or *A Nest of Nobles* (in Russian *Dvorianskoe gnezdo*) (1872) - translated from a French version, then *Dimitri Roudine* (1873) - translated from French and German, *On the Eve* (1873, reprinted in 1875), *Spring Floods* (1874), *Virgin Soil* (translated with the author's permission by T. S. Perry, 1877), and finally *Annals of a Sportsman* (1885) - the translation was conducted by Franklin Pierce Abbott. Another version of *A Sportsman's Sketches* that brought the author's negative reaction: "Turgenev protested against this translation which he felt to be inadequate."¹⁰⁵

During the next decade, in the 1880s, the names of Leo Tolstoy, Fedor Dostoevsky along with other 19th century Russian authors were brought to the U.S., intensifying and enriching the context of received Russian literature. Royal Gettman marks 1886 as a significant milestone in the

¹⁰⁵ Rissa Yachnin and David H. Stam, *Ivan Turgenev: A Checklist of Works by and about Him*, with an introductory essay by Marc Slonim (New York: The New York Public Library, 1962), 17.

influx of Russian culture, noting that four texts by Tolstoy, two by Gogol, and one each from Dostoyevsky and Chernyshevsky were published that year.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, Hapgood's *The Epic Songs of Russia* was published, along with the translation of Dupuy's *Masters of Russian Literature*. Between 1884 and 1890, the publication of general books on Russia increased significantly, with the American Catalogue listing around thirty such titles.¹⁰⁷

Beyond literary translations, another important dimension of reception was the publication of American travelogues about Russia. Perhaps the most influential of these was George Kennan's *Siberia and the Exile System* (1891), which played a significant role in shaping American perceptions of Russia. Four years later, Isabel Hapgood's *Russian Rambles* (1895) offered another widely recognized perspective within the evolving literary discourse on Russia. The appearance and popularity of these travel narratives both reflected and fueled growing American interest in the customs and daily life of this distant country.

At this stage, Kennan and Hapgood had not yet established an American tradition of travelogues about the Russian Empire. However, between 1867 and 1880, a diverse array of guidebooks and travel accounts appeared in both England and the United States, reflecting a growing Western fascination with Russia. Notable works from this period include Agapius Honcharenko's *Russian and English Phrase Book* (1868), which was promoted for "traders, travelers, and teachers" and underscored the practical value of engaging with Russian culture.¹⁰⁸ Other significant publications include the anonymously authored *Sketches of Russian Life*, as well as H.C. Romanoff's *Historical Narratives from the Russian and Russia in 1870* (both published in

¹⁰⁶ Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America*, 111

¹⁰⁷ Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America*, 111

¹⁰⁸ Honcharenko, an exiled Ukrainian Orthodox priest, publicly denounced corruption within the church and voiced his opposition to the tsarist regime. He immigrated to the United States in 1865.

London in 1871).¹⁰⁹

In addition, influential American authors contributed to the understanding of Russia by recording their travels in books and articles, many of which appeared in *The Nation*. Examples include J. Ross Browne's *The Land of Thor* (1870), Samuel Prime's *The Alhambra and the Kremlin: The South and the North of Europe* (1873), and Edna Proctor's *A Russian Journey* (1872). The popularity of Russian culture in America during this era can be attributed in part to these travel writers, who, despite sometimes holding critical views of the country, frequently expressed admiration for Russian art, music, and literature.¹¹⁰ Collectively, these works fueled and reflected the active cultural exchange and curiosity that characterized the period.

George Kennan's travelogue on Russia emerged within the context of intense public debate about the political regime of the empire. These discussions revealed significant ambivalence in American society: while more liberal groups condemned the repressive measures of the tsarist government, they also highlighted the sharply divergent views on governance and social reform that characterized the era.

In the context of the discussion, whether the Russian Empire's leading aristocracy is the sole decision-maker in the country, a question arose about how political dissidents were treated in Siberian exile.¹¹¹ At the center of public debates, George Kennan was negotiating with *Century* magazine, which agreed to support his travel to Russia in exchange for regular articles based on his observations. Kennan traveled to the country in the summer of 1884, returned in the summer of 1885, and continued working there for over a year.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 169-170.

¹¹⁰ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 320.

¹¹¹ George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*, vol. 1 (New York: The Century Co., 1891), iii.

¹¹² Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 282

After publishing his illustrated series in *Century* — featuring images based on his own photographs — George Kennan embarked on a book tour in February 1889, delivering lectures across New England and the Midwest that consistently drew large audiences. Two years later, in 1891, his articles were collected and published as *Siberia and the Exile System*. According to Norman Saul, Kennan’s writings and lectures profoundly shaped American perceptions of Russia: “The result was a series of articles for *Century*, beginning in November 1887, that would color the American perception of Russia for over a hundred years.”¹¹³

Following the publication of Kennan’s book, Isabel Hapgood entered the public debate, publishing a review in which she — courteously yet pointedly — criticized Kennan for presenting a one-sided view of Russia.¹¹⁴ The influence of Kennan’s work is further illustrated by the response of British traveler Harry De Windt, who undertook his own journey to Russia specifically to confirm or challenge the details presented in Kennan’s account.¹¹⁵

Both Kennan and Hapgood set the stage for decades of future public debates on the far distant country, embodying more liberal and conservative positions on each side. George Kennan, in his articles, lectures, and ultimately a book, portrayed a rather negative image of the country he studied, leaning towards the revolutionary, anti-monarchist perspective. The example of this kind of extreme thoughts circulating in that direction at the time in the U.S. might be Mark Twain’s statement: “to keep the (Russian) throne vacant by dynamite until the day when candidates shall decline with thanks.”¹¹⁶

Here, Isabel Hapgood, another influential translator of Russian literature, was leaning

¹¹³ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 282

¹¹⁴ Isabel Hapgood (published anonymously), “Kennan’s Siberia,” *The Nation* 54 (January 14, 1892): 35–36.

¹¹⁵ See more details in Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 290

¹¹⁶ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 396

towards an exaggerated conservative perspective. Thus, the translator, in her support for the monarchy in the Russian Empire, expressed regret over the abolition of serfdom.¹¹⁷

Therefore, the discourse surrounding public opinion on Russia during this period oscillated between two distinct ideological extremes: one marked by a progressive liberal position that embraced revolutionary ideas and explored communist theories,¹¹⁸ and the other, conservative one, distinguished by the admiration for the opulence of the imperial era, particularly the Romanov dynasty and the aristocratic elites of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

It is difficult to determine which perspective held greater sway in public discourse during this period. For example, in her scholarly analysis, Ingrid Kleespies suggests that popular views of Russia focused less on notions of “backwardness” and more on seeing the country as a realm of “imperial romance,” marked by glamorous aristocracy and political intrigue.¹¹⁹ I would tend to state the “bipolar” nature of Russia’s perception in the US with both extremes particularly drafted in the public discourse.

Kleespies underscores that, in addition to its imperial allure, Russia emerged as a fertile ground for the proliferation of new ideologies during this period, including anarchism and nihilism, both of which garnered significant interest from American intellectual circles.¹²⁰ This complex interplay of ideologies contributed to a dynamic cultural exchange and a nuanced understanding of Russia's sociopolitical landscape among various audiences.

¹¹⁷ The detailed research of Hapgood’s position in Ingrid Kleespies article: Ingrid Kleespies, “‘A Knowledge of Russian Such as No American Man Possesses’: Isabel Hapgood on Russia at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 101, no. 2 (April 2023): 254–283

¹¹⁸ For example, in 1891, the Society of American Friends of Russian Freedom (SAFRF) was founded in the United States with the primary aim of opposing the tsarist regime in Russia.

¹¹⁹ Kleespies, “‘A Knowledge of Russian Such as No American Man Possesses,’” 259.

¹²⁰ “At the same time, political progressives ‘were attracted to the innovative Russian ideologies’ of anarchism and nihilism and were drawn to ‘the romantic fervor of exemplary Russian revolutionaries’ “. Kleespies, “‘A Knowledge of Russian Such as No American Man Possesses,’” 259.

Another important issue that garnered attention in American society was the increase in Jewish immigration from the Russian Empire. Norman S. Saul thoroughly examines this matter and concludes that the number of immigrants grew in a geometric progression starting from 1880-s.¹²¹ As nationalist sentiments gained traction in Russia, national minorities, including Jews, often faced unfair treatment from the government. Following the pogroms of 1881, the number of Jewish immigrants from Russia surged significantly, as many sought refuge in the United States. The U.S. government's stance on Russian Jewish immigration was notably ambiguous.

During this period, American society expressed concern that young Jewish immigrants might introduce destructive nihilist and anarchist ideas to the society. The publication of Kennan's book helped slightly temper public opinion toward these refugees, particularly between 1890 and 1898. Still, general awareness and anxiety continued to persist: "Certainly many Americans were alarmed about the presence of an anarchist element among new Russian Jewish immigrants: though the threat was greatly exaggerated, the attempted assassination of Henry Frick by a Russian-Jewish immigrant in 1892 stood as a permanent reminder."¹²² Notably, this incident involved Alexander Berkman, who had a long personal association with Emma Goldman, further fueling public fears about radicalism among Russian Jewish immigrants.

With an ambivalent stance towards the political regime in the Russian Empire and shaping opinions about liberal revolutionary thought abroad, the impact of Russian culture on American audiences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be considered quite significant. Among other reasons, political-economic interactions between the two countries as a precondition, mutual interest in each other, sustained from previous periods and entering a new stage - in

¹²¹ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 236.

¹²² Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 396-397

literature - the ongoing search for the “pattern for realism” and “pattern for the realistic genres,” together with the national identity mainly in the novel in the U.S.

Royal Gettman characterizes the influence of Russian culture at the turn of the twentieth century as a “craze,” capturing the broader cultural dynamics of the era: “The American curiosity in things Russian was so intense and widespread that it justified the term ‘craze.’”¹²³ While studying a general timeline for this phenomenon, scholars differ regarding its exact boundaries. Ingrid Kleespies identifies a significant decade, from 1880 to the 1890s, as crucial to the adoption of Russian cultural motifs in American society.¹²⁴ In contrast, Royal Gettman extends this timeframe from 1885 to 1900 and beyond, suggesting a more sustained engagement with Russian cultural elements.¹²⁵ Norman S. Saul proposes that the period from 1890-1898 was when the “impact of Russian culture on the United States increased dramatically, perhaps reaching its all-time apex,”¹²⁶ including the recognition of Russian art, such as the discovery and total popularity of Peter Tchaikovsky in music, Vasily Vereshchagin’s dominating presence in art, and Leo Tolstoy’s craze in literature.

Further expanding this discourse, Paul Miller proposes an even wider lens, indicating that the cultural impact of Russia on the United States spanned from 1890 to 1940. He indicates it as a period of “great Russian influence.”¹²⁷ This perspective underscores the enduring nature of Russian cultural influence.

¹²³ Gettman, *Turgenev in England and America*, 110

¹²⁴ Kleespies, “A Knowledge of Russian Such as No American Man Possesses,” 258

¹²⁵ Gettman, *Turgenev in England and America*, 110

¹²⁶ Saul suggests that the composer enjoyed even greater popularity in the United States than in Russia, partly because “the emphasis on Russian national and religious themes suited the American taste for the exotic, mystical, and romantic.” Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 334

¹²⁷ Paul W. Miller, “Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson – and Ivan Turgenev,” in *Ivan Turgenev*, ed. and with introduction by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003), 207.

These divergent timelines highlight the complexity and significance of general Russian cultural influence, reflecting distinct scholarly perspectives shaped by their sources. Meanwhile, setting up the narrow context for the “Russian craze”, generalizing the median data in between those four approaches, I can see that 12.5 years, starting from 1885 till 1897 or from 1890 till 1902, were the “peaks” of Russian influence. At this point, interestingly to mention that Leo Wiener’s *Anthology of Russian literature* and Isabel Hapgood *A Survey of Russian literature* were both published in 1902, covering and maybe even closing the “cultural request” from the audience.

Therefore, the “Russian craze” broadly refers to the surge of interest in Russian culture, art, and especially literature, with Leo Tolstoy occupying a central position. This enthusiasm was sparked and promoted by several notable figures in the United States, most notably William Dean Howells — critic and editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1871 to 1881 — whose influence began in the 1870s, as well as later key translators such as Isabel Hapgood and Leo Wiener. Hapgood was known for her first book, *The Epic Songs of Russia* (1885), and her translations of *Dead Souls* and *Taras Bulba* by Nikolai Gogol (1886). Among others I also mention Nathan Haskell Dole, who brought in English Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* (1889) and *Anna Karenina* (1899). By the way, during the period from 1885 to 1900 and later, this enthusiasm for Russian culture was evident in various aspects, such as music playing in households and the adoption of Russian-style dining, referred to as “à la Russe.”¹²⁸

Norman Saul and Ingrid Kleespies aptly describe the surge in Leo Tolstoy’s popularity as a “side craze” (1890–1898).¹²⁹ One clear sign of Russian literature’s growing prominence — especially Tolstoy’s works — was the extensive translation activity in the United States during the

¹²⁸ Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America*, 110

¹²⁹ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 323-330

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Translators like Isabel Hapgood and Leo Wiener played key roles in making Tolstoy accessible to American readers. Hapgood, in particular, became Tolstoy's principal American translator, solidifying this role through multiple visits to Yasnaya Polyana and building a personal rapport with the author. Likewise, Leo Wiener corresponded with Tolstoy, reinforcing the direct connections between Russian writers and their American mediators. Among Wiener's papers in the Harvard Library archives, I found a letter from Gavriil Volkov, a staff member at Tolstoy's museum in Moscow, requesting copies of certain letters for inclusion in a new complete edition of Tolstoy's works. Volkov specifically notes that the letters in Wiener's possession date from 1902, 1904, and 1905.¹³⁰

Between 1880 and 1920, Russian literature became so prominent in the American context that a new class of experts emerged, critical analyses flourished, and reviews of translations regularly appeared in print. In addition to this rise in expertise and cultural commentary within U.S. journals, universities began to establish general courses on Slavic languages and cultures during this period.

D. American Translators of Turgenev: Analyzing the Motivations and Literary Strategies of Leo Wiener and Isabel Hapgood.

If Shuyler's translation appeared alongside the emergence of Russian literature in the U.S., Wiener's and Hapgood's roles involved establishing themselves as experts in Slavic culture — both in academia and in public discourse. The path they shared at the turn of the century was focused on bringing Leo Tolstoy's texts to the U.S., driven by the current popularity of the writer

¹³⁰ Gavriil Volkov, *Letter to Leo Wiener*, HUG 1876.6510, Leo Wiener Correspondence, ca. 1884–1935, Harvard University Archives.

and their work on anthologies of Russian literature, with the aim of introducing the full scope of Russian literary culture to readers.

Compared to the culturally rooted and enduring translations of Constance Garnett, the American versions discussed here are less well known and generally regarded as secondary in both style and linguistic accuracy. The works of Schuyler, Wiener, and Hapgood illustrate how translations can become marginalized over time, as well as the diverse motivations that drive such efforts. Examining these translators' work offers valuable insights into the unique paths and perspectives of American translators engaging with Russian literature.

Leo Wiener's pioneering role is marked by his distinction as the first American professor of Slavic literature. Born Leib Zelmanovich Wiener in the city of Bialystok in 1862 — then part of the Russian Empire and now in Poland — Wiener was of Russian-Jewish heritage. He received a thorough education, graduating from a Russian gymnasium before continuing his studies at the University of Warsaw and later at Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin.

Today, Leo Wiener's name is perhaps even more widely recognized because of his son, Norbert Wiener (1894–1964), the renowned American mathematician who founded the field of cybernetics. Leo Wiener's intense commitment to his son's education became a major personal project, further reflecting his ambitious and driven character.

Wiener's own journey to the United States, vividly recounted in his memoirs, stands out as an extraordinary and unconventional experience. The young student left university to pursue his idealistic vision of founding a vegetarian commune in the United States. Inspired by his involvement in Berlin's vegetarian society, he set out for America — despite no practical agricultural experience, a fact he candidly admits in his memoirs, *Stray Leaves from My Life*. His journey took him from Germany to Britain before he arrived in New Orleans in 1882, virtually

penniless and without connections. As he recalls, “when I landed at New Orleans, my capital had dwindled down to twenty-five cents... I would work, though I did not have the slightest idea how work could be obtained.”¹³¹

After changing various labor jobs, he eventually became a schoolteacher in a small town called Odessa, Missouri. Wiener notes in his memoirs that he admired the name of the town because it resembled Russian. He describes his first teaching appointment in the U.S. with a sense of radiant irony: “I was to teach German and French, Latin and Greek, mathematics and civil government. Civil government I probably taught better than any other subject, because I knew nothing about it and so had to study it.”¹³² Upon arriving in the United States and beginning his first teaching job, Wiener made a concerted effort to study English thoroughly. Several years later, the translator would pursue pedagogy and education, among other fields in which he would be academically involved, and some of his initial articles would focus on the challenges of teaching within the immigrant community.¹³³

In 1892, Wiener arrived in Boston with some prior teaching experience in the United States. He supported himself by offering private language lessons and working as a translator. While there is no definitive information about his motivation for relocating to Boston, it is likely that his academic ambitions played a role, as both Boston and New York were leading centers of intellectual life during that period.

In his early years in Boston, Wiener frequented the Boston Public Library and connected with prominent academics, including Harvard professor Archibald Cary Coolidge. Impressed by

¹³¹ Leo Wiener, *Stray Leaves from My Life*.

¹³² Leo Wiener, *Stray Leaves from My Life*.

¹³³ For instance: Leo Wiener, *The Education of Boston's Foreign Element*, HUG 1876.6576, Box 1, Papers of Leo Wiener, Harvard University Archives.

Wiener's reputed proficiency in thirty languages and his passion for teaching, Coolidge took private Polish lessons from him and later recommended him for a position at Harvard, becoming a key supporter in establishing Slavic studies at the university.¹³⁴

The claim that Wiener mastered thirty languages does not appear exaggerated. His profound passion for language learning is reminiscent of Leo Tolstoy, who similarly devoted himself to studying multiple languages. Notably, neither English nor Russian was Wiener's native tongue. At home, he spoke German and Yiddish and later began speaking French. He started studying Russian at age eight with his aunt, and during his gymnasium years added Latin and Greek as part of the curriculum. While living in Warsaw, he also learned Polish. As Wiener notes in the memoirs, he seized every opportunity to acquire a new language.¹³⁵ While studying in Berlin, Wiener further developed his German, which later became one of his main languages for correspondence and academic work. As noted earlier, he only learned English grammar after he started teaching at a school.

An analysis of Wiener's papers, correspondence, articles, and other materials housed in the Harvard University library archives reveals that he actively used three languages: English (the most dominant), followed by Russian and German. Wiener made a concerted effort to publish his work in both Europe and the United States, thereby maintaining strong connections with specialists abroad.¹³⁶

In 1896, Wiener joined Harvard, where he taught elementary courses in Russian, Polish, and Old Church Slavonic. He went on to become the first American professor of Slavic literature

¹³⁴ According to Saul, while Wiener was working at the Boston Public Library, he still held an appointment at the University of Missouri. Both Child and Coolidge supported his appointment as a Russian instructor at Harvard in 1896. Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 393.

¹³⁵ Leo Wiener, *Stray Leaves from My Life*.

¹³⁶ Leo Wiener, *Correspondence*, ca. 1884–1935, HUG 1876.6510, Leo Wiener Correspondence, Harvard University Archives.

in 1911. In addition to translating works from Russian and Polish, Wiener also developed a course dedicated to Leo Tolstoy. Regarding his impact in Slavic studies, Wiener compiled a valuable *Anthology of Russian Literature* (1902-1903) and translated 24 volumes of Leo Tolstoy's writings after, completing this extensive task in just 24 months (1904-1905).

Exploring the connections between Wiener and Hapgood reveals several notable intersections. Given the relatively small field, it is likely they were familiar with each other's work. Both also had ties to Harvard University, particularly through Professor Francis J. Child: Hapgood served as Child's assistant in 1857–1858, and Child wrote the preface for her first book, *The Epic Songs of Russia*. Wiener, for his part, maintained an active correspondence with Child, as documented in the Harvard archives.¹³⁷

Were the two prominent experts on Russian literature evolving simultaneously in competition with each other? Wiener was keenly aware of his foundational role in developing Slavic studies in the United States. In his 1897 article "Our Slavic Scholars,"¹³⁸ he assessed the field and acknowledged the work of his contemporaries, including a brief mention of Hapgood. Moreover, there are at least two pieces of evidence pointing to explicit professional rivalry between the two during this formative period.

In the article, Wiener notes that many works in Slavic studies had been translated into Russian from French rather than directly from the original language. He emphasizes the importance of source-language translations, arguing that relying on intermediary languages undermines a translator's credibility as a true cultural specialist: "When I spoke of representatives of Slavic studies, I had in mind no translators, but those who have made contributions to the study

¹³⁷ Leo Wiener, *Correspondence*.

¹³⁸ Leo Wiener, *Our Slavic Scholars*, 1897, HUG 1876.6576, Box 1, Papers of Leo Wiener, Harvard University Archives.

of Slavic languages. It was, therefore, natural to single out Ralston in England, for he is quoted as an authority by Russian philologists, as to mention Miss Isabel Hapgood as the only one in America who has contributed to Slavic Studies, for her book on the *Epic Songs of Russia* has been favorably reviewed by Slavic scholars. I have never read her translations of Russian novels and know nothing about them.”¹³⁹

Beyond the article’s initially provocative tone — likely reflecting Wiener’s intent to assert his own expertise in the field — his statements raise several important questions. Notably, Hapgood, as a translator, primarily worked with both French and Russian. By 1897, she had translated Leo Tolstoy’s *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth* (1886), as well as Nikolay Gogol’s *Taras Bul’ba* and *Dead Souls* (1886). Probably, by this time she also claimed the status of Tolstoy’s expert in the U.S., conducting her translations of *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1890) and *The Gospel in Brief* (1896).

Wiener claims he was unfamiliar with these translations — though, in reality, only one novel, *Dead Souls*, was on the list¹⁴⁰ — presenting two contradictory statements side by side. From this, it can be inferred that Wiener implies Hapgood likely relied on an intermediary language and was not fully proficient in Russian for her translations, a point he generalizes earlier in his critique. He also largely overlooks Hapgood’s travelogue, *Russian Rambles* (1895), mentioning only her earlier work, *The Epic Songs of Russia*, translation of byliny. As a result, Hapgood’s contributions as a translator have been largely marginalized, and her “academic expertise” has been dismissed.

¹³⁹ Leo Wiener, *Our Slavic Scholars*.

¹⁴⁰ In fairness, Hapgood went on to translate several major Russian novels later, following the publication of her *Survey of Russian Literature* in 1902.

Wiener's assessment of the field may also be linked to an article published by Isabel Hapgood in *The Nation* earlier in 1892, titled "A Russian Professorship."¹⁴¹ This article discusses the establishing of a professorship in Slavic studies at a U.S. university and Hapgood's assertion that only a Russian native speaker might be suitable for that role.¹⁴² Consequently, Hapgood was the first specialist to publicly claim to establish this position before Wiener took it on. Ingrid Kleespies argues that, despite Hapgood's limited chances due to her lack of formal education for such a role, she still seemed to assert her claim to the position. Kleespies notes, "By her own formula, it appears there was only one American who truly qualified, despite her claims of disinterest. It is striking how Hapgood adopts the authoritative tone of an established expert in Russian and Slavic studies in her letters, positioning herself as perhaps the only person qualified to determine what is needed for the new Russian professorship."¹⁴³

Two specialists who publicly engaged with Hapgood on this issue were Nathan Haskell Dole¹⁴⁴ and Leo Wiener, then teaching at a high school in Kansas City. Wiener proposed that the position should go to William Morfill of Oxford, who had recently published a Russian grammar book.¹⁴⁵

Discussions about establishing Slavic studies at U.S. universities began in 1892, and progress was swift. At Harvard, for example, the professorship for Leo Wiener was established

¹⁴¹ Isabel Hapgood, "A Russian Professorship," *The Nation* 54, no. 1407 (June 16, 1892): 447.

¹⁴² Hapgood, "A Russian Professorship," 447.

¹⁴³ Kleespies, "'A Knowledge of Russian Such as No American Man Possesses,'" 264

¹⁴⁴ Nathan Haskell Dole (1852–1935) was a key figure in the growing American interest in Russian literature, serving as a writer, editor, and translator who played a major role in bringing Tolstoy to English-speaking readers. His translation of *Anna Karenina* appeared in 1886, followed by several collections of Tolstoy's shorter stories in 1887, and his translation of *War and Peace* in 1889. The clustering of these works within just a few years highlights the rapid growth of the American market for Russian literature in the late 1880s and the rising prominence of Tolstoy among American readers. However, since Dole focused primarily on Tolstoy's works, he is not a central figure in this particular study.

¹⁴⁵ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 390

several years later, in 1911, reflecting the rapid institutional recognition of Russian literature — and Slavic culture more broadly — as a vital part of American society and academic life.

After Leo Wiener secured a position in Slavic studies, his professional interests evolved multiple times throughout his academic career. His initial research focused on Yiddish literature, culminating in the publication of his book, *The History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (1899). As part of his studies, Wiener traveled extensively across Europe and Russia. He also acquired a significant collection of books from the Asiatic Museum in St. Petersburg, which later became part of the Yiddish collection at the Harvard University Library.

While teaching at Harvard, Wiener recognized the need for a comprehensive study of Russian literature, which ultimately led to the creation of a two-volume anthology. The popularity of these volumes, published between 1902 and 1903, is highlighted by a letter from the publisher, The Knickerbocker Press, dated October 7, 1912.¹⁴⁶ In this letter, the publisher responded to Wiener's request regarding the printing of a new book titled *Literature of Russia*. They politely explained that this effort could not be realized under the current economic conditions, as they were uncertain about future sales success. Nonetheless, the publisher acknowledged that the anthology had been out of stock for two days ten years earlier.¹⁴⁷

Another valuable Wiener's work sets up a cultural generalization titled *An Interpretation of the Russian People* (1915). The monograph presents a comprehensive assessment of Russian culture. In this work, the author analyzes various dimensions of the culture, including art, music, and religion, among other aspects.

¹⁴⁶ G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers and Booksellers, letter to Leo Wiener, October 7, 1912, Leo Wiener Correspondence, ca. 1884–1935, HUG 1876.6510, Harvard University Archives.

¹⁴⁷ G. P. Putnam's Sons, letter to Wiener, October 7, 1912.

Unlike her professionally motivated predecessor, Isabel Florence Hapgood (1850–1928) stood out as a cultural ambassador whose volunteer efforts were devoted to translating and promoting Russian literature across the United States. The widespread popularity of Russian culture at the turn of the century, combined with her personal fascination with Orthodoxy, likely inspired Hapgood’s commitment to cultural mediation. Opportunities to publish her translations from both French and Russian, along with strong interest from American journals, further propelled her mission.

Hapgood’s case highlights the ongoing demand from American journals for experts in Russian culture. Notably, in her book *Russian Rambles* (1895), the translator described her expertise as grounded in her own personal experience: “A man who would see Russia clearly must strip himself of all preconceived prejudices of religion, race, and language and study the people from their own point of view.”¹⁴⁸ This statement, together with the presence of other experts on Slavic culture — such as George Kennan and Leo Wiener — underscores the “cultural request” for mediators in American society. From 1885 to 1917, Hapgood’s understanding of Russia and her experiences there were, in many ways, distinctly American, especially when contrasted with Leo Wiener’s multicultural background spanning Jewish, Russian, and American contexts.

While serving as an assistant to Harvard professor Francis James Child, Hapgood contributed to his work *English and Scottish Ballads* (1857–1858). Inspired by this experience, she published her first book, *Epic Songs of Russia*, in 1885, featuring translations of medieval Russian folklore stories known as *byliny* — which she referred to as “epic songs” — including tales of Ilya of Murom, Dobrynya, and others. As noted above, the book received positive reviews.

¹⁴⁸ Isabel F. Hapgood, *Russian Rambles* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895), viii

Hapgood lacked formal university education, instead taking private Russian lessons and pursuing self-education. Her dedication to language study enabled her to travel to the Russian Empire, where, between 1887 and 1889, she made her first visits and reported extensively to American audiences about Russian customs and culture. By this time, she had already published translations of Leo Tolstoy's *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth* (1886) as well as Gogol's *Taras Bul'ba* and *Dead Souls* (1886).

During her initial trip, Hapgood met Tolstoy himself and, with his permission, translated several of his works —establishing her reputation as the leading American translator of Tolstoy. Besides translating *Kreuzer Sonata* and *Gospels*, Hapgood offers a glimpse into the author's background by publishing her article "Count Tolstoy at Home" in 1891 in *The Atlantic*. Eight years later, she also introduces to American audience the monograph by Pyotr Sergienko, *How Count L.N. Tolstoy Lives and Works* (1899). At this point, Hapgood emphasizes and impacts her support for "Tolstoy's craze" that occurred at that time.

Her trip to Russia in 1887-1889 built the foundation for her travelogue, *Russian Rambles* (1895), which detailed her experiences traveling through the country. Eventually, the translator made her journeys around the country annually. Ingrid Kleespies, in her analysis of *Russian Ramblers* compared Hapgood's writings with those of another contemporary expert in Russian culture, George Kennan, referring to both as "amateur adventurers."¹⁴⁹

Hapgood collaborated with both Russian and French writers, and was the first to translate Victor Hugo into English for American readers. Her choice of languages likely reflected the popularity of Russian and French culture at the time, as well as a growing cultural demand for translations.

¹⁴⁹ Ingrid Kleespies, "A Knowledge of Russian Such as No American Man Possesses," 256.

The translator also completed *A Survey of Russian Literature*, a comprehensive history covering all periods from 988 to the late nineteenth century, published in 1902.¹⁵⁰ The simultaneous work of Hapgood and Wiener on Russian anthologies illustrates that interest in Russian culture expanded not only in the late 1890s, but further and stepped to the beginning of the new century, as evidenced by the demand for comprehensive historical volumes from both academic circles and general readers. In the preface, Hapgood specifies that her insights are based exclusively on Russian literature, as assessed by leading critics. She intentionally avoids making comparisons to other national literatures due to her limited knowledge in those areas.¹⁵¹

Hapgood was likely the most significant of the early American translators of Turgenev's works. Interestingly, in her 1886 review "Tolstoi and Turgeneff" published in *The Nation* (1886), she described Turgenev as "a cold writer" and criticized him for having a "cold approach" to his characters. In contrast, she expressed a preference for Tolstoy, whom she characterized as a "warmer" author.¹⁵²

Meanwhile, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Hapgood shifted her focus to Turgenev's prose. My guess is that after the *Anthology* was published and she personally re-evaluated Turgenev's work — and perhaps in search of another prominent author to translate after Tolstoy — she devoted renewed attention to his writings. Between 1903 and 1904, Hapgood compiled seven volumes of Turgenev's works, including *A Nobleman's Nest* and *First Love* (1903). She also translated stories from *A Sportsman's Sketches* under the title *Memoirs of a Sportsman*,

¹⁵⁰ Isabel Florence Hapgood, *A Survey of Russian Literature, with Selections* (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1902), accessed October 10, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/surveyofrussian00hapg/page/n7/mode/2up>.

¹⁵¹ Isabel F. Hapgood, preface to *A Survey of Russian Literature, with Selections* (New York: The Chautauqua Press, 1902), i.

¹⁵² Isabel Hapgood, "Tolstoi and Turgeneff," *The Nation* 42 (May 6, 1886): 388–389.

producing the first American translation of the book. Published in two volumes in New York in 1903, this edition featured an extensive preface by Henry James. At minimum, the translator enhances that shift in Turgenev's reception and popularity during that time.

Throughout her career, Hapgood's interests evolved, encompassing both Russian and French literature. In her work with Russian authors, she skillfully navigated between writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Notably, she translated Maxim Gorky's *Foma Gordyeev* (1901) and *Orloff and His Wife* (1901), as well as Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* (1905). Given her affinity for 19th-century Russian realist prose and her interest in themes of orthodoxy, it is unsurprising that Leskov's *The Steel Flea* (1916) and *The Cathedral Folk* (1924) are also among her significant contributions.

In addition to her literary interests, the translator likely had religious motivations for her work on Russian culture. As a member of the Episcopalian Church in the U.S., Hapgood had a profound interest in Orthodoxy. She deeply admired church liturgy and choral music, dedicating herself to bringing these texts into English. Her translation of the *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic (Greco-Russian) Church* (1906), according to Ingrid Kleespies, went through six editions and is still in use.¹⁵³

Hapgood became acquainted with Tikhon, the future Patriarch of Moscow, who was then the archbishop of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. During 1916-1917, she visited Tikhon and edited a volume of translated Church Slavonic texts. It's worth noting that during this trip to Moscow in 1916-1917, the Russian Revolution took place, and she witnessed the February events, reporting the fall of the Romanov dynasty. The translator became one of the first American journalists to cover the execution of the Romanov family in the U.S. She managed to escape with

¹⁵³ Ingrid Kleespies, "A Knowledge of Russian Such as No American Man Possesses," 255.

help from the American Consul and returned home. For over two decades, Hapgood contributed regularly to the *New York Evening Post* and *The Nation*,¹⁵⁴ firmly establishing herself as an expert in Russian-American relations.

Analyzing the careers of contemporaries Leo Wiener and Isabel Hapgood reveals distinct approaches to translation and scholarship. For Hapgood, translating works from both Russian and French and publishing articles on the Russian Empire in American journals became her primary focus. In contrast, Wiener's academic pursuits led to numerous books and publications across diverse fields, including Jewish and Slavic literature, linguistics, and education, with his translations closely tied to his scholarly career. Notably, however, neither Hapgood nor Wiener began as a specialist in Russian literature — both worked across multiple national literatures and languages, bringing a broad, cosmopolitan perspective to their roles as cultural mediators. Both dedicated themselves to translating Leo Tolstoy's works into English, with Hapgood completing her versions of *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, *Youth* (1886), *Sevastopol Sketches* (1888), and *Life* (1888) during the 1880s — a peak period of Tolstoy's popularity in the U.S. — and Wiener taking on the translations later in 1904 with his complete set of 24 volumes.

Regarding Turgenev, Wiener translated only the excerpts from *Fathers and Sons* that belonged to the second volume of his *Anthology of Russian Literature*. Hapgood focused on translating Turgenev's texts into English in 1903-1904, including the novels *Fathers and Sons*, *A House of Gentlefolk*, *On the Eve*, *Smoke*, *Virgin Soil*, and the book *Memoirs of a Sportsman*, as well as other stories in preparing her 16th volumes series of Turgenev's writings. Therefore, for a comprehensive analysis, it would be more logical to compare Tolstoy's translations by Hapgood

¹⁵⁴"Isabel Florence Hapgood," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified June 22, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Isabel-Florence-Hapgood>.

and Wiener, or Turgenev's translations by Hapgood and Garnett, as these pairings allow for a more meaningful assessment of translation approaches and outcomes.

As the twentieth century began, the two translators concentrated on distinct areas of Russian realist literature — one focusing largely on Tolstoy, the other on Turgenev. This division may have been shaped by publishing contracts. My aim is to illuminate the challenges these early translators encountered, even with shorter passages, and to show how they navigated the linguistic complexities inherent in their work.

