

UC Berkeley

UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Writing Living People: The Promise and Inadequacy of Mimetic Characterization in Late Soviet Literature

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8xh8s05b>

Author

Parker, David Michael Akiyoshi

Publication Date

2021

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

Writing Living People:
The Promise and Inadequacy of Mimetic Characterization in Late Soviet Literature

by

David Michael Akiyoshi Parker

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Slavic Languages and Literatures
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Eric Naiman, Chair
Professor Edward Tyerman
Professor Alexei Yurchak

Spring 2021

Writing Living People:
The Promise and Inadequacy of Mimetic Characterization in Late Soviet Literature

©2021

By

David Michael Akiyoshi Parker

Abstract

Writing Living People:
The Promise and Inadequacy of Mimetic Characterization in Late Soviet Literature

by

David Michael Akiyoshi Parker

Doctor of Philosophy in Slavic Languages and Literatures

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Eric Naiman, Chair

This dissertation traces the charged dynamic of mimetic characterization in late Soviet literature through a study of the works of Yuri Trifonov, Andrei Bitov, and Vasilii Belov. Emerging from the Stalinist era and its socialist realist doctrine of the “positive hero,” Soviet writers faced the daunting opportunity of returning a human face to literary characters. This study argues that writers in the era of “developed socialism” were drawn towards this prospect of writing “living people” into their works, only to be stymied by the incompatibility and obsolescence of mimetic modes of characterization inherited from the Russian literary tradition to individuals shaped by both the horrors of the recent past and a nonheroic present. This ultimate failure of mimetic characterization led writers to reference the late Soviet individual through novel means: unable to adequately represent verisimilar characters in words, the authors explored in this dissertation wove the ethical and aesthetic dilemmas surrounding this impossibility into the structure of their texts themselves.

The dissertation’s three chapters examine the specific ways each author responded to this mimetic challenge through close readings of the narrative structure and character systems of texts like Trifonov’s *Dom na naberezhnoi* [House on the Embankment], Bitov’s *Pushkinskii dom* [Pushkin House], and Belov’s *Privychnoe delo* [A Typical Matter]. These readings are informed by the theoretical writings of both Western and Soviet literary scholars such as Lidiia Ginzburg, Gyorgy Lukács, James Phelan, and Mikhail Bakhtin. Despite the diversity of their literary styles, all three authors participated in official literary culture, and as such particular attention is given throughout this dissertation to the reception of these writer’s characters by the Soviet critical apparatus. Late Soviet writers not only had to navigate the newly opened landscape of a “socialist realism without shores” but also engaged with the legacies of 19th century Russian realism, whose model of character greatly informed understandings of mimetic characterization for a revived Russian literary culture. The limitations of this model encountered by late Soviet writers and the innovations these encounters produced have implications far beyond the field of literary history. Recent decades have seen a widespread critical reevaluation of the field of “Soviet subjectivity,” with a particular focus on the Stalinist era. A flood of new information, in particular pertaining to the routine or “everyday life” was made available after the fall of the Soviet Union, which saw the opening of historical archives and a flood of non-fiction documents, diaries and memoirs. Valuable insights can be made from a study of accounts both narrated by

and about fictional persons, and this study of characterization in the late Soviet era aims to recover notions of selfhood among the writers, critics, and readers of late Soviet literature.

“Одной из основных внутренних тем романа является именно тема неадекватности герою его судьбы и его положения. Человек или больше своей судьбы, или меньше своей человечности.”

“One of the novel’s fundamental internal themes is the inadequacy of the hero’s fate and position to himself. Man is either greater than his fate or less than his humanity.¹”

¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 3: Teoriia romana, 1930-1961 gg.*, vol. 3, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2012), 639.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
A Note on Transliteration and Translation	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Yuri Trifonov: Absence and Insensitivity	17
Chapter Two: Andrei Bitov: “This game of “who-whom,” this unreality...”	46
Chapter Three: Vasilii Belov: “To be their intercessor in literature”	91
Conclusion	122
Bibliography	126

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by thanking Eric Naiman for six years—seven, if you count the Platonov course—of support and especially for the enthusiasm with which he listened to me before offering his tremendous advice as I rambled on during office hours. I am inspired by the generosity he shows towards his students and the ideas they bring with them, as well as his ability to lead a class through complex and occasionally quite difficult subjects, something I witnessed firsthand as a reader for his Nabokov course. Edward Tyerman served as the chair for my qualifying exams, and it was his Contemporary Russian Literature course that affirmed my desire to write a dissertation on the late Soviet era. I am grateful to him for his thorough and thoughtful comments on every iteration of this dissertation, and in particular his gentle reminders to keep the larger picture in mind. Alexei Yurchak's scholarship is a genuine inspiration to me in how it reveals the fascinating temporality of the late Soviet Union—a very particular time and place—while simultaneously having far-reaching implications and applications across disciplines and decades. It is also a joy to read, written with a humor and wit that was also displayed in the t-shirt he wore under his blazer to my qualifying exams.

This dissertation is the product of an extremely wide net of support by countless individuals across the larger world of Slavic Languages and Literatures. To begin, I would like to thank my many Russian instructors, who brought me closer each year to a language and culture that continues to captivate me: Tatiana Smorodinskaya, Kevin Moss, and Sergei Davydov at Middlebury College; Larisa Moskvitina and Evgeny Dengub at the Summer Language School; Eugenia Khassina at Stanford; and especially Anna Muza at Berkeley, who brings such joy and grace to the classroom. I would also like to thank Moriah, Amanda, Elizabeth, and Seth at ISSA for their support, patience, and warmth. I offer my immense gratitude to the Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Berkeley for the tremendous opportunities they afforded throughout my time at Berkeley but especially for their Dissertation Fellowship, without which this work would not have been possible.

I have truly missed my friends at colleagues at Berkeley during this year of pandemic-induced separation, but they continued to buoy my spirits and offer invaluable advice despite our physical distance. Thank you to my cohort-mates Karina McCorkle and Maria Whittle and to those above me—Dominick Lawton, Kit Pribble, and Kathryn DeWaele—for their love, humor, and support. A special thank you to Semyon Leonenko for our friendship in general and in particular for appreciating along with me the brilliance of the particular basketball moment we experienced during our time in the Bay Area. I'm also grateful for Caroline Brickman's company and guidance here in Pittsburgh over these last two years.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for the decades of support and understanding that led to this project and so much more. I would like to thank my brother Sam for his kindness and his commitment to reading deeply, my mother for her consideration and a certain steadfastness that helped greatly in this project, and my father for his curiosity and for his subscription to *Granta* magazine, whose inclusion of a Platonov story in a 1998 issue set me down this journey many years ago. My final acknowledgment is to Sarah Fox, for loving me and for being the inspiration to see this dissertation through.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my grandparents Bill and Haru Yokoyama and Jim and Hallie Parker.

A Note on Transliteration and Translation

Transliterations in this dissertation are given according to the Library of Congress system, except for certain first and last names that are familiar to English-language readers, e.g. *Tolstoy* in place of *Tolstoi* and *Yuri* in place of *Iurii*. All titles of Russian-language works and periodicals are given in LOC transliteration, followed by an English translation in brackets. Bibliographic information for English-language translations is provided when available by a footnote on a work's initial appearance in the dissertation. All Russian-language passages in the Introduction and Conclusion have been translated into English, and, unless otherwise indicated, these translations are my own. All citations regardless of author follow the Library of Congress system.

“It was in the 20th century that the conversation begun long ago about the futility of life ended and another conversation began: how one could survive and stay alive without losing one’s human form... In recent memory a literary character’s conflict has again become an external conflict, as in pre-psychological times. —Lydia Ginzburg (1956)¹

“Resounding conflict out in the open has become rare and exceptional. Over lengthy periods the surface of social life seems to alter little, and what changes can be detected come about slowly, each in its turn... In the art of today as in that of a more distant past the accent falls on man’s inward life and conscience, on his moral decisions, which cannot be expressed, it may be, in any external act.” —Gyorgy Lukacs (1965)²

Introduction

The central question of my dissertation—the relationship between literary characters and living people in late Soviet literature—emerges from the space separating these two statements. Occupying roughly contemporaneous vantagepoints at the onset of the second half of the 20th century and sharing a deep knowledge of Russian and Soviet literature, Lukács and Ginzburg have nonetheless come to opposing conclusions. In his essay on Solzhenitsyn’s *Odin den’ Ivana Denisovicha* [*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*],³ Lukács gestures toward the psychological realism of the 19th century as a possible salvation for Soviet socialist realism, while in her private notebooks Ginzburg expresses her fear that the traumatic events of war and terror have returned man to an even more distant time where individual, psychological beings are no longer representable as such. For both scholars, Soviet society has clearly entered a turning point—Lukács emphasizes the present calm and advocates for a return to past modes of representation, but Ginzburg, with her gaze fixed firmly on the past, argues that man has crossed a threshold of no return. Art has been called to reflect upon and respond to these dramatic changes in Soviet society post-Stalin, and this general aesthetic response is expressed specifically in terms of characterization. What Lukács and Ginzburg are considering is the return of a human face to literary character after the collapse of the strict canons of socialist realism and its cult of the positive hero, and the gap between their answers reveals the tension felt by writers, critics, and readers between the promise and the inadequacy of mimetic depictions of character in late Soviet literature. This dissertation examines the fate of mimetic characterization in the prose works of three Soviet authors: Yurii Trifonov, Andrei Bitov, and Vasiliï Belov. Despite the

¹ Lidiia Ginzburg, *Zapisnye knizhki: vospominaniia : esse* (Sankt-Peterburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 2002), 198.

[«...именно в XX веке кончился давно начатый разговор о тщете жизни и начался другой разговор—о том, как бы выжить и как бы прожить, не потеряв образа человеческого... На нашей памяти конфликт литературного персонажа стал опять внешним конфликтом, как во времена допсихологические.»]

Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Russian language quotations are my own.

² Georg Lukács, “Solzhenitsyn and the New Realism,” *The Socialist Register*, no. 2 (1965): 213.

³ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* /, trans. H.T. Willetts, 1st ed. (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1991).

This dissertation will give the original Russian names of works in transliteration, with an English translation in the footnotes. When applicable, a note on an English translation will be provided, as above.

diversity of their literary styles and philosophical views, each of them grappled with technical and ethical challenges in representing individual human beings caught between the sluggish temporality and newly-fostered individualism of the late Soviet period and the shock revelations about the recent Stalinist past. Rather than devoting themselves completely to the methods “of a more distant past” or abandoning characters with a human face altogether, these authors worked through the era’s unique tension surrounding literary character to develop new means of representing human beings. Engaging with the Russian realist tradition and the inadequacy of its conventions in a rapidly transforming society, these writers compensate for the *failure* of traditional mimetic characterization by gesturing towards the individual via the *synthetic* or *thematic* aspects of the text; that is, to write the mimetic failure of literary characterization into the text.

1.1 Establishing mimetic character

In *Story and Discourse*, Seymour Chatman begins his overview of characterization with an expression of bewilderment: “It is remarkable how little has been said about the theory of character in literary history and criticism.”⁴ What does not need to be said, however, is that the concept of literary character, despite the best efforts of semioticians and narratologists, is stubbornly anthropocentric and anthropomorphic. The connection between fictional characters and living people is self-evident, Chatman continues, and he acknowledges that “narrative theory should at least contemplate the relationship [between them].”⁵ The concept of “mimetic character” or “mimetic characterization” arises from this relationship or, more specifically, this *resemblance*: a literary character can be emblematic of certain ideas, virtues, or social classes, but when we read a character *mimetically*, it is always as a representation of a living person. In this respect, every literary character is inherently mimetic,⁶ but as the very existence of the phrase “mimetic character” suggests, the mimetic aspect of character can be more or less prevalent. The boundaries of the term are difficult to establish—when Northrop Frye speaks of the “mimetic hero” in his *Anatomy of Criticism*, the protagonist is mimetic only in the sense that he or she is subject to laws and forces that resemble those of our own universe. More commonly, mimetic characters are those that undergo greater development or show greater depth; mimetic

⁴ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), 107.

⁵ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), 108.

⁶ Uri Margolin writes that “a minimal identification in the text of an individual with predicates is a prerequisite for thematic and constructional analyses.

Uri Margolin, “The What, the When, and the How of Being a Character in Literary Narrative,” *Style* 24, no. 3 (1990): 453–68.

For Chatman, this identification begins with animacy: “There are animated cartoons in which a completely contentless object is endowed with characterhood, that is, it takes on the meaning “character” because it engages in a suitably anthropomorphic action (that is, a movement on the screen that is conceived as an instance of human movement.)”

Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), 25.

Barthes proposes that in literature this initial step towards characterhood is prompted not by motion but by the proper name or pronoun.

Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 67-68.

characters are typically round (vs. flat), dynamic (and not static), novelistic (and not mythic), representational (vs. structural), psychological, and, although recently challenged, they are “major” rather than “minor.”⁷ Scholes and Kellogg have devised a trinary classificatory system for character: “esthetic” characters, which exist on the page solely to fulfill plot functions or perform archetypal roles, “illustrative” characters, which carry allegorical or symbolic weight, and “representational” or “mimetic,” who are “highly individualized” and possess complex inner lives.⁸ James Phelan has devised his own three-part model of character that I have found to be extremely useful in my analysis of late-Soviet literary characterization, and as I make frequent reference to several of his terms in my dissertation, I will summarize the main tenets of his system below.

Phelan’s model was first laid out in detail in his 1989 book *Reading People, Reading Plots*, which sought to elaborate the relationship between character development and narrative progression, arguing that the two are inseparable: “...when an author creates a character, she creates a potential for that character to participate in the signification of the work through the development of the character in three spheres of meaning; that potential may or may not be realized depending upon the way the whole work is shaped.”⁹ Those three spheres are the *mimetic*, the *thematic*, and the *synthetic*. *Mimetic* components are selective, gesturing towards a human individual, while *thematic* components highlight the character’s symbolic or allegorical aspect as a “stand-in” for a larger category, be it socio-historical, moral, or cultural. Lastly, *synthetic* components refer the reader to the character’s status as a fictional construct, emphasizing their textual embodiment within written language. Phelan’s system is a powerful analytical tool in part because of its flexibility. Characters do not exist as purely mimetic, synthetic, or thematic, but instead move through the text as a mixture of all three components. In addition, as Phelan is equally interested in narrative progression, he frequently tracks how mimetic characteristics can be “converted” into thematic or even synthetic features throughout the course of a work. As this dissertation is concerned above all with the mimetic aspect and its failure in late Soviet prose, it is worth unpacking Phelan’s understanding of the term in greater detail.

In 2020, Phelan and Matthew Clark jointly published *Debating Rhetorical Narratology*, in which Clark revisits, challenges, and expands upon Phelan’s model. In his chapter on the

⁷ See Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003).

In Baruch Hochman’s “taxonomy” (1985), the categories are: *Stylization/Naturalism*, *Coherence/Incoherence*, *Wholeness/Fragmentariness*, *Complexity/Simplicity*, *Transparency/Opacity*, *Dynamism/Staticism*, and *Closure/Openness*. *Character in Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

For an exploration of the differences between “flat” and “minor” characters, see Marta Figlerowicz, “Introduction,” in *Flat Protagonists: A Theory of Novel Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–20.

⁸ Robert Scholes, James Phelan, and Robert L. Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative*, 2nd edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 99-101. Phelan wrote an additional chapter to Kellogg and Scholes’ book covering developments in narrative theory from the time of its original publication in 1966 up to the beginning of the 21st century.

⁹ James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago: University Press, 1989), 10.

mimetic function, Clark provides a useful compilation of Phelan's various definitions before beginning his critique of them:

In the [Mimetic-Thematic-Synthetic] model, the mimetic component is "that component of character directed to its imitation of a possible person," and it is also "that component of fictional narrative concerned with imitating the world beyond the fiction, what we typically call 'reality.'" Mimesis is produced by "conventions, which change over time," and "imitations are judged to be more or less adequate" in terms of these conventions (Phelan, *Living* 215). "Responses to the mimetic component involve an audience's interest in the characters as possible people and in the narrative world as like our own" (Phelan, *Living* 20).¹⁰

Clark criticizes Phelan's conflation of the mimetic with the "realistic," noting that the model as it stands has "no theoretical account of fantastic narratives, which foreground the unrealistic or the impossible, or 'unnatural' narratives, which foreground their fictionality."¹¹ This is particularly relevant for late Soviet literature, with its abundance of fantastic and surreal fictional universes, particularly in unofficial and countercultural works.¹² One aspect of mimetic character that neither Clark nor Phelan address in great detail is the relationship between what the latter refers to as "the narrative world" and "the world beyond the fiction." Mimesis is understood by Phelan largely in terms of imitation: "Realistic fiction seeks to create the illusion that everything is mimetic and nothing synthetic, or, in other words, that the characters act as they do by their own choice rather than at the behest of the author."¹³ Such a view denies mimetic characters the extratextual existence that so often sets them apart from other represented elements of a narrative. Characters can certainly be perceived as "mimetic" or "realistic" solely through traits and actions related to the reader, but they can also emerge as humanlike precisely in their struggle *against* the author, not seamlessly integrated within an artistic simulacrum of reality but instead emerging from it. Literary characters, to use Uri Margolin's words, are "detachable" from their originating text.¹⁴ In *The Reality Effect*, Roland Barthes uses the same language to describe any kind of description embedded within a text: "in Alexandrian neo-rhetoric of the second century A.D., there was a craze for ecphrasis, the detachable set piece (thus having its end in itself, independent of any general function)..."¹⁵ Barthes is writing about the importance of detail to the realist text, but what I am interested in is the relative *autonomy* of description in relation to the structure that contains it. Phelan's model is built upon character and narrative progression, and as such, he frequently describes instances in literary texts when

¹⁰ Matthew Clark and James Phelan, *Debating Rhetorical Narratology: On the Synthetic, Mimetic, and Thematic Aspects of Narrative* (Ohio State University Press, 2020), 53-54.

¹¹ Matthew Clark and James Phelan, *Debating Rhetorical Narratology: On the Synthetic, Mimetic, and Thematic Aspects of Narrative* (Ohio State University Press, 2020), 54.

¹² In his essay "Chto takoe sotsialisticheskii realizm," Andrei Siniavskii advocated for a turn towards "нелепая фантазия" and "искусство фантазмагорическое" in order to save Russian literature. See Abram Terts, *Chto takoe sotsialisticheskii realizm* (Parizh: Syntaxis, 1988), 63-64.

¹³ James Phelan, *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* / (Ithaca, N.Y. :, 2005), 20.

¹⁴ Uri Margolin, "The What, the When, and the How of Being a Character in Literary Narrative," *Style* 24, no. 3 (1990): 453-68, 453.

¹⁵ Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1989), 143.

mimetic traits “become” or are “converted” into thematic traits, such as in his analysis of Orwell’s *1984*.¹⁶ But a crucial aspect of the mimetic character in my understanding of the term is precisely this “independence” that literary characters negotiate with the remainder of the text. Literary characters are, in Chatman’s words, “open constructs,” but they reside in a finite narrative. This results in a particular tension that Alex Woloch has named the “character-space”: “that particular and charged encounter between an individual human personality and a determined space and position within the narrative as a whole.”¹⁷ An assessment of mimetic characterization in a given text or literary era should evaluate the relative weight given to the former (the individual human personality) versus the latter (the concerns of the narrative as a whole.) Whether they emerge from the text or in opposition to it, then, mimetic characters are singular, individualized, and differentiate themselves from the surrounding text.

One of the difficulties of fixing what makes a character mimetic is that many of the above traits, taken in isolation, are woefully insufficient. Characters can be written to “stand out” quite clearly and still remain caricatures, like the “eccentric” workers in Woloch’s analysis of Victorian-era novels.¹⁸ An abundance of pure description, likewise, is not in itself enough to individualize a character. A protagonist’s physical characteristics can be read as representative of his or her class or ethnicity, as in the Russian Natural School. The “inward turn” to which Lukács refers is a hallmark of literary realism and often a prerequisite for a mimetic depiction of character from the 19th century onwards. The alignment of the psychological with the individual is touted in a Soviet literary textbook released during the 1980s: “The increasing psychological saturation of prose [in the 1970s] resonated with the views firmly entrenched in public consciousness concerning the value and endless uniqueness of each separate individual.”¹⁹ But just as a portrait can be used in the services of physiology, the portrayal of mental processes can serve as a depiction of the processes themselves, rather than the cognitive workings of a specific human being. Lidia Ginzburg reflects upon this in her praise of Tolstoy’s realism: “Tolstoy, like no one else, reached the individual person. He is a magnificent master of character, but he went beyond individual character in order to see and show *general life* not only in the sense that what is characteristic for this person is characteristic to people in general as well, but in the sense that life itself, reality as such became the object of representation.”²⁰

The most frequent criticism leveled against a category like mimetic characterization is that the practice of mimesis and notions of “life itself,” “plausible,” “realistic,” or “lifelike” are

¹⁶ James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago: University Press, 1989), 27-43.

¹⁷ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003), 14.

¹⁸ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003), 155-167.

¹⁹ A. G. Bocharov and G. A. Belaia, *Sovremennaiia russkaia sovetskaia literatura: kniga dlia uchitelia* (Москва: Просвещение, 1987), 99.

[Возросшая психологическая насыщенность прозы как бы резонировала прочно утверждавшимся в общественном сознании воззрениям относительно ценности и бесконечной неповторимости каждой отдельной личности.]

²⁰ Lidia Ginzburg, *O literaturnom geroe* (Leningrad: Sov. pisatel', Leningr. otd-nie, 1979), 170.

[Толстой, как никто другой, постиг отдельного человека. Он величайший мастер характера, но он переступил через индивидуальный характер, чтобы увидеть и показать *общую жизнь* не в том только смысле, что свойственное данному человеку свойственно и людям вообще, но и в том смысле, что предметом изображения стали процессы самой жизни, действительность как таковая.]

completely subjective in nature and always beholden to a given cultural context. Phelan acknowledges as much in the introduction to his *Reading People, Reading Plots*:

For the most part, such a representation is a matter of conventions and the conventions change over time as both ideas about persons and fictional techniques for representing persons change. [...] Thus, I think that for my purposes flexible, shifting criteria are superior to fixed ones. Since my goal is to understand the principles upon which a narrative is constructed, I shall seek to make my judgements according to what I know or can infer about the conventions under which a given author is operating.²¹

Phelan's first book analyzes a broad swath of texts across the 19th and 20th centuries, while this dissertation restricts itself to a roughly two-decade period (from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s) of Russian-language fiction. Because mimetic characterization is contingent upon "ideas about persons" and realized through "conventions," I will attempt to summarize in the following two sections the changing notion of the individual in the late Soviet period and the history of characterization in Russian and Soviet literature. At the same time, I hope to subvert these questions of subjectivity to some extent by frequently reversing the lens from my own judgements on a given character's "realness" back onto the accounts of contemporary readers, writers, and literary critics making their own evaluations. As Rita Felski writes: "literary character can disclose rather than disguise [...] via the specifics of its formal shaping, it offers otherwise unattainable insights into the historical inflection of personhood."²² Although this dissertation does not restrict itself to an account or survey of cultural understandings of character or the individual in the Soviet period, these understandings are an indispensable aspect of my research on late Soviet literature. Given the considerable overlap between literary character and the individual, especially in Russian and Soviet culture, this discussion of literature should be of interest to anyone conducting sociological or cultural research on the late-Soviet period.

1.2 Capturing the late Soviet individual

In his book *The Collective and the Individual in Russia*, Oleg Kharkhodin turns to Steven Lukes' breakdown of the term "individualism" to establish a backdrop for his own study:

[Lukes] has distinguished four core component ideas "variously expressed and combined" in the term "individualism." The first one is respect for persons, "the supreme and intrinsic value, or dignity, of the individual human being." The second is independence or autonomy, "according to which an individual's thought an action is his own, and not determined by agencies or causes outside his control." The third aspect of individualism is the notion of privacy, "an area within which an individual is or should be left alone by others and able to do or think whatever he chooses." The fourth is the notion of self-development, which now "specifies an ideal of the lives of individuals—an ideal whose content varies with different ideas of the self on a continuum of pure egoism to

²¹ James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago: University Press, 1989), 12.

²² Rita Felski, "Introduction," *New Literary History* 42, no. 2 (2011): v–ix.

strong communitarianism.”²³

Kharkhordin and Lukes are both sociologists, but all four of the latter’s “ideas” expressed above are directly relevant to the literary concept of mimetic character, beginning with the first: mimetic character finds self-justification in the inherent value of an individual human being. The literary equivalents of the second and third ideas can be examined through the lens of narratology, a question of the relationship between author and hero. The fourth concept, which threatens to cross over from the mimetic towards the thematic, is quite familiar to scholars of Soviet literature, which held throughout its history a markedly didactic function within society.

As scholars, we should be skeptical of the universality of a term such as “the individual” or “individualism,” and indeed, Kharkhordin’s entire book uncovers the extent to which “practices of individualization” in Russia and the Soviet Union diverged from those of Western Europe. Despite the constancy of the practice of horizontal, rather than vertical, surveillance, Kharkhordin nonetheless notes that the late Soviet period saw the emergence of “individualization by distinction” (*otlichie*) alongside the more longstanding practice of self-criticism and revelation (*oblichenie*).²⁴ This newfound means for self-actualization could be activated by joining a smaller group or subculture or through artistic or creative style, aided by a rising availability and variety of consumer goods in the late Soviet era. The status of the individual post-Stalin acquired a new significance through the increasing autonomy of daily life as well as a heightened focus in the language of official ideology: publication after publication reminded readers of the importance of the “human factor,” and the new 1977 Constitution promised its citizens: “the state pursues the aim of giving citizens more and more real opportunities to apply their creative energies, abilities, and talents, and to develop their personalities in every way.”²⁵ Polly Jones links this imperative to create “multi-faceted” personalities in society with the increasingly individualized and complex portrayals of historical figures found in later volumes of the Soviet biographical series *Plamennye revoliutsionery* [*Fierce Revolutionaries*].²⁶ These heroes from a revolutionary past required greater nuance and psychological depth in order to attract readers living in a decidedly aheroic present.²⁷ At the same time, Soviet writers and critics—especially in their private and unofficial writings—grappled with a traumatic past that threatened to erase the individual altogether. As Ginzburg noted, the experience of war and mass terror fundamentally and permanently altered the image of

²³ Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1999), 3.

²⁴ Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1999), 337.

²⁵ *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1982), 21.

²⁶ Polly Jones, *Revolution Rekindled: The Writers and Readers of Late Soviet Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

²⁷ For some studies of late-Soviet temporality, particularly in the Brezhnev era, see Lilya Kaganovsky, “The Cultural Logic of Late Socialism,” *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3, no. 2 (2009): 185–99.

Nadine Natov, “Daily Life and Individual Psychology in Soviet-Russian Prose of the 1970s,” *The Russian Review* 33, no. 4 (1974): 357–71. Anna Fishzon, “Queue Time as Queer Time: An Occasion for Pleasure and Desire in the Brezhnev Era and Today,” *Slavic and East European Journal* 61, no. 3 (2017): 542–66, and especially Aleksei Yurchak, *Eto Bylo Navsegda, Poka Ne Konchilos’: Poslednee Sovetskoe Pokolenie* (Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2014).

man. In Alexander Etkind's *Warped Mourning*, this past experience is only representable in "warped imagery" that often take the form of uncanny, supernatural, or fantastic phenomena.²⁸ The moralist critic Lev Anninskii wrote of this past in 1989: "But does anyone who was on this carousel have a name? Do they have a face? How to keep one's *face* in the faceless flow of masses, replacing and crushing each other?"²⁹

If the concept of mimetic character is dependent upon the notion of an individual within a given culture, it follows that a study of mimetic character in late Soviet literature should uncover correlating changes in the depiction and reception of protagonists within works of the period, as seen in the humanized heroes of the *Plamennye revoliutsionery* series examined by Jones or the ghostly figures documented by Etkind. In the context of Russian and Soviet culture, this relationship is complicated by the reciprocal nature of aesthetic activity and social identification—in other words, understandings of personhood do not merely find their reflection *in art*, but are to a significant degree informed *by* their depictions. The multidirectionality of this conduit is written into the very introduction of Liidia Ginzburg's *O literaturnom geroe* [*On the Literary Hero*], which begins with the announcement: "This book is dedicated to a key literary question: the understanding of man that a writer incarnates in his or her heroes," and concludes with an inverted reiteration of the work's theme, "the cognition of man through means of literary heroes, created by the writer."³⁰ Phelan specifically states that the mimetic aspect of character is evaluated according to "conventions, which change over time." These conventions also differ culturally, not just historically, and the significance of character in the history of Russian literature specifically is so significant that it is more appropriate to refer to the "institution" of character in the Russian and Soviet tradition, rather than a mere set of conventions.

1.3 The Institution of character in Russian and Soviet literature

It should be noted that one would be hard-pressed to find the terms "mimetic characterization" or "mimetic character" in any Soviet literary discussion until at least the late-1980s. "Mimesis" literally means "imitation" in ancient Greek, but as John Baxter notes, in its English usage it persists in transliteration, rather than in translation,³¹ and its definition has never overlapped cleanly with pure imitation. As evinced by its inclusion in the 1804 *Noviy slovotolkovatel'* [*New Interpreter of Words*]³², «Мимесис» in its transliterated form has been

²⁸ Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. (Stanford University Press, 2013).

²⁹ Lev Anninskii, "Kak uderzhat' litso?," *Zvezda*, no. 9 (September 1989): 220.

"[Да есть ли имя у кого то ни было в этой карусели? Есть ли лицо? Как удержать л и ц о в безликом потоке сменяющих друг друга, сминающих друг друга масс?"]

³⁰ Liidia Ginzburg, *O literaturnom geroe* (Leningrad: Sov. pisatel', Leningr. otd-nie, 1979), 3-4.

[Эта книга посвящена ключевому вопросу литературы—пониманию человека, которое писатель воплощает в своих героях... "познание человека посредством литературных героев, создаваемых писателем."]

³¹ John Baxter, "Mimesis," in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, ed. Irena R. Makaryk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 591-593.

³² "Один из видов иронии тропа риторики, значит подражание и состоит в том, когда кто чужую речь изображаешь тем же голосом и теми же движениями и употребляется наиболее в комедиях."

Nikolai Maksimovich Ianovskii, "Mimesis," in *Novyi Slovotokovatel', Raspolozhennyi Po Alfavit* (Sankt-Peterburg: Akademiia Nauk, 1804), 301.

known to certain literate Russian speakers for centuries, but its usage in Soviet criticism was quite rare until at least the 1980s, and in many cases the word is glossed as *podrazhanie*, indicating its unfamiliarity. Erich Auerbach's landmark study *Mimesis* (1946) was mentioned in a 1958 article in *Voprosy literatury* [*Questions of Literature*] attacking "bourgeois and revisionist literary theory"³³ and was not viewed favorably in the academy or translated into Russian until the 1970s. Familiarity with the book did not automatically lead to increased usage of the term, of course. After attending a nationwide conference on postmodern aesthetics in Latvia in 1988, the critic Viktor Ivbulis wrote: "I admit that I took in the terms "discourse," "metalanguage," "mimetic works," "duplication of the image," with satisfaction—that is, the attempts to establish some bridges between the terminology used by us and western literary critics."³⁴

The scarce usage of "mimesis" and the "mimetic" in Russian-language discourse is curious, given the close and sometimes tortuous relationship between art and reality in Russian and Soviet culture. In an 1835 article, Vissarion Belinsky championed "*real* poetry, the poetry of life, the poetry of reality," which did not "re-create life, but reproduced, reconstructed it..."³⁵ At the same time, the Russian radical critics believed in the *transformative* potential of literature by providing a model for revolutionary change. In her analysis of the writings of Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov, Sarah Ruth Lorenz shows that the conflict generated between the critic's "imitative and progressive principles"—that is, their demand that art both faithfully reflect and transform reality—was resolved primarily through the prism of literary character.³⁶ The Russian tradition of literary criticism utilizes character as one of the most essential if not the primary lens for reading and assigning value to the works of fiction. In his attempt to summarize for Western audiences the "essential characteristics of Russian criticism," René Wellek remarked that "especially, the emphasis on types and heroes is greater in Russia than elsewhere."³⁷ If literature was in Russia the primary forum for discussing issues of social and civic importance, then character was among the most prevalent media for their expression. As Lydia Ginzburg writes: "Literature and reality interact. Literature fixes phenomena from reality and returns them to it in an already cognitive and structured form... And for this it is very important to find a term. Sometimes this fixing term is the name of a protagonist. [...] In 1862 society found out that the new man was named Bazarov."³⁸

³³ According to the article's unsigned authors, Auerbach, as a member of the "Swiss School," does take a correct (negative) attitude towards modernist tendencies in art, but is nonetheless criticized for the apolitical nature of his work.

"Protiv burzhuaizmykh i revizionistskikh teorii v literaturovedenii," *Voprosy literatury*, August 1958.

³⁴ V. Ivbulis, "Ot modernizma k postmodernizmu," *Voprosy literatury* 30 (September 1989), 258.

[“Признаюсь, с чувством удовлетворения я воспринимал обозначения: "дискурс", "метаязык", "миметические произведения", "тиражирование образа", то есть попытки перебросить какие-то мосты между терминологией, применяемой нами и западными литературоведами.”]

³⁵ Vissarion Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Tom I, Stat'i i retsenzii. khudozhestvennyye proizvedeniia: 1829-1835* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1953), 267.

³⁶ Sarah Ruth Lorenz, "Realist Convictions and Revolutionary Impatience in the Criticism of NA Dobroliubov," *Slavic and East European Journal* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 79.

³⁷ René Wellek, "The Essential Characteristics of Russian Literary Criticism," *Comparative Literature Studies* 29, no. 2 (1992): 137.

³⁸ Lidia Ginzburg, *O literaturnom geroe* (Leningrad: Sov. pisatel', Leningr. otd-nie, 1979), 52. Bazarov's name could be substituted with Pechorin, Tatiana, Oblomov, etc.

[“Литература и действительность взаимодействуют. Литература закрепляет явления действительности и возвращает их ей уже в осознанном и структурном виде... А для этого очень

The “new man” is a *type*, a generalized category, but the mimetic aspect—that is, the aspect of reality undergoing “reflection”—was not entirely displaced from the individual to the societal. Reflecting on his creation, Turgenev spoke of Bazarov almost as if he were an independent person and not a character: “The image came out so defined that it immediately entered into life and started to act by itself, in its own way.”³⁹ In his efforts to “claim” Bazarov as his own, the critic Pisarev invented an entire biography for the character, complicating, in a way, his typicality. The ability of Russian realist fiction to present the reader with images of vividly *human* individuals is especially celebrated in Western criticism. In his brief excursion into Russian realism in *Mimesis*, Auerbach notes that “the unqualified, unlimited, and passionate intensity of experience in the characters portrayed” is one of the most striking aspects encountered by “western readers.”⁴⁰ For Raymond Williams, Tolstoy is an exemplar of the “realist tradition in fiction,” which values:

a whole way of life, a society that is larger than any of the individuals composing it, and at the same time valu[es] creations of human beings who, while belonging to and affected by and helping to define this way of life, are also, in their own terms, absolute ends in themselves.⁴¹

The balance of thematic and mimetic to which Williams refers was achieved in part through realism’s critical intervention in literary history: the interpenetration of pre-existing literary aesthetic structures with extraliterary disciplines like sociology, anthropology, and physiognomy.⁴² In her book on Chernyshevsky Irina Paperno explores just how easily an artistic model said to reflect reality can be transformed into a model for living. This paradox can be seen in the split between Chernyshevsky the critic—who was capable of recognizing Tolstoy’s narratological innovations in presenting the cognitive process of a character’s “inner monologue”⁴³—and Chernyshevsky the writer, whose concept of the “New Man” served as the

важно найти термин. Иногда закрепляющий термин—это имя действующего лица. [...] В 1862 году общество узнало, что новый человек называется Базаровым”]

³⁹ Ivan S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem: V tridsati tomakh: pis'ma 10, 1869-1870*, vol. 10, 30 vols. (Moskva: Nauka, 1994), 107.

[“образ вышел до того определенный, что немедленно вступил в жизнь и пошел действовать особняком на свой салтык.”]

As Chloe Kitzinger notes, similar statements on the “independence” of their characters can be found in the critical writing of both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. See Chloe Kitzinger, “Illusion and Instrument: Problems of Mimetic Characterization in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy” (Berkeley, CA, University of California, Berkeley, 2016).

⁴⁰ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), 522-23. Ironically, Auerbach also finds that social distinctions—one of the key aspects of characterization in the Russian critical tradition from its origins in the *ocherk*—are largely absent from the Russia of literature.

⁴¹ Raymond Williams, “Realism and the Contemporary Novel,” in *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 304.

⁴² For more on Realism’s innovative relationship within Western literary history in this regard, see Ginzburg, pp. 57-88 and Irina Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988).

⁴³ Gleb Struve, “Monologue Intérieur: The Origins of the Formula and the First Statement of Its Possibilities,” *PMLA* 69, no. 5 (1954): 1106.

foundation of the prototypical “positive hero,” a lineage traced in detail by scholars such as Régine Robin and Rufus Mathewson.⁴⁴ Along with the shift from the descriptive to the aspirational came, quite naturally, a shift in focus from mimetic to thematic characterization.

During the 1920s the question of depicting human beings in literature was a highly contested issue, with each artistic camp attempting to advance its own formulation. RAPP manifestoes agitated for the “living man,” an internally divided subject which was subjected to intense psychological scrutiny. The *Litfront* group, with their mass-protagonist, advocated for “social” rather than “individual” psychology, while the members of LEF declared the obsolescence of any form of psychological analysis whatsoever, seeking to restructure literary works around the act (*дело*), de-centering the traditional nucleus of the human being. The debates of the 1920s were quickly overshadowed, of course, by the hegemonic status of Socialist Realism in the first half of the 1930s. A 1974 article in *Russkaia literatura* [*Russian Literature*] explores the differences in character development among the various literary movements in detail only to conclude that these debates were simply a means of reaching the only logical conclusion—the Socialist Realist method of characterization pioneered by Gorky and writers like Leonov, Fadeev, Furmanov, and Sholokhov: “The truth of the path chosen by these writers is confirmed by the entire following development of Soviet literature.”⁴⁵

The positive hero who eventually emerged from the literary debates of the 1920s occupies a central role in nearly every formulation of the socialist realist genre, in both “official” and “unofficial” analyses stretching over nearly a century. Despite myriad ideological and theoretical differences among the critics, the positive hero is understood to fulfill a highly thematic role. For unofficial critics, the hero is decidedly *antimimetic* in nature. Andrei Sinyavsky, who saw elements of neoclassicism in socialist realism, wrote: “It is impossible, without falling into parody, to create a positive hero (in the full socialist realist manner) and simultaneously endow him with a human psychology. Neither a real psychology nor a hero will come out of it.”⁴⁶ The positive hero, in his ability to encode the forward course of history in an easily consumable (i.e. biographical) form, is crucial to Katerina Clark’s understanding of socialist realism, but the conversion of his life into parable comes at the cost of his recognizability as a human being: “The Stalinist author does not strive to create a memorable character, an individual, but rather someone who largely fits preordained patterns. In this respect, his aims are unlike those of both writers of formulaic fiction and novelists writing in the mainstream tradition of the European novel in its heyday, the nineteenth century.”⁴⁷ Boris Groys, who sees socialist realism as a direct descendent of the avant-garde, attributes a similar irreality to the Soviet hero, albeit towards a

⁴⁴ Rufus W Mathewson, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2000), and Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992).

⁴⁵ V.V. Kompaneets, “Problema khudozhestvennogo psikhologizma v diskussiiakh 1920-x godov,” *Russkaia Literatura*, no. 2 (1974): 209. Emphasis mine.

[“Истинность выбранного этими писателями пути подтверждается *всем последующим развитием советской литературы.*”]

⁴⁶ Abram Terts, *Chto takoe sotsialisticheskii realizm* (Parizh: Syntaxis, 1988), 59.

[“Нельзя, не впадая в пародию, создать положительного героя (в полном соц. реалистическом качестве) и наделить его при этом человеческой психологией. Ни психологии настоящей не получится, ни героя.”]

⁴⁷ Katerina Clark, “Socialist Realism With Shores: The Conventions for the Positive Hero,” in *Socialist Realism Without Shores*, ed. Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 42.

different end:

The art of socialist realism, therefore, is not realistic in the traditional sense of the word; that is, what it provides is not a reflection of worldly events in their worldly contexts and motivations, but hagiographic, demonological, and other such depictions of transcendental events and their worldly consequences. It is not for nothing that socialist realist aesthetics always speaks not of “portraying” positive or negative heroes, but of “incarnating” them by artistic means. In and of themselves the positive and negative heroes have no external appearance, because they express transcendental demiurgic forces.⁴⁸

The explanations of socialist realism put forth by Clark, Sinyavsky, Groys, and others present character as a purely formal device employed towards thoroughly thematic or ideological ends; a means for producing socialism, rendering Marxist-Leninism visible, or a veil to conceal the presence of Terror. Of course, contemporary Soviet critics could not possibly write about character this way, and at plenums and on the pages of literary journals the presentation of character was subject to continual debate, mostly in order to establish a tentative balance, as Dobrenko notes, between “truth of life” (to avoid charges of “conflictlessness”) and “revolutionary development” (to not engage in “slander.”)⁴⁹ Furthermore, Dobrenko’s analysis of reader responses during the Stalinist era and Jochen Hellbeck’s work on Soviet subjectivity in the 1930s demonstrate that the positive hero, as a model for emulation, resembled a human being enough to inspire millions of citizens who engaged actively with the characters encountered in literary texts.⁵⁰

The process of destalinization and the rapid erosion of the doctrine of socialist realism created dramatic new opportunities for the depiction of human beings in literature. Already at the 1954 Soviet Writers’ Congress, Konstantin Simonov warned against the excessive deification of historical figures in Soviet art: “...great people turned into living monuments, and the work’s educational role in fact was lessened, as people stopped seeing the person in the great person, his human qualities...”⁵¹ New “proses”—*Lieutenant’s*, *Village*, and *Youth*—brought forth new protagonists on the pages of Soviet journals. The diversity of heroes increased dramatically from the Thaw onward as the institution of socialist realism expanded its formal boundaries to encompass an ever-greater diversity of genres.⁵² Despite the waning influence of the positive

⁴⁸ Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 63.

⁴⁹ Evgeny Dobrenko, *A Political Economy of Socialist Realism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 59.

⁵⁰ Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997) and *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). Kharkhordin also points to what he calls “heroic mimesis” as a strategy of Soviet individualization. Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1999), 248-249.

⁵¹ Konstantin Simonov, “Problemy razvitiia prozy,” *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, December 18, 1954.

[“...великие люди превращались в живые монументы, а воспитательная роль произведений на самом деле снижалась, ибо люди перестали видеть в великом человеке человека, его человеческие качества...”]