These difficulties can be clearly seen in the selections Wiener chose for his *Anthology of Russian Literature, From Earliest Period to the Present Time* (1902), a collection of important works he recommended to his Harvard students. All authors in the anthology are presented in chronological order, each introduced by a brief biographical note. This approach aligns with the author's stated goal of providing context and continuity throughout the collection: "to render a concise, yet sufficient, account of Russian Literature in its totality, to give to the English reader who is not acquainted with any other language than his own a biographical, critical and bibliographical sketch of every important author, to offer representative extracts of what there is best in the language in such a manner as to give a correct idea of the evolution of Russian Literature from its remotest time."¹⁵⁵ Part one contains the authors "from the Tenth Century to the Close of the Eighteenth Century"¹⁵⁶ and second part - 19th century writers and poets.

In the preface to the first volume Wiener emphasizes increasing interest in Russian literature in the U.S. and notes that the translations at the time were weak and obscure: "In England

¹⁵⁵ Wiener, Leo. *Anthology of Russian Literature: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*. Part I: *From the Tenth Century to the Close of the Eighteenth Century*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902, vi.

¹⁵⁶ Wiener, *Anthology of Russian Literature*, pt. 1, ii.

and America there are many signs of a similar interest in their Russian neighbor, though at present it expresses itself mainly in the perusal of Russian novels in translations that rarely rise above mediocrity.”¹⁵⁷

It is noteworthy that the author translated most of the texts for the anthology himself, stating he included only those existing translations he deemed reliable: “To give variety, I have reproduced such of the existing translations as are less objectionable. In my own translations, for which alone I am responsible, I have attempted to render minutely the originals, with their different styles, not excepting their very imperfections, such as characterize particularly the writers of the eighteenth century.”¹⁵⁸ The first volume is a comprehensive work covering all major authors from the period, with a particularly notable section devoted to folklore.

In the second volume, Turgenev’s central importance is immediately signaled by the use of his lines — drawn from his prose poem on the Russian language — as the book’s epigraph: “In days of doubt, in days of anguished thought over the fate of my native land...”¹⁵⁹ Alongside prose and poetry, the anthology features literary criticism by influential figures such as Vissarion Belinsky, writing on the “Natural School,” and Nikolay Dobrolyubov, who addressed “Oblomovism.” The volume spans all major nineteenth-century writers and poets, beginning with Karamzin and concluding with Gorki and Merezhkovski. Altogether, the anthology provides an in-depth exploration of the breadth of Russian literature.

The anthology features excerpts from Ivan Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons* as well as his prose poem “Nature.” The choice of this novel is fitting, as it was the text that secured Turgenev’s widespread popularity in Russia and Europe and was the first of his works translated into English.

¹⁵⁷ Wiener, *Anthology of Russian Literature*, pt. 1, v.

¹⁵⁸ Wiener, *Anthology of Russian Literature*, pt. 1, vi.

¹⁵⁹ Wiener, *Anthology of Russian Literature*, pt. 2, i.

Notably, Wiener brings particular attention to the novel, presenting it as a central work in Turgenev's oeuvre — an important emphasis, given that many American critics during the 1870s-1880-s tended to downplay its significance and considered it less valuable compared to his other writings. The inclusion of "Nature" is also significant, highlighting Turgenev's deep appreciation for the natural world — a recurring theme in his major writings — and demonstrating his poetic style, especially in passages devoted to meditative reflection. As Turgenev composed his prose poems in the 1880s, these pieces may be unfamiliar to American readers. Additionally, the anthology provides a comprehensive list of all English translations of Turgenev's works published up to 1899.¹⁶⁰

The anthology includes excerpts from chapter five of *Fathers and Sons*, featuring the breakfast scene in which Arkady explains Bazarov's ideology to his father and uncle, followed by an open confrontation with Pavel Petrovich. This exchange serves as a prime example of the ideological clashes between the characters. Early in the scene, Arkady introduces the novel's key term, "nihilist," to describe one of Bazarov's defining characteristics to the older generation. The chapter also foreshadows Bazarov's future debates with the "fathers," setting the stage for ongoing generational conflict.

In the analyzed translations, the novel's notion *nihilist*, popularized by Turgenev, is explained in different ways. In the Russian text, it is defined as "a person who does not accept anything": "Нигилист, — проговорил Николай Петрович. — Это от латинского nihil, ничего, сколько я могу судить; стало быть, это слово означает человека, который... который ничего не признает?"¹⁶¹ Here, C.J. Hogarth's translation closely mirrors the original text. "I imagine that

¹⁶⁰ Wiener, *Anthology of Russian Literature*, pt. 2, 281.

¹⁶¹ Turgenev, *Polnoie sobranie sochinenii i pisem v 30 tomakh*. Vol. 7, 25.

that must be a term derived from Latin nihil or nothing. It denotes, I presume, a man who – a man who – well, who declines to accept anything.”¹⁶² Turning to Constance Garnett's version, it introduces the phrase “accepts nothing”: “A nihilist,” said Nikolai Petrovitch. “That's from the Latin, nihil, nothing, as far as I can judge; the word must mean a man who ... who accepts nothing?”¹⁶³ These translations highlight different aspects of Bazarov's personality. In the first version, the translator presents Bazarov as someone who thoughtfully and deliberately “declines to accept anything,” suggesting a reasoned awareness of his position. In contrast, the second translation portrays this trait as more categorical and absolute, implying a stark rejection of common values and a more uncompromising character.

In Wiener's translation, the phrase explaining the unfamiliar concept, will be modified to “acknowledges nothing”: “Nihilist,” – muttered Nikoláy Petróvich. “That is from the Latin nihil, nothing, so far as I can judge; consequently, that word designates a man who – who *acknowledges nothing*?”¹⁶⁴ Interestingly to mention that Hapgood almost kept Wiener's phrase and even enhanced his version as “recognizes nothing”: “He is a nihilist,”- repeated Arkády. “A nihilist,” said Nikolái Petróvitch.-“That comes from the Latin nihil, nothing, so far as I can judge; consequently, that word designates a man who . . . who *recognizes nothing*. “ Say: ' who respects nothing,'”- put in Pável Petróvitch, and devoted himself once more to his butter.”¹⁶⁵ In this instance, Wiener's translation emphasizes Bazarov's active awareness and subsequent rejection of established customs, rituals, traditions, and beliefs, whereas Hapgood's version does not clearly convey this sense of agency —possibly hinting at a more passive or even “childish” stubbornness

¹⁶² Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. Hogarth, 28.

¹⁶³ Turgenev, *Fathers and Children*, 36.

¹⁶⁴ Wiener, *Anthology of Russian Literature*, pt. 2, 283

¹⁶⁵ Turgenev, *Fathers and Children*, trans. Hapgood, 38.

in Bazarov's character. Notably, both Wiener and Hapgood choose words that are closer to the Russian original than those selected by Hogarth or Garnett, though the subtle distinction between "recognizes" (which can be passive) and "acknowledges" (which implies agency) remains significant in shaping our understanding of Bazarov's attitude.

Some phonetic features in how characters pronounce certain phrases might also be difficult to adapt when translating into another language. In the same conversation, Pavel Petrovich explains his stance using the French pronunciation ("old" way) of the word "принцип" - "principle," also pronouncing a soft [r'], while Arkady's pronunciation tended more toward a hard sound [r]: "Вот как. Ну, это, я вижу, не по нашей части. Мы, люди старого века, мы полагаем, что без принципов (Павел Петрович выговаривал это слово мягко, на французский манер, Аркадий, напротив, произносил «прынцип», налегая на первый слог), без принципов, принятых, как ты говоришь, на веру, шагу ступить,дохнуть нельзя." ¹⁶⁶

Wiener, while adhering to the concept of word-for-word translation, chose to eliminate the word "прынцип" and include only an explanation of the way the characters pronounce it: "I declare. Well, that, I see, is beyond us. We are of the older generation; we assume that without principles (Pável Petróvich pronounced this word softly, in the French fashion, Arkádi, on the contrary, pronounced it hard, with a decided accent on the first syllable), without principles taken, as you say, on faith, it is impossible to take a step, or breathe." ¹⁶⁷ Comparing it with Garnett's attempt, I noticed that the second translator fully eliminated the feature, not explaining it as it was not relevant to the target language: "Indeed. Well, I see it's not in our line. We are old-fashioned people; we imagine that without principles, taken as you say on faith, there's no taking a step, no

¹⁶⁶ Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, 7:25.

¹⁶⁷ Wiener, *Anthology of Russian Literature*, pt. 2, 284.

breathing. *Vous avez changé tout cela.*” Garnett again slightly changes Turgenev's phrase by adding a French sentence to it, meaning “You have changed it all.” Notably, Wiener’s approach tends to be less domesticating, striving to preserve source-language features and meanings, even when challenging to render in English. For example, when translating the informal Russian “ты,” Wiener accurately renders it as “you,” which is both true to the Russian and preferable to the archaic “thou” sometimes used for the informal “ты” (as in Hapgood’s translation). By doing so, Wiener maintains the original tone and relationship between the characters more faithfully.

Probably, Wiener experienced a sort of reconnection with Russian culture after moving to the U.S. in his twenties. His position at Harvard University, combined with his specialization in Slavic studies, fueled his research and translation efforts. It is likely that he held a deep admiration for Tolstoy’s writings and aimed to situate them within the broader context of American and world literature.

Describing Wiener’s role as a mediator, I could say that he positioned himself between two cultures while clearly recognizing the unique characteristics of each. As he noted, “The author has drawn his information not only from his own intimate acquaintance with the country of his birth and education, but also from the great store of special monographs accessible to the Russian scholar. He has attempted, without bias or rancor, to present all the sides of the national existence and to moderate the Russian spirit of self-abasement in the light of Anglo-Saxon objectivity and fairness.”¹⁶⁸ At this point the translator states his position as “unbiased”, establishing his role as a leading specialist in Slavic cultures.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Leo Wiener. *An Interpretation of the Russian people* (New York, 1915), 2.

¹⁶⁹ It is difficult to determine how central Wiener considered his rivalry with Isabel Hapgood to his own work. Yet, given Hapgood’s conservative outlook and her interest in Russian Orthodoxy, Wiener may have regarded her approach to Russian literature and culture as less objective than his own. The available evidence does not indicate that his critical assessment of Hapgood changed over time; he appears to have continued to question the scope of her expertise.

While translations of Turgenev's novels began appearing in the U.S. in the late 1860s, *his A Sportsman's Sketches* continued to circulate mainly in German and French editions. One reason for this was that Schuyler's translation of *Fathers and Sons* initially sparked American interest in the Russian novel, a genre that by the late nineteenth century had become especially prominent among American writers drawn to Russian realist prose. This focus fueled a greater demand for longer literary forms. Meanwhile, the American short story tradition — rooted in the works of Edgar Allan Poe and further developed by Nathaniel Hawthorne and O. Henry — was already strong and widely regarded as self-sufficient.¹⁷⁰

Additionally, translating *A Sportsman's Sketches* presented significant stylistic challenges, as Turgenev's prose is notably dense. American writers interested in the book most likely relied on French or German translations — for example, it is likely that Henry James became acquainted with these stories through the French versions.

As mentioned earlier, Hapgood shifted her focus from Tolstoy to Turgenev after publishing her *Survey* (1902). Although she once viewed Turgenev as a “cold writer” compared to Tolstoy, she now praised the mastery of his style: he “not only to have produced the *most artistic pictures of that sphere ever written by a Russian*, but to have summed up in his longer novels devoted to the higher classes, in a manner not to be surpassed, and *in a language and style as polished and brilliant as a collection of precious stones*.”¹⁷¹ In the same passage later Hapgood identifies Turgenev as the creator of the Russian artistic novel, “carrying it to the pitch of perfection in the matter of elegance, and finely proportioned exposition and arrangement of its parts — its

¹⁷⁰ See for example Jennifer J. Smith. *The American Short Story Cycle*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

¹⁷¹ Isabel Hapgood. *A Survey of Russian Literature, with Selections*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902, 164.

architecture, so to speak — combined with artless simplicity and realism”. She mentioned that his style is marked by soft, tender tones and subtle detail, evoking the atmosphere of central Russia. The writer is celebrated for his “vivid landscapes and his sensitive portrayal of romantic emotions, earning him the title “bard of love.””¹⁷² Hapgood also underlined that his works feature a gallery of Russian women from the 1850s and 1860s, depicted with exceptional depth and moral grandeur — often surpassing the male characters in significance and strength.¹⁷³ In this brief passage, the translator highlights the very qualities of Turgenev’s work that most appealed to American audiences — from his realism to his nuanced portrayal of female characters. There are also notable parallels between this introduction and Henry James’s reviews of Turgenev.¹⁷⁴

A Survey includes Hapgood’s translation of Turgenev’s story “Biryuk” from *A Sportsman’s Sketches*. In Russian, “Biryuk” refers to a solitary man living alone in a remote area; in the story, the main character is a forest ranger responsible for guarding his master’s trees. Hapgood translates the title as “The Wolf,” employing a “translation by meaning” that draws a parallel between the title and the peasant protagonist’s character. It seems likely that Hapgood’s engagement with Turgenev began during her work on *A Survey*, as she discovered his distinctive style while translating this passage. Additionally, Henry James’s admiration for Turgenev may have further inspired her interest in the writer.

Hapgood’s version of *Zapiski okhotnika* appeared eight years after another important translation, in 1915, produced by Constance Garnett. Upon examining two translations of *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, it is notable that Garnett opts for a title that is more closely aligned with the original. In contrast, Isabel Hapgood modifies the title to, she has - *Memoirs of A Sportsman* - to

¹⁷² Hapgood, *A Survey of Russian Literature*, 170.

¹⁷³ Hapgood, *A Survey of Russian Literature*, 170.

¹⁷⁴ Henry James, “Ivan Turgenev,” *The Century Magazine* 28, no. 1 (November 1884): 61–66.

evoke a greater sense of nostalgia (here the French influence also may be traced). In her preface, she emphasizes that Turgenev began writing these sketches while in France: “Most of them, however, were written abroad, whither he betook himself in 1848, intending never to return, because the thought of life in his native land was painful and oppressive”.¹⁷⁵

I analyze two episodes from the stories “Khor and Kalinych” and “Byezhin Meadow” as examples — one illustrating the adaptation of Turgenev’s dialogue with the character Khor, and the other showcasing the vivid nature imagery.

In the scene featuring the conversation between the hunter and the peasant Khor’ (whose name can be translated as “ferret”), multiple narrative layers unfold. The narrator’s earlier comparison of Khor to Socrates highlights the character’s distinctive wisdom and, notably, elevates the peasant to the status of a philosopher. In contrast to Kalinych, Khor embodies rationality and serves as a voice of reason within the story’s structure. The depiction of the hunter’s distant yet respectful relationship with the peasant was notably progressive for its time. The narrator sees in each peasant character a strong and unique personality. However, from Khor’s attitude — despite the narrator’s position as a hunter rather than a landlord — he prefers to be cautious and avoid answering his question directly, instead dodging it. Since for peasants the usual routine was living in “commune” (“obshchina”), Khor’s experience was quite distinguishing — his family lives separately and operates as a successful farm, which was more aligned with European farming in the middle of the 19th century. The narrator, who leans toward a Western way of thinking, raises the question of why Khor’ could not buy his freedom, since such an option existed for him, allowing him to become a merchant.

¹⁷⁵ Turgenev, Ivan. *Memoirs of a Sportsman*. Translated from the Russian by Isabel F. Hapgood. Vol. 1. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903.

Table 1. The comparative translation of the pieces from “Khor’ and Kalinych.”

<i>Ivan Turgenev</i>	<i>Translation by Isabel Hapgood</i>	<i>Translation by Constance Garnett</i>
“Так оно как-то странно выходило. Хорь выражался иногда мудрено, должно быть, из осторожности... Вот вам образчик нашего разговора: — Послушай-ка, Хорь, — говорил я ему, — отчего ты не откупишься от своего барина? — А для чего мне откупаться? Теперь я своего барина знаю и оброк свой знаю... барин у нас хороший.	“Somehow, it turned out so strangely. Khor sometimes expressed himself queerly, out of wariness, it must have been.... Here is a sample of our conversation: "See here, Khor," I said to him: "why dost not thou buy thy freedom from thy master?" “And why should I buy my freedom? As it is, I know my master, and I know what quit-rent I have to pay. . . . we	“In this way our conversation was rather curious. <i>Hor</i>, doubtless through caution, expressed himself very obscurely at times.... Here is a specimen of our talk. Tell me, <i>Hor</i>,' I said to him, 'why don't you buy your freedom from your master?' 'And what would I buy my freedom for? Now I know my master, and I know my rent.... We have a good master.'

	have a good master.”	
— Всё же лучше на свободе, — заметил я.	“But it is better to be free, nevertheless,"-I remarked.	'It's always better to be free, I remarked.
Хорь посмотрел на меня сбоку.	Khor gazed askance at me.	Hor gave me a dubious look.
— Вестимо, — проговорил он.	“Of course," said he.	'Surely,' he said
— Ну, так отчего же <i>ты</i> не откупаешься?	"Well, then, <i>why dost not thou</i> buy thyself free?"	'Well, then, <i>why don't you buy</i> <i>your freedom?</i> '
Хорь покрутил головой.	Khor twisted his head around	Hor shook his head.
— <i>Чем, батюшка,</i> <i>откупиться прикажешь?</i>	.“ <i>Wherewith wouldst thou</i> <i>have me buy my freedom,</i> <i>dear little father?</i> ”	' <i>What would you have me buy</i> <i>it with, your honour?</i> '
— Ну, полно, старина... ...	“Come now, enough of that, old man.....” ...	'Oh, come, now, old man!'... ...
— А что, ведь <i>ты</i> тоже торговлей занимаешься? — спросил я его.	"What then, <i>thou</i> art engaged in trade also, art thou not?"- I asked him.	' <i>Why, do you do a little trading</i> <i>too?</i> ' I asked him.

— Торгуем помаленьку маслишком да дегтишком... Что же, тележку, батюшка, прикажешь заложить?	"We do a little trade in butter and tar....Dost thou command us to harness up the light cart, dear little father?"	'We trade a little in a little butter and a little tar.... Would your honor like the cart put to?'
«Крепок <i>ты</i> на язык и человек себе на уме», — подумал я.	“ <i>Thou</i> keeps a tight rein on thy tongue, and art a man who knows his own mind,” I thought.	' <i>You</i> 're a close man and keep a tight rein on your tongue, I thought to myself.

Hapgood's overall translation remains largely faithful to the original text without introducing significant deviations or added phrases. However, her sentence constructions often feel more old-fashioned, and her word-for-word approach sometimes results in a less natural, heavier style. For instance, to render the Russian informal “ты,” Hapgood uses the archaic English pronoun “thou,” a form now mostly found in religious or 18th-century texts.¹⁷⁶ For example, Turgenev's phrase, “*Ну, так отчего же ты не откупаешься?*”¹⁷⁷ becomes in Hapgood: “*Well, then, why dost not thou buy thyself free?*” This choice, while technically accurate in capturing the informal register, can sound stilted and dated to modern readers.

Garnett, by contrast, simply omits the distinction, defaulting to the modern English “you,” as in: “*Well, then, why don't you buy your freedom?*”¹⁷⁸ While this approach sacrifices the nuance

¹⁷⁶ Hapgood may have conflated two distinct stylistic registers: in English, “thou” is strongly associated with biblical and religious language and therefore carries an elevated or archaic tone, whereas the Russian *ty* (“you”) is the informal singular form of address.

¹⁷⁷ I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem: v tridsati tomakh*. Sochineniia. Vol. 3, *Zapiski okhotnika* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 12.

¹⁷⁸ Ivan Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, trans. Constance Garnett (London: Heinemann, 1895), 9-11

of social hierarchy inherent in the Russian, it results in a smoother and more natural English rendering. The challenge here is that modern English does not offer a direct equivalent for the informal “ты,” a distinction crucial for conveying the subaltern status of a character like Khor’, which both speakers in the Russian take for granted. Hapgood’s use of “thou” an attempt to signal both informality and formality, but in doing so, she introduces a level of archaism that may distance contemporary readers from the text, whereas Garnett opts for clarity and readability, even at the expense of this subtle social cue.

In the phrase “Хорь выражался иногда мудрено, должно быть, из осторожности...”¹⁷⁹ Hapgood makes the sentence more precise, aiming for a word-by-word translation: “*Khor sometimes expressed himself queerly, out of wariness, it must have been.*”¹⁸⁰ She also connects the sense of “мудрено” with “*queerly*” - meaning strange or peculiar. In the dynamics of relationships between Khor’ and Kalinych in the story, rationalism and common sense clearly favor Khor’. Garnett rewrites the sentence smoothly, maintaining the original idea - in her version, “*Hor, doubtless through caution, expressed himself very obscurely at times.*”

When the question comes to his business, Khor’ keeps diminutives in his speech, probably downplaying his success in the narrator’s eyes: “Торгуем помаленьку маслишком да дегтишком...”¹⁸¹. Hapgood saves the first part of the sentence, “*We do a little trade in butter and tar*”¹⁸². In Garnett’s case, the sentence “*We trade a little in a little butter and a little tar...*”¹⁸³ keeps the initial meaning.

¹⁷⁹ Turgenev, *Zapiski okhotnika*, 12.

¹⁸⁰ Turgenev, *Memoirs of a Sportsman*, 12–14.

¹⁸¹ Turgenev, *Zapiski okhotnika*, 12.

¹⁸² Turgenev, *Memoirs of a Sportsman*, 12–14.

¹⁸³ Turgenev, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, trans. Constance Garnett, 9-11

Finally, the noun “бабушка,” used by Khor’ when addressing the hunter, posed a particular challenge for Hapgood. In Russian, “бабушка” is a cordial diminutive often used when addressing a priest, a landlord, or as a respectful term for an elder. Hapgood renders this as “dear little father,”¹⁸⁴ attempting to capture the diminutive form, but her paraphrase does not accurately convey the original meaning or the nuance of the address in the target language. In contrast, Garnett effectively parallels the intent and formality of the original by translating the phrase as “your honor,”¹⁸⁵ which better reflects the respectful address appropriate in English. Hapgood’s literal paraphrasing, while attentive to the affectionate diminutive, ultimately fails to provide an equivalent form of address for the English-speaking reader.

One of the most poetic stories in the collection, “Bezhin Meadow,” was translated by the British translator Constance Garnett as “Byezhin Prairie,” a choice that emphasizes the vastness of the landscape and evokes the image of the “endless Russian steppe.” In contrast, Hapgood opts for the more accurate and familiar term “meadow.”

Turgenev’s style is especially notable for its vivid portrayal of nature, capturing the world through the hunter’s eyes. The reader is drawn into the landscape, able to hear the surrounding sounds and sense the atmosphere alongside the storyteller. In the story’s opening, the sky’s colors are rendered in a full spectrum, seamlessly blending as the narrative unfolds — much like a carefully staged scene in the theater: “С самого раннего утра небо ясно; утренняя заря не пылает пожаром: она разливается *кротким румянцем*. Солнце — не огнистое, не раскаленное, как во время знойной засухи, не тускло-багровое, как перед бурей, но *светлое*

¹⁸⁴ Turgenev, *Memoirs of a Sportsman*, 12–14.

¹⁸⁵ Turgenev, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, trans. Constance Garnett, 9-11

и приветно лучезарное — мирно всплывает под узкой и длинной тучкой, свежо просияет и погрузится в лиловый ее туман.”¹⁸⁶

In this passage, Turgenev’s mastery in describing the morning sky in all its living colors might pose a challenge for both translators. Thus, in Garnett’s case the dynamics of the episode together with the invented color tones are fully presented: “From earliest morning the sky is clear; the sunrise does not glow with fire; it is suffused with a *soft roseate flush*. The sun, not fiery, not red-hot as in time of stifling drought, not dull purple as before a storm, but with *a bright and genial radiance, rises peacefully* behind a long and narrow cloud, shines out freshly, and *plunges again into its lilac mist.*”¹⁸⁷

In contrast, Hapgood tends to be more schematic in her translation, which might affect these lyrical passages: “From the very earliest dawn the sky is clear; the morning glow does not flame like a conflagration: it pours itself forth in *a gentle flush*. The sun, not fiery, not red-hot, as in the season of sultry drought, not of a dull crimson, as before a tempest, but bright, and *agreeably radiant*, glides up peacefully under a long, narrow cloudlet, beams freshly, and *plunges into its lilac mist.*”¹⁸⁸ Even with an attempt to preserve initial Turgenev’s initial colors, the text loses its unique texture.

If I compare some phrases, they again will reveal the schematic and more formal approach by Hapgood, for instance, “pours itself forth in a gentle flush” and “glides up peacefully under a long, narrow cloudlet.” They preserve Russian cadence but can feel slightly stiff in English. The archaic way of setting up the phrase leads to losing the poetic texture in the story.

¹⁸⁶ Ivan Turgenev, *Polnoie sobranie sochinenii i pisem v 30 tomakh*. Vol. 3. 12 vols. (Moskva: Nauka, 1979), 86.

¹⁸⁷ Turgenev, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, trans. Constance Garnett, 113.

¹⁸⁸ Turgenev, *Memoirs of a Sportsman*, 151

Garnett, by contrast, opts for smoother, more poetic phrasing: “suffused with a soft roseate flush” and “rises peacefully behind a long and narrow cloud,” which evoke a painterly atmosphere and resonate more naturally with English readers. While Hapgood’s translation retains cultural nuance and structural precision, Garnett’s flows with lyrical ease, capturing the serene beauty and emotional tone of Turgenev’s nature imagery more vividly.

Hapgood’s translation is faithful and clear, but her more literal phrasing can diminish the musicality and emotional warmth of Turgenev’s prose. Garnett, though sometimes more flexible, captures the atmospheric lyricism that characterizes Turgenev’s nature writing — especially in sketches like “Byezhin Prairie,” where the landscape almost becomes a character itself.

The American translation of *A Sportsman’s Sketches* is now largely forgotten, while the English version remains widely used. This difference in recognition reflects the translators’ contrasting approaches. Isabel Hapgood’s early 20th-century translation offered a unique perspective, but it was Constance Garnett’s more accessible rendering — better attuned to the nuances of Turgenev’s style — that enabled the stories to resonate with readers throughout the 20th century and beyond. Garnett’s translations were, in fact, accessible to American readers, as they were frequently reprinted and circulated in the United States, further contributing to their enduring popularity.

In studying the reception of Ivan Turgenev’s writings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I focused on early American translators of Russian literature who have received little scholarly attention. Analysis of specific excerpts from *A Sportsman’s Sketches* and *Fathers and Sons* reveals that Eugene Schuyler often relied on word-for-word paraphrasing, which sacrificed much of Turgenev’s original style and nuance. Similarly, Isabel Hapgood’s translations tended to be highly literal, resulting at times in stiff or awkward English that closely mirrored the

structure of the source text. In both cases, French translations appear to have heavily influenced the English versions. By contrast, Leo Wiener strove to preserve the original meaning of the Russian and resisted “domesticating” the language, adopting an academic approach designed to reflect the authentic speech of the characters as it would have been at the time. This comparative analysis is valuable because it highlights how both Wiener and Hapgood, through their distinct translation strategies, contributed to shaping American perceptions of Russian literature. Their translations reflect not only differing attitudes toward linguistic fidelity and readability, but also the broader American fascination with Russian culture at the turn of the century.

After the initial introduction of Turgenev’s work during 1860s-1970-s, these translations reflect a growing cultural demand for multiple mediators and for the active translation and publication of Russian literature at the turn of the century. They also mark a shift from relying on intermediary languages to pursuing more direct translations from Russian. This evolution reveals a period of genuine curiosity and engagement, as well as the challenges translators faced in navigating linguistic and cultural differences.

Chapter 3. From Reception to Influence: Turgenev's Writings and the Pursuit of Realism in the United States (1860s–1900s).

A. American literary context during 1865-1900s: evolvement of realism, naturalism, and regionalism. Self-identity.

The reception of Russian literature, particularly the works of Turgenev, coincided with a new phase in American culture from the 1860s to the 1900s. This period marked a separation from British heritage, which occurred alongside a rejection of the romanticism tradition and a shift towards establishing new, "more realistic" patterns in literature. Emerging as a reaction against romantic idealism, realism aimed to depict everyday life with honesty, psychological depth, and social awareness. Influenced by European writers and shaped by historical events, nineteenth-century American novelists such as William Dean Howells and Henry James explored the complexities of ordinary characters facing moral and cultural dilemmas. This movement gradually gave rise to naturalism, which emphasized the deterministic forces of environment and heredity, as exemplified by Stephen Crane and Frank Norris. At the same time, regionalism thrived through authors like Kate Chopin and Hamlin Garland, who vividly portrayed the unique voices and customs of America's varied locales. Collectively, these movements marked a literary shift toward greater authenticity and social critique.

The development of American realism started about 30 years after it first emerged in Europe. Important social and political factors included the rise of a new era in American history following the Civil War, characterized by the abolition of slavery and the reconstruction of the South, while the North and the entire country underwent rapid industrialization. Exploring the frontier and its unique spirit also played a part. Additionally, the quick growth of the immigrant

population contributed to these changes.¹⁸⁹ Mentioned elements raised questions about the portrayal of modern life in American literature and what distinguishes it. Ultimately, this led to inquiries about national self-identity and the positioning of American literature within a broader global context.

While American realism, following the European tradition, positioned itself in opposition to romanticism, its development took a distinctly different course. Nevertheless, each of these mentioned above movements retained certain elements of romanticism within their evolving literary frameworks: “the opposition (between realist and romanticism) in American literature was much less vivid than in most European countries; their relations were based more on principles of complementarity and creative dialogue, the rapprochement and synthesis of opposites, rather than confrontation and irreconcilable struggle. Although the development of realism undoubtedly included a rejection of the extremes of Romanticism. American Romanticism was more oriented toward reality, and realism in the United States retained Romantic notions of the world and humanity for much longer than it did in Europe.”¹⁹⁰ Unlike in the history of Russian or European literature generally, in the U.S., the three movements developed nearly simultaneously.

At this point, the tradition of Russian literature being received as a distinguished part of the European context was established. However, the influence was not limited to any one European tradition, such as English, French, German, or Russian, but was rather mixed. For example, Honoré de Balzac’s detailed social panoramas inspired Howells’s dedication to depicting ordinary life with complexity, while George Eliot’s ethical reflections and psychological realism shaped both Howells’ and Henry James’s narrative styles. Émile Zola’s naturalism, though more controversial,

¹⁸⁹ *Istoriia literatury SShA*, ed. Ia. N. Zasurskii (Moskva: IMLI RAN, 2003), 11.

¹⁹⁰ *Istoriia literatury SShA*, 11.

contributed to Howells's understanding of determinism and social forces in fiction. Additionally, British authors such as William Makepeace Thackeray influenced Howells's view of literature as a moral mirror of society. By the 1870s, however, Russian novels — especially those by Turgenev — began to set the standard for realism, gradually eclipsing the influence of French literature. What factors contributed to this shift?

According to Dale Peterson, “by the early 1880s, a militant new school of American theorists of the novel had fully emerged from the literary columns of “quality” eastern journals such as *Atlantic Monthly* and *The Nation*.¹⁹¹ Turgenev was promoted by writers, critics, and editors of U.S. (New England) journals at that time, including T.S. Perry, W.D. Howells, H. Boyesen, J.P. Lathrop, and, of course, H. James. Both William Dean Howells and Henry James, as leading figures in a new movement, not only followed European literary trends but also incorporated those ideas into their own writings. Analyzing the key pieces focused on Turgenev among the three reviewers — Perry, Howells, and James — I noticed that only James mentioned the term “searching realist”,¹⁹² elaborating on the question of new principles for depicting real life in literature. Perry and Howells use nearly similar notions, referring to “being truthful to life”.¹⁹³ What American critics sought in contemporary Russian literature was its strong connection to society and its resonance with the nation's readers. Despite the dominance of British books in the market, these reviewers encouraged American authors to create similarly engaged literature and urged readers to embrace it. Moreover, all the critics mentioned above aimed to educate their audience and inspire the next generation of American writers.

¹⁹¹ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 7

¹⁹² Henry James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1904), 213

¹⁹³ See for example, T.S. Perry, “Ivan Turgeneff,” *The Nation* 12, no. 307 (May 18, 1871): 340, William Dean Howells, “Ivan Turgenev,” in *Criticism and Fiction, and Other Essays*, ed. Clara Marburg Kirk and Rudolf Kirk (New York: New York University Press, 1959), 110–11.

Not coincidentally, the primary interest in Turgenev occurred during the Reconstruction period. Dale Peterson shares the idea of a constant search for national ideological unity during that time, shaped by the trend to unite the South and Northern parts and triggered by a general concern about diversity and pluralism. “The period was beset with anxiety that the flux of surface diversities might render incoherent the hoped-for scenario of triumphant reunion.”¹⁹⁴ In this context, the national idea — or “myth of unity” — served as the foundation for the diverse body of works that came to define nineteenth-century American realism. It was upon this groundwork that the concept of the “great American novel” emerged.

Given the cultural demand for the new “realistic” novel, why was Turgenev chosen as one of the important writers in the formation of this genre? Mikhail Feklin, in his study on Turgenev in England, argued that this writer’s prose became a middle ground for those critics, promoting a new style. Turgenev’s prose, as Feklin suggests, represents a harmonious synthesis between the often tedious and convoluted multi-plot structures found in English novels and the dense, intricate narratives typical of French literature: his work “seemed like a golden mean between the bland, multi-plot English novel and French prose, which demanded... excessive mental effort.”¹⁹⁵ A similar idea was expressed by W.D. Howells and T.S. Perry during their 1912 conversation on modern Russian literature: talking about the French novels, they both admire clear Tolstoy’s style in *War and Peace*: “Perry: Almost crude at moments. In the French there would be those old and faded flowers of rhetoric brought in. Where he said he did not like a certain thing at all in French would say the thing “seemed repugnant to him.”¹⁹⁶ Besides that, as Dale Peterson initially states,

¹⁹⁴ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 8

¹⁹⁵ Feklin, *The Beautiful Genius*, 82.

¹⁹⁶ W. D. Howells & T. S. Perry, “Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation,” *North American Review*, July 1912, 94

the idea of promoting the British or French author at that point was diminished in terms of overcoming “the weighty cultural authority of English didacticism” or French “paganism.”¹⁹⁷ He also suggests, similar to Feklin's idea, that Turgenev offered a “middle course” with his “narrative model which spoke directly to the felt anxieties of Reconstruction intellectuals who were equally wary of Anglo-Saxon morality and French license.”¹⁹⁸ In overcoming these two traditions, the first — British — was seen as too focused on simple moralism, and the second was less appropriate because it lacked a moral element.

This “golden mean” not only made Russian writers’ work more accessible to a broader audience but also introduced a new dimension to the realist movement. By balancing clarity with depth, Turgenev was able to engage readers on multiple levels — inviting them to appreciate the nuances of human experience without overwhelming them with complexity.

Beyond stylistic traits, I argue that both Turgenev and, later, Tolstoy were deeply rooted in their national context, thematically centering their works on the search for Russian identity. Turgenev, in particular, portrays a gallery of quintessentially Russian characters — emotionally strong, mature women and weak, doubt-ridden, impractical men — offering a nuanced reflection of “Russianness” in a specific historical period. This preoccupation with defining a national character is evident from his earliest work, *A Sportsman's Sketches* (1852), and continues through his later novels and essays, such as “Hamlet and Don Quixote” (1860), where he attempts to distill two archetypal personalities.

Importantly, American writers and critics recognized a parallel between the Russian literary search for national identity and their own. While British and French literature often assumed a

¹⁹⁷ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 9

¹⁹⁸ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 21

stable national identity and tended to universalize their cultural experience, Russian and American literature of this period were marked by active self-examination and a persistent questioning of what defines a nation.

It's also noteworthy that Turgenev after reading W.D. Howells' novel *Their Wedding Journey*, emphasized the mastery of the writer in portraying typically American characters.¹⁹⁹ On October 28, 1874, Turgenev wrote the only letter known to Howells, thanking him for sending the novel *Their Wedding Journey* (1872). Not long before that, Howells in *The Atlantic* (March 1874), quoted Turgenev's statement that nothing great is created outside the national. And now, in his letter to Howells, Turgenev phrases him first and foremost as a national writer with "the stamp of Americanism" ("с печатью американизма") on everything he writes. Turgenev's letter ends with a wish to meet Howells someday.

Therefore, Turgenev's American critics, who also served as editors or contributors to national magazines, were concerned with cultivating the reading public's tastes and shaping a new style in American literature. As Mikhail Feklin states, they saw Turgenev as "the most acceptable model for American writers themselves and a convenient tool for shaping the tastes of American readers."²⁰⁰

How influential was Turgenev among American writers during 1870-s may be see in W. D. Howells memoirs: "In those days, on the Atlantic coast, all the young writers were reading Turgenev. This Russian writer... opened a new world to him—and it was the only real world."²⁰¹ I then trace this tradition to Howells's follower, Hamlin Garland, who not only acknowledges the influence of Russian literature in his own prose but also articulates a new aesthetic of regionalism

¹⁹⁹ According to Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosviazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 98.

²⁰⁰ Feklin, *The Beautiful Genius*, 82.

²⁰¹ William Dean Howells, *European and American Masters* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 41.

in his book *Crumbling Idols*. Finally, Henry James, influenced by the Russian writer throughout his career, called him "a novelist for novelists" — establishing this role for young writers in the U.S. A similar approach to Russian writing as a distinct literary school continued into the early 20th century, including in Sherwood Anderson's work.

A surge of interest in Turgenev's writings occurred in the 1870s, as evidenced by the number of translations published in the U.S. during that period. I have already mentioned Eugene Schuler's version of the novel *Fathers and Sons* (1867). *Smoke* was translated in 1872 and a series of various texts appeared in 1873, including *Dimitri Roudine* (translated by T.S. Perry, published in Leisure Hour Series, New York), *On the Eve* (translated by C. E. Turner, New York) and *Liza; or, A Nest of Nobles*. In 1875, *Three Meetings* appeared in *Lippincott's*, followed by *The Watch* and *The Living Mummy* in 1876, published in *Lippincott's* and *Scribner's Monthly*, respectively. In 1877, another novel translated by T. S. Perry was published in New York: *Virgin Soil*.

In the next decade, in 1882, G.W. Scott published *Punin and Baburin* in New York's *Seaside Library*. In the year 1883, Eugene Schuyler's *Fathers and Sons* (Leisure Hour Series and Seaside Library) were reprinted, and *Song of Triumphant Love* was translated (Seaside Library). In 1884, Henry Gersoni's translation of "Mumu" and "Diary of a Superfluous Man" released in New York.²⁰² Same translator followed in 1886 with *An Unfortunate Woman* and *Assya* in the *Standard Library*.²⁰³ Finally, in 1891, *Tales from a Stormy Night* was published in New York.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Ivan Turgenev, *Mumu; and The Diary of a Superfluous Man*, trans. Henry Gersoni (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884).

²⁰³ Ivan Turgenev, *An Unfortunate Woman, and Ass'ya*, trans. Henry Gersoni (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1886).

²⁰⁴ The list, based on Leo Wiener's catalogue included in the *Anthology*, offers the full range of English translations published in both Great Britain and the U.S., assuming all were easily accessible to the U.S. audience. See Wiener, *Anthology of Russian Literature*, pt. 2, 280-282.

Besides that, the eight volumes of Ivan Turgenev's collected works were published in New York by Henry Holt & Company as part of the *Leisure Hour Series* between 1867 and 1885.²⁰⁵ Turgenev was also part of Holt's entire series, which aimed to introduce European literature to American audiences. The seventh volume included Perry's translation of *Virgin Soil* (Nov', 1877). I can claim that, Turgenev was more popular in the United States than in England in the mid-19th century, as Royal Gettman points out when comparing the number of works published by the author in the two countries.²⁰⁶

The sudden popularity of Turgenev in the U.S. was reflected in his letter to P.V. Annenkov, dated January 26, 1874, in which he reports on the unexpected success that has come to him in America: "...A certain publisher, Holt, who has been publishing translations of my works for five years now. Since no literary convention exists between Russia and America, Holt did not think to ask me for any authority... yesterday I received a letter from Holt in which he informs me that at first the sale of my works went poorly, but now he has made such a profit from them that he can send me 1,000 francs as a reward."²⁰⁷

The wave of general fascination with Turgenev had already noticeably subsided in the 1880s; the writer gave way to his compatriots – Leo Tolstoy (discovered by W.D. Howells and Isabel Hapgood), Fedor Dostoevsky, Nikolai Gogol, and at the beginning of the 20th century, the names of Anton Chekhov and Maxim Gorky were inscribed in the American literary history as well. However, Turgenev's influence had not completely vanished; rather, it firmly entered the

²⁰⁵ Yachnin and Stam, *Ivan Turgenev: A Checklist of Works by and about Him*, 17.

²⁰⁶ Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America*, 37

²⁰⁷ I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem: v tridsati tomakh*. Pis'ma. Vol. 10, 1869–1870 (Moscow: Nauka, 1994), 425.

general flow of Russian literature and the fascination with Slavic culture at the beginning of the 20th century.

B. Appreciation of Turgenev's Realism in T.S. Perry's criticism.

Thomas Sergeant Perry (1845–1928) played a pivotal role in introducing Ivan Turgenev's literary works to American audiences during the 1870s and 1880s. As a critic, writer, and translator, Perry distinguished himself as an exemplary cultural mediator, significantly shaping American perceptions of Russian literature. His academic journey commenced at Harvard University, where he not only completed his studies but also maintained enduring ties to this intellectual hub in Boston throughout his lifetime. After his graduation from Harvard in 1866 Perry lived for two years in Europe. Following a period of residence in Europe, Perry returned to Harvard to serve as a tutor in German and French. Later in the 1870s, he was appointed an instructor in English at Harvard. His life was characterized by extensive travel across Europe, mirroring the experiences of his contemporary, Henry James, with whom he maintained a close friendship throughout his life. Upon each return from his various foreign sojourns, Perry expressed a profound hesitance to reacquaint himself with what he perceived as the emptiness of Boston, highlighting the tension between his appreciation for European cultural landscapes and his home country.²⁰⁸

His role was instrumental in broadening American literary horizons by championing major European authors and their works during the late 19th century. As editor of the *North American Review* from 1872 to 1874, Perry helped integrate international voices into mainstream American discourse. He also contributed essays and reviews to influential magazines such as *the Atlantic*

²⁰⁸Virginia Harlow, *Thomas Sergeant Perry: A Biography and Letters to Perry from William, Henry and Garth Wilkinson James* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1950), v.

Monthly and *The Nation*, further promoting the works of European literary giants such as Goethe, Flaubert, and Tolstoy. His elegant translations and incisive criticism made these authors accessible to American readers.²⁰⁹ When Howells took the editorial position at the *Atlantic*, he offered Perry the chance to lead the department of “Recent Literature,” where his reviews on French and German publications appear, including those devoted to translations of Turgenev.

Perry’s experience extended well beyond European and Russian cultures. His academic roles at Harvard and Keio University in Japan (1897-1901) highlighted his dedication to cross-cultural exchange. Through these efforts, Perry promoted a more global perspective in U.S. literary criticism.

As previously noted, promoters of foreign literature in the U.S. — including translators, reviewers, and critics — played a vital role in shaping literary taste, with Perry being a prime example. Virginia Harlow describes him as a pioneer in introducing both Russian and French writers to American audiences: “He was a pioneer in appreciation of Turgenev and the Russian and French novelists, with Howells and James, he staunchly upheld the cause of realism in fiction against the romanticism of popular novelists and against the coming naturalism of Zola.”²¹⁰ Finally, Perry introduced Turgenev’s writing to W.D. Howells and Hamlin Garland²¹¹ and popularized the ideas of realism in his criticism. According to Mikhail Alekseev, “Perry particularly emphasized that Turgenev 'stands with both feet on the ground,' that in his works he offers not 'pictures taken from the surface of life,' but 'life itself in its course.'” The masters of the Western European novel, from the point of view of Perry and his associates, met the new demands

²⁰⁹ In distinction to Schuyler, Hapgood, or Wiener, Perry did not translate Turgenev’s texts from Russian - he used French and German versions for the translations.

²¹⁰ Harlow, *Thomas Sergeant Perry*, v.

²¹¹ Donald Pizer, “Evolution and Criticism: Thomas Sergeant Perry,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1961): 349-350; Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosviazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 951.

of realistic art to a significantly lesser degree than Turgenev's work, because while these writers "described" life, Turgenev "recreated" it."²¹²

In addition to his work on American literature, T.S. Perry wrote extensively about European authors, especially those from Germany and France. His writings spanned a wide array of topics, including literature, criticism, history, biography, and studies in philosophy and religion. According to Virginia Harlow's research, Perry authored 299 essays on American literature, 200 on French authors, and about 100 each on English and German literature. Notably, between 1871 and 1881, he also published 17 essays focused on Russian literature.²¹³

Between 1871 and 1877, Perry translated several of Ivan Turgenev's works into English for American periodicals and publishers.²¹⁴ His translation of the story "Mou-Mou" appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine* (Vol. VII, April 1871, pp. 372–387), followed later that year by "A Correspondence" in *Galaxy* (Vol. XII, October 1871, pp. 451–469). In 1872, Perry published his version of Turgenev's novella "Faust" in *Galaxy* (Vol. XIII, May–June, pp. 621–634, 734). He also translated two of Turgenev's novels from French editions. The first, *Dimitri Roudine*, was serialized in *Every Saturday* (Vol. III, new series, January 28–April 26, 1873). His most substantial contribution came with the 1877 Boston edition of *Virgin Soil*, also translated from French with Turgenev's authorization, published as part of the Leisure Hour Series.²¹⁵ These translations not

²¹²M. P. Alekseev, "Mirovoje Znachenije 'Zapisok Okhotnika' [The World Significance of A Sportsman's Sketches]," in *Tvorchestvo Turgeneva. Sbornik statei*, Turgenev-lit.ru, accessed November 17, 2025, <https://turgenev-lit.ru/turgenev/kritika-o-turgeneve/tvorchestvo-turgeneva-sbornik/alekseev-mirovoe-znachenie-zapisok-ohotnika.htm>.

²¹³ Virginia Harlow, *Thomas Sergeant Perry*, 195.

²¹⁴ Virginia Harlow, *Thomas Sergeant Perry*, 359.

²¹⁵ The interest of the reading audience in this novel could be explored further in research — in both Europe and the U.S., readers received the novel in the same year it was published in Russia, 1877. This suggests that Turgenev stayed in contact with several translators, as it appeared simultaneously in French, English, and German. According to the novel's commentaries, the early German translation was coordinated with the author, and the manuscript was sent to the German *St. Petersburg Zeitung* before it was published in *Vestnik Evropy*. See M. P. Alekseev, "Примечания к роману 'Новь'" [Notes

only broadened Turgenev's reach in the English-speaking world but also established Perry as one of the foremost mediators of Russian literature in 19th-century America.

Additionally, between 1871 and 1875, Perry played a pivotal role in introducing Ivan Turgenev to American readers through a series of insightful reviews and essays published in *The Nation* and *The Atlantic Monthly*.²¹⁶ During the specified period, Turgenev's name is the only one from Russian writers in the list. His earliest piece, "Ivan Turgeneff," appeared in *The Nation* on May 18, 1871 (Vol. XII, pp. 340–341), offering an opening critique of the new Russian author's work - the English version of the novel *On the Eve*.²¹⁷ He followed with a review of Otto Glagau's book *Die russische Literatur und Iwan Turgénjew* (Berlin, 1872). The following year, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (November 1872), he discussed the German edition of *Spring Floods*. Perry continued his advocacy with another review on *On the Eve* in 1873 (*The Nation*, Vol. XVI, March 27, pp. 219–221) and *Dimitri Roudine* (*The Nation*, Vol. XVII, July 31, pp. 73–74) the same year.²¹⁸

Perry continued his engagement with Turgenev's works in *The Atlantic Monthly* (Jan-Jun 1874), where his extended essay "Ivan Turgénieff" appeared, and in June 1875, he reviewed the new German translation of *Sportsman's Sketches* under the title *Skizzen aus dem Tagebuche eines Jägers* (*Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XXXV, June 1875, pp. 747–749)²¹⁹ and another German translation

to the novel *Virgin Soil*], *Turgenev-lit.ru*, accessed November 17, 2025, <https://turgenev-lit.ru/turgenev/proza/nov/primechaniya-vii.htm>.

²¹⁶ Virginia Harlow, *Thomas Sergeant Perry*, 359-385

²¹⁷ Translated from Russian by Charles E. Turner as *On the Eve: A Tale* and published in London in 1871 with the future reprint in the U.S. by J. W. Lovell in 1873; H. Holt & Co. in 1875

²¹⁸ Based on the bibliography compiled by Virginia Harlow in *Tomas Sergeant Perry: A Biography and Letters to Perry from William, Henry, and Garth Wilkinson James* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1950), and Yachnin and Stam, *Ivan Turgenev: A Checklist of Works by and about Him*, 17-25.

²¹⁹ This article was mentioned in the second chapter as anonymous.

of Turgenev's prose titled *Zwei neue Novellen: Punin und Baburin, Die Lebendige Mumie* (*Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XXXVI, October 1875, pp. 503–505).

He returned in July 1877 with another review, this time focusing on the French edition of *Virgin Soil*. Later, in the February 1887 issue of *Scribner's Magazine*, Perry expanded his perspective with the essay "Russian Novels," demonstrating his ongoing interest in Russian fiction and its reception among English-speaking audiences.

It is worth noting that other translations, particularly German and French, were frequently referenced in Perry's essays — for instance, his comments on the French version of *A Sportsman's Sketches*²²⁰ — suggesting that American readers were familiar with these editions. Newly published German translations were also considered significant publishing news and were accessible to the American public, often imported from Europe. Major universities, such as Harvard, included these foreign editions in their collections, further facilitating American engagement with Russian literature through a wide array of translations.

During the 1870s, Turgenev's works were actively translated into French and German. French translations were especially prominent, as they were produced under Turgenev's close supervision by Louis Viardot. English translations, often based on these French editions, were accepted largely for convenience.²²¹ As Russian texts made their way to the United States via Europe — and as part of the broader stream of European literature — they frequently became

²²⁰T.S. Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," *Atlantic Monthly* 33 (January–June 1874): 565–575, at 567.

²²¹ How Russian texts were cultivated in the U.S. can be seen from the conversation between T.S. Perry and W.D. Howells titled "*Recent Russian fiction*"; in the dialogue, the interviewer Howells makes clear to the reader which version of the texts, English, French, or German, Perry was reading. Thus, talking about Nikolai Gogol's *Tarass Boulba*, Perry confirms that the first was the French version, Howells in reply: "That must have been in French. I am not sure whether I read it in French or in English (Curious how one does not remember!). W. D. Howells & T. S. Perry, "Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation," *North American Review*, July 1912, 87

“Frenchified” before being received and absorbed by American readers. Authors and reviewers such as Perry and James were also familiar with the German translations.

Donald Pizer noted that, while Perry focused on major journalism works and teaching at Harvard in the 1870s, he shifted his emphasis to literary criticism in the 1880s. During this period, he published several influential monographs, including *English Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (1883), *The Progress of Literature* (1886), and *A History of Greek Literature* (1890), in which he developed an evolutionary approach in his theories.²²²

Working with European authors influenced Perry’s views on realism, as well as his ideas about literary progress and determination. As a critic, he played a key role in introducing the European novel into the American cultural mainstream. According to Donald Pizer, “Perry found the realistic novel to be the means by which modern literature might fulfill its evolutionary potential.”²²³ Perry saw the novel as the dominant genre capable of transforming modern ideas into literary expression. In his 1887 essay on Russian novels, he observed: “These stories have the great advantage of being modern. Their modernness is not confined to their title pages; it is part of their whole spirit and method.”²²⁴ By citing Howells’s prose as an example, Perry also defended the artist’s freedom to break from convention.

Donald Pizer identifies Perry, along with Hamlin Garland, George Pellew, and William D. Howells, as leading critics of the evolutionary school shaped by Darwin’s ideas. In 1869, Howells, then assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, recruited Perry as a reviewer of foreign literature. Perry, in turn, later brought Henry James into the world of literary criticism when he became an

²²² Donald Pizer, “Evolution and Criticism: Thomas Sergeant Perry,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1961): 349-350

²²³ Pizer, “Evolution and Criticism: Thomas Sergeant Perry,” 349-350

²²⁴ Thomas Sergeant Perry, “Russian Novels,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 1 (February 1887): 252.

editor at the journal. Beyond their professional collaboration, these figures maintained close personal relationships throughout their lives.²²⁵ Howells acknowledged that Perry was the one who introduced the Russian novelists to him - Tolstoy, Gogol, and Dostoevsky, and “he was almost the first one to read Turgenieff.”²²⁶

Howells believed that Perry played a key role in the emergence of a new school of evolutionary criticism. Perry, in turn, viewed realism — shaped by Darwinian concepts of environmental determinism and descriptive relativism — as providing a more honest and detailed representation of human experience compared to the romanticized narratives of romanticism. He considered romantic literature increasingly irrelevant in a world that demanded genuine engagement with contemporary life. In the evolutionary approach, “the three writers asserted a historical relativism which demanded that modern art be interpreted and judged on the basis of its *truthful representation of contemporary life* rather than its conformity to criteria which the universal law of progressive change had rendered obsolete and retrogressive.”²²⁷ Perry’s criticism reflected a belief that literature should evolve alongside society, serving as a mirror to its complexities and transformations.

The period of transformation in American literature during the 1870s and 1880s closely mirrored the shift that occurred in Russian literature in the 1840s and 1850s, as both cultures moved away from romanticism toward more realistic genres. For example, Perry’s reflections on the power of literature to influence societal development and even shape a nation’s historical

²²⁵ Donald Pizer, “Evolutionary Literary Criticism and the Defense of Howellsian Realism,” 297.

²²⁶ Virginia Harlow, *Thomas Sergeant Perry*, 51.

²²⁷ Pizer, “Evolutionary Literary Criticism,” 298.

trajectory strongly echo the ideas of Vissarion Belinsky, as articulated in his “Obzory russkoi literatury” (“Surveys of Russian Literature”).²²⁸

Notably, Dale Peterson traces how Perry’s literary tastes and his appreciation of Turgenev’s poetic style were shaped by intermediary European influences, particularly German criticism. Peterson highlights the significant role of German critic Julian Schmidt, who in his collected essays of 1870 described Turgenev as “the head of living novelists.” Schmidt not only elevated Turgenev’s status in European literary circles but also drew a parallel between *A Sportsman’s Sketches* and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, further influencing Perry’s perspective and deepening the connection between Russian and American literary developments.²²⁹

In this analysis, I explore how Perry’s views on realism are revealed through his writings about Turgenev. My primary focus is on his introductory article “Ivan Turgeneff,” published in *The Nation* in 1871, which offers a critical review of Turgenev’s novel *On the Eve* as translated by C.E. Turner that same year.

In the introductory section, the critic addresses why the previously translated *Fathers and Sons* received little attention. He assumes that several factors may have contributed to this. Firstly, many readers were discouraged by the seemingly strange and unfamiliar names of the characters (“the reader was frightened by the uncouth names of the characters”²³⁰), making it difficult for them to engage with the story. Additionally, Turgenev was not well-known at the time, which may have deterred potential readers from picking up the book. Furthermore, the novel requires some

²²⁸ Vissarion Belinsky’s ideas, which he expressed for example in his *Взгляд на русскую литературу 1847*, see V. G. Belinskii, “Vzglyad na russkuyu literaturu 1847 goda,” v: *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh, pod obshchei red. F. M. Golovenchenko*, tom III: Stat’i i retsenzii 1843–1848 (Moskva: OGIZ, GIKHL, 1948). Available at: http://az.lib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_1847.shtml

²²⁹ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 17

²³⁰ T. S. Perry, “Ivan Turgeneff,” *The Nation* 12, no. 307 (May 18, 1871): 340.

understanding of materialist philosophy and the significant social changes that accompanied the emancipation of serfs in Russia.

In contrast, the novel *On the Eve* showcases Turgenev's mastery in a different light, being referred to as a pure love story. The author highlights the vivid, intricate portrayal of the characters in the narrative. This perspective suggests that, despite the barriers some readers may encounter, the depth of character development and emotional themes in the novel can resonate with any reader within any geographical location: "It can be enjoyed as well in South America, as on the banks of Neva, for it is a love story, pure and simple."²³¹ Therefore, here, the ability to easily grasp the story's context is highlighted as a major factor in reception. Additionally, in the essay, Perry lays a foundation for a critical appreciation of Turgenev's narrative style.

Turgenev's text is characterized by a remarkable delicacy and poetic sensibility, engaging readers with an immediacy that captivates their attention from the outset: it is "so delicate, so poetical, and so rare that the fascination of the reader is immediate and complete."²³² The writer's mastery in portraying character is evident in the vivid individuality with which he brings his characters to life; readers gain insight into their complexities through Turgenev's nuanced narration. For instance, the writer allows the character Shoubin to emerge as a fully realized individual, reflecting the intricacies of human behavior as they manifest in everyday life. Here again Perry highlights the narrator's ability not (only) to describe the character, but to let him act without intrusion or judgment: "he lets Shoubin appear to us as men do in life."²³³

²³¹ Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," 340.

²³² Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," 340.

²³³ Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," 340.

The critic has lauded Turgenev's work for its "most skillful representation of things as they really appear,"²³⁴ a sentiment that underscores his commitment to a realist aesthetic. Perry compares this approach with Balzac's writing, who often employed what has been described as "ponderous machinery" in his storytelling, underpinned by a sense of "scientific accuracy."²³⁵ While Balzac's narratives are heavily detailed and structured, Turgenev's art lies in his ability to select and present minute details that resonate with the overarching narrative. Ultimately, for Perry, Turgenev emerges as a master of literary realism, skillfully blending observation and artistic insight to produce a body of work that remains strikingly powerful and relevant: "He is an artist in his realism."²³⁶

For instance, Perry appreciates the writer's mastery at conveying the nature of memory, in which a single detail can help restore and echo the entire situation from the past. Therefore, Turgenev's artistic vision is rooted in a profound observation of life; he captures fleeting moments that echo the larger human experience. His realism is not merely a replication of reality but an artistic interpretation that elevates everyday occurrences to a level of profound significance.

Perry describes the narrator as maintaining a consistently detached stance, deliberately avoiding any overt advocacy for the characters ("He is always a narrator and never an advocate"²³⁷), particularly in their explorations of profound themes such as love and sacrifice. This detachment underscores the narratives' complexities, allowing the reader to engage with the text critically rather than through a singular perspective.

²³⁴ Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," 340.

²³⁵ Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," 340.

²³⁶ Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," 340

²³⁷ Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," 340

While Turgenev's work was widely admired by American critics of the time, many — including Perry — questioned the persistent pessimistic tone found in his stories. Perry notes this prevailing mood in his essay on the German translation of *A Sportsman's Sketches*, published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, as well as in his more comprehensive essay on Turgenev from 1874. The author notes that *On the Eve* also evokes a persistent sense of melancholia, imbuing the narrative with an underlying mood of sadness that resonates with the reader. attributes this pessimistic tone to various factors, including a general sense of existential dread, the prevailing spirit of the times, and the socio-political environment in contemporary Russia. Upon analyzing the novel's conclusion, the reader is confronted with a poignant depiction of a woman's enduring love. This dichotomy offers a glimmer of hope amidst the bleakness, suggesting that even in the face of an unhappy ending, the capacity for profound love remains a testament to human resilience. As noted, "in spite of this unhappy termination, the reader is left at least in the presence of the sublimity of a woman's love."²³⁸

Perry assures the reader that the French and German translations of the novel are complete, based on the author's observations. Nevertheless, he still recommends reading the novel in French under the title *Elena*.

A more thorough and detailed article about Turgenev's writing, including observations on his major works, was published later in the *Atlantic Monthly* under the editorial leadership of W.D. Howells in 1874. While the specific details of its publication history remain unclear, there is good reason to think that Perry probably began work on this extended essay with Howells's support.

²³⁸ Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," 340

The article addresses the broader question of art's nature. Perry states that the essence of art lies in its duality: it can entertain with whimsy and creativity on one side, while delving into deeper, more serious themes on the other.

The author includes a brief biographical paragraph about Turgenev, finishing with the observation that the Russian author currently lives in Baden-Baden, and then moving on to the next section of literary analysis. While discussing *Sportsman's Sketches*, he mentions the French translation of the work. Perry highlights the significance of this French version, which is known in the U.S. as *Récits d'un chasseur*. This translation was completed by Louis Viardot in 1854, and it appears to have been recognized under that name in the U.S. Perry argues that the book played a crucial role in supporting the movement for the emancipation of the serfs in Russia and is regarded as a major influence in "the cause of the abolition of serfdom."²³⁹ Furthermore, the critic notes that stories published separately did not have the same impact as the complete book; together, they formed a compelling case against serfdom.

Perry also references the parallel with Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which is credited with galvanizing the abolitionist movement in the United States. However, despite this connection, the reviewer asserts that there are no further similarities in their narratives.²⁴⁰ What unites them, instead, is their overall impact: both texts served as tools for awareness and change, demonstrating how literature can cross borders and address important social issues. Comparing these two texts had already become commonplace — Perry might have been familiar with T. Robinson's article since she references the same episode that stands out to her from the book — the dialogue between the hunter and the serf from the story "Lgov," which illustrates the serf's

²³⁹ T. S. Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," *Atlantic Monthly* 33 (January–June 1874): 565–575, at 567.

²⁴⁰ Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," 567.

hardships while changing many occupations in his life under his master's will.²⁴¹ Besides this story, Perry also highlights "Beazhin Meadow," also known as "Beazhin Prairie" (in French, "La Prairie"). The reviewer emphasizes how elegant and complete the composition is, including the characters and the plot of the story: "It's a perfectly complete picture."²⁴² It is clear that Perry was drawn not only to Turgenev's poetic mastery but also to the social impact his work provoked.

Analyzing Turgenev's style, Perry praises Turgenev's mastery as "a truthful painter": "But Turgenev's enjoyment of nature and his keen observation make him a truthful painter, while his sensitive avoidance of anything that might fatigue the reader saves him from the most frequent error of the landscape-painter who works with pen and ink."²⁴³

Perry observes that Turgenev's writing combines a broad scope of observation and irony toward those in power with genuine sympathy for the peasants. While the stories consistently evoke a sense of sadness, Perry argues this is not due to pessimism, but rather a testament to Turgenev's remarkable ability to create vivid, life-like scenes that resonate with readers.²⁴⁴

The narrative is grounded in realism, characterized by a deliberate distancing from the narrator's personal feelings. Perry notes that the realist obscures his own presence, further emphasizing the authentic representation of life and its complexities: it reveals itself "in a sense of hiding himself and in the painstaking accuracy he shows in regard to everything his pen touches."²⁴⁵

In his review, Perry also discusses other works by Turgenev, such as "Moumou" and "Correspondence," providing concise plot summaries and highlighting key details from each. I

²⁴¹ E. Robinson, "Slavery in Russia," *The North American Review* 82, no. 171 (April 1856): 293

²⁴² Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," 568

²⁴³ Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," 568,

²⁴⁴ Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," 568

²⁴⁵ Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," 569

would say that the story of a deaf serf and his dog made a striking impact on the critic due to its portrayal of unreasonable cruelty. Both stories were also translated by Perry from French.

Before discussing the novels, Perry characterizes the prevailing emotion in Turgenev's works as "unfailing melancholy,"²⁴⁶ describing them as presenting "a very black picture of Russian life which has apparently all the outside form of civilization."²⁴⁷ He draws a socio-cultural parallel between Russia and the United States, noting that conditions in Russia reminded him of the American South before the Civil War and comparing the Russian nobility to the Southern planter aristocracy. Perry also observes that humorous short stories using vernacular language were common in both the North and South of the U.S. By highlighting this parallel, he suggests that American literature was already developing its own realist tradition through such stories.

Another notable aspect of Perry's reflections on Turgenev is his observation that humor is largely absent from the Russian author's writing. However, Perry does not interpret this absence as an inability of Turgenev to convey humor in his stories, the critic provides examples of characters like Pantaleone in the *Spring Floods* or Uvar Ivanovitch in *On the Eve*, but rather reflects the current situation in Russia. Perry offers a plausible explanation for this, citing prolonged despotic rule and deep religious sentiment among the people in the country. For instance, Turgenev's central heroines in his novels do not laugh, but they mostly possess "serious mystery of half poetic reserve."²⁴⁸

The observer discusses all of Turgenev's major novels, including as *Smoke*, *Lisa*, *On the Eve*, *Fathers and Sons* (listed here in Perry's sequence), and the novella *Torrents of Spring*. Across his essays, Perry consistently highlights Turgenev's remarkable skill in portraying female

²⁴⁶ Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," 571

²⁴⁷ Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," 571.

²⁴⁸ Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," 572

characters, asserting that the author “better draws women than men”²⁴⁹ and “knows them as well as women could.”²⁵⁰ He is particularly struck by the poetic and enigmatic qualities Turgenev imparts to his heroines.²⁵¹

Another important aspect of Perry’s criticism is his attention to the moral dimension of Turgenev’s stories. Notably, Perry also discusses how Turgenev’s works engage with ethical questions, reflecting the author’s concern with the moral implications of his narratives. He considered the plots of *The Torrents of Springs*, *Correspondence*, and *Smoke*, bringing the moral lessons to the reader. Interestingly, during the 1880s, when this writer’s popularity was waning, critics often pointed out a lack of moral component in Turgenev’s work compared to Leo Tolstoy.

Among all Turgenev’s novels on the list, the one that stands out for Perry is *On the Eve* (he calls it “The best of Turgenieff’s novels”²⁵²). The significance had already been discussed in the first review.

Perry’s criticism of *Fathers and Sons* is particularly noteworthy. Today, this novel is widely regarded as a cornerstone of the Russian literary canon, alongside *A Sportsman’s Sketches* — a status solidified in the twentieth century. However, among the American literary elite of the 1870s, *Fathers and Sons* was not well received; it was often considered difficult to read, perhaps due in part to the limitations of early translation. Notably, Eugene Schuyler, who produced the first English translation, was not part of the core group of critics and writers — such as Perry, Howells, and James — who shaped the American reception of Turgenev. Perry, in particular, raises questions about the novel’s plot and expresses confusion over Turgenev’s decision to kill off the

²⁴⁹ Perry, “Ivan Turgénieff,” 574

²⁵⁰ Perry, “Ivan Turgénieff,” 572

²⁵¹ Perry, “Ivan Turgénieff,” 572

²⁵² Perry, “Ivan Turgénieff,” 574

protagonist. He wonders what purpose this dramatic turn serves and whether it is essential to the novel's overall impact, highlighting a disconnect between contemporary expectations and Turgenev's artistic choices.

Therefore, Perry identified in his articles key themes in Turgenev's critical reception: the unintrusive author in narrative passages, mastery of poetic descriptions, and particular focus on women characters,²⁵³ which would be expanded upon in both Howells' and James's writing.

The American critic regarded Ivan Turgenev as a central figure in the development of European realism, praising his skillful blend of psychological insight, social observation, and artistic restraint. Perry saw Turgenev as a vital bridge between Russian and Western literary traditions, introducing the depth and nuance of Russian realism to European and American audiences in a refined, accessible form. He admired Turgenev's truthful portrayal of characters, which aligned with the realist aim of depicting life without romantic idealization. Turgenev's subtle emotional narratives and elegant prose exemplified the kind of realism Perry championed—morally serious yet aesthetically graceful. Through his essays, translations, and reviews, Perry actively promoted Turgenev's work, helping to shape the author's reputation and influence in the United States.

²⁵³ If I were to compare Perry's criticism to that of the late Soviet-modern Russian approach, such as by a prominent philologist like Iurii Lebedev—his books *Zapiski Okhotnika* (1977) and *Turgenev* (1990)—the main points in the critical reception would be similar, with the only difference in emphasizing the overall emotional impression of sadness and the explanations for it.

C. The Critical Reception and Admiration of W. D. Howells: *the Atlantic Monthly* as a Platform for Promoting Turgenev in the 1870s.

The degree of Turgenev's admiration shared by William Dean Howells with Perry might be seen from his letter to Hjalmar Boyesen. The editor asks his friend to deliver his regards to Turgenev in Europe, stating: "Tell him that scarcely a month passes but we burn incense to him in *the Atlantic*. The subtitle of the magazine should be changed so as to read: 'Devoted to Turgenieff, Science, and Art.'"²⁵⁴

The close interconnection among Perry, Boyesen, Howells, and James can be seen as a dynamic chain of mutual influence. When Howells joined the staff of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1866, his earliest literary inspirations were George Eliot and William Makepeace Thackeray.²⁵⁵ As Howells took on his editorial responsibilities, he became acquainted with Henry James, who was younger than his friend but likely had more experience in literary matters. James introduced Howells to Perry, who then led the editor to discover Russian literature, particularly Turgenev, and helped him understand Turgenev's contribution to realism.²⁵⁶ Howells, as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1871 to 1881, established and offered Perry the opportunity to lead the journal's European literature section.

Perry and Howells were both be a part of a group of young New England authors, who "in extended conversations, in their lifelong correspondence, and in reviews of each other's novels,

²⁵⁴ Cited in Dale E. Peterson, "From Russia with Love: Turgenev's Maidens and Howells's Heroines," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 26, no. 1 (March 1984): 23–34, at 26.

²⁵⁵ There is Howells's note on how, after he experienced disappointment with Thackeray, he turned to Turgenev. See Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 96.

²⁵⁶ William Dean Howells, "Ivan Turgenev," in *Criticism and Fiction, and Other Essays*, ed. Clara Marburg Kirk and Rudolf Kirk (New York: New York University Press, 1959), 110

... discussed the limitations and possibilities of distinctly American fiction.”²⁵⁷ They also felt the dominating influence of British fiction on the American market and tried to make an impact to overcome it. This included the request to change literary conventions that were generally brought from Britain.

The editor’s “secondary view” of Turgenev later became the subject of George Moore’s satirical commentary: “Henry James went to France and read Tourgueneff. W.D. Howells stayed at home and read Henry James.”²⁵⁸ Notably, this playful remark captures the essence of Turgenev’s American reception: James absorbs and transforms Turgenev’s European style in his own writing, which is then further adapted and “Americanized” by Howells.

There is no doubt that Howells was closely familiar with major English translations of Turgenev’s texts that appeared during the 1870s; his admiration is easily seen in the reviews published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. His engagement with Russian writer began with his article on *Smoke* (the novel was translated from French and published in New York) in August 1872. In this notice, Howells introduced American readers to Turgenev’s novel of Russian society, praising its realism and psychological depth. He also aimed to introduce the American public to “a worthier type of fiction.”²⁵⁹

The writer followed with a review of *Liza* (the text was a reprinted British translation) in February 1873, where he highlighted Turgenev’s mastery in portraying the characters and setting the collision for the plot. Later that same year, in the September issue, Howells observed *Dmitri Roudine*, continuing his effort to familiarize the American literary public with Turgenev’s works.