⁵² For an overview of the shifting critical frame of late socialist realism, see Thomas Lahusen,

hero, the institution of character as a critical category continued to dominate in the Brezhnev era. Discussion of works like Vasilii Belov's *Privychnoe delo* [*A Typical Matter*]⁵³ or Trifonov's *Obmen* [*The Exchange*]⁵⁴ were dominated by back-and-forth deliberations over the suitability of their protagonists and not their formal innovations. This preoccupation with character persisted at a time when the notion of character was under attack in the West, both as a critical concept and within literature. In official publications, the perseverance of the literary hero was an important distinction between Soviet and Western literature, a point of pride in most accounts. At a 1965 Finno-Soviet literary conference, Yuri Trifonov gave a talk on "character in modern literature." Like Ginzburg, he recognized that 20th century man "substantially principally differs from the man of the previous century," and as a result, today's artists are faced with two possible choices: "Some stand for a complete break with classic traditions. Others, on the other hand, insist on the need to develop them." Trifonov's speech is in support of the latter variant, rejecting the *nouveau roman* precisely because of its rejection of character. He reminds his Finnish audience that writers like Camus and Kafka—whose heroes find themselves "on the edge of nonexistence"—are well known to Soviet readers but are not met with the same popularity they enjoy in the West.⁵⁵

Late Soviet writers thus found themselves inhabiting an environment with much richer opportunities for pursuing a mimetic view of character while simultaneously operating in a literary culture where a thematic or didactic expectation for character still reigned. The latter was not merely a vestige of socialist realism but a central aspect of the "classical traditions" to which Trifonov refers—namely, the enduring legacy of Russian critical realism, which sought to provide readers with characters that were simultaneously individual, fully-formed human beings as well as bearers of generalized information as social types. Long before the concept of mimetic character entered Russian academic usage, the concept was expressed quite clearly by Dostoevsky in a statement written in defense of his 1880 Pushkin Speech:

...in artistic literature there are types and there are real individuals, that is, the sober and complete (as much as possible) truth about a person. A type rarely contains a real individual, but a real individual can also be completely typical (Hamlet, for example). Gogol's Sobakevich is only Sobakevich, Manilov is only Manilov, we do not see real people in them, we only see the features of these people that the artist wanted to bring out.⁵⁶

"Socialist Realism in Search of Its Shores: Some Historical Remarks on the 'Historically Open Aesthetic System of the Truthful Representation of Life,'" in *Socialist Realism Without Shores*, ed. Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 5-26.

⁵³ This work has not been translated to English, but the novella's title has been alternatively translated as *That's How it Is*, *Habitual Business*, *Habitual Affair*, *Business as Usual*, etc.

⁵⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *The Exchange & Other Stories*, trans. Ellendea Proffer (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002).

⁵⁵ Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossii, 1985), 60.

⁵⁶ Fedor Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 26: *Dnevnik pisatel'ia 1887--*, 30 vols. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), 312-313.

[“Видите что: в художественной литературе бывают типы и бывают реальные лица, то есть трезвая и полная (по возможности) правда о человеке. Тип редко заключает в себе реальное лицо, но реальное лицо может являться и типичным вполне (Гамлет, например). Собакевич у Гоголя только Собакевич, Манилов только Манилов, реальных людей мы в них не видим, [мы] а видим

Dostoevsky then cites Mironova from Pushkin’s *Kapitanskaia dochka* [*The Captain’s Daughter*]⁵⁷ as an example of a character who is “also a type, a comic one, but a completely real individual, and because of that completely truthful.”⁵⁸ It is no accident that many of the typical attributes of mimetic characters—their psychological depth, their “complexity,” and their socially-derived motivations—are synonymous with realist literature. When Uri Margolin created a set of five “minimal constitutive conditions for narrative individuals,” only realist texts satisfied all five (modernism retained three conditions, and postmodernist works held none at all).⁵⁹ This dissertation does not strictly address the legacy of critical realism in late Soviet literature, but it does examine a diverse array of authors’ engagement with and reevaluation of the conventions of mimetic character inherited from Russian literature’s realist past. Encountering what can only be the ultimate failure of the realist model to adequately convey their contemporaries in words, late Soviet writers turned to novel means of addressing the representation of human beings in literature outside of pure mimetic practices.

1.5 Chapter summaries

The dissertation examines the work of three writers—Yurii Trifonov, Andrei Bitov, and Vasili Belov, a list that is certainly not exhaustive when held up to the multi-decade corpus of late Soviet prose. Before I break down the composition of the rest of the dissertation in greater detail, I must acknowledge that I had initially planned to include a fourth chapter dedicated to the reception of western theories of character among Soviet readers and writers during the Brezhnev era, but the cessation of international travel during the COVID-19 pandemic rendered the archival research necessary for such a chapter impossible. Many other late Soviet writers are also deserving of an investigation of mimetic character—the grotesque family figures of Liudmila Petrushevskaja’s kitchen-table realism, for example, or the documentary prose of a writer like Daniil Granin. It should also be noted that Trifonov, Belov, and Bitov all published in state-owned outlets for much of their careers and participated (albeit not without controversy) in official Soviet literary culture, and a separate chapter concerning underground and emigre Russian-language literature is a future project for consideration. While many of the issues under discussion are common to both the Thaw and the Stagnation eras, the vast majority of the works under discussion fall into the latter period, which I define as spanning from the late-1960s to the mid-1980s. The relationship between the individual and society was certainly a central concern of Thaw-era cultural works. This relationship, however, was considerably less problematic during an era buoyed by the prospect of post-Stalinist reforms and a “return to Leninist values.” This can be seen in the optimism with which Pomerantsev ends a key section in *Ob iskrennosti v literature*: “Then my truth will merge with our common truth.”⁶⁰ The confidence contained in

лишь те черты этих людей, которые хотел выявить художник.”]

⁵⁷ Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin, *The Captain’s Daughter*, trans. Robert Chandler and Elizabeth Chandler, Hesperus Press Classics (London: Hesperus, 2007).

⁵⁸ Fedor Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 26: Dnevnik pisatel’ia 1887.--, 30 vols. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), 312-313.

[“тоже тип, комическое, но вполне реальное лицо, а потому и вполне правдивое.”]

⁵⁹ Uri Margolin, “The What, the When, and the How of Being a Character in Literary Narrative,” *Style* 24, no. 3 (1990): 462.

⁶⁰ [“И тогда моя правда сольётся с нашей общей.”]

Vladimir Pomerantsev, “Ob Iskrennosti v Literature,” *Novii Mir*, no. 12 (1953): 218–45.

this statement is endemic to the Thaw era, and it is only in the Brezhnev era that any latent tension between these “two truths” comes to the forefront, resulting in the mimetic failure this dissertation describes. Late socialism is also notable for the historical turn in culture (as seen in the endless parade of commemorations, jubilees, and period films and novels) and the cooling of both Stalinist and Thaw-era enthusiasm, ceding space from the thematic axis to the mimetic.

Although a much broader array of writers and works deserve consideration, I believe that the three authors of my dissertation nonetheless reflect the diversity of the late Soviet field as well as the universality of the problem of mimetic characterization to its writers, critics, and readers. The first chapter is dedicated to the work of Yurii Trifonov, who came to prominence with the 1949 publication of the socialist realist novel *Studenty* [*Students*]⁶¹ and later became an outstanding figure in the Urban Prose school, which held a magnifying glass up to the lives of the urban Soviet *intelligentsia*. Chapter Two examines the early career of Andrei Bitov, who came out of the Thaw-era Young Prose but quickly exhibited an interest in metaliterary experimentation—his *Pushkinskii dom* [*Pushkin House*],⁶² the final work explored in the chapter, is widely acknowledged as one of the first postmodern novels in Russian literature. Lastly, Vasilii Belov was a standard-bearer of the Village Prose movement, which documented the disappearing life of the Russian village with a mixture of ethnographic detail and premodern temporality. The three authors are united in turn by their engagement with the legacy of 19th-century Russian realist writing and their preoccupation with the ethical, technical, and practical means of depicting individual human beings in their fictional works.

Chapter One, “Yuri Trifonov: *Absence and Insensitivity*” begins with a reexamination of Trifonov’s reputation as a mimetic writer. Critics both in the Soviet era and today commonly view his skill in depicting human personalities and his attention to the realia of late Soviet life as existing separately from the moral and thematic message conveyed by his work. I argue that Trifonov’s dedication to the mimetic serves in itself as an ethical response to the transience of life, most especially in the context of the Soviet historical experience. The chapter’s first three subsections examine in greater detail Trifonov’s working-through of the problems of characterization in texts such as *Obmen, Dom na naberezhnoi* [*The House on the Embankment*],⁶³ and *Starik* [*The Old Man*]⁶⁴. The final subsection introduces the concept of indexical characterization, a novel method of referencing a forever-absent human being that operates along the very boundaries of the mimetic.

In Chapter Two, “Andrei Bitov: This game of ‘who-whom,’ this unreality” I examine the author’s modernistic attempts at reproducing human interiority and the flow of consciousness through a comparative analysis of his early Leningrad stories and Bakhtin’s theories of the relationship between author and hero. I argue that the author’s early protagonists fail to differentiate themselves mimetically precisely because the intense interiority pursued by Bitov does not allow space for aesthetic finalization. An exception to this is his short story “Penelopa,” [“Penelope”] in which the synthetic component of character is emphasized to a greater extent,

⁶¹ Iurii Trifonov, *Students, a Novel*, trans. Ivy Litvinova and Margaret Wettlin (Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. House, 1953).

⁶² Andrei Bitov, *Pushkin House*, trans. Susan Brownsberger, 1st ed (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1987).

⁶³ Iurii Trifonov, *Another Life; The House on the Embankment*, trans. Michael Glenny, 1st. Touchtone ed (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986).

⁶⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *The Old Man*, trans. Jacqueline Edwards and Mitchell Schneider (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

paradoxically creating the separation necessary for a genuinely mimetic hero. The next two sections examine Bitov's further creative evolution away from solipsism in his own version of the Soviet *Bildungsroman*, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* [*Such a Long Childhood*] and the growing use of the synthetic aspect in his meta commentary on the Soviet institution of the positive hero in *Puteshestvie k drugu detstva* [*Journey to a Childhood Friend*]. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Bitov's novel *Pushkinskii dom* and the author's final act of separation from his hero and a renunciation of the act of representation altogether, transferring characterization from the mimetic to the synthetic plane.

The dissertation's final chapter, "Vasilii Belov: To be their intercessor in literature" attempts to uncover how the Village Prose genre, once known for its continuance of the Russian realist tradition, had by the mid-1980s become known for its complete detachment from reality. Rather than attempt to cover the literary movement as a whole, I focus on Vasilii Belov's 1966 novella *Privychnoe delo* and the tension between the mimetic and thematic spheres in order to account for the genre's later trajectory. I begin the chapter with a summary of Gyorgy Lukács' 1936 essay *The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization*, in which Lukács argues that protagonists can both advance a work's central message and simultaneously develop as individualized, mimetic characters through the representation of dialogue, thought, and other mental-verbal processes. Lukács has provided a working model for a literary text in which the mimetic and thematic aspects are not in competition but in fact mutually reinforce each other. In the rest of the chapter I examine just how deeply the representation of a *peasant* subjectivity in written language calls Lukács's theory of "intellectual physiognomy" into question. A brief summary of the figure of the peasant in the Russian literary tradition is included for context, followed by a close reading of Belov's *Privychnoe delo* that focuses on Belov's depiction of the interiority of the novella's celebrated protagonist, Ivan Afrikanovich. Ultimately, I argue that the incompatibility between the mimetic representation of peasant speech and the proper conveyance of the work's thematic or moral themes led to the abandonment of mimetic principles by Belov and other Village Prose writers in favor of the thematic.

When viewed from a distance, each author's work can be broadly associated with one of the three modes of Phelan's model—Trifonov is the most classically "mimetic" writer, Bitov's metatextual play aligns with the synthetic, and the chapter on Belov attempts to account for the dominance of the thematic in his later works. An overarching focus on the mimetic aspect and its failures in late Soviet prose reveals a breakage that only widens across the three chapters: from artistic innovation brought on by the trauma of the past in Trifonov to its ethical displacement in Bitov and its ultimate rejection in Belov's later writings. In the dissertation's conclusion I introduce, as a coda, Mikhail Kuraev's *Kapitan Dikshtein* [Captain Dikshtein]⁶⁵ and briefly discuss the fate of the mimetic aspect in *Perestroika* and post-Soviet literature.

⁶⁵ Mikhail Kuraev, "Captain Dikshtein: A Fantastic Narrative," in *Night Patrol and Other Stories*, trans. Margareta O. Thompson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 9–140.

Chapter One

Yuri Trifonov: *Absence and Insensitivity*

Introduction

Reflecting on the enduring popularity of Yuri Trifonov's novella *Dom na naberezhnoi* in 2014, writer and literary critic Dmitri Bykov singled out the author's mimetic prowess as the work's most immediately obvious attraction:

Чудо трифоновского стиля, его невероятная плотность, которая и есть тот самый «мотор» прозы, о необходимости которого он не уставал напоминать, — в «Доме на набережной» нагляднее всего, и мастерство это, хоть и не кричит о себе, так поражает на уровне жидковатой русской прозы второй половины XX века, что у читателя попросту нет времени задуматься о втором и третьем слое, о подтексте, о предмете авторской озабоченности. Он слишком поглощен узнаванием — и это узнавание касается не только реалий, но и типажей, жестов, настроений: ведь все как у нас!¹

The Trifonovian text captivates the reader with a power that is mimetic in the Aristotelian sense: in *Poetics*, the origins of poetry are attributed to mankind's "universal pleasure in imitations," the "most accurate possible images of objects..."² The perceived vividness of Trifonov's depictions was remarked upon throughout his long literary career: a 1951 review of his debut novel *Studenty* on the pages of *Pravda* praised his: "уменье воссоздать живой образ коллектива в разнообразии запоминающихся характеров."³ A reader of his Thaw-era novel *Utolenie zhazhdy* [*The Quenching of Thirst*]⁴ described the vividly evocative nature of his prose in 1965: "И когда читаешь страницы, посвященные труду, осязаешь, чувствуешь этот будто расплавленный воздух и раскаленное солнце, знойные ветры и песок, песок. Честное слово, кажется иногда, что он у тебя на зубах хрустит... И видишь людей, веришь их поступкам, их словам, силе их чувств."⁵ John Updike offered measured praise for Trifonov in a 1978 review: the three novellas that made up his "Moscow cycle" "hold up the mirror to Trifonov's chosen sector of life in the Soviet Union with a persuasive clarity and melancholy."⁶ Critical on the whole of Trifonov's work, Boris Sakharov allowed for the "радость узнавания" triggered by the author's prose: "узнавания чрезвычайно знакомых, каждый день встречающихся жизненных ситуаций и характеров."⁷

¹ Dmitrii Bykov, "Vremia Shulepy," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 5 (2014): 175–77.

² Aristoteles and Malcolm Heath, *Poetics* (London [etc.: Penguin Books, 1996), 6.

³ Lev Iakimenko, "Povest' o studentakh," *Pravda*, January 8, 1951, 3.

⁴ Iurii Trifonov, "Thirst Aquenched," trans. Ralph Parker, *Soviet Literature*, no. 1 (1964): 3–118.

(Abridged translation)

⁵ N. Chernikova, "Yu. Trifonov: Roman 'Utolenie zhazhdy,'" *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 6, 1965, 3.

⁶ John Updike, *Hugging the Shore: Essays and Criticism* (Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2013), 504.

⁷ Vsevolod Ivanovich Sakharov, *Obnovliaiushchiisia mir: zametki o tekushchei literature* (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1980), 177–178.

For Bykov, however, the realism⁸ of a Trifonov text is its first, immediate pleasure, but it is not *primary*: “Узнавание в “Доме на набережной”—главное читательское занятие, и не у всякого хватает сил нырнуть глубже.”⁹ It is only by looking *past* or *under* the reflective surface of the text that the true meaning can be obtained. The significance of *Dom na naberezhnoi*—and for Bykov, the work literally signifies, it is a *symbol*—resides in its broadly national and historical context, a text-edifice that conveys the grandeur and terror of the entire Soviet experience. In criticism, Trifonov’s mimetic talent—the “complex” characters, realia, paratactical sentences—are recognized as representing some aspect of reality, but these observations are ultimately in service to another, higher message. To paraphrase Phelan, these *mimetic* instances—no matter how masterfully they are drawn—are ultimately meant to be converted by the reader into a *thematic* statement or observation. In a 1990 article, Thomas Seifrid noted that Trifonov’s reputation on both sides of the Iron Curtain had “come to rest principally on the candor with which his works, particularly those of his Moscow cycle, examine ethical themes.”¹⁰ As Trifonov’s career progressed, the ethical (and moral) aspect of his works were increasingly examined diachronically within their historical contexts: for Soviet critics, this was the perceived moral degeneration of contemporary society from the great ideals and feats of the Revolution and the Great Patriotic War to the fetid depths of petty *meshchanstvo*, while critics located outside of the Soviet Union—both temporally and geographically—explore the historical philosophy of Trifonov’s works and particularly his use of Aesopian language to address the lacunae surrounding the traumatic events of the first half of the 20th century and their aftereffects on its survivors.¹¹

Trifonov himself spoke many times about literature’s role in addressing historical and ethical issues, and while I do not wish to deny the validity of any of the interpretations of Trifonov’s works cited above, I believe that the discussion and interpretation of his works is plagued by a continuous devaluation of the mimetic function within them, despite the universal recognition of the author’s mimetic tendencies. For Trifonov, the reproduction of “reality” is not incidental to the text’s greater meaning, but instead largely constitutes it. The representation and recognition (узнавание) of other human beings carries historical and moral weight. As literary scholars (or at least “discerning” readers) we often resist the association of fictional characters with real persons. We have a responsibility before a text to attempt to enter its mimetic illusion and serve, as Adam Zachary Newton writes, as “witnesses or even interlocutors before we deflect risk and

⁸ This “realism” falls under the category of what Roman Jakobson calls “meaning B” in his essay *On Realism in Art*: “A work may be called realistic if I, the person judging it, perceive it as true to life.” Roman Jakobson, “On Realism in Art,” *Language in Literature*, 1987, 20.

⁹ Dmitrii Bykov, “Vremia Shulepy,” *Druzhba narodov*, no. 5 (2014): 175–77.

¹⁰ Thomas Seifrid, “Trifonov’s Dom Na Naberezhnoi and the Fortunes of Aesopian Speech,” *Slavic Review* 49, no. 4 (1990): 611.

¹¹ For example, Seifrid (1990), Polly Jones, “Iurii Trifonov’s Fireglow and the ‘Mnemonic Communities’ of the Brezhnev Era,” *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 54, no. 1/2 (2013): 47–72., David C. Gillespie, “Time, History, and the Individual in the Works of Yuri Trifonov,” *The Modern Language Review* 83, no. 2 (1988): 375–95., Kevin Platt, “Yuri Trifonov’s The House on the Embankment and Late Soviet Memory of Stalinist Violence: Disavowal and Social Discipline,” *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, no. 155 (January 2019): 229–45., Stiliana Milkova, “Reading Games/Games of Reading: Iurii Trifonov’s House on the Embankment and Forms of Play beyond Samizdat,” *Poetics Today* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2009), and Yurii Leving, “Vlast’ i slast’ (‘ Dom Na Naberezhnoi’ Iu.V. Trifonova),” *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, no. 75 (October 2005): 258–90.

find security in the role of “readers.”¹² We should hesitate before performing this reflexive distancing of character from person with Trifonov, however, if only because he himself constantly questions this very division:

Это не секрет, что герой, случается, ставит в тупик не только читателя, но и автора. Начинает вести себя не совсем так, как от него ожидаешь. А в жизни, с живыми людьми такого не бывает? Только живой человек в отличие от героя книги не стоит перед необходимостью беспрестанно доказывать свою жизненность, достоверность.¹³

Мы легко говорим о том или другом человеке в жизни, как и об образе в литературе, что он развратен или декадент, или асоциален. Но и у плохих людей должно быть право жить, асоциальным тоже нужно найти место в обществе. Так и в литературе.¹⁴

This argument was made most forcibly in an article published in a 1972 issue of *Voprosy literary* discussing Trifonov’s Moscow cycle, in which the author attempted to defend his works against charges of social myopia and an alarming lack of positive heroes for emulation. Trifonov bristles at the vulgar sociology that reduces his characters to mere exemplars of the urban intelligentsia and criticizes the critics for subjecting *Obmen*’s Lena to such a categorical evaluation: “О живом человеке нельзя, о литературном человеке—можно. Вот этого я не понимаю.”¹⁵ Trifonov is asking for his characters to be read almost exclusively mimetically, to apply the same rights and expectations to “Lena” as we would to a real human being. Although this demand of Trifonov’s is impossible to fulfill, my reading of his works in this chapter seeks to foreground the mimetic aspect, not dismiss it. James Phelan’s conception of the mimetic encompasses both “that component of character directed to its imitation of a possible person” and “that component of fictional narrative concerned with imitating the world beyond the fiction, what we typically call ‘reality.’”¹⁶ How is the relationship between these two concepts—that of an artistic model of a universe and a referencing of the world existing outside of it—negotiated within the Trifonovian text? What are the ethical responsibilities and rewards for the representation of other human beings in his writing, and how is this relationship altered by the historical and biographical circumstances under which these texts were created?

The chapter is divided into four subsections. I open with an examination of minor characters across Trifonov’s works, noting the peculiar ways in which both protagonists and the text itself recognizes the discrepancy between the character’s space within the narrative itself and their presence within the consciousnesses of the main characters. Subsections two and three explore the composition and significance of traits in characterization, particularly in Trifonov’s novellas *Dom na naberezhnoi* and *Starik*. The second section addresses historical determinacy and internal change, while the third section turns to the ethical problems of characterization and

¹² Adam Zachary Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge (Mass.); London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 65.

¹³ Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiiia, 1985), 285.

¹⁴ Iurii Trifonov, “Iz Dnevnikov i Rabochikh Tetradei. Prodolzhenie. Publikatsiia i Kommentarii Ol’gi Trifonovoi,” *Druzhba Narodov*, no. 2 (1999).

¹⁵ Iurii Trifonov, “Vybirat’, reshat’sia, zhertvovat’,” *Voprosy literary*, no. 2 (1972): 63.

¹⁶ Matthew Clark and James Phelan, *Debating Rhetorical Narratology: On the Synthetic, Mimetic, and Thematic Aspects of Narrative* (Ohio State University Press, 2020), 53.

allegorization. The last section turns to the use and depiction of indexical objects in Trifonov's novellas and finally to the limits of mimetic representation and the technique of "indexical characterization" in *Starik* and *Drugaiia zhizn'* [*Another Life*].¹⁷

1.1 Acquaintances, minor characters, and giving account

“Попросили зайти в учебную часть. Там был такой Друзяев, недавно назначенный, Глебов знал его мало. Расспрашивал о дипломе, что да как.”¹⁸ With these words begins the moral dilemma that dominates the second half of *Dom na naberezhnoi*. The narrator's presentation of Druziaev corresponds to what Glebov would have known on that November day—a few scattered biographical facts overheard from colleagues—but shortly after their first meeting concludes, the reader is already given Druziaev's entire fate in a single paragraph:

И Друзяев, так смело и хитроумно затеявший этот дальний подкоп под крепость, огороженную мощной стеной, не догадывался, что ровно через два года он, вышибленный отовсюду и сраженный insultом, будет сидеть в кресле у окна во двор и, трясая скрюченными руками, мыком объяснять жене, что хотел бы закурить сигарету. А еще через год, будучи аспирантом, Глебов прочтет в газете маленькие объявления: “...с глубокими прискорбием... после тяжелой и продолжительной...” Как рассказывали, на похоронах Друзяева присутствовали человек восемь, все были возбуждены недавно прошедшими другими похоронами, дело происходило в марте, но даже и не в том суть: Друзяев исчез стремительно, как и возник. А возник он будто только затем, чтобы выполнить какую-то быстротечную миссию. Налетел, выполнил и исчез.¹⁹

A similar moment occurs in Trifonov's later novella *Vremia i mesto* [*Time and Place*], in which the writer Antipov must also make a decision at the trial of a literary has-been, Dvoynikov. The trial is resolved after a long series of deliberations by Antipov, and after the matter is concluded, he reflects: “Ни Двойникова, ни Самодурову, ни старшего Саясова с автоматическими скулами Антипов никогда больше не видел и ничего не слышал о них. И ему показалось, что вся эта история представляла интерес лишь для одного человека—для него самого.”²⁰ Druziaev and Dvoynikov's status as minor characters have somehow become apparent to Glebov and Antipov, protagonists of their respective texts; they have been reduced from persons to *actants*, mere functions within the text, and seem to exist solely to advance the narrative of the latter's lives forward. For the reader, on some level, this is a kind of baring of the device: characters disappear from the pages all the time, and no one—least of all the protagonists—thinks anything of it. At the same time, paradoxically, their realization not only brings our attention to minor characters' flatness but also suggests that such a state is somehow

¹⁷ Iurii Trifonov, *Another Life; The House on the Embankment*, trans. Michael Glenny, 1st. Touchtone ed (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986).

¹⁸ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 264.

¹⁹ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 266.

²⁰ Trifonov, Iurii. *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom*. Slovo, 1999, p. 30

an *aberration* within the protagonists' lives as they know them, for the realization belongs to them, and not the text.

The issue of minor characters has received renewed interest in recent decades, in no small part due to Alex Woloch's 2004 book *The One vs. the Many*, which conceptualizes literary characters in terms of *character-space*, "that particular and charged encounter between an individual human personality and a determined space and position within the narrative as a whole" and the *character-system*: "the arrangement of multiple and differentiated character-spaces [...] into a united narrative structure."²¹ Woloch applies these concepts to the French and British 19th century realist novel, arguing that the "tension that narrative continually elicits between an individual who claims our interest and a fictional totality that forces this individual out of, or beneath the discursive world"²² reflects the era's liberal democratic aspirations alongside rapidly rising economic inequality. Referencing Marx's theories of utilization and alienation, Woloch argues that minor characters are "the proletariat of the novel."²³ Glebov and Antipov's realizations quoted above are a particularly cogent illustration of the tension that Woloch speaks of, but his accounting for the underlying economic structure of a given text is complicated by Trifonov for several reasons. Firstly, the works discussed above are *novellas*, not novels, and thus are not obligated or do not strive to depict a society in its totality, a commonly ascribed feature of the novel form.²⁴ With the appearance of his Moscow novellas, Trifonov was accused of depicting too limited a slice of Soviet society in his works, namely the urban intelligentsia. This narrow gaze was incredibly penetrating, likened to a microscope or x-ray vision, but also overly cramped, as can be seen in the titles to some of his critical press: "В замкнутом мирке," "Измерения малого мира," "Герой или 'обломок целого?'"²⁵ The majority of Trifonov's novellas do contain at least one character of a peasant background, who is typically both beloved by all and completely opaque to both narrator and hero. To a Soviet critic of moralistic bent like Lev Anninskii, their salt-of-the-earth presence within Trifonov's texts is clearly welcome:

²¹ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003), 13.

²² Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003), 38.

²³ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003), 27.

²⁴ Interestingly, the character system of Trifonov's 400-page historical novel *Neterpenie* is in fact sprawling and quite comprehensive: In an interview with *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Trifonov boasted: "Я намеренно перегрузил книгу фамилиями людей, не связанных плотно с сюжетом, ибо мне хотелось достигнуть максимальной исторической достоверности." in *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiia, 1985), 235.

For David Gillespie, Trifonov's decision detracted from the novel's aesthetic value: "Also, at times the plethora of characters and names is overwhelming, the reader is easily lost as he tries to keep up with and identify various characters and their aliases, and with the exception of well-drawn characters such as Zheliabov, Perovskaia and Kletochnikov, others come across more as types, only thinly sketched and more often than not mere cannon fodder." In *Iurii Trifonov: Unity through Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 138.

²⁵ Yurii Andreev, "V Zamknutom Mirke," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 10 (March 3, 1971): 5; Grigorii Brovman, "Izmereniia Malogo Mira," *Sovetskaia literatura*, no. 10 (March 8, 1972): 5; Aleksandr Goraovskii, "Geroi Ili 'Oblomok Tselogo?'," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 36 (September 2, 1981): 4.

Бабушка Глебова. Прочная, народная, устойчивая душа, далекая от высокоумных проблем, погруженная в повседневные хозяйственные заботы. К этому варианту у Трифонова давняя тяга, и рядом с безумными от страха или азарта интеллектуалами у него часто присутствует такая простая и прочная, “не участвующая” в их делах крестьянка... Косноязычная домработница Нюра из “Предварительных итогов”; хозяйка дачи тетя Паша из “Другой жизни”; и вот—баба Нила из “Дома на набережной”, старая, изработанная, все отдавшая ближним, и даже на смертном орде пытающаяся как-то помочь Глебову, облегчить ему душу, спасти внука.²⁶

Viewed thusly, Baba Nila, no matter how respected, fits Woloch’s paradigm quite well: within the text, she gives her labor to others without protest, and her death—the end of her individuality, a most critical moment of her own life—is offered up to the protagonist for the advancement of the narrative, *his* narrative. If we consider Baba Nila’s *character-space*, however, a strange moment in the text draws our attention: Baba Nila begins their last encounter by asking Glebov to speak—“Люблю слышать о ваших делах”—and Glebov obliges, laying out his potential options for the critical meeting, none of which are acceptable. But before she gives her critical advice to Glebov—“Как оно выйдет само, так и правильно”²⁷—she begins to speak herself: “Баба Нила вдруг сама пускалась рассказывать о том, что вспоминалось давеча. А вспоминалось ей подробно, хорошо. И все про далекое...”²⁸ Her story begins with the familiar and wholly appropriate topic of lineage: There was Grandpa Nikolai, a merchant by profession... These thoughts quickly lose all semblance of narrative, historical or otherwise, and dissipate into scattered images of sweets bought on the street, and finally little trays of caramels brought back from Moscow. The scenes brought before the reader have no real value to Glebov, nor are they relevant to the text on a structural or thematic level. For a brief moment, shortly before her death, Nila’s character-space swells outward, presenting something which is significant *to her and no one else*, and the relationship between major and minor character is, if only slightly and briefly, made more balanced: “Так рассказывали друг другу—Глебов бабе Ниле, она ему,—и всем казалось, что старушке полегчало. Она даже совет дала...”²⁹

Characters like Baba Nila or Aunt Pasha make up the minority of characters, minor or otherwise, in Trifonov’s texts, centered as they are around the sprawling city of Moscow. Trifonov, after all, once declared the hero of his novellas to simply be *gorozhane*.³⁰ But Trifonov’s beloved Moscow does not generate a character network that matches its urban sprawl; unlike Bely’s *Petersburg* or Bulgakov’s *Master i Margarita* [*The Master and Margarita*]³¹, masses and crowd scenes are relatively rare in Trifonov’s works. The assemblage of characters, especially in his later works, is instead motivated by the principle, for lack of a better word, of *acquaintance*:

²⁶ Lev Anninskii, “Ochishchenie proshlym,” *Don*, no. 2 (1977): 159.

²⁷ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 291.

²⁸ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 291.

²⁹ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 291.

³⁰ Iurii Trifonov, “Vybirat’, reshat’sia, zhertvovat’,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 2 (1972): 63.

³¹ Iurii Trifonov, *Disappearance*, trans. David Lowe (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1992).

“Я стараюсь писать о людях, которых я хорошо, близко знаю, часто встречаю.”³²

“Это не рабочие и не крестьяне, не элита. Это служащие, работники науки, гуманитарии, инженеры, соседи по домам и дачам, просто знакомые.”³³

“Так называемые произведения «на моральную тему» — это произведения о простой, неприкрашенной, реальной жизни. С осуждением чего-то дурного, с симпатией к хорошему. С картинами, подробными описаниями, со стремлением изобразить знакомых—живых—людей.”³⁴

In his urban stories, Trifonov’s characters are linked almost exclusively by blood, marriage, or profession. The late Soviet period was marked as a whole by an expanding private sphere that existed outside and alongside the state, when, in Anna Rotkirch’s words, “informal networks expanded in full bloom, and it seems that the frontiers between home and workplace became relevantly more permeable during this time.”³⁵ Despite their reputation as misanthropes and narcissists, the immediate world of acquaintances and relatives is completely inescapable for Trifonov’s protagonists, and the sometimes painful bonds that link them are an inseparable aspect of any Trifonovian text. The strength of these connections is such that only under the most terrible conditions will they start to waver: in Trifonov’s last novella *Ischeznovenie* [*The Disappearance*], in a scene set at the height of the Terror, Nikolai Grigorievich reflects on a certain undeniable change that has come over his life:

Он замечал, как за последние годы гас интерес к людям, даже некогда близким. Круг становился все уже. Когда-то море людей окружало его, годы и города подполья, ссылок, войны бросали навстречу сотни редкостно прекрасных людей, которые на лету становились друзьями, но вот уже нет никого — они-то есть, но необходимость дружбы исчезла, — никого, кроме Давида, Мишки, еще двух или трех. И осталась в круге Лиза с детьми. Поэтому Маша, прилетевшая издалека, как воспоминание, не пробудила ничего, кроме деловых мыслей и привычной, грызущей время от времени где-то в середине груди, под сердцем, тяжести.³⁶

Masha is an old acquaintance who has come to Moscow to ask for Nikolai Grigorievich’s help: “Маша Полубоярлова существовала кратко, но грозно и неизгладимо в жизни Николая Григорьевича.”³⁷ Her presence in the text is as equally short as Druziaev’s in *Dom na naberezhnoi*, but the disruption she brings is of an opposite tendency: whereas Druziaev’s presence in Glebov’s life seems incommensurate to his role in the narrative in which he appears, Masha’s overall effect on the story of *Ischeznovenie* is minimal compared to the impression she has left on Nikolai Grigorievich’s memory. Within the narrational present, she serves only as a

³² Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossii, 1985), 270.

³³ Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossii, 1985), 302.

³⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossii, 1985), 104.

³⁵ Quoted in Elena Zdravomyslova and Viktor Voronkov, “The Informal Public in Soviet Society: Double Morality at Work,” *Social Research* 69, no. 1 (2002): 55.

³⁶ Iurii Trifonov, *Otblesk Kostra; Ischeznovenie: Dokumental’naia Povest’, Roman*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1988), 285-286.

³⁷ Iurii Trifonov, *Otblesk Kostra; Ischeznovenie: Dokumental’naia Povest’, Roman*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1988), 280.

litmus test for Nikolai Grigorievitch's character, his willingness to risk on her behalf. In addition, as a figure from his past, she functions as material by which the reader can more clearly access a protagonist's interior. When critics speak of Trifonov's "realistic" or "lifelike" characters, they are most often speaking of his protagonists and the psychological interiority with which they are related. An early article by Evgenii Dobrenko recognized that the "inner movement" of Trifonov's later prose was generated not by the events related in the text but the hero's experiencing of them.³⁸ Lidia Ginzburg credits Tolstoi with innovating the objectivization or aestheticization of cognitive processes. By depicting the processes of experiencing life—"life in general"—Tolstoi was able to create an "inimitable illusion of authenticity, of 'real life,' that captivated and that still captivates his readers."³⁹ Trifonov, who greatly admired Tolstoi, strove to recreate these processes.⁴⁰ Many of the minor characters in Trifonov, like Masha, occupy a great deal more space within the consciousness of the fictional protagonist than the physical fictional world which they ostensibly share.

Trifonov's character system, built as it is along the principle of acquaintance, offers little hope for minor characters to suddenly—as Baba Nila does—take up space, to speak for themselves. They are quite often peripheral, as the protagonist of *Drugaiia zhizn'* reflects:

Люди в долгой жизни окружают нас какими-то скоплениями, друзьями: внезапно кристаллизуются и внезапно пропадают, подчиняясь неясным законам. Когда-то были друзья юности вроде Влада, студенческие компании,—сгинули без следа; потом Сущевская, художники, старики, пьянчужки, Валерка Васин с Зикой,—тоже канули в воду; потом люди из музея, те, другие, Илья Владимирович,—точно не было никогда!⁴¹

At the same time, suspended as they are in a model of human cognition, these literary characters are understood by the protagonists precisely as *human beings*: they are not merely an actant, a formalist dot on the timeline of the hero's plotted story, but are perceived as having their own biographies. Ksenofont Fedorovich exists in *Dolgoe proshchanie* [*The Long Farewell*]⁴² to deliver ten words of reported speech, and then sixteen more are granted to relate his fate: "Ксенофонт Федорович был отличный человек. Лялю любил, как дочь. Умер, бедный, от сердечного приступа: пил много."⁴³ In *Drugaiia zhizn'*, a "человечек с оливковым лицом" appears and exits within a single paragraph, but his disappearance is noted: "Оливковый человечек куда-то исчез, пропал навсегда."⁴⁴ These details are, to paraphrase Barthes' *Reality Effect*, "irrelevant to the narrative structure" of the texts, but are nonetheless justified by the object of representation—the flowing consciousness of Olga Vasil'evna,

³⁸ E. A. Dobrenko, "Siuzhet Kak Vnutrennee Dvizhenie" v Pozdnei Proze Iu. Trifonova," *Voprosy Russkoi Literatury*, no. 1 (1987): 45.

³⁹ Lidija Jakovlevna Ginzburg and Judson Rosengrant, *On Psychological Prose* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 246.

⁴⁰ See, for example, his 1978 article "Tolstoi Lev Nikolaevich" in *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossia, 1985), 27-37.

⁴¹ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaiia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 317.

⁴² Iurii Trifonov, *The Long Goodbye: Three Novellas*, trans. Ellendea Proffer and Helen P. Burlingame (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

⁴³ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaiia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 26.

⁴⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaiia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 224.

translated into prose.⁴⁵ As a side effect, however, the reality of these characters to the protagonists is *made apparent* to the reader by the inclusion of these details, the knowledge or lack thereof of their fates. Because Trifonov's narratives so often occur across multiple decades and in the mode of *recollection*, their reality is often shot through with multiple temporalities—the time being recollected and the time of recollecting—producing an effect not unlike that which Barthes attributes to the photographic image in *Camera Lucida*, a “superimposition of reality and the past.”⁴⁶ “*This will be and this has been*”: the “anterior future”⁴⁷ of the photograph which Barthes describes is most striking in a work like *Starik*, filled with revolutionary violence. Here is the sole presentation of the character named Mokeich: “Бычин вскакивает. «Кто пустил?» — «Да ваш караульный спит...» Караульный, старый казачишко Мокейч — вскоре зарубили филипповцы,— дремлет на крыльце.”⁴⁸ The same interest is shown even when their fate is not known. Maria Adolf'ovna is a minor character in the recollections of a minor character—Aleksandr Martynovich, through whom the novella is focalized for a brief interlude. Still, even she is given her due: “И, конечно, [она] умерла скоро, ибо была на пороге последнего исчезновения. Впрочем, неведомо! Может, умерла и не скоро, а может, жива до сей поры, ей девяносто семь лет, и она все еще плетет вечерами на своей восьмигранной рамке шерстяные салфетки...”⁴⁹ The other people who litter the memory-landscape of Trifonov's heroes exist in a very different grammatical tense than the preterite which defines, to return to a much earlier work of Barthes's, the quintessentially realist novel. The narrator of that mode “has the power to do away with the opacity and the solitude of the existences which made it up,”⁵⁰ but Trifonov's heroes, operating on the order of *personal acquaintance*, dare not dismiss their minor characters so lightly.

The minor characters that inhabit Trifonov's texts never attempt, unlike in Dostoevsky or Dickens, to become major, or to “get out of hand,” “kick the book to pieces,” in E.M. Forster's words.⁵¹ Degree of focalization is a common criterion for the division of major and minor characters, and in Trifonov's works this is typically restricted to one or two protagonists only. But even if minor characters rarely appear outside of the protagonists' consciousnesses, they are nonetheless endowed with a respect that pure narrative rarely grants them: they are *given account*; time and time again, their fates are remarked upon regardless of their actual character-space. Their mimetic force comes not from their description (in the form of portraiture) or their actions within the text (their *roles*) but rather from their mere *presence*, or lack thereof, and the importance attached to it.

1.2 “И был он сам, непохожий на себя”: Historical pressure in *Dom na naberezhnoi*

⁴⁵ Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect,” in *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1989), 145.

⁴⁶ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 76.

⁴⁷ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 96.

⁴⁸ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 63.

⁴⁹ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 112.

⁵⁰ Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero, and Elements of Semiology* (London: J. Cape, 1984), 28.

⁵¹ E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 66-67.

In *O literaturnom geroe*, Lidiia Ginzburg traces the increasing complexity of the literary hero from *mask* to *type* to the realist *kharakter* of the 19th-century sociopsychological novel, which consists of an “индивидуальное сочетание новых признаков,” “динамическая, многомерная система; в ней существенны уже не сами по себе свойства, которые можно перечислить, но отношение между ними. Характер—это отношение между признаками.”⁵² This conception is quite similar to that offered by Trifonov in the aforementioned defense of his Moscow novellas on the pages of *Voprosy literatury*: “меня интересуют характеры. А каждый характер - уникальность, единственность, неповторимое сочетание черт и черточек.”⁵³ It is the multiplicity of characteristics that each *kharakter* possesses in both Ginzburg’s and Trifonov’s phrasing which guarantees them at least a partial claim for their “roundness,” to use the classic terminology of E.M. Forster⁵⁴. The “complexity” of Trifonovian heroes in this sense is widely acknowledged in criticism⁵⁵; Natal’ia Ivanova locates this feature in the character system of Trifonov’s earliest novel, the socialist realist *Studenty*, a landscape inhospitable to “round” characters as any other:

Герои “Студентов” в момент после публикации повести были расставлены критикой по традиционному ранжиру: Белов—положительный, Палавин—отрицательный. [...] Но при внимательном чтении вдруг обнаруживаются неучтенные, видимо, тогда молодым прозаиком моменты, случайно проскочившие черточки: Вадим—бездарен, а не только трудолюбив, да и завистлив; Сергей—обаятелен, а не только морально нечистоплотен и оторвался от коллектива. Обнаруживается некоторая половинчатость, неустойчивость героев, неожиданная [...] их сложность.⁵⁶

The complex of traits that Ginzburg calls *kharakter* (which is separate and more discrete than her use of the term *literaturnyi geroi*) did not strictly arise with 19th-century realism but is nonetheless closely associated with it. Central to Ginzburg’s understanding of realism is the concept of *обусловенность* and a vision of man as “historically, socially, biologically determined.”⁵⁷ Traits can be drawn from a wide variety of sources, but the total sum of traits derived from the text are usually governed and ordered by a dominating principle or system.⁵⁸ Examining Trifonov’s characters in this manner—character-as-systems, and not character systems—all three of the basic categories offered by Ginzburg would seem to be applicable. Biological principles are most visible in the form of *heredity*, as illustrated in the successive generations of families often counterposed against one another in many of his works, and the great importance of lineage to characters such as Rebrov from *Dolgoe proshchanie* and Sergei in

⁵² Lidiia Ginzburg, *O literaturnom geroe* (Leningrad: Sov. pisatel’, Leningr. otd-nie, 1979), 124-125. Ginzburg’s conception of character as a system made up of traits is fully in line with various “Western” theories of character put forth in the 1960s-1980s by scholars such as Roland Barthes, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Mieke Bal, Seymour Chatman, etc.

⁵³ Iurii Trifonov, “Vybirat’, reshat’sia, zhertvovat’,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 2 (1972): 62–65.

⁵⁴ E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 67-78.

⁵⁵ A 1986 article by Stewart Paton, for example, characterized Trifonov as “a specialist in the varying shades of grey.” “The Hero of His Time,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 64, no. 4 (1986): 506.

⁵⁶ Natal’ia Ivanova, *Proza Iurii Trifonova* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1984), 17.

⁵⁷ Lidiia Ginzburg, *Literatura v poiskakh real’nosti* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1987), 8.

⁵⁸ Lidiia Ginzburg, *O literaturnom geroe* (Leningrad: Sov. pisatel’, Leningr. otd-nie, 1979), 90.