²⁵⁷ Birgit Wetzel-Zahm. “New England versions of the Femme Fatale: Howells’ deviating responses to Turgenev” in *Internationality in American Fiction: Henry James, William Dean Howells, William Faulkner, Toni Morrison*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005, 114

²⁵⁸ Peterson, “From Russia with Love,” 25

²⁵⁹ William Dean Howells, “Ivan Turgenev,” 110–11.

These reviews illustrate Howells's role as a cultural mediator, using the *Atlantic Monthly* to promote Russian realism and to situate Turgenev within the broader transatlantic conversation on the novel. It is important to note the timely appearance of reviews, published in the same year as the translations.

The fifth Turgenev work mentioned in Howells's memoirs is the novel *Spring Floods*.²⁶⁰ This was likely the version translated by Sophie Michell Butts and published in *Eclectic Magazine* from October 1873 to March 1874. Howells may also have been acquainted with the novella as part of the sixth volume of a collection published by Henry Holt in New York; the text appeared in 1874 as well.²⁶¹

Setting himself up at the edge of realism in the American literary context, in his review of *Lisa* Howells immediately admires Turgenev's characteristic, which he later refers to as "truth to life." In his first essay, the critic emphasizes that Turgenev's portrayal of situations in his novels reflects "nothing more than life": "The other is - life; nothing more, nothing less; and though life altogether foreign to our own, yet unmistakably real. Everything is unaffected and unstrained. Here is not so much of the artificer as even his style: this author never calls on you to admire how well he does a thing; he only makes you wonder at the truth and value of the thing when it is done."²⁶²

Later in the essay "Tourgueneif, Auerbach," from the book *My Literary Passions*, Howells gave a name to Turgenev's distinctive style as "dramatic fiction." He compares the writer to the Norwegian author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, which is rather close to that type of writing for him: "His

²⁶⁰ "It is enough for the present purpose that *Smoke*, and *Lisa*, and *On the Eve*, and *Dmitrii Roudine*, and *Spring Floods* passed one after another through my hands, and that I formed for their author one of the profoundest literary passions of my life". William Dean Howells, *My Literary Passions* (New York: Harper, 1895), 229

²⁶¹ According to Yachnin and Stam, *Turgenev in English: A Checklist of Works by and about Him* (Project Gutenberg, 2018), <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/56678/pg56678-images.html>

²⁶² William Dean Howells, "Liza," *Atlantic Monthly* 31, no. 184 (February 1873): 239

fiction is to the last degree dramatic. *The persons are sparely described, and briefly accounted for, and then they are left to transact their affair, whatever it is, with the least possible comment or explanation from the author.* The effect flows naturally from their characters, and when they have done or said a thing you conjecture why as unerringly as you would if they were people whom you knew outside of a book. I had already conceived of the possibility of this from Björnson, who practices the same method, but I was still too sunken in the gross darkness of English fiction to rise to full consciousness of its excellence....It was with a joyful astonishment that I realized the great art of Tourgenief.”²⁶³

In his review of *Smoke*, Howells highlights not only Turgenev’s realistic detail and narrative construction but also the way the characters reflect contemporary socio-political conditions in Russia. As a critic, Howells valued literature’s capacity to engage with current reality, writing: “Characters are related to the most modern aspects of social and political life in Russia. A strain of pitiless sarcasm mocks the national conceit and barbarism; and one sadly recognizes in the Russians' grotesqueness, their tall talk, their fondness for all sorts of psychological, social, and political quackery, their likeness to Americans, whom they resemble in their recentness and the geographical vastness of their country. *We wish that the likeness held good also in our possession of such a national novelist as Turgenev.*”²⁶⁴ For Howells, *Smoke* was a particularly significant work, just as *On the Eve* had been central to Perry’s critical engagement with Turgenev.

The prominence of the novel in Howells’s essays can be largely attributed to his perception of Turgenev as the quintessential national writer. In the post–Civil War era, as American literature sought to define itself and movements like regionalism gained momentum, critics such as Howells

²⁶³ William Dean Howells, *My Literary Passions*, 229.

²⁶⁴ William Dean Howells, “Smoke,” *Atlantic Monthly* 30, no. 178 (August 1872): 244,

were especially eager to identify works that captured a distinct “national spirit.” Within this context, the novel emerged as the primary vehicle for exploring and articulating national identity.

In his essay on *Smoke*, Howells began to praise Turgenev as exactly the type of national writer he valued — a theme he would continue in his review of *Lisa*. A key point for Howells is the distinctly Russian character of Turgenev’s protagonists, and the way reading these novels enables the reader to become, in his words, “Russianized”: “In the mean time you come to know also a great deal of Russian life in general, though apparently no study of it has been made for your instruction: *you Russianize, as you read*, till you wish to address your acquaintances by their Christian names and patronymics.”²⁶⁵ Interestingly, Turgenev, in response, praises Howells’s novel as being particularly American. In the letter to the writer after reading *Their Wedding Journey*, Turgenev expresses his admiration of the book: «Your literary appearance causes a feeling of lively sympathy: it is natural, simple, and clear - and in the same way it is full of unpretentious poetry and fine humour... I feel the American identity inherent in it - and this is not the last reason that your works give me such pleasure.”²⁶⁶

In his analysis of *Smoke*, *Lisa*, and *Rudin*, Howells emphasizes Turgenev’s skill in creating a cast of diverse characters, each with distinct backgrounds and motivations, whose interactions and dramatic collisions propel the plot. These encounters lead to surprising revelations and conflicts that shape the narrative. In his later essay on Turgenev in *My Literary Passions*, Howells further praises Turgenev’s mastery in orchestrating these plot-driving collisions, as well as his ability to portray complex characters with a detached, impartial narrative voice.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ William Dean Howells, “Liza,” *Atlantic Monthly* 31, no. 184 (February 1873): 240.

²⁶⁶ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 99

²⁶⁷ William Dean Howells, *My Literary Passions* (New York: Harper, 1895), 232, accessed November 20, 2025, Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/myliterarypassio00howeuoft/page/n3/mode/2up>.

Reading Turgenev's texts coincided with Howells's own novel-writing process. The author in his interview in 1914 shared that, "In those days on the *Atlantic* all the young writers were reading Turgenev."²⁶⁸ The writer was not merely fascinated by Russian literature as something exotic and distant; he was captivated by Turgenev's mastery of narrative and the conflicts within his stories. For Howells, Turgenev already had become a kind of mentor in writing. In the review of *Lisa*, he expressed that his interest in the novel stemmed not only from his role as a critic but also as a novelist.²⁶⁹ Howells approached Turgenev's work by studying every detail, mentioning that he read the texts several times.²⁷⁰ The influence on his writing style is evident in Howells' reflection on how his own perception changed after encountering these novels. He stated, "Life showed itself to me in different colors after I had once read Tourguenief. My cheerful American outlook was bathed in the vast melancholy of the Slav, patient, agonistic, and trustful."²⁷¹

Howells' own writing mastery developed significantly under the influence of Turgenev.²⁷² This evolution is evident in his progression from works like *Suburban Sketches* to his novels *Their Wedding Journey* (1872) and *A Chance Acquaintance* (1873).²⁷³ It is worth noting that the author was fortunate to be closely acquainted "with a group of young men who were actively absorbing the 'lessons of the master' at the time when his critical beliefs and novel-writing technique were taking shape."²⁷⁴ For example, Howells employs the method of "dramatic fiction" in his own

²⁶⁸ William Dean Howells, "Ivan Turgenev," 112.

²⁶⁹ William Dean Howells, "Liza," 239–41.

²⁷⁰ In particular "more than twice". William Dean Howells, *My Literary Passions*, 229.

²⁷¹ William Dean Howells, *My Literary Passions*, 229.

²⁷² See William Dean Howells, "Ivan Turgenev," in *Criticism and Fiction, and Other Essays*, 111; Peterson, "From Russia with Love," 26; Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosviazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 96

²⁷³ Dale Peterson in his article traces Turgenev's influence on Howells' heroines, comparing *A Chance Acquaintance* with *Rudin* and *A Foregone Conclusion* with both *Lisa* and *On the Eve*. See Peterson, "From Russia with Love," 23–34; Birgit Wetzel-Zahm analyses the connections between *Smoke* and *Mrs Farrel*. Birgit Wetzel-Zahm. "New England versions of the Femme Fatale: Howells' deviating responses to Turgenev" in *Internationality in American Fiction: Henry James, William Dean Howells, William Faulkner, Toni Morrison*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005, 112–113.

²⁷⁴ William Dean Howells, "Ivan Turgenev," 112.

writings. According to Aleksander Nikoliukin, from Turgenev, the author inherited a form of "dramatic novel", "where the characters were responsible for their actions, ... and not at the whim of the author, whose role in the novel was reduced to a minimum. The transfer of dramaturgical techniques into prose not only gave images onstage freedom but also conditioned the unity of action and the limitation of locational and temporal diversity."²⁷⁵ Finally, setting up the stage for a main female character in the text, like "femme de fatale," such as Irina in *Smoke*, is also attributed to Turgenev's influence.²⁷⁶

Beyond questions of genre and style, and literature's capacity to engage with contemporary social and cultural issues, a central concern for this new generation was the identity of the protagonist: should the central character be male or female? In this regard, Turgenev's work again proved influential, shaping the approaches of both Howells and James. I would argue that Perry first characterized Turgenev's female characters as central and underscored their mystique, strength, and deep spirituality. For Howells, "Turgenev... presented female characters who were refreshingly different from the one-dimensional, bloodless, and artificial heroines of romantic novels."²⁷⁷ The writer is captivated by Irina from *Smoke*, Lisa from the eponymous novel, and other Turgenev heroines, and he recreates these femme fatales within the American context in his own novels — *A Chance Acquaintance*, *A Foregone Conclusion*, and *Mrs. Farrel*.

Birgit Wetzel-Zahm highlights Howells' distinctive role in forging this literary connection. As an editor, critic, and writer, he pursued new approaches to character portrayal, "setting himself

²⁷⁵ Nikoliukin, *Interrelations of Russian and American Literatures*, 101-102.

²⁷⁶ Wetzel-Zahm. "New England versions of the Femme Fatale," 112-113.

²⁷⁷ Wetzel-Zahm. "New England versions of the Femme Fatale," 118.

apart from earlier American and British narrative traditions by directing attention to contemporary novels originating in a foreign culture.”²⁷⁸

Why did Howells choose Turgenev over other European authors? I believe this decision was influenced both by his personal taste and by the broader literary community he engaged with, as New England authors and critics sought new, more natural methods of character portrayal. As for British writers, Howells himself noted that William Thackeray, Charles Dickens, and George Eliot “could not make the same impression as Turgenev” on him.²⁷⁹

In addition to seeking new methods of character portrayal, there may have been a desire to surpass and move beyond the British literary tradition. This motivation reflects a broader trend of distancing American literature from its historical ties to Britain by pursuing alternative models that offered a distinct contrast.²⁸⁰ Here, French novels were seen as an alternative to their Russian counterparts. In *My Literary Passions*, Howells observes that while French and Russian novels often explored similar themes, they differed significantly in character portrayal and the treatment of moral issues. Speaking specifically of Turgenev, he notes: “In his hands, sin suffered no dramatic punishment; instead, it was characterized by unrest and a longing for peace.”²⁸¹

Besides that, I should mention the later conversation between Howells and T.S. Perry, published in the *North American Review* in 1912, where they discussed the stylistic heaviness of French texts.²⁸² Thus, the absence of a strong moral component and the heavily stylized French

²⁷⁸ Wetzel-Zahm. “New England versions of the Femme Fatale,” 113-114

²⁷⁹ Dean Howells, *My Literary Passions*, 229

²⁸⁰ See Armin Paul Frank and Rolf Lohse, “Introduction,” in *Internationality in American Fiction: Henry James, William Dean Howells, William Faulkner, Toni Morrison*, ed. Armin Paul Frank and Rolf Lohse (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 10.

²⁸¹ Howells, *My Literary Passions*, 231.

²⁸² Howells and Perry, “Recent Russian Fiction: A Conversation,” 88.

texts paved the way for the popularity of Russian novels, which were still mostly translated from French versions.

Howells never had the opportunity to meet Turgenev in person. Alongside James, another important mediator between the two was Norwegian American journalist and critic Hjalmar Boyesen. According to Aleksander Nikoliukin, at Turgenev's request, Boyesen listed several American novels and was pleased to find Howells's *Venetian Life* (1866) on Turgenev's desk during a visit to Paris in 1873.²⁸³ In January 1874, Boyesen sent Turgenev a copy of Howells's most recent novel, *A Chance Acquaintance* (1874), directly from America. Turgenev's response was immediate. On February 24, 1874, in a letter to Boyesen, Turgenev thanked him for the novel and expressed his gratitude to American readers for their interest in his own books.²⁸⁴ Dale E. Peterson has another version: during the summer of 1873, while Boyesen was traveling in Europe, Howells asked him "to deliver his regards and books to Turgenev in Paris."²⁸⁵

In the 1880s, Howells — like many of his contemporaries — discovered Tolstoy's works. In his memoir *My Literary Passions* (1895), he expresses a newfound admiration for the great Russian novelist. The final chapter is devoted to Tolstoy, while Turgenev occupies several earlier chapters. Reflecting on his literary journey, Howells notes that he has come to appreciate a different approach—one he considers "finer and truer" than Turgenev's method.²⁸⁶

During the 1880s, Turgenev's prose underwent a significant reassessment, especially in comparison to Tolstoy. As Gettman notes, Turgenev came to be regarded as a more "artful" and less "Russian" writer than his contemporaries during this period.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 97.

²⁸⁴ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 97.

²⁸⁵ Peterson, "From Russia with Love: Turgenev's Maidens and Howells's Heroines," 26

²⁸⁶ Howells, *My Literary Passions*, 229.

²⁸⁷ "Un-Russian and arty." See Gettman, *Turgenev in England and America*, 71.

For the critics and writers discussed here, Turgenev was viewed as a national writer in both his attitude and his work. His primary role involved shaping and disseminating Russia's image abroad, particularly in Europe, where he achieved considerable success. As Rissa Yachnin and David H. Stam note, both Henry James and Hjalmar Boyesen — who met Turgenev in person — always described him as “completely Russian.” The Goncourt brothers, in their *Journal* of 1863, painted him as “a white-haired giant who looked like the spirit of a mountain or a forest,” an embodiment of Russian soil itself. Henry James emphasized Turgenev's quintessentially Russian qualities and his ongoing concern with Russian affairs, while after Turgenev's death, Renan remarked that “he was the incarnation of the whole race ... his conscience was in some sort the conscience of a people.”²⁸⁸

In the decades that followed, Turgenev was increasingly overshadowed by other major Russian authors, notably Tolstoy, and later Dostoevsky, Gogol, and Chekhov. Unlike these writers, Turgenev was seen as more Europeanized, and his work was marked by a reduced spiritual dimension — imbuing his prose with a certain *froideur* and detachment. Ironically, this very quality led some to view him as “less Russian” than Tolstoy.

On the other hand, it is important to emphasize Turgenev's unique position as a Russian-European author who was readily embraced by American critics. His success not only distinguished him from his contemporaries but also paved the way for the later acceptance of other 19th century realist writers. Without Turgenev's ability to gain recognition in the United States, the subsequent popularity of these other Russian authors might have been far less certain.

²⁸⁸ Slonim, “Turgenev Revisited,” 9.

D. Turgenev's Affirmation as a Novelist for Novelists in Henry James's Perception.

Although Perry, Howells, and James maintained close professional and personal relationships throughout their lives, they differed markedly in their critical approaches as cultural mediators. Howells approached Turgenev's work more as an enthusiastic reader — or even a student, than as a conventional literary critic. Perry, by contrast, was primarily a reviewer and journalist whose main goal was to excite American audiences about Turgenev's writing; his admiration is evident in nearly every paragraph he wrote. James's approach was distinct from both — his aesthetic sensibility, evident from his very first review, created the sense of an equal dialogue between two masters. James demonstrated a deep understanding of Turgenev's novels and stories, frequently highlighting the Russian author's narrative artistry in ways that resonated with the American tradition of storytelling.²⁸⁹ It is telling that after James's initial review, Turgenev promptly responded and arranged to meet him, recognizing a kindred spirit in the American critic.²⁹⁰

The question is — who made the first impact on the delivery of Turgenev's name among those three? Probably, both James and Perry discovered the Russian writer simultaneously, in the period when French authorized translations appeared. By 1874, they both mentioned in reviews such texts as *A Sportsman's Sketches*, *Mu-mu*, *Correspondence*, *Torrents of Spring*, novels *Rudin*, *Lisa*, *On the Eve*, *Fathers and Sons*, *Smoke*. As it is seen from 1874 article, James was deeply familiar with all of Turgenev's central texts. Additionally, both critics had a strong emotional response to the plot of *Mu-mu*, probably because the parallel between serfdom and slavery still resonated, making the story's central idea well-illustrated for an American reader. James's

²⁸⁹ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 220.

²⁹⁰ Ivan Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh. Pis'ma*. Vol. 13: 1874 (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 144-145.

engagement with the French text is easily explained - there were no English translations at a time, and /or they seem incomplete to him.²⁹¹ For instance, in his first review, he calls *On the Eve* by his French translation *Helene*, the critic also did not mention the titles of two stories from *A Sportsman's Sketches* that he admired most of all - instead of this, he provides his reader with a short description of those, speaking about “Bezhin Meadow” and “Singers.” In Perry’s reviews, he addresses both German and English translations of Turgenev. According to Virginia Harlow, Perry translated two novels and several stories, including *Mu-mu*.²⁹² It is still the question - was it James or Howells who influenced Perry to translate those? Or was it Perry’s individual decision? I propose an alternative version of how Turgenev’s works circulated among these American literary figures: James read Turgenev in French and recommended that Perry translate them for Howells, who ultimately read Turgenev in English. This scenario might be supported by their documented linguistic abilities: James was known to read French fluently, Perry was an active translator, and Howells often relied on English translations.

Looking at Perry's and James’s roles in introducing Turgenev to the U.S. audience, I see that Perry’s essays on Turgenev appeared several years earlier - he started publishing his articles in 1871 - with a general review of Turgenev’s writings appearing in 1874. On James’s side, he immediately began with the publication of a comprehensive study on the Russian writer’s prose in one of the prominent journals of the time, the *North American Review*, in the same year as Perry's.

Therefore, T. S. Perry played the foundational role in introducing Ivan Turgenev to American readers between 1871 and 1874, producing a steady stream of reviews and essays in *The Nation* and *The Atlantic Monthly* at a time when Russian literature was still largely unknown in

²⁹¹ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 211.

²⁹² Virginia Harlow, *Thomas Sergeant Perry*, 359.

the United States. His earliest notice, the 1871 *Nation* review of *On the Eve*, marked the beginning of a sustained critical engagement that included discussions of German editions of *Spring Floods* and *A Sportsman's Sketches*, as well as reviews of *Dimitri Roudine* and additional commentary on *On the Eve*. By contextualizing Turgenev's work, summarizing themes, and explaining the author's significance, Perry served as the principal mediator through whom American audiences first encountered Turgenev.

Henry James entered the critical conversation later but with a more concentrated and conceptually influential contribution. His 1874 essay "Iwan Turgéniew," published in the *North American Review*, approached the writer not as a literary curiosity but as a major European realist whose artistry could be evaluated alongside French and English masters. Rather than providing introductory exposition, James offered aesthetic assessment — emphasizing style, psychological nuance, and narrative form — and in doing so elevated Turgenev's status within an international literary canon. While Perry functioned as the early advocate who built awareness and familiarity, James provided the authoritative, craft-oriented interpretation that helped canonize Turgenev for a transatlantic readership. Up to 1874, their complementary roles — Perry as introducer and James as evaluator — shaped the twin foundations of Turgenev's reception in the English-speaking world.

Between 1874 and 1897, Henry James wrote four articles on Turgenev, reflecting an evolving attitude towards the Russian writer and his work. The first article, titled "Iwan Turgéniew," was published in the *North American Review* in April 1874 and highlighted Turgenev's leading position among European writers. In April 1877, James reviewed Turgenev's new novel in the *Nation*, focusing on the French edition of *Virgin Soil*. In January 1884, he wrote a memorial piece called "Ivan Turgénieff" for the *Atlantic Monthly* (reprinted in *Partial Portraits*, 1888). Finally, in 1897, James contributed a biographical piece on Turgenev to the *Library of the*

World's Best Literature, edited by Charles Dudley Warner, dedicating attention to Turgenev's life and legacy. James referred to the writer at different stages in his life — before his acquaintance with Turgenev, during their communication, and after the Russian writer's death. It's also worth noting that the American author reapproached two of his essays for later publications - in the collections *French Poets and Novelists* (1874 essay reprinted in 1878) and *Partial Portraits* (1884 essay reprinted in 1888).

James's first review of Turgenev's works sparked an eight-year correspondence between them, although only Turgenev's letters have survived.²⁹³ James probably sent Turgenev a copy of the *North American Review* where the essay was published.²⁹⁴ In Turgenev's first letter, dated July 26 1874, the writer mentions that he did not receive the initial message from his American correspondent. However, in the same letter, the novelist expresses his desire to meet James in Paris,²⁹⁵ demonstrating a keen interest in the American reviewer. This interest would eventually evolve into a friendship.

As I have already mentioned, James's first article on Turgenev was later included in his collection *French Poets and Novelists* (1878). In this volume, James explores the impact of French writers on the evolution of the realistic novel.²⁹⁶ More broadly, James also examines the influence of these writers on the overall concept of art. In this collection, he includes essays on a range of prominent literary figures, beginning with Alfred de Musset, Théophile Gautier, and Charles Baudelaire. Separate essays are devoted to Honoré de Balzac and Balzac's letters, followed by

²⁹³ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvizi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 110.

²⁹⁴ C. Richards, "Occasional Criticism: Henry James on Ivan Turgenev," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 78, no. 3 (2000): 466

²⁹⁵ Turgenev, *Pis'ma*, vol. 13, 144-145.

²⁹⁶ Compare the scope of James's and Howells's writings — in *My Literary Passions*, Howells shares the books and authors that influenced him as an American author. Meanwhile, James highlights the most prominent European writers of his time, thereby emphasizing the international reach of his own book.

discussions of George Sand and a paired essay on Charles de Bernard and Gustave Flaubert. The volume also features essays on the “Two Ampères” (André-Marie Ampère and Jean-Jacques Ampère), Madame de Sabran, Mérimée’s letters, and the Théâtre Français, where James explores the broader tradition of French theater.

Why was Turgenev included in a book about French writers? The answer lies in both the medium and the context of his reception: James primarily encountered Turgenev’s work through French translations, which were especially influential in shaping his and other American critics’ views. As previously mentioned, Turgenev’s close collaboration with Louis Viardot meant these French editions were widely regarded as authoritative. Furthermore, James notes in his first essay that the available English translations left much to be desired,²⁹⁷ further justifying his comparative approach. Turgenev’s presence among leading French authors reflects both his integration into the European literary scene and his unique influence on the U.S. through this Franco-Russian connection.

Notably, the American reviewer consistently acknowledged Turgenev’s significance as a leading Russian writer, a point he repeatedly emphasized throughout his essays: “Mr. Turgenieff’s themes are all Russian.”²⁹⁸

During this period, Balzac and Flaubert had a notable influence on American literature, and Turgenev’s works enjoyed broad readership. As Dale Peterson observes, in his first essay James was seeking an author “whose form was just French enough, but whose content was just British

²⁹⁷ For the author, both the French and German versions of Turgenev’s text surpassed the English translations in mastery. Henry James, *French Poets and Novelists* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1878), 269.

²⁹⁸ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 280.

enough.”²⁹⁹ This observation suggests that James was especially drawn to Turgenev for both artistic mastery and the strong moral dimension he discerned in his writing.

At the same time, Turgenev embodied an international literary sensibility, shaped in large part by his extended residence in Paris and Western Europe. James admired not only Turgenev’s formal qualities — his style, psychological subtlety, elegant realism, and nuanced moral insights — but also the way his art aligned more closely with French realism than with the stereotypical “Russian exoticism.” Turgenev’s inclusion in *French Poets and Novelists* thus reflects James’s broader editorial vision: to assemble writers who exemplified a continental realist tradition — authors who were not necessarily “French by birth,” but who were “French in literary spirit” or, more broadly, “European in aesthetic orientation.” Notably, when assessing Turgenev’s stylistic mastery, James considered it “equal or even superior” to that of the French authors: “In susceptibility to the sensuous impressions of life... he equals, and even surpasses, the most accomplished representatives of the French school of story-telling.”³⁰⁰

In his extended essay James thoroughly examines all aspects of Turgenev’s text, including the narrator’s position, the characters, and various themes. I should also mention that the reviewer’s style of narration is more spontaneous than the articles written by Perry and Howells. In one paragraph, he often touches upon several ideas, fluidly moving between Turgenev’s characters, themes, and the construction of the narrative.

In the opening section, James highlights a crucial characteristic for American readers of Turgenev: the way his writings cultivate taste.³⁰¹ While Perry and Howells did not address this concept in their reviews, James articulation in his first essay appears to be quite significant.

²⁹⁹ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 25

³⁰⁰ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 279.

³⁰¹ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 270.

When engaging in the discussion with Howells and Perry, who also compared Turgenev with other European writers, James mentioned a kind of one-sidedness or a tendency to follow only one method or theme that was specific to Walter Scott (history and heroism), Charles Dickens (moral lessons), George Sand, or George Eliot. For James, Turgenev “cares about everything he observes” - his scope includes all social classes, with characters from both the wealthy and the poor, living in cities and villages.³⁰²

James offers an in-depth analysis of the qualities that define Turgenev’s mastery. Like Perry, he highlights Turgenev’s detached authorial stance, noting how the Russian writer adopts the role of an observer within his own narratives (here I would mention that reading *A Sportsman’s Sketches* was an essential experience for James - in this particular cycle, appointed method developed). James called him a genius in his “narrow observation.”³⁰³ In the critic’s view, these observational qualities render Turgenev’s narrator someone who simply records events, taking notes rather than intervening.³⁰⁴

Several times James mentions how particular and concrete Turgenev’s details are - if Perry sees only one significant detail from the past that may evoke the whole memory (the example here might be the introductory part of the novella *Torrents of Spring*), James, similar to Bazarov’s experiments, analyzes the texture of the narration and examines how, in that observation, many details build a life-like picture. Therefore, he mentions Turgenev’s “apparently excessive attention to detail,” and “passion for distinctness, for bringing his characterization to a point.”³⁰⁵ Summarizing, James states: “If his manner is that of a searching realist, his temper is that of an

³⁰² James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 270.

³⁰³ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 270.

³⁰⁴ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 270.

³⁰⁵ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 270.

earnestly attentive observer, and the result of this temper is to make him take a view of the great spectacle of human life more general, more impartial, more unreservedly intelligent, than that of any novelist we know.”³⁰⁶

The critic’s concept of realism also varies significantly from other Turgenev observers — here, he describes the writer as a “searching realist.” In the same texts where Perry perceives objectivity, detachment, and impartiality in this writer, and Howells sees faithfulness, James observes how an independent character ultimately enables Turgenev to reveal the character’s psychology to the reader.

In characterizing Turgenev’s style, James arrives at conclusions similar to those of Howells. While Howells describes the Russian writer’s approach as a “dramatic method,” James highlights the “dramatic form,” observing that in Turgenev’s works, “everything takes the dramatic form.”³⁰⁷ Exploding his idea of a narrator as an observer, James underscores the immersive experience the reader has while engaging with the story: “as we read we are always looking and listening.”³⁰⁸ Again, I see the particular influence of *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, where the hunter not only engages in conversations with everyone he meets on his way but sometimes hides or stays nearby listening and observing particular situations.

James refines Turgenev’s narrative technique in his own work by moving beyond the detached narrator to what is called the “point of view” method, telling the story from a specific perspective. In the preface of his novel *A Portrait of a Lady* (1881), James provides an in-depth discussion of this narrative approach. He emphasizes the significance of the narrator’s perspective in shaping the reader’s understanding of the characters and notes that the story is told from a

³⁰⁶ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 271.

³⁰⁷ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 285.

³⁰⁸ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 285.

viewpoint that balances sympathy with critical observation, enabling readers to comprehend Isabel Archer's inner life while maintaining a sense of judgment and narrative control. James reflects on the crucial role of point of view in fiction, stating that it determines what the reader sees and how characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions are conveyed. For *The Portrait of a Lady*, he selects a limited omniscient perspective closely focused on Isabel. This choice allows for an intimate understanding of her consciousness without offering a fully external or purely objective account. James contrasts this approach with stories that emphasize plot or external events, stressing that his focus on psychological depth necessitates careful consideration of how the point of view influences the reader's perception of character and situation.

In his analysis of Turgenev's characters, James adopts a unique approach. He observes that Turgenev's figures are "all portraits: they have each something special, something peculiar," and it is precisely this distinctiveness, as James notes, "that rescues them from the limbo of graceful generality."³⁰⁹

James introduces the term "grotesque" to describe certain characters and discusses how a story can feature a "broken hero"—such as Uvar Ivanovitch (retaining his spelling from the essay) from *On the Eve*. In doing so, James establishes a tradition of portraying eccentric, strange, or unique characters—a legacy that would later be reflected in the works of Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway. In his subsequent essay on *Virgin Soil* (1877), the critic expands on this concept, describing Turgenev's characters as "reversed heroes": "Ivan Turgenev's heroes are never heroes in the literal sense of the word, rather quite the reverse; their function is to be conspicuous as failures, interesting but impotent persons who are losers at the game of life."³¹⁰ This

³⁰⁹ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 271.

³¹⁰ James, "Ivan Turgenev's New Novel," *The Nation* 24, no. 617 (April 26, 1877): 252.

characterization provides a valuable key to understanding the protagonists portrayed by later modernist authors.

In his postmortem essay of 1886, James further develops this idea — echoing Howells's earlier observation in his review of *Dmitrii Rudin* that “the character is a plot.”³¹¹ James brings this notion to the forefront, advocating for a move away from plot-driven storytelling. He defends the modern author's ability to step back from the “twisted story” and intricate plots characteristic of American tradition, such as those found in Edgar Allan Poe's detective tales. Reflecting on Turgenev, James noted: “The germ of a story, with him, was never an affair of plot — that was the last thing he thought of: it was the representation of particular persons. The first form in which a tale appeared to him was as the figure of an individual, or a combination of individuals, whom he wished to see in action, being sure that such people must do something very special and interesting.”³¹² Therefore in that situation the plot moves itself by the collision of the characters, “which are not the result of a preconceived action, but a consequence of the qualities of the actors... This figure will always, probably, find favor with many readers, because it reminds them enough, without reminding them too much, of life”.³¹³

Analyzing the initial idea of his own novel *The Portrait of A Lady* (1881), James expresses similar thoughts: the idea of the book did not originate from a pre-existing plot, but rather from “the sense of a single character ... a particular engaging young woman.”³¹⁴ He emphasizes that

³¹¹ William Dean Howells, “A Turgenev Novel,” in *Criticism and Fiction, and Other Essays*, ed. Clara Marburg Kirk and Rudolf Kirk (New York: New York University Press, 1959), 112-113.

³¹² James, “Ivan Turgenieff,” in *Partial Portraits*, 314.

³¹³ James, “Ivan Turgenieff,” in *Partial Portraits*, 315.

³¹⁴ “Trying to recover here, for recognition, the germ of my idea, I see that it must have consisted not at all in any conceit of a “plot,” nefarious name, in any flash, upon the fancy, of a set of relations, or in any one of those situations that, by a logic of their own, immediately fall, for the fabulist, into movement, into a march or a rush, a patter of quick steps; but altogether in the sense of a single character, the character and aspect of a particular engaging young woman, to which all the usual

everything else — setting and subject — had to be built around this character rather than the other way around. Here James recalls Ivan Turgenev's remark that for him fiction often begins with the vision of "a person or persons who hover in the imagination and solicit the writer's attention,"³¹⁵ the author confirms he felt similarly: once he had the character clearly in mind, his work became about "placing her, seeing her in action, and imagining the situations that would most reveal her nature."³¹⁶ James notes that he was more conscious of his figures than of their setting, saying he could hardly imagine a story that didn't need its agents to launch it. The writer found it difficult to conceive of any situation that was interesting without depending on "the nature of the persons situated."³¹⁷ Describing his initial vision, he refers to her as a "vivid individual ... in motion ... bent upon her fate."³¹⁸

The intricate portrayal of women's characters in Turgenev's works serves as a significant inspiration for James to focus on similar types in his own writing. Like many of his contemporaries, the reviewer admires Turgenev's heroines, highlighting the novelist's exceptional talent in crafting vivid and compelling portraits of women, each with their own distinctive charm. He notes: "The same may be said of his treatment of all his heroines, and said in evidence of the refinement of his art; for if there are no heroines we see more distinctly, there are none we love more ardently. It would be difficult to point, in the blooming fields of fiction, to a group of young girls more radiant with maidenly charm than M. Turgénieff's Hélène, his Lisa, his Katia, his Tatiana and his Gemma."³¹⁹

elements of a "subject," certainly of a setting, were to need to be super added." Henry James, "Preface," in *The Portrait of a Lady*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), vi–vii.

³¹⁵ James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, Preface.

³¹⁶ James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, Preface.

³¹⁷ James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, Preface.

³¹⁸ James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, Preface.

³¹⁹ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 275.

Following in the footsteps of Perry and Howells, James further cements the image of enigmatic and strong young women, showcasing their potential for dominant roles in modern literature. This theme is particularly evident in his own notable works, such as *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), where he explores the complexities and strengths of his female characters.

Both Howells and James were drawn to Turgenev not only for his innovative writing techniques but also for his deep connection to his homeland. James, in particular, envisioned the ideal national writer as someone capable of achieving international recognition through a profound understanding of their own country and society. “M. Turgénieff’s themes are all Russian; here and there the scene of a tale is laid in another country, but the actors are genuine Muscovites. It is the Russian type of human nature that he depicts; this perplexes, fascinates, inspires him. His works savour strongly of his native soil, like those of all great novelists, and give one who has read them all a strange sense of having had a prolonged experience of Russia. We seem to have travelled there in dreams, to have dwelt there in another state of being.”³²⁰ Both critics employ the metaphor of traveling across the country while reading Turgenev’s works. James reiterates this idea in his 1886 essay, describing Turgenev as a “Slav genius” and highlighting not only his deep rootedness in Russian soil but also his far-reaching international influence: “Cosmopolite that he had become by the force of circumstances, his roots had never been loosened in his native soil.”³²¹ This profound connection between the author and the world he depicts would go on to influence future generations of writers, including Hamlin Garland, Ernest Hemingway, and Sherwood Anderson.

³²⁰ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 280.

³²¹ James, “Ivan Turgénieff,” in *Partial Portraits*, 292.

Similarly to Howells, James also mentions some parallels between the United States and Russia and observes that both countries are going through the analogous historical period, experiencing significant societal changes: “American reader easily understands Russian society - Russian society, like our own, is in process of formation, the Russian character ... is in a sea of change.”³²² Here, he sees one of the reasons for Turgenev's popularity in the U.S.

With this observation, James's exploration of political connections between Russia and the U.S. appears exhausted. In contrast to Howells's and Perry's focus on critical evolutionism, the power of literature to shape social conditions, and the broader sweep of national history, these themes find little resonance in James's criticism. Instead, James is primarily concerned with the aesthetic mastery of the texts he examines, paying less attention to their social or historical context. His depiction of Turgenev's melancholy is vivid and powerful, yet he does not clearly explain how this emotional tone relates to the author's imagery or to broader cultural themes. Compared to Perry's argument — which centers on the notion of an unattached author capturing and depicting a moment in history without judgment — James's treatment of Turgenev seems more ambiguous and less connected to the evolving concerns of American literature.

In a final part of a long and thorough essay James touches upon several stories “A Village Lear,” “The Antchar” (in Russian “Zatishye”), “The Forsaken” (in Russian “Neschastnaya”), “A Correspondence” and “The Journal of a Superfluous Man.” In his analysis, the critic notes a sense of melancholy that intensifies from one story to the next. While Perry only briefly addresses this emotion in his review, James delves into it more deeply: he concludes that Turgenev's narrator is “morbidly serious, that he takes life terribly hard”³²³ and continues: “We move in an atmosphere

³²² James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 220.

³²³ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 243.

of unrelieved sadness. We go from one tale to the other in the hope of finding something cheerful, but we only wander into fresh agglomerations of gloom. We try the shorter stories with a hope of chancing upon something pitched in the traditional key of "light reading," but they strike us alike as so many ingenious condensations of melancholy."³²⁴

At this point, the critic values not only the moral dimension but also looks for an underlying note of optimism in artistic creation. When James cannot find this essential quality, he begins to question the narrator's stance within the work: "We set him down forthwith as a cold-blooded pessimist, caring for nothing in life but its misery and for nothing in misery but its pictorial effects - its capacity for furnishing cynical epigrams. What is each of the short tales we have mentioned, we ask, but a ruthless epigram, in the dramatic form, upon human happiness?"³²⁵ Unlike Perry, James steers clear of socio-political parallels and instead pursues an aesthetic explanation. However, in doing so, he overlooks the philosophical context — in Turgenev's case, shaped by Schopenhauer's pessimism from the 1860s onward. James attempts to categorize Turgenev's melancholy into two types — spontaneous and wanton — but ultimately offers only a somewhat ambiguous definition of each.³²⁶ In resolving this moral component, James arrives at the idea of a global balance: "Sadness has its element of error, but it has also its lighter element of wisdom."³²⁷

Another review by Henry James could serve as a cornerstone in the reception history; while the first and last articles marked the beginning and end of Turgenev's interest in the U.S., the article of *Virgin Soil* likely represents a high point followed by a future decline.

³²⁴ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 243.

³²⁵ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 243.

³²⁶ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 249.

³²⁷ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 250.

A particular interest in the novel was sparked even before its publication, leading to an earlier German translation. This anticipation stemmed from widespread European fascination with the social changes occurring in Russia, particularly those related to the socialist “narodniki” movement. In his review, James remarks on the fortuitous timing of the book’s release, highlighting the prevailing curiosity about Russia: “This is a very good moment for a Russian novel to appear — at least out of Russia.”³²⁸

The high demand for the novel can be attributed to several factors: heightened attention to Russian affairs sparked by the “narodniki” movement, and the timing of the “case of fifty” (“protsess pyatidesyati”), which took place in Saint Petersburg in the spring of 1877. The materials from this trial were published in France in the same magazine, *Le Temps*, that featured the translation of the novel.³²⁹ As a result, readers were confident that Turgenev was depicting a real case that had stirred widespread excitement in Russia.

Turgenev’s established reputation, the novel’s themes, and the success of his earlier work *Smoke* (1867) all contributed to the anticipation surrounding his new release. As a result, Henry James was eager to read *Nov’* as soon as it appeared in Paris in the spring of 1877, published under the title *Terres Vierges* in a translation by Émile Durand-Gréville. Drawing on the French edition, James wrote a review for *The Nation*, published in April 1877. He focused on the early French translation rather than the English version prepared by his friend and colleague Thomas Perry later that year — likely still questioning the quality and reliability of the English translation. In this review, James continues the tradition of engaging with Turgenev’s texts in French and

³²⁸ James, “Ivan Turgenev’s New Novel,” *The Nation* 24, no. 617 (April 26, 1877): 252.

³²⁹ See the commentary to the novel: I. S. Turgenev, *Nov’*, primechaniya, chast’ VII, “Turgenev-lit.ru”, <https://turgenev-lit.ru/turgenev/proza/nov/primechaniya-vii.htm>.

acknowledges that the author's popularity has endured for some time, "even among those people who are condemned to know him only through imperfect translations."³³⁰

In the review, although Turgenev's novel receives general approval and the customary New England admiration for his status as a contemporary global master, the overall tone is noticeably more restrained than usual. Although the article acknowledges his skill in portraying characters and the "union of the deepest reality of substance... with the most imaginative, most poetic touches,"³³¹ it takes a more schematic approach to analyzing the characters of the young generation of revolutionaries. The likely explanation for this difference can be found in his personal reaction to the novel, which he shared in a letter to Perry dated April 18, 1877, prior to the publication of his review. In this letter, James openly expressed his disappointment: "The book will disappoint you, as it did me; it has fine elements, but I consider it the weakest of his long stories. I have heard it has been such a failure in Russia that it has not been reprinted from the Review in which it appeared... I would not be able to conscientiously recommend any American publisher to undertake *Terres Vierges*. It would not be successful."³³²

James offers no encouragement to Perry regarding the translation — in fact, he anticipates little success for the text in the U.S. What, then, motivated Perry in this situation? I would argue that the answer lies in the distinct perspectives each friend held on Turgenev. For James, the author's material was only valuable within an aesthetic or poetic context. Perry, on the other hand, guided by "evolutionary criticism," saw merit in translating a novel that directly reflected contemporary social phenomena.

³³⁰ James, "Ivan Turgenev's New Novel," *The Nation* 24, no. 617 (April 26, 1877): 252.

³³¹ James, "Ivan Turgenev's New Novel," 253.

³³² Henry James to Thomas Sergeant Perry, April 18, 1877, in *The Complete Letters of Henry James*, vol. covering 1876–1878, ed. Leon Edel et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 108

In his final biographical piece James presents Turgenev as a writer who occupies a singular position among European novelists, particularly valued by foreign — and especially English — readers. This reception, James insists, does not arise from any concession to non-Russian tastes, but rather from the distinctly Russian quality of Turgenev's genius itself, which paradoxically helped to "domesticate" him abroad.³³³ Again, James brings the parallel between a national\international focus, indicating that a strong national element may lead to international recognition of the writer.

Turgenev's reputation, James suggests, was established early through *A Sportsman's Sketches* (1852), a work whose quiet portrayal of rural and peasant life coincided with a historical moment of moral awakening. Talking about the book, James once again compares this work to Harriett Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Here, the author does not neglect this comparison but examines the aesthetic differences between the two books. James notes that while Turgenev's rustic studies resonated with their time, they did not incite the immediate uproar that Stowe's work did. Instead, Turgenev's art was more subtle, evoking deeper emotions rather than explicit recognition.³³⁴

In examining Turgenev alongside his Russian contemporaries, James especially focuses on comparing him to Tolstoy — an unavoidable reference due to Tolstoy's immense popularity in the 1880s. In this essay, James aims to move beyond the usual comparisons and refocus attention on Turgenev himself. At the time, the reviewer still regarded himself as "on Turgenev's side." He begins by suggesting that Turgenev serves as an "outside" writer for foreign audiences, whereas Tolstoy represents the "inside." However, he promptly reassesses this notion, concluding that

³³³ Henry James, "Ivan Turgenev (1818–1883)," in *Library of the World's Best Literature*, 1897, accessed via ibiblio, <https://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/ist/hjames1.htm>.

³³⁴ James, "Ivan Turgenev."

Tolstoy is certainly not “less read abroad.”³³⁵ Although Tolstoy was the younger writer and would later gain greater international recognition through works like *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, James underscores that Turgenev preceded him and exerted a unique and lasting artistic influence. Thus, in comparison to Tolstoy, he characterizes Turgenev as a “novelist’s novelist,” whose work offers not a massive accumulation of life, but a model of method, restraint, and form that quietly guides other writers. It’s worth emphasizing that James’s definition of Turgenev as “writer for writers,” which will be echoed in the next generation of authors, appears alongside the comparison to Tolstoy. Therefore, choosing an author from the “Russian school,” James leaned toward Turgenev’s style rather than Tolstoy’s vision.

Here the reviewer’s discussion underscores the contrast between Tolstoy’s overwhelming force and Turgenev’s measured clarity, the latter exerting what he calls a “quiet irresistibility of presentation.”³³⁶ Pavel Balditsyn summarized the writer’s perceptiveness on Tolstoy’s mastery: “James saw Tolstoy’s novels as formless; he had a predilection for the concentrated closed introversion of the works of Turgenev and Flaubert.”³³⁷ The confirmation of this might be found in the Preface to the novel *The Tragic Muse* (1890). James expresses a more critical view of Tolstoy’s writings, suggesting that, with an exaggerated composition, the novel’s capacity to convey a central idea will be diminished. In examining how his own story should be structured and what options are available for its composition, the writer also questions the novels of Thackeray and Dumas: “There may in its absence be life, incontestably, as *The Newcomes* has life,

³³⁵ James, “Ivan Turgenev.”

³³⁶ James, “Ivan Turgenev.”

³³⁷ Pavel Balditsyn, “Puti razvitiia realizma v SShA,” in *Istoriia literatury SShA* (Moscow: IMLI RAN, 2004), 16.

as *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, as Tolstoi's *Peace and War*, have it; but what do such large, loose, baggy monsters, with their queer elements of the accidental and the arbitrary, artistically mean?"³³⁸

James further praises Turgenev's artistry for its concision, balance, and psychological delicacy. Referring to novels such as *Rudin*, *Fathers and Children*, *Spring Floods*, and *Virgin Soil*, he highlights Turgenev's consistent focus on character, human relations, and moral sympathy rather than on dramatic plot or ideological excess, continuing the line of thought on Turgenev's mastery from previous essays. For James, Turgenev's enduring value lies in his humane vision and his ability to render emotional life with subtle insight, producing works whose harmony of form and feeling continues to exert a lasting artistic presence.

In finding a common ground for the prose of Turgenev and Henry James, Dale E. Peterson unites and articulates the two notions: provincial realism and poetic realism.³³⁹ The term "provincial realism" refers to literary movements that were marginal to Europe, which I would argue were also shaped by the disintegration of European culture while still being influenced by it. Peterson also elaborates on the broader idea of challenging the main trends of Victorian novels in American literature. The second notion pertains to the novels' poetic qualities — being thoughtfully constructed and formally cohesive, Turgenev's novels, in particular, exhibit a greater potential for lyrical expression. Thus, Peterson refers to those texts as "chamber novels."³⁴⁰ To support these observations, I would highlight other examples from Turgenev's writings. For instance, the book *Sportsman's Sketches* strikes a balance between the social meaning and lyrical depictions of nature, ultimately emphasizing the aesthetic element of the work. Additionally,

³³⁸ Henry James, "Preface," in *The Tragic Muse*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan & Co., 1921), xi.

³³⁹ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 2

³⁴⁰ See more in Dale E. Peterson, "Turgenev's Art of the Novel," in *The Clement Vision: Poetic Realism in Turgenev and James* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975), 71–83.

Turgenev's later works, such as the short prose poems in *Senilia* (1883), demonstrate his inclination towards the poetization of prose. This shared aesthetic interest reveals a commonality between both authors.

Besides that, for both Turgenev and James, the notion of “realism” is fundamentally tied to subjective observation. As Dale Peterson notes, “Both writers emphasize the play of perspective and the 'point of view.' Both authors seem to assume that authentic realism can only exist on a perceptual, experiential basis—on what might today be called a 'phenomenological' grounding of truth.”³⁴¹ Thus, the writers viewed realism as “that which insists upon the priority of perception over circumstance.”³⁴²

Summarizing the critical reception of Turgenev’s writings in the U.S. during the 1870s-1890s, which was generally influenced by the critics and readers this chapter has examined, the first book, *A Sportsman's Sketches* — although it wasn't translated into English until the late 19th century — quickly reached American audiences through other languages, such as French and German. Positive feedback on Turgenev's cycle appeared in both Perry's and James's criticism.³⁴³ Therefore, for the intellectual elites in Boston and New York, the language barrier was not an issue in this case.

In contrast, Turgenev’s first novel, *Fathers and Sons*, early translated by Eugene Schuyler and received a rather adverse, or, to say, confused, reaction from critics in 1870-s. Royal Gettmann, in his research, analyzes the two reviews of the translation that appeared in the *Nation* and the *North American Review* in 1867, the same year as the publication, and indicates that “the reviewers

³⁴¹ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 3

³⁴² Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 5.

³⁴³ T. S. Perry, review of *Skizzen aus dem Tagebuche eines Jägers*, *Atlantic Monthly* 35, no. 212 (June 1875): 747–749, James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 224.

were extremely friendly.”³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, “Despite the fact that the reviews praised the artistic qualities of the novel and properly subordinated “tendency” element, Turgenev’s masterpiece did not win an audience.”³⁴⁵ The translation was also reprinted in 1872, as Turgenev’s popularity was growing, but this still did not generate interest in the text.

What contributed to this type of reaction? Was it the clarity of the translation? Thus, Howells does not mention the novel's impression in his reviews and refers only to Odintsova describing Turgenev's female characters.³⁴⁶ Perhaps Perry and James focused on French version, which appeared in 1863 under the title *Pères et enfants* and was approved by Turgenev. Both reviewers questioned this text’s value and didn't see it as a masterpiece. Perry expressed confusion over the plot, particularly questioning why the author chose to kill the protagonist.³⁴⁷ He also mentioned that for the proper understanding of the text there should be a deep knowledge of the societal changes that took place in Russia.³⁴⁸ James, on his side, questioned the lack of irony in Turgenev’s story. Perry, by the way, also noted that Turgenev’s prose contains almost no humor, with some minor exceptions; the female characters, for instance, do not even laugh.³⁴⁹ James perceived the novel as pure satire, pointing out the absence of irony — each character, in his view, serves as a parody. This includes not only Kukshina and Sitnikov but also Bazarov and Odintsova; he also emphasized the novel's pessimistic tone.³⁵⁰ Therefore, even though the English translation of the novel appeared first in the U.S., it didn't boost interest in Turgenev until Perry and James discovered him in Europe as a “French author.”

³⁴⁴ Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America*, 39.

³⁴⁵ Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America*, 42.

³⁴⁶ Howells, *My Literary Passions*, 229.

³⁴⁷ Bazarov dies “at the will of the author.” See T.S. Perry, “Ivan Turgénieff,” 575

³⁴⁸ T. S. Perry, “Ivan Turgeneff,” *The Nation* 12, no. 307 (May 18, 1871): 340

³⁴⁹ Perry, “Ivan Turgénieff,” 572

³⁵⁰ James, *Ivan Turgénieff*, in *French Poets and Novelists*, 247

The wave of interest began with Perry's review of *On the Eve* and his first essay in 1871,³⁵¹ related to the English translation produced by C.E. Turner the same year and reprinted in 1873 in New York. This review paved the way to the success of the other Turgenev texts - *Torrents of Spring*, *Smoke*, and others, and even boosted the publication of the set of Turgenev's writings by Holt.

With the influence of these three critics and writers, interest in Turgenev grew steadily — especially following James's in-depth review published in 1874. According to Dale Peterson, by this year, “there was at hand for the canonization of Ivan Turgenev as the patron saint of the American theory of the dramatic novel.”³⁵² The peak of Turgenev's popularity coincided with the release of his novel *Virgin Soil (Nov')*, published in 1877 and translated into all major European languages at the same time. The English translation was completed by Thomas S. Perry, who probably obtained official approval from Turgenev or his French publisher, highlighting his commitment to providing an accurate version. *Virgin Soil* was Turgenev's last and longest novel, which centers on a group of revolutionaries in a provincial town. By the time the novel was published, Turgenev had already established himself as an internationally recognized writer known for his depictions of Russia.

Turgenev, by the way, was aware of the “hype” his work generated: in a letter to his brother dated October 26, he stated: «Так как ты интересуешься переводами моей столь единодушно обруганной „Нови“, — то могу тебе сказать, что до сих пор она уже появилась на следующих языках: французском, немецком (четыре разных перевода!), английском,

³⁵¹ Perry, “Ivan Turgeneff,” *The Nation* 12: 340–41.

³⁵² Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 18

ИТАЛИЯНСКОМ, ШВЕДСКОМ, ПОЛЬСКОМ, ЧЕШСКОМ, СЕРБСКОМ И ВЕНГЕРСКОМ».³⁵³ This suggests that Turgenev maintained communication with multiple translators, as the novel was published simultaneously in French, English, and German. According to Mikhail Alekseev's research, the early German translation was produced in consultation with Turgenev himself, with the manuscript sent to the German *St. Petersburg Zeitung* prior to its appearance in *Vestnik Evropy*.³⁵⁴ It's likely that there was an agreement to share the French manuscript with Perry for faster translation.

By the early 1880s, interest in Turgenev among the previously mentioned circles had noticeably declined. Gettmann observed that Perry, after publishing his translation of *Virgin Soil* in 1877, did not produce many works on Russian literature, aside from a general article on Russian novels in 1887.³⁵⁵ Probably Perry focused more on his own monographs, such as *From Opitz to Lessing* (1885), which explored the history of German literature, and *French Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (1889), both of which achieved only moderate success.³⁵⁶ In the late 1890s, Perry left the United States for several years and moved to Japan, where he served as an English professor at Keio University in Tokyo from 1898 to 1901.

During the 1880s, Howells shifted his focus to another Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy. As his memoirs make clear, Howells's attitude toward Turgenev changed; he came to see the "life-likeness" of Turgenev's prose as less compelling when compared to the vivid realism he found in Tolstoy's work. Conversely, Henry James remained steadfast in his admiration for Turgenev, despite his disappointment with *Virgin Soil* (1877). His significant work on Turgenev was a

³⁵³"Since you are interested in the translations of my so generally slandered *Nov'*, I can tell you that it has already appeared in the following languages: French, German (four different translations!), English, Italian, Swedish, Polish, Czech, Serbian, and Hungarian»." See Alekseev, "Primechaniia k romanu 'Nov'."

³⁵⁴ Alekseev, "Primechaniia k romanu 'Nov'."

³⁵⁵ Perry, "Russian novels," 252–256.

³⁵⁶ Gettmann suggest here that Perry was generally less adopted for the routine activities than his colleagues. See Gettmann, *Turgenev in England and America*, 51

posthumous review published in 1884, which was later reprinted in *Partial Portraits* (1888). This review likely marked the end of Turgenev's major popularity.

Turgenev's writings did not completely disappear from the American market, as I demonstrated in the previous chapters massive English translations of his works were published at the turn of the century in Britain and the U.S. by translators such as Constance Garnett (1894-1899) and Isabel Hapgood (1903-1904) probably still being a part of cultural "Russian craze". By this time, Turgenev distinguished himself from Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, ultimately carving out a niche as the "writer for writers."

By the end of the nineteenth century, critics such as William Dean Howells and, even more significantly, Henry James helped cement Turgenev's reputation as a "novelist for novelists," linking his innovative aesthetics to themes deeply rooted in personal experience. Turgenev was also a pioneer of the "chamber novel," a concise and intimate form of storytelling. His focus on provincial life shaped the next generation of American writers, contributing to the evolution of naturalism and modernism — seen, for example, in Hamlin Garland's *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891) and Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919). By the time Ernest Hemingway entered the literary scene, the "recipe" for becoming a writer was already established.

Chapter 4. Turgenev's Rediscovery in the Early Twentieth Century: From Realist Legacy to Modernist Form.

A. Early Twentieth-Century Reassessments of Turgenev's Prose

What prompted American critics and writers of the early twentieth century to reassess Ivan Turgenev's role in their literary culture, and how did this reevaluation transform his significance from a model of realism into a stylistic influence and a "school of writing"? Turgenev's role in the American literary landscape evolved over time. Nineteenth-century critics and writers primarily regarded him as a model of European realism, while early twentieth-century authors began to reassess him as a stylistic exemplar within emerging modernist experiments. Initially, the reception of Russian literature in the U.S. was shaped by political fascination and a wave of "Russomania," alongside with that Turgenev's prose gradually established itself as a distinct "school of writing."

From the 1880s through the early decades of the 20th century, Norman E. Saul shows that U.S.–Russian relations were shaped as much by cultural exchange as by diplomacy, with growing flows of people, ideas, and commerce linking the two societies³⁵⁷. Americans and Russians traveled, studied, and worked in each other's countries, spreading American industrial practices and consumer culture. Yet this period also brought rising tension: in the 1880s, especially, American public opinion turned critical of Russian autocracy and pogroms. Despite these conflicts, mutual curiosity persisted into the early 20th century, with Russians seeking American technology and organizational models, and Americans continuing to engage with Russian art and social thought. Saul emphasizes that this era was marked by a mix of attraction and unease — he characterizes the period from 1905 to 1914 as "hopes and fears" — as cultural fascination

³⁵⁷ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 511-548.

coexisted with political distrust, helping set the stage for the more turbulent relations that followed World War I and the Russian Revolution.³⁵⁸

Thus, Americans' reaction to the 1905 upheaval in Russia may be indicative of a mix of sympathy, concern, and caution, shaped largely by newspaper reports of violence, such as the Bloody Sunday massacre in St. Petersburg, and by broader hopes that Russia might move toward political reform under Nicholas II. Much of the U.S. public viewed Russian workers and peasants as struggling for basic rights, and liberal commentators framed events through America's own democratic ideals, while immigrant communities from Eastern Europe followed developments closely, and some supported labor and socialist movements inspired by the unrest. At the same time, reports of strikes and revolutionary activity fueled early anxieties among conservatives about the spread of radical ideologies to the United States. Overall, the 1905 events reinforced American perceptions of Russia as an autocratic society in need of modernization, while sowing seeds of both sympathy for reformers and wariness of revolutionary politics.³⁵⁹

Beyond politics, this attention to Russia extended into the cultural sphere, where revolutionary events intersected with a growing American fascination with Russian literature and art. This notion aligns with Royal Gettmann's concept of a "Russian craze," which I referenced in the second chapter. Additionally, Rebecca Beasley, in her monograph, introduces the term "Russomania," highlighting similar cultural phenomena in Europe.³⁶⁰ While both terms capture a genuine intellectual and emotional interest in Russia, I view "Russomania" as a phenomenon marked by sincere curiosity as well as a degree of exoticism. The fascination with Russian culture

³⁵⁸ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 509.

³⁵⁹ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 488-492.

³⁶⁰ See Rebecca Beasley, *Russomania: Russian Culture and the Creation of British Modernism, 1881–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 1-40.

emerged in Western Europe and was subsequently “inherited” by the United States, as cultural peripheries often adopt the perspectives of the metropolis.

Between 1880 and 1920, Russian culture had a significant impact on the United States, especially among elite artistic and intellectual circles. Russian music, ballet, and literature were regarded as emotionally intense, spiritually profound, and radically modern, offering American audiences an alternative to Victorian restraint and academic classicism. The touring success of the Ballets Russes in 1916 and 1917, led by Sergei Diaghilev, changed American expectations of dance and stage design.³⁶¹ Composers like Pyotr Tchaikovsky, who toured in 1891, and Sergei Rachmaninoff, who toured from 1909 to 1910, became integral to the concert scene in the U.S. Summarizing the role of Russian art in modernism, Steven Marks notes that its overall impact was highly valuable: “Around 1900, Russian avant-garde artists entered into the period of frenzied experimentation that did much to foster Modernist culture. For about two centuries, Russian had imitated European arts from the periphery; now it surged into the forefront of Diaghilev’s ballet, the theater of Stanislavsky and Meyerhold, the abstract painting of Kandinsky and Malevich.”³⁶² At the same time, the widespread reading of Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky helped popularize the idea of a uniquely “Russian soul,” associated with moral struggle, suffering, and psychological depth.³⁶³ At this point, “Russomania” created a horizon of expectation in which Russian culture was associated with intensity, spirituality, and radical transformation. Turgenev’s prose both satisfied and moderated this expectation.

³⁶¹ See Hanna Järvinen, “Failed Impressions: Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in America, 1916,” *Dance Research Journal* 42, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 77–108.

³⁶² Steven G. Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 176. See more on Diaghilev’s impact in the chapter chap. 6, “Conveying the Higher Truth Onstage: Ballet and Theater,” 176–228

³⁶³ Marks analyzes both Dostoevsky’s and Tolstoy’s influence in Western culture, pointing out that Dostoevsky was “discovered” after both Turgenev and Tolstoy—during 1900s - 1930s. Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World*, 77

During the mentioned period, Russian literature entered American intellectual life through an expanding network of translations, academic institutions, literary journals, and cultural exchange. Canonical figures — Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov — circulated widely in English, becoming integral to a growing cosmopolitan canon of world literature with Turgenev and Tolstoy established their positions at the end of the 19th century, and Dostoevsky and Chekhov coming at the beginning of the 20th century.³⁶⁴ This reception intensified with the institutionalization of Slavic studies and the proliferation of public lectures on Russian culture. Early mediators such as Leo Wiener and Isabel Hapgood played an important role in this process, shaping American access to Russian texts through translation and scholarship and helping to transform initial readerly curiosity into sustained pedagogical and critical traditions that testify to a lasting transatlantic dialogue between Russian and American literary cultures.

At the turn of the century, American periodicals significantly influenced how elite audiences perceived Russian literature. Journals like *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Nation*, which were previously analyzed, played an important role in this process. Additionally, newer publications such as *The New Republic*, established in 1914, consistently reviewed Russian novels and essays. They presented these works not just as foreign curiosities but as important contributions to contemporary moral and aesthetic discussions.³⁶⁵

Alongside the reflection of Russian literature and fascination with Slavic cultures, the establishment of Slavic studies in academia was underway at the beginning of the century. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, early efforts to introduce Slavic languages and literatures in the United States began with individual instruction, notably Leo Wiener's pioneering courses at

³⁶⁴ Saul, *Concord and Conflict*, 564

³⁶⁵ Choi Chatterjee, "Transnational Romance, Terror, and Heroism: Russia in American Popular Fiction, 1860–1917," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 3 (2008): 753–777

Harvard University in 1896.³⁶⁶ By the early twentieth century, these isolated beginnings had quickly matured into formal academic departments at several leading universities; for example, the University of California, Berkeley,³⁶⁷ and Columbia University soon followed Harvard in creating dedicated Slavic programs.³⁶⁸ Rather than an administrative chronology, what stands out is how these institutional developments transformed initial readerly curiosity about Russian texts into enduring academic traditions, enabling the sustained study, translation, and critical mediation of authors like Turgenev for new generations of American students and scholars.

Despite the early American discovery of Turgenev's writing and his significant popularity, there were no large-scale translations of his works until the late 19th century. Some novels were translated in the U.S., while others were reprinted both in London and New York.³⁶⁹ Before the advent of systematic translation projects, American readers largely relied on British editions imported from London, as well as scattered U.S. publications of individual novels and stories. Contemporary reviewers often remarked on awkward phrasing, unnatural dialogue, and abridged passages, which obscured the effect of Turgenev's style and created a sense of unevenness and distance from the original. For example, an 1881 review in *The Nation* critiqued translations of Turgenev that still relied heavily on French texts: "Nearly all the English translations have been taken from the French and, of course, adopt all these alterations in form and perspective, while the style suffers a further depreciation from the tendency to use the Latin side of our language in translating from the French, and so departing more and more from the vigorous and vivid

³⁶⁶ History | Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures." Harvard University. 2026. <https://slavic.fas.harvard.edu/pages/history-slavic-languages-and-literatures-harvard-university> Accessed February 16, 2026

³⁶⁷ University of California, Berkeley, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, "About the Department," accessed January 27, 2026, <https://slavic.berkeley.edu/about>

³⁶⁸ Columbia University, Department of Slavic Languages, "About," accessed January 27, 2026, <https://slavic.columbia.edu/>

³⁶⁹ See Yachnin and Stam, "Collected Works," in *Turgenev in English*, 17.

definiteness of the original.”³⁷⁰ Such shortcomings shaped American perceptions of Turgenev as a remote or difficult author and risked undermining the subtlety that defined his prose in Russian.

By contrast, after Constance Garnett’s steady efforts beginning in the mid-1890s, critical responses increasingly highlighted the natural flow and stylistic clarity of her translations.³⁷¹ The arrival of reliable, stylistically unified translations reshaped American critical opinion, fostering a more nuanced and consistent appreciation of Turgenev’s artistry.³⁷²

Two major sets of Turgenev’s works in translation appeared one after the other. In England, Constance Garnett began translating him, starting with *Rudin* in 1894, followed the same year by *A Nest of Gentlefolk*. In 1895, she published English versions of *Fathers and Children* and *On the Eve* and continued to translate Turgenev throughout the decade, including *Smoke* in 1896 and *Torrents of Spring* in 1897. Since Garnett’s translations were released individually rather than as a complete set, Isabel Hapgood undertook a major project: a 16-volume collection titled *The Novels and Stories of Ivan Turgenieff*, published in 1903–1904 in New York by Scribner’s Sons. The collection included introductions by Henry James and illustrations. Volumes 1 and 2 (1903) contained *Memoirs of a Sportsman* in two parts; Volume 3 (1903) featured *Rudin: a Romance* (as well as *A King Lear of the Steppes*); Volume 4 (1903) included *A Nobleman’s Nest*; Volume 5 (1903) contained *On the Eve*; and Volume 6 (1903) featured *Fathers and Children*. Volumes 7–16 (1904) gathered other major novels and story collections, including *Smoke*, *Virgin Soil* (in two parts), *The Diary of a Superfluous Man*, *First Love*, and *Phantoms and Other Stories*. Although I

³⁷⁰ Clara B. Martin, “Turgenieff and His Translators,” *The Nation* 26 (May 1878): 322–23.

³⁷¹ Rachel May, *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994), 32

³⁷² On the positive feedback to Garnett’s translations see Charles A. Moser, “Translation: The Achievement of Constance Garnett,” *The American Scholar* 57, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 433.

have no data on sales success, this major project was likely driven by the wave of Russomania and the demand for another prominent Russian author besides Tolstoy.³⁷³

The availability of more reliable translations coincided with the emergence of a new generation of American naturalist writers. By tracing the connection from the “searching for realism” authors to the “looking for new methods” modernists in the United States, I can demonstrate that Ivan Turgenev’s influence on American literature was continuous, extending from the 1870s and 1880s into the next decade.

Among writers emerging from the American Midwest at the turn of the century, this influence is most clearly visible in Hamlin Garland, a regionalist writer who articulated his literary position in the manifesto *Crumbling Idols* (1894), where he argued that American authors should turn to their “native soil” for subject matter.³⁷⁴ He argued that American literature must break free from blind adherence to European traditions and sentimental romanticism — outdated “idols” that stifle originality. Instead, he urged writers to ground their work in authentic, lived experience rather than in inherited literary conventions, drawing inspiration directly from the realities they know best. He insisted that American life — its landscapes, labor, struggles, and social conditions — deserves literary forms and styles shaped by those very realities, rather than by imported models. Above all, Garland champions realism over romance, claiming that honest portrayals of life, even when uncomfortable or harsh, are both ethically necessary and artistically stronger than idealized or escapist writing.³⁷⁵ Garland’s central takeaway, and the principle most relevant to Turgenev’s

³⁷³ Hapgood translated Tolstoy before Turgenev. Her publications included *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth* (1886), and *Sevastopol* (1888), followed by *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1890) and *The Gospel in Brief* (1896). At the start of the century, Harvard Professor Leo Wiener completed a translation of Tolstoy’s works in 24 volumes (1904).

³⁷⁴ Hamlin Garland, *Crumbling Idols: Twelve Essays on Art and Literature*, intro. Robert E. Spiller (Gainesville, FL: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1952), 26.

³⁷⁵ Garland, *Crumbling Idols*, 35.

influence, is his call for "native soil realism": literature rooted in the direct observation of local life and experience. This argument resonates with Turgenev's provincial focus, as his narratives are grounded in attentive depictions of rural settings and regional experience. Both Turgenev and Garland viewed the local and the everyday as key sources of literary authenticity and innovation.

Garland's ideas were profoundly shaped by William Dean Howells, who promoted him early in his career and played a pivotal role in his intellectual development. Howells championed Garland's fiction in his reviews and facilitated his access to major publishing venues such as *Harper's* and *The Atlantic*. More importantly, Howells affirmed Garland's dedication to depicting ordinary people and everyday life, reinforcing his commitment to Midwestern regionalism and socially conscious realism.³⁷⁶ Crucially, it was Howells who introduced Garland to Russian writers, including Turgenev, thereby broadening his literary horizons. As a result, Garland's manifesto not only echoes Turgenev's approach but also reflects the broader transatlantic literary dialogue fostered by Howells.³⁷⁷

Garland, in turn, extended Howells's realist principles into more explicitly regional and socio-economic territory. While Howells emphasized moral realism and domestic life, Garland pushed realism outward toward naturalistic concerns — farm labor, prairie hardship, and structural inequality — most memorably in the cycle *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891).³⁷⁸

Turgenev significantly shaped Garland's artistic method and literary outlook, particularly through the psychological depth and moral seriousness evident in *Fathers and Sons*.³⁷⁹ After reading the novel in the translation by Eugene Schuyler, he wrote the following in his notebook on

³⁷⁶ Miller, "Hamlin Garland's Retreat from Realism," 119-22.

³⁷⁷ Charles T. Miller, "Hamlin Garland's Retreat from Realism," *Western American Literature* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 119-29.

³⁷⁸ Andrew Lawson, "Hamlin Garland's Vertical Vision," in *Downwardly Mobile: The Changing Fortunes of American Realism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 112-127.

³⁷⁹ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 123.

October 16, 1884: “Finished reading *Fathers and Sons* with a feeling of deep respect for the author and with a much greater understanding than before of the Russian cast of mind. In this book, the writer has penetrated to the very depths of the human soul.”³⁸⁰

It is important to reassess the views of Perry and Howells on Russian literature, particularly as expressed in their 1912 conversation. This dialogue between two leading critics of the previous generation serves as a key source for understanding the reception of Russian authors in America at that time. Their exchange codifies the hierarchy of Russian writers and the concept of a “Russian school.”³⁸¹ Introducing the new Russian author Artsybashev into the discussion, Howells opens by asking whether he more closely resembles Tolstoy — whom Howells regarded as the preeminent writer — or Turgenev. In making this comparison, Howells characterizes Tolstoy as “voluminous” and Turgenev as “condensed,”³⁸² effectively framing those through a comparison of expansiveness versus economy. Furthermore, Howells emphasizes the significance of what he calls “the great Russian school,”³⁸³ placing both authors within a coherent artistic tradition rather than viewing them as isolated figures.

Turgenev’s name continued to hold a prominent place in the literary landscape of the early twentieth century. In the interview, Howells asks whether any contemporary Russian writer evokes Turgenev, to which Perry responds: “No, there is nobody just like him.”³⁸⁴ Their conversation later shifts to Anton Chekhov (spelled “Tchekof” in the discussion), signaling a growing awareness of a new generation of Russian writers, even as Turgenev remains the standard for artistic excellence.

³⁸⁰ Cit. from Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosviazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 123.

³⁸¹ Howells and Perry, “Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation,” 85-103.

³⁸² Howells and Perry, “Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation,” 85.