Drugaia zhizn'.⁵⁹ For the critics—largely Soviet—who detected the taste of naturalism and remnants of the *fiziologicheskii ocherk* in Trifonov's work, the makeup and conduct of each character was conditioned *socially*, determined primarily by their membership to a specific *sloi* of the urban intelligentsia which was commonly viewed as a modern manifestation of the social category of the *meshchanstvo*. Character traits conditioned from social or historical criteria are often interrelated and are only partially separable. A 1979 article by V. Pertsovskii, like many others of the time, approached Trifonov's characters as exemplars of the moral degeneration of the Soviet intelligentsia. He wished to remind his fellow critics, however, that figures such as Smolianov or Glebov must be understood within their specific historical context:

Естественно, однако, предположить, что "мелкобуржуазная психология" в обществе, которое уже более 60 лет идет по социалистическому пути, - это совсем не то, что было в конце прошлого и в начале нынешнего века, "во времена Горького и Чехова"... Суть проблемы, по всей вероятности, заключается в том, что общественный и нравственный конфликт внутри современного развитого социалистического общества не может не быть качественно иным, чем в первые десятилетия после Октября. Его отличительные черты сегодня иные по сравнению с 20-30-ми годами.⁶⁰

Outside of Soviet criticism, Trifonov's protagonists are predominantly understood historically, especially since the mid-1980s. Ginzburg remarked that the traits of Turgenev's Rudin "have no independent existence outside his historical function as a Russian circle ideologue of the 1830s,"⁶¹ and for a contemporary scholar like Kevin Platt, for example, both Glebov's actions and cognitive processes are conditioned by his historical existence as a late Soviet survivor of Stalinist mass terror.⁶² Some forty-odd years separate the publication of *Dom na naberezhnoi* and Platt's insightful article, and it is unsurprising that a historicized reading of Trifonov's characters would become more prevalent with each passing decade. But this historical aspect is not just a matter of critical reorientation; Trifonov himself stated several times his deep commitment to depicting the changes wrought by time: "Время—категория сложная. Изменяясь само, оно изменяет человека, даже деформирует иногда. Вот в "Обмене", например, помните, как время изменило Дмитриева, главного героя повести, человека вроде бы порядочного, доброго?"⁶³ The image of man permanently altered and perhaps even marred by time appears much earlier in Trifonov's prose. In 1965's *Utolenie zhazdy*, the narrator

⁵⁹ In *Drugaia zhizn'*: "Он говорил что-то путаное насчет своих собственных предков, беглых крестьян и раскольников, от которых тянулась ветвь к пензенскому попу-расстриге, а от него к саратовским поселенцам, жившим коммуной, и к учителю в туринской болотной глуши, давшему жизнь будущему петербургскому студенту, жаждавшему перемен и справедливости,—во всех них клекотало и пенилось н е с о г л а с и е... Тут было что-то не истребимое ничем, ни рубкой, ни поркой, ни столетиями, заложенное в генетическом стволе..." *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 303.

⁶⁰ V Pertsovskii, "Pokoriaias' techeniu," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 4 (1979): 11.

⁶¹ Lidia Ginzburg and Judson Rosengrant, *On Psychological Prose* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 241

⁶² Kevin Platt, "Yuri Trifonov's The House on the Embankment and Late Soviet Memory of Stalinist Violence: Disavowal and Social Discipline," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, no. 155 (January 2019): 229–45.

⁶³ Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiia, 1985), 293–294.

silently observes a nocturnal landscape and remarks that the true measure of time's passing is not the material world, but human beings:

Помолчав, я говорю, что мне никогда не удавалось взволноваться при виде старых камней и ощутить нечто торжественное, вроде движения веков, или движения лет, или даже просто движения времени. Но зато я ощущаю это при виде людей. При виде некоторых я вижу годы, десятилетия и даже иногда века. [...] Мой отец всю жизнь пронес на себе печать семнадцатого года. А есть люди конца двадцатых годов, середины тридцатых, и люди начала войны, и люди конца войны, и они, как и мой отец, остаются такими до конца своих жизней. Я ненавижу некоторых оттого, что читаю у них на лбу ненавистный мне год, тридцать седьмой, а они, может, и рады были бы измениться, да не могут, не могут! Время испекло их в своей духовке, как пирожки.⁶⁴

Lipovetskii and Leiderman have noted that the last line quoted above echoes—if somewhat ironically—Erenburg's well-known phrase “Люди шли в плавку, как руда.” But if *Utolenie zhazhdy* does still contain elements of the production novel, especially in the “transformation” or “reforging” of certain characters within the text, the phenomena described above does not resemble the typical socialist realist progression from spontaneity to consciousness, but instead the arrested development of serious historical trauma.⁶⁵ Irina Paperno defines historical self-consciousness as “the sense of self derived from the coincidence of personal life and world history,”⁶⁶ and for the members of the 19th Russian intelligentsia, these processes of alignment and recognition with a perceived historical moment and future trajectory represented an extremely powerful and often productive means for fashioning one's identity. The inherent violence in Trifonov's imagery, of deformation and irreversible branding—points to the challenge facing historically-derived models of selfhood, literary or otherwise, in the second half of the 20th century—no longer the actualization of self via history, as in Turgenev's time, but a self or human identity that is itself threatened to be eclipsed or destroyed entirely by the forces of history.

In a talk given at a 1965 Finno-Soviet literary conference—the same year that *Utolenie zhazhdy* was published—Trifonov names this very challenge:

И человек XX столетия существенно, принципиально отличается от человека предшествующего столетия. Люди XX столетия прошли через две мировые войны. Они пережили величайшие революционные потрясения. Люди нашего времени заняты таким всеобщим делом, как предотвращение новой военной катастрофы. [...] В своем обобщенном виде человек XX столетия и является персонажем всей мировой современной литературы.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *Utolenie zhazhdy* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 330-331.

⁶⁵ N Leiderman and M.N. Lipovetskii, *Ot "sovetskogo pisatel'ia" k pisateliu sovetskoi epokhi: put' Iurii Trifonova* (Ekaterinburg: AMB, 2001), 9. Lipovetskii and Leiderman refer only to the last line in their monograph.

⁶⁶ Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 9.

⁶⁷ Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiia, 1985), 58-59.

Trifonov was at this time a relatively young writer in the midst of a career revival, speaking as an official representative of Soviet literature, and thus it is not surprising that his speech rejected the renunciation of characterization in the French *Nouveau Roman*. But the active optimism of Trifonov's proposed image of man—united against Fascism, more closely connected than ever before—is threatened by the preceding clause, which attributes this unity not to hope or inspiration but to passive, universal suffering. Lidiia Ginzburg described this new man in a private 1954 notebook entry:

Вместо свободного мира идей—предельно необходимый и давящий мир объективного ужаса жизни. Герой—страдательный, маленький человек, просто человек. Функция его в корне изменилась. Он стал теперь выразителем всех—больших и малых, глупых и умных, умудренных и малограмотных. В этом демократизм современного сознания.⁶⁸

In a much later entry, this transformation is presented as a direct consequence of Stalinism:

В XX веке размывание характера, быть может, сопряжено с непомерным тоталитарным давлением, перетиравшим личные свойства человека. Сталинской поре присуща унификация поведения перед всем грозящей пыткой и казнью. Лгали лживые и правдивые, боялись трусливые и храбрые, красноречивые и косноязычные равно безмолвствовали.⁶⁹

When “history” is endowed with a power completely unbeknownst to Herten or Turgenev, traits are no longer relevant carriers of information or identity, even in their dynamism or mutual interaction. When the narrator of *Vremia i mesto* meets the novel's protagonist, Sasha Antipov, during the Second World War, he is struck unpleasantly by their similarity. Recalling the long-faded figure of Antipov several decades later, he dismisses his earlier surprise: “[Сашка] был похож на меня, но время всех делает похожими.”⁷⁰ When man is wholly determined by time, he resembles Glebov's characterization of Shulepa from the opening pages of *Dom na naberezhnoi*:

Шулепа состоял из слоев, распадался пластами, и каждый пласт был не похож на другой, но вот то—в снегу, в сугробах у кирпичной стены, когда дрались до кровняки, до хрипа “сдаюсь”, потом в теплом громадном доме пили, блаженствуя, чай из тоненьких чашечек—тогда, наверно, было настоящее. Хотя кто его знает. В разные времена настоящее выглядит по-разному.⁷¹

This evaluation is clearly focalized through Glebov,⁷² however. Numerous commentators,

⁶⁸ Ginzburg, Lidiia. *Zapisnye knizhki: vospominaniia : esse*. Iskusstvo-SPB, 2002, p. 199.

⁶⁹ Lidiia Ginzburg, *Zapisnye knizhki: vospominaniia : esse* (Sankt-Peterburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 2002), 345.

⁷⁰ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 513.

⁷¹ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 203.

⁷² Michael Glenny's translation makes this obvious: “his recollection of Shulepa was made up of shaky, disparate layers.” Emphasis mine. Iurii Trifonov, *Another Life; The House on the Embankment*,

both Soviet and Western, have noted Glebov's lack of memory, or more specifically his *unwillingness* to remember.⁷³ His carelessness towards the past does not carry over into his present evaluations, however. Throughout the novella, he is unusually attentive to any perceived changes in his acquaintances, particularly in Levka: "Несмотря на то что за семь лет Левка стал другим человеком."⁷⁴ "Не надо было приходиться сюда. Левка очень переменялся..."⁷⁵ and Sonia: "Но было невероятно не видеть, как изменилась Соня! Однако не видели, не замечали..."⁷⁶ "Все дело заключалось в том, что и она оказалась совсем не похожей на ту, к какой он привык и с какой давно, годами смирился. Ее молчаливость, стеснительность, анемичность—все это было в прошлой, далекой жизни. И только ее доброта и покорность остались с ней новой..."⁷⁷ Concerning his own changes, Glebov's myopia similarly disappears. The celebrated passage which begins "Почти четверть века назад, когда Вадим Александрович Глебов еще не был лысоватым, полным, с грудями, как у женщины..." ends with this somewhat peculiar observation: "и был он сам, непохожий на себя и невзрачный, как гусеница."⁷⁸ It is not surprising that Glebov, then, lacking a stable sense of identity, insists upon the total transformation of his closest acquaintances upon every new encounter. He himself, as the novella's second narrator notes, possesses no traits of his own, *совершенно никакой*: "и не злой, и не добрый, и не очень жадный, и не очень уж щедрый, и не то чтобы осьминогом, и не совсем оглоед, и не трусливый, и не смельчак, и вроде бы не хитрец, и в то же время не простофиля."⁷⁹ *Fear* is the one constancy throughout Glebov's childhood and young adulthood, an amorphous apprehension of the "всем грозящей пыткой и казнью" described by Ginzburg that eroded one's individual features. But this totalitarian mode of characterization on the level of the text applies truly only to Glebov, and Glebov reads his fellow characters by the manner in which he is written.⁸⁰

This split in perception extends to the very first words of the novella, which belong the

trans. Michael Glenny, 1st. Touchtone ed (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), 192.

⁷³ See, for example:

Yurii Leving, "Vlast' i slast' (' Dom Na Naberezhnoi' Iu.V. Trifonova)," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, no. 75 (October 2005): 258–90, S. Eremina and V. Piskunov, "Vremia i Mesto Prozy Iu. Trifonova," *Voprosy Literatury*, no. 5 (1982): 34–65, Kevin Platt, "Yuri Trifonov's The House on the Embankment and Late Soviet Memory of Stalinist Violence: Disavowal and Social Discipline," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, no. 155 (January 2019): 229–45, Thomas Seifrid, "Trifonov's Dom Na Naberezhnoi and the Fortunes of Aesopian Speech," *Slavic Review* 49, no. 4 (1990): 611–24,

⁷⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 229.

⁷⁵ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 281.

⁷⁶ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 253.

⁷⁷ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 254.

⁷⁸ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 206.

⁷⁹ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 256.

⁸⁰ As Boris Pertsovskii notes: "Глебов успешно убеждает себя в том, что поступки людей целиком и полностью определяются обстоятельствами" "Pokoraias' techeniiu," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 4 (1979): 21.

second, lyrical, narrator, whose recollections are ostensibly more “reliable” than Glebov’s: speaking with proemial authority, he relates that the boys in question have *turned into different people*, and that they would likely fail to recognize each other. But at the same time, this evaluation is not ontological, it does not belong to the narrator who has just stated it: “Ну и бор с ними, с недогадливыми!”⁸¹ Reading past Glebov’s observations, the reader sees that the novella’s “minor characters”—Shulepnikov, Sonia, Ganchuk—do not fundamentally change in regards to their core traits over several decades and throughout the course of the novel, that they are still recognizably *themselves* at the novel’s finish. In his *Structuralist Approaches to Character in Narrative*, Uri Margolin, like Ginzburg and Trifonov, views literary characters as made up of interacting traits (“dimensions,” in Margolin’s terminology). But he reminds us that the inherently temporal nature of narrative must be considered when examining and/or identifying the composition of each character: “an answer should be provided to the question of what is involved in the integration of successive character frames into a final retrospective overall character portrait.”⁸² Margolin then lists four paradigms for a character’s progression throughout a work: 1) no change, or at least no change of core features; 2) gradual but progressive change, “as in the *Bildungsroman*,”; 3) “abrupt, semantically related change,” often related to trauma, and 4) “abrupt, iterative, and semantically unrestricted (random) change of most or all core properties of a narrative agent, to be found in many postmodern narratives. The individual turns here into a radical transformation series, a series of disjointed frames, none of which is related to any other...”⁸³ No character in *Dom na naberezhnoi* overlaps completely with these paradigms, but only the fourth approaches most closely Glebov’s mode of cognition (his failures of recognition) within the novella. This is not to say that *Dom na naberezhnoi* is not a historical work, or at least a novella that concerns itself with *history*. Immediately following his statement, quoted earlier, that his Dmitriev from *Obmen* was distorted by time, Trifonov shifts his focus to *Dom na naberezhnoi*:

...время возносит и опускает людей, меняет их местами. Что произошло с профессором Ганчуком, какая метаморфоза: в двадцатых годах он судья, в сороковых — жертва. Или, к примеру, Шулепников. Пытался вершить судьбы — а где мы встречаемся с ним в финале? Так что время беспощадно и могущественно, оно безжалостно высвечивает истинную ценность человека.⁸⁴

Trifonov speaks of Ganchuk’s “metamorphosis,” but the changes that take place concern his fate, and not, ultimately, his character; the forces of history or simply “time” act powerfully upon his *life*, the *course* of it, but unlike Dmitriev or Glebov, his *being* is not determined by it.

1.3 “Скрыто запакванное тайное ядро”: Reading and writing character in *Starik* and *Vremia i mesto*

In an oft-quoted passage in *Dom na naberezhnoi*, the second narrator recalls his last meeting with his beloved former schoolmate, Anton Ovchinnikov, at the outbreak of the Second World

⁸¹ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 201.

⁸² Uri Margolin, “Structuralist Approaches to Character in Narrative: The State of the Art,” *Semiotica* 75, no. 1–2 (1989): 18.

⁸³ Uri Margolin, “Structuralist Approaches to Character in Narrative: The State of the Art,” *Semiotica* 75, no. 1–2 (1989): 18–19.

⁸⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiia, 1985), 293–294.

War. Anton informs the narrator that their coincidental and seemingly insignificant meeting will be recorded in his notebook, “потому что все важно для истории.”⁸⁵ Lipovetskii and Leiderman believe that this second narrator has taken up Anton’s task of recording these moments “for history,” and that this history carries an ethical or even pedagogical value for the living: “Он извлекает исторический опыт из биографического времени своего поколения. [...] Он не возвращает прошлое [...], он предупреждает и учит прошлым. Такова главная функция лирического героя в “Доме на набережной.”⁸⁶ Such a reading of *Dom na naberezhnoi* glosses over the fact that the lyrical narrator and the characters he recounts reside on the same plane, within the same fictional universe—to *him*, they are real human beings. Such an extraction can be performed by the reader of the text, but “history” in this form—the separation or reduction of a person into a moral “lesson”—would be in Trifonov’s fictional universe an act approaching cruelty. Following the adoption of the 1977 Constitution, the weekly *Literaturnaia gazeta* [*Literary gazette*] solicited well-known Soviet writers to answer the following question: “Какими чертами должен обладать, на ваш взгляд, наш современник, чтобы мы могли назвать его всесторонне развитой личностью?”⁸⁷ Trifonov takes this question, which specifically asks for abstract traits to fulfill a certain ideal, and personifies it:

Когда задумываешься над понятием “всесторонне развитая личность”, в сознании возникают не идеи, не исполненные совершенства фигуры, а просто живые люди. Из тех, что встречались в жизни. [...] В детстве меня поразил один мальчик. Он был как раз такой удивительно “всесторонне развитой личностью”. Лева Федотов. Несколько раз я поминал его то в газетной заметке, то в рассказе или повести, ибо Лева покорило воображение навеки. Он был так не похож на всех!⁸⁸

The moral-historical and the autobiographical here are inseparable, and it is impossible to “extract” the one from the other.

Starik, published in *Druzhba narodov* [*Friendship of Peoples*] two years after *Dom na Naberezhnoi*, similarly begins with an encounter with the past: the elderly Pavel Letunov receives a letter from his childhood love Asia Igumnova. The technique of temporal layering and interweaving begun by Trifonov in *Dom* is intensified in *Starik*, which, following the twisting paths of the old man’s memory, flows between an unbearably hot Moscow summer in the late 1970s, the outbreak of Revolution in 1917, and the chaotic early twenties in southern Russia. But if *Dom na naberezhnoi* is largely concerned with the survivors of total war and totalitarian violence, who, as Pertsovskii writes of Glebov, are condemned to “плыть в потоке событий,

⁸⁵ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999, 294..

⁸⁶ N Leiderman and M.N. Lipovetskii, *Ot “sovetskogo pisatel’ia” k pisatel’iu sovetskoi epokhi: put’ Iurii Trifonova* (Ekaterinburg: AMB, 2001), 30.

⁸⁷ “Anketa ‘LG,’” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 40 (October 5, 1977): 10. The question referenced Article 20 of the new constitution: “В соответствии с коммунистическим идеалом «Свободное развитие каждого есть условие свободного развития всех» государство ставит своей целью расширение реальных возможностей для применения гражданами своих творческих сил, способностей и дарований, для всестороннего развития личности.

⁸⁸ Iurii Trifonov, “Dobro, chelovechnost’, talant,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 40 (October 4, 1977): 13. Lyova Fedotov was the prototype for Anton Ovchinnikov. For more on Lyova, see Yuri Slezkine, *The House of Government: A Saga of the Russian Revolution* (Princeton University Press, 2017).

растворяя,”⁸⁹ *Starik* shifts its orientation towards the *victims*, those who did not survive to the present day, and whose characters have, in Bakhtinian terms, undergone “aesthetic completion.”⁹⁰ Letunov’s pension years have been dedicated to the rehabilitation of Sergei Migulin, a Red Cossack commander who was secretly married to Asia and ultimately executed for insubordination. It is only at the end of the novella that we learn that Letunov played a not insignificant role in his death. Asia writes to Pavel to thank him for his part in removing the “позорное клеймо”⁹¹ from his name, hitherto his only presence in the historical narrative, and we are reminded of the etymological origins of the word *character*: “die, stamp, impress.”⁹² If the living are threatened with a dissolution of character in a stream of endlessly multiplying, mutually incoherent changes, Migulin and millions of others are subjected to an extraordinary flattening, especially if they are to be placed within the confines of official Soviet historiography. The young Trifonov confronted this in a 1962 journal entry, during the time of his work on the documentary novella *Otblesk kostra*:

Динамические силы русской революции не были исчерпаны Гражданской войной. За словами “оппозиция” и “фракция” стояли живые люди.

Какими они были?

Как хочется представить их мучениками, героями и как легко злодеями.⁹³

Trifonov admits the overwhelming temptation to reduce the “living people” of the past into religious or folkloric archetypes which, per Katerina Clark, fully corresponds with the socialist realist mode.⁹⁴ Years later, Letunov faces the same challenges of oversimplification in his own project of historical reconstruction:

Бог ты мой, как все это немисливо объяснить одним словом! Но каждый раз пытаются. Пытались при жизни Мигулина, выкрикивая такие слова, как “изменник” и “предатель”, пытаются и теперь, крича “ленинец” и “революционер”. Объяснилось бы просто и одним словом—не сидел бы среди ночи, вороша бумажки... Хотя спасибо бумажками, еще ночь обломал...⁹⁵

Letunov is aware that it is impossible for a word to encompass a human being, and yet he

⁸⁹ V Pertsovskii, “Pokoriaias’ techeniu,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 4 (1979): 32.

⁹⁰ “...с самого начала мы должны переживать [героя] всего, иметь дело со всем им, с целым, в смысле он должен быть мертв для нас, формально мертв. В этом смысле мы можем сказать, что смерть — форма эстетического завершения личности.”

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie Sochinenii v Semi Tomakh. Tom 1: Filosofskaia Estetika 1920-Kh Godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2003), 200.

⁹¹ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn’: povest’*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1980), 8.

⁹² “Character, n.,” in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed April 21, 2020, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30639>.

⁹³ Iurii Trifonov, “Iz dnevnikov i rabochikh tetradei: Okonchanie. Publikatsiia i kommentarii Ol’gi Trifonovoi,” *Druzhba narodov*, no. 11 (1998).

⁹⁴ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000).

⁹⁵ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn’: povest’*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1980), 148.

continues to labor away, and even welcomes the distraction of his efforts. When asked if he feels any guilt before Migulin, he answers that he feels responsibility only toward *others*: “Объяснил как мог: тем, что истиной не делился. Хоронил для себя. А истина, как мне кажется, [...] ведь только тогда драгоценность, когда для всех. Если же только у тебя одного, под подушкой, как золото у Шейлока, тогда—тьфу, не стоит плевка.”⁹⁶ Migulin can only be recovered in language and it is this tension—for the old man is not a writer, who invents his hero, but a makeshift historian—that grants him such an intense awareness of the process and perils of characterization.

Letunov recalls an episode from his childhood: he is skiing with his uncle Shura, Asia, and her brother Volodia. A local bandit appears from the trees and Volodia suddenly sets off downhill. The group, it turns out, was never in any real danger, as the bandit knows and collaborates with Shura, a professional revolutionary. On the way home no one can bear to bring up Volodia’s horrible act of cowardice. But safely indoors, a legal discussion breaks out: “С юридической точки зрения,—говорит Константин Иванович,—трусость почитается настолько свойственной человеку...”⁹⁷ Shura defends Volodia, as does Letunov, internally, years later:

У каждого было. И у меня тоже. Миг страха, не физического, не страха смерти, а вот именно миг помрачения ума и надлом души. Миг уступки. А может быть, миг самопознания? Но после этого человек говорит: один раз я был слаб перед вами, но больше не уступлю никогда.⁹⁸

Volodia’s family is essentially discussing—in his absence, for he has fled the room in shame—the relationship between character and event famously expressed by Henry James: “What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?”⁹⁹ Volodia is a minor character within the text as a whole, he is ripe for “flattening,” and yet Trifonov devotes several pages of the novella to this episode, not as an illustration of Volodia’s character, which is not relevant for *Starik*’s narrative, but to demonstrate Letunov’s reluctance to reduce his acquaintance to a single, dominating trait. He is likewise impressed, but not convinced, by his comrade Orlik Naum’s manner of reading people:

⁹⁶ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 196-197.

⁹⁷ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 33.

⁹⁸ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 34. This same anecdote is repeated in Trifonov’s posthumous *Ischeznovenie*, with an entirely changed significance. Instead of referring to another person in an attempt at understanding, the story is presented in an act of self-justification, a sort of parody of Letunov’s thoughts in *Starik*: “...И досаднее всего, что я не столько струсил, написавши в 1931 году две строчки „сознания“, сколько проявил доверие к людям, вовсе его не заслуживавшим. Теперь тем более мне необходима выдержка! Возьмем литературный пример: Хаджи-Мурат Л. Н. Толстого. Совершенно реальный тип, взятый с натуры. Он рассказывает русскому офицеру, как он растерялся, когда при нем стали убивать его начальника и молочного брата, и он один ускакал от многочисленных убийц. „Как же ты струсил, ты, знаменитый храбрец?“ — спросил его офицер. Да, он струсил, но он стиснул зубы и больше никогда этого не делал — всю жизнь!” *Otblesk Kostra; Ischeznovenie: Dokumental'naiia Povest', Roman*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1988), 191.

⁹⁹ Henry James, *The Art of Fiction: And Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 13.

Спорить с Орликом трудно. Он все знает заранее, ни в чем не сомневается. Люди для него—вроде химических соединений, которые он мгновенно, как опытный химик, разлагает на элементы. Такой-то наполовину марксист, на четверть неокантианец и на четверть махист. Такой-то большевик лишь на десять процентов, снаружи, а нутро меньшевистское.¹⁰⁰

Both Ginzburg and Lukács praised Tolstoy for his ability to recognize the “fluidity” of human existence and his recognition that the value of traits in human behavior is not all-powerful. In *On Psychological Prose*, Ginzburg quotes Tolstoy’s diary from 1898: “One of our greatest errors in judging a person is to call or define him as intelligent, foolish, good, evil, strong, or weak, for he is all of these— all possibilities—since he is a fluid substance.”¹⁰¹ But this discovery of the fluidity of human existence led Tolstoy towards innovations in the depiction of “life in general” and the mimetic depiction of *processes* which superseded individual human beings. Letunov’s mission is different, even as a historian: although his research is directed towards uncovering the ultimate causes behind an *action*—Migulin’s decision to violate an order to stand down—the focus of his inquiries are almost always directed beyond traits or even personality, towards the issue of *identity*. At seventy-two years of age, he has participated in the Revolution and Civil War, was branded a wrecker, served in the camps, and lived through the Second World War. Unlike Glebov, however, he comes to realize that the individual, despite it all, can be separated from history and the suffering it has wrought:

Сосуды мертвеют не от холестерина, а оттого, что смерть постоянно малыми дозами проникает в тебя. Уход мамы был первым. Уход Гали — наверное, последний. И тогда и теперь меня покидает единственный человек. Но между двумя смертями — между временем, когда я еще не успел стать собой, и временем, когда перестал быть собой, во всяком случае, в глазах других, потому что никто не знает, что ты остался тем же, и надо играть роль до конца, притворяясь, что действительно изменился, о чем кричит твоя внешность, докладывает твоя походка и свидетельствуют слабые силы, но это ложь,—между двумя смертями пролегла долгая жизнь, в течение которой меняешься не ты сам, а твое отношение к целому, не имеющему названия, к жизни-смерти.¹⁰²

This internal integrity comes only through great effort, and here it is only directed at the self. At the climax of the novella, Letunov pays a visit to the still-living Asia on the outskirts of Moscow. There is an initial shock at her aged appearance, a recognition of her blue eyes, and then their conversation begins, “обо всем, о всех временах, о пятидесяти пяти годах. И о главном, о чем нужно до зарезу узнать. Вот что: зачем он выступил тогда на фронт?”¹⁰³ But as the new Asia becomes more familiar, speaking animatedly in front of him, Letunov’s consciousness attempts to integrate her latest temporal instantiation with those prior, and the result is an eruption of words as the “character frames” described by Margolin flash in front of

¹⁰⁰ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 57.

¹⁰¹ Lidiia Ginzburg and Judson Rosengrant, *On Psychological Prose* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 248. Lukacs quotes the passage in *Voskresenie* that is clearly developed from this entry. See Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1972), 184-185.

¹⁰² Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 48.

¹⁰³ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 199.

him like a zoetrope:

Неужели эту смешную кикимору я держу на руках, едва не падая от отчаяния, ее молодое, тяжелое — белый живот, белые ноги, запах пота и крови, острый, как скипидар, запах девятнадцатого года, и он вырывает у меня из рук, как будто свою добычу; потом в комнате, не зажигая света, в Балашове, когда душила тоска и чужая любовь и то же самое недоумение: «Зачем он двинулся на фронт? Что за всем этим крылось?» И еще потом бритая, тифозная голова, тончайшая шея, страдание в глазах, злоба ее матери, тогда казалось — после убийства Шигонцева, — что теперь конец, убит не Шигонцев, а Мигулин, зарублен в балке ночью...¹⁰⁴

Letunov's thoughts continue in a single sentence that lasts 530 words and spans three pages. His focus drifts away from Asia, to other events and memories, but the passage circles back to her at its breathless conclusion, and it is revealed that this entire string of words forms a copular sentence, all an attempt to *describe* the woman in front of her:

...мчусь в станицу Михайлинскую, где арестован комкор, на второй день там, забрать Асю, теперь или никогда, черныш в дубленом тулупе, с маузером в желтой коробке встречает на крыльце, шупает белыми глазами, тянет руку за документом, потом говорит: «Взята вместе с ним, по групповому делу. А ты кто ей будешь?» — не помню, что отвечаю, может быть, «друг», может быть, «брат», а может, «никто», и на этом конец, и все, и навсегда, на жизнь, обледенелое крыльцо, красноармеец в тулупе, я сажусь в снег, остальное неинтересно, разве эта сухенькая, гнутая старушонка — она?¹⁰⁵

If Asia's identity can at least be materially present before him, in the form of her blue eyes, Letunov's need to establish the "truth" about Migulin, a figure who was known to him only partially, similarly metastasizes into bibliomania:

...зачем он так сделал? Не нужны статьи, увековечивание памяти, улица в городе Серафимовиче, не нужна громадная правда, нужна маленькая истина, не во всеулышанье, а по секрету: з а ч е м?

Вот папка в залоснившемся картоне с наклееным в верхнем углу желтым прямоугольником кальки с надписью: "Все о С.К. Мигулине". Листки, тетрадки, письма, копии документов—все собранное за годы.¹⁰⁶

Migulin's entire life—his public life, at least, and that is how Letunov relates to him—is defined by this single decision, which literally decides his life. Tzvetan Todorov, reflecting on James' aphorism cited earlier, noted the peculiar interaction between character and action:

A character trait is not simply the cause of an action, nor simply its effect: it is both at

¹⁰⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 200-201.

¹⁰⁵ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 202.

¹⁰⁶ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 136.

once, just as action is: X kills his wife because he is cruel, but he is cruel because he kills his wife. Causal analysis of narrative does not refer back to a first and immutable origin, which would be the meaning and law of subsequent images. In other words, we must be able to grasp this causality outside of linear time.¹⁰⁷

Letunov—whose life is now experienced in the past as much as the present¹⁰⁸—is attempting to work backwards from the action to discover the original trait, to reveal Migulin in his entirety—*все о Мигулине*—and thus recover him for himself (his conscience) and the world.

In a 1996 article, Tatiana Spektor argues that the character Sergei Troitskii from *Drugaiia zhizn'* was written by Trifonov as a manifestation of the “положительно прекрасный человек” imagined by Dostoevsky in his work on *Idiot*. Of particular significance for Spektor’s analysis is the concept of “*sterzhen'*” (rod, core), an innermost essence that bends but never breaks: “Неудачи из года в год добивали [Сергея], вышибали из него силу, он гнулся, слабел, но какой-то стержень внутри него оставался нетронутым — наподобие тоненького стального прута, — пружинил, но не ломался. [...] он все же не хотел ломать то, что было внутри него, такое стальное, не видимое никому.”¹⁰⁹ Spektor, quoting the early 20th century scholar Sergei Askol'dov, ties this feature of Sergei with Alyosha from *Brat'ia Karamazovy* [*The Brothers Karamazov*]: “*стержень*—необходимое свойство религиозно-этического идеала Достоевского, ибо в нем “всегда явственно ощущается неизменяемый, для всяких внешних воздействий непреодолимый *стержень* единственного и неповторяемого человеческого “я”.”¹¹⁰ While the concept of *sterzhen'* was indeed quite important to Trifonov, it is not connected solely to “positive characters”: Glebov’s father in *Dom na naberezhnoi* is described thusly: “А внутри отцовской природы, скрытым стержнем, вокруг которого все навивалось, было могучее качество—осторожность.”¹¹¹ The same can be read in the description of an old man in *Ischeznovenie*: “Положив короткие ручки на колени, старик печально и твердо смотрел Николаю Григорьевичу в глаза. Такой же слегка остекленевший взгляд был у него — Николаю Григорьевичу вспомнилось, — когда судили Пуятину в двадцать первом году. Вот оно, великое минералогическое свойство этого характера: проходят десятилетия, а он остается самим собой.”¹¹² The critic Alevtina Kuzmicheva believed that as a writer, Trifonov possessed an “изначальный природный интерес к тому, что он сам называл “тайным ядром” личности, ее “знаком”.”¹¹³ Such a core would be indelible, like the marks left by certain *anni horribiles* on the faces of Koryshev’s contemporaries in *Utolenie zhazdy*, but *original*, “first and immutable,” in Todorov’s words.

¹⁰⁷ Tzvetan Todorov, “Narrative-Men,” in *The Poetics of Prose* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 68-69.

¹⁰⁸ “Дни мои все более переливаются в память. И жизнь превращается в нечто странное, двойное: есть одна, всамделишная, и другая, призрачная, изделие памяти, и они существуют рядом.” Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 16.

¹⁰⁹ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 248-249.

¹¹⁰ Tat'iana Spektor, “Polozhritel'nyi geroi Iuriiia Trifonova,” *Russian Language Journal/Russkii Iazyk* 50, no. 165/167 (1996): 190.

¹¹¹ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchaniie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 217.

¹¹² Iurii Trifonov, *Otblek Kostra; Ischeznovenie: Dokumental'naia Povest', Roman*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1988), 193.

¹¹³ Alevtina Kuzmicheva, “Pisatel' griadushchego stoletiiia,” *Znamia*, no. 8 (1999): 193.

The phrase “тайное ядро” appears in Trifonov’s 1980 novel *Vremia i mesto*, the last published during his lifetime. The young writer is faced with a difficult, potentially morally compromising decision, a scene that reoccurs countless times across Trifonov’s oeuvre. He has been asked to testify as an expert witness in a trial of literary plagiarism; the brother of the accuser is a higher-up at a publishing house and the future of Antipov’s manuscript is in his hands. The defendant, an old man named Dvoynikov, is represented by the father of Antipov’s childhood friend. When it becomes clear that there will be no easy exit from the trial, Antipov turns away from the grey literary pamphlets presented as evidence towards the people themselves: “Антипов долго не мог заснуть и думал об этом, потом вдруг догадался, чего не хватало: людей. Действующие лица были замаскированы бумажками. Он не мог судить о них, не видя и ощущая их как живых людей. Заснул в тревоге—дело выходило нештучное.”¹¹⁴ During the trial—like Glebov, he has put his decision off until the very last moment—he catches sight of Dvoynikov in the flesh and realizes that his only way out is to “recognize the truth” (*узнать правду*):

Двойников, и верно, норовил подзаработать за чужой счет, но он же и помогал людям щедро. Как же соединялось это в одном человеке? Да вот соединялось как-то! Все в нем было. [...] Был и смельчак, и трус—на войне заслужил ордена за храбрость, а дома боялся дочери, которая его временами била. Был и старик, и юноша—мучился от любви и мучился от старческих недугов, от болезни сердца.

Как же было Двойникова—в каждой молекуле расщепленного пополам—слить воедино? [...] Антипов решил, что если поставить гирьки на обе чаши, то гирька *великодушие* будет самая редкостная и удельный вес ее будет так тяжел, что она перетянет. Великодушие всегда риск, и та половина Двойникова, которая способна на риск, есть главная. Тут, подумал Антипов, скрыто запакованное тайное ядро.”¹¹⁵

Antipov has been put in the unenviable position of having to judge another human being and make a legal pronouncement on his character, an operation that Glebov was unable to perform. The truth, which here carries a moral value, is produced by the successful *reading* of another human being. Antipov has to respond to what Adam Zachary Newton refers to as the “responsibility” of reading: “The responsibility is twofold. In part it means learning the paradoxical lesson that ‘getting’ someone else’s story is also a way of losing the person as ‘real,’ as ‘what he is’; it is a way of appropriating or allegorizing that endangers both intimacy and ethical duty. At the same time, however, one’s responsibility consists of responding to just this paradox.”¹¹⁶ Fraught as it may be, we know that Antipov’s reading can be considered successful, because for the first time in all of his works, the Trifonovian hero makes the correct ethical decision.

1.4 Metonymic presence and indexical characterization in *Starik* and *Drugaia zhizn’*

¹¹⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchaniie; Drugaia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 413.

¹¹⁵ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchaniie; Drugaia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 429-430.

¹¹⁶ Adam Zachary Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge (Mass.); London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 19.

During a trip to France in the early 1980s, not long before his death, Trifonov and his wife Olga Vasil'evna attempted to locate Bunin's villa in the town of Grasse: "Никто не знал, где эта вилла. 'Бунин? Бунин?' Вдруг возник милейший человек — господин Форестье. Он когда-то дружил с библиотекарем, и тот познакомил его с Буниным. Юра сказал: "Значит, я здоровался с Буниным. Я здороваюсь с Форестье, а он здоровался с Буниным".¹¹⁷ Olga does not mention why her husband's thought was important enough to make note of almost twenty years later, nor why it was included in a serialized publication of Trifonov's diaries and notebooks for the journal *Druzhba narodov*. Perhaps she was struck by his somewhat naive amazement at the enduring presence of what should be long-absent: by some transitory principle—the grip of a weathered hand—Bunin, a writer whom Trifonov much admired,¹¹⁸ appears again before him. Trifonov and Bunin are *linked* through Forestier, evoking an artistic image which appears in almost every Trifonov text beginning with his Moscow cycle: that of a chain or thread which stretches across generations. In *Obmen*, it is familial: "Дед был ведь стар, должен был угаснуть, но вместе с ним исчезало что-то, прямо с ним не связанное, существовавшее отдельно: какие-то нити между Дмитриевым, и матерью, и сестрой."¹¹⁹ A feverish conversation in *Dolgoe proshchanie* between two characters visualizes these linkages as historical, an ontological circumstance of contemporaries co-existing in time: "Мой отец был современником вашего Николая Васильевича, тоже петербургский житель [...] Понимаете ли, история страны—это многожильный провод, и когда мы вырываем одну жилу..."¹²⁰ In a 1973 letter to a veteran of the Civil War, Trifonov likened the old man to a "живая нить, соединяющая наше время с замечательными людьми прошлого."¹²¹ The image is most developed in *Drugaiia zhizn'*, where it occupies a central position in the work of the departed historian Sergei Troitskii: "человек есть нить, протянувшаяся сквозь время, тончайший нерв истории, который можно отщепить и выделить и—по нему определить многое. Человек, говорил он, никогда не примирился со смертью, потому что в нем заложено ощущение бесконечности нити, часть которой он сам"¹²² It is important to note that the threads or linkages pursued in Sergei's studies are not to be associated with the concept of a causal progression or chain of events as commonly visualized in narratology or historiography, as Troitskii declares in a heated argument with his colleagues:

— Историческая целесообразность, о которой ты толкуешь,— говорил Сережа,— это нечто расплывчатое и коварное, наподобие болота...

— Это единственно прочная нить, за которую стоит держаться!

— Интересно, кто будет определять, что целесообразно и что нет? Ученый совет

¹¹⁷ Iurii Trifonov, "Iz dnevnikov i rabochikh tetradei: Okonchanie. Publikatsiia i kommentarii Ol'gi Trifonovoi," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 11 (1998).

¹¹⁸ See his article "I.A. Bunin" in *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiia, 1985), 26-27

¹¹⁹ Iurii Trifonov and Robert Russell, *Obmen / The exchange / Yu. V. Trifonov; edited by Robert Russell*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 48.

¹²⁰ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 64-65.

¹²¹ Iurii Trifonov, "Sopriazhenie istorii s sovremennosti'iu...," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 7 (1987): 180.

¹²² Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 289.

большинством голосов? Он настолько зарвался, что забыл о том, что Кисловский как раз председатель ученого совета.¹²³

The importance this metaphor takes on throughout his works comes not from a sense of unidirectional movement or procession along these linkages but rather the *contiguity*—in the spatial sense, of *abutment*—inherent to metonymy.¹²⁴ Typically this image appears in the text in the form of a protagonist’s realization or epiphany, a purely mental structure, but the concept is almost always manifested physically as well. Sometimes this linkage is literally a person, as in Trifonov’s letter to the veteran or the miraculously still-living Koshel’kov in *Drugaia zhizn’*, whose mere existence proves the veracity of a document crucial to Sergei’s dissertation on the Tsarist secret police. More often, however, the order is reversed—not an individual being offered as verification of a document or greater assertion, historical or otherwise, but a document or artifact that *extends* the presence of a human being. Trifonov had maintained a very strong interest in the interaction between document and fiction since at least the early 1960s, when he began working on the “dokumental’naia povest” *Otblesk kostra* [*The Campfire’s Glow*], set primarily during the Civil War and dedicated to the memory of his father Valentin. A 1962 diary entry records some of his excitement:

Факт, документ, конкретность — обладает своей собственной громадной и взрывчатой силой. [...]

Документальная проза — это правда. С нее все началось. Тацит и Плутарх до сих пор — лучшие прозаики, так же, как протопоп Аввакум, как Пушкин — автор “Истории пугачевского бунта”.

Я думаю, что конкретная, фактическая основа лежит в основе успеха многих произведений, т. н. — чисто художественных.¹²⁵

Trifonov’s interest in documentary materials corresponded with what Denis Kozlov calls “the late Soviet historical turn,” which blossomed from the Thaw-era onward:

As the post-Stalin debate of the “Thaw” undermined the persuasiveness of earlier interpretations of history, many groups in Soviet society sought to legitimize their existence by constructing new historical continuities. The search for continuity shaped public historical inquiry in the form of selection, accumulation, and circulation of data

¹²³ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn’: povest’*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1980), 276. Sergei’s widow’s view of history is similarly ordered:

“История представлялась Ольге Васильевне бесконечно громадной очередью, в ко торой стояли в затылок друг к другу эпохи, государства, великие люди, короли, полководцы, революционеры, и задачей историка было нечто похожее на задачу мили ционера, который в дни премьер приходит в кассу кино театра «Прогресс» и наблюдает за порядком,— следить за тем, чтобы эпохи и государства не путались и не ме нялись местами, чтобы великие люди не забегали вперед, не ссорились и не норовили получить билет в бессмертие без очереди...” Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn’: povest’*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1980), 286.

¹²⁴ As elaborated in Roman Jakobson, “Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,” in *Language in Literature* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), 95–114.

¹²⁵ Iurii Trifonov, “Iz dnevnikov i rabochikh tetradei: Okonchanie. Publikatsiia i kommentarii Ol’gi Trifonovoi,” *Druzhba narodov*, no. 11 (1998).

that were meant to complement rather than revolutionize existing worldviews.¹²⁶

Trifonov incorporated a great deal of archival research into the structure of his 1973 novel *Neterpenie* [*Impatience*] as well, set in the second half of the 19th century, but when returning to the era of the Revolution and Civil War for his novella *Starik*, he decided that his new project would be best served by moving away from a “purely documentary foundation” and the implementation of “bare facts.”¹²⁷ Trifonov’s experimentation with hybrid documentary-artistic forms was not uncommon for Soviet literature of the early Stagnation era, but what is notable is the heightened significance these documents hold for his novellas—not in their structure or composition, but as physical objects within their given fictional worlds. The notebooks of Anton in *Dom na naberezhnoi*, Gorik in *Ischeznovenie*, and Glebov’s father in *Obmen* are both immeasurably valuable and lost forever; Rebrov from *Dolgoe proshchanie* can only find true solace ensconced inside historical archives. “Вот редчайшая редкость, драгоценность в сто шестьдесят страниц в синей папочке,” thinks Letunov in *Starik*: “стеннограмма суда. Если начнется в доме пожар и надо хватать самое ценное, схвачу эту папку. А зачем? Все читано, перечитано.”¹²⁸ The value of these objects comes not from the knowledge they contain as much as their *testimonial* powers: like Peircean indexes, they point deictically towards the original, beloved object. And as true indexes, they refer to individuals, not types or generalized categories.¹²⁹ The artifacts are very frequently endowed with another power as well: as Mary Anne Doane notes, the concept of the index “seems to specify signs on the order of the trace—the footprint, the death mask, the photograph.”¹³⁰ A map would typically be classified by Peirce as a diagram, under the category of icon, as it imitates or bears resemblance to the terrain it signifies. For the second narrator of *Dom na naberezhnoi*, however, its value is indexical: “Я стою в нерешительности перед картой Испании. Брать, не брать? [...] Ее можно положить в карман пальто. Эта карта до сих пор среди моих книг на полке. Прошло много лет, я не разу не развернул ее. Но то, что вобрало в себя так много страданий и страсти, пускай детских страданий и детской страсти, не может пропасть вовсе.”¹³¹ In *Drugaiia zhizn’*, Olga’s relationship to her husband’s personal belongings changes dramatically after his death:

Все его папки, блокноты, тетради толстые и тонкие, вырезки из газет, аляповато расклеенные по альбомам, выдранные из журналов страницы, кипы исписанной бумаги, рассованные по разным местам — часть находилась в ящиках стола, часть на нижних полках в шкафах, какие-то папки пылились на самом верху шкафов, под потолком, куда месяцами не достигала тряпка, и Ольга Васильевна сердилась и во время каждой уборки требовала, чтобы он куда-нибудь пристроил «свой хлам», лучше всего в мусорный бак, именно «хлам», потому что, будь это ценное, он не держал бы на верхотуре, в пыли, а какие-то бумаги в дни ремонта попали на

¹²⁶ Denis Kozlov, “The Historical Turn in Late Soviet Culture: Retrospectivism, Factography, Doubt, 1953–91*,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 3 (2001): 578.