³⁸³ Howells and Perry, “Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation,” 86.

³⁸⁴ Howells and Perry, “Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation,” 87.

By the time of the interview, the spiritual dimension of Russian literature — especially in the works of Turgenev and Tolstoy — had been widely acknowledged by critics. Howells highlights a recurring theme in Russian prose: its capacity to grapple with profound spiritual questions. He references the character's journey "into the Valley of the Shadow of Death," drawing parallels between Turgenev's *Virgin Soil*, Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, and the death of Prince Andrei in *War and Peace*.³⁸⁵ This observation underscores what both critics see as a defining trait of Russian literature — its remarkable ability to probe the depths of human experience. This example illustrates how the "horizon of expectations" changed at the turn of the century, with the new era placing greater value on the moral seriousness and spirituality offered by Russian literature.

In Howells' admiration for Russian literature there was a notable shift from Turgenev in the 1870s to Tolstoy in the 1880s. In contrast, Perry's views on Turgenev and Russian literature remained steadfast throughout the years.³⁸⁶ He highlights Turgenev's exceptional mastery of style, asserting that the Russian author represents the peak of the previous generation of writers: he "was the culmination of their period of writing."³⁸⁷ In Perry's view, Turgenev represents the culmination of a literary tradition that began with Pushkin, Lermontov, and Gogol. He synthesizes their achievements, refining Russian prose into a disciplined and economical art form.

An important perspective on the comparative reception of 19th century Russian writers at the turn of the century is provided by Donna Orwin in her study *Consequences of Consciousness: Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy*. Although Orwin does not focus specifically on reception history, her work highlights the American cultural demand for spirituality in relation to these three

³⁸⁵ Howells and Perry, "Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation," 97.

³⁸⁶ Howells and Perry, "Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation," 100.

³⁸⁷ Howells and Perry, "Recent Russian Fiction. A Conversation," 102.

authors. She situates this interest within a broader cultural context, observing that non-Russian readers, even without a national imperative, were drawn to nineteenth-century Russian writers for their insights into modern psychology and its artistic expression.³⁸⁸ As Orwin observes, the assessment formulated by the Russian critic D. S. Mirsky in the 1920s remains valid: Russian realism was defined by “a sympathetic attitude to human beings, without distinction (not only of class but) of intrinsic moral significance,” which became “what Europe accepted as their message to mankind when they were first revealed to the West.”³⁸⁹

As Russian realism’s universal empathy was embraced by Western audiences, critics gradually moved beyond this collective message to discern the individual contributions of each major writer. To clarify the focus on “subjectivity,” it is essential to note that this quality not only set Turgenev apart from his Russian contemporaries, but also most effectively illustrates how his innovations in narrative distance and restraint were later inherited by American literary modernism.

Orwin emphasizes that Turgenev often articulated the central problems that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky later undertook to resolve in more expansive ways.³⁹⁰ Turgenev, she argues, protects subjectivity by deliberately declining to analyze his characters exhaustively or to probe their inner lives beyond a certain point, thereby preserving narrative distance and psychological tact.³⁹¹ Tolstoy and Dostoevsky inherit these questions but pursue them through more intrusive and complex narrative strategies, extending rather than rejecting the concerns first formulated in Turgenev’s restrained realism. Therefore, Turgenev’s prose proved particularly adaptable to

³⁸⁸ Donna Tussing Orwin, *Consequences of Consciousness: Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 3

³⁸⁹ Cit from Orwin, *Consequences of Consciousness*, 3

³⁹⁰ Orwin, *Consequences of Consciousness*, 5.

³⁹¹ Orwin, *Consequences of Consciousness*, 5.

modernist sensibilities because its restraint aligned with emerging aesthetics of omission and implication. Unlike Tolstoy's moral expansiveness or Dostoevsky's philosophical intensity, Turgenev's narrative tact preserved ambiguity and psychological distance.

Meanwhile, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, who entered the literary stage one by one after Turgenev,³⁹² posed greater challenges to Western expectations. For Henry James, Tolstoy's novels were formless, excessive, or emotionally overwhelming.³⁹³ Tolstoy's reception increasingly emphasized his profound moral seriousness and his respect for human subjectivity, particularly his insistence on holding characters morally accountable while granting them full interior complexity. Orwin provides a valuable comparison between *Anna Karenina* and Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*: "In both novels, the eponymous heroine follows her subjective daimon wherever it leads her and perishes as a result. Both characters are loved by their creators and consequently by readers, yet only Anna rises to the level of tragic heroine, while Emma remains a victim of her surroundings and her own delusions. Flaubert's respect is reserved for true science, as represented by the great doctor who arrives too late to save Emma at the end of the novel but sizes up the situation at a glance. Tolstoy loves Anna as the repository of sincere feeling, but also respects her as a free agent, and he therefore holds her accountable for her own demise... Even as an emotive being, Anna differs from Emma. The essential love of life that wells up in her at the end is fundamentally moral, while Flaubert counts such love of life as amoral. So Tolstoy judges Anna more harshly than Flaubert does Emma, but in so doing, the Russian author honors his heroine more than the French one does his."³⁹⁴ The author analyzes the crucial difference in the reception

³⁹² Tolstoy's craze began in the 1890s and continued into the 20th century. Dostoevsky was massively discovered in the U.S. during the 1900s-1930s. See Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism*, 77.

³⁹³ James, "Preface," xi.

³⁹⁴ Orwin, *Consequences of Consciousness*, 10.

of Russian and French literature: how the Western analytical position of the narrator confronts Tolstoy's compassion, merged with artistic freedom.

Dostoevsky was received as the most psychologically intense and philosophically unsettling of the three. While his fiction appears to penetrate relentlessly into the inner life, Orwin's account highlights that Dostoevsky's authorial control remains indirect and strategic: he guides readers toward ethical and psychological insights unavailable to any single character.: "Dostoevsky, in particular, is less intrusive than all the psychological details in his fiction would imply, but at the same time, his author operates dexterously behind the scenes to guide the reader to certain conclusions unavailable to any one character in his texts."³⁹⁵ Western reception gradually shifted from viewing Dostoevsky as chaotic or pathological to recognizing his innovative narrative orchestration of competing consciousnesses.

By the time modernist writers encountered Turgenev, his work had already been filtered through translators, critics, and institutions, establishing him as representative of a distinct school of writing. His appeal to early twentieth-century American writers stemmed largely from his unique stylistic economy. In contrast to Tolstoy's sweeping moral panoramas and Dostoevsky's intense psychological drama, Turgenev's prose is characterized by restraint, tonal subtlety, and a carefully maintained distance between narrator and character. Critics of the preceding generation consistently highlighted this stylistic discipline, appreciating Turgenev not for ideological radicalism, but for formal clarity and compositional balance. His narrative method favors understatement over accumulation; emotional states are seldom named outright, instead emerging through gesture, landscape, rhythm, and implication. His sentences are moderate in length and complexity, eschewing rhetorical excess yet sustaining a lyrical attentiveness to mood: "The

³⁹⁵ Orwin, *Consequences of Consciousness*, 6.

curious intermediate length of the Turgenevan novellalike novel is itself suggestive of a process of poetic condensation.”³⁹⁶

This reassessment of Turgenev within the context of modernist stylistics demonstrates how a Russian literary tradition was absorbed into American literature as a model for artistic education. Hemingway’s years in Paris exemplify this process: his close study of Russian prose influenced the development of modernist techniques that valued linguistic precision, attention to sound and rhythm, and a poetic sensitivity to textual texture. Michael S. Reynolds notes that the young Hemingway checked out Turgenev’s *A Sportsman’s Sketches* three times from Sylvia Beach’s library, underscoring the depth of this engagement.³⁹⁷ For both Anderson and early Hemingway, Turgenev’s mastery lay not only in narrative structure but in the subtle calibration of words and tonal effects — qualities that helped shape the aesthetic foundations of American modernism.

Meanwhile, the provincial foundations of Ivan Turgenev’s prose remained central to how a new generation of writers engaged with his work. This focus on provincial experience, alongside the strong American tradition of literary regionalism, was carried forward by Sherwood Anderson. In Juri Lotman’s terms, the “cultural request” of emerging modernist writers closely resembled that of their predecessors: they continued to view Turgenev as offering a “school of writing” rooted in personal experience and provincial life.

Moreover, the essence of this cultural request remained consistent over time. Late nineteenth-century critics like Perry and Howells valued Turgenev for the “truthfulness of life” in his prose, while modernist writers turned to his work for new methods of representation and practical “tools for writing.” The nature of the request did not change; rather, it was reinterpreted

³⁹⁶ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 73

³⁹⁷ Michael S. Reynolds, *Hemingway: The Paris Years* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999),

within a modernist context. For Anderson, this reevaluation focused on how literature could restore the “magic” resonance of language while maintaining its naïve, natural roughness. The challenge was not to abandon this raw quality, but to refine it with greater formal clarity and artistic awareness—translating the immediacy of experience into a more deliberate, controlled literary form.

When examining Turgenev’s early twentieth-century reception, it is important to consider whether he was seen as a prominent European master, a member of the French school (as suggested in Henry James’s reviews), or simply as a Russian author. Unlike his predecessor Henry James and his literary successor Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson did not emerge from within a European literary context. Although Anderson traveled extensively in Europe after the success of his first book, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), his engagement with Russian literature took place primarily in the United States, where he was influenced not only by Turgenev but also by Anton Chekhov.³⁹⁸ Meanwhile, Anderson encouraged young writer Ernest Hemingway to settle in Paris,³⁹⁹ which he did after securing an appointment with the *Toronto Star*. Hemingway lived in Paris from 1921 to 1928, immersing himself in the French literary scene while also reading Turgenev’s prose with close attention.⁴⁰⁰

Thus, Anderson’s reception of Turgenev was distinctly American, shaped by his engagement with Russian literature on home soil. In contrast, Hemingway encountered Turgenev and Russian literature in Paris, primarily through Constance Garnett’s translations, which introduced these works to a new generation of anglophone writers abroad.

³⁹⁸ V. Ia. Zviniatskovskii, “Sherwood Anderson i Chekhov,” in *Chekhov i mirovaya literatura*, 3 vols., ed. Z. S. Papernyi and E. A. Polotskaia, vol. 2, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, vol. 100 (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), 730–739.

³⁹⁹ Debra A. Modellmog and Suzanne del Gizzo, eds., *Ernest Hemingway in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 164.

⁴⁰⁰ Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Scribner, 1964), 36

For Henry James, who theorized and institutionalized the modern narrative point of view, Turgenev provided a model of narrative consciousness and formal balance that aligned with James's focus on subjectivity and the filtering of experience through individual perception. In contrast, Sherwood Anderson, engaging with Russian literature from within the United States rather than through European circles, absorbed Turgenev's attention to interiority and provincial life, reimagining it in a distinctly American idiom marked by emotional estrangement and small-town experience.

Ernest Hemingway, in turn, radicalized this inheritance by distilling Turgenev's restraint into a poetics of compression and omission, most famously articulated in his "iceberg technique," in which meaning is generated by what remains unstated beneath the surface of the text.⁴⁰¹ Hemingway's disciplined sentences, submerged emotional cores, and reliance on implication rather than exposition can thus be read as an intensified continuation of Turgenev's aesthetic economy. Taken together, these three trajectories—James's consciousness, point of view, and subjectivity; Anderson's interiority and regional voice; and Hemingway's compression, omission, and iceberg principle — suggest a coherent lineage in which Turgenev's prose operates as a shared aesthetic filter, shaping divergent yet interconnected strands of American modernism.

⁴⁰¹ Hemingway explains this technique and uses the comparison of his style to an iceberg in his novel *Death in the Afternoon*: "If a writer of prose knows enough of what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing." See Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), Ch 16, 192

B. Turgenev's Artistic Inheritance in Anderson's Prose: A Comparative Reading of *A Sportsman's Sketches* and *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Sherwood Anderson's engagement with Turgenev is evident in the structural parallels between *Winesburg, Ohio* and *A Sportsman's Sketches*. Both books are composed as cycles of short stories, presenting loosely connected portraits of provincial life that emphasize atmosphere and psychological depth over plot. Each author constructs a sense of community from fragments— isolated individuals whose inner lives are revealed through brief encounters and subtle gestures. Anderson's "grotesques," marked by loneliness and unfulfilled longing, echo Turgenev's fascination with singular, often peculiar characters, and reflect Henry James's observation that Turgenev's plots revolve around such figure.⁴⁰² Anderson adapts this legacy to an American context, transforming Turgenev's Russian countryside into the small towns of the Midwest. In doing so, he fuses Russian interiority with American regionalism, creating a modernist form that blends narrative restraint with subjective intensity. For Anderson, Turgenev provides not only thematic inspiration but also a compositional model — demonstrating how provincial life can serve as a setting rich in psychological complexity.

Sherwood Anderson's early work was shaped by several influential American writers, which guided his move away from conventional, plot-driven fiction toward a more impressionistic, character-centered style. Mark Twain, Edgar Lee Masters, and Gertrude Stein were especially significant in this development. Edgar Lee Masters, in particular, had a direct impact: his *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), with its series of portraits of small-town residents, illuminated the inner life of a community — a structural approach that Anderson would later adopt in *Winesburg, Ohio*. Mark Twain inspired Anderson's plainspoken diction and regional realism, encouraging a voice

⁴⁰²Henry James, "Preface," in *The Portrait of a Lady*, 5

grounded in everyday speech. Gertrude Stein contributed to Anderson's stylistic experimentation, especially his use of repetition, rhythmic phrasing, and deceptively simple sentences. Collectively, these writers enabled Anderson to develop a prose style that was both colloquial and innovative, skillfully blending "local color" with modernist technique.⁴⁰³

Russian literature also played a crucial role in shaping Anderson's artistic sensibility, especially the works of Anton Chekhov and Ivan Turgenev.⁴⁰⁴ From Chekhov, Anderson absorbed the idea that fiction could focus on subtle psychological states and fleeting emotional moments rather than dramatic plots, a principle clearly reflected in the introspective stories of *Winesburg, Ohio*.⁴⁰⁵ Turgenev's influence appears in Anderson's restrained tone and in his sympathetic portrayals of provincial life, in which ordinary people are depicted with dignity and emotional complexity. Both Russian writers emphasized mood, atmosphere, and interiority, qualities that Anderson adapted to an American setting, resulting in stories that move beyond traditional narrative forms.

The significance of Ivan Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* for Sherwood Anderson's artistic development has long been acknowledged, though rarely examined in sustained detail. Critics have focused especially on this book of stories because its episodic structure and observational narrator closely anticipate Anderson's own narrative method. The idea of the connection between two books was first raised by Irving Howe⁴⁰⁶ and subsequently noted by other scholars, including Nathan B. Fagin, Brom Weber, Malcolm Cowley, Forrest Ingram, and Perry

⁴⁰³ On the connection of Anderson to the contemporary authors see for example: Cleveland B. Chase, *Sherwood Anderson* (New York: Robert M. McBride, 1927), 18

⁴⁰⁴ Malcolm Cowley, "Sherwood Anderson's Book of Moments," in *A Many-Windowed House* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), 169

⁴⁰⁵ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosviazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 390

⁴⁰⁶ Irving Howe, "The Book of the Grotesque," in *The Achievement of Sherwood Anderson*, ed. and introd. Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 91.

Miller.⁴⁰⁷ However, scholars have offered varying interpretations of Turgenev's influence on Anderson's work. For example, Forrest Ingram, in his study of short story cycles, notes that Anderson, "as an ardent devotee of *A Sportsman's Sketches* and as an original, fully realized genius in his own right, carried the tradition of the cycle across the ocean and helped it take shape."⁴⁰⁸ Brom Weber, in his monograph about the writer, emphasizes similarities in narrator's position, noting: "Among other things, the influence of Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* is evident, in which a narrator who is sympathetic yet far from sentimental allows various types of Russian character to reveal themselves."⁴⁰⁹ These different emphases — on form, character depiction, or narrative mediation — demonstrate the variety within the ongoing critical conversation about the cycle form. Regarding research on Anderson conducted in Russian, Mikhail Landor also advanced the idea of connections between genres, remarking that in *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson adopts a genre form from Turgenev.⁴¹⁰

In his correspondence, Anderson explicitly acknowledged Turgenev's impact on his work. For example, in his 1924 letter, the writer confessed that he had been "fumbling around" as a storyteller until he discovered Russian authors. He described *A Sportsman's Sketches* as a book that "inspired and guided him like the light of a beacon," and while working on *Winesburg, Ohio*,

⁴⁰⁷ Brom Weber, *Sherwood Anderson* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964), 23, Forrest L. Ingram, "Sherwood Anderson: *Winesburg, Ohio*," in *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century* (Paris: Mouton, 1977), 13–26, P. W. Miller, "Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson – and Ivan Turgenev," in *Ivan Turgenev*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003), 205–215

⁴⁰⁸ Forrest L. Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century: Studies in Literary Genre* (The Hague–Paris: Mouton, 1971), 14.

⁴⁰⁹ Weber, *Sherwood Anderson*, 23

⁴¹⁰ Mikhail Landor, "Bol'shaia proza – iz maloi. Ob odnom stanovishchemsiazhanre v XX veke," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 8 (1982): 76–77

he consciously sought “a new looseness of form,” for which Turgenev served as a guiding model.⁴¹¹

Anderson was known for his controversial statements; on one hand, he could dismiss any connection with Russians, but on the other, he admitted that “he had not read any of the Russians except Turgenev.”⁴¹² The writer acquired the eight-volume collected works of Turgenev — the largest set of books he owned by any Russian author. Reflecting on his early years as a writer in Chicago, he repeatedly cited Turgenev as an important milestone in his literary development.: “When I was alone, in Chicago perhaps, my fancy would take it up and play with it. Too bad I was not a Turgenev or someone equally skillful. Were I such a one, I might make of what I had seen some such a tale as, say, Turgenev’s *Smoke*. There was just the material for a tale, a novel perhaps.”⁴¹³

What Anderson regarded as an artistic influence, later critics would recognize as evidence of Turgenev’s formal revolution in short fiction. Frank O’Connor, for example, argued that Turgenev’s enduring importance lies in his “influence on the creation of a new art form,” even calling *A Sportsman’s Sketches* “the greatest book of short stories ever written.”⁴¹⁴ Such assessments reflect not only admiration, but a formative aesthetic orientation: Anderson’s search for narrative form was deeply shaped by his engagement with Turgenev’s work.

In developing his own literary voice, Anderson adopted an approach first articulated by Henry James in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* — one that prioritized character development and setting over plot-driven storytelling.⁴¹⁵ Anderson encountered Turgenev within an established

⁴¹¹ Cit from Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century*, 148

⁴¹² Cowley, “Sherwood Anderson’s Book of Moments,” 169

⁴¹³ Sherwood Anderson, *A Story Teller’s Story* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1924), 402

⁴¹⁴ Frank O’Connor, *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1963), 46.

⁴¹⁵ James, “Preface,” in *The Portrait of a Lady*, ed. Nicola Bradbury, 5

aesthetic tradition that, by the early twentieth century, already valued these elements. His particular emphasis on environment became a key innovation.

As part of broader modernist experimentation, Anderson sought a new literary form — one that moved beyond conventional plot structures and traditional genre boundaries. He believed that the novel should reflect the current times in American history and bear the distinct mark of its era. Although committed to portraying “American life,” Anderson’s early novels, *Windy McPherson’s Son* (1916) and *Marching Men* (1917), received only lukewarm reviews. It was during the creation of *Winesburg, Ohio* that he shifted away from the conventional novel, embracing the prose cycle as a more fitting vehicle for his artistic vision.

After the publication of his first novels, Anderson was haunted by the thought of some “still unwritten thing.”⁴¹⁶ His memoirs contain an episode in which he recalls that “books bearing his name stood on the shelf, yet the thought would not leave him—he had not yet written anything truly significant.”⁴¹⁷ For several years, Anderson nurtured plans for a new novel, bringing draft materials from Elyria, Ohio, to Chicago; ultimately, this project remained unfinished at the end of his life.⁴¹⁸ Soon, however, he abandoned the traditional novel form altogether. Drawing inspiration from three cycles — Turgenev’s *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, Gertrude Stein’s *Three Lives* (1909), and Edgar Lee Masters’s poetic *Spoon River Anthology* — Anderson embraced a new genre. Many of the materials originally intended for his novel were eventually woven into *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Anderson sought “a new looseness of form” in his writing, deliberately moving away from the conventional, rigid structure of the traditional novel: “What is wanted is a new looseness of

⁴¹⁶ Cit from W. L. Phillips, “How Sherwood Anderson Wrote *Winesburg, Ohio*,” *American Literature* 23, no. 1 (1951): 7.

⁴¹⁷ Cit from Phillips, “How Sherwood Anderson Wrote *Winesburg, Ohio*,” 7

⁴¹⁸ Phillips suggests that the novel might have borne the name of its protagonist, *Tablot Whittingam*. See Phillips, “How Sherwood Anderson Wrote *Winesburg, Ohio*,” 11.

form, and in *Winesburg* I had made my own form.”⁴¹⁹ Instead of adopting stream-of-consciousness techniques like Joyce, Anderson looked to Turgenev’s *A Sportsman’s Sketches* for inspiration—striving to capture life’s authentic flow through a series of interconnected yet distinct stories. This model of “separated unity” became central to Anderson’s artistic vision.

The quest for a new artistic form was probably one of the writer’s primary creative goals. He admitted: “I constantly force myself to work in an experimental field. I constantly ask myself: ‘What more can be done in prose that has never been done before?’”⁴²⁰ These explorations coincided with the formation of modernist aesthetics, a period of heightened attention to literary form, when emphasis shifted from the meaning of words to their sound and to sentence construction. Anderson was intrigued by Gertrude Stein’s linguistic experiments. In *A Story Teller’s Story* (1924), he acknowledged that Stein taught him to see the word as distinct from its meaning.⁴²¹ As Brom Weber notes, Anderson essentially apprenticed himself to Stein, who opened his eyes to new possibilities in narrative style; the writer “recognized her rejection of conventional syntax, punctuation, and pronunciation... as a rejection of the deadness of habitual language and rhythm, of literature based more on tradition than on the object represented, [and an embrace of] speech freshly articulated.”⁴²²

In this context, every word was carefully chosen to create a distinct melody within the text — a rhythm shaped by falling intonation and consonantal harmony, resulting in a kind of prose poetry. At this point, Anderson credited Gertrude Stein with teaching him to listen more attentively to the sound of language: “She made him intimately aware of individual words, their shape, texture,

⁴¹⁹ Cit from Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century*, 148.

⁴²⁰ Cit from D. Stouck, “Sherwood Anderson and the Postmodern Novel,” *Contemporary Literature* 26, no. 3 (1985): 305.

⁴²¹ Anderson, *A Story Teller’s Story*, 263.

⁴²² Weber, *Sherwood Anderson*, 21.

and sound.”⁴²³ According to Brom Weber, the combination of “fear and reverence before the word together with love for it contributed to the achievement of impeccable stylistic purity.”⁴²⁴ This pursuit of stylistic purity also echoes Turgenev's influence, whose precise and melodious prose set a standard for clarity and elegance that Anderson admired and sought to emulate.

In the first two stories of the book — “The Book of the Grotesque” and “Hands” — Anderson found his own “primitive,” and at times “rough,” narrative style, which he later refined into a more even mode of storytelling. This intentional roughness, along with his careful word choice and occasional uncertainty about conveying meaning, reflected the stance of a writer conscious of standing at the threshold of a new national culture. In his 1917 essay “An Apology for Crudity,” Anderson contends that a writer must discard literary clichés and confront reality directly.⁴²⁵ The latter, in his view, is extremely unattractive and coarse, much like the characters of Americans themselves, who combine a peculiar naiveté with the same coarseness and harshness. The author also hopes that, in time, a new generation will emerge that writes in a refined style.⁴²⁶

Anderson claimed that the writing process was spontaneous and subject to momentary inspiration; however, the drafts of *Winesburg* examined by William Phillips demonstrate that he worked on his style with the greatest meticulousness, consciously changing his sentences and bringing them closer to colloquial speech.⁴²⁷ Essentially, Anderson designed his book to be spoken aloud, intentionally crafting it for an oral experience.⁴²⁸ The narration in *Winesburg, Ohio* is marked by a measured, unhurried rhythm, and the entire book is rich with sound correspondences:

⁴²³ Cit from David Stouck, “Sherwood Anderson and the Postmodern Novel,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 7, no. 3 (1976): 304.

⁴²⁴ Weber, *Sherwood Anderson*, 12.

⁴²⁵ Sherwood Anderson, “An Apology for Crudity,” *The Dial* 63 (November 8, 1917): 437–38.

⁴²⁶ Anderson, “An Apology for Crudity,” 437–38

⁴²⁷ Phillips, “How Sherwood Anderson Wrote *Winesburg, Ohio*,” 19.

⁴²⁸ Cowley, “Sherwood Anderson's Book of Moments,” 169.

“The stranger became silent and seemed overcome with sadness, but another blast from the whistle of the passenger engine aroused him”⁴²⁹ — [s] (“Tandy”); “It was long and narrow and swung outward on a hinge like a door”⁴³⁰ — [o:], [ou] (“The Strength of God”).

Anderson’s lyrical prose can be seen as an attempt to capture the natural flow of life, conveying its inherent “roughness” and sense of “unfinishedness.” His vision is illustrated by the image of small, twisted apples in the story “Paper Pills” — apples that ripen late in the Winesburg orchards and whose wonderful, juicy flavor is known only to a select few: “It is delicious, like the twisted little apples that grow in the orchards of Winesburg. In the fall one walks in the orchards and the ground is hard with frost underfoot...On the trees are only a few gnarled apples that the pickers have rejected. They look like the knuckles of Doctor Reefy’s hands. One nibbles at them and they are delicious. Into a little round place at the side of the apple has been gathered all of its sweetness. One runs from tree to tree over the frosted ground picking the gnarled, twisted apples and filling his pockets with them. Only the few know the sweetness of the twisted apples.”⁴³¹

The poetic inclination of Anderson’s prose is evident in the story “Thinker”, where sentences naturally fall into stanza-like groupings and a single paragraph often forms a complete intonational phrase:

It was berry harvest time in Winesburg
and upon the station platform
men and boys loaded the boxes of red, fragrant berries
into two express cars that stood upon the siding.

⁴²⁹ Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism*, ed. Charles E. Modlin and Ray Lewis White (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 79

⁴³⁰ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 81

⁴³¹ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 14

A June moon was in the sky,
although in the west a storm threatened,
and no street lamps were lighted.
In the dim light
the figures of the men
standing upon the express truck
and pitching the boxes in at the doors of the cars
were but dimly discernible”⁴³² (“Thinker”).

The scene of workers loading berries on a June night at the Winesburg station is rendered by Anderson as a musical, almost ritualistic act. While the lyrical quality of this passage owes something to Gertrude Stein’s influence, Turgenev’s poetic descriptions of nature likely served as a model as well. Turgenev’s stories are renowned for their focus on capturing a single moment in vivid detail, and Anderson, in a similar vein, creates what Malcolm Cowley described as a “book of moments” in Winesburg, Ohio. Anderson’s approach reflects a desire to depict “moments so boundless in time that each contains a whole life.”⁴³³

Anderson was often associated with regionalist writers, yet he resisted being tied to any single region, insisting instead on a broadly American—and even universal—scope in his work. Nevertheless, his childhood and youth in the Midwest undeniably provided the essential foundation for his entire literary career.⁴³⁴

⁴³² Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 73

⁴³³ Cowley, “Sherwood Anderson’s Book of Moments,” 166

⁴³⁴ D. Anderson, “Wanderers and Sojourners: Sherwood Anderson and the People of Winesburg,” *Twentieth Century Literature* 23, no. 1 (February 1977): 32.

The provincial setting of Anderson's stories reflects not only his biography but also his tendency toward broad symbolic and mythological generalization — a drive to uncover the very essence and foundation of American life. Anderson believed that the small town occupies a unique position between the metropolis and the natural world; in *Home Town* (1940), he described such communities as the “backbone of the country”: “The small community has always been the “backbone of the living thing we call America,” because it lies halfway between the cities (which breed ideas) and the soil (which breeds strength).”⁴³⁵ At this stage, Anderson follows in the tradition of nineteenth-century writers like W.D. Howells and Hamlin Garland, both of whom stressed the modern author's connection to the realities of American life. For Anderson, the theme of native soil becomes essential. His writing is grounded in a desire to preserve and convey this “connection to the soil,” a deep attachment to one's place of origin. In *A Story Teller's Story*, he underscores this point: “Turgenev, Gogol, Fielding, Cervantes, De Foe, Balzac — what mighty names marched through the mind with the click of the car wheels. To the man of the American West, how much the East means. How deeply buried the great European craftsmen had been in the soil out of which they had come. How intimately they had known their own peoples and with what infinite delicacy and understanding they had spoken out of them.”⁴³⁶

Turgenev's portrayal of provincial life set an important artistic precedent for Anderson, emphasizing the representation of ordinary existence as a site of broader social meaning. The Russian writer's focus on provincial settings was rooted in personal experience and guided by a universalizing impulse: by vividly depicting local realities, he sought to illuminate general patterns of human and social life. In *A Sportsman's Sketches*, the world of landowners, peasants, and rural

⁴³⁵ Cit from B. T. Spenser, “Sherwood Anderson: American Mythopoeist,” in *Sherwood Anderson: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Walter Rideout (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 158.

⁴³⁶ Anderson, *A Story Teller's Story*, 390.

landscapes is not merely a backdrop, but a lens through which the condition of society at large is revealed. Using Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of chronotope — a fusion of time and place in literature⁴³⁷ — this provincial setting serves to unify the book's cyclical structure and becomes one of the key elements holding the text together.

Anderson's formal experimentation was closely intertwined with his depiction of environment. His focus on the chronotope became a hallmark of his work, building in part on techniques pioneered by Turgenev. In both authors' texts, the provincial setting serves to establish a sense of cyclical unity. The shared chronotope of time and place binds the narratives together, while still maintaining the "looseness of form" that comes from telling stories within a single, unified locale.

This same artistic logic shapes Anderson's depiction of provincial America. In *Winesburg, Ohio*, the small town is not merely a backdrop for individual stories; rather, its environment exerts a powerful influence over the characters' inner lives and destinies. The town's atmosphere — its silences, rhythms, and emotions — functions almost as an additional character, animating the narrative from within. In fact, Anderson's chronotope dominates the lives of his characters; it is no coincidence that the book itself is titled *Winesburg*, underscoring the town's determining role in the fate of its inhabitants. Both Turgenev and Anderson thus elevate provincial life into an aesthetic principle: the local becomes a lens for generalization, and the ordinary serves as a vehicle for expressing fundamental truths about human existence.

The parallels outlined above reveal a deeper affinity between Turgenev's and Anderson's artistic approaches, particularly in their handling of character. Anderson inherits not just

⁴³⁷ Bakhtin M. M., "Formy vremeni i khronotopa v romane," in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki* (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975), 235.

Turgenev's technical methods, but also his aesthetic principle: both authors construct characters around a single, heightened trait that comes to define the entire personality.

In Turgenev's work, the focus on a dominant personal quality often produces characters whom contemporaries regarded as "strange" or marginal — figures distinguished by their uniqueness, inwardness, and divergence from social norms. His peasant characters, for instance, are portrayed as unique individuals with a contemplative and sensitive nature. The depiction of Kalinych in the first story perfectly exemplifies this "poetical potential": "I opened my eyes and saw Kalinitch: he was sitting on the threshold of the half-opened door, carving a spoon with his knife. I gazed a long time admiring his face, as sweet and clear as an evening sky"⁴³⁸ ("Khor and Kalinych"). Through such depictions, Turgenev elevates his peasant characters beyond simple social types, imbuing them with a lyrical quality. This poetization not only "humanizes" the peasants but also invites readers to appreciate the richness of their inner lives and the beauty in their simplicity. In redefining the literary portrayal of rural figures, Turgenev grants them a dignity and emotional depth that transcends conventional social boundaries.

Kalinych sets the pattern for a series of "shelterless" characters — figures who lack a stable home and are closely connected to the natural world. He spends most of his time at the apiary; Biryuk lives alone in a forest hut ("Biryuk"); and Lukerya resides in a small shed ("A Living Relic"). Yermolai, who accompanies the hunter, also wanders through fields and woods ("Yermolai and the Miller's Wife"). In this story cycle, such proximity to nature not only defines these characters' existence but also underscores their inability to fulfill conventional social roles as peasants, particularly the formation of families and households. Lukerya from "A Living Relic" stands as the final figure in this line of peculiar heroes, resembling the type of "iurodivyi" — a

⁴³⁸ Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, trans. Garnett, 8.

physically or mentally challenged individual often regarded as a local saint within the community. As a result, Lukerya possesses a profound sense of self-awareness; in her conversation with the hunter, she observes: “Why, some haven't a roof to shelter them, and there are some blind or deaf; while I, thank God, have splendid sight, and hear everything - everything. If a mole burrows in the ground - I hear even that. And I can smell every scent, even the faintest! When the buckwheat comes into flower in the meadow, or the lime-tree in the garden - I don't need to be told of it, even; I'm the first to know directly. Anyway, if there's the least bit of a wind blowing from that quarter... Look at this, again: anyone in health may easily fall into sin; but I'm cut off even from sin.”⁴³⁹ For Lukerya, the greatest hardship is the loss of belonging and refuge. Yet the heroine believes she has found her true home — the place meant for her — and feels at peace and content with her circumstances.

These characters share an inability to firmly establish themselves or put down deep roots; as Polutykin says of Kalinych: “he is a willing and useful peasant; *he can't farm his land properly*; I am always taking him away from it. He goes out hunting every day with me.”⁴⁴⁰ All the characters in this group, for various reasons, are unsuited to the demands of heavy peasant labor. Their lack of “rational thinking” is offset by a range of irrational or intuitive abilities: “But Kalinitch was endowed with powers which even Hor' recognized; he could charm away hemorrhages, fits, madness, and worms; his bees always did well; he had a light hand.”⁴⁴¹ These skills also pass to Kasyan: “You know they say you cure folks; you're a doctor,”⁴⁴² says the coachman Yermolai of him. At the same time, Kalinych had a gentle and kind personality, whereas Yermolai, who

⁴³⁹ Ivan Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, vol. 2, trans. Constance Garnett, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/8744/pg8744-images.html#chap23>.

⁴⁴⁰ Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, trans. Garnett, 8.

⁴⁴¹ Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, trans. Garnett, 14.

⁴⁴² Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, trans. Garnett, 176.

accompanied the hunter in later stories, did not share this mild temper. However, he was knowledgeable about the hunter's craft, highly observant, and — like the other figures in this group — lacked a permanent home. The narrator describes him as “a very strange kind of man; heedless as a bird, rather fond of talking, awkward and vacant-looking; he was excessively fond of drink, and never could sit still long; in walking he shambled along, and rolled from side to side; and yet he got over fifty miles in the day with his rolling, shambling gait.”⁴⁴³ In Kasyan, mystical abilities become even more pronounced; he is entirely isolated from the human world and is regarded as a holy fool. The forester Biryuk is also something of an outsider, yet his close bond with nature — shaped by his work — reflects a remarkable resilience of character. Both Kalinych and Kasyan possess a spiritual sensitivity, evident in their appreciation for art and their singing talents. This natural gift is also present in Yakov Turok (“Singers”). Finally, Lukerya embodies kindness and steadfast faith, even predicting her own death.

Here, Turgenev uses distinct traits to define a character's personality, while Anderson expands these traits into structural metaphors for human isolation. In both writers' work, characterization functions as a compositional device: the figure is not merely depicted, but architecturally constructed around a central quality. This shared approach helps explain why Anderson's grotesques can be viewed as a modernist amplification of Turgenev's character typology.

Given these affinities, it is not surprising that both writers focus so closely on various forms of human peculiarity. For example, Henry James noted that all of Turgenev's characters are marked by strange traits: “I remember Turgenev's once saying in regard to Homas, the little Norman country apothecary, with his pedantry of “enlightened opinions,” in *Madame Bovary*, that the great

⁴⁴³ Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, trans. Garnett, 25.

strength of such a portrait consisted in its being at once an individual, of the most concrete sort, and a type. This is the great strength of his own representations of character; they are so strangely, fascinatingly particular, and yet they are so recognizably general.”⁴⁴⁴ Anderson maintains a similar focus on character depiction: he is drawn to distorted figures, to grotesque characters, who, as he writes, are warped by some “single truth.”

Anderson articulates his concept of the grotesque in the opening story, “The Book of the Grotesque.” Each character lives according to a personal truth and serves only that. In the story’s symbolic creation episode, it is said that there were “many thoughts but no such thing as a truth.”⁴⁴⁵ “And then the people came along. Each as he appeared snatched up one of the truths and some who were quite strong snatched up a dozen of them. It was the truths that made the people grotesques... It was his notion that the moment one of the people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood.”⁴⁴⁶ The author not only fragments his imagined world into small, disconnected pieces but also inverts meanings throughout. An amplified truth becomes a falsehood, and the characters’ positive traits — none of whom are truly negative — are distorted, forming the very foundation of the grotesque.

The grotesqueness of these figures stems in part from the way they are constructed: a single character trait is exaggerated and drawn almost to the point of caricature, becoming the defining feature of the hero, thus, George’s father, Tom Willard (“Mother”), with his moustache; Doctor Reefy’s fingers (“Paper Peels”); Wing Biddlebaum’s hands (“Hands”). In the story about Wing

⁴⁴⁴ See also another James’s note in the creation on the character: “The first form in which a tale appeared to him was as the figure of an individual, or a combination of individuals, whom he wished to see in action, being sure that such people must do something very special and interesting.” James, “Ivan Turgeneff,” in *French Poets and Novelists*, 271.

⁴⁴⁵ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 6.

⁴⁴⁶ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 6.

Biddlebaum the narrator gives particular attention to his characters' hands, which seem to speak on his behalf. Just as Anderson sought to capture the rhythms of spoken language in the narrative — even mimicking gestures — his characters' physical movements carry special meaning. For instance, David D. Anderson interprets these hand gestures as a form of genuine, spontaneous communication.⁴⁴⁷ In his novels, Turgenev refines this technique, using gesture as a powerful means of expressing what remains unspoken between characters. Through carefully observed movements and subtle physical cues, he reveals the emotional undercurrents and silent tensions that shape his stories, demonstrating how gesture can communicate meaning beyond words.

This comparison shows that Anderson's grotesques are not merely an isolated modernist invention but rather an extension of a characterological principle already present in Turgenev's prose. Both writers build their characters around a dominant trait that shapes their inner world and marks them as outsiders. Anderson, however, takes this method further, transforming it into a symbolic system in which individuality is heightened and rendered grotesque. What manifests in Turgenev as lyrical marginality evolves in Anderson into a metaphysical vision of human isolation, revealing a clear artistic continuity in their approaches to character.

Another key element unifying Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* is the presence of the narrator-hunter. As the cycle progresses, the narrator's affinity with the book's idealistic characters becomes apparent. He shares their admirable qualities — a deep love of nature and a restless desire to wander in search of new encounters. He is ill at ease in the formal setting of a dinner party, far preferring to listen to the stories of the *odnodvoret*s Ovsyannikov, visit the forester's hut, or meet the holy fool Kasyan.

⁴⁴⁷ David D. Anderson, "Sherwood Anderson's Moments of Insight," in *Critical Essays on Sherwood Anderson* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall & Company, 1981), 160.

Throughout the book, the hunter frequently participates in the events he describes, with the narration often delivered in the first person (as in “Hamlet of the Shchigrov District,” “Biryuk,” “Lgov,” and others). In “My Neighbor Radilov,” he even unwittingly serves as a catalyst for the protagonist’s difficult decision.⁴⁴⁸ Two notable exceptions break from this usual pattern: in “The End of Chertopkhanov,” which approaches novella form, the narration shifts to the third person; while in the lyrical sketch “Forest and Steppe,” it moves to the second person. Overall, the narrator-hunter remains closely aligned with the author, serving as both storyteller and narrator and frequently addressing the reader directly. These three facets — hunter as character, storyteller, and narrator — are essential to understanding the book’s structural unity.

The sequence of stories in *A Sportsman’s Sketches* is anchored by the narrator, who propels the action and guides the reader through the unfolding episodes. These individual stories come together as parts of a unified mosaic, all viewed through the narrator’s perspective. Constantly on the move, he serves as the book’s “dynamic center,” around whom the events revolve. This structure allows the cycle to maintain a “single angle of vision upon heterogeneous material,”⁴⁴⁹ offering a cohesive portrait of Russian life in the mid-nineteenth century.

Additionally, the hunter functions as a collector, selecting which stories to include — a role suggested by the very title, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, and confirmed at the end, when he notes that he will soon finish his account. In this way, Turgenev draws on earlier cyclical traditions, such as Pushkin’s *Tales of Belkin* and Gogol’s *Evenings on a Farm near Dikan’ka*, where a single narrator or collector similarly organizes a variety of stories.

⁴⁴⁸ Turgenev, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, trans. Garnett, 80-84.

⁴⁴⁹ S. E. Shatalov, *Khudozhestvennyi mir I. S. Turgeneva* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 252

At the same time, Turgenev deliberately downplays the hunter's individuality, avoiding a personal storyline — such as the familiar trope of a city gentleman-hunter arriving at his estate for the summer. This choice shifts the focus away from the narrator's biography and toward the surrounding landscapes and the characters he observes. Notably, the narrator's name — Pyotr (Piotr) Petrovich — is revealed only in one of the final sketches (“It Knocks!” or “The Rattling of Wheels” in Garnett's translation).⁴⁵⁰

By forgoing a central hero, Turgenev deliberately distances himself from Romantic conventions. Whereas the Romantic wanderer is introspective, Turgenev's hunter turns his gaze outward, closely observing the external world. As Sergey Petrov notes, Turgenev may have viewed the traditional central hero as a mere “survival of the Romantic school:” “like other authors of ‘physiologies,’ he wished to present pictures of life in their simplicity and immediacy...”⁴⁵¹ On the other hand, Sergei Shatalov suggests that introducing a consistent main character and approaching the travel novel differently would have shifted the book's perspective, making all characters subordinate to him and thereby reducing the sense of life unfolding “objectively.”⁴⁵²

The narrator's detachment — a quality highlighted by contemporary American critics such as Perry and James — is achieved in part through his capacity for self-effacement.⁴⁵³ He fulfills his primary function by introducing new characters and allowing them narrative space, then deliberately retreats into the background. This self-effacement is closely tied to the narrator's capacity for engagement: upon entering a new world, he seeks to blend seamlessly into it. For example, in “Biryuk,” when caught in a violent storm, the narrator calmly chooses to wait out the

⁴⁵⁰ Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, trans Garnett, vol. 2.

⁴⁵¹ Cit from Shatalov, *Khudozhestvennyi mir I. S. Turgeneva*, 266.

⁴⁵² Shatalov, *Khudozhestvennyi mir I. S. Turgeneva*, 265.

⁴⁵³ T.S. Perry, “Ivan Turgeneff,” *The Nation* 12, no. 307 (May 18, 1871): 340, Henry James, “Ivan Turgeneff,” in *French Poets and Novelists*, 271.

bad weather, adapting himself to the situation: “The rain fell in torrents. I went on a step or so, and soon was forced to stop; my horse foundered; I could not see an inch before me. I managed to take refuge somehow in a spreading bush. Crouching down and covering my face, I waited patiently for the storm to blow over, when suddenly, in a flash of lightning, I saw a tall figure on the road.”⁴⁵⁴ In these moments, the hunter, so to speak, “mimics” the landscape, aiming to become part of the scene depicted.⁴⁵⁵

James also highlighted Turgenev’s remarkable gift for detailed observation of the natural world. In “The Tryst,” for instance, the hunter describes falling asleep in the forest and awakening to find the landscape subtly transformed — an episode that illustrates both a merging with nature and Turgenev’s acute sensitivity: “I cannot say how long I was asleep, but when I opened my eyes, all the depths of the wood were filled with sunlight, and in all directions across the joyously rustling leaves there were glimpses and, as it were, flashes of intense blue sky; the clouds had vanished, driven away by the blustering wind; the weather had changed to fair, and there was that feeling of peculiar dry freshness in the air which fills the heart with a sense of boldness, and is almost always a sure sign of a still bright evening after a rainy day. I was just about to get up and try my luck again when suddenly my eyes fell on a motionless human figure.”⁴⁵⁶

According to Aleksandr Chudakov, the narrator possesses a unique perceptual sharpness, listening and observing with extraordinary attentiveness in every situation. Chudakov argues that in Turgenev’s writing, what truly matters is not merely the event itself, but how it is filtered through the narrator’s perception.⁴⁵⁷ The author’s subjective presence mainly manifests in descriptions of

⁴⁵⁴ Turgenev, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, trans. Constance Garnett, vol. 1, 248.

⁴⁵⁵ Iurii Lebedev calls it “the ability to interact, to engage” - “sposobnost’ priobshcheniya”. See Iu. V. Lebedev, “*Zapiski okhotnika*” I. S. Turgeneva (Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1977), 16.

⁴⁵⁶ Turgenev, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, 2.

⁴⁵⁷ A. P. Chudakov, “Turgenev: povestvovanie—predmetnyi mir—geroi—siuzhet,” in *Slovo—veshch’—mir. Ot Pushkina do Tolstogo* (Moskva, 1992), 90.

nature; otherwise, the hunter mostly functions as a “collector of stories,” playing a role that is essentially shared by both the educated reader of the time and the characters themselves, since the narrator often doesn’t know how a situation will turn out.

The hunter’s openness and initial interest in others move the plot of stories: he builds trust and is willing to talk in almost any situation. For example, in the story of the district doctor: “Queer things happen in the world: you may live a long while with some people, and be on friendly terms with them, and never once speak openly with them from your soul; with others you have scarcely time to get acquainted, and all at once you are pouring out to him — or he to you — all your secrets, as though you were at confession. I don’t know how I gained the confidence of my new friend—anyway, with nothing to lead up to it, he told me a rather curious incident; and here I will report his tale for the information of the indulgent reader.”⁴⁵⁸ Here, the perspectives of the hunter and the doctor, who narrates the story, diverge significantly: while the provincial doctor Trifon fails to recognize the romantic nature of Alexandra Andreevna, the hunter perceives the depth and sincerity of her feelings.

Turgenev’s narrator frequently bypasses social barriers, engaging with characters on a direct, “person-to-person” level. In contrast, stories like “Two Landowners” and the dinner scenes in “Hamlet of the Shchigrov District” highlight social distance and formality. Iurii Lebedev attributes the hunter’s openness to his disregard for social conventions, noting that genuine connection in Turgenev’s work arises not in regulated settings, but in moments of heartfelt disclosure.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ Turgenev, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, trans. Garnett, vol. 1, 56-57.

⁴⁵⁹ Lebedev, “*Zapiski okhotnika*” I. S. Turgeneva, 18.

Through self-effacement, the narrator gives space to multiple voices, creating a polyphonic effect reminiscent of the novel form. The plot of each sketch often centers on someone else's story, following the "story within a story" principle. The hunter refrains from overt generalizations or direct moral judgments, allowing the situations themselves to carry meaning. Scenes of physical punishment are depicted with sympathy and detachment, suggesting that the aim is to portray representative social realities. Nevertheless, contemporary readers would likely detect a democratic, Westernizing undertone throughout the cycle, interpreting serfdom as a form of slavery within their own society.

The hunter adopts a similar approach when interacting with characters from different social classes. His behavior toward nobles is facilitated by his own social standing, while with peasants, the barrier is somewhat lowered by his attire and his sincere curiosity about their lives — though a degree of suspicion remains, as seen in Kasyan's cautious response.⁴⁶⁰ As Iurii Lebedev points out, "on this shared ground between the gentleman and the peasant, a special kind of human relationship is established in Turgenev's book; the people whom the narrator meets during his hunting trips are openly friendly with him."⁴⁶¹ By wearing the hunter's costume, the narrator attempts to renounce his privileged status, aiming to detach from the system and become a wanderer who has surrendered some of his privileges.

While Turgenev's narrative unity is anchored in a self-effacing, observant narrator, Anderson's work is shaped by a different kind of storytelling — an oral, seemingly spontaneous voice that deliberately adopts naïveté as an aesthetic choice.

⁴⁶⁰ Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, trans. Constance Garnett, vol. 1, 173-174.

⁴⁶¹ Lebedev, "Zapiski okhotnika" I. S. Turgeneva, 17.

Anderson's connection to "living reality" is evident in his embrace of the oral storytelling tradition, a legacy he shares with Mark Twain. As Malcolm Cowley observes, "he was essentially a storyteller, as he kept insisting, but his art was of a special type, belonging to an oral rather than a written tradition."⁴⁶² Anderson's prose seeks to replicate the rhythms of spoken language — its intonations, pauses, and spontaneity. This narrative approach foregrounds the immediate present and the act of storytelling itself, conveying a sense of the "flow of life" and the flexibility characteristic of modern art. Anderson's stories often shift perspectives rapidly and include frequent digressions; the writer might pause to pursue a side topic and only later — sometimes with an apology to the reader — return to the main narrative: "But this is not the story of Windpeter Winters nor yet of his son Hal who worked on the Wills farm with Ray Pearson. It is Ray's story..."⁴⁶³ As Irving Howe notes, Anderson's prose even manages to capture the natural pauses and gestures of conversation, further blurring the line between spoken and written narrative.⁴⁶⁴

One important condition for imitating spontaneous speech is maintaining simple syntax; lexical repetition becomes acceptable. In "Paper Pills," for example: "Out of many of them he <Doctor Reefy> formed a truth that arose gigantic in his mind. The truth clouded the world."⁴⁶⁵ Yet, these goals ultimately lead to a stylistically refined rhythmic text. In the same story, lines easily fall into stanza-like segments: "The tall dark girl \came to see Doctor Reefy\\

because she was in the family way\ and had become frightened.\\

She was in that condition \

because of a series of circumstances \

⁴⁶² Cowley, "Sherwood Anderson's Book of Moments," 169.

⁴⁶³ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 113.

⁴⁶⁴ Howe, "The Book of the Grotesque," 90–101.

⁴⁶⁵ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 15.

also curious...”⁴⁶⁶

Notably, the narrator’s explicit “search for the word” is most evident in the first two stories. After establishing a “primitive,” deliberately rough style, Anderson transitions to a more even mode of narration. This intentional crudity, coupled with a sense of uncertainty about conveying meaning, reflects the author’s sense of standing at the threshold of a newly emerging national culture.

In his book, Anderson rarely employs first-person narration, preferring the third person to achieve a particular effect. This choice allows him to balance the intimacy characteristic of short stories with the expansive scope of the novel. Through this narrative approach, Anderson aims to create a unity reminiscent of a novel. Whereas Turgenev’s hunter mostly remains an outside observer, the narrator in *Winesburg, Ohio*, explores the inner lives of his characters, uncovering subconscious fears and desires — an idea already hinted at by the epigraph (“to see beneath the surface of lives”⁴⁶⁷). The narrator moves freely through time and space, coordinating simultaneous actions in stories like “The Strength of God” and “Teacher,” where Curtis Hartman, Kate Swift, and George Willard meet at the Winesburg Eagle office on a snowy winter night.⁴⁶⁸

Both Turgenev and Anderson, in their early books, explore the common emotion of lyrical sadness driven by nostalgia. The narrator’s perspective in Winesburg is both temporally and spatially shifted: the author looks back to the late 19th-century province from 1920s Chicago, an era of prosperity, hearing the “roar and rattle” of industry and automobiles. This modern noise makes the town’s failures feel very real, while the mythic Winesburg — still characterized by the slow pace of farm life — gains its unique atmospheric charm.

⁴⁶⁶ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 15.

⁴⁶⁷ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 15.

⁴⁶⁸ Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, 90.

Finally, as in *A Sportsman's Sketches*, Anderson forges a connection between the narrator and the main character through a shared inner sensibility. In both works, autobiographical elements are significant — memories of youth help to shape George Willard. However, unlike Turgenev's book, Anderson's cycle places the main character firmly at the center of the narrative. He probably becomes a third narrator in *Winesburg*: the “nascent artist” who is writing his articles for *The Winesburg Eagle*. If the all-knowing narrator reveals hidden inner lives, Willard acts as the grotesques' interlocutor and listener. The characters-citizens of Winesburg come to him as they did to the old writer in the opening story, “The Book of the Grotesque,” seeking to speak, be understood, and ease inner pain. As Edmund Fussell points out, without these stories, Willard's development as a writer wouldn't be possible.

The comparison of Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* and Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* demonstrates that the figure of the narrator serves as the principal structural and semantic axis through which both cycles achieve unity, yet each writer resolves this task through fundamentally different narrative optics. Turgenev constructs cohesion through the self-effacing observer, whose restrained presence ensures objectivity and the continuity of perception. This strategy allows Turgenev to preserve an equal narrative distance and foreground reality itself rather than the storyteller's personality.

Anderson, by contrast, attains unity not through withdrawal but through the illusion of immediacy. His narrative voice imitates oral storytelling, cultivates spontaneity, and foregrounds linguistic searching, thereby creating the impression that meaning is born in the very act of narration. If Turgenev's narrator stabilizes perception, Anderson's destabilizes it: time fragments into moments, scenes dissolve into impressions, and the reader becomes an active participant in reconstructing coherence. The apparent naïveté of Anderson's style thus proves to be an aesthetic

principle rather than a limitation, reflecting his aspiration to restore language's primal connection with lived experience.

Taken together, these parallels show that the relationship between Turgenev and Anderson should be seen as one of artistic influence and formal change. What American critics of the 19th century identified in Turgenev — how the character is built around a key trait within a provincial setting — reappears in Anderson as a modernist enhancement of that same idea. The “strange” or particular characters of *A Sportsman's Sketches* thus find their structural counterpart in the grotesques of *Winesburg, Ohio*, where psychological concentration becomes a governing device of narrative composition. In this sense, Anderson does not simply borrow from Turgenev; he extends and reconfigures his predecessor's aesthetic logic within a new modernist context. The continuity between them reveals a transnational lineage of prose technique in which provincial setting, episodic form, and character function as interconnected elements of a book of stories.

C. Literary Tradition and Parody: Hemingway, Anderson, and Turgenev.

By the time Ernest Hemingway stepped onto the literary stage, Ivan Turgenev's reputation was already firmly established among 19th-century Russian novelists, with a substantial critical and literary reception in the United States. Hemingway's predecessors, including his early mentor Sherwood Anderson, played a crucial role in introducing and solidifying the Russian literary tradition for a new generation of modernist writers. Anderson's library included the eight-volume set of Turgenev's works — likely the Henry Holt edition from the late 19th century⁴⁶⁹ — while Hemingway would have encountered Turgenev through Constance Garnett's widely available translations. Influenced by both Anderson and Turgenev, Hemingway drew from Anderson's

⁴⁶⁹ See Yachnin and Stam, “Collected Works,” in *Turgenev in English*, 17.

model of psychological minimalism and narrative restraint, but it was Turgenev who provided the structural discipline and compositional control that defined Hemingway's mature prose, particularly in his use of concise narrative movement and understated emotional resonance.

Malcolm Cowley notes that in the 1920s, while both were living in Chicago, Hemingway was widely regarded as Anderson's disciple.⁴⁷⁰ The young writer was forthright about his early indebtedness to Sherwood Anderson. In a letter dated May 23, 1925, Hemingway expresses his gratitude to Anderson for the crucial support he provided in publishing *In Our Time* with Boni & Liveright in New York: "I'm terribly glad about you going over to Liveright and I can't write letters so I can't tell you how grateful I am for your getting my stuff published."⁴⁷¹ Anderson's influence is particularly visible in Hemingway's early short fiction, where emotional tension is suggested rather than explained. As the contemporary American literary critic Edmund Wilson stated about young Hemingway, "he belonged to the same school as Anderson and Gertrude Stein."⁴⁷² Yet, as Carlos Baker points out, Hemingway was eager to move beyond this association, determined to surpass his teacher and "live down" the connection as quickly as possible.⁴⁷³

Sherwood Anderson played a pivotal role in Hemingway's exposure to Russian writers, with Turgenev standing out as a particular influence. Anderson not only encouraged Hemingway to move to Paris — a decision critical to Hemingway's artistic development — but also provided key letters of introduction to literary figures such as Sylvia Beach, Gertrude Stein, and Ezra Pound.⁴⁷⁴ Through these connections, Anderson helped Hemingway gain entry into the vibrant

⁴⁷⁰ Cowley, "Sherwood Anderson's Book of Moments," 166.

⁴⁷¹ Ernest Hemingway, *Selected Letters, 1917–1961*, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), 162.

⁴⁷² Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 147.

⁴⁷³ Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, 147.

⁴⁷⁴ See Carlos Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952; revised ed., 1972), 7-8, Ernest Hemingway, *Selected Letters, 1917–1961*, ed. Carlos Baker (New York:

Parisian literary circles where he would encounter new artistic ideas and, significantly, deepen his engagement with Russian literature.

In memoir-based novel *A Moveable Feast* (1964), Hemingway explicitly situates his own development as an author within the context of what he read in Paris during the 1920s, including Russian authors. He recalls that, “from the day I had found Sylvia Beach’s library I had read all of Turgenev, what had been published in English of Gogol, the Constance Garnett translations of Tolstoi and the English translations of Chekhov,”⁴⁷⁵ demonstrating that Russian literature was a central part of his literary diet in his formative years. This immersion in Russian prose coincided with the development of the economy and precision that would come to define Hemingway’s style, suggesting that reading writers such as Turgenev contributed to his emphasis on clarity, rhythmic restraint, and linguistic economy. As Robert Coltrane observes, “It was from Turgenev rather than Anderson that Hemingway had learned economy of style, especially the revealing of a character’s inner turmoil through carefully selected landscape details and description of action.”⁴⁷⁶

Later in the novel, Hemingway again describes his early “literary passions” as “Russians”: “At first there were the Russians; then there were all the others. But for a long time there were the Russians.”⁴⁷⁷ It’s worth noting that Turgenev was considered part of the “Russian school,” and by the 1920s, the literary canon prominently featured Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky — with Turgenev often listed first. Hemingway specifically references his reading of *A Sportsman’s Sketches*: “I started with Turgenev and took the two volumes of *A Sportsman’s Sketches*... I chose

Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1981), 60. More on Anderson-Hemingway relationships see Michael Reynolds, *The Young Hemingway* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1986), 183-187.

⁴⁷⁵ Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 101.

⁴⁷⁶ Robert Coltrane, “Hemingway and Turgenev: The Torrents of Spring,” in *Ivan Turgenev*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003), 59

⁴⁷⁷ Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 102.

the Constance Garnett edition of *War and Peace*, and *The Gambler and Other Stories* by Dostoyevsky.”⁴⁷⁸

In two letters from December 1925 — one to F. Scott Fitzgerald and another to Archibald MacLeish — Hemingway offers more detailed reflections on his engagement with Turgenev and Russian as well as broader European literature. In the first letter, Hemingway discusses his recent reading of *Fathers and Children*, voicing a pointed criticism: “it can never be exciting again as when it was written and that’s a hell of criticism for a book.”⁴⁷⁹ In a subsequent letter, the young Hemingway articulates his views on Russian writers, emphasizing his admiration for the artistry in Turgenev’s works: “Turgenieff to me is the greatest writer there ever was. Didn't write the greatest books, but was the greatest writer. That's only for me of course. Did you ever read a short story of his called *The Rattle of Wheels*? It's in the 2nd vol. of *A Sportsman's Sketches*. *War and Peace* is the best book I know but imagine what a book it would have been if Turgenieff had written it. Chekov wrote about 6 good stories. But he was an amateur writer. Tolstoi was a prophet. Maupassant was a professional writer, Balzac was a professional writer, Turgenieff was an artist.”⁴⁸⁰ By explicitly differentiating Turgenev from his contemporaries — calling Tolstoy a prophet, Maupassant and Balzac professionals, and Chekhov an amateur writer — Hemingway clarifies what he values above all: artistry, not merely technical competence or prophetic vision. His praise for Turgenev’s artistry, even over Tolstoy’s monumental achievement in *War and Peace*, reveals a profound respect for the subtle, enduring craft of literary composition and continues the line of acknowledgment for Turgenev’s mastery begun by T.S. Perry and Henry James.

⁴⁷⁸ Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 32.

⁴⁷⁹ Hemingway, *Selected Letters, 1917–1961*, 176.

⁴⁸⁰ Hemingway, *Selected Letters, 1917–1961*, 179.

By holding Turgenev up as an example of the “artist,” Hemingway affirms that literary greatness lies not only in innovation or fame, but in the lasting force of style, structure, and emotional resonance. This perspective strengthens the argument that Hemingway’s own search for literary economy and precision was deeply informed by his reading of Turgenev, and that the Russian’s artistry offered a model for the values Hemingway would pursue throughout his career.

The connection between the two writers has been explored in both American and Russian criticism. For example, Carlos Baker, examining the influence of both Tolstoy and Turgenev on Hemingway, notes that “all great writers appear to share the ability to involve the reader’s imagination, we have been there,” said Hemingway, “in the books.”⁴⁸¹

Aleksandr Nikoliukin, in particular, has explored the connections between the two writers, emphasizing the direct links between *A Sportsman’s Sketches* and *In Our Time*. He highlights their shared stylistic techniques and similarities in genre structure: “One may note, for example, the generic affinity between Hemingway’s first major book, *In Our Time* (1925), and *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, which he had studied repeatedly: in both Ivan Turgenev and Hemingway the cycle of stories becomes a unified work, a book that, through the totality of seemingly disparate scenes, creates the image of a particular world and is governed by a single, “through-running” artistic idea — despite the apparent isolation of the fragments that make up the narrative.”⁴⁸²

Nikoliukin’s analysis sheds light on the specific nature of Turgenev’s legacy within Hemingway’s prose. He suggests that the poetic qualities found in Turgenev’s passages are intensified in Hemingway’s writing, resulting in a more concentrated and impactful style. “An example of such ‘objective’ narration can be seen in the miniatures placed as epigraphs to that same

⁴⁸¹ Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 176.

⁴⁸² Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosviazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 372.

book, *In Our Time* (originally, they constituted a separate booklet issued in a tiny print run), which represent a kind of prose poem. However, they differ from Turgenev's in that Hemingway strives to avoid any emotional coloring or lyrical tone, seeking only the unity of an associative sequence that, as if independently of the author's effort, evokes a sense of the world's boundless cruelty."⁴⁸³

What Hemingway appropriates from Turgenev is not only a cyclic structure, but two fundamental narrative principles: the disciplined detachment of the authorial voice and the controlled perspectival framing of experience. Like Turgenev, Hemingway withdraws overt commentary, allowing events to unfold through an ostensibly objective narrative surface. At the same time, beneath this restraint lies a carefully modulated lyrical intention — not expressed through overt emotional coloring, but embedded in the rhythm, sequencing, and tonal calibration of the sentence itself.

The structural affinity between *A Sportsman's Sketches* and *In Our Time* becomes particularly visible when one examines the mechanics of scene construction. In Turgenev's sketches, characterization often emerges through brief encounters framed by landscape and gestures rather than psychological exposition. An example of this narrative method can be found in the story "The Tryst," where the image of the young peasant girl Akulina gradually emerges from the forest as described by the narrator.⁴⁸⁴ Generally, the narrator refrains from interpreting the peasants' inner lives directly; instead, their personalities are revealed through their behavior rather than description. The narrative eye remains observational rather than intrusive.

A similar narrative strategy governs the vignettes in *In Our Time*, particularly the brief interchapters depicting scenes of violence — executions, battlefield chaos, or bullfights.

⁴⁸³ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvizi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 372.

⁴⁸⁴ Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, 2.

Hemingway forgoes interior commentary and instead presents action through spare, declarative sentences. For example, the vignette in Chapter V reads: “They shot the six cabinet ministers at half-past six in the morning against the wall of a hospital. There were pools of water in the courtyard. There were wet dead leaves on the paving of the courtyard. It rained hard. All the shutters of the hospital were nailed shut. One of the ministers was sick with typhoid. Two soldiers carried him downstairs and out into the rain. They tried to hold him up against the wall but he sat down in a puddle of water.”⁴⁸⁵

The power of the passage derives from Hemingway’s refusal to comment on the characters’ emotions or motivations, forcing the reader to confront the stark reality of the scene. Emotional weight is conveyed not through explanation but through precise external detail, which invites the reader to infer the psychological and moral consequences. As in Turgenev’s work, meaning emerges from what is shown rather than what is said, achieving an understated but profound resonance.

What distinguishes Hemingway is the radical intensification of this method. Where Turgenev’s narrator maintains a gentle lyrical presence, Hemingway compresses even further, reducing syntax to bare essentials. Yet the structural principle remains recognizably Turgenevian: emotional resonance emerges from juxtaposition rather than commentary. In studying Turgenev, Dale Peterson defines his narrative technique as “dramatic,” characterized by minimal authorial commentary and scenes that unfold directly before the reader’s eyes.⁴⁸⁶

In this sense, Hemingway’s much-discussed “impersonality” does not emerge ex nihilo; it develops from the realist tradition of narrative restraint. Turgenev’s narrator observes without overt

⁴⁸⁵ Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 51.

⁴⁸⁶ Peterson, *The Clement Vision*, 7-22. Richard Freeborn in his monograph calls Turgenev’s novel “theatrical”. See Freeborn, *Turgenev: The Novelist’s Novelist—A Study*, 53.

judgment; Hemingway radicalizes this strategy by eliminating nearly all traces of narratorial mediation. At this point, Hemingway demonstrates how modernist austerity can grow organically from realist discipline.

Anderson's aesthetic program emphasized sincerity and the portrayal of marginal lives, yet his prose often retained traces of authorial sympathy and interpretive commentary. In contrast, Hemingway's mature style eliminates such mediation, allowing meaning to emerge directly through action, dialogue, and setting. As Turgenev shows throughout *Fathers and Sons*, generational tension unfolds not only through confrontations in conversations between characters like Bazarov and Pavel Petrovich, but also through gestures and silences rather than narrative explanation. Hemingway uses this approach in works like *In Our Time*, where emotional disillusionment is conveyed through repetition, omission, and understatement: "The visible areas glint with the hard factual lights of the naturalist. The supporting structure, submerged and mostly invisible except to the patient explorer, is built with a different kind of precision - that of the poet-symbolist."⁴⁸⁷

Although Hemingway avoids explicit lyricism, the rhythmic structure of his prose can be seen in relation to Turgenev's refined musicality. Turgenev's sentences often blend descriptive richness with subtle shifts in tone, creating an understated poetic rhythm. For example, in "Bezhin Meadow" (in Garnett's translation "Byezhin Prairie"), Turgenev presents a sunset with a series of gradual, interconnected images, layering emotional color onto the landscape. "In the evening these clouds disappear; the last of them, blackish and undefined as smoke, lie streaked with pink, facing the setting sun; in the place where it has gone down, as calmly as it rose, a crimson glow lingers long over the darkening earth, and, softly flashing like a candle carried carelessly, the evening star

⁴⁸⁷ Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 117.

flickers in the sky. *On such days* all the colors are softened, bright but not glaring; everything is suffused with a kind of touching tenderness. *On such days* the heat is sometimes very great; often it is even 'steaming' on the slopes of the fields, but a wind dispels this growing sultriness, and whirling eddies of dust — sure sign of settled, fine weather — move along the roads and across the fields in high white columns.”⁴⁸⁸.

In contrast, Hemingway’s prose, while similarly attentive to rhythm, achieves its effects through parataxis and intensified repetition. For example, in the vignette Chapter VI describing Nick wounded against the church wall, Hemingway’s repetition is evident: “He had been hit in the spine. *His face* was sweaty and dirty. The sun shone on *his face*. The day was very hot.”⁴⁸⁹ A striking example of repetition, echoing the rhythms of oral speech and prayer, appears in the introductory passage of Chapter VII: “He lay very flat and sweated and prayed oh jesus christ get me out of here. Dear jesus please get me out. Christ please please please christ. If you'll only keep me from getting killed I'll do anything you say. I believe in you and I'll tell everybody in the world that you are the only thing that matters. Please please dear jesus.”⁴⁹⁰ Here, the repetition of words — “please please please” and the repeated invocations of “Christ” and “Jesus”— intensifies the desperate, childlike urgency of the prayer, while the paratactic sequence of clauses accentuates the immediacy and rawness of the moment.

In each of these passages, Hemingway’s rhythm and simple sentences reflect Turgenev’s use of repetition, but the effect is fundamentally different. Rather than creating a growing atmosphere, Hemingway’s structure reduces the scene to its bare essentials, creating a stark feeling of absence and finality. Therefore, while both writers use rhythmic sequences, Turgenev guides

⁴⁸⁸ Turgenev, *A Sportsman’s Sketches*, trans. Constance Garnett, vol. 1, 134.

⁴⁸⁹ Hemingway, *In Our Time*, 63.

⁴⁹⁰ Hemingway, *In Our Time*, 67.

the reader through a slow buildup of emotion, whereas Hemingway highlights the suddenness of loss.

Tracing the trajectory from Anderson to Turgenev helps us understand the full complexity of Hemingway's literary method. While Anderson introduced Hemingway to the value of simplicity and directness in prose, it was Turgenev who provided a model for how such simplicity could be given depth and resonance through carefully crafted structure. Turgenev's influence extends beyond surface lyricism; he demonstrates how rhythm, pacing, and the deliberate arrangement of sentences can evoke atmosphere and emotional intensity without excess ornamentation. Hemingway's signature style — marked by short sentences and restrained language — may seem distinctly American at first glance, but its underlying architecture reveals a more cosmopolitan heritage. Russian realism, and Turgenev in particular, offered Hemingway a blueprint for creating meaning through what is left unsaid, for building narrative tension through silence and omission as much as through description. In this sense, Hemingway's stylistic economy is not merely a product of national tradition or personal innovation, but rather the outcome of a cross-cultural exchange, in which Russian literary techniques play a decisive and formative role in shaping what would become one of the most recognizable voices in twentieth-century literature.

Whereas in the early years of Hemingway's career, Sherwood Anderson had functioned as a crucial mentor for him; by the mid-1920s, the relationship between the two authors changed, and Hemingway had begun to chafe against persistent comparisons that positioned him as Anderson's disciple.⁴⁹¹ The immediate catalyst for the satire appears to have been Anderson's 1925 novel *Dark Laughter*, which Hemingway viewed as an example of stylistic excess and artistic disappointment. In response, Hemingway sought to express his own vision of fiction by parodying Anderson's

⁴⁹¹ Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story*, 147.

style, using it as a vehicle to critique what he saw as its shortcomings.⁴⁹² In response, he composed the novella *The Torrents of Spring* with remarkable speed, producing a deliberate parody that exaggerated Andersonian mannerisms and the literary fashion surrounding them. The circumstances of publication intensified the stakes: Hemingway was then under contract with Boni & Liveright, whose option clause required him to submit future work to them first. When the firm rejected *The Torrents of Spring* — objecting to its caricature of Anderson — the refusal effectively released Hemingway from their contractual hold and allowed him to move to Scribner's, where he would soon publish *The Sun Also Rises*.⁴⁹³ The episode marked not only a professional transition but also a symbolic break with Anderson, as parody became the means through which Hemingway asserted aesthetic independence from his former mentor.