¹²⁷ Iurii Trifonov, “V kratkom-beskonechnoe,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 8 (1974): 171–94.

¹²⁸ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn’: povest’*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1980), 170.

¹²⁹ James Jakób Liszka, *A General Introduction to the Semeiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 38.

¹³⁰ Mary Ann Doane, “Indexicality: Trace and Sign: Introduction,” *Differences* 18, no. 1 (2007): 2.

¹³¹ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 269–270.

антресоли,—все это еще было его плотью, несло в себе его запах, эманацию его существа, поэтому притрагиваться было страшно.¹³²

Several researchers have detected traces of the Russian religious philosopher Nikolai Fedorov in *Drugaia zhizn'*, both in the heretical principles of Sergei's research and in the form of the novella itself as a partial reconstruction of a departed person.¹³³ Fedorov called for all of mankind to unite in the fulfillment of a “всеобщее дело”—the elimination of death and the resurrection of all human beings who had ever lived. A crucial step in this process is the creation of vast archives and museums filled with the remnants of the dead, as Svetlana Semenova notes:

Проективный федоровский музей задуман как предприятие собирания, хранения, изучения всех остатков прошлого, всех малейших следов ушедших людей на их вещах, документах, дневниках, книгах, произведениях искусства, и т.д. Речь идет о тотальной консервации памяти, причем в идеале четко индивидуализированной. Глубокий смысл собирания мертвых вещей в том, чтобы за ними видеть их создателей.¹³⁴

Sergei Troitskii is the latest in a long list of historians that populate Trifonov's works, but his research methodology—what he refers to only half-jokingly “разрывание могил”—is at heart more similar to an archivist's. Like an index, Troitskii's work does not really “assert anything about the object it represents, so much as shows or exhibits that object.”¹³⁵ Trifonov's historian-archivists do not study the past in order to extract some lesson or prophetic knowledge from it, as Leiderman and Lipovetskii attest. They instead seek to restore or resurrect, in true Fyodorovian fashion, a lost individual to the world. But the indexical artifacts they cherish and cultivate cannot communicate anything beyond their reference, and it is for that reason that the archeological projects of Trifonov's characters always in end in failure: they are not, on their own, *communicable*. The playwright Rebrov's happiest moments are spent in the Lenin Library, leafing through ancient periodicals in search of the failed revolutionary Ivan Pryzhov: “Великолепное чтение на несколько дней. Зачем был ему нужен Прыжов, Ребров и сам не знал. Зачем-то нужен!”¹³⁶ Twenty pages later, Rebrov's archival ardor has moved on from Pryzhov, and he is instead hoping to write a piece about another revolutionary, Nikolai Kletochnikov: “Пылко начал работать. [...] Все это, незаконченное, сумбурное, грудями черновики лежало в бесчисленных папках, ожидая своего часа. Внезапно наступал такой день, когда прорезывался пока еще робкий, холодноватый, но обещавший великое

¹³² Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 260-61.

¹³³ This connection is noted in passing by Lev Anninskii in “Ochishchenie proshlym,” *Don*, no. 2 (1977): 157–60, and S. Eremina and V. Piskunov, “Vremia i mesto prozy Iu. Trifonova,” *Voprosy Literatury*, no. 5 (1982): 34–65. It is developed in much greater detail by Tatiana Spektor, “The Christian Subtext in Iurii Trifonov's Moscow Stories” (Lawrence, University of Kansas, 1995), and Janusz Świeży, ““Razryvanie mogil’ . Prelomlenie idei Nikolaia Fedorova v povesti Iurii Trifonova ‘Drugaia zhizn’,”” *Przegląd Rusycystyczny* 141, no. 1 (2013): 42–64.

¹³⁴ Nikolai Fedorov, *Sochineniia* (Moskva: Mysl', 1982), 38.

¹³⁵ James Jakób Liszka, *A General Introduction to the Semeiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 38.

¹³⁶ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 31.

оледнение вопрос: зачем?”¹³⁷ The same fate befalls Letunov, whose rehabilitation project is misunderstood completely and dismissed as the eccentricities of old age. Even Troitskii, who Trifonov scholar Natal’ia Ivanova held up as “образ, пожалуй, самый светлый в трифоновской прозе,”¹³⁸ loses faith: “[...] теперь ему кажется, что все эти подробности подробностей, эти крохи, сметенные со стола каких-то пиров, которые он вылавливает со дна колодца, не нужны никому, кроме пяти или шести человек в целом свете...”¹³⁹ Neither Rebrov nor Letunov nor Troitskii are able, or perhaps willing, to attempt what Trifonov undertook with a work like *Otblesk kostra* or *Neterpenie*, to take these living traces and transform them into an communicable artistic image, to impart or extract some value *to* or *out of* them other than that which is already inherent in their indexical status. Discussing the concept of the index as it relates to the photograph, Mary Ann Doane writes: “While realism claims to build a mimetic copy, an an illusion of an inhabitable world, the index only purports to point, to connect, to touch, to make language and representation adhere to the world as tangent—to reference a real without realism.”¹⁴⁰ Embedded within a work of (realist) fiction, the index loses its connection to the real, retaining for Trifonov’s characters its Fyodorovian promise but lacking the possibility of its fulfillment.

Roland Barthes in *A Lover’s Discourse*: “Sometimes the metonymic object is a presence (engendering joy); sometimes it is an absence (engendering distress).”¹⁴¹ The indexical trace—like a footprint—testifies to a presence that has already been displaced, is no longer present. Many of Trifonov’s later works feature a character who is primarily presented through their absence—Anton in *Dom na naberezhnoi*, Troitskii in *Drugaiia zhizn’*, and Galia in *Starik*. For all his mastery of mimetic characterization, Trifonov does not attempt to describe these characters externally or transcribe, in Lukács’ terms, the “intellectual physiognomy” of their consciousnesses.¹⁴² Trifonov employs a novel method of characterization in which he registers the *impression* of these already-absent characters; their “character” is not inscribed or stamped upon them, as the original meaning of the word holds, but rather the character’s pressure leaves an inscription upon the text itself. This defines the artistic project of *Drugaiia zhizn’*, which begins with the fact of Sergei Troitskii’s death and works backwards. A discussion with the author in *Literature obozrenie* recognized this task but expressed some doubt that the average Soviet reader would be up for the challenge:

По-видимому, вы хотите, чтобы через Ольгу Васильевну, которая изо всех сил старается, но никак не может понять Сергея, чтобы через нее читатель вашего Сергея понял, разобрался в этом непростом характере. Поистине это задача для читателя-виртуоза. Тем более, что для ее решения читателю надо «выяснить отношения» с самой Ольгой Васильевной. Что это значит? Он должен увидеть события глазами Ольги Васильевны, понимая при этом, что ее точка зрения, ее

¹³⁷ Iurii Trifonov, *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaiia zhizn’; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom* (Moskva: Slovo, 1999), 56.

¹³⁸ Natal’ia Ivanova, *Proza Iuriiia Trifonova* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1984), 204.

¹³⁹ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaiia zhizn’: povest’*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1980), 346.

¹⁴⁰ Mary Ann Doane, “Indexicality: Trace and Sign: Introduction,” *Differences* 18, no. 1 (2007): 4.

¹⁴¹ Roland Barthes and Richard Howard, *A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 173.

¹⁴² See Georg Lukacs, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 149–88.

мерка не есть мерка автора и, значит, не должна быть его, читателя, меркой. Перевоплотившись в вашу героиню, он должен в то же время себя от нее отделить.¹⁴³

This indexical characterization is implemented more subtly and perhaps more radically in *Starik*, in the figure of Galia. Letunov's deceased wife is almost entirely incidental to the plot of *Starik*—her life did not intertwine with Letunov's until long after the events described in flashback, and her death occurs before the novella's contemporaneous events. Neither her physical appearance nor her personality is ever described directly. When Letunov directly imagines to himself “с каким страстным вниманием—даже увидел мысленно, с каким лицом,—стала бы его слушать Галя”¹⁴⁴—the particular visual features of the image that appears before him is not shared with the text.

Both widow and widower associate any surviving traces of their deceased spouses with *pain*:

После смерти Гали казалось, что нет лютее страдания, чем страдание памяти, хотел уйти вслед за ней или превратиться в животное, лишь бы не вспоминать [...] но через какое-то время, может, года через четыре или лет через пять я почувствовал, что в страданиях памяти есть отрада, Галя оставалась со мной, ее неисчезновение продолжало приносить боль, но я радовался этой боли.¹⁴⁵

Человек уходит, его уход из мира сопровождается эманацией в форме боли, затем боль будет гаснуть, и когда-нибудь—когда уйдут те, кто испытывает боль,—она исчезнет совсем. Совсем, совсем. Ничего, кроме химии... Химия и боль—вот и все, из чего состоит смерть и жизнь.¹⁴⁶

“Whatever pain achieves,” writes Elaine Scarry, “it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language.”¹⁴⁷ The prominence of these missing characters is an acknowledgement, perhaps, to the limits of mimetic representation, that no model or imitation could be adequate to a lost individual who survives in the present only in the pain of absence, inexpressible and wholly individual.

Conclusion

On April 24th, 1938, the 12-year old Trifonov wrote the following in his diary:

Много дней уже прошло с тех пор, как арестовали и посадили в Бутырки мамочку. Дни стали для меня пустыми. Особенней чувствую (а чувствую все время) отсутствие мамы я в выходные дни. В школьные дни, в будни, я в кругу своих товарищей, а тут наедине со своими мыслями. [...]

Когда мне было около 8—9 лет, я думал про себя так: (этого размышления никто,

¹⁴³ Iurii Trifonov, *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiia, 1985) 284-285.

¹⁴⁴ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 14.

¹⁴⁵ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 16.

¹⁴⁶ Iurii Trifonov, *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), 289.

¹⁴⁷ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.

кроме меня, не поймет, а потому я жду от всякого лишь смеха) почему я чувствую только за себя, а не за Таню, Бабушку или Соньку какую-нибудь. Почему я чувствую только за себя? И я пришел к такому выводу, что я должен испытать все решительно, что есть на свете.¹⁴⁸

Already present in this entry are the two central themes of Trifonov's prose, *отсутствие* and *недочувствие*. With his decision to feel *for others* and to *experience everything there is on earth*, he has taken on the utopian promise of the mimetic, where empathy alone can overcome alterity. The force of this empathy can be felt in the precise, unrelenting accuracy with which he transcribed the thoughts of his protagonists. His desire to create literary characters that so closely resemble the people he knew in reality conversely led him, I believe, to extend this empathy to his literary characters: to properly "account" for his minor characters, to recognize the difficulty, danger, and *necessity* of reaching the deepest possible understanding of an individual, and lastly, to recognize the failure of mimetic methods to replace another human being, in his recognition of and before their *absence*.

¹⁴⁸ Iurii Trifonov, "Iz dnevnikov i rabochikh tetradei. Publikatsiia i kommentarii Ol'gi Trifonovoi," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 5 (1998).

Chapter Two

Andrei Bitov:

This game of “who-whom,” this unreality...

Introduction

The first volume of Bitov’s four-tome collected works *Imperiia v chetyrekh izmereniakh* [*Empire in Four Dimensions*] begins with the following words from the 1960 story “Avtobus” [*The Bus*]: “Хорошо бы начать книгу, которую надо писать всю жизнь... То есть не надо, а можно писать всю жизнь: пиши себе и пиши. Ты кончишься, и она кончится.”¹ This early vision of writing envisions a coincidence of the writing subject with herself in both temporality and identity. It is an act of self-authoring—unlike Trifonov, the “other” is not mentioned in this youthful declaration. The passage is an appropriate choice to begin the sprawling multivolume set, for it is easily reconciled with the popular perception of the writer today, known for his love of literary play and exquisite style. An even earlier and much less utopian recollection of writing—or really just language itself—is given in Bitov’s memoir *Neizbezhnost’ nenapisannogo* [*Inevitability of the Unwritten*], in which he recollects a particular day at school when he is sliding down a banister:

И вот съезжаю я вниз, к зеркалу, а по противоположному маршу, через ступеньку, бегут вверх однокашники, и одни кричит мне через пролет: “Андрюха! А мы только что о тебе говорили!”

Что-то оборвалось во мне и не вернулось: как же так?! Меня с ними не было, а обо мне говорили... Я доехала до конца перил и влетел в зеркало. И я не узнал этого мальчика.

Что же тогда произошло?

Меня не испугали, что говорили обо мне плохо,—такого я не мог заподозрить. Меня поразило, даже потрясло, что обо мне можно было говорить в мое отсутствие! Что я был еще где-то, где меня в этот момент не было. Что-то случилось. Причем необратимо.²

These two accounts—of the act of writing and of being written—inform the whole of Bitov’s literary career, which pursued the promise of the former while never forgetting the shock of the latter. This chapter will explore the shifting dynamic between these two forces—of *being* author and *becoming* hero—in Bitov’s early writings, up to and including *Pushkinskii dom*, through a study of the author-hero relationship within his works. Through an analysis strongly informed by Mikhail Bakhtin’s studies of literary characterization, I trace an evolution from an intensely

¹ Andrei Bitov, *Imperiia v Chetyrekh Izmereniakh*, vol. 1, 4 vols. (Moskva: TKO AST, 1996), 9.

² Andrei Bitov, *Neizbezhnost’ Nenapisannogo : Godovye Kol'tsa, 1956-1998-1937* (Moskva :, 1999), 9-10.

interiorized mode of perception to a full and novel acceptance of the *other*, one that is chiefly motivated by a crisis in literary culture during the late Soviet era.

Bitov and Bakhtin

The connection between Bitov and Bakhtin is most obvious in *Pushkinskii dom*, and more than a few scholars have remarked upon the linkages in their studies of the novel. While Bitov is not particularly known for his vivid characters or complex modeling of social networks, his intense interest in literary theory and criticism is quite often reflected in his writing, including direct references to some of Bakhtin's theories. Furthermore, the depth and scope of Bakhtin's theories of artistic creation are such that they are applicable to literary texts across genres, modes, and eras. Remarking upon the incredible breadth of Bakhtin's afterlife across the myriad disciplines and subfields of the Humanities, Adam Zachary Newton writes: "... the proliferation of Bakhtin's fulfills and extends rather than traduces his meaningfulness, confirming the propensity for any truly generative thinker to become unfinalizable in and through his work."³ The "meaningfulness" that Newton ascribes to Bakhtin gives purchase to the "any" that follows: forty-five years after his death, Bakhtin's stature is such that his writings and philosophy are germane to nearly any topic. In other words, a Bakhtinian reading of Andrei Bitov's prose, which this chapter seeks to incorporate, demands little justification. When the lens is reversed, however—*Bitov reading Bakhtin*—questions of influence and chronology become newly relevant, as Bitov himself acknowledged with precision in his commentaries to *Pushkinskii dom* regarding certain detectable Nabokovian elements in the novel. Bitov claimed that he did not read Nabokov until December 1970, when three quarters of the novel was already written. The shock of *Dar*, followed quickly by a reading of *Priglasenie na kazn'* [*Invitation to a Beheading*], was enough to set back his work by several months: "С этого момента я уже не вправе отрицать не только воздушное влияние, но и прямое, хотя и стремился попасть в колею написанного до обезоружившего меня чтения."⁴ In the case of *Pushkinskii dom*, Bitov's knowledge of at least some of Bakhtin's theories is well-established—there is a direct reference to the concept of carnivalization in the third part of the novel⁵ and the figure of Modest Odoevtsev is based, at least partially, on Bakhtin's individual biography:

Поводом для его "предположения" послужило начало возрождения репутации М.М. Бахтина и первые сведения о нем, полученные от В. В. Кожина: что Бахтин пострадал не в 1937, а в 1928 году, что его по-своему спасло; что он без ноги; что появившиеся неожиданно деньги (от переиздания книги) он прячет в самоваре; что

³ Adam Zachary Newton, *To Make the Hands Impure: Art, Ethical Adventure, the Difficult and the Holy* (Fordham University Press, 2015), 162.

⁴ Andrei Bitov, "Blizkoe retro, ili Kommentarii k obshcheizvestnomu.," *Novii Mir*, no. 4 (April 1989): 163.

⁵ "(Вот мы и уплатили дань всеобщей обязательной карнавализации повествования...)" Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 331.

боится переезжать из своего Саранска...⁶

The literary scholar Vadim Kozhinov played a key role in Bakhtin's "rediscovery" in the early 1960s, and Bitov was a close acquaintance of his since at least the mid-1960s.⁷ Bitov's proximity to a preeminent Bakhtin scholar, while certainly relevant, cannot establish with certainty *with which* texts Bitov was familiar, beyond the aforementioned reference to carnivalization originating from Bakhtin's work on François Rabelais, which was published in the Soviet Union in 1965. It is also quite likely that he was acquainted with *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo* [*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*], especially after its republication in 1963.

Questions of influence and authorial intention have proved to be an increasingly treacherous territory for literary scholars, but the establishment of a definite connection between Bitov and Bakhtin as described above is directly relevant to this chapter's exploration of the relationship between author and hero in Bitov's early writing. But any attempt at establishing causation is challenged not by Bitov's chronology (questions of access), but Bakhtin's (questions of availability). According to Michael Holquist, the very existence of the notebooks that made up *Avtor i geroi v esteticheskoi deiatel'nosti* [*Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*] was not revealed to Kozhinov and a small circle of others until 1972, after Bitov finished writing *Pushkinskii dom*.⁸ Some of the key concepts in *Avtor i geroi* regarding characterization and the relationship of aesthetics to core issues of subjectivity and alterity are readdressed in *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, but then several of the stories addressed in this chapter predate Bakhtin's revival and Bitov's acquaintance with Kozhinov. So while we should keep the "direct" Bitov-Bakhtin connection in mind, the first and second sections of this chapter will speak in terms of comparison and not direct influence in a manner described by Eric Naiman expresses in his article, "What if Nabokov Had Written 'Dvoinik?':

It is a central purpose of comparative literature to enable us to speak of the influence of a living writer on a dead one, or of one who died recently on those who predeceased him by decades or even centuries. We don't usually put it in such terms—a distinction is drawn between influence and comparison, but the latter word often serves to spring the scholar free of the historian's fetish of causation.⁹

2.1 "Свидетель собственного опыта": Bitov's Leningrad stories

According to his own account, Bitov's entry into creative life began in 1956 upon seeing Fellini's *La Strada*.¹⁰ The following year he enrolled as a student at the Leningrad Mining

⁶ Andrei Bitov, "Blizkoe retro, ili Kommentarii k obshcheizvestnomu.," *Novii Mir*, no. 4 (April 1989):145.

⁷ V. Makhlin, "Postol'ku, Poskol'ku...: Pamiati Vadima Valer'ianovicha Kozhinova," in *Bakhtinskii Sbornik*, ed. V. Makhlin, vol. 5 (Moskva: Iazyki Slavianskoi kul'tury, 2004), 627.

⁸ M. M Bakhtin et al., *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), xviii.

⁹ Eric Naiman, "What If Nabokov Had Written 'Dvoinik'? Reading Literature Preposterously," *The Russian Review* 64, no. 4 (2005): 575.

¹⁰ Ellen B Chances, *Andrei Bitov: The Ecology of Inspiration* (Cambridge [etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 18.

Institute and joined a literary circle, where he initially read poetry before switching to prose.¹¹ Bitov's first publication, the short story "Babushkina piala," came out in the journal *Molodoi Leningrad* in 1960. Bitov published several short stories in the first half of the 1960s, and at the start of his literary career his writings were viewed generically as belonging to the "young" (*molodaia*) or "confessional" (*ispovedal'naia*) prose movement. The movement was represented in print from the first issue of the journal *Iunost'* under the editorship of Valentin Kataev in 1955, shortly before the 20th Party Congress and coinciding with the publication or republication of works by J.D. Salinger, Erich Maria Remarque, and Ernest Hemingway.¹² Although the movement was rather short lived—less than a decade later, it had already begun to lose its literary significance, becoming a target of parodization¹³—it nonetheless represented nothing less than a stylistic and ethical revolution, especially considering its origins in the immediate wake of the grey "conflictlessness" of the Zhdanov era of Soviet literature. Writers like Vasily Aksenov and Anatolii Gladilin made full use of teenage slang and professional jargon. In other words, everyday human speech reentered literature:

В противовес "письменной", газетно-книжной традиции языка этой прозы "новую" повесть заполнила речь устная. Всевозможные жаргонные слова, причем не только вульгаризмы, но и слова профессиональных жаргонов, привычные лишь для узкого круга людей, теперь получили в ней права гражданства.¹⁴

The vast expansion of stylistic possibilities was accompanied by the equally significant appearance of a new literary hero who gave the genre its "confessional" name:

Собственно, с героя-то все и началось. Вопреки навязываемому соцреалистической эстетикой представлению о советском человеке как о цельной, внутренне завершенной личности, живущей в полном ладу со своей прекрасной современностью, авторы «Юности» привели в литературу молодого рефлектирующего героя.¹⁵

Parallels were unsurprisingly drawn between the typical protagonists of *molodaia prosa* and their similarly disillusioned and rebellious counterparts in the West, the Holden Caulfields and

¹¹ A 1963 report on the All-Union Meeting of Young Writers on the front page of *Literaturnaia gazeta* named Bitov among several other delegates who "«не отсиживаются на задворках жизни, стараются быть на стремнине всенародного шествия к коммунизму:» "Андрей Битов—горный инженер, буровик. Но прежде чем стать инженером, он работал на бурении простым рабочим." Georgii Markov, "Radost' znakomstv," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 11, 1963.

¹² For more on the tremendous influence of these three authors on the *shestidesiatniki*, see Eleonory Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture* (Harvard University Press, 2018), particularly the chapter "Books About Us." For a general overview of the movement, see N Leiderman and M.N. Lipovetskii, *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody: v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Izdatel'skii tsentr "Akademiia," 2010), 151-162.

¹³ See Marietta Chudakova and Aleksandr Chudakov, "Sovremennaia Povest' i Iumor," *Novii Mir*, no. 7 (July 1967): 229-31.

¹⁴ See Marietta Chudakova and Aleksandr Chudakov, "Sovremennaia Povest' i Iumor," *Novii Mir*, no. 7 (July 1967): 223.

¹⁵ N Leiderman and M.N. Lipovetskii, *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody: v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Izdatel'skii tsentr "Akademiia," 2010), 151-152. Emphasis in original.

other “angry young men,” but the Soviet confessional hero emerged not just from general post-war malaise but the specific and world-shattering context of Stalin’s death in 1953 and Khrushchev’s “secret speech” in 1956. The thirst for sincerity and self-expression was not limited to the (then)-rising generation of *shestidesiatniki*, but was a general feature of the Thaw’s cultural revolution:¹⁶ Vladimir Pomerantsev was well into his forties when he published his influential article *Ob iskrennosti v literature* in a 1953 issue of *Novyi mir*, in which he declared: “в истории литературы художники стремились к исповеди, а не только к проповеди.”¹⁷ In a mostly positive appraisal of the “fourth generation” of Soviet writers, Feliks Kuznetsov noted the young author’s penchant for narratives that are either purely or “seemingly” (*kak by*) in the first-person: “Почему ‘как бы’? Да потому, что даже в тех случаях, когда повествование в произведении ведется от третьего лица, автор присутствует здесь настолько активно, что можно говорить о нем, как о “лирическом герое” прозы.”¹⁸ Deming Brown breaks down these narratological intricacies in much greater detail:

In third-person narration, a flexible relationship was established between narrator and protagonist, so that sometimes their subjective spheres, their voices, were distinct, but at others indistinguishable. Intimacy was achieved through interior monologue, constructed so as not only to convey ideas but also to suggest thought processes themselves. This form of narration permitted the author to come extremely close to his protagonists, and at times almost to become one of them, but it also enabled him to remain above them and, while maintaining a generally sympathetic attitude toward them, to engage in skeptical or ironic evaluations of their words and acts.¹⁹

Although Brown includes Bitov as a representative of the youth prose movement, he notes that Bitov’s stories “almost invariably concentrate on a single character,” without a “explicitly related social issue.”²⁰ This internal focus of Bitov’s early writing is marked, even among his fellow “confessional” prose writers; in her article “A New Type of Character in Soviet Literature of the 1960s,” Olga Bakich notes that that the presentation of Bitov’s young heroes relies less on colorful dialog and instead an exploration of the protagonist’s thought processes itself.²¹ For Soviet readers accustomed to more conscious and plot-driven stories, Bitov’s early prose could be bewildering. Here V. Geideko attempts to explain the plot of Bitov’s 1960 story “Zheny net doma”: “Возвращался человек домой, было ему скучно, зашел в магазин, обменял бутылку с водкой на фляжку, поехал в общежитие к товарищам, потом направился с ними в кино и,

¹⁶ For example, see Ellen Rutten, *Sincerity After Communism: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 77, and Nancy Condee, “Cultural Codes of the Thaw,” *Nikita Khrushchev*, 2000, 160–76.

¹⁷ Vladimir Pomerantsev, “Ob iskrennosti v literature,” *Novii Mir*, no. 12 (1953): 218.

¹⁸ Feliks Kuznetsov, “Chetvertoe pokoleniie,” *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, July 27, 1961.

¹⁹ Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 183.

²⁰ Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 192.

²¹ Olga Bakich, “A New Type of Character in the Soviet Literature of the 1960s: The Early Works of Andrei Bitov,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 23, no. 2 (1981): 127.

наконец,—вернулся домой. Что же здесь неправоподобного—все как в жизни. При этом для такой манеры существует даже специальный термин: поток жизни.”²² The “special term” Geideko names was not a discovery of Soviet literature post-Stalin, of course, nor was it appropriated from Salinger or Joyce. An obvious point of reference in Russian literature would be the early literary experiments of the similarly youthful Tolstoy, especially his *Istoriia vcherashnego dnia*. As Irina Paperno notes, his sketch makes the first reference to the concept of the self, or life, as a written text²³:

Бог один знает, сколько разнообразных, занимательных впечатлений и мыслей, которые возбуждают эти впечатления, хотя темных, неясных, но [не] менее того понятных душе нашей, проходит в один день. Ежели бы можно было рассказать их так, чтобы сам бы легко читал себя и другие могли читать меня, как и я сам, вышла бы очень поучительная и занимательная книга, и такая, что недостало бы чернил на свете написать ее и типографщиков напечатать.²⁴

This is strongly reminiscent of the opening paragraph of Bitov’s “Avtobus,” previously cited in the introduction to this chapter: “Хорошо бы начать книгу, которую надо писать всю жизнь... То есть не надо, а можно писать всю жизнь: пиши себе и пиши. Ты кончишься, и она кончится. И чтобы все это было—правда. Чтобы все—искренне.”²⁵ Like the young Tolstoy, the protagonist of “Avtobus” is enthralled by the power of writing: “А книга—это чудо. Понимаете, это все, что я написал вот сейчас—этого всего не было. То есть это было... Во мне, скажем.”²⁶ He is similarly overtaken by despair at the enormity and likely futility of his task: “А потом, страшное дело, буду ходить и—о чем бы написать? О чем? Мое же дело?! Об этом? Но почему же именно об этом? Или о том? Тоже ни к чему...”²⁷ Paperno notes that Tolstoy’s early writings were greatly informed by his careful reading of Laurence Sterne, in which “the consciousness of the protagonist/narrator” is made into a “locus of action.”²⁸ The confessional mode is intricately bound up with the use of the first-person, or, failing that, a restricted focalization in the interest of self-exploration and self-expression. A striking aspect of Bitov’s early short stories, though, is the immediate recognition of the presence of other human beings, and, more specifically, their consciousnesses. Immediately following the hero’s declaration to write the “book of his life,” he muses on both the impossibility of anyone ever truly recognizing him and the inferred subjectivity of every other human being on the planet:

А я такой-то человек. У меня есть люди, которых я люблю, люди, с которым я знаком, люди, которых я не знаю. Все эти люди как-то меня знают, что-то обо мне

²² V. Geideko, “Ot opisaniia k Oomysleniiu,” *Sibirskie Ogni* 3 (1965): 174.

²³ Irina Paperno, “Who, What Am I?”: *Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self* (Cornell University Press, 2015), 14.

²⁴ Lev Tolstoy, *Polnoe Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 90 vols. (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1935), 1:279.

²⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 1:45.

²⁶ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 1:48.

²⁷ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 1:56.

²⁸ Irina Paperno, “Who, What Am I?”: *Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self* (Cornell University Press, 2015), 18.

иногда думают, когда есть к тому повод. А я совершенно не представляю, что они обо мне думают. Но мне кажется, они не допускают, что я какой-нибудь другой, чем они. Что я могу чего-то больше или хотя бы иначе, чем они. [...]

То-то и оно. Все люди—центры. Два с половиной миллиарда центров.²⁹

Within the space of three paragraphs, Bitov's protagonist has employed yet another image for the human being—not as a book to be written or read, but as a center of perception, which immediately evokes the early writings of Bakhtin:

Единство мира эстетического видения не есть смысловое-систематическое, но конкретно-архитектоническое единство, он расположен вокруг конкретного ценностного центра, который и мыслится и видится и любитя. Этим центром является человек, все в этом мире приобретает значение, смысл и ценность лишь в соотношении с человеком, как человеческое.³⁰

This “человек-центр” is inherently situated at a specific point in time and space, and the contingent nature of his existence in time and space is crucial to Bakhtin's concepts of self and other in *Avtor i geroi*, as Michael Holquist notes:

What Bakhtin means by his apparently casual reference to the difference between a “transcendental” level and the level of “immediate reality” is made clearer in these early essays in those places where Bakhtin distinguishes between *all* cognitive levels of awareness and the kind of *situated* awareness individual human beings experience in the unique sites they occupy in the world at a particular time and in a particular place. [...] the distinction is first of all charted in terms of visual perception. If two persons look at each other, one sees aspects of the other person and of the space we are in that the other does not and—this is very important—*vice versa*: “As we gaze at each other, two different worlds are reflected in the pupils of our eyes.”³¹

These “reflected worlds” are wistfully described in an extended lyrical passage from Bitov's story “Bezdel'nik” [“Good-for-nothing”]:

А вот и черный канал. Перехожу и попадаю на магистральную улицу. Тут много людей, и еще некоторое время, пока мной не овладеет суета, я могу идти и смотреть в лица. Многие люди проходят мимо меня, и я что-то понимаю про некоторых, они перестают быть незнакомыми—и проходят мимо, уходят. Тут приобретаешь и теряешь легко и мгновенно—прикосновение незнакомой жизни. Что-то тут не так. Особенно если девушки. Тут острее чувствуешь утрату: целый

²⁹ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 1:45.

³⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filosofskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2003), 56.

³¹ M. M Bakhtin et al., *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), xxii.

мир—взгляд—и мимо, мимо.³²

The fact that Bakhtin writes primarily on the *verbal* arts belies the intense visuality of his preferred terminology, which extends far beyond the model described by Holquist: “точка зрения,” “кругозор,” “избыток/недостаток видения,” “фон,” “автор-созерцатель...”³³ Bitov’s short stories from the late 1950s and early 1960s are full of mundane actions, the “*ноток жизни*” referenced by Geideko above, but many of them are peculiarly occupied by vision and the exchange of glances. The miracle of the written word—to refer to something that does not exist or cannot be spatialized, to engage in fantasy, to express one’s innermost thoughts and nature—is eventually disparaged by the young hero of “Avtobus” in favor of the simple practice of *seeing*: “Вот автобус. Два сиденья напротив. На каждом из них мужчина и женщина. Сидят напротив женщины и мужчины. И все читают. А я стою над ними, держась за поручень, и вижу их затылки и раскрытые книжки. Я не знаю, какие это книги, и пытаюсь узнать по тексту. Текст прыгает.”³⁴ A disconnected jumble of words enters the pages of the story, but nothing can be gleaned, and the protagonist loses his patience:

Нет, с меня хватит...

И, пожалуй, как понять друг друга? Ох, уж эти книжки! Пассажиры! Вы же сидите рядом, вы сидите напротив: женщины рядом с мужчиной и мужчина напротив женщины... И ни черта не понимаете! И не смотрите друг на друга...”³⁵

As typical for the protagonists of young prose, Bitov’s heroes are “dreamers,” and fantasy and reality often intermix. But they also exist in a contingent world, and their own fictional imaginings are inevitably interrupted by the external world. In “Solntse” [“The Sun”], for example, the purely cognitive activity of the protagonist is broken up by the entrance of a girl into his field of vision:

Сел в автобус. Сухой солнечный асфальт наматывался на колеса. Витя снова построил дела в затылок друг другу. Как кнопки.

В автобус вошла девушка. Она не имела никакого отношения к делу. Обыкновенная девушка. Довольно приятная. Витя взглянул ей в глаза, и это несколько нарушило очередность пунктов. Девушка была чему-то очень рада и села сзади. Витя стал снова располагать свои дела. Они прыгали. Спиной он все время чувствовал девушку. [...] По-видимому, девушка смотрела Вите в затылок, потому что, когда он повернулся, то столкнулся с ее взглядом. Она посмотрела на Витю, а он вспомнил про косичку, снова вобрал голову в плечи и потерялся: как она на него посмотрела?.. Так и сидел, будто его вот-вот пристукнут чем-нибудь

³² Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 89.

³³ See John Docker and Subhash Jaireth, “Introduction: Benjamin and Bakhtin: Vision and Visuality,” *Journal of Narrative Theory* 33, no. 1 (2003): 2.

³⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 51.

³⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 52.

сверху, и ничего не воспринимал, кроме девушки сзади.³⁶

The burning sensation the adolescent experiences on the bus can be seen as an illustrated reaction to what Bakhtin refers to as the surplus or excess of vision that occurs every time one seeing subject encounters another:

Ведь в каждый данный момент, в каком бы положении и как бы близко ко мне ни находился этот другой созерцаемый мною человек, я всегда буду видеть и знать нечто, чего сам он со своего места вне и против меня видеть не может: части тела, недоступные его собственному взору: голова, лицо и его выражение, мир за его спиной, целый ряд предметов и отношений, которые при том или ином взаимоотношении нашем доступны мне и не доступны ему.³⁷

Although Bakhtin emphasizes the mutual nature of this vision, this passage is clearly written from the perspective of the perceiver: the world behind *his* back, accessible to *me*. Bitov's adolescents, unlike the young Tolstoy, are not writing *after the fact*, and their mental flow consists not just of reflection or reverie but *reaction* as well: they engage in life-writing and read the others surrounding them, but they are aware of the possibility that they themselves are visible within the world they inhabit; they, too, can be *read*. Paperno notes that Tolstoy's experiments in recording consciousness are accomplished by a bifurcation of the subject that is primarily *temporal* in nature: "Written from memory, in the past tense, this narrative nevertheless strives to imitate a notation of immediate experience—something like a stenographic transcription of a human consciousness involved in the act of apprehending itself. [...] the splitting of the self into a protagonist and a narrator, who operate in two different time-frames."³⁸ Although Bitov's protagonists also engage in metacognition, the outside point from which they engage in the act of narration is much more spatially oriented, in a manner reminiscent of Bakhtin's characterization of Dostoevsky:³⁹ "Возможность одновременного сосуществования, возможность быть рядом или друг против друга является для Достоевского как бы критерием отбора существенного от несущественного."⁴⁰ This *proximity* never leaves the consciousness of his heroes, and they share with their Dostoevskian counterparts the anxiety this can bring: "Сознание у Достоевского никогда не довлеет себе, но находится в напряженном отношении к другому сознанию. Каждое переживание, каждая мысль героя внутренне-

³⁶ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 20-21.

³⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filosofskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2003), 104.

³⁸ Irina Paperno, "Who, What Am I?": *Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self* (Cornell University Press, 2015), 17.

³⁹ The influence of Dostoevsky on the young Bitov's Leningrad extends beyond the hero's presentation: "Bezdel'nik" contains two short episodes with a suffering horse and a young woman in possible distress that are strongly evocative of scenes from *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*. See Chances, pp. 97-98, and Stephen Hagen, "The Stories of Andrei Bitov, 1958-1966: A Search for Individual Perception" (Durham, UK, Durham University, 1980), 12. George Gibian also makes the connection between the young urban hero of the 1960s and Dostoevsky in "The Urban Theme in Recent Soviet Russian Prose: Notes Toward a Typology," *Slavic Review* 37, no. 1 (1978): 40-50.

⁴⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 2: "Problemy tvorcestva Dostoevskogo", 1929 stat'i o L. Tolstom, 1929 zapisi kursa po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922-1927*, vol. 2, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2000), 37.

диалогичны, полемически окрашены, полны противоборства, или, наоборот, открыты чужому наитию, во всяком случае не сосредоточены просто на своем предмете, но сопровождаются вечной оглядкой на другого человека.”⁴¹ The glance of another can be viewed as a welcome intervention, or at least with great curiosity, as in “Bezdel’nik,” which opens with an admission by the protagonist that he cannot say “какой я на самом деле,” gesturing instead towards a mirror: “Ведь именно перед зеркалом мы понимаем, какими нас видят люди. Для того и смотримся.”⁴² In the story’s final scene, the window of his supervisor’s office is transformed in the hero’s imagination into a snow globe, and the last words evoke one last time the viewpoint of *another*: “Там снежный город. Кто-то живет в нем, вовсе крохотный... Интересно, каким он видит меня оттуда?”⁴³

Despite the frequent exchange of glances, the reader is never shown the view “оттуда”—we never obtain a sense of “polyphony” of multiply-interacting character-perspectives, only the hero’s awareness of these other points of seeing.⁴⁴ Of course, as scholars such as Deming Brown or Bakich observed, Bitov’s early writing differed significantly from his colleagues in this regard. If Dostoevsky, to paraphrase Bakhtin, depicted not “the poor clerk” but the “*self-consciousness*” of the poor clerk, then Bitov’s stories describe the self-consciousness of a young dreamer.⁴⁵ In the first chapter of *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*, Bakhtin speaks repeatedly on the “inner freedom” of the author’s characters: “это прежде всего—свобода и самостоятельность их в самой структуре романа по отношению к автору, точнее—по отношению к обычным овнешающим и завершающим авторскими определениям.”⁴⁶ In a certain sense, this freedom is issued at the cost of the hero’s *definability*, in terms of both their mimetic and thematic traits: “Все устойчивые, объективные качества героя, его социальное положение, его социологическая и характерологическая типичность, его *habitus*, его душевный облик и даже самая его наружность,—т.е. все то, что обычно служит автору для создания твердого и устойчивого образа героя—“кто он”—у Достоевского становится объектом рефлексии самого героя...”⁴⁷ That same question—“кто он?”—was difficult to answer for the reviewers of Bitov’s 1963 short story collection *Bol’shoi shar* [*The Big Balloon*]. In a review of Bitov’s later prose, Natal’ia Ivanova referred back to the hero of the early novella *Odna strana* [*One Country*] as an example of an “auto-hero”: “не герой даже, а инструмент.

⁴¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 2: “Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo”, 1929 stat’i o L. Tolstom, 1929 zapisi kursa po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922-1927*, vol. 2, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2000), 41.

⁴² Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 83.

⁴³ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 105.

⁴⁴ It is interesting that Bakhtin opens his work on Dostoevsky with a characterization of the polyphonic novel, but in the second section, “Geroi u Dostoevskogo,” the characters he brings forth as examples are overwhelmingly from Dostoevsky’s shorter works: Devushkin, the Underground Man, the narrator of “Krotkaia”.

⁴⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 2: “Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo”, 1929 stat’i o L. Tolstom, 1929 zapisi kursa po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922-1927*, vol. 2, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2000), 44.

⁴⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 2: “Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo”, 1929 stat’i o L. Tolstom, 1929 zapisi kursa po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922-1927*, vol. 2, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2000), 19.

⁴⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 2: “Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo”, 1929 stat’i o L. Tolstom, 1929 zapisi kursa po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922-1927*, vol. 2, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2000), 44.

Инструмент восприятия и инструмент анализа этого восприятия.”⁴⁸ Vsevolod Voevodin in his appraisal of the early story “Inostrannyi iazyk” [“A Foreign Language”] viewed Bitov’s technique not as simply a different approach, but a failure:

Я уже говорил об умении Битова выражать сложные душевные состояния, проявившемся в рассказе “Иностранный язык”. Между тем весь рассказ в целом оставляет очень смутное впечатление. [...] О чем же рассказ? О том, что нераспознаваемы друг для друга человеческие души, сталкиваются и отталкиваются, как частицы в пространстве? Или все проще, гораздо проще, и дело в особых личных свойствах героя, в его нерешительности, рефлексии, обостренной застенчивости? Но тут-то и беда, что герой даже именем наделен—Генка—и профессия названа—монтер, однако в рассказе он бесплотен, он абстракция, просто так, некий молодой человек, вообще “он.” Характер никак не получился.

Так же и в рассказе “Дверь”. Это хороший рассказ о терзаниях юношеской любви, о юной бурной ревности, но опять-таки в рассказе действует юноша “вообще”, лишенный индивидуальных, социальных черт, которыми только и определяются подобные натуры.⁴⁹

Voevodin offers the character’s personal name and profession as evidence that Bitov has not held up one of the fundamental aspects of mimetic character—that the subject of the narrative be a clearly individuated human being and act in accordance with his position within society, respectively. Nearly every mention of Bitov during the first few years of his career is accompanied by an acknowledgement of his obvious skill as a prose writer, and especially his ability to convey inner, “psychological” experience, but the characters from his early short stories very rarely distinguish themselves *as individuals*.

In the introduction to *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*, Bakhtin cites the prevalent critical conception of Dostoevsky’s novels as ideological novels, and his heroes as these ideologies made flesh.⁵⁰ Bakhtin acknowledges the role that multiply coexisting ideologies plays in his concept of the polyphonic novel, but stresses that the hero of Dostoevsky’s novel is nonetheless a human being: “изображал он в конце концов не идею в человеке, а, говоря его собственными словами,—‘человека в человеке’”.⁵¹ In her exploration of mimetic characterization in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, Chloe Kitzinger notes that the autonomy that Bakhtin ascribes to the former’s characters is in many ways a continuation of the views of thinkers like Dmitry Merezhkovsky and Viacheslav Ivanov, who wrote of “the tendency of Dostoevsky’s characters to overstep the bounds of artwork and text”.⁵² In his tripartite model,

⁴⁸ Natal’ia Ivanova, “Sud’ba i Rol’,” *Druzhba narodov*, no. 3 (1988): 245.

⁴⁹ Vsevolod Voevodin, “Otvetsvennost’ talanta,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, March 24, 1964.

⁵⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 2: “Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo”, 1929 stat’i o L. Tolstom, 1929 zapisi kursa po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922-1927*, vol. 2, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2000), 11.

⁵¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 2: “Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo”, 1929 stat’i o L. Tolstom, 1929 zapisi kursa po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922-1927*, vol. 2, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2000), 40.

⁵² Chloe Kitzinger, “Illusion and Instrument: Problems of Mimetic Characterization in Dostoevsky

Phelan describes the mimetic component of *character* as that which is “directed to its imitation of a possible person,” and the mimetic aspect of narrative is “concerned with imitating the world beyond the fiction, what we typically call ‘reality.’”⁵³ The mimetic strength of Dostoevsky’s characters is attributable in no small part to the intense psychologism of his writing, his ability to produce textual approximations of the innermost mental and psychic processes. But the peculiar vividness that Bakhtin and many other readers of Dostoevsky describe is not achieved by imitating a reality; figures like Goliadkin or the Underground Man are larger-than-life because they instead *reference* the world beyond the text through their rebellious independence in the face of the demands of author, narrative, and literary convention. The “round” character, as defined by E.M. Forster, is often associated with the mimetic or representational aspects of characterization, and Forster directly connects their liveliness to their “mutiny”: “For [the characters] have these numerous parallels with people like ourselves, they try to live their own lives and are consequently often engaged in treason against the main scheme of the book.”⁵⁴ In other words, the Dostoevskian hero as imagined by Bakhtin often is received as *more* “mimetic,” in the sense of “really existing,” when they are aware of their own irreality as an element within the synthetic narrative structure.

Why, then, does Bitov’s early hero fail to distinguish himself? Like Dostoevsky, Bitov does not depict his protagonist, but the protagonist’s self-consciousness, and he does so with widely recognized precision. This self-consciousness is acutely aware of the presence of the other, very often operating on a principle of visual perception and spatial contingency, as in Dostoevsky. The principle difference between them can be found in the underlying identity of this “other” that is so painfully felt in both Bitov and Dostoevsky. For Raskolnikov and Goliadkin, these “others” certainly include the other literary characters that co-inhabit their respective fictional worlds, but they quite often perceive the gaze of a higher being, that of *the author*. Eric Naiman’s Nabokovian reading of Dostoevsky’s “Dvoinik” brings the latter’s metafictional tendencies to the fore: “[Goliadkin]’s awareness of his approaching exit functions as evidence of the story’s existence as a plotted, artistic work.”⁵⁵ And although Bakhtin opens his work on Dostoevsky with a vision of the polyphonic novel’s contested ground, the majority of analysis of the Dostoevskian hero in the second chapter concerns itself with the relations between a *single* protagonist and his or her creator, the author. In Bitov’s early sketches, the author’s presence is scarcely felt, if at all. V. Kamianov, for example, wrote that the hero of *Oдна страна* “свободно жил и самовыявлялся, не чувствуя на себе требовательного взгляда автора.”⁵⁶ Adolf Urban argued that many important questions about the hero’s fate and purpose remained unanswered in his stories, and as a result, “мы не знаем степени личной авторской в них заинтересованности.”⁵⁷ Analyzing Bitov’s later heroes, Ivanova found the relationship between

and Tolstoy” (Berkeley, CA, University of California, Berkeley, 2016), 163.

⁵³ Quoted in Matthew Clark and James Phelan, *Debating Rhetorical Narratology: On the Synthetic, Mimetic, and Thematic Aspects of Narrative* (Ohio State University Press, 2020), 53.

⁵⁴ E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 66.

⁵⁵ Eric Naiman, “What If Nabokov Had Written ‘Dvoinik’? Reading Literature Preposterously,” *The Russian Review* 64, no. 4 (2005): 583.

⁵⁶ V. Kamianov, “Evklidu-Evklidovo,” *Voprosy Literaturny*, no. 4 (1969): 36.

⁵⁷ Adol’f Urban, “V nastoiashchem vremeni,” *Zvezda*, no. 7 (1973): 215.

author and hero in his early stories to be quite simple: “Безо всякой там путаницы: герой-автор, автор-герой.”⁵⁸ The author is either identical to the hero or else is little more than a stenographer of the hero’s consciousness; in any case, it seems that the author in Bitov’s earliest stories has lost the “ценностную точку внеаходимости герою”⁵⁹ that Bakhtin discusses in *Avtor i geroi*, under which three “typical” situations can arise:

In the first situation, the hero possesses the author, who must flail about for any possible positions outside of the protagonist to grab hold of; in many cases it is the work’s other characters who provide *terra firma*: “вживаясь в их эмоционально-волевою установку по отношению к автобиографическому герою, он пытается освободиться от него...”⁶⁰ In the early short stories, other “действующие лица” are hardly present, and their perspective is never accessed. If the position of “outsidedness” cannot be attained, then a specific artistic phenomenon often takes place, as observed on the Leningrad bus rides of Bitov’s young hero: “задний план, мир за спиною героя не разработан и не видится отчетливо автором и созерцаем, а дан предположительно, неуверенно изнутри самого героя...”⁶¹

In the second situation, the author takes hold of the hero and introduces “завершающие моменты” within him, and the hero begins to determine himself. The hero can then act and exist entirely in accordance with these artistic principles, as in 18th century neoclassical theatre, or alternatively it can overcome this possession and integrate the author’s reaction within itself, as the Romantic hero does.

Bakhtin devotes much less attention to the third possible situation: “герой является сам своим автором, осмысливает свою собственную жизнь эстетически, как бы играет роль; такой герой, в отличие от бесконечного героя романтизма и неискупленного героя Достоевского, самодоволен и уверенно завершен.”⁶²

It would seem that Bitov’s young hero—who equates living with writing, who is constantly daydreaming, who projects semi-finalizing observations onto nearby strangers—belongs to this third category. But what role, exactly, does the young hero play? The self-consciousness that sharpens his powers of observation erodes his уверенность, but more importantly, the hero-narrator never senses the presence of the author, or even the reader. The “others” to which he relates are only the passersby who live within the same fictional plane, while the line delineating “self” and “other” in *Avtor i geroi* and *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo* is clearly drawn between author and protagonist. To “play a role” requires knowledge of some kind of outside structuring principle to overlay upon one’s own life. What Bitov has presented in these early sketches are not literary characters in the traditional sense, as neither the reader nor the protagonist perceives any point outside of the hero/themselves *that can finalize them*

⁵⁸ Natal’ia Ivanova, “Sud’ba i rol’,” *Druzhba narodov*, no. 3 (1988): 244.

⁵⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filososfskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2003), 99.

⁶⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filososfskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2003), 99.

⁶¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filososfskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2003), 100.

⁶² Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filososfskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2003), 101-102.

aesthetically. Bakhtin warns that “чистое вживание” alone cannot form an artistic vision: “Эстетическая деятельность и начинается собственно тогда, когда мы возвращаемся в себя и на свое место вне страдающего, оформляем и завершаем материал вживания...”⁶³ Instead of character we have a partial model of the process of characterization, an illustration of what Michael Holquist calls “[Bakhtin’s] first law of human perception: whatever is perceived can be perceived only from a uniquely situated place in the overall structure of possible points of view.”⁶⁴ In the absence of the synthetic component, however, the mimetic potential of the early Bitov hero fails to develop.

When discussing Bitov’s early heroes, Adol’f Urban spoke of their strengths and failures as artistic representations in the collective. Although the majority of the protagonists do possess proper names, Urban only mentions Lobyshev,⁶⁵ the hero of 1962’s “Penelopa,” by name. After circulating for a few years, the short story was published in the 1965 almanac *Molodoi Leningrad*,⁶⁶ where it received predominately positive reviews. E. Sidorov declared it to be the almanac’s “most interesting and mature” piece,⁶⁷ and Iakov El’sberg called it a “воспроизведение дум и чувствований, неотрывное от пристальнейшего психологического анализа и самоанализа.”⁶⁸ Writing in 1973, Vsevolod Sakharov still believed it to be Bitov’s best work.⁶⁹ At first glance, “Penelopa” is similar to Bitov’s other early stories: a young engineer leaves work, strolls down the Nevsky, decides to see a film adaptation of *The Odyssey*, meets a poorly-dressed young woman while waiting for the movie to start, feels guilt and excitement at their sudden closeness and possible encounter after the film’s conclusion, and finally detaches himself from her with a false promise of a future meeting. A simple explanation for the work’s greater acclaim and the stronger impression left by Lobyshev is the simple fact that “Penelopa” was, at seventeen pages, longer than previous Bitov short stories. And although the aloof young hero is not terribly different from the protagonists of “Solntse” or “Avtobus,” even the barest of plot summaries above attests to the story’s much more strongly developed structure. Olga Bakich is able to break “Penelopa” down into three separate parts (“Introduction, Complication, Climax”), which is scarcely possible for the wanderings that make up the *Bol’shoi shar* collection.⁷⁰ But “Penelopa” is not just distinguished by its word count or a stricter adherence to

⁶³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filosofskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2003), 107.

⁶⁴ M. M Bakhtin et al., *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), xxiv.

⁶⁵ In some versions of “Penelopa” the hero is named Bobyshev, not Lobyshev, such as in the *Sobranie sochineniia* put out by *Molodaia gvardiia*. Page numbers are quoted from this edition, but in accordance with the original story and its original reviewers I will refer to the hero as “Lobyshev.”

⁶⁶ According to Bitov, it was “almost” shown to Tvardovskii and “almost” published in *Molodaia gvardiia. Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 568.

⁶⁷ E. Sidorov, “Chto za slovom?,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 64 (June 2, 1966): 2–3.

⁶⁸ Iakov El’sberg, “Poiski i ozhidaniia,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, March 8, 1967.

⁶⁹ Vsevolod Ivanovich Sakharov, “Alkhimiia prozy,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, October 3, 1973, 5.

Not all responses were positive: Vsevolod Voevodin was unimpressed with the hero and the story itself: “Здесь [...] скрупулезный анализ душевного состояния героя, щегольской, псевдоутонченный, с той же оглядкой на переводные образцы. Чего стоит один параллельный ряд: образы Эллады—современность. Ведь еще Джойс положил начало такой игре!” “Na melkovod’e,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 19, 1966, 3..

⁷⁰ Olga Bakich, “A New Type of Character in the Soviet Literature of the 1960s: The Early Works of

the rules of storytelling; author and hero are newly distanced from each other in a manner hitherto unknown to Bitov. This distance does not come at the cost of the story's psychologism, as Iakov El'sberg noted: "Соотношения голосов Лобышева и рассказчика-писателя усиливают психологическое и моральное напряжение рассказа. Чувствуется, что если Лобышев отвечает за себя, то рассказчик берет на себя ответственность и за него, и за точность передачи его мыслей и чувств в их развитии."⁷¹ This mechanism is examined in greater detail by Bakich:

Lobyshev's thought processes are presented by means of an interesting narrative technique. The story is told almost entirely in the third person, and most of the incidents are presented in the following order: (1) the narrator's description of an event, action, or background in the third person, from Lobyshev's point of view; (2) presentation of Lobyshev's feelings or thoughts about these events, actions, or background, either in the third person or in the form of Lobyshev's direct or indirect interior monologues; (3) presentation of Lobyshev's thoughts about his own thoughts in the form of Lobyshev's indirect interior monologues; (4) the narrator's examination, usually in the third person, of the ways in which Lobyshev thinks and suppresses his thoughts.⁷²

For illustration, Bakich cites a passage in which Lobyshev is walking along Nevskii, but a scene in the cinema buffet also shows this process in action:

И он шел с ней между столиками крохотного буфета, казалось ему, бесконечно долго. И в это недолгое время, что он шел, тяжеловатые мысли вспархивали в его мозгу, большие и шуршащие, как совы. Эти мысли, эти совы, были о том, что и раньше бывало вскользь, но теперь они были порезче, так что, по крайней мере, не приходилось уже сомневаться в их существовании: были они или не были. Были. Были они о том, почему же он стыдится этой девушки, раз уж с ней идет, и как это позорно стыдиться кого-то перед кем-то и гораздо сильнее, чем себя перед собой. И никакого объяснения этому, кроме того, что последнего никто не видит, Лобышев не находил. А уж это вовсе подлю, думал Лобышев. Это-то ладно, но то, что он сказал, пока в его мозгу летали эти совы, поразило его еще сильнее.⁷³

Bakich goes on to note that the increased distance between narrator and hero is brought into greater relief from a few explicitly metaliterary authorial interjections that directly reference the story's artificial nature:

И вот он проходит в темную подворотню кинотеатра, и это чуть ли не первая фраза рассказа, который я собираюсь писать. И теперь наконец я начинаю с нее ради еще одной, единственной, которую я знаю и которая должна быть чуть ли не в самом конце. Так вот, я приступаю к началу рассказа, и если мне до того уже не стыдно, то меня охватывает дрожь, потому что я приступаю. Он проходит и не думает ни о

Andrei Bitov," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 23, no. 2 (1981): 128-29.

⁷¹ Iakov El'sberg, "Poiski i ozhidaniia," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, March 8, 1967, 4.

⁷² Olga Bakich, "A New Type of Character in the Soviet Literature of the 1960s: The Early Works of Andrei Bitov," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 23, no. 2 (1981): 130.

⁷³ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 125-126.

чем, потому что о саде он вроде бы и не думал, а о картине уже все передумал до этого.⁷⁴

These asides would later become a familiar element of Bitov's prose, but here it is a novel intervention into the story's narrative flow.

Contemporary reviewers in the Soviet Union did not mention Bitov's lifting of the curtain within "Penelopa," instead emphasizing the story's ethical value: in Sidorov's opinion, it represented a kind of testing ground: "Писатель рассматривает своего героя в исключительной, нетипичной ситуации, чтобы резче проявить его гражданскую, человеческую сущность. Это не просто психологический, но и социальный опыт."⁷⁵ For El'sberg, it is ultimately an argument for moral vigilance: "Битов показывает, что пошлость и подлость проникли во внутренний мир хорошего парня потому, что он не был внутренне готов к отпору таким настроениям и поступкам. Решительное сопротивление даже самым мелким проявлениям пошлости и подлости, которое стало бы инстинктом,— вот за какое состояние чувств и мыслей борется рассказ."⁷⁶ Lobyshev's lowest moment comes when he gives his new acquaintance a false address, knowing that he will not bring himself to ask his workplace to hire her. The moral realization that strikes Lobyshev—the "фраза, которая должна быть чуть ли не в самом конце"—is indeed quite damning: "...Ведь это же я делаю каждый день! Больше, меньше, но каждый день, думал Лобышев."⁷⁷ But it is unclear if this knowledge originates entirely from within, as El'sberg claims. Bakich notes that the hero feels most comfortable within the darkness of the cinema, safe from the eyes of others, and his epiphany is immediately preceded by the terrible *awareness* of his own visibility: "Он шел, и ему казалось, что все его видят, столь освещенного солнцем, что все это у него на лбу написано."⁷⁸ A few pages earlier, Lobyshev himself had temporarily occupied the role of "автор-созерцатель," observing the girl in a pseudo-artistic manner, enjoying his excess of vision not with love, as Bakhtin desires, but voyeuristically:

Девушки отсюда видно не было. Задыхаясь, он опустил монетку. Монетка провалилась. Снова опустил. Искоса поглядывал в дверь: девушки видно не было. Монетка снова провалилась. Сзади остановились две совсем юные девочки, одна хорошенькая. Стояли ждали, когда он позвонит. Девушки видно не было. Лобышев отошел от автомата. Девочки заняли его место, щебеча. Выходить на Невский не было сил. Он отошел в глубь парадной. Обернулся — в дверях был солнечный прямоугольник Невского. Шли люди. Стоял напротив дом. И проезжали машины. И вдруг посередине прямоугольника, как в раме, как в кадре, появилась девушка. Она-то была очень хорошо видна, освещенная. Он был в тени. Она меня не видит, подумал Лобышев. Но это было ясно, что она его тоже видела. Иначе бы она так не

⁷⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 122.

⁷⁵ E. Sidorov, "Chto za slovom?," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 64 (June 2, 1966): 2.

⁷⁶ Iakov El'sberg, "Poiski i ozhidaniia," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, March 8, 1967, 4.

⁷⁷ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 133.

⁷⁸ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 133.

смотрела.⁷⁹

The intense social pressure felt by Lobyshev would make “Penelopa” a moment of *ethical*, and not *moral* education. Given the story’s combination of situated seeing and the narrator’s newfound distance, however, Lobyshev’s realization could be a tacit recognition of his *visibility* not just as a passerby, but as a literary protagonist, whose innermost thoughts and sensations are “у него на лбу написано.” The strength of this moment, and of Lobyshev as a character, is unattainable without both the divergence of author and hero and the synthetic signaling of “Penelopa.”

2.1 “Опыты приспособленчества”: encounters with Socialist Realism in *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* and *Puteshestvie k drugu detstva*

Bitov’s second major work *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* was published in the journal *Iunost’* [Youth] in 1964, although the majority of it was written between 1959-1961. According to Bitov’s notes in his 2014 anthology *Nulevoi tom*, a summer spent mining up North in 1959 left a deep impression on him, and he began his second *povest’* in the first person. Writing continued in starts and stops, until, in Bitov’s words:

От своего старшего друга (Сергея Вольфа) [...] услышал я впервые слово модернизм и имена трех его китов: Пруста, Генри Джеймса и Джойса, – и все это были лишь слова, слова, слова. Так, про Генри Джеймса Сережа сказал, что тот писал от первого лица, тут же переводя его в третье, чем и достигал большей убедительности. Этой информации мне тут же хватило, чтобы перевести свое Я в ОН, представить себе неоконченную повесть как роман и, соответственно, назвать его ОН – ЭТО Я.⁸⁰

Despite this breakthrough, Bitov considered his “first novel” to be unpublishable in part due to its depiction of mandatory army service, but when Soviet publishers requested for a second manuscript in 1964, the novel, now bearing the tentative title “*Prizyvnik*” [The Conscript] seemed the most suitable for revision and submission: “все-таки какой-никакой реализм плюс рабочая тематика.”⁸¹ Bitov did not choose the work’s final title, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo*, which, along with its appearance in the flagship journal *Iunost’*, laid an easy trail for contemporary reviewers wishing to interpret the novel-novella along the now-familiar genre conventions of confessional prose. Ronald Meyer, writing in 1986, indeed considers *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* to be Bitov’s “most representative young prose story,”⁸² and there are obvious grounds to do so beyond its title. The semi-autobiographical hero, Kirill Kapustin, is in many ways a typical *geroi-neudachnik*: recently expelled from his university, the “неуверенный человек” decides on a whim to travel to the far North to work in a mine before he is ultimately drafted into the army. In comparison with the urban wanderers of his short stories, Kirill’s social alienation is much more strongly and concretely articulated, although the cleavages depicted are not as much

⁷⁹ Andrei Bitov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991), 132.

⁸⁰ Andrei Bitov, *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]* (Moskva: AST, 2014), 459.

⁸¹ Andrei Bitov, *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]* (Moskva: AST, 2014), 459.

⁸² Meyer, Ronald. *Andrej Bitov’s “Pushkinskij Dom.”* Indiana University, 1986, p. 8.

generational—between fathers and sons⁸³—as socio-economic—Kirill’s dormitory roommates, students and aspiring members of the intelligentsia, and the proletarian miners with whom he spends his working days. Bitov has stated that *Detstvo* was partially inspired by his desire to write a “real novella” that would stand apart from the frivolity of his first, the travelogue *Odna strana* that had appeared in 1963’s *Bol’shoi shar*,⁸⁴ and this is reflected in part by the work’s episodic but nevertheless strictly chronological *siuzhet*: a brief prologue depicts Kirill standing on a train platform shortly before his departure and correspondence with his parents a month afterwards. Part One traces a three day span in which Kirill manages to fall in love, narrowly avoid a catastrophic mining accident, and have a falling out with his roommates. Part Two begins weeks later as his former colleagues are preparing to return home while Kirill remains in the mining town. He receives a draft notice at the start of winter, and the final third of the book is dedicated to his last days in the North as he prepares to say farewell to his colleagues and his girlfriend, Valia.

When comparing the first version of the novella with its final published variant, the differences are relatively minor: a reordering of episodes in the first half, more piquant language, different choices of words etc. Nonetheless, Bitov in 2014 spoke of the final version of *Detstvo* as an act of “conformism” necessitated by the immediate economic demands of a young family.⁸⁵ *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* was published in book form by Sovetskii pisatel’ in 1965, with an inner jacket description framing the novella as a *Bildungsroman* of sorts: “[Кирилл] становится рабочим-грузчиком на шахте в маленьком северном городке, узнает труд, дружбу, любовь, делает первый шаг к зрелости.”⁸⁶ Read from a distance, *Detstvo* does, in fact, trace such a journey: in the novella’s closing scene, Kirill literally finds his place within society as he joins a column of departing soldiers. For a critic such as I. Grinberg, the final words of *Detstvo* were a fitting representation of the post-Stalin ideals of “socialist morality” and the “всестороннее развитие” of Soviet citizens:

“Уходит человек по дороге в колонне со всеми...” — вот заключительная фраза повести, и, конечно же, она говорит прежде всего о нравственном состоянии молодого человека, осознавшего, что его личность, его ум и сердце свободно раскрываются и мужают только в тесном общении с современниками, в связи с окружающим трудовым миром.⁸⁷

In his review Grinberg juxtaposed the novel’s moral, as interpreted above, with the main body of the text, and especially in its depiction of secondary characters: “Нельзя не заметить то, что в повести часто возникает ощущение скованности чувств, двухмерности изображения.”⁸⁸ Kirill’s closest acquaintance is the middle-aged miner Kolia, who is introduced in an early chapter helpfully titled “Kolia—drug.” His importance is signified by the presence of a biography, however succinct: “Такая у него была жизнь, что не способен он теперь от

⁸³ Fathers and sons or “uncles and nephews,” as Nancy Condee characterizes the unstable foundations of kinship authority during the Thaw. “Cultural Codes of the Thaw,” *Nikita Khrushchev*, 2000, 162-163.

⁸⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]* (Moskva: AST, 2014), 459.

⁸⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]* (Moskva: AST, 2014), 654.

⁸⁶ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 4.

⁸⁷ I. Grinberg, “A rasti emu-v nebo,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, January 19, 1965, 3.

⁸⁸ I. Grinberg, “A rasti emu-v nebo,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, January 19, 1965, 3.

работы устать. И тюрьма, и война, и шахта—тридцать лет из сорока пяти—вся жизнь.”⁸⁹ In *The One vs. the Many*, Alex Woloch identifies “two kinds of minoriness” among secondary characters; the “worker,” who is “reduced to a single functional use within the narrative,” and the “eccentric,” who “plays a disruptive, oppositional role within the plot.”⁹⁰ Kolia fulfills a number of important functions within *Detstvo*: typically silent, he serves as a companion and teacher to Kirill as he learns a new profession. More dramatically, he rescues Kirill from a mining accident and is later himself gravely injured by a mining wagon. In Woloch’s formulation, “eccentric” characters are quite often “wounded, exiled, expelled,” or otherwise removed from a narrative as penance for their disruption. The image of a crippled worker or soldier is indeed common to many of the 19th century Realist novels that make up the source material for Woloch’s study of characterization. In the context of Socialist Realism, however, Kolia serves the role of a helper, not a disruptor, and his disfigurement is more evocative of Ostrovsky than Dickens: “[Кирилл] подходил к [койке] и уже ясно видел что-то неестественное, громоздкое, распиравшее белоснежную простыню. [...] Тогда он увидел, что это громоздкое и есть Коля, только он был там, внутри, как в раковине, и видна была только маленькая и сухонькая его голова с паутинкой серых волос на лбу. Это был Коля и не Коля.”⁹¹ While *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* takes its formal inspiration from the young Bitov’s introduction to Joycean narrative techniques, its basic elements and underlying structure bear a strong resemblance to the Socialist Realist novel, albeit in its “confessional” variant, as Katerina Clark writes:

The youth novel might be described as a kind of mutation, for though most of the standard events of the plot are different from those of the typical Stalin novel, the underlying structural impulse is the same: a rite of passage by which the hero passes from a state of "spontaneity" to one of "consciousness" and thus achieves social integration. The *sequence* of events thus remains much the same as before.⁹²

True to form, *Detstvo* begins as the hero stands on a literal threshold between home and what Clark calls “the other place,” a remote site associated with intense physical labor. No longer a student, Kirill is in the mines not as a future engineer but as an entry-level toiler.⁹³ The most detailed description of manual labor in *Detstvo* comes in Part One, when Kirill’s section of the mine must be entirely cleared for a surprise inspection. In a somewhat farcical manner, the vividness of the description is in part due to the fact that Kirill is extremely hungover at the start of his shift. The same rhythmic exertion is experienced in a much more positive manner later that same day while running in a local park: “Бег был приятен и напоминал труд. Его ритм. И все уже происходит само собой: ноги выбрасываются по очереди вперед — сами, дыхание вырывается — само, и стон, и пот. Глаза смотрят под ноги, выбирают путь, а дорожка

⁸⁹ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 15.

⁹⁰ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003), 25.

⁹¹ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 168.

⁹² Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 226.

⁹³ Writing home to his mother less than a month after his arrival in the town, Kirill relates how quickly he has adapted to this career reorientation: “Скоро месяц, как я тут. Теперь я уже не ученик, а «подземный трудящийся IV разряда» — так это называется. И мне кажется, что я только и делаю, что выхожу на смену: просыпаюсь — иду на смену, прихожу со смены — засыпаю. Работа, как здесь говорят, «медвежья». Но ничего.” *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 10.

убегает под ноги — серая, ровная, будто едешь. Так можно бежать очень долго.”⁹⁴ Kirill’s run takes on greater and greater momentum until he is carried by his body to the peak of a nearby mountain, where his entire surroundings are perfectly visible to him and he himself is above the gaze of everyone but the narrator. This second feat of labor is entirely private, and it is this trial that concludes Part One and seemingly enacts a transformation within the hero: “Он лежал в кровати и улыбался, чувствуя свое тело отдыхающим, тонким, стройным, с в о и м . И уснул с чувством, как на вершине, когда всё — впереди и ничто не заслоняет взгляда.”⁹⁵

In Clark’s analysis of the “conventional Soviet novel,” the hero almost inevitably comes into contact with a mentor-father figure who guides them, in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist historical plot, from spontaneity to consciousness. In the transition from the production novel to the youth novel, the mentor typically undergoes less of a transformation than the protagonist. In Clark’s words, he is “usually an older worker, possibly the brigade leader, and probably a member of the Komsomol. [...] He is person of integrity who believes firmly in the collectivist Communist ideal. [...] At the end of most youth novels the mentor dies, usually in some engagement with elemental forces or as the result of some accident.”⁹⁶ Here, too, Bitov fulfills requirements only partially: Kolia exits the narrative in the appropriate manner and is impeccably proletarian in origins, but he has served time in prison and never demonstrates any real ideological knowledge of any kind in his time with Kirill in the mines. When Kirill visits Kolia in the hospital, the conversation is initially concerned with workplace and medical topics before taking on an entirely different tone towards the end:

Я вот все лежу, — сказал Коля, — не шевельнуться — все думаю. Думал, что умру, — так что думал много. И подумал я, что все люди жизнью своей недовольны. Им все кажется: не такая у них сегодня жизнь, а настоящая — завтра начнется. Им все кажется, что это пока, а должно быть — другое. А другого — не будет. Так и умереть можно — все ждут и ждут, и ни одного дня своего вроде и не жили. Всем кажется: есть, какая-то «особая» жизнь, а сейчас — так себе, притворство. Может, это только мне кажется? .. Меня все гнуло — я все снова пережить хотел. Слишком много было лишнего. Иначе вроде все могло бы быть... Но вот я думал — и это прошло. Вдруг я понял, что не в обстоятельствах дело. Видел я мало, потому что плохо видел и мало любил. Жизнь всюду одна — так мне теперь кажется. Я не знал хорошей жизни, но теперь припомнить — все у меня было: и любовь, и вино, и товарищи... а уж рабо-оты! И свобода была, и горе... Все было. Может, чего-то побольше, а чего-то поменьше, чем надо, но все это было. И вроде бы как и у людей — настоящее. Вот я и думаю теперь, что понимать это — и есть свобода.

Кирилл удивлялся. Ему казалось, что это и есть то самое, о чем он думал все последнее время.

This treatise on inner freedom—such an important topic for Thaw-era literature—clearly can be read as a form of the “initiation” rite that Clark finds essential to the Soviet novel; a “final encounter as one in which the “baton” (*estafeta*) is passed on or as one in which the elder gives

⁹⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 94.

⁹⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 98.

⁹⁶ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 230.

his "testament" (*poucenie*).⁹⁷ But the purity of the moment is immediately undone by Kolia's next utterance:

— А иногда я думаю, — сказал Коля, — что, может, и не так все это, что я тебе сказал... Может, и не так. Может, что вино было похуже, и бабы понекрасивей, и вкалывания побольше, и свободы поменьше — может, это и худо, думаю. Думаю, может, чтобы все это было немного получше — в этом и смысл? Может, я ничего-то на свете и не видел, раз все у меня было чуть похуже? Только похуже чего? А, Кирюша?

Теперь Кириллу казалось, что не то, а именно это и есть то самое, о чем он думал. Но он хотел успокоить Колю:

— Да нет, Коля. Это сначала ты правильно сказал...⁹⁸

Kirill cannot find the proper words to say to Kolia to assuage his pain, and Kolia fails to produce the special words gained from his position on the threshold of life and death that would be of aid to the living. The two characters—protagonist and minor character—have been led by the narrative to a place of reckoning, but the reckoning fails to take place. Kolia even begins to question his fate in life, or, in metafictional terms, his function within the text:

А в словах Коли появилась обида. Большая обида, что ему больно. Он жаловался, где у него болит и как. И что вот все придумывают и летают, а не могут придумать, чтобы не было больно. Что все это случилось с ним, а с другими и с Кириллом — не случилось, и вот он, Коля, болен, а другие с Кириллом — живы и здоровы.⁹⁹

Kirill, being the hero, has nothing to say to this outburst, and after a subtle reminder, Kolia again "knows his place" and literally recedes into the background:

—Ты постарайся, Коля, меньше думать об этом...

Коля, словно очнувшись, словно поняв что-то, посмотрел на Кирилла.

— Очень ты молодой... — сказал он. — и здоровый. Ну, иди... Спасибо, что попрощаться зашел. Счастливо тебе служить. Иди, иди. Я устал.

И сразу как-то удалился во взгляде, закрылся, ушел в свою гипсовую раковину...¹⁰⁰

The other miners are not afforded this kind of exposition, failed or otherwise, and are for the most part only described in terms of their direct connection to Kirill—i.e., as elements of the young man's experience. There is, however, an offset passage in *Detstvo* in which an attempt is

⁹⁷ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 173.

⁹⁸ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 171-172.

⁹⁹ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 173.

¹⁰⁰ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 174.

made at relating their individual characters to the reader, one which is not present in the “first” version of the novel, “On—eto ia.” In the published version, it appears in the subchapter “Ponedel’nik i dalee, izo dnia v den’,” and a version of it appeared previously in a 1964 issue of *Literaturnaia gazeta* under the title “Grupповаia fotografiia.”¹⁰¹ In the novel the passage is immediately marked by Kirill’s disappearance as subject, replaced with the repetitive use of the third-person plural imperfective: “Сначала все они ехали из разных концов города на автобусах. Потом они сходили в одном месте, где у всех автобусов было кольцо. Они исчезали в будке проходной, похожей на тыщи других проходных и все же таинственной, как чистилище. Они раскрывали пропуска — и тогда оказывались на территории рудника.”¹⁰² The miners gather in a group on a large log before each shift, greeting each newcomer as they appear from an overhead rail. Here the narration shifts from the imperfective to the perfective as the workers are hailed individually on one particular morning. The group engages in lighthearted smalltalk until the supervisor arrives with a packet of photographs, one for each worker: “И вот они сидят на бревне, эти разные люди. Сидят и каждый разглядывает свою фотографию, такую же, как и у других, на которой сидят они на бревнышке точно так, как сидят они сейчас, много раз повторенные своими фотографиями.”¹⁰³ The photograph serves as a *mise-en-abyme* within the text, as the represented miners effectively look upon a reproduction of themselves. They regard themselves with great pleasure, but the *group* photograph is significant to the work as a whole because it provides a motivation for the *individualized* depiction of multiple secondary characters who otherwise inhabit the text as proper nouns only, limited to dialog spoken in their interactions with Kirill. The ekphrasis begins with an emphasis on the photograph’s power of petrification:

[...] мастер вдруг достал аппарат, привинтил его к торчавшей из земле трубе, аппарат зажужжал, мастер побежал и уселся на бревнышко, и—щелк!

—Вот он приход...—сказал было Сеня-младший и так и замер, рот—маленькое “о”.

А Кильматдинов кинул камешек—так и замерли Кильматдинов и камешек: рука отведена, лицо глупое, улыбочное, а камешек отлетел от руки и повис...

The frozen frame of the photograph uncouples these secondary characters from the experiential flow of the modernist protagonist, Kirill, and provides an approximate form of the “finalization” that Bakhtin calls for in the aesthetic depiction of an *entire* human being. Together with Kirill, who is now able to reflect on his colleagues outside of his immediate experience, the narrative proceeds to “read” the photograph, one person at a time, “слева направо.” Each profile, consisting of a paragraph or two, shares not only a characterization of the individual but also reflects on the appropriateness or fairness of said characterization, like in the description of

¹⁰¹ Andrei Bitov, “Grupповаia fotografiia,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 18, 1964. It was introduced as a chapter from a “new novella about our contemporaries,” “Trava i nebo.”

¹⁰² Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 120-21.

¹⁰³ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 124.

Книупфер:

Вроде он тебе по грудь, а в дюймовые доски гвоздь ладонью загоняет: с одного удара—доска насквозь. Что бы он стал делать, если бы не умел этот гвоздь ладонью загнать, даже представить трудно. Словно бы главная это его черта. “Это который”—“А это тот, который ладонью гвоздь в дюймовую доску загоняет”.— “Ах, этот... ну да, знаю, загоняет”. Впрочем, если бы не загонял, тогда был бы он Книупфер. Тоже ведь примечателен и человек по фамилии Книупфер.¹⁰⁴

Kirill’s lighthearted reflection both expands dramatically the reader’s knowledge of these secondary characters while simultaneously acknowledging that no epithet or paragraph could ever possibly “do them justice.” Still, it is the photograph’s mimetic power that produces this temporary reflection, and Kirill experiences his comrades *aesthetically*, if only temporarily:

А вот сидит Кильматдинов... А вот... Много их тут поместилось на бревнышке. И все они без разбору нравятся Кириллу... Отвести руку с фотографией, чтобы полюбоваться, и сказать про себя: “До чего же славные все люди сидят на этом бревне!”—и оживает фотография, и сидят они они живые, на самом деле...

...Мастер докурил папироску, сказал: “Ну, пошли”,—и все скрылись цепочкой по одному под землей.”¹⁰⁵

In the version of the scene that appeared in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Kirill himself is recognized in the photograph: “А это кто? Кто это так некстати всунулся между двумя головами, и получилось что-то трехголовое? И глупо так улыбается? Не узнаете? Кирюша. Кирилл Капустин. Вот кто это.”¹⁰⁶ In the published novella, Kirill is presumably present in the photograph but neither his external depiction nor his reaction to his own image is related by the narrator. Although Soviet critics detected a gap between Bitov the author and Kirill the hero, this separation was achieved by a supposed moral judgement and not by means of any specifically formal techniques, as we saw in “Penelopa.” The supposedly Joycean principle of “он—это я” upon which *Detstvo* is constructed makes any external framing of Kirill, photographic or otherwise, quite unsustainable for the text. Kirill’s individuality is presented through his interiority, and this mode of characterization comes into conflict with *Detstvo*’s obvious generic allegiances to the Soviet novel of becoming, which, in its “youthful” variant, depicts the hero’s journey toward a harmonic resolution between self and society. It is a matter, as Kirill is well aware, of “finding his place” among others: in an extended monologue towards the end of the book, which passes imperceptibly back and forth between Kirill’s thoughts and the author’s reflection upon the text itself, the notion that the protagonist represents, as an essential feature of the *Bildungsroman*, “the image of man in the process of becoming,”¹⁰⁷ is disavowed:

¹⁰⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 127.

¹⁰⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 130.

¹⁰⁶ Andrei Bitov, “Grupppovaia fotografiia,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 18, 1964.

¹⁰⁷ This is Bakhtin’s formulation of the genre in “The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 20.

И рано говорить о благотворном влиянии производства на юную душу, о том, что так находят свое место в жизнь. Это тоже только этап, и не так его находят, это место. Главным по-прежнему остается твое отличие от других, чем ты нов и несовместим с другими, то есть что ты принес в эту жизнь. Главным остается: ты сам среди других и с другими, а не такой же, как они.

Ничего еще не достигнуто. И никаких гарантий, что, растворившись, не успокоится он и выделит себя из всех—нет. Будет ли такой зрелый человек Кирилл Капустин?—никому не известно.¹⁰⁸

If *Detstvo* is not a story of Kirill's *becoming* into a more "true" or "harmonious" self, then how can the novel conclude? In order for the subject to enter into society, to put an end to his "long childhood," some degree of externalization is required, either by the protagonist or the author. For Bakhtin, as Ilya Kliger writes, "the *other's* relation to the world is one not of horizontal movement but of location within an environment (*okruzhenie*). In space, the *other* is externalized as a bounded body among other physical objects."¹⁰⁹ Such a recognition of one's situatedness is a necessary aspect of Thaw-era subjectivity, the process of which is described in primarily *spatial* terms in the passage by the critic Grinberg already cited above: in *close* contact with the *surrounding* world of labor. Despite the significance of his relocation from Leningrad to the mining town, the spatial dimension of *Detstvo* remains largely unfilled, especially above ground. Walking with his girlfriend Valia, for example, we are given a rare description of his surroundings: "Они шли проулками между большими одинаковыми многоквартирными домами, расставленными широко и свободно. Их стены были рассечены солнцем на свет и тень косыми уверенными росчерками. И были дома оттого как-то особенно объемны, отдельные — геометрические тела. И воздух между ними, это просвеченное солнцем «ничего», тоже существовал отдельными геометрическими объемами—только прозрачными."¹¹⁰ Even the vivid depiction of his run in the park is centered on Kirill's body passing up and down the mountain—things come into view, pass behind his field of vision, and are never touched upon again. The brief concluding section of the novel, "Po doroge," contains a sweeping, panoramic description of a column of conscripts marching down a forest road at sunrise. This time, however, the narrator's cinematic vision is uncoupled from Kirill, who is not mentioned by name for several paragraphs: the column is a single, jumbled unit, snaking forward:

Дорога попискивает под ногами. Идет колонна, и все в колонне, если смотреть немного сверху и сбоку, совсем-совсем одинаковые. Тем более — если стоять, а они идут, удаляются. Да еще впереди повисло непомерно большое и красное солнце. А оно хоть и совсем неяркое, но на фоне его фигурки в колонне становятся совсем черными, да еще колонна идет, удаляется, и шеренги сливаются. Если стоять и смотреть немного сверху и сбоку...

Но нет, еще можно разглядеть... Вон там, в колонне, со всеми, в третьей шеренге с

¹⁰⁸ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 179-80.

¹⁰⁹ Ilya Kliger, "Heroic Aesthetics and Modernist Critique: Extrapolations from Bakhtin's 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,'" *Slavic Review* 67, no. 3 (2008): 556.

¹¹⁰ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965), 59.

конца, второй справа... уже совсем маленькая фигурка. .. Уходит со всеми Кирилл Капустин, неплохой вроде бы человек. Не низкий и не высокий. Не толстый и не худой. Не красавец и не урод. Не сильный и не слабый. Не зрелый и не ребенок. С достоинствами и недостатками. Большой и маленький. Единственный и многих. Он успел уже полюбить что-то.

Уходит человек по дороге, в колонне, со всеми.. .¹¹¹

Kirill, finally, has been placed against a background, and quite definitively. In the column, on his way to army service, he does not possess any distinguishing traits that would rescue him from the dissolution he so feared earlier in the novel. As Klinger notes, the aesthetic experience of *reading* for early Bakhtin consisted of “a double operation whereby the reader or viewer aligns herself with the ‘intentional’ perspective of the hero and *simultaneously* recoils back into the totalizing outsideness of the author.”¹¹² In the aesthetic principle of early Bitov, with its alignment of narrator and hero, the latter movement of outsideness either never comes at all, as in many of his early sketches, or else, as in *Detstvo*, can only occur literally as the work’s final, culminating moment: Kirill’s individuality is so closely linked to his interiority that the novel cannot continue after his exteriority has been established. The original version of the novel makes this even more explicit: after the ellipsis, a final line:

“Уходит человек по дороге, в колонне, со всеми...

И вот его уже не отличить.”¹¹³

Bitov’s next novella, *Puteshestvie k drugu detstva*, was written between 1963-1965 and was first published in 1967 as part of his anthology *Dachnaia mestnost’*. Like his first novella, *Oдна strana*, *Puteshestvie* is playful in tone and written in the mode of “*vol’naia proza*.”¹¹⁴ Sprinkled throughout the narrator’s personal observations are excerpts from real newspaper articles, and both stylistically and compositionally, *Puteshestvie* is much closer to the factographical writing of the 1920s than the allegorical literature of Socialist realism. Rather than fulfill another assignment to illustrate “какой-никакой реализм плюсь рабочая тематика,” as in *Takoe dolgoe detstvo*, *Puteshestvie* instead depicts the task itself: the narrator, a writer, is asked to compose something about the “positive hero,” to which he replies: “У меня все положительные... На отрицательных у меня сил не хватает.”¹¹⁵ When pressed further on the subject, the narrator recalls a childhood friend named Genrikh that would make for a perfect profile:

— Есть! — вдруг кричу я с радостью и отчаянием.—Есть один! Как же я забыл! Знаю одного, хорошо знаю. С детства. Вот уж положительный, вот уж герой! В вулканы лазает. Каждый год себе что-нибудь ломает: руку, ногу, шею. И никто его,

¹¹¹ Andrei Bitov, *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1965), 205.

¹¹² Илья Клингер, “Heroic Aesthetics and Modernist Critique: Extrapolations from Bakhtin’s ‘Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,’” *Slavic Review* 67, no. 3 (2008): 556.

¹¹³ Andrei Bitov, *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]* (Moskva: AST, 2014), 311.

¹¹⁴ These are Bitov’s words from his 2014 commentary in *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]* (Moskva: AST, 2014), 461.

¹¹⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost’* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiiia, 1967), 74-75.

заметьте, не гонит — сам лезет, совершенно бескорыстно, в самый кратер. Не человек — символ!¹¹⁶

The “journey” referenced in the novella’s title is twofold: superficially, the narrative follows the writer as he makes his way across the Soviet Union towards Kamchatka in order to meet the topic of his journalistic sketch. Despite the vast distance traversed, no exotic vistas or novel cultures are related, only the otherworldly space of airport waiting lounges, due to constant weather delays. This stagnant movement is counterbalanced by an inward-facing mental process that takes the narrator backwards in time, towards certain insights and revelations concerning the nature of heroism, Soviet journalistic practices, and the shared childhood of Bitov’s wartime generation. Writing in jealousy and awe of his childhood friend, the narrator gradually comes to the realization that true heroism comes not from endless trials and demonstrations of superhuman strength, but in the flexibility and charity of everyday living. He is convinced of this when, on one of his final layovers, he witnesses a completely unexpected and selfless act: a young girl, baby in tow, explains her situation to another woman: she is on her way to Zabaikal’e to confront a deadbeat father in the vain hope that he still lives at his old address. A nearby passenger interrupts her story and offers to marry her and adopt her son as his own. This act of charity has an even greater effect on the narrator because it was performed impulsively and will never serve as an example:

Вот и весь романс. Я вполне допускаю, что они будут потом ругаться и ссориться и что счастье их не будет безоблачным, но одного не будет никогда — никогда он не вспомнит, не похвастается, не упрекнет ее тем, как подобрал ее с ребенком, никогда не поставит этого себе в заслугу и не потребует награды. Потому что это был поступок в подлинном и полном значении этого слова, и он тотчас перестанет им быть, если станет предметом самоутверждения и любования.

Время выдвигает свое слово. И слово это — ПОСТУПОК. [...] Поступок требуется каждый день и исключительно редок. А подвиг... Они, конечно, были, есть и будут в наше удивительное время. Но ведь вот даже возникают непонятные дискуссии: «В жизни есть место подвигам? В жизни нет места подвигам?» Бессмысленно ведь спросить: «В жизни есть место поступкам?»

Поступок — форма воплощения человека. Он неприхотлив на вид и исключительно труден в исполнении. Неблагодарен в принципе. Подвиг ищет форму и требует условий, подразумевает награду. Поступок существует вне этого. И подвиг я могу понять лишь как частный вид поступка, способный служить всеобщим примером.¹¹⁷

Bitov’s formulation—“поступок—форма воплощения человека”—is interesting in several regards. First there is the irony that the man’s act does serve as a kind of lesson or inspiration for Bitov, if not a truly universal example. Secondly, by re-centering an external act over internal mental processes, it would seem to invert the author’s own methods for depicting his characters. After witnessing the stranger’s proposal, the narrator continues to observe him. The man

¹¹⁶ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost’* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossii, 1967), 75.

¹¹⁷ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost’* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossii, 1967), 121-122.

becomes hot, takes off his felt boots, looks at his new daughter and tenderly removes her shoes as well. He starts to eat an apple, looks at his daughter, and gives her the finest apple in his bag. Bitov is delighted to have deduced the simple truth behind the man's charity: "Что же это?— думаю.—Вот как дивно!' Просто он только через себя все понять может. Ему нежарко—то и всем нежарко. Он сыт—то и все сыты."¹¹⁸ The moralist critic Anninskii enjoyed the episode in the airport from an aesthetic standpoint, but felt that it revealed an important ethical limitation of Bitov's writing:

Вчитайтесь в приведенный этюд: незаметно для себя Битов открывает в этом девочкином отце как раз то самое, в что ужаснуло его в Генрихе: механизм психологического движения. Человек не сам поступает, он просто реагирует на раздражение: ему жарко – ну, так и всем жарко. Даже и в позитивной своей душевности Битов знает только этот, природно-импульсивный уровень. Уровня духовного, когда личность несет в своем сознании моральную норму безотносительно к ситуации, — здесь нет.¹¹⁹

As mechanistic as the man's motivations may seem, the *act* gains a great deal of its value to the narrator precisely from its embeddedness in everyday existence, and in this it evokes the Bakhtinian concept of the *postupok* present in his earliest writings. Addressed in a large part towards Kant's categorical imperative, Bakhtin posits a different system that is predicated upon the contingency of human existence. For Bakhtin, as Michael Holquist writes, Kant's system is "highly abstract: it gains in authority by marking a distance from the specific, the local-anything, in other words, that has an odor of the subjective about it. Bakhtin in this volume is seeking to get back to the naked immediacy of experience as it is felt from within the utmost particularity of a specific life, the molten lava of events as they happen."¹²⁰ The narrator has replicated this moment before the reader and extracted something of much greater significance from it: *this* is the heroism of our time! But the rhetorical reversal of roles that the narrator obtains after witnessing and processing this event is followed immediately by an increasing sense of relativism and a principle of *non*-judgement that throws the novella's momentum off course. In other words, the *postupok* may provide a temporary moral lesson, but its insistence on the present moment destabilizes the narrative and spins it into uncertain directions. Speculating further on the man's case, he abandons his hypotheses mid-sentence:

А может, баба его бросила? И ему одному с девчонкой непривычно? А может...
Что мы вообще знаем о людях? А все судим и судим.

Не так ли я то ли сужу, то ли не понимаю тебя, Генрих? Сужу или не понимаю—одно и то же. И тогда я, наблюдающий и формулирующий этого мужика, который все чувствует и понимает только через себя, оказываюсь в большей степени таким мужиком, нежели он сам.¹²¹

Herein the narrator abandons his attempt to profile Genrikh, either for the Soviet public or

¹¹⁸ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost'* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiiia, 1967), 122

¹¹⁹ Lev Anninskii, "Tochka opory," *Don*, no. 7 (1968).

¹²⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1993), x.

¹²¹ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost'* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiiia, 1967), 122.

“for himself.” As he approaches his hero’s time zone, he finds that time itself has brought them closer together, and the concept of a generation—typically a key element in youth prose that has hitherto been understated in Bitov’s prose—now comes to the forefront:

И тогда я вдруг обнаружу, Генрих, что у нас с тобой много больше общего, чем я мог бы подозревать или предположить. Что время перемешало наши отличия и объединило нас, отделив нас сначала от старших, а по том от младших братьев. Мы переглядываемся с тобой на вечеринке, где твои товарищи моложе тебя и меня, и понимаем друг друга, и что-то сближает нас против них. [...] Так вот прежде чем полюблю их — ты благодаря им станешь мне близок, понятен и дорог не только как воспоминание детства, а как такой же человек, как я, такой, каких мы ищем и находим изредка, и они — друзья.¹²²

The relationship between author and hero in *Puteshestvie* is notably complex, starting with the multiple proliferations of especially the latter that coexist throughout the text. Firstly, there is the fact that Genrikh Shteinberg is a real vulcanologist, born in Leningrad in 1935, who was closely acquainted with the actual writer Andrei Bitov. Their actual acquaintance is not typically remarked upon in contemporary reviews, but this suprafictional layer must be taken into account.¹²³ Secondly, there is the image of Genrikh obtained from inserted excerpts from the Soviet press, the official presentation of a living example of the “positive hero.” Then there is the Genrikh of Bitov’s childhood, a superhuman figure whose exploits are even more exaggerated than in the newspaper clippings: when the narrator triumphantly raises a weight one hundred and fifty times at the Pioneer camp, Genrikh raises it a thousand and one times, nearly killing himself in the process. Finally, there is the “true,” present-day Genrikh, free of Soviet lionization and the jealousy-ringed lens of childhood memory. The narrator is, in a certain sense, Genrikh’s “author”—he relates him to the reader and carefully selects and arranges the scraps of articles that surround his own words. When he finally meets Genrikh face-to-face on his assignment, they will exist on the same plane, fundamentally altering their author-hero, self-other relationship:

В конце концов слишком по линейке провел я тебя в этом рассказе, и сам вышел по линейке. Две параллельные, мол, линии никогда не пересекаются. Конный пешему, мол, не товарищ. Тут я ловлю себя на том, что все преувеличил, чрезмерно увлекшись в последнее время графикой чертежа. Я преувеличил, и с какой же радостью встречу с тобой и увижу, что не прав.¹²⁴

“Reality” already occupies a tenuous position in *Puteshestvie*: apart from the author’s frequent asides and insertions, the truly liminal zones of the airplane cabin and the airport lounge and the lengthy layovers make spatial and temporal anchors rare and often insignificant in the novella. What is left of the narrative’s forward motion of the narrative after the witnessing of the

¹²² Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost’* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossii, 1967), 125.

¹²³ For an interview with Shteinberg that discusses the novella in depth, see Posleslovie geroiia: Genrikh Shteinberg o podvige i postupke, interview by Svetlana Bunina, June 2008, <https://lechaim.ru/ARHIV/194/1kl.htm>.

¹²⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost’* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossii, 1967), 124.

postupok is completely derailed as the narrator and Genrikh's meeting approaches. Just before the ending, the author helpfully reminds the reader that any description of his anticipation is effectively feigned:

...хотя и не прилетел еще к тебе и не встретился с тобой, но ведь всякая вещь на документальной основе пишется потом, когда уже в прошлом не только полет к тебе, но и встреча с тобой, и отъезд назад, домой...

А пока мы все не летим. Я не лечу—и все не летят.¹²⁵

The final leg of the flight is related in the present tense, the scenic arrival to Kamchatka in the imperfective, and only on the last page, in the present tense is their meeting finally described. This mutual present is extremely brief, and their shared existence on the page melts into thin air:

Да, папа здоров, и мама здорова. Хорошо-то у вас как! Весна! «У нас всегда так»,—бормочет друг. А что это за облачко над горой? Почему всюду ни одного и лишь над ним? «А это не гора, а вулкан. И не облачко, а это он курится...» —бормочет друг. Рот его раскрылся, и его нет рядом со мной. Это я —здесь, а он сейчас там, в Ленинграде. Мой друг читает письмо.

— Здравствуй!¹²⁶

Perhaps their meeting cannot last long on the page because it no longer has relevance to the narrator? As he has realized, “understanding” Genrikh would mean to judge him, whether for his own sake or for consumption by the Soviet reading public. What is newly important is their shared existence in time—as members of the same wartime generation—and one-time occupiers of the same space, Leningraders who still think fondly of each other's parents. The literature on *Puteshestvie* is relatively light in volume; most critics welcomed the narrator's aversion to the positive hero trope, although Igor' Motiashov argued that Genrikh *as he is written* is more of an individual than any of Bitov's protagonists.¹²⁷ Bitov would later remark that he had left many things out of his account of the trip to Kamchatka in order for the work to be published, but despite this “self-censorship,” he felt obligated to add the section concerning *podvig* and *postupok* “для проходимости.”¹²⁸ It was precisely this section, according to Bitov, that raised the most consternation post-publication, and to his disappointment no one seemed to notice the irony produced by the juxtaposition of newspaper articles with his own essay prose. And although this essay format would become a staple of his writing thereafter, *Puteshestvie k drugu detstva* represented Bitov's “последний опыт приспособленчества [...] Вписав главу о подвиге и поступке, я должен был *поступить*: в том же 1964-м, в том же Токсово написать первый вариант “Пушкинского дома.”¹²⁹ Ronald Meyer has outlined the numerous parallels between the two works, whose creative histories overlap by a year, particularly between

¹²⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost'* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiia, 1967), 125-126.

¹²⁶ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost'* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiia, 1967), 128.

¹²⁷ Igor' Motiashov, “Otvettvennost' Khudozhnika,” *Voprosy Literatury*, no. 12 (1968): 15.

¹²⁸ Andrei Bitov, *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]* (Moskva: AST, 2014), 461.

¹²⁹ Andrei Bitov, *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]* (Moskva: AST, 2014), 461-462.

the novel's protagonists.¹³⁰ The most significant creative discoveries, however, manifested themselves in Bitov's newfound interest in the impossible relationship of writing and the *present* and the expansion of the thematic aspect of character, in particular along the concept of the generation so central to Russian Realism. These phenomena would be explored in much greater depth in *Pushkinskii dom*, and most significantly, the meeting between author and hero would not only take place, but be enacted in its fullest.

2.3 “Совпадаем и не ведаем”: Avtor i geroi v Pushkinskom dome

Роман — это жанр, в котором неизбежно меняется сам автор, жанр отражающий, чем дальше, тем больше, изменение не столько героев, сколько самого автора.
Время — это неизбежность отношений. В романе неизбежны отношения автора с героем и набегающим текстом.¹³¹

Bitov began writing what would become the novel *Pushkinskii dom* in 1964, submitting a revised manuscript for publication in 1971. Edited sections of the novel, mostly from its second section, were published in the Soviet Union during the 1970s.¹³² For Soviet readers throughout the decade, each new novella or short story was largely understood to be part of a larger project, as Natal'ia Ivanova noted: “...по частям, по “пунктиру” читатель должен восстановить в сознании задуманное, *целое*.”¹³³ The full version of the novel published in the West in 1978, however, was several times longer than the sum of all previous parts combined. Although Bitov referred to *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* as a novel, *Pushkinskii dom* is the first work that meets the novel's elusive criteria of *length*: as Yurii Karabchievskii noted in 1977: “Мы решительно перепрыгиваем через всю пятнадцатилетнюю работу Битова, более или менее отраженную в печатной критике, чтобы раскрыть его новую книгу, в которой одна только первая часть значительно превышает по объему любую из повестей.”¹³⁴ The novel and its excerpts generated considerable critical attention throughout the 1970s and especially during *perestroika* (it was republished in *Noviy mir* in 1987), and *Pushkinskii dom* remains to the present day Bitov's most discussed work. With its length and complexity, it is no wonder that each reader of *Pushkinskii dom* comes away with their own impression of the novel's lessons. John Updike's review of the English translation stated simply that “the novel not only is difficult but feels to be *about* difficulty, Russian difficulty.”¹³⁵ In his article “Pamiatnik proshedshemu vremeni,” Viktor Erofeev describes reading the novel three times—as a manuscript, *Ardis* publication, and on the

¹³⁰ Ronald Meyer, “Andrej Bitov's ‘Pushkinskij Dom’” (Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University, 1986), 25-28.

¹³¹ Andrei Bitov, “Bitva,” in *Stat'i iz romana* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1986), 84.

¹³² Ellen B Chances, *Andrej Bitov: The Ecology of Inspiration* (Cambridge [etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 202. For a much more detailed account of the novel's publication history, see Ronald Meyer, “Andrej Bitov's ‘Pushkinskij Dom’” (Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University, 1986), 76-93 and especially Stephen Hagen, “The Stories of Andrej Bitov, 1958-1966: A Search for Individual Perception” (Durham, UK, Durham University, 1980), 230-31.

¹³³ Natal'ia Ivanova, *Tochka zreniia: o proze poslednikh let* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1988), 177.

¹³⁴ Yurii Karabchievskii, “Tochka boli. O romane Andreia Bitova ‘Pushkinskii dom,’” *Grani*, no. 106 (December 1977): 145.

¹³⁵ John Updike, “Doubt and Difficulty in Leningrad and Moscow,” in *Odd Jobs: Essays and Criticism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 551.

pages of *Noviy mir*—experiencing it completely different each time.¹³⁶ In her analysis of perestroika-era criticism of the novel, M.S. Kormilova finds that literary scholars tended to focus on the novel’s thematics:

Трактовки характера главного героя в рецензиях И. Золотусского, Н. Ивановой, А. Латыниной были направлены на анализ смыслов, а не теоретико-литературной проблемы героя и автора. [...] В исторический момент, когда роман вышел в свет на родине Битова, еще не мог быть проведен подробный анализ и некоторых других его параметров, например нереалистической композиции “Пушкинского дома”. Внимание критиков переключалось скорее на содержательные моменты, как правило, более связанные с политической остротой романа.¹³⁷

Within the “historical moment” *Pushkinskii dom* was received as a novel about the late Soviet intelligentsia, especially the generation that came of age under late Stalinism and experienced early adulthood during the Thaw. These interpretations existed alongside and often overlapped with the novel’s obvious status as a monument or possible parody of Russian literary culture, as Viktor Erofeev perceived when reading a manuscript of the novel in the early 1970s:

Создать нечто такое, что было бы продолжение русского романа XIX века, его достойным развитием, отчасти обобщением, своего рода отечественным “метароманом”...не это ли мечта каждого талантливого писателя-современника? Битов воплотил эту мечту в безукоризненно выполненный текст, размеченный и прописанный так что его архитектоника перекликалась с архитектурой места действия.¹³⁸

This shift in critical focus from the novel’s social thematics to the cultural sphere¹³⁹ has dominated later interpretations of the novel. For Mark Lipovetsky, Bitov’s novel inaugurated Soviet literary postmodernism precisely through its depiction of culture:

Bitov's most important achievement in *Pushkin House* is the exposure of the simulative character of the Soviet mentality and Soviet culture long before Baudrillard and his followers; that is, he draws the reader's attention to the primacy of imaginary constructs, of images without real referents, of copies without originals. It is in *Pushkin House* that this radical transformation is first established, the transformation that is perhaps the most important consequence of the Thaw. It is the beginning of postmodernist time.¹⁴⁰

According to Lipovetsky, the Soviet postmodern condition does not actually begin with the

¹³⁶ Viktor Erofeev, “Pamiatnik proshedsheму vremeni,” *Oktiabr’*, no. 6 (June 1988): 203–4.

¹³⁷ M.S. Kormilova, “Kritika Perioda” Perestroiki” o Romane A. Bitova” Pushkinskii Dom”: Metodologicheskaia Inertsia i Novye Printsipy Kriticheskogo Analiza.,” *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, 10, no. 6 (2009): 174.

¹³⁸ Viktor Erofeev, “Pamiatnik proshedsheму vremeni,” *Oktiabr’*, no. 6 (June 1988): 203.

¹³⁹ A. Gimein in his brief review signified the importance of this theme by referring to culture with a capital “C,” calling *Pushkinskii dom* “столь неожиданное и столь долгожданное повествование о разорванном времени, интеллигенции и Культуре,” “Nulevoi Chas,” *Kontinent*, no. 20 (1979): 369.

¹⁴⁰ Mark Lipovetsky, *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 40.

death of Stalin and the collapse of its overarching metanarrative; it is only after a “return to culture” is attempted in the wake of this collapse that the “mechanism of transmission of cultural traditions” is placed under scrutiny and is found to no longer function. In other words, *Pushkinskii dom*’s status as a “monument to a past time,” as Erofeev’s wrote, is a necessary condition for the work’s larger outcome of depicting the simulative nature of late Soviet society. Lipovetsky begins his chapter with a quote from Bakhtin and utilizes the philosopher’s concepts of “axiological contexts” and “the creative chronotope” in the course of his argument. The ultimate title of the novel—as opposed to the longest variant published in the USSR before *glasnost*, “Molodoi Odoevtsev, geroi romana”—is a strong indication that *Pushkinskii dom* is a ultimately a novel *about* Culture, both Russian and Soviet. Without dismissing or downplaying this assertion, I do wish to draw attention to the fact that both sociohistorical and cultural-semiotic commentaries on the novel base their claims either on the characters depicted—as in Soviet-era criticism—or else the manner by which characters are presented—as Lipovetsky does when he draws upon Bakhtin’s *Avtor i geroi*. In fact, while the sustained metacommentary provided by the author that runs throughout the novel touches upon matters of style, plot, and setting, it reflects most often of all on issues of *characterization*, including: the interrelationship between protagonist, minor characters, and the story’s structure (pp. 56, 202, 249, 253, 305)¹⁴¹, the diegetic status of the narrator (pp. 70-72, 194, 312), the intricacies of typification (p. 110) and the relationship between history and personality (pp. 28, 133), and, of course, the entirety of the subsection “Akhilles i cherepakha,” which bears the subtitle “otnosheniia geroia i avtora.”¹⁴² And while I contend that the fate of Russian culture is the overarching concern of *Pushkinskii dom*, Bitov was nonetheless interested in the relationship between author and hero *separately* from his aim of creating a “roman-muzei” (or sacking said museum, to paraphrase Lipovetsky). In the introduction to his 1998 collection, Bitov describes an unfulfilled project began two years into the writing of *Pushkinskii dom*:

... непосредственно после “Путешествия к другу”, в 1966 году, я задумал эдакий роман-репортаж “Япония как она есть” о том, как я собрался туда ехать и не поехал. Но это была самая внешняя сюжетная канва; основной же романной конструкции служила сама попытка откровенно рассказать, честно доложить, как дело было, с последовательным выяснением и доказательством, что это невозможно. Мое изначальное, исповедальное Я через несколько страниц безнадежных искренних усилий обретало Я-авторское, еще через некоторое количество страниц это авторское Я настолько окрепло, что превращалось в Автора, Автор становился героем повествования и, уже в таком самостоятельном качестве, задумывал роман о некоем герое (о, эти мучительные поиски фамилии!), для которого Япония была целью всей жизни, и случайные, вольные события моей собственной жизни, претерпев тройную метаморфозу, становилась главами романа из жизни Имярека. К тому же сам Имярек начинал жить жизнью собственной, с каждой главой обретая самостоятельность, все более раздражаясь на вмешательство самонадеянного Автора (который и мне-то самому не нравился) в его отдельную, личную жизнь. Таким образом, Имярек сам брался за перо, познавая (хоть и на скудном, но уже своем опыте) проблемы прокливаемого им

¹⁴¹ Page numbers refer to Ardis edition: Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978).

¹⁴² Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 397-408. This section was published as a stand-alone article in the January 22nd 1975 issue of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 6.

Автора. Таким образом, к концу повествования в тесных дверях финала столпилось уже семь разных героев.¹⁴³

The unfinished novel's *siuzhetnaia kanva*, like *Puteshestvie k drugu detstva*, shares little in terms of content with *Pushkinskii dom* but shares its preoccupation with rebellious protagonists, author/narrator slippages, and metatextual play. The prominence of author-hero relations within the novel has made Bakhtin an obvious and necessary reference when discussing the work.¹⁴⁴ In earlier studies, especially those written before the discovery and eventual publication of the fuller corpus of Bakhtin's works, the novel is often evaluated through the concept of polyphony pioneered in 1963's *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*. A. Gimein's 1979 review of *Pushkinskii dom* in the emigre journal *Kontinent* was one of the first mentions of Bitov and Bakhtin together: "Достоевский интересуется и вдохновляет Андрея Битова именно как исследователя, и роман Битова являет собой как бы экспериментальное подтверждение знаменитой теории поэтики Достоевского, разработанной М. М. Бахтиным."¹⁴⁵ Ronald Meyer's 1986 dissertation draws parallels between Dostoevsky and Bitov's use of doubled characters, highlights usages of the "double-directed word," and views the inset texts authored by Leva, his grandfather Modest, and Uncle Dickens as examples of polyphonic independence, instances where characters can "speak for themselves."¹⁴⁶ Other critics invoked Bakhtin towards a kind of ethical evaluation of Bitov's hero: In her "critical analysis of the late Soviet hero," Ann Komaromi finds Leva to be a representatively "smug" and "passive" member of his generation, but she singles out his fictional article "Tri proroka" as an example of what Bakhtin would call an authentic authoring of oneself.¹⁴⁷ For Natalia Ivanova, Leva fails to live up to the Bakhtinian precept of "answerability":

Лева постоянно рефлексировал. Но его мышление, если воспользоваться термином раннего Бахтина, не носит "участного" характера. Дурная неслиянность рефлексии и жизни—вот что является основой постоянных Левиных поисков "алиби в бытии"—он, собственно, не чувствует себя ответственным не в одной из ситуаций. [...] Жизнь Левы Одоевцева, эта "отпавшая от ответственности" жизнь, поистине драматична. Но он проживает ее "для себя", как "я-единственный", а не "я-для другого", в том числе и "я-для культуры."¹⁴⁸

Ellen Chances believes that Bitov's relationship to Bakhtin in *Pushkinskii dom* is dialogic, verging on the polemical:

¹⁴³ Andrei Bitov, *Neizbezhnost' nenapisannogo : godovye kol'tsa, 1956-1998-1937* (Moskva :, 1999), 11-12.

¹⁴⁴ Very few studies have looked at other works by Bitov with reference to Bakhtin; Bora Chung's article in the January 2019 issue of SEEJ looks specifically at *Prepodavatel' simetrii* with reference to *Avtor i geroi*. Bora Chung, "The Writer as Translator in Andrei Bitov's The Teacher of Symmetry," *Slavic and East European Journal* 63, no. 4 (2020): 562-78.

¹⁴⁵ A. Gimein, "Nulevoi Chas," *Kontinent*, no. 20 (1979): 369.

¹⁴⁶ Ronald Meyer, "Andrej Bitov's 'Pushkinskij Dom'" (Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University, 1986), 175-177 and 180-182.

¹⁴⁷ Ann Komaromi, "Andrej Bitov's Pushkin House: A Critical Analysis of the Late Soviet Hero," *The Russian Review* 72, no. 3 (2013): 406.

¹⁴⁸ Natal'ia Ivanova, *Tochka zreniia: o proze poslednikh let* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1988), 182-183.

Bitov, in the structure of *Pushkin House*, takes issue with Bakhtin, for Bitov claims that the author's relationship to the hero is different from the one suggested by Bakhtin. What Bitov says is that the *author* lives in the interstices between life and the written word. Bakhtin had spoken about the life of a book as existing in the spaces between the voices of the *characters* in that book. Bitov turns the discussion around and thinks about the writer's place in life rather than about the author's place in that book.¹⁴⁹

Like Chances, Rolf Hellebust's article on Bakhtin and the legacy of the "virtual sequel" of Russian realism focuses on the relationship between a text and the outside world. According to Hellebust, Bakhtin's conceptualization of the novel as a zone of "maximal contact with contemporary reality in all its openendedness"¹⁵⁰ is indebted to the utopian promise of the merging of art and reality championed by Russian realist critics, and thus "the fictional unfinishedness of the Russian novel is but a pledge of its finalization—which can only be realized *outside* its own fictional world."¹⁵¹ The "virtual sequel" for Russian literature would not be a reimagining or rereading of a novel, but its actual continuation in non-fictional reality. The writers of the twentieth century, Hellebust argues, do not accept the impossibility of actually accomplishing such a sequel; in socialist realism, the coming of Utopia on earth has already merged fictional and actual happy endings, and in the works of modernist and postmodern writers like Nabokov, Pasternak, and Bitov, fictional characters frequently author real-world narratives.¹⁵² Of the three, the merging of these two universes is most obvious in *Pushkinskii dom*, in which Bitov "literalizes Bakhtin's dictum that 'author and hero meet in life.'"¹⁵³ Lipovetsky similarly emphasizes the coming together of reality and fiction in *Pushkinskii dom*, although the process by which this comes about is reversed. Rather than the elevation of the fictional character to the level of the author's world, it is the author that exists in a world where "the antithesis of literature and life, of the cultural classics and contemporaneity, is consistently problematized [...], while the motif of life simulation blurs the boundaries between them once and for all."¹⁵⁴ As a result, the three "axiological contexts" that Bakhtin defines in *Avtor i geroi*—that of the hero, the author-narrator, and the author-creator—have all merged into a single, unstable unity by the novel's conclusion. The "outsidedness" typically exercised by the author-creator is now enjoyed by the literary hero, and, reciprocally, the author takes a position of "outsidedness" towards the work itself. The only way to break out of the Baudrillardian world of the Soviet present is thus to expose "the text's own contexts, its own simulated character, and, therefore, its own unreality."¹⁵⁵ As seen in these brief summaries above, numerous scholars have

¹⁴⁹ Ellen B Chances, *Andrei Bitov: The Ecology of Inspiration* (Cambridge [etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 233.

¹⁵⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 11.

¹⁵¹ Rolf Hellebust, "Bakhtin and the 'Virtual Sequel' in Russian Literature," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 44, no. 4 (2000): 610.

¹⁵² Rolf Hellebust, "Bakhtin and the 'Virtual Sequel' in Russian Literature," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 44, no. 4 (2000): 616.

¹⁵³ Rolf Hellebust, "Bakhtin and the 'Virtual Sequel' in Russian Literature," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 44, no. 4 (2000): 617.

¹⁵⁴ Mark Lipovetsky, *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 61.

¹⁵⁵ Mark Lipovetsky, *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 65.

analyzed *Pushkinskii dom* through a multitude of theoretical lenses provided by Bakhtin to address questions of ethics, Russian and Soviet culture, and modernist and postmodernist aesthetics. I would like to examine *Pushkinskii dom* through an investigation of the relationship between author and hero in the light of the intensely interiorized narrative practices of his earlier works of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Despite the foregrounding of synthetic element throughout the novel, I believe that the author's full, final embrace of outsideness in the closing pages is prompted by an ethical recognition of character not as hero or a life to be consummated, but simply as "other"—in other words, a novel author-hero relationship that is neither completely collapsed nor relentlessly tyrannical.

The postmodern problematizes history, according to Linda Hutcheon, but it "is not ahistorical or dehistoricized"¹⁵⁶ Erofeev's initial reaction to *Pushkinskii dom* as simultaneously a worthy continuation of the 19th-century Russian novel and a domestic "metanovel" and the passionate responses to the character of Leva in the *perestroika*-era literary press demonstrate that the novel's postmodern poetics did not in any way hinder the reception of the work's thematic aspects. The concept of a historically defined personality had taken a new prominence in Bitov's prior work, *Puteshestvie k drugu detstva*, in which the narrator discovers, apparently without irony, that "время перемешало наши отличия и объединило нас, отделив нас сначала от старших, а потом от младших братьев."¹⁵⁷ The shared pressure shaping their character becomes noticeable only as they begin to perceptibly age, leading to the perception of a certain asynchrony. Asynchrony is present in *Pushkinskii dom* on two levels: the temporality of writing ("И здесь я снова оглядываюсь из времени, о котором повествую, во время, в котором пишу..."¹⁵⁸) and historical time; as Natalia Ivanova writes: "Битов смотрит на своего Леву уже с той временной дистанции, где пятидесятые годы кончились (даты работы над циклом - "1964, 1970"). Он пишет своего героя, уже зная или предвидя историческую судьбу его поколения—судьбу тех, кому в те достопамятные годы было около двадцати."¹⁵⁹ The aesthetic and epistemological consequences of these two temporal disjunctions are linked within the text by the narrator:

...сейчас у нас другое прошлое, чем было тогда, когда оно было для нас настоящим. Глядя то с той, то с другой вершины на одну и ту же точку равнины, мы видим разный пейзаж. Каждое из двух изображений неполно, и они не совместимы. Мы рассказали всю Левину жизнь из сегодняшнего дня, представив Леву равноправным и полномочным участником исторического процесса. Возможно, теперь он сам именно так вспоминает свое прошлое и узнал бы себя в нашем изображении. Но если бы он читал все это тогда, когда это с ним происходило, то никогда бы не признал себя в герое, ибо крайне сомнительно, чтобы люди свидетельствовали о своем участии в историческом процессе изнутри процесса. Так что, хотя все, что описано здесь, было с Левоу —он-то об этом понятия не имел. Для себя-то, пожалуй, он имел только одно понятие... и не

¹⁵⁶ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), xii.

¹⁵⁷ Andrei Bitov, *Dachnaia mestnost'* (Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiiia, 1967), 125.

¹⁵⁸ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 29.

¹⁵⁹ Natal'ia Ivanova, *Tochka zreniia: o proze poslednikh let* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1988), 178.

знал, что его любовь - исторична.¹⁶⁰

The italics above relate to Leva as if he were a real person, or its literary equivalent, a mimetic character. But several times in the novel, the same level of metacommentary is performed on the main protagonist in reference to his thematic aspect: at the end of Part One, the question of the relevancy of the concept of typicality to postrevolutionary Russia is posed using Leva (the artistic image) as an example, not Leva (the character).¹⁶¹ Again, these numerous asides by the narrator did not seem to lessen the thematic impact of *Pushkinskii dom*'s characters for Soviet reviewers in the same way that frequent assertions of a protagonist's fictionality might undermine the work's mimetic illusion. See, for example, Yurii Karabchievskii's early essay on the novel, from 1972:

Речь идет о типе мышления, об особенностях восприятия, о системе реакции, которые отличают наше общество, точнее, интеллигенцию, еще точнее - поколение, родившееся в "роковом" году или около него. И в этом смысле у нас не остается никаких сомнений в тождественности Лёвы Одоевцева и автору и каждому из нас, и получается, что Лёва вполне соответствует тому классическому определению "типического героя в типической обстановке", над которым часто иронизирует Битов.¹⁶²

Karabchievskii recognizes Bitov's devaluation of the notion of typicality (a devaluation that is brought about simply by commenting on it within the text) while simultaneously asserting the historical veracity of Leva, and he was certainly not alone in doing so.¹⁶³ The postmodern or metaliterary aspects of *Pushkinskii dom*, in other words, can perhaps complicate the novel's historical coding but it cannot deconstruct it altogether, a reflection of the work's precarious position between homage and parody to the realist tradition. It is a text that can be read as *both* a "worthy continuation of the 19th century novel" and a "metanovel," to paraphrase Erofeev. The patterns, situations, and relationships are familiar to the reader from their cultural heritage, and this familiarity is even waggishly pointed out to them by the author, but nonetheless these forms

¹⁶⁰ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 133-134.

¹⁶¹ "Проблема типического в литературе, на наш взгляд, была революционно перевернута самой историей. Если в четко-разграниченном классовом обществе герой обязательно нес в себе формирующие классовые черты (родовое начало характера) и они в сочетании с чертами личными и современными производили литературный тип, который, возможно, и действительно, необходимо было подсматривать, собирать по косточкам и обобщать, то, в наше время, герой почти лишен этой родовой основы или она мелькает в нем некими реликтовыми, неузнаваемыми и непонятными ему самому раздражителями, - а само время столь решительно и бурно проехало по каждому отдельно взятому из общей, почти бесклассовой массы человеку, что каждый человек с мало-мальски намеченными природой чертами личности, стал *тип*, в котором, по принятому выражению, как в капле воды, отразился весь мир и, как в капле моря, выразилось все море." Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 110.

¹⁶² Yurii Karabchievskii, "Tochka boli. O romane Andreia Bitova 'Pushkinskii dom,'" *Grani*, no. 106 (December 1977): 152-53.

¹⁶³ Ivanova, for example, believed that "Растерянность перед жизнью и неумение (или невозможность?) с нею справиться—вот что акцентирует Битов в историческом, я на этом настаиваю, Левинном характере." *Tochka zreniia: o proze poslednikh let* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1988), 179.

still carry the power to act upon Bitov's audience and convey some evaluative meaning to them. As Bitov writes in Part One: "не стремление к реальности, как правило, объявляется реализмом, а лишь привычность литературных форм и даже норм."¹⁶⁴

There are much fewer critical discussions concerning Leva's convincingness as a *mimetic* character—that is, as a possible human *individual*—which is no doubt prompted by the author's declaration on the novel's opening pages that the phenomena that make up both the form and the themes of the novel resolutely *do not exist in reality*. Having acknowledged this, the first part of the novel can begin in earnest with the recreation of the "современное несуществование героя, этот неуловимый эфир..."¹⁶⁵ Within the simulated world of *Pushkinskii dom*, there is only one character whose reality seems unshakeable: the eccentric friend of the family Uncle Mitia. His *individuality* is apparent from his multitude of unusual habits, practices, and tastes, but above all it is the position he seems to occupy outside of the postrevolutionary cultural sphere:

Вообще все, связанное с дядей Митей, претерпевало для Левы неожиданное обновление... Даже то, что принадлежало всем людям, например, история, стоило подставить в нее дядю Митю—приобретало необыкновенный оптический эффект: Лева начинал это видеть, будто это и действительно было. [...] Лева начинал это видеть, будто ни разу классных сочинений не писал, кино-картин не смотрел, будто на уроках историю не проходили...¹⁶⁶

The enormous admiration that the young Leva feels for Mitia is infectious: Karabchievskii reads him as a purely positive character, an embodiment of "чистота," while simultaneously insisting upon his incredible mimetic power:

Этот удивительный человек написан с такой резкой достоверностью, с такой ощутимостью невозможных качеств, с такой безоговорочной уверенностью, что не остается никаких сомнений: он существовал, он был, он не придуман, а вспомнен. Вот таким редким случаем органического возникновения и представляется мне дядя Митя с его нищим изяществом, скребкой полов и щек, бесконечным мытьем и приноживанием. Это поразительное соответствие внутреннего и внешнего - конечно же, образ, но, конечно же, и действительность.¹⁶⁷

The last line from above hints at the fact that despite his seeming uniqueness as a character, Mitia also fulfills an important and purely functional role within the text: he does not just exist "действительно," but also stands in for *действительность* itself.¹⁶⁸ Almost every assertion of Mitia's essential tangibility is given from Leva's perspective ("для Левы," "Леве казалось..."), but this initial impression is strong enough for the novel's readers to essentially ignore the carelessness with which the character is treated for the rest of the narrative: The irreplaceable

¹⁶⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 72.

¹⁶⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 14.

¹⁶⁶ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 41.

¹⁶⁷ Yurii Karabchievskii, "Tochka boli. O romane Andreia Bitova 'Pushkinskii dom,'" *Grani*, no. 106 (December 1977): 149-150.

¹⁶⁸ Lipovetsky points out that Mitia, along with Leva's grandfather, together are the only "real" characters in the novel precisely because they alone have "preserved an organic link with the traditional culture buried beneath Soviet civilization." *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 49.

Uncle Mitia passes away gracefully in the “версия и вариант” to Part One, an artistic decision which, in Part Two, is revealed by the narrator-creator to have been a mistake: “Мы истратили дядю Митю в первой части, другого такого у нас нет. И все-таки он необходим именно в той части, чтобы уравновесить некрасоту деда.”¹⁶⁹ Finally, during a critical moment in Part Three: “Мы можем обрадовать читателя—дядя Диккенс еще жив! По крайней мере, для романа он оживет еще раз и еще раз умрет.”¹⁷⁰ Bitov has essentially introduced a character and has prompted us to read him mimetically and then makes a mockery of his most essential characteristic—his existence outside of any systems or structures—by completely subordinating his every future appearance to the demands of narrative structure.

As Bitov’s first work of a properly novelistic length, *Pushkinskii dom* would presumably have far greater “character space” available than any of his previous works, to invoke Alex Woloch’s terminology from *The One vs. the Many*. But if we attempt to plot out the “distributional matrix” of the novel—i.e., “how the discrete representation of any specific individual is intertwined with the narrative’s continual apportioning of attention to different characters who jostle for limited space within the same fictive universe”¹⁷¹—we find that for most of the novel, the actual “fictive universe” is tied to Leva’s perspective just as closely as the claustrophobic world of *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* or the Leningrad of Bitov’s early sketches. No real “distribution” takes place, in other words—everything outside of the author’s italics is focalized through Leva, and this, too, is made explicit by the narrator throughout the novel:

“Потому что интересуется [автора] только герой, и только героя, как уже выбранный (пусть неудачно) объект исследования, не хочет менять автор.”¹⁷²

“поэтому нам отчасти придется отойти от чисто левинной призмы...”¹⁷³

“Так прочитана история Левы под знаком Альбины: другие звезды в этом небе, иначе расположены по отношению друг к другу. Лева не видит их точно так же, как не видим мы в нашем северном полушарии Южный Крест.”¹⁷⁴

Some reviewers, especially earlier on, remarked upon the flatness of the novel’s characters, but here again the author’s commentary helpfully explain that this is merely the consequence of the novel’s chosen mode of presentation:

И тут уже начинают мерещиться, двоиться, множиться и исчезать - и Фаина, и Альбина, и Митишатъев... [...] Может, их с самого начала было столько, а я как автор слил их в одну Фаину, одного Митишатъева, одного... чтобы хоть как-то сфокусировать расплывчатую Левину жизнь?.. Потому что люди, действующие на нас — это одно, а их действие на нас — нечто совершенно другое, сплошь и рядом одно к одному и никакого отношения не имеет, потому что действие их на нас - это уже мы сами. И поскольку нас занимал именно Лева и действие людей на него, то и

¹⁶⁹ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 203.

¹⁷⁰ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 380.

¹⁷¹ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel* (Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003), 13.

¹⁷² Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 56.

¹⁷³ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 72.

¹⁷⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 219.

наши Фаина и Митишатъев — тот же Лева: то ли они слагают Левину душу, то ли его душа —раздваивается, расстраивается, расщепляется на них. [...] Так что, некоторая нереальность, условность и обобщенность этих людей-сил, людей-векторов не означает, что они именно такие, - это мы их видим такими через полупрозрачного нашего героя.¹⁷⁵

If this subjectivity results in a distortion of other characters, it compensates for it by conveying particularly vividly—one might even say mimetically—discrete feelings and experiences. Frank Kermode’s review of the novel for the *New York Times* dismisses its metaliterary play as “nothing new,” but the descriptions of Leva’s romantic entanglements are “very well portrayed—comic, sad and true.”¹⁷⁶ And although Karabchievskii found that “сама Фаина никак не складывается в реальное лицо,” he praises Bitov for the “потрасающе написанная вечеринка с мучительной ревностью и кражей кольца...”¹⁷⁷ Compared to the narrow focalization of his earlier prose, Bitov here has finally separated narrator from hero, but this separation can only be manifested in the commentary (*italics*) that presumably exists outside of the text’s fictional universe. Inside of this universe, inside of the fabula, he is nonetheless is still subordinated to the hero’s zone of vision, although now he is free to comment on this fact.

Leva also differs from his predecessors in the fact that if he does not *rebel* against his fictionality and the narrational demands placed upon him, he at least becomes aware of them in a way that other Bitovian heroes (with perhaps the exception of Lobyshev from “Penelopa”) are not. In the first break, which occurs at the “вечеринкой с мучительной ревностью,” he becomes aware of himself as *subject* and not just an object, in the grammatical sense, which leads to the inevitable diminishing of the others around him:

На самом деле, вовлеченный в этот процесс, в этой погоне за растущим, как снежный ком, предательством, он и сам подвигался к краю, только как бы не сам, а с ними, за ними следом. То-есть, незаметно для самого себя, он оказывался по ту сторону, и уже потихоньку был способен совершать в отношении других то, от чего страдал сам. И эта возмутительная игра „кто — кого”, которую все время подсовывали Лева, пока он верил, что должна быть любовь, а не „кто — кого” [...] — эта игра „кто — кого”, эта нереальность (Искушение) становилась все более явью для Левы, и он, пусть неумело и не в силах еще сравняться, но уже пробовал шкодливой ручонкой то, что, перенося свой опыт на всех, ему казалось, все и делают — так чем же он хуже всех?.. И так эти двое вдруг стали делиться и помножаться в его глазах, распространяться со скоростью опыта, что мир уже отчетливо начинал делиться на ОН (Лева) и ОНИ (все).¹⁷⁸

During the climactic duel with his rival Mitishat’ev at the end of Part Three, Leva’s realization develops into an epiphany:

В одно и то же место уязвляет меня и Фаина, и дед, и Митишатъев, и время —в

¹⁷⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 244.

¹⁷⁶ Frank Kermode, “Lyova’s Death Was Temporary,” *The New York Times*, January 3, 1988, 10.

¹⁷⁷ Yurii Karabchievskii, “Tochka boli. O romane Andreia Bitova ‘Pushkinskii dom,’” *Grani*, no. 106 (December 1977): 173.

¹⁷⁸ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 235.

меня! Значит есть я —существующая точка боли! Вот там я есть, куда попадает в меня все, а не я где-то существующий попадаю под удары, непредусмотренные удары случайного и чуждого мира! Это и есть доказательство моего действительного существования —приложимость *всех* сил ко мне. Но это не доказательство сил!

Так радостно объяснялся Лева...

- Ты вот сказал, Христос в пустыне... А меня обвинил.

Не так! От искушения ведь и можно лишь выкрутиться, преодолевать — нельзя. Преодолевать — потерпеть поражение, потому что признать. Не признать искушение — вот победить его! И в Писании так! никогда не понимал... — восхищался Лева. —Нравилось, а не понимал. Мы чувство, вызываемое в нас, стали принимать за содержание того, что вызвало чувство — вот наша неспособность любить другого. Как же иначе стали мы читать Евангелие —для удовольствия! А то бы поняли... „Искушение от диавола,” —сказано в Писании,— ведь не диаволом же!¹⁷⁹

Leva's words here neatly echo the author's from a hundred pages prior: “люди, действующие на нас—это одно, а их действие на нас—нечто совершенно другое.”¹⁸⁰ Within the fictive universe, this conveys an evolutionary advantage to Leva while also preventing an ethical response to others. On the level of the text itself, it is an admission that the narrative can only depict the latter phenomena—the forces acting upon Leva—and not the people producing these forces themselves. The overlap between the two introduces a certain confusion into the text: is this solipsism an inherent characteristic of Leva's personality (and, allegorically, of the late-Soviet intelligentsia), or is it a consequence of how the fabula of the novel itself is focused through this “чисто левинной призмой?” Leva himself recognizes and simultaneously dismisses the limitations of this method when he responds to one of Mitishat'ev's accusations: “Ну—жизнь моя! ...неужели упрекать в ней человека можно! Я вот всё-таки живу, не понимаю и живу—мне же это важно! Что я могу, свидетель собственного опыта?..”¹⁸¹

This resignation is all the more damning because just hours earlier Leva had just experienced an encounter of a completely different nature with Faina, the third component in the endless game of “кто-кого” that powers the novel's second section. On a crisp November morning, Leva observes his love walking past the Pushkin House with a male companion:

Спутник шел, исполненный силой, которую придала ему Фаина, и это не убивало Леву, как обычно, навывлет, хотя Лева и видел все, как всегда видел, но —не так видел. [...] Перед Левой вдруг, впервые за много лет, реальный предмет, реальная Фаина, идущая вот сейчас мимо его окон, по набережной, с незнакомым Леве спутником. Лева впервые за много лет увидел Фаину... [...]

У Левы вдруг все замерло от любви к ней, именно к ней, ни к кому больше —и

¹⁷⁹ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 342-343.

¹⁸⁰ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 244-245.

¹⁸¹ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 344.

себя в этом не было. Впервые, быть может, за все время его чувство и можно было назвать любовью, разве что еще какой-нибудь один далекий момент, самый первый, уже забытый им.¹⁸²

Leva's vision is so striking to both reader and protagonist because what begins as an account of his "собственного опыта" suddenly becomes a moment of what Bakhtin would call "artistic seeing." In this brief moment of clarity, Leva does not mistake the pressure Faina exerts upon him as Faina herself, but instead sees her from the outside, *aesthetically*. The visual metaphors of early Bakhtin are realized here literally: when Leva gazes downwards at Faina from his high window, he fills in the background around her and, more crucially, he is not only separated spatially from his lover but recognizes that, despite his longing, he must not under any circumstances attempt to invite her up to him or attempt to descend down to her. The scene as a whole evokes the specific relationship of *vnenakhodimost'* that Bakhtin describes between author and hero:

Это отношение изъе­млет героя из единого и единственного объе­млющего его и автора-человека открытого события бытия, где он—как человек—был бы рядом с автором—как товарищ по событию жизни, или против—как враг или наконец в нем самом—как он сам, изме­лет его из круговой поруки, круговой вины и единой ответственности и рождает его—как нового человека в новом плане бытия, в котором он сам для себя и своими силами не может родиться, облакает в ту новую плоть, которая для него самого и не существенна и не существует.¹⁸³

This brief moment of *vnenakhodimost'* produces for Leva a true image of the "whole" of Faina, and it is born from his spatial separation, his loving removal from her life. It is also an exception in the novel when it comes to its secondary characters: as Leva mentions to Mitishat'ev during their debate, "Видишь, я очень изменился за последнее время—вдруг обнаружил людей вокруг себя."¹⁸⁴ *Pushkinskii dom*, as mentioned earlier, does differ from Bitov's earlier works in that there is a very pronounced separation between author and hero. The author *does* possess a "surplus of vision," as Bakhtin dictates, but the excess of the author's vision is *temporal* in nature, and not truly spatial. This can be seen in the elusiveness of Leva's external appearance, which is only revealed in the novel's epilogue, after the fabled meeting between author and hero takes place.¹⁸⁵ Prior to that moment, the narrator's privileged knowledge that Leva lacks is derived from the inherent temporality of writing:

Не знает [Ле­ва], что это в нем — хохот самой Истории, если она все-таки есть. Не знает он, что о ненавистном во все школьные годы физике станет когда-нибудь вспоминать с теплотою, а о кумире и властителе дум —завуче, с содроганием. Не знает физик, что заведет себе наконец домик с садиком и огородом, не знает завуч, что станет вице-президентом Академии педагогических наук, не знает Спокойное,

¹⁸² Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 260.

¹⁸³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filosofskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2003), 96-97.

¹⁸⁴ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 260.

¹⁸⁵ External appearance is a necessary step for the young Bakhtin in artistic contemplation of the other; see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filosofskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2003), 108-114.

что придет через комсомол к русской идее, не знает Лева, что за дверью проходит Фаина... Никто ничего не знает из того, что все мы теперь знаем.¹⁸⁶

Только прошлое могло быть прожито тем единственным способом, который оказался, и в отношении прошлого мы снимаем с себя ответственность перед героем. Настоящее же неизвестно и неделимо. Это авторское коварство, при котором мы знаем, что *будет* с нашим героем, никак не может ужиться с чувством справедливости, ибо он этого не знает.¹⁸⁷

The narrator's awareness of his temporal advantage over Leva is occasionally accompanied by anxiety over the coming moment where the narrated time of the novel will catch up to the present moment that begins it: "*Настоящее время губительно для героя. И в жизни герои населяют лишь прошлое, литературные же герои живут лишь в уже написанных книгах.*"¹⁸⁸ The present tense in *Pushkinskii dom* literally and necessarily manifests itself with Leva's death, for it is only under the limit imposed by death that a life can be made formal, i.e., a literary character, as Bakhtin writes in *Avtor i geroi*:

Данность временных границ жизни другого, хотя бы в возможности, данность самого ценностного подхода к законченной жизни другого, [...] восприятие под знаком смерти, возможного отсутствия—эта данность обуславливает уплотнение и формальное изменение жизни, всего ее течения временного внутри этих границ.¹⁸⁹

With Leva's death, the author has fulfilled the aesthetic portrayal of Leva's life, and an artistic whole has been formed with the closing of the narrative circle:

*...по законам построения литературного произведения, он действительно окончен, наш роман. [...] Все, что я написал до сих пор, я написал для воображаемого терпеливого читателя. Пусть же он меня извинит или идет к черту - я хочу немножко и для себя, невообразимого, для своего уяснения, для своей чистой совести: я хочу изгнать запах писательского пота, того усилия, с каким заставлял Воображаемого сопереживать романские события как действительные. В этом для меня, видите ли, честность: образ и должен быть образ: он может быть вызван, но не должен существовать, облепив действительность, на правах реальности.*¹⁹⁰

It is in this "немножко" that follows the novel's formal conclusion that Leva is resurrected, not as a literary character but a human being. This miraculous resurrection is aided by the novel's historical context: the fact that Soviet reality is indistinguishable from simulation is typically taken as a sign of decay or at least disorder, but this devaluation of reality is accompanied by an equally valid *elevation* of the fiction—and by extension, *fictional persons*—to a status equal to their living counterparts. The author has not merged completely with Leva, as

¹⁸⁶ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 160.

¹⁸⁷ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 400.

¹⁸⁸ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 369.

¹⁸⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filosofskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2003), 182.

¹⁹⁰ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 370-371,

Lipovetsky argues, but instead remains an other to his him (after all, he must remain outside of Leva to finally record his external appearance, however indeterminate it may be). What is radically different is that the narrator has renounced his authorial surplus, at least on the temporal axis: “Я, видите ли, не претендую на власть, которой уже добился.”¹⁹¹ He has retained his position outside of his hero but has voluntarily destroyed the “эстетически продуктивно отношение автора к герою”; in a neat reversal of the early Bakhtin, he does not remove himself from the field of the hero’s life but instead wades into the “единое и единственное открытое событие бытия, где он—как автор—был бы рядом с героем.”

There is a certain paradox that arises in the fact that the destruction of the “aesthetically productive relationship of the author towards the hero” does not lead to the destruction of the work itself, which continues on for several dozen additional pages. It is here that we can finally return to the question, or the fate, of Culture, which is of such concern to Bitov throughout *Pushkinskii dom*. As Lipovetsky writes, “outsidedness in Bitov is largely deprived of formal and aesthetic meaning; instead, it takes on the semantics of culture and philosophy: this is outsidedness in relation to total simulation...”¹⁹² *Pushkinskii dom* is often discussed alongside several other Soviet “metanovels,” as Hellebust does when lumping it together with *Doktor Zhivago* and *Dar*. But Leva, curiously enough, is not a writer but a literary critic, and in the short digression “*Professiia geroiia*,” the hero’s relationship to literature (and, by extension, culture) is related to the reader in spatial terms: “Ведь профессию ему какую выбрал!.. Чтоб не писатель был, но все-таки писал. Чтоб жил литературой, на литературе, с литературой, но не в ней.”¹⁹³ Here the narrator describes Leva’s profession with a mixture of pity and scorn, but in the novel’s epilogue, the attempt to continue the novel after Leva’s death is characterized as being “скорее литературоведческая, чем литературная.”¹⁹⁴ After the hero’s resurrection the author can no longer perform the act of *vzhivanie*, the first step of aesthetic seeing as prescribed by the young Bakhtin. As an interlocutor, Leva remains opaque and ultimately unknowable to the author, who is now no longer *inside* of him, but merely *beside* him. This represents not the impossibility of aesthetic creation after Soviet reality’s complete break with culture, as Lipovetsky argues, but instead a novel relationship that perceives and even accepts culture and tradition as *other*, as something both radically open (in the sense that it is unknowable) and closed (it is impenetrable). In the first pages of the book, Bitov acknowledges the necessity of making use of “*тарой, созданной до нас и не нами*.”¹⁹⁵ By relating to Leva as equal he is effectively breaking this vessel and placing himself outside of it, but not entirely apart from it.

The author’s self-demotion is an act born out of ethical need, for he does it “*для своей чистой совести*.” His final gesture is one of stepping back from the practice of representation

¹⁹¹ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 371.

¹⁹² Mark Lipovetsky, *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 62.

¹⁹³ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 267.

¹⁹⁴ *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 370. Bora Chung makes a similar observation for Bitov’s *Prepodvatel’ simmetrii*, where the opposition of author to literary scholar is replaced by *translator*: “Bitov in “The Translators Preface” steps down from the position of the author, the subject of the narration, to the position of the translator, the subject of the utterance, and becomes a “character.” He is no longer the author outside of the work, as in Bakhtin’s discussion of the author and his hero.” “The Writer as Translator in Andrei Bitov’s *The Teacher of Symmetry*,” *Slavic and East European Journal* 63, no. 4 (2020): 567.

¹⁹⁵ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 14.

towards an acceptance the unknowability of the other: “Мы совпадаем с ним во времени - и не ведаем о нем больше НИ-ЧЕ-ГО.”¹⁹⁶ The initial inspiration for what would later become the novel was a simple anecdote about two young men who, in a state of drunken debauchery, inflicted considerable damage to a museum and then rushed to put things back in order just in time. The story was amusing to Bitov, but more importantly it seemed to conceal an important message about the state of Soviet morality: “Я думал: дипломированные филологи, восстающие на манер луддитов, уничтожавших когда-то ткацкие станки?.. Нет, страшно... Потом, эта покорная ликвидация последствий своего безобразного восстания тоже меня занимала.”¹⁹⁷ Lipovetsky believes that *Pushkinskii dom* exhibits a transition from modernist to postmodernist aesthetics that “appears to have taken place as the novel was written.”¹⁹⁸ If this change in perception took place alongside the end of the Thaw and the beginning of the Brezhnev era, it is revealing that a work initially intended to serve as a representation of an ethical crisis became by its completion an aesthetic intervention into a crisis of representation.

Conclusion

The novel relationship between author and hero that concludes *Pushkinskii dom* came only after over a decade of constant writing, reflected through the slowly shifting prism of author and hero: the sensitive solipsism of his early sketches was followed by clumsy and experimentative encounters with socialist realist master plots and narratives, and finally, a return to and confrontation with the Russian realist tradition and its practice of historically-motivated characterization. In a 1987 article covering Bitov’s writing career, which at that point covered nearly thirty years, Natal’ia Ivanova wrote that any attempt to uncover the “secret” to the author’s style must begin with an examination of his literary heroes. “Да и загадка в чисто битовском духе—с героями его связана: ранее они *были*, а теперь *исчезли*. Нет больше героев (в старинном понимании этого древнейшего литературоведческого термина) в его прозе.”¹⁹⁹ The final break took place with *Pushkinskii dom*; for the rest of the 1970s and 1980s Bitov’s writing is mostly concerned with nature and travel writing, and to Ivanova, this is motivated by the search for a new cultural context that still maintains contact with reality:

Армения или Грузия вытесняет Монахова и Леву (для писателя, по-моему, героем является и человек, и целая культура). Битовское сердце отдыхает, а ум приобретает пищу для анализа,—не с дурной бесконечностью рефлексии, а с твердой реальностью жизни, ее плоти и крови имеет теперь дело автор.²⁰⁰

Just as his heroes changed radically over his career, so did Bitov’s own relationship to them, from *чистое вживание* to the ultimate gesture of the voluntary stripping away of his authorial position. This was certainly motivated by a search for a new *context*, as Ivanova suggests, but in another sense it is an attempt to reconcile the act of writing (“Хорошо бы начать книгу, которую надо писать всю жизнь...”) with the shock and confusion felt by the young Bitov

¹⁹⁶ Andrei Bitov, *Pushkinskii dom* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 408.

¹⁹⁷ Andrei Bitov, “Akhilles i cherepakha,” in *Stat’i iz romana* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1986), 149.

¹⁹⁸ Mark Lipovetsky, *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 64.

¹⁹⁹ Natal’ia Ivanova, *Tochka zreniia: o proze poslednikh let* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1988), 170.

²⁰⁰ Natal’ia Ivanova, *Tochka zreniia: o proze poslednikh let* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1988), 185.

when he first learned that he, too, could become something akin to a literary character whose image is subject to the whims of the author.

Chapter Three

Vasilii Belov: “To be their intercessor in literature”

Introduction

In late 1987 the Soviet critic Galina Belaia raised the alarm on the pages of *Voprosy literatury* over the rapidly growing disjunction between recent works of literature and “contemporary reality.” What Belaia perceived was not simply a failure of the latest texts to address modern society but a complete lack of engagement between the two altogether. This perceived abandonment of the principles of literary realism manifested itself most clearly in the insubstantiality of these works’ literary characters, a development which was met by protest by Belaia:

Почему же в иную эпоху, спустя десять с лишним лет, нас пытаются убедить, что можно писать иначе, что художественность не поспевает за стремительными темпами общественного развития? Что это естественно и что это нам, читателям и критикам, надо перестроиться и придумать некую новую поэтику, где характеры, превращенные всего лишь в знак явления, где зарисовки, лишенные плоти и крови, были бы объявлены результатом “нового мышления”, “новой художественностью”?¹

Belaia’s characterization of the *perestroika*-era protagonist is echoed in an article by Mikhail Zolotonosov written three years later. The view from 1991, unsurprisingly, is even more polemical and delivered with a judgement that is even more certain:

Сегодня литература на том месте, где раньше располагался “образ строителя коммунизма”, “положительный герой” и т.п., оставляет “слабый контур с незаштрихованной сердцевинкой”... Раньше это категорически запрещало начальство, теперь запрет снят, а условия литературой игры допускают такую возможность. Использовать же ее заставляет доминирующее сегодня ощущение исчезновения человека вместе с породившим его тоталитарным социумом.”²

These two images of the last years of the Soviet literary process are all the more striking because Belaia and Zolotonosov have drawn their observations from a corpora of texts that would seem to be aesthetically and politically opposed. Zolotonosov is primarily concerned with what he calls the “литература восьмиدهарстов”:

...литература, насыщенная иронией и сознательно разрушающая традиционную конвенцию о беллетристике, имеющая дело не непосредственно с реальностью, а с текстами прошлых времен, то есть ЛИТЕРАТУРОЙ И ЦИТАТАМИ. То, что для “шестидесятников” является серьезной проблемой, для носителей этого

¹ Galina Belaia, “Pereput’e,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 12 (1987): 101.

² Mikhail Zolotonosov, “Otdykhaiushchii fontan,” *Oktiabr’*, no. 4 (1991): 176. Zolotonosov is quoting phrases from S. Vasil’evaia from the May 1990 issue of “Rodnik.”

литературного сознания (Е. Попов, Д. Пригов) стало предметом игры и очень часто веселой, но изощренной насмешки.³

Belaia, on the other hand, is addressing the decidedly more conservative—both politically and formally—Village Prose literary school. Where Zolotonosov sees the “восьмидесятые” actively choosing logocentrism over the depiction of “reality,” prioritizing the synthetic over the mimetic, Belaia describes a more complicated process of detachment among Village Prose writers, who had taken the revived interest in the historical common to many readers and writers of the 1960s and 1970s down a decidedly different path: “Они были устремлены в далекое прошлое - к “корням” и “истокам”, лежавшим далеко за пределами 1917 года. Но главное даже не в этом: история стала “идеей”, традиция была узаконена в общественном сознании.”⁴ Belaia does not dismiss the path they chose altogether—indeed, she is careful to praise the imagination and craftsmanship of the Village Prose writers’ earlier work—but their absolute separation of the present from a valiant past, in her estimation, had severely diminished their work’s ability to engage “concretely” with contemporary reality: “В конечном счете прошлое в целом было противопоставлено современности, а современность тоже освоена только в целом, в общем, но не освоена конкретно-исторически.”⁵ Belaia was not alone in her estimation: in 1985, Liliia Vil’chek saw Valentin Rasputin’s *Proshchanie s Materoi* [Farewell to Matyora]⁶ as the “logical culmination” of Village Prose, which was no longer able or willing to touch upon contemporary rural life in the Soviet Union:

Книги о жизни сегодняшнего села, о сельском рабочем классе будут принадлежать уже иной литературной галактике, иной, как модно говорить, парадигме, иному течению. Возможно, литература, как и сама история, развивается по спирали, и истоки этого молодого течения вновь обнаружатся где-то на водоразделе искусства и публицистики.⁷

Read in tandem, these two quotations from Zolotonosov and Belaia can be read as evidence of a *universal* decline in the mimetic aspect of characterization, intentional or not, in the last years of Soviet literature. But where this absence or reduction in mimetic representation can be expected for the conceptualist and “другая проза” writers, the anti-realist turn of late Village Prose is much more striking in light of its literary legacy. Leiderman and Lipovetsky paint the earlier work of the writers cited by Belaia as inheritors of the Russian prose tradition, especially that of 19th-century realism:

Творцам “деревенской прозы” принципиально чужды приемы модернистского письма, “телеграфный стиль”, гротескная образность. *Им близка культура классической русской прозы с ее любовью к слову пластическому, изобразительному, музыкальному, они восстанавливают традиции сказовой речи,*

³ Mikhail Zolotonosov, “Otdykhaiushchii fontan,” *Oktiabr’*, no. 4 (1991): 175.

⁴ Galina Belaia, “Pereput’e,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 12 (1987): 91.

⁵ Galina Belaia, “Pereput’e,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 12 (1987): 93.

⁶ Valentin Rasputin, *Farewell to Matyora*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis, 1st edition (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1995).

⁷ Liliia Vil’chek, “Vniz po techeniiu derevenskoi prozy,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 6 (1985): 72.

плотно примыкающей к характеру персонажа, человека из народа, и углубляют их.⁸

Like Russian realism proper, the Village Prose genre traces its origins to the sketch form, with its empirical and ethnographic aspirations, and with the movement's "inner turn" in the 1960s came widespread praise for the return of the mimetic character to Soviet prose. As Jeremy Morris writes: "What marked out Village Prose as being in some respects a positive development, in contrast to other officially indulged writing, was its fresh, unclichéed characterization."⁹ How did the typical protagonist of Village Prose—with its aspirations towards a more verisimilar or "faithful" depiction of rural Soviet citizens, through syntactical innovation, *skaz*-narration, and ethnographical detail—give way in later works by the same authors to wholly thematic or allegorical figures who were scarcely distinguishable from the paper-thin phantoms of the "восьмидерасты"? Belaia faults the writers' orientation towards an impossible past, while David Gillespie, following the work of David Bethea, believes that the "apocalyptic turn" that saturates late Village Prose writing is an ingrained feature of Russian cultural history.¹⁰ Rather than take a diachronic approach, surveying canonical works of a literary movement that spanned more than two decades,¹¹ this chapter will examine problems of this mimetic-thematic relationship in a single work by a single writer—Vasilii Belov's *Privychnoe delo* (1966). The arc of Belov's literary career is a microcosm of Village Prose's trajectory as a whole: once one of its most promising writers, by the late 1980s the ideological contents of his work far outstripped any artistic qualities it might have held.¹² He had first achieved widespread recognition for his vivid and "authentic" portrayals of rural citizens and in particular his special talent for capturing folk speech. Here is how Feliks Kuznetsov described his characters in a 1969 almanac dedicated to a new generation of Soviet writers:

Белов знает деревенскую жизнь не понаслышке—он плоть от плоти ее. Вот почему люди, населяющие его прозу, не умозрительные конструкции, не риторические,

⁸ Leiderman, N., and M. N. Lipovetskii. *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody: v dvukh tomakh*. Izdatel'skii tsentr "Akademiia," 2010, pp. 63-64. Emphasis in original. Speaking specifically of the temporal aspect of Village Prose writing, Kathleen Parthé makes a similar claim concerning the relationship between the genre and Socialist Realism: "The sense of time in Village Prose is not only *anti*- but also *ante*- Socialist Realism; it effectively bypasses Socialist Realism and goes back to both traditional peasant life and to the depiction of that life in pre-Revolutionary Russian literature. Kathleen F. Parthé, *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 56.

⁹ Jeremy Morris, "From Chudak to Mudak? Village Prose and the Absurdist Ethics of Evgenii Popov," *The Modern Language Review* 99, no. 3 (July 2004): 698.

¹⁰ See David Gillespie, "Apocalypse Now: Village Prose and the Death of Russia," *The Modern Language Review* 87, no. 2 (April 1992): 407-17.

¹¹ In her monograph on the subject, Kathleen Parthé writes that the canonical works of the Village Prose movement span from the mid-1950s until the early 1980s. *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), *xii*.

¹² As David Gillespie writes:

"In the late 1980s, the surviving representatives of village prose, especially Vasilii Belov, Viktor Astaf'ev, and Valentin Rasputin, lost much of their authority and appeal among large sections of the Soviet reading public because of inflammatory and provocative statements they made, either in their fictional works or in public speeches and articles, on the Jews, Freemasons, women, Western fashions and music, the future of Russia, and the younger generation." "Apocalypse Now: Village Prose and the Death of Russia," *The Modern Language Review* 87, no. 2 (April 1992): 407.

условные фигуры. Это живые люди, подлинно народные характеры. Таковы прежде всего Иван Африканович и Катерина в повести “Привычное дело”—наиболее значительной из всего, что написал Белов. Это его соплеменники, и Василий Белов считает своим сыновним долгом быть их “ходоком” в литературе, рассказывать всю правду о них.¹³

The inhabitants of Belov’s stories are described here as autonomous, *living* people, but Kuznetsov’s use of the word “ходок”¹⁴ suggests that some kind of intervention on Belov’s part is necessary in order for them to become properly legible in literature. This chapter will examine the cost of this intervention—the creation of a newly mimetic peasant literary subject—for the other functions of the literary text. Rather than viewing Village Prose’s thematic turn as a reflection of cultural or historical circumstances, I argue that what is extracted in Belov’s act of serving as *ходок в литературе* manifests itself in the thematic axis of the work, creating an inherent conflict between the thematic and mimetic poles of character in Village Prose literature. *Privychnoe delo* was an overnight sensation in the Soviet literary world, and the vastly divergent readings of its overarching themes and the nature of its protagonist does not just reflect the depth of Belov’s writing but also reveals this fundamental conflict, between the representation of a nonliterary consciousness and the conveyance of an extranarrative message or allegory. This conflict will be formulated as a counterexample, essentially, to the thematic-mimetic relationship established in Gyorgy Lukács’ essay *The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization*, which touches upon the literary representation of dialog and mental processes in realist literature.

3.1 Lukács’ *The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization*

In his 1936 essay *The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization*, Georg Lukács describes a specific method by which “great realists” across the ages—Shakespeare, Balzac, and Gorky, to name a few—achieve dynamic, individualized characters in their fictional works. He opens with the example of Plato’s *Symposium*, which distinguishes itself from the philosopher’s other dialogues not necessarily through the strength of its ideas, but through the presentation of its various personalities:

Plato reveals the thinking processes of his characters and develops their varied intellectual positions regarding the same problem—the nature of love—as the vital factor in their characters and as the most distinctive manifestation of their personalities. The ideas of the individuals are not abstract, generalized, and unmotivated. Instead the total personality of each character is synthesized and exemplified through his mode of thinking, in his mode of self-expression, and in his conclusions regarding the subject at hand.¹⁵

¹³ Feliks Kuznetsov, “Vasilii Belov,” in *My - Molodye* (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1969), 225.

¹⁴ The second of four possible definitions for *ходок* in the Ushakov dictionary: “Выборный от крестьян, посланный куда-н. Ходатайствовать о чем-н. Перед кем-н.” Dmitrii Ushakov, ed., “Khodok,” in *Tolkovyi Slovar’ Russkogo Iazyka* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo inostrannykh i natsional’nykh slovarei, 1940).

¹⁵ Georg Lukács, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 149–150.

This technique—which Lukács calls *intellectual physiognomy*—seemingly bridges two very significant and interrelated aesthetic divides: it presents the “secret for exalting the individual to the typical,”¹⁶ but since this operation is simultaneous and not unidirectional, it works upon the thematic and mimetic aspects of character equally; in fact, they now work to mutually reinforce each other rather than work in opposition. In other words, a fully individualized, mimetic character does not struggle against the work’s overarching message and structure—the “mutiny” of E.M. Forster’s round character—but plays a role in its production.

For Lukács, a successful presentation of a character’s intellectual physiognomy hinges upon four overlapping factors. Given that the essay was written during the critic’s residency in the Soviet Union in the mid-thirties, it is not surprising that the “subject at hand” should be deeply historicized and synonymous with the identification and deep examination of the “major contradictions, motive forces, and tendencies of an era.”¹⁷ This is taken *a priori* for Lukács, and as Darko Suvin notes, the criteria for determining the “essential problems of one’s time” are left up to the worker’s party.¹⁸ Assuming the text has correctly selected the most “essential,” or “pressing” issues of the period, there is the additional requirement that a protagonist possesses the “capacity for intellectual generalization,” and in fact it is this facility for Lukács that essentially determines their position within the text’s character system: “The protagonist’s rank depends essentially on the level of his self-awareness, his capacity consciously to raise what is individual and incidental in his existence to a specific level of universality.”¹⁹ Third, this self-conscious protagonist should encounter, experience, and consider the contradictions of his age not through petty observations of everyday life but in “extreme, intensified” situations, which for Lukács are the “most effective means for achieving typicality on the highest level.”²⁰ Lastly, typicality can only be achieved and a true intellectual physiognomy can only be established when a character is placed within a complex and dynamic social system:

The basis of great literature is Heraclitus’s common world of men “awake”, the world of men struggling in society, struggling with each other, acting for and against each other and reacting actively, not passively, to each other. If there is no “awake” consciousness of reality, there can be no intellectual physiognomy. Left to revolve about itself in an isolated subjectivity, the intellectual physiognomy becomes blind and amorphous.²¹

Although at one point Lukács states that this intellectual physiognomy is “only one quality through which an author can relate the individual to the universal,”²² it is clear from the

¹⁶ Georg Lukacs, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 154.

¹⁷ Lukács does not address the fact that the central problem of *Symposium*—the nature of love—is a universal, and not historical one.

¹⁸ Darko Suvin, “Lukács: Horizons and Implications of the ‘Typical Character,’” *Social Text*, no. 16 (Winter -1987 1986): 105.

¹⁹ Georg Lukacs, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 155.

²⁰ Georg Lukacs, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 159.

²¹ Georg Lukacs, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 161.

²² Georg Lukacs, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 157.

polemical thrust of the majority of his essay that it the four criteria he establishes hold an evaluative weight. Lukács sharply criticizes contemporary prose for its naturalist preoccupation with static description, alienated characters, and empty conversation.

Unlike the works by Dos Passos or James Joyce cited by Lukács as negative examples, Belov's *Privychnoe delo* was heralded as a continuation of the realist tradition by a literary institution that in many ways still operated under the same dialectical understanding of art and historical progress held by Lukács in 1936. This alone does not make it an *obvious* text for a Lukacsian intellectual physiognomic examination, however. On a strictly formal level Belov's work is a novella, making the creation of a truly complex character network and an atmosphere of social expansiveness which Lukács calls for much less easily accomplished. More seriously, the "essential problems" that lay at the heart of the text are largely ahistorical in nature—the familiar Village Prose binary of urban-rural is represented, but the sweeping social changes facing the Russian village are not as centered in *Privychnoe delo* as in many other representative texts of the genre. But what sets "The Intellectual Physiognomy" apart from Lukács' other aesthetic criticism of the period—the more well-known essay "Narrate or Describe?" or his monograph *The Historical Novel*, for example—is specifically his evocation of the pseudoscience of physiognomy, which operates upon the belief that a person's behavior, personality, or social and/or ethnic origin can be inferred from their physical appearance. Lukács' essay does not acknowledge the modern usage of physiognomy in the fields of criminology or anthropology, nor does he make an effort to differentiate a character's *manner* of thinking from his or her *ability* to engage "self-consciously" and their "capacity for intellectual generalization." Lukács disregards the potential for a misalignment between the representation of mental processes and the presentation, through character, of their rhetorical message regarding the work's central issue. By attempting to represent the intellectual physiognomy of a peasant to an extent unknown to Russian literature, Belov's *Privychnoe delo* interrogates this space between a character's "ability" and "manner" of thinking and calls into question the mutually reinforcing mimetic-thematic nexus that Lukács offers up as existing without tension. Before turning to the intellectual physiognomy of Belov's work, however, I will attempt to place his exploration of peasant subjectivity within the greater context of the Russian literary tradition.

3.2 "Тоже человек": *Mimetic representations of the Russian peasantry and the origins of Village Prose*

Although the term is not universally accepted by all its purported practitioners, "Village Prose" (*деревенская проза*) as an artistic phenomenon represents, in the words of Kathleen Parthé, "the most aesthetically coherent and ideologically important body of published literature to appear in the Soviet Union between the death of Stalin and Gorbachev's ascendancy."²³ This coherency, as evidenced by the genre's preferred name, is first and foremost one of content: works ascribed to the movement are set in rural settings, populated by rural protagonists, and

²³ Kathleen F. Parthé, *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), ix-x. Parthé's book was originally published in 1992, but this sentiment was shared by the critics Vadim Kozhinov and Vladimir Gusev as early as 1968: "я так же, как и В. Кожинов, считаю, что так называемая деревенская проза (термин весьма кустарен тут я тоже согласен с В. Кожиновым)—самое серьезное направление в нынешней русской прозе." "О прозе, derevene, i tselnykh liudiakh," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 14, 1968, 6.

deal with issues of rural life.²⁴ Such topics are not, of course, unique to Village Prose; four out of five residents of the Russian Empire resided in rural areas on the eve of the Revolution, and a bare majority of Soviet citizens lived in cities only in the early 1960s.²⁵ From a strictly demographic standpoint, it is unsurprising that the Russian countryside is an extremely prominent setting throughout the history of Russian literature. Localized features of the country's rural landscape began to emerge in earnest towards the end of the 18th century in the works of writers like Radishchev and Karamzin, but the figure of the Russian peasant as *literary subject* came to the forefront only with 19th century realism. Though the Russian realist tradition first emerged from the cramped, fetid conditions of Petersburg as explored in the "physiological sketches" of the 1840s, the Natural School quickly expanded its field of vision to the open air of the provinces. As Donald Fanger notes, the empirical aspirations of the genre endowed a work like Dmitrii Grigorovich's 1846 novella *Derevnia* with newfound veracity: "The result was the first 'inside' account of peasants to be written by an outsider, and the inevitable element of factitiousness was largely concealed by the quasi-documentary character of the mode, together with the humane tendency of the story."²⁶ In his account of the peasant in literature over the 19th century, Fanger traces a figure that grows increasingly complex and diverse in its representation throughout the long century: from Radishchev (a serf who speaks "in phrases full of Church Slavonicisms, inversions, parallelism, and chiasmus"²⁷) to Turgenev (the Russian peasant as a fully human being, spiritually, at least, as much a citizen of his country as anyone else²⁸), concluding with the chaotic, almost demonic *muzhiki* and *baby* in early-twentieth century works by Chekhov and Gorky. Despite this development, Fanger concludes that peasant figures largely remained peripheral characters, fulfilling functional or thematic roles within their respective texts. To a certain extent, this was a question of *agency*: there were very few writers of truly peasant origin throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. As Fanger writes:

The peasant, then, cannot speak for himself in nineteenth-century literature, nor can his way of life inspire a long, coherent work. He can only be approached from outside, by writers who, because they have *chosen* him as a subject, must find some significance in his existence. That significance is the writer's own invention or discovery; it answers *his* needs and is a part of *his* moral life.²⁹

Another explanation offered by Georgi Plekhanov was more epistemological in nature. Reflecting upon an earlier essay by Gleb Uspenskii, he argues that the peasant as an individualized character is difficult to represent in literature because they are scarcely distinguishable from each other *in reality*. For Plekhanov, Russian *muzhiki* could not be

²⁴ For a general introduction to these themes, see the introduction to Kathleen F. Parthé, *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).

²⁵ *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda: SSSR (svodnyi tom)* (Moskva: Gosstatizdat TsSU SSSR, 1962), 13.

²⁶ Donald Fanger, "The Peasant in Literature," in *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, ed. Wayne Vucinich (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968), 245.

²⁷ Donald Fanger, "The Peasant in Literature," in *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, ed. Wayne Vucinich (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968), 237.

²⁸ Donald Fanger, "The Peasant in Literature," in *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, ed. Wayne Vucinich (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968), 247.

²⁹ Donald Fanger, "The Peasant in Literature," in *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, ed. Wayne Vucinich (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968), 232.

portrayed as *individuals* (*личности*) because they effectively were without personality (*личности*):

Сам Гл. Успенский говорит, что “отделить из этой миллионной массы единицы и попробовать понять ее—дело невозможное” и что “старосту Семена Никитича можно понимать только в куче других Семенов Никитичей”. Поэтому и изображать Семена Никитича можно только “в куче других Семенов Никитичей.” [...] Художественному изображению хорошо поддается только та среда, в которой личность человеческая достигла уже известной степени выработки. Торжеством художественного творчества является изображение личностей, принимающих участие в великом движении человечества, служащих носительницами великих мировых идей. [...] Мы видим, таким образом, что преобладающий общественный интерес настоящего времени привел наших народников-беллетристов к изображению крестьянской жизни, но характер этой жизни должен был невыгодно отразиться на характере их художественного творчества.³⁰

As a Marxist critic, his demand that fully-formed literary characters “participate in the great movement of humanity” points forward towards the fundamental arc of the socialist realist novel from “spontaneity” to “consciousness.” As Katerina Clark notes in *The Soviet Novel*, Bolshevik leaders overwhelmingly identified this spontaneous element with the peasantry itself. After 1917 members of the peasantry could now enter into the stream of history and make their own journey along this dialectic, but it is easy to see how the peasant figure as imagined by an intellectual like Plekhanov could not yield a physiognomic portrait adequate to Lukács’ standards, let alone “speak for himself.” The peasant’s journey from spontaneity to consciousness is portrayed perhaps most canonically by Dmitrii Furmanov in *Chapaev*, but it is no accident that the narration of this account is left not to Chapaev himself but the intellectual Klychkov.³¹ The entry for “Крестьянская литература” in the 1931 *Sovetskaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia* further suggests that the first generation of peasant *writers*, and not just protagonists, were not fully up to the task:

В лит-ру пришли от непосредственного земляного труда, от сохи, люди обладающие огромным опытом, запасом наблюдений, талантом, но часто с полным отсутствием общей культуры и художественной техники. И понятно, что вместо художественного обобщения они давали на первых порах хорошую или плохую фотографию. Фотографизм — причина чрезвычайной растянутости и раздробленной описательности произведений [крестьянской литературы].³²

The same article makes clear that “peasant literature” as a distinct branch of Soviet literature was expected to rapidly wither away, like the State or the Nation, with the advance of socialism:

³⁰ Georgii Plekhanov, *Izbrannye Filosofskie Proizvedeniia*, vol. 5, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sotsial’no-ekonomicheskaia literatura, 1958), 66.

³¹ For a more detailed exploration on Furmanov’s methods and motivations in creating the fictional Chapaev and Klychkov, see Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 84-88.

³² A. Reviakin, “Krest’ianskaia literatura,” in *Literaturnaia Entsiklopediia* (Moskva: Kommunisticheskaia akademiia, 1931), 581.

Причины неизбежного расцвета крестьянской литературы, — принимая во внимание ее диалектическое развитие в колхозно-социалистическую, — лежат в том, что она является лит-рой восходящих групп, к-рые в союзе с рабочим классом и под его идейным влиянием и руководством борются за социалистическое переустройство действительности и человеческих отношений, чтобы кратчайшим путем прийти к логическому концу своей предыстории, к слиянию в единый общественный коллектив с рабочим классом и к созданию вместе с ним единой соц. лит-ры.³³

The dynamic described above—a Soviet literature in which, in Geoffrey Hosking’s words, “the peasant ideal was subordinated to the proletarian dream”—would largely hold true throughout the 1930s and 1940s.³⁴ When socialist realist authors did chose to depict rural settings, especially post-collectivization, their representations did not suffer at all from the “photographism” feared above but rather from a pastoral tintage that threatened to completely eclipse the work’s connection with contemporary reality, as seen in one of the most canonical texts of the Zhdanov era, Simon Babaevskii’s *Kavaler zolotoi zvezdy*.³⁵

The origins of the Village Prose genre are commonly traced to the publication of “rural sketches” in the early 1950s that explored the living conditions of the Soviet countryside in a semi- or pseudo-documentary mode. It is tempting to link their appearance to Khrushchev’s ascendancy, both in the cultural context of the Thaw and more specifically with his agricultural policies, but the most prominent text of this minigenre—Valentin Ovechkin’s *Raionnye budni*—was published in 1952, predating the death of Stalin. The sketch is centered around a conflict over different management philosophies held by *kolkhoz* first secretary Borzov and the second secretary Martynov. The active discussion of policies and their execution was significant in its own right, but the overwhelmingly positive reaction to Ovechkin’s work in the Soviet press placed its *aesthetic* achievements on equal footing with the political issues and solutions it presented. In an *Izvestiia* article, Marietta Shaginian called the sketch a “портрет, где мастер схватил и запечатлел полное бытие человека. Это—правда, увиденная и отраженная искусством.”³⁶ The mimetic power of the sketches extended to the main characters—Ovechkin’s extended use of dialog prompts the reader, Shaginian argues, to “представить себе звук и тембр голоса каждого из говорящих, до такой степени жизненно верно схвачены и переданы характеры.”³⁷ A review by Nikolai Atarov in *Literaturnaia gazeta* published a day prior similarly praised the author’s “своеобразная писательская выразительность” and the “запоминаемость многих его персонажей.”³⁸ Atarov notes that the sketch was published in *Novyi mir* under the rubric “diary of a writer.” Revisiting Ovechkin’s sketches twelve years later,

³³ A. Reviakin, “Krest’ianskaia literatura,” in *Literaturnaia Entsiklopediia* (Moskva: Kommunisticheskaia akademiia, 1931), 583.

³⁴ Geoffrey Hosking, “The Russian Peasant Rediscovered: ‘Village Prose’ of the 1960s,” *Slavic Review* 32, no. 4 (December 1973): 705–24. Hosking does make exceptions for several works published in the 1920s by Leonov and Pilniak, and the writings of Privshin throughout the 1930s and 40s.

³⁵ Not all agree that Babaevskii’s novel represents the apotheosis of rural prose before Village Prose; Andy Hicks argues that *Kavaler* in fact represents an alternate path not taken for the origins of Village Prose. See Andy Hicks, “Semen Babaevskii and the Struggle to Revivify the Rural Theme,” *Studies in Slavic Cultures (SISC)*, no. 6 (May 2007).

³⁶ Marietta Shaginian, “Raionnye budni,” *Izvestiia*, October 26, 1952, sec. Kritika i bibliografiia.

³⁷ Marietta Shaginian, “Raionnye budni,” *Izvestiia*, October 26, 1952, sec. Kritika i bibliografiia.

³⁸ Nikolai Atarov, “Raionnye budni,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, October 25, 1952.

Igor' Vinogradov noted that *Raionnye budni* is a work that plays primarily upon the readers intellect:

Наткнувшись на какую-то проблему, он поворачивает ее и так и сяк, стремясь обнажить все ее грани, он жаждет как можно детальнее “обсудить” ее со всех сторон, просмотреть и проверить все “за” и “против”, взвесить аргументы, уяснить расстановку сил, способствующую или мешающую этим решениям. Именно поэтому очерки его и насыщены в такой мере всякого рода разговорами, спорами, обсуждениями—в них кристаллизуется мысль, которой хочет поделиться с нами писатель, в них приобретает она окончательные свои очертания.³⁹

Vinogradov's review provides a clear example of intellectual physiognomy,⁴⁰ and we see how the sheer abundance of verbal discussion works to enhance both the mimetic power of the work's protagonists (as Shaginian noted) as well as conveys all the more effectively the message of reform which Ovechkin wished to share with the reader. But while Borzov and Martynov take shape before the reader through their discussion of agricultural issues, it is important to note that the protagonists of *Raionnye budni* are Party members and speak in clear, standard Russian, and while the *content* of the sketches was more inclusive and more unrelenting in tone, the exploration of rural life was still conducted by and received through relative “outsiders” in the context of the social world of the Russian village. Ovechkin was aware that neither narrational nor political authority in his works was in the hands of the peasantry themselves, as can be seen in a notebook entry by Martynov from a later sketch: “Мы иногда перед народом бываем похожи на ту излишне заботливую мамашу, которая никак не может примириться с фактом, что сын ее давно вырос, что он уже с усами, женить его пора. Все хочется ей по-прежнему кормить его с ложечки и водить по улице за ручку.”⁴¹

The revival of the sketch genre in the early 1950s echoed the origins of Russian realism and the physiological explorations of the Natural School that took place a little over a century prior. With a commitment to the sober depiction of everyday reality and the most pressing material issues facing the Soviet countryside, Ovechkin and other sketch writers followed an “empirical imperative”⁴² that can easily be conflated with mimetic principles in their most basic understanding—the reproduction of the “reality” of everyday life and its problems into language. The sketch form gave way by the end of the 1950s to other formats in the presentation of rural

³⁹ Igor' Vinogradov, “Derevenskie ocherki Valentina Ovechkina,” *Novyi mir*, no. 6 (1964): 209.

⁴⁰ According to A.S. Stykalin, Vinogradov was one of several *shestidesiatniki* critics who studied the work of Lukács quite closely:

“Представители журнала «новый мир» В. Лакшин, И. Виноградов и другие не только пытались установить некоторую преемственность своего направления литературно-критической мысли с определенным образом интерпретированными традициями довоенного журнала «Литературный критик», но и интересовались современным творчеством Лукача.”

A.S. Stykalin, “Komu opasen D'erd' Lukach?,” *Istoricheskaiia ekspertiza* 16, no. 3 (2018): 186.

⁴¹ Valentin Ovechkin, *Trudnaia vesna* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1956), 319.

⁴² Anatoly Pinsky defines this “empirical imperative” as Khrushchev-era a newfound motivation as citizens and individuals to “approach reality more critically—to focus on so-called mistakes and shortcomings in Soviet life—and to bring that criticism to bear on both the present and the past. This summons amounted not merely to a return to realism but to a focus on facts rather than narrative.”

See Anatoly Pinsky, “The Diaristic Form and Subjectivity under Khrushchev,” *Slavic Review* 73, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 805–27.

life, chiefly the short story and the novella. And, again repeating the course of 19th-century Russian literary history, this change in form saw a dramatic expansion of the scope and nature of the issues under consideration. Reflecting on the parameters of Village Prose in 1971, Vsevolod Surganov spoke of the “очевидное переключении значительного отряда “писателей-деревенщиков” с социально-экономических и хозяйственно-организационных проблем на проблемы морально-этические, психологические и даже философские.”⁴³ For Surganov, the reason for these changes were quite simple—the Party had resolved the vast majority of the socioeconomic problems facing the Soviet countryside, and now writers were free to address needs less concrete in nature. A similar argument is made by Elena Starikova in her 1972 article “Sotsiologicheskii aspekt sovremennoi ‘derevenskoi prozy.’”⁴⁴ Starikova leads her article with figures and data highlighting the recent dramatic economic and demographic transformation of the country’s rural sector. She concludes that these changes, despite their positive direction, have led Village Prose authors of the 1960s to devote *too much* of their artistic attention to the “актуальные проблемы духовных результатов быстрого социального преобразования деревни и страны в целом.”⁴⁵ In her estimation, Village Prose had begun to develop along two separate lines of development: the first was an exploration of the history of the *Soviet* village and the “реалистический анализ характеров и нравственных качеств человека, порожденных крестьянским прошлым России.” The second consisted in:

... стремление писателя отдаться лирической стихии воспроизведения в малейших и тончайших оттенках встречи собственного сегодняшнего “я” с давно покинутым или только что открытым для себя миром лесов, полей, скрипучих деревенских домов, старух и стариков, сохранивших в речи и обычаях приметы ушедшего деревенского прошлого.⁴⁶

Starikova’s statement ropes together writers of peasant origin with those who are discovering the countryside for the first time, but when examining the work of Vasilii Belov, Petr Rebrin, and Viktor Likhonosov, she acknowledges that one’s personal background has a profound effect on one’s literary output:

Василий Белов, Петр Ребрин, Виктор Лихоносков - три разных художника, три разные биографии и почти равная тяга к деревне и "тоска по деревне". Равная по силе, но какая разная по качеству! Она естественно владеет недавним сельским выходцем В. Беловым, органически составляя поэзию его художественного мира, она не дает покоя корреспонденту и журналисту П. Ребрину и ведет его к анализу и переоценке сложных явлений сельского хозяйства в прошлом, она программно декларируется как литературно-общественная позиция молодым горожанином В. Лихоносковым, пришедшим к этой принципиальной "тоске по деревне" через книгу

⁴³ Vsevolod Surganov, “Da, nazvanie obiazyvaet...,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, October 13, 1971.

⁴⁴ Elena Starikova, “Sotsiologicheskii aspekt sovremennoi ‘derevenskoi prozy,’” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 7 (1972): 11–35.

⁴⁵ Elena Starikova, “Sotsiologicheskii aspekt sovremennoi ‘derevenskoi prozy,’” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 7 (1972): 28.

⁴⁶ Elena Starikova, “Sotsiologicheskii aspekt sovremennoi ‘derevenskoi prozy,’” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 7 (1972): 28.

и неприятие города, где его пугает утрата "нравственной цельности".⁴⁷

Despite Starikova's efforts to portray all three methods as equally valid, the fact remains that nearly every canonical Village Prose writer, especially from the 1960s onwards, belonged overwhelmingly to the first category, hence the collective name for the writers themselves: *derevenshchiki*.⁴⁸ The *derevenshchik*'s personal, *ancestral* knowledge of his or her native village was an absolutely key aspect in the development of Village Prose, and the centering of a peasant protagonist instead of a conscientious local party official led to a natural shift in orientation from economic and administrative concerns to the philosophical and spiritual. Scholars in the West picked up on this inward turn, with many believing it to be motivated by ideological, rather than material changes. Gleb Žekulin argued that Soviet intellectuals turned toward the moral values purportedly preserved in the Russian countryside in an attempt to fill the void left by the collapse of Stalinism.⁴⁹ Limiting his discussion to the realm of literature, Geoffrey Hosking suggested that it was not the countryside as a whole but the figure of the peasant himself that had become *necessary* to the institution of Soviet literature: "With the weakening of Socialist Realism, [prose writers] were searching for a more humane and *narodnyi* kind of positive hero than had dominated recent fiction. "Village prose" came into the mainstream of prose fiction, partly because of the public concern with agricultural reform under Khrushchev, but mainly because of this search for a new positive image of man."⁵⁰

The newfound figure of the rural hero alone could not possibly fill the hegemonic place of the Stalin-era "positive hero." Nonetheless, the fact that authors with a lifelong, "inside" knowledge of village life were now creating works that were centered around and focalized through peasant *protagonists* represented a novel phenomenon in the history of Soviet and even Russian literature. The revolutionary potential of these changes can be seen in the reaction, both popular and critical, to Vasilii Belov's 1966 novella *Privychnoe delo*.

3.3 "Эффект народности" and "передача смысла": peasant speech and peasant voices in *Privychnoe delo*

Vasilii Ivanovich Belov was born in a small village in the Vologda region in 1932. After spending the first years of adulthood working as a tradesman in his local *kolkhoz*, he began his literary career while serving in the Soviet army in Leningrad. By the mid-1960s, Belov had already published two short story collections and a book of verse, but it was the appearance of his novella *Privychnoe delo* in the January 1966 issue of the Petrozavodsk journal *Sever* that catapulted the writer to all-Union fame.⁵¹ As described by fellow Village Prose writer Fedor

⁴⁷ Elena Starikova, "Sotsiologicheskii aspekt sovremennoi 'derevenskoi prozy,'" *Voprosy literatury*, no. 7 (1972): 22.

⁴⁸ Leiderman and Lipovetsky note that this name was somewhat pejorative: "...сами они выходцы их деревни, поэтому (а отчасти их-за снисходительного самодовольства культурного круга, и не без зависти к удавшейся вдруг чистоте нового движения) эту группу стали звать д е р е в е н щ и к а м и." N Leiderman and M.N. Lipovetskii, *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody: v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Moskva: Izdatel'skii tsentr "Akademiia," 2010), 63.

⁴⁹ Gleb Žekulin, "The Contemporary Countryside in Soviet Literature: A Search for New Values," in *The Soviet Rural Community*, ed. James Millar (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, n.d.), 376–404.

⁵⁰ Geoffrey A. Hosking, "Vasilii Belov-Chronicler of the Soviet Village," *The Russian Review* 34, no. 2 (1975): 167.

⁵¹ Yurii Rozanov notes that Belov initially wanted to publish his novella in *Novyi mir*, and, failing

Abramov, its publication was a genuine literary event:

Студенты, школьники, старики—все бегали по библиотекам, по читальням, все охотились по номерам малоизвестного дотоле журнала “Север” с повестью еще менее известного автора, а раздобыв, читали в очередь, а то и скопом, днем, ночью—без передыху. [...] “Привычное дело” приняли все: и “либералы”, и “консерваторы”, и “новаторы”, и “традиционалисты”, и “лирики”, и “физики”, и даже те, кто терпеть не могут деревню ни в литературе, ни в самой жизни.⁵²

The literary scholar Elena Klepikova, whose criticism encompasses a wide spectrum of late Soviet and emigre literature, shared Abramov’s assessment:

В наше время непрекращающихся литературных споров трудно найти значительного писателя—прозаика или поэта, который вошел бы в литературу без сопровождающего аккомпанемента самых противоположных отзывов о его произведениях. С Василием Беловым произошло иначе—его повесть “Привычное дело” сразу после своего появления оказалась в центре внимания, и критики, расходившиеся во взглядах на литературу, сошлись на ее высокой оценке.⁵³

According to Yurii Rozanov, the very first reactions to the novella focused on Belov’s portrayal of socioeconomic conditions of life on the *kolkhoz* before the passage of agricultural reforms just the year before.⁵⁴ *Privychnoe delo* is in fact scarce on historical clues that would allow for a precise dating, but it was published with the subtitle “Из прошлого одной семьи,” providing a potential escape mechanism for anxious reviewers concerned that Belov had depicted village life too harshly. *Privychnoe delo* is centered around the peasant laborer Ivan Afrikanovich Drynov, who, in a period of a little less than one year engages in drunken misadventures, misses the birth of his ninth child, attempts to leave his native village of Sosnovka in order to work in the city, suffers the loss of his beloved wife Katerina, and nearly dies from exposure in the cold expanses of the northern Russian forest. Despite their life-altering significance, the last two events only occupy the final quarter of the novella, but as a review in *Izvestiia* noted, its appeal was not reliant on its plotting: “Почти невозможно пересказать сюжет этого произведения. Сюжета—в смысле занимательности фабулы, интриги—почти

that, as part of a standalone collection by *Sovetskii pisatel’*. For the early publication history and reaction to *Privychnoe delo*, see Yurii Rozanov, “Povest’ V.I. Belova ‘Privychnoe delo’ v zerkale literaturnoi kritiki 1960-x godov,” in *Povest’ V.I. Belova “Privychnoe delo” kak vologodskii tekst*, ed. S. Baranov (Vologda: Vologodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2016), 11–31.

⁵² Fedor Abramov, “Dereven’ku zovut Timonikha (K 50-letiiu Vasiliia Belova),” *Sever*, no. 10 (1982): 92.

⁵³ Elena Klepikova, “Ot byta k eposu. Zametki o tvorchestve Vasiliia Belova,” *Avrora*, no. 9 (1971): 58.

⁵⁴ Yurii Rozanov, “Povest’ V.I. Belova ‘Privychnoe delo’ v zerkale literaturnoi kritiki 1960-x godov,” in *Povest’ V.I. Belova “Privychnoe delo” kak vologodskii tekst*, ed. S. Baranov (Vologda: Vologodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2016), 16–17. An example, from a very brief review in *Ogonek*: “В. Белов описывает жизнь деревни в тот момент, когда низкая оплата трудодня, всевозможные запреты, сковывавшие самостоятельность и личную инициативу крестьянина, нарушения Устава сельхозартели и прежде всего принципа материальной заинтересованности мешали людям жить на родной земле.” V. Petelin, “O svetlom i gor’kom,” *Ogonek*, no. 29 (July 1966): 27.

что и нет.”⁵⁵ Instead, it was Belov’s inner exploration of his peasant characters that fascinated Soviet readers, as I. Borisova declared:

Событий коренных, серьезных много. Горьких и радостных, убивающих и воскрешающих. А держится повесть будто не ими, так же, как жизнь Ивана Африкановича состоит из них и в то же время не их одних только [...] События лучше всего сохраняются в памяти человека, и ими он ведет счет времени, но обтачивает человеческую душу повседневность.⁵⁶

What initially struck readers in *Privychnoe delo* is not so much the interaction between protagonist and narrative but instead the former’s experiencing of the latter. A literary work structured around experience is only revelatory in the context of the protagonist’s social origin; over a century after *Zapiski okhotniki*, Belov’s writerly relationship with Ivan Afrikanovich was nonetheless considered to be groundbreaking: “По отношению к человеку, по умению увидеть богатство внутреннего мира простого крестьянина—это проза, развивающая лучшие традиции нашей литературы.”⁵⁷ The writer Efim Dorosh, an early representative of the Village Prose genre, likened Belov to Turgenev, who “писал о крестьянине как о человеке по преимуществу.” But Belov’s work went further: while rooted in the traditions of Russian literature, Dorosh wrote that *Privychnoe delo* “представляется мне тем не менее открытием, потому что характера, подобного Ивану Африкановичу, в нашей литературе до сего дня не было...”⁵⁸ Vladimir Gusev also compared the newest generation of Village Prose writers to the Russian realists, but sought to highlight important differences between the two rather than trace a simple continuity: “Толстой идет к народу, к народной жизни от филиософии, от сложных религиозно-этических доктрин... Иное дело советские писатели. В их книгах было начато изображение изнутри самого народа—не сверху, а снизу.”⁵⁹ Gusev speaks of an *illustration* (*изображение*) conducted from within, but a principle technique of the new generation of Village Prose writers was not description, but a kind of transcription. Marietta Chudakova begins her 1972 article “Zametki o iazyke sovremennoi prozy” by noting the elevated prominence of spoken language in the work of Youth Prose writers from the late 1950s onwards. Turning her attention to newer works from the Village Prose school, she finds the voice of the rural protagonist to be no less prominent—in fact, it is no longer utilized in pursuit of a stylistic flourish or for parodic effect, but instead has taken on a newfound *seriousness*:

В «серьезной» прозе языковая задача принципиально иная. Здесь автор уже отвечает почти за каждое слово как за «свое», непосредственно от него самого исходящее. Он не передоверяет его героям и не пародирует от собственного имени какие-либо языковые пласты.

Сегодня на наших глазах возникает проза, которая как бы заново собирается, но не по словечкам, не по обрывкам чужих интонаций—не важно, литературных или подслушанных “в жизни”,—а в трудных усилиях постижений некой целостности

⁵⁵ P. Troitskii, “Mnogoobrazie poiska,” *Izvestiia*, January 22, 1967.

⁵⁶ I. Borisova, “Privychnoe delo zhizn’,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 143 (December 3, 1966): 3.

⁵⁷ P. Troitskii, “Mnogoobrazie poiska,” *Izvestiia*, January 22, 1967.

⁵⁸ Efim Dorosh, “Ivan Afrikanovich,” *Novyi Mir*, no. 8 (August 1966): 259.

⁵⁹ Vladimir Gusev, “O proze, derevene, i tselnykh liudiakh,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 14, 1968.

[...] Проза эта—в литературном опыте лучших из ее “основателей”—поставила себе целью не одни только уверения в преданности тем глубинным слоям народной жизни, которые литературой еще так мало исследованы,—она ищет возможно более постижения этой жизни. И перед нею как новая цель встала необходимость полноты и целостности изображения героев.⁶⁰

Chudakova also uses the word *illustration*, but it is clear that this illustration takes place through speech, and not description, and in fact, is achieved through a ceding of control on behalf of the narrator towards his or her peasant subject:

В повести В. Распутина “Последний срок” автор дает своей героине высказаться. Он слушает её не перебивая, не торопя, не собирая её речь вокруг того, что кажется ему самому главным и важным, а оставляя её в согласии с её собственной меркой ценностей. Читая повесть, невозможно избавиться от странного ощущения, что автор не “создатель” речи своей героини, а слушатель её, что вместе с нами он следит за этой речью с неослабным вниманием, напрягая слух.⁶¹

This sensation that what one is reading is a transcription and not fiction can only be created by an author intimately familiar with the spoken language local to the character, and Chudakova cites Vasilii Belov as a prime example of an author who possesses the necessary talent to do so: “Среди тех, кто встал на путь поисков нового авторского слова, прямо обратись к народной речи и просвечивающему за ней народному миропониманию, есть и писатели уже вполне определившиеся, прочно и без видимых усилий владеющие этим словом. Такова проза Василия Белова.”⁶² *Privychnoe delo* displays this knowledge from its very opening words: the novella begins *in medias res* with Ivan Afrikanovich drunkenly lecturing his horse Parmen: “—Парме-ен? Это где у меня Парменко-то? А вон он, Парменко. Замерз? Замерз, парень, замерз. Дурачок ты, Пармен. Молчит у меня Парменко. Вот, ну-ко мы домой поедem. Хошь домой-то? Пармен ты, Пармен...”⁶³ Ivan Afrikanovich’s physiology is not described in particular detail, but for critic Irina Borisova, the vividness of the characters’ speech more than compensates for this:

Послушайте трехстраничный разговор Ивана Африканович с мерином, разговор, которым начинается повесть, или же повествование героя о незадачливой поездке на заработки, или рассказ бабки Евстоли о смерти Катерины, и вы увидите редкое: как события, попадая в лоно этой речи, перекатываются, обволакиваясь ее словами, переживаются и, растворяясь, оседают в плоть этой жизни, в ее основы.⁶⁴

These moments of orality occur quite frequently throughout *Privychnoe delo*. Geoffrey Hosking has identified five “modes of narration” within the work:

(1) author's narration in his own language; (2) author's narration in the language of his characters; (3) internal monologue in direct speech; (4) internal monologue in indirect

⁶⁰ Marietta Chudakova, “Zametki o iazyke sovremennoi prozy,” *Novyi mir*, no. 1 (1972): 229.

⁶¹ Marietta Chudakova, “Zametki o iazyke sovremennoi prozy,” *Novyi mir*, no. 1 (1972): 232.

⁶² Marietta Chudakova, “Zametki o iazyke sovremennoi prozy,” *Novyi mir*, no. 1 (1972): 235.

⁶³ Vasilii Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 124.

⁶⁴ I. Borisova, “Privychnoe delo zhizn’,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 143 (December 3, 1966): 3.

speech (sometimes virtually indistinguishable from 2); (5) the spoken language of the characters themselves. Not that they can always be clearly distinguished: there are overlappings and unmarked transitions from one to another. It is indeed in part the juxtaposition and mingling of these modes of narration which gives the story its peculiar freshness and variety and also weaves portraits of individual men into a wider human and natural setting.⁶⁵

The novella is divided into seven chapters, five of which are further divided into titled subsections. Ivan Afrikanovich is clearly the novel's main protagonist, but there are several subsections (e.g. "Союз земли и воды," "Что было дальше,") and even entire chapters ("Рогулина жизнь") where he is absent and narrative interiority is focalized through the village's other inhabitants: his wife Katerina, grandmother Evstol'ia, his numerous children, and even the beloved family cow, Rogulia. We can see in Belov's attempts at portraying the conscious experiences of an animal and a newborn child that the author was keenly interested in exploring the outer limits of literary subjectivity; even as they come together and merge into a kind of "fundamental natural unity,"⁶⁶ in Hosking's words, the individuality of each voice is preserved through the work's careful arrangement, as Leiderman and Lipovetskii point out:

Причем автор очень продуманно «оркестровал» стиль повести. Сначала он дал каждому голосу прозвучать чисто, беспримесно: первая глава открывается монологом Ивана Африкановича, в этой же главе обстоятельно излагаются бабьи пересуды по поводу сватовства Мишки Петрова, а вторая глава начинается с развернутого авторского слова. Поэтому, когда все эти голоса схлестываются в речи безличного повествователя, они легко узнаются, их «характеры» читателю уже известны.⁶⁷

These voices can be said to ring out "purely," or "cleanly" in part because of the peculiarly mimetic nature of reported speech in narrative as opposed to exposition. Gérard Genette argues that the representation of words—transcription, in other words—is inherently closer to the ideal practice of mimesis than the description of actions or details:

While we can admit with some difficulty that the operations of conceiving of acts and conceiving of words do proceed from a similar mental operation, "to say" these acts and "to say" these words constitute two very different verbal operations. More precisely, only the first act constitutes a real operation, that is, an act of diction in the Platonic sense, which requires a series of transpositions and equivalencies as well as a set of unavoidable choices between those elements of the story to be retained and those to be omitted, choices between the different possible points of view, etc. All of these operations are obviously absent when the poet or historian limits himself to transcribing a discourse.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Geoffrey A. Hosking, "Vasilii Belov-Chronicler of the Soviet Village," *The Russian Review* 34, no. 2 (1975):168-69.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey A. Hosking, "Vasilii Belov-Chronicler of the Soviet Village," *The Russian Review* 34, no. 2 (1975):171.

⁶⁷ N Leiderman and M.N. Lipovetskii, *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody: v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Moskva: Izdatel'skii tsentr "Akademiiia," 2010), 67.

⁶⁸ Gérard Genette, "Boundaries of Narrative," *New Literary History* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1976): 4.

It is interesting to compare the above paragraph by Leiderman and Lipovetsky on *Privychnoe delo*'s composition with Vinogradov's comments on *Raionnye budni* cited earlier: the former are concerned with how the represented peasant voices influence the work's *style*, while the latter notes with approval how the dialog and discussions between party bureaucrats effectively convey the work's *thematics*. One consequence of the appearance of a fuller, more "autonomous" peasant voice in literature is a shift in the function represented dialog performs in the text. Returning to Genette, there is a kind of sliding relationship between the opacity of the speaker and the informational content of their utterances:

"Showing" can be only a *way of telling*, and this way consists of both *saying about it* as much as one can, and *saying this "much"* as little as possible [*en dire le plus possible, et ce plus, le dire le moins possible*]: speaking, as Plato says, "as if the poet were someone else"—in other words, making one forget that it is the narrator telling. Finally, therefore, we will have to mark the contrast between mimetic and diegetic by a formula such as: *information + informer = C*, which implies that the quantity of information and the presence of the informer are in inverse ratio, mimesis being defined by a maximum of information and a minimum of the informer, diegesis by the opposite relationship.⁶⁹

The "information" Genette refers to is essentially the narrative's *fabula*—the events, actions, and details recounted. The "presence" of the speaker does not correlate with an absence of information altogether, but instead a substitution of one kind of knowledge for another. When this representation includes non-literary or nonstandard speech, there is a knowledge conveyed to the reader by the speaker's *manner of speaking*, and this knowledge can very broadly said to be ethnographic in nature. Vasilii Belov was not just a representative of the *derevenshchiki* but a devoted archivist and ethnographer of the life and customs of his native Vologda, even publishing a non-fiction book titled *Lad: ocherki o narodnoi estetiko* [*Lad: Sketches on Folk Aesthetics*] in 1982. Belov's commitment to accurately portraying his homeland seems to coincide with realism's pursuit of the particular and the empirical. A detail or mannerism can be included by the author with documentary intent, but there is no guarantee that these details and specificities will be received by reader in the same way. In a 1971 essay "Rasskaz i rasskazchik," Sergei Zalygin wrote the following on the effects of Belov's use of language:

Эмоциональная же сторона этого языка, кроме всего прочего, заключается для меня еще и в его историчности, в том давнем и неизменном чувстве родства, в котором я состою с ним... Пусть я не думаю о том, что те или иные слова и выражения плотников из "Плотницких рассказов" говаривались моими предками, но я чувствую это; пусть я не знаю, никогда не знал, а прочитав, не запомню на будущее то или иное слово, но я опять-таки чувствую и твердо знаю, что оно—мое, из моего прошлого, из моей психики; пусть оно грубовато или незвучно—но это его право, право называть вещи своими именами, оно ведь отнюдь не помешало возникнуть пушкинской звучности и красоте слога.⁷⁰

Zalygin shared a peasant background with Belov but traced his origins to the Ural region, not the Russian north, and he respects the accuracy of Belov's language when he acknowledges the

⁶⁹ Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Cornell University Press, 1980, p. 166.

⁷⁰ Sergei Zalygin, "Rasskaz i rasskazchik," *Nash sovremennik*, no. 11 (1971): 119.

regional differences in their dialects. Zalygin's reference to "calling things by their names" is ironic here because he is effectively declaring that *specific* names for places and things are ultimately less important than the atmosphere they evoke. What Zalygin is describing resembles the "referential illusion" of Barthes' reality effect:

The truth of the illusion is this: eliminated from the realist speech-act as a signified of denotation, the "real" returns to it as a signified of connotation; for just when these details are reputed to *denote* the real direct, all that they do—without saying so—is *signify* it; Flaubert's barometer, Michelet's little door finally say nothing but this: *we are the real*; it is the category of "the real" (and not its contingent contents) which is then signified...⁷¹

Barthes is speaking for all of literary realism, but what Zalygin is describing is specific to Village Prose in a way that does not really apply to other contemporaneous Soviet literary trends; a certain *effekt narodnosti*. When placed into a literary narrative, ethnographic details—*local, authentic* nouns, verbs, and expressions—can shed their "contingent contents" in favor of the stylistic "effect" they carry for the reader. The centering of *non-standard* voices within a literary narrative is not simply a matter of diegesis versus mimesis, as Genette believed, but instead a choice between communication (of fact or a concept, mimetic or thematic) and evocation (of a style, an atmosphere, an aesthetic). Zalygin tacitly acknowledges this tradeoff in his praise of Belov's writing: "...повсюду—с присущей этому стилю устностью, с интонацией глубоко доверительного, такого искреннего собеседования и с тем отчуждением автора от задач чисто литературных, которое и есть очень высокая задача литературы, задача мысли и смысла."⁷² Zalygin here places the responsibility for this "alienation" at the feet of the author, not the reader, but in any case, the fact that Belov's use of peasant speech and peasant voices affected or even hindered the transmission of the work's transmission of its "мысли и смысла" is evident in the dramatically divergent interpretations of *Privychnoe delo* that emerged after its publication.

3.4 "и никто этого не видел": *Narration and communication in Privychnoe delo*

Despite the polyphonic nature of Belov's prose—the interweaving of voices and viewpoints and the inclusion of animal and infant consciousnesses—early reviews of *Privychnoe delo* focused overwhelmingly on the central figure of Ivan Afrikanovich Drynov. Geoffrey Hosking believed that the novella was "successful particularly in the presentation of a new kind of positive hero,"⁷³ but his statement belies the considerable debate that took place in the Soviet literary press over Afrikanovich's very suitability as a protagonist. First, a basic and essential question had to be determined: *was* Ivan Afrikanovich a positive hero? What were his defining "traits," and were they worthy of emulation? The emerging division of Soviet literary criticism into separate "liberal" and "nationalist" camps that defined the 1970s is already evident in the reviews of *Privychnoe delo*.⁷⁴ Larisa Kriachko in *Literaturnaia gazeta* found Ivan Afrikanovich to be an

⁷¹ Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1989), 148.

⁷² Sergei Zalygin, "Rasskaz i rasskazchik," *Nash sovremennik*, no. 11 (1971): 119.

⁷³ Geoffrey A. Hosking, "Vasilii Belov-Chronicler of the Soviet Village," *The Russian Review* 34, no. 2 (1975): 167.

⁷⁴ See Mark Lipovetsky and Mikhail Berg, "Literary Criticism of the Long 1970s and the Fate of

exemplar of the “типическое народное свойство” of “стойкость,” particularly in the way in which he weathers the calamities that befall him,⁷⁵ a sentiment echoed by Pavel Glinkin in *Molodaia gvardiia*:

Иван Африканович терпит немалые бедствия, но почему же его жизнеописание не вызывает уныния? Да потому, что он “не расплывается в грусти, не падает под ее томительным бременем... Грусть у него не мешает ни иронии, ни сарказму, ни буйному веселью, ни разгулу молодчества.” Этот гимн Белинского “крепкой, мощной, несокрушимой” душе русского человека вполне определяет внутреннюю суть Ивана Африкановича. Есть в его натуре нечто родовое, общее, приложимое к понятию национальный тип.⁷⁶

Ivan Afrikanovich was held up as an example for the nationalist critic Viktor Chalmaev’s “philosophy of patriotism”: “...и любовь писателя к своим героям, и мужественная гражданская позиция защитника этих людей, и боль за эту семью, родничок всенародной жизни, в целом звучат как патриотический гимн миллионам сеятелей и хранителей русской земли.”⁷⁷ The liberal Vladimir Gusev, on the other hand, recognized the charm of Belov’s characters, but denied their connection with present (or near-present) reality:

Иван Африканович, его Катя, бабка Евстоля потому и влекут, умиляют людей, даже и ненавидящих обычную “деревенскую прозу”—что в них поэтичное, поэзия, духовность деревни довлеют над суровым бытом, что Белов создает поэтический образ нетронутых, цельных людей, о которых мечтает, а не “пишет прямо с натуры”, чем гордятся многие “деревенщики”. Иван Африканович, Катя, Евстоля—это во многом утопия и мечта, идиллия, пастораль, плод фантазии художника, всем своим большим сердцем любящего деревню и тоскующего по ее “цельности”.⁷⁸

Vladimir Kamianov’s article “Ne dobrotoi edinoi...” was the first salvo in the literary polemic surrounding Village Prose on the pages of *Literaturnaia gazeta* in 1967-68. Kamianov was opposed to the “lyric prose” of the new rural writers, which in his view was overly preoccupied with description and moral philosophy. The villagers of Belov, Zalygin, and Likhonov were thus nothing more than “герои-‘распорядители’, олицетворенная совестливость и потому как бы камертон, по которому автор настраивает лиру.”⁷⁹ Lyrical prose, he continued, “не в силах охватить личность героя целиком и вполне довольствуется той или иной “избранной” добродетелью.” He shares Gusev’s concern that the new prose has adopted the hermetic chronotope of the idyll.⁸⁰ Events have lost their importance,

Soviet Liberalism,” in *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 207–29, and especially p. 214 for a discussion of Belov..

⁷⁵ Larisa Kriachko, “Listy i Kornii,” *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, no. 48 (November 29, 1967): 5.

⁷⁶ Pavel Glinkin, “Zemlia i asfal’t,” *Molodaia gvardiia*, no. 9 (September 1967): 251-252.

⁷⁷ Viktor Chalmaev, “Filosofia patriotizma,” *Molodaia gvardiia*, no. 10 (October 1967): 291.

⁷⁸ Vladimir Gusev, “O proze, derevene, i tselnykh liudiakh,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 14, 1968,

6.

⁷⁹ Vladimir Kamianov, “Ne dobrotoi edinoi,” *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, no. 47 (November 22, 1967): 4.

⁸⁰ In Bakhtin’s words: “Это выражается прежде всего в особом отношении времени к

fragmentariness reigns, and the heroes inhabit a world that is both timeless and motionless: “Сегодняшняя чистота и высокая поэзия их душ—одновременно чистота вчерашняя и завтрашняя. Она устойчива и бессрочна, как символ. А раз так, авторский “объектив” может быть неподвижен, герои никуда не уйдут. И вот стабильность как внутренняя норма заглавного характера становится нормой повествования.”⁸¹ For many critics on both side of the liberal/nationalist divide, Ivan Afrikanovich was viewed as a wholly thematic character. Despite their recognition of the innovations of the new Village Prose authors like Belov, the themes Ivan Afrikanovich embodied—laboriousness, innocence, connection with the land—were hardly different than the peasant figures from a century before. What had obviously changed in the new criticism was the lack of *political* objection to Afrikanovich’s *social* membership within the peasantry. While Kamianov does underline a lack of character development, particularly from spontaneity towards consciousness,⁸² many liberal critics’ criticisms were primarily aesthetic in nature: Ivan Afrikanovich failed as a positive hero not because he embodied negative traits or tendencies, but simply because he failed in his primary task of being a mimetically convincing character.

A notable early exception to this trend is an article by Igor’ Dedkov in *Novyi mir*, “Stranitsy derevenskoi zhizni.” Dedkov takes a prosecutorial view of Ivan Afrikanovich’s “actual” behavior in *Privychnoe delo*, finding not just kindness and naivety but drunkenness, absentmindedness, and unfaithfulness as well.⁸³ Dedkov disregards the exemplary/symbolic value of the character but unlike other liberal critics like Kamianov, he finds that the very strength of *Privychnoe delo* lies in its realistic depiction of the contemporary village and its inhabitant:

Талант В. Белова, его знание деревенского человека позволили ему изобразить крестьянский тип, давно уже не замечаемый нашей литературой, и к тому же представить его с такой художественной и жизненной полнотой, что мы встречаемся с ним, как с живым человеком. [...] И если в нем находят образец, спасительный источник духа и “нравственные ресурсы”, то писатель в этом не повинен.⁸⁴

When read both positively and positivistically by a socially-oriented critic like Dedkov, *Privychnoe delo* resembles the rural sketch of more than a decade prior:

Повесть В. Белова возвращает нас к земле надежнее, чем все обещания

пространству в идиллии: органическая прикрепленность, приращенность жизни и ее событий к месту [...] Пространственный мирок этот ограничен и довлеет себе, не связан существенно с другими местами, с остальным миром.” *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 3: Teoriia romana, 1930-1961 gg.*, vol. 3, 7 vols. (Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul’tury, 2012), 472-473.

⁸¹ Vladimir Kamianov, “Ne dobrotoi edinoi,” *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, no. 47 (November 22, 1967): 4.

⁸² Vsevolod Surganov shared this opinion in his review in *Literaturnaia gazeta*: “Пока же среди литературных героев, проходящих по его страницам, еще все-таки мало людей, кои, помимо доброты и способности к тончайшим душевным переживаниям, обладают еще и силой—могучей и действенной, активно и реально, по-хозяйски участвуют в нашей жизни—и не только в деревне, но и в городе.” “Da, nazvanie obiazyvaet...,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, October 13, 1971.

⁸³ Igor’ Dedkov, “Stranitsy derevenskoi zhizni (Polemicheskie zametki),” *Novyi mir*, no. 3 (March 1969): 231–46.

⁸⁴ Igor’ Dedkov, “Stranitsy derevenskoi zhizni (Polemicheskie zametki),” *Novyi mir*, no. 3 (March 1969): 245.

возвращения у иных писателей. Она не зовет “спасать” или “спасаться”, она учит видеть и помнить то, что есть. [...] Лучшие книги наших дней о деревне дают талантливую картину реальной жизни, выявляют распространенные и существенные умонастроения времени, продолжают традиции классической русской литературы.⁸⁵

Despite the reference to “умонастроения времени,” Dedkov does not touch upon Belov’s presentation of Ivan Afrikanovich’s interior world or even his use of language in general. His sociocritical lens approaches Ivan Afrikanovich as though he was the subject of a physiological sketch; viewed from above, his external actions—strictly those depicted within the narrative—are scrutinized. Ivan Afrikanovich’s *experience* of those actions is simply excluded from the scope of his article.

The majority of critics, however, both held up Ivan Afrikanovich as a positive example of the Russian peasantry and recognized Belov’s innovations in the use of oral and folk language within *Privychnoe delo*.⁸⁶ At the same time, the aesthetic question of constructing a *literary* work around a *peasant* voice seemed in some cases to elicit more anxiety and apologia among critics than any potential political or ideological issues resulting from the hero’s agrarian backwardness. According to Kamianov, every minor character holds a different impression of Ivan Afrikanovich, but the reader is unable to establish the “real” Afrikanovich because the man himself lacks the necessary self-awareness to be discovered:

Как видим, во многих душах отпечатались личность героя - и все по-разному. Правда, достоверность "отпечатков" примерно одна. И ходит Иван Африканович никем, за исключением разве лишь жены Катерины да тещи Евстолий, не опознан, в том числе самим собой. Подобно многим, он втянут в круговорот "привычных дел", скрытой их стороной интересуется мало, в себя заглядывать не привык. Правда, Иван Африканович видит и чувствует значительно тоньше тех же многих, но поэтический образ окрестного мира проникает в него как бы помимо его воли, даже не проникает - постоянно струится в сознании.⁸⁷

The conservative Pavel Glinkin also recognized Ivan Afrikanovich’s extraordinary sensitivity, but he argued that this was to Belov’s advantage: a hero’s emotional *reaction* is a far more effective aesthetic tactic than *reflection*, if one is aiming for an illustration of inner values:

Богатство природы мерится способностью к переживаниям. Чем сложнее и выше душа, тем более тонкие и многообразные оттенки чувств ей доступны, тем точнее и мгновеннее ответ на внешние раздражители. Эмоции, как известно, помогают принять необходимый образ действия там, где нет времени на обдумывание ситуации или когда рассудок бессилён в ней разобраться. Но эмоции— производные всего предшествующего развития человека, и по тому, как отвечает

⁸⁵ Igor’ Dedkov, “Stranitsy derevenskoi zhizni (Polemicheskie zametki),” *Novyi mir*, no. 3 (March 1969):245, 246.

⁸⁶ Galina Belaia traces the legacy of *skaz*-narration and informal speech in Soviet literature from the 1920s through *molodaia proza* and ultimately Village Prose writers in detail in “Rozhdenie novykh stilevykh form kak protsess preodoleniia ‘neutral’nogo’ stilia,” in *Teoriia literaturnykh stilei*, ed. N.K. Gei (Moskva: Nauka, 1978), 460–85.

⁸⁷ V. Kamianov, “Evklidu-Evklidovo,” *Voprosy Literaturnykh*, no. 4 (1969): 28-29.

герой на смену обстоятельств, можно судить о подлинных внутренних ценностях более уверенно, нежели по его и авторским декларациям и фабульным построениям.⁸⁸

Throughout his article, Glinkin contrasts the peasant's stoic and taciturn nature with the egomaniacal *надрыв* of the urban heroes of Young Prose. The stories of Bitov and Aksenov consist of nothing but a “скучная череда самодовольных рассказов от первого лица, будто и впрямь людям только и дела, что изливаться перед каждым встречным.”⁸⁹ By contrast, Ivan Afrikanovich's sensitivity is illustrated by the shame he feels when confronted by the Kolkhoz chairman over his unauthorized mowing of grass. Glinkin praises his unconscious biological response—“Иван Африканович покраснел как маков цвет,” something over which he has no agency. In a 1968 article, Vadim Kozhinov goes further than Glinkin, elevating Ivan Afrikanovich's murky consciousness to Belov's central artistic and moral principle. According to Kozhinov, Belov did not wish to depict the peasant as “*also* a person” in the Turgenevian tradition, but rather immersed himself in the peasant's world in order to gain a deeper understanding of himself and the universe: “Вбирая голос Ивана Африканович в свой голос, писатель преследует цель не “поднять” героя до себя, но, скорее напротив, самому “подняться” до его человеческой полноты и цельности.”⁹⁰ Kozhinov's analysis of *Privychnoe delo* is striking in its reversal of Lukac's concept of intellectual physiognomy—the artistic value of the work and the efficacy of its moral teachings are in fact *heightened* by Ivan Afrikanovich's dearth of self-awareness:

Вот почему открытие поисков истины, верности добру и чувства красоты в переживаниях героя, подобного Ивану Африкановичу, который не только не отделяет этих переживаний от всей своей практической жизнедеятельности, не только не может их отчетливо выразить, но даже и не осознает их до конца, имеет неопределимое значение.

Василию Белову удалось—и в этом прежде всего и проявился его дар художника—заставить поверить в то, что его герой переживал все именно так, как это сотворено в повести. Тем самым “высокие” переживания обрели ту силу, правду и всеобщую значимость, которую они легко утрачивают в отвлеченной, “интеллектуальной” сфере, где уже, в сущности, нет практического критерия для различения истинных и мнимых ценностей.⁹¹

Kozhinov does not even have to intuit the passivity of Ivan Afrikanovich's existence from the text; the narrator of *Privychnoe delo* comments on it directly multiple times throughout the text. “Сейчас Иван Африканович даже не думал, только дышал да слушал. Но и скрип завертки, и фыркание мерина не задевали его сознания. Из этого небытия его вывели чьи-то совсем близкие шаги. Кто-то его догонял, и он поежился, очнулся.”⁹² At certain moments, he is no different than his newborn son:

⁸⁸ Pavel Glinkin, “Zemlia i asfal't,” *Molodaia gvardiia*, no. 9 (September 1967): 249.

⁸⁹ Pavel Glinkin, “Zemlia i asfal't,” *Molodaia gvardiia*, no. 9 (September 1967): 244.

⁹⁰ Vadim Kozhinov, “Tsennosti istinnye i mnimye,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 5 (January 31, 1968): 5.

⁹¹ Vadim Kozhinov, “Tsennosti istinnye i mnimye,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 5 (January 31, 1968): 5.

⁹² Vasilii Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 129.

Иван Африканович долго ходил по студеным от наста полям. Ноги сами несли его, и он перестал ощущать сам себя, слился со снегом и солнцем, с голубым, безнадежно далеким небом, со всеми запахами и звуками предвечной весны.

Все было студено, солнечно, широко. Деревни вдали тихо дымили трубами, пели петухи, урчали тетерева, мерцали белые, скованные морозцем снега. Иван Африканович шел и шел по певучему насту, и время остановилось для него. Он ничего не думал, точь-в-точь как тот, кто лежал в люльке и улыбался, для которого еще не существовало разницы между явью и сном.

И для обоих сейчас не было ни конца, ни начала.⁹³

In a key scene in the novella, Ivan Afrikanovich is denied a permit to leave the *kolkhoz* for the city and is suddenly overcome by rage:

Иван Африканович встал. У него вдруг, как тогда, на фронте, когда прижимался перед атакой к глинистой бровке, как тогда, застыли, онемели глаза и какая-то радостная удаль сковала готовые к безумной работе мускулы, когда враз исчезал и страх и все мысли исчезали, кроме одной: “Вот сейчас, сейчас!” Что это такое “сейчас”, он не знал и тогда, то теперь вернулось то самое ощущение спокойного веселого безрассудства, и он, дивясь самому себе, ступил на середину конторы и закричал:

—Справку давай! На моих глазах пиши справку!

Иван Африканович почти завизжал на последнем слове.

Бешено обвел глазами всех правленцев. И вдруг волчком подскочил к печке, обеими руками сгреб длинную согнутую из железного прута кочергу:

—Ну!

В конторе стало тихо-тихо. Председатель тоже побелел, у него тоже, как тогда на фронте, остекленели зрачки, и, сжимая кулаки, он уставился на Ивана Африканович. Они глядели друг на друга... Председатель с усилием погасил злобу и сник. Устало зажал ладонью лысеющий лоб.

—Ладно... Я бы тебе показал кузькину мать... ладно. Пусть катится к е... матери. Хоть все разбегитесь...⁹⁴

Ivan Afrikanovich has given himself over completely to this “спокойное веселое безрассудство,” and he is in fact rewarded for this moment of outright *stikhiinost*: the permit is granted without any subsequent punishment or, for that matter, the personal growth typical to socialist realist literature. More notably, the scene takes place in a stuffy office, not the expanse of the Russian countryside. Ivan Afrikanovich’s unconscious reaction is not due to an instance of

⁹³ Vasilii Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 157.

⁹⁴ Vasilii Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 216.

communion with nature, as in the examples above, but in response to a purely social situation. Note that the village chairman, also a veteran, reacts temporarily in a similar manner, but their shared experience of war has not brought them to any kind of mutual understanding. The literary critic Viktor Pankov found that Belov did not adequately account for his hero's heroic military experience when depicting his peacetime behavior,⁹⁵ but the greater problem is not one of biographical continuity than one of communicability.

Much has been made of the *unity* that extends throughout the world of *Privychnoe delo*, with its porous boundaries between man and nature, adult and child, and the conscious and unconscious worlds. But the confrontation between Afrikanovich and the chairman shows us to what extent this unity is a product of the narrative structure that has been put into place by Belov, not an inherent and preexisting element of rural village life as so fervently discussed by liberal and nationalist critics. Several times in the novella—and especially at moments of crisis—Belov overtly informs the reader that his hero's consciousness is perceptible to the reader only through the narrator's intervention by emphasizing its absence in the world of the text: “Иван Африканович был не очень тепло одет и только приговаривал: “Ох ты, беда какая, ох и беда!” Он и сам не знал, вслух ли это говорилось или только мысленно, потому что если бы вслух, то все равно голос был не слышен.”⁹⁶ What is read is immediately declared to be unheard, as in the case of Ivan Afrikanovich's four-year-old daughter Marusia: after relating her thoughts, the narrative emphasizes the opacity of her inner world: “Маруся все время молчала, и никто не знал, что она думает. Она родилась как раз в то время, когда нынешняя корова Рогуля была еще телочкой и молока не было, и от этого Маруся росла тихо и все чего-то думала, думала, но никто не знал, что она думала.”⁹⁷ As Dorrit Cohn notes, narrative fiction distinguishes itself precisely in its ability to represent the “transparent fictional mind,” but Belov's insistence that these innermost thoughts are accessible to the narrator and reader alone underlines Ivan Afrikanovich's social isolation and his inability to communicate these same narrated thoughts to his peers within his text—in other words, his internal world can be fictionalized and thus passed *upwards*, but it cannot be communicated *horizontally*—our hero does engage in discussions over a range of domestic topics, but he is unable to articulate any of the deeper issues which lie at the core of the text at the same level of the characters of Plato's *Symposium* or *Anna Karenina*'s Konstantin Levin. This unidirectional relationship undermines a central tenet of Lukács' *Physiognomy*, that the central protagonists have an “‘awake’ consciousness of reality,” “acting for and against each other and reacting actively, not passively to each other.”⁹⁸

Ivan Afrikanovich's blissful existence is upended completely after his wife Katia's death; in the novella's eponymous and penultimate subchapter “Privychnoe delo,” he is wracked by grief and insomnia. During brief periods of sleep, he dreams incessantly of an old boat and resolves to craft himself a new one out of an aspen tree noticed earlier that year, “чтобы хоть немного забытья.”⁹⁹ As he wanders deeper and deeper into the forest, he grows increasingly numb to the world, but peace does not return to him:

⁹⁵ Viktor Pankov, *V zhivom potoke* (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1979), 330.

⁹⁶ Vasilii Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 138.

⁹⁷ Vasilii Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 146.

⁹⁸ Georg Lukacs, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 161.

⁹⁹ Vasilii Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 246.

Иван Африканович вздрогнул, вал безбрежного шума замирал неохотно, возмущенно стихал в другой стороне. Мокрая, темная тишина давила сердце, никогда Иван Африканович не был таким одиноким. Он опять забылся необлегчающим забытием, и водяной вал, этот страшный потоп, опять раз за разом топил и топил его, но никак не мог утопить совсем. В этом забытии время то останавливалось, то и вовсе шло запятки, образы последнего лета перемежались и путались: то вдруг Ивану Африкановичу снился какой-нибудь уже виденный однажды сон, то он смотрел новый сон, и в этом сне ему снился третий сон—сон во сне. Но все было неясно, путано, тревожно...”¹⁰⁰

He is pulled out of his dissociation by the appearance of a solitary star in the sky:

Звездочка. Да, звездочка, и небо, и лес. И он, Иван Африканович, заблудился в лесу. И надо было выйти из леса. Звезда, она одна, звезда-то. А ведь есть еще звезды, и по ним, по