As Carlos Baker notes, *The Torrents of Spring* was conceived as “a satirical *jeu d'esprit* with a serious critical core,” revealing both Hemingway's gift for parody and his sharp critical reaction to Anderson's influence.⁴⁹⁴ By adopting Anderson's characteristic features — such as repetitive phrasing, simplified diction, and sentimental tonal shifts — Hemingway highlights what he saw as the weaknesses of Anderson's prose.

In studying the history of the novella's creation, Robert Coltrane suggests that Hemingway read Turgenev's *Spring Torrents*⁴⁹⁵ immediately after Anderson's *Dark Laughter* and recognized his mentor's narrative intentions with particular clarity. As Coltrane notes: “Where Turgenev used a precise choice of words that involve the reader in the scene while also advancing the plot

⁴⁹² Coltrane, “Hemingway and Turgenev: *The Torrents of Spring*,” 60.

⁴⁹³ Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 41-42.

⁴⁹⁴ Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 38.

⁴⁹⁵ Turgenev's *Veshniie vody* was first translated into English by Constance Garnett as *The Torrents of Spring*, published in the U.S. in 1906; other translations use the title *Spring Torrents*. To distinguish it from Hemingway's work, I will refer to Turgenev's novella as *Spring Torrents*.

economy... Anderson's attempts at impressionism and stream-of-consciousness produced monotonous repetition, awkward fragments, and a ponderously slow pace."⁴⁹⁶ Therefore, the idea for the story emerged precisely at the intersection of these two narrative styles. It reflected the perspective of Hemingway as a student and young writer, eager to direct his mentor's attention toward the methods of Turgenev — techniques that Hemingway saw as more effective and disciplined than those employed by Anderson.

In *Dark Laughter*, Anderson often employs rhythmic repetition and deliberately naïve diction to evoke spontaneous emotional revelation.⁴⁹⁷ Same way in *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson's characters are propelled by hidden, subconscious desires they struggle to articulate — not only to others, but even to themselves. Their inner lives are revealed through broken, repetitious phrases, evoking a sense of longing and psychological fragmentation.⁴⁹⁸ Hemingway's parody accentuates these stylistic traits, and as Michael Reynolds points out, the novella intentionally mirrors Anderson's style so that exaggeration becomes both comic and critical.⁴⁹⁹

Thus, Hemingway's novella is not merely a parody; it can also be read as a reflection on the inheritance of Turgenev's legacy in American prose. While satirizing Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway's text participates in a broader dialogue with the Russian realist tradition, particularly Turgenev's story. Robert Coltrane suggests that Hemingway's direct engagement with Turgenev — especially his reading of Constance Garnett's translation in October–November 1925 — may have directly inspired the creation of his own novella.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁶ Coltrane, "Hemingway and Turgenev: *The Torrents of Spring*," 60.

⁴⁹⁷ Modlin, Charles E., and Ray Lewis White, editors. *Critical Essays on Sherwood Anderson*. G. K. Hall, 1981, 106.

⁴⁹⁸ Howe, *Sherwood Anderson*, 68.

⁴⁹⁹ Reynolds, *The Young Hemingway*, 333.

⁵⁰⁰ Coltrane, "Hemingway and Turgenev: *The Torrents of Spring*," 58-59.

In *Spring Torrents*, as in *A Sportsman's Sketches*, Turgenev employs retrospective analysis. In this work, the technique is marked by a subtle detail: the main character discovers a small wooden cross that evokes memories of his youth and his travels in Europe: "For a few instants, he looked in perplexity at this cross—suddenly he gave a faint cry.... Something between regret and delight was expressed in his features. Such an expression a man's face wears when he suddenly meets someone whom he has long lost sight of, whom he has at one time tenderly loved, and who suddenly springs up before his eyes, still the same, and utterly transformed by the years."⁵⁰¹ In terms of critical reception in the U.S., Thomas S. Perry, for example, observed how a single, subtle detail in Turgenev's text could illuminate profound emotions within a character and resonate throughout the entire story.⁵⁰²

The aging Dmitrii Sanin recalls a pivotal romantic episode from his youth, and this structure of remembrance creates both temporal distance and moral reflection. The story thus becomes less about plot and more an exploration of character. From the outset, the narrator's tone signals to the reader that there will be no happy ending for Dmitrii, a Russian noble visiting Frankfurt, and Gemma, a young Italian woman living there with her family. In Turgenev's hands, memory is not merely a backdrop; it serves an ethical function, shaping the reader's understanding of lost opportunities and irreversible choices.⁵⁰³

Turgenev's mastery in this story lies beneath the romantic clichés that dominate its first part, which centers on the naive first love between the young protagonists. Elements such as a chance encounter, burgeoning attraction, a duel to defend a lady's honor, a secret letter of confession, and a climactic garden rendezvous — all hallmarks of nineteenth-century romantic

⁵⁰¹ Ivan Turgenev, *The Torrents of Spring*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Macmillan, 1897), 4.

⁵⁰² T.S. Perry, "Ivan Turgeneff," *The Nation* 12, no. 307 (May 18, 1871): 340.

⁵⁰³ Freeborn, *Turgenev*, 162-163.

literature — are woven throughout the narrative. These elements also appear in Aleksandr Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and Mikhail Lermontov's "Princess Mary" from *A Hero of Our Time*. However, Turgenev transcends these clichés by employing minimal character description and shifting the narrative perspective to Dmitrii, who recounts his own past. This narrative choice allows Turgenev to diverge from the expected plot and offer a more nuanced exploration of character. The story is told from a single point of view, so the reader sees Gemma exclusively through Dmitrii's eyes. For instance, the omniscient narrator offers only a brief description of the protagonist, characterizing him as "soft" in a single paragraph.⁵⁰⁴ The reader observes the development of love and affection until it reaches a crucial point: "And so it was; directly he had got inside his room, directly he had sat down to the writing-table, with both elbows on the table and both hands pressed to his face, he cried in a sad and choked voice, "I love her, love her madly!" and he was all aglow within, like a fire when a thick layer of dead ash has been suddenly blown off."⁵⁰⁵

If the first part of the story can be described as "romantic" — with Turgenev purposefully subverting mentioned clichés— the second part shifts to a more "realistic" mode. After deciding to marry the beautiful Gemma, Dmitrii plans to sell his property to Maria Nikolaevna Polozov, but soon becomes entangled in an affair with this married woman. Throughout, the narrative remains with the same naive young storyteller, who is steadily drawn in by Maria's dangerous allure, intelligence, and power.

⁵⁰⁴ Ivan Turgenev, *The Torrents of Spring*, https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/9911/pg9911-images.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

⁵⁰⁵ Ivan Turgenev, *The Torrents of Spring*, https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/9911/pg9911-images.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

Maria Nikolaevna brings a completely different emotional register to the narrative. While Gemma embodies sincerity and moral clarity, Maria personifies volatility and erotic dominance. Her presence destabilizes Sanin's moral balance, transforming what begins as a romantic story into a psychological drama of temptation. At the heart of *Spring Torrents* is the drama of lost love and moral hesitation: Sanin's inability to act decisively — his surrender to impulse and abandonment of true affection — leaves him with a lifelong burden of regret.

Turgenev's narrator adopts an ironic stance toward the rituals that follow the romantic storyline — portraying, for example, the duel as a scene that confuses all the characters involved. This irony is heightened by the characters' mutual recognition that the situation is not being taken seriously. In contrast, Hemingway takes such romantic clichés and transforms them into “dry satire.” The rhetoric of sincerity that animated early nineteenth-century fiction — in Turgenev's case, softened by irony — becomes, in Hemingway's prose, something exposed as naive or excessive. This marks a broader literary shift from gentle irony to sharper satire and critical distance.

While Turgenev's story is built around two interconnected parts, Hemingway's novella divides the narrative into two largely unrelated plotlines: those of Scripps O'Neill and Yogi Johnson. The romantic focus centers on Scripps, whose rapidly shifting affections are portrayed with a speed and abruptness that border on parody. In Hemingway's narrative, romantic commitments dissolve almost as soon as they are formed; declarations of devotion are so fleeting and exaggerated that they verge on the absurd.

In Turgenev's novella, the main character is too weak and indifferent to choose between his first naive love affair with Gemma and the seductive passion with Maria Nikolaevna Polozov (who seduced him in three days), ultimately losing both and returning to his home country.

Scripps's transition from the wife who left him in Mancelona moves quickly as he moves to Petoskey and meets the old waitress, Diana; by the end of the same day, they become "man and wife."⁵⁰⁶ Soon after, Scripps turns his attention to another woman in the beanery — a young waitress named Mandy. Whereas Sanin is depicted as weak and naïve, Hemingway's character appears morally unanchored and capricious.

Drawing on Turgenev's "dramatic" style — characterized by minimal authorial intrusion and vivid, unfolding scenes — Hemingway intensifies these qualities, producing episodes that verge on melodrama and theatricality. In this context, romantic clichés become targets for Hemingway's parody. He deliberately mimics the conventions of romantic fiction — impassioned dialogue, decisive encounters, and symbolic gestures. For instance, when Scripps meets the older waitress for the second time, the moment is immediately cast as a romantic revelation:

"Good evening," she said simply. "It's good to have *you* back."

Something stirred inside Scripps O'Neil. A feeling that he could not define came within him.

"I've been working all day long"— he looked at the elderly waitress — "for *you*," he added.

"How lovely!" she said. And then smiled shyly. "And I have been working all day long— for *you*."

Tears came into Scripps's eyes. Something stirred inside him again. He reached forward to take the elderly waitress's hand, and with quiet dignity she laid it within his own. "You are my woman," he said. Tears came into her eyes, too...

⁵⁰⁶ Ernest Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring: A Romantic Novel in Honor of the Passing of a Great Race* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 35

“You are my man and more than my man.” She looked into his eyes. “You are all of America to me.”⁵⁰⁷

By parodying the conventions that Turgenev helped establish, Hemingway exposes the artificiality of such dramatic structures, turning his novella into both a tribute to and a critique of his literary predecessors. In this way, Anderson’s inheritance of Turgenev’s traditions becomes the object of Hemingway’s satire. As Baker observes, Hemingway handles Anderson’s “simplistic sentimentalism” more effectively than Anderson himself, exaggerating its emotional rhetoric to the point of comedic revelation.⁵⁰⁸

Framed by memory, *Spring Torrents* allows Turgenev to explore the interplay between past experience and present regret, cultivating a tone of nostalgic introspection. Hemingway, while echoing this structure, deliberately destabilizes it. His narrative oscillates unpredictably between an omniscient perspective and a more limited, subjective viewpoint, fragmenting the reader’s connection to the story. This instability serves as both homage and critique: on one hand, Hemingway mimics Turgenev’s restraint in filtering events through a selective narrative lens; on the other, he subverts it by introducing abrupt shifts, ironic detachment, and moments of narrative unreliability.

The effect is to draw attention to the mechanisms of storytelling itself — exposing the artificiality of the narrative frame and prompting the reader to question both the reliability of memory and the authority of the narrator. In this way, Hemingway’s novella marks a shift from Turgenev’s subtle introspective realism toward the bold formal experiments of modernism. By engaging with Turgenev’s dramatic technique, Hemingway not only honors the tradition of

⁵⁰⁷ Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring*, 33.

⁵⁰⁸ Carlos Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 40

observational realism but also pushes beyond it, employing parody and structural innovation to challenge conventional narrative boundaries. The result is a work that bridges nineteenth-century realism and twentieth-century modernism, demonstrating how inherited techniques can be transformed into instruments of literary innovation.

Hemingway repeatedly interrupts the narration with authorial intrusions and exaggerated deviations, foregrounding the artificiality of storytelling itself. Eventually, the novella shifts back and forth, weakening the connection between the plot and the “fabula” — the actual sequence of events. In *The Torrents of Spring*, the pronounced manipulation of the plot’s roughness results in the elimination of the traditional introduction. This leaves the reader questioning where the story truly begins: in the opening scene with the two protagonists — Yogi Johnson, a pump factory worker, and Scripps O’Neil, a writer — standing together, at the start of Scripps’s narrative, or perhaps even further.

The narrator, who guides the reader into this confusion, emerges only by the end of Part 2, which is, notably, the exact middle of the text. Here, “explaining” passages address the confusion: “The story will move a little faster from now on, in case any of the readers are tiring.”⁵⁰⁹ The author also breaks the fourth wall, directly addressing the reader and further blurring the boundaries between narrative and reader: “It is very hard to write this way, beginning things backward, and the author hopes the reader will realize this and not grudge this little word of explanation.”⁵¹⁰

In the same paragraphs, the narrator introduces two more digressions, ultimately inviting the reader to share their own manuscripts and revealing where to find him — in a café, discussing

⁵⁰⁹ Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring*, 33.

⁵¹⁰ Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring*, 33.

literature. Therefore, modernist play with the reader does not result neither in any actual explanation, nor in the parts that address the plot directly. In this way, Hemingway mocks the naïveté of Turgenev's and Anderson's narrators, caricatures the writer's persona, and heightens the modernist tradition of playful interaction with the reader.

Scripps frequently expresses a sense of missed opportunities, echoing the lyrical nostalgia found in Turgenev's writing as he reflects on his first wife and daughter. This emotional undercurrent also fuels his dreams of Paris. Hemingway exaggerates Turgenev's sincere, romanticized character of Sanin — who genuinely regrets his past — by contrasting him with the emotionally volatile Scripps. The narrative intertwines memories of lost chances with Scripps's persistent longing to visit Paris, a desire that can resurface at any moment: “There was nothing rococo about it, like the buildings he had seen in Paris. No, he had never been in Paris. That was not he. That was his friend Yogi Johnson.”⁵¹¹

Hemingway's characterization is stripped to its bare essentials. Like Turgenev, he relies on brief, carefully chosen details rather than extended descriptions. However, while Russian writer's restraint fosters psychological subtlety, Hemingway's minimalism often borders on caricature, reducing characters to a single, exaggerated trait. For instance, Scripps O'Neil's portrait is defined by just one characteristic, which is repeated twice for emphasis: “Near Yogi at the next window but one stood Scripps O'Neil, a tall, lean man with a tall, lean face.”⁵¹²

In Hemingway's writing, language is intentionally oversimplified and rhythmically repetitive, mimicking Sherwood Anderson's stylistic tendencies. The resulting prose maintains a faintly poetic flow, but the repeated phrases and abrupt sentence structures turn lyricism into satire.

⁵¹¹ Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring*, 4.

⁵¹² Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring*, 3.

Therefore, Hemingway amplifies Anderson's technique by repeating the same word at the end of one sentence and at the start of the next: "He opened the window carefully, just a crack. Just a crack, but that was enough."⁵¹³ or "He had once made a trip as far as Duluth. Duluth was far across the blue waters of the lake in the hills of Minnesota."⁵¹⁴ Sometimes the repetition of the opening phrases becomes doubled in intensity: "Scripps on his way to the beanery. Scripps happy that he was working with his hands. Scripps thinking of the old pump-makers. Scripps going to the society of the friendly waitress. Who was that waitress, anyway? What was it had happened to her in Paris?"⁵¹⁵

The divergence between the two novellas is most evident in the contrast between regret and irony on the one hand and parody and satire on the other. Turgenev's narrative voice is mournful, prompting the reader to reflect on what has been lost. The final impression of *Spring Torrents* is one of subdued sadness: Dmitri Sanin is led but is diminished by the memory of what he failed to achieve back to Europe and finds Gemma's New York address. The heaviness of the retrospective narration lends the story moral authority, turning private mistakes into a moral lesson.

Hemingway, on the other hand, rejects such seriousness. In *The Torrents of Spring*, the author satirizes the conventions of romantic fiction by reducing his characters' love lives to detached, almost mechanical pursuits. Scripps's affairs are marked by a lack of genuine emotion or attachment, while Yogi's storyline centers on his quest to overcome physical impotence — transforming romance into a search for sexual functionality. Yogi is depicted as confused and frustrated, his emotional state mirroring the anticipation of spring, which traditionally symbolizes renewed desire. His storyline concludes with a satisfying resolution, as Yogi encounters a naked

⁵¹³ Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring*, 4.

⁵¹⁴ Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring*, 5.

⁵¹⁵ Hemingway, *The Torrents of Spring*, 32.

Indigenous woman (referred to as a “squaw” in the original text) in the beanery. The story concludes with two Native Americans trailing behind Yogi and the woman, collecting the garments that Yogi discards along their path. As Baker points out, the title itself carries an erotic subtext: “The torrents of the title are mainly sexual. They flow through the veins of Scripps O’Neil and through the arteries of Yogi Johnson.”⁵¹⁶ At the same point, the narrative tone remains consistently playful, deliberately undercutting the seriousness of emotional turmoil.

Hemingway’s comic approach is rooted in a literary tradition where romantic weakness once bore profound, tragic weight. By recasting moral hesitation as farce, he exposes the shifting sensibilities of modernism: sincerity is continually confronted by irony, and emotional gravity is compelled to justify itself in an age of skepticism. In this light, the contrast between the two novellas illuminates a larger transformation in literary history — from the psychological realism of the nineteenth century to the self-aware revisionism of the twentieth.

From this perspective, Hemingway’s parody operates as a sophisticated act of literary succession rather than mere ridicule. By exaggerating the conventions of 19th-century literary traditions —mediated through Anderson’s style — Hemingway transforms Turgenev’s nuanced psychological realism into a vehicle for modernist satire. Crucially, this process of parody does not sever ties with tradition; instead, it depends on the emotional depth and narrative subtlety established by Turgenev. The seriousness and complexity underlying Turgenev’s realism become the foundation upon which Hemingway builds his comic distortions. The dynamic between the two novellas thus reveals that modernist aesthetics often emerge not from wholesale rejection, but from creative reinterpretation of inherited forms. Parody, in Hemingway’s hands, becomes a

⁵¹⁶ Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 39.

generative force — a means through which the new literary generation both critiques and revitalizes the narrative conventions of its forebears.

Conclusion.

By tracing Ivan Turgenev's reception in the United States from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, this dissertation demonstrates how the historical context of Russian-American relations shaped his introduction and influence. It examines the impact of translation, critical mediation, and writers' responses on both the theory of American realism and the evolution of modernism.

In **Chapter One**, I established the theoretical foundation for this research by drawing on the reception theories of Juri Lotman, Hans Robert Jauss, and Wolfgang Iser. Each offers distinct yet complementary tools for analyzing Turgenev's reception in the United States.

Lotman's cultural semiotics offers a macro-level framework that conceptualizes literary reception as an active negotiation between source and receiving cultures. He contends that literary influences do not simply impose themselves from the outside, but rather emerge in response to a "cultural request" already present within the receiving society.⁵¹⁷ Within this context, Turgenev's introduction to the American literary scene can be seen as a response to the country's shifting literary and cultural needs. His themes — such as the portrayal of serfdom in *A Sportsman's Sketches* — resonated deeply with American readers, who interpreted these narratives through the lens of their own experiences with slavery, amplifying their relevance and impact.⁵¹⁸ Similarly, the wave of Turgenev's popularity in the 1870s arose from a broader literary desire: the search for a new model in contemporary European literature.

⁵¹⁷ Lotman, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Interaction: The Semiotic Aspect," 68.

⁵¹⁸ See Robinson, "Slavery in Russia," 293–318.

Anonymous, "Serfdom and the Emancipation Laws in Russia," 41–88.

Moving from semiotics to reception theory, I place particular emphasis on how the “horizon of expectations”⁵¹⁹ shaped Turgenev’s reception in America. My research demonstrates that the meaning and value of Turgenev’s texts were never fixed but continually shifted in response to changing expectations and literary aspirations among American readers and critics. This dynamic is especially striking in the context of the late nineteenth century, when American literary figures sought new forms of realism and frequently compared Turgenev to other European authors. By closely examining reviews, essays, and correspondence from the period, I trace the arc of Turgenev’s American reception: from initial fascination and critical acclaim in the late 1860s and 1870s, through intervals of partial neglect and reinterpretation in the 1880s and 1890s, to renewed appreciation during the era of modernist innovation in the early twentieth century. This process reveals how Turgenev’s significance was not simply inherited but was actively constructed — and repeatedly reconstructed in the new epoch.

Wolfgang Iser’s reader-response theory provides another valuable perspective, shifting attention to the experience of individual readers⁵²⁰ and emphasizing the essential role of mediators — in this study translators, critics, and editors — in shaping the understanding of Turgenev’s work. In the American context, the interpretive choices of translators such as Eugene Schuyler, Leo Wiener, and Isabel Hapgood, as well as critics like Thomas Sergeant Perry, William Dean Howells, and Henry James, were instrumental in defining the contours of Turgenev’s reception. Drawing on firsthand sources, I highlight how differences in translation and critical framing led to a remarkable diversity of interpretations, revealing the agency of those who mediated between Russian and American literary worlds. Taken together, these theories provide a comprehensive methodological

⁵¹⁹ Jauss, “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory,” 12-13.

⁵²⁰ Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 20.

toolkit for analyzing the reception of Turgenev in the United States. Lotman's framework helps explain the macro-level conditions that made literary transfer possible; Jauss situates reception within changing historical circumstances and readerly expectations; and Iser foregrounds the micro-level practices of reading and interpretation that animate cross-cultural exchange.

The application of reception theory to Turgenev's case highlights the value of interdisciplinary approaches in comparative literary studies. It demonstrates that literary exchange across borders is not linear, but involves complex processes of translation, cultural mediation, and continual reinterpretation. This study's theoretical framework has enabled a dynamic analysis of Turgenev's American reception — one attentive to both historical context and the experiences of readers, critics, and translators. The dissertation explores these dimensions across its chapters: translation (chapter two), critical reception in the nineteenth century (chapter three), and literary appropriation in the early twentieth century (chapter four).

The second chapter of this dissertation traces the evolving stages of Russian-American relations from the 1860s to the 1920s, focusing on how Turgenev's works were received through the lens of American translators. Turgenev's initial reception coincided with a period of profound political and social change. The American Civil War and its aftermath fostered a heightened interest in comparative social structures, prompting readers to draw explicit parallels between Russian serfdom and American slavery. This context created fertile ground for the reception of foreign literature that engaged with themes of social reform, moral conflict, and national identity. Broader economic ties and increased diplomatic engagement between the two countries further encouraged cross-cultural curiosity and exchange.

Turgenev's works began appearing in American periodicals and translations during the 1860s, with French and German versions of *A Sportsman's Sketches* emblematic of this early

phase. The Civil War served as a catalyst, heightening American interest in Russian society and deepening the impact of Turgenev's depictions of rural life and social change. Reviewers and readers alike interpreted his narratives through the prism of their own experiences, rendering his stories both accessible and resonant.

A pivotal moment came with Eugene Schuyler's 1867 translation of *Fathers and Sons*. While Schuyler relied on French intermediary text,⁵²¹ his translation captured the spirit of Turgenev's novel and brought it to a wide American audience, setting a precedent for future translators and firmly establishing Turgenev's presence in American literary culture. Yet, curiously, Schuyler's translation and the novel itself, despite its foundational role, was rarely acknowledged in later 1870-1880-s critical discussions. This oversight suggests that later advocates like Perry and James reintroduced Turgenev to American readers through their own engagement with the broader European literary context, rather than by building on Schuyler's pioneering efforts. Both recognized the challenges American readers faced in appreciating Turgenev's novels without a deeper knowledge of Russian society and history.

This chapter also examines the crucial work of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century translators Leo Wiener and Isabel Hapgood, whose backgrounds, motivations, and professional trajectories reveal the complexity of cultural transmission. Unlike Schuyler, who introduced Turgenev at the dawn of Russian literary reception in America, Wiener and Hapgood operated during a period of growing interest in Tolstoy and the institutionalization of Slavic studies. Wiener, an immigrant and the first American professor of Slavic literature at Harvard, championed word-for-word accuracy and scholarly rigor, producing monumental translations and anthologies —

⁵²¹ See Schuyler, "Letter to the Editorial Board," 496.

though often embroiled in rivalry with contemporaries like Hapgood, whom he criticized for her reliance on intermediary languages.⁵²²

Hapgood, on the other hand, was a self-taught translator and cultural ambassador, motivated by a personal fascination with Russian Orthodoxy and a desire to foster cross-cultural understanding. Her translations, supported by her journalistic acumen and extensive travel, played a significant role in popularizing Turgenev for American audiences, even as her literary taste changed from initial critic of Turgenev's style towards his admiration.

Both figures responded to a cultural phenomenon of "Russian craze" in the U.S. at the turn of the century, but differed in methods and status: Wiener's expertise was rooted in scholarship and linguistic mastery, while Hapgood leveraged journalistic and literary networks, as well as her religious engagement, to promote Russian culture. Their careers overlapped in the competition for authority and access, as well as collaboration with key academic and literary institutions. The legacies of Wiener and Hapgood underscore the complexity of literary transmission between Russia and America, revealing how translation, academic ambition, personal motivation, and shifting cultural tastes converged to shape the American canon of Russian literature. Their efforts not only advanced the reception of Turgenev, Tolstoy, and others, but also set the stage for future scholarship and popular appreciation of Russian authors, marking a transition from isolated acts of translation to sustained, institutionalized cultural exchange.

I have also conducted a detailed comparative analysis of early American translations of Turgenev's works, highlighting the contrasting approaches of Leo Wiener and Isabel Hapgood. Wiener prioritized word-for-word accuracy, aiming to preserve the original style, structure, and even the imperfections of the Russian text, as evidenced in his anthology and his translations of

⁵²² Leo Wiener, *Our Slavic Scholars*.

selected passages from *Fathers and Sons*. He was attentive to linguistic nuance and often included explanatory notes to preserve both cultural and historical context, sometimes at the expense of natural English flow.

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Hapgood was a self-taught translator and cultural ambassador. She prioritized clarity, faithfulness, and cultural nuance, though her literal approach could at times yield phrasing that felt archaic or stiff. In contrast, the British translator Constance Garnett is celebrated for her lyrical fluidity and her ability to capture Turgenev's poetic sensibility, especially in descriptions of nature; Hapgood's translations, by comparison, tend to be more formal and schematic.⁵²³ Hapgood also faced significant challenges, such as rendering culturally specific terms, Russian diminutives, and Turgenev's dense style into English. In stories like "Khor and Kalinych" and "Bezhin Meadow," her translations are accurate but sometimes lack the musicality and warmth of Garnett's more adaptive versions.

In Wiener's case, there was a significant shift toward translating directly from Russian, paralleled by Hapgood's efforts. This gradual movement toward more direct translations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked a turning point, culminating in Constance Garnett's work, which enabled a more nuanced and accurate appreciation of Turgenev's artistry.

In Chapter Three, I demonstrate that the critical reception of Turgenev's writings in the United States — from the 1860s onward — was deeply intertwined with the broader evolution of American literary identity. In their pursuit of "true realism," American critics and writers engaged deeply with Turgenev's work, drawing inspiration from it and using it as a benchmark for their own literary aspirations. The rise of realism, and future naturalism, and regionalism in American

⁵²³ Rachel May, *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994), 32

literature did not occur in isolation, but was fundamentally shaped by historical forces such as the aftermath of the Civil War, the challenges of Reconstruction, rapid industrialization, and growing social complexity. Amid these transformations, American literary culture was primed for new models that could more authentically reflect the realities of modern life and help articulate a distinct national voice.

Turgenev's introduction to the American literary scene in the 1860s and 1870s coincided with a period of heightened cultural exchange between the United States and Russia. His works were initially met with enthusiasm, especially among the cosmopolitan circles of Boston and New York. Critical mediators and tastemakers like T. S. Perry, William Dean Howells, and Henry James, writing for influential journals such as the *North American Review*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *The Nation*, played decisive roles in shaping Turgenev's reputation. They admired his mastery of realistic style, narrative detachment, and nuanced character portrayal — particularly his depiction of women. American readers, encountering Turgenev's explorations of rural society, class tensions, and moral dilemmas, found striking parallels with their own society's struggles with slavery, modernization, and reform.⁵²⁴

The mediation and advocacy of Perry, Howells, and James were central in interpreting, adapting, and ultimately assimilating Russian realism into the American context. Perry, as a pioneering mediator, introduced Turgenev with an eye toward evolutionary criticism and literary progress. Howells, both as editor and novelist, promoted Turgenev's "truth to life" and dramatic realism, shaping a generation of American writers sensitive to social nuance and artistic

⁵²⁴ See for example T. S. Perry, "Ivan Turgénieff," *Atlantic Monthly* 33 (January–to of June 1874): 565–575, William Dean Howells, "Smoke," *Atlantic Monthly* 30, no. 178 (August 1872): 243–44, Henry James, "Ivan Turgenev's New Novel," *The Nation* 24, no. 617 (April 26, 1877): 252.

restraint.⁵²⁵ James, with his psychological insight and international perspective, elevated Turgenev as a “novelist for novelists,” emphasizing the subtlety and technical sophistication of his realism.⁵²⁶ Collectively, these critics not only shaped the American reception of Turgenev, but also redirected the broader trajectory of American fiction, steering it away from romantic excess and British convention toward a literature defined by moral ambiguity, psychological depth, and disciplined artistry.

The trajectory of Turgenev’s reputation in the United States — rising rapidly in the 1870s, peaking with the publication of *Virgin Soil* (1877), and then gradually yielding to the prominence of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov — mirrors the evolving tastes and ambitions of American literary culture. This search for new literary models did not focus on England, whose literary dominance was increasingly challenged by American critics and writers. Instead, there was a conscious turn toward continental Europe, with particular attention given to the achievements of French and German literature. Turgenev, whose works were most often encountered in French and German translations, was nonetheless consistently recognized — even by those reading him in translation — as an authentically Russian voice. As Henry James noted, despite Turgenev’s cosmopolitan life and the mediation of his works through French culture, he remained deeply Russian in both sensibility and subject matter.⁵²⁷ Importantly, it was not only Turgenev’s stylistic purity and narrative mastery that appealed to American critics of the period, but also the strong moral component woven throughout his texts.

For key American critics and writers such as Howells and James, Turgenev’s works became a kind of school for their own literary practice — a source of technical mastery, poetic realism,

⁵²⁵ Howells, “Ivan Turgenev,” 110–11.

⁵²⁶ James, “Ivan Turgenev.”

⁵²⁷ James, “Ivan Turgenev.”

and narrative innovation. It was through this sustained engagement that James ultimately established the enduring image of Turgenev as the “novelist for novelists,”⁵²⁸ framing his oeuvre as a model and a training ground for aspiring writers. In sum, Turgenev’s reception was not merely a chapter in the story of Russian-American literary exchange; it played a formative role in shaping the craft, direction, and self-understanding of American literature itself.

In **Chapter Four**, I have demonstrated that Turgenev’s rediscovery in the early twentieth century was a pivotal moment in the evolution of American literary modernism. As American attitudes toward Russian literature shifted from a generalized “Russomania” to a more discerning appreciation of individual Russian authors, Turgenev was increasingly recognized not just as a realist, but as a stylistic innovator whose legacy demanded reassessment. The enduring influence of Henry James’s view of Turgenev as a “novelist for novelists” continued into the twentieth century and evolved into what can be described as a true “school of writing.” This period of renewed interest was fueled by improved translations — most notably by Constance Garnett — by the institutionalization of Slavic studies at American universities, and by the active engagement of American literary journals and periodicals.

Turgenev’s prose — marked by restraint, lyricism, and psychological subtlety — came to be seen as a touchstone for the emerging aesthetics of modernism, offering a bridge between nineteenth-century realism and the experimentalism of the new century. His influence on American writers was both structural and thematic. Sherwood Anderson, for instance, drew inspiration from several sources in shaping *Winesburg, Ohio* — including American literary traditions of local color and realism as well as the innovative narrative structure of Turgenev’s book *A Sportsman’s*

⁵²⁸ James, “Ivan Turgenev.”

Sketches.⁵²⁹ Anderson's search for a "looseness of form," stylistic purity, and symbolic use of provincial space reveals a direct engagement with Turgenev's literary principles.

Ernest Hemingway's connection to Turgenev, initially mediated by Anderson's mentorship, soon became an independent and sustained engagement. In early works such as a book of short stories *In Our Time*, Hemingway's narrative restraint, subtle use of implication, and celebrated "iceberg technique" all demonstrate his engagement with and adaptation of Turgenev's mastery of observational narration.⁵³⁰ Hemingway's novella *The Torrents of Spring* stands as both a parody and homage, acknowledging Turgenev's foundational role in shaping modernist narrative technique even as Hemingway asserted his own literary independence.

These cases make clear that Turgenev's methods — narrative detachment, lyricism, and character-driven composition — were not simply borrowed but actively adapted and transformed, becoming essential tools for American modernists. His prose offered a model and a challenge: to capture the complexity of modern experience with precision and restraint. The result was a distinctive strand of American literature that fused local authenticity with cosmopolitan technique, rooted in Russian realism yet oriented toward future literary innovation.

This study has mapped Turgenev's journey from his initial discovery and critical acclaim, through phases of neglect, to his creative rediscovery in the modernist era. Each stage — his early popularity among intellectuals, the innovations and controversies of translation, his catalytic role in American realism, and his lasting impact on narrative form — demonstrates that cross-cultural literary exchange is a dynamic, ongoing process of reinterpretation and transformation.

⁵²⁹ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 390.

⁵³⁰ Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosvrazi literatur Rossii i SShA*, 372.

Looking ahead, further research should explore how Turgenev was received by broader American audiences during the twentieth century, investigating the mechanisms by which his prestige was constructed and maintained. Examining the interplay of political, cultural, and aesthetic factors will deepen our understanding of his unique transnational reputation. Comparative studies with Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov will further clarify Turgenev's distinct position in American letters and illuminate divergent trajectories of Russian literary influence. Ultimately, such inquiry will not only enrich our appreciation of Turgenev's enduring significance but also contribute valuable insight into the broader dynamics of comparative literary studies.

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Appendix A. Major Works of Ivan S. Turgenev (Years of First Publication in Russia)

Year	Russian Title	English Title	Genre
1852	<i>Записки охотника</i>	<i>A Sportsman's Sketches</i>	Short story (prosaic) cycle
1856	<i>Рудин</i>	<i>Rudin</i>	Novel
1858	<i>Ася</i>	<i>Asya</i>	Novella
1859	<i>Дворянское гнездо</i>	<i>Home of the Gentry</i>	Novel
1860	<i>Накануне</i>	<i>On the Eve</i>	Novel
1862	<i>Отцы и дети</i>	<i>Fathers and Sons</i>	Novel
1867	<i>Дым</i>	<i>Smoke</i>	Novel
1870	<i>Степной король Лир</i>	<i>King Lear of the Steppes</i>	Novella
1872	<i>Весенние воды</i>	<i>Spring Torrents</i>	Novella
1877	<i>Новь</i>	<i>Virgin Soil</i>	Novel
1882	<i>Стихотворения в прозе (Senilia)</i>	<i>Poems in Prose</i>	Prose poems

FATHERS AND SONS



IVAN SERGHEÏEVITCH TURGENEF

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN
WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE AUTHOR

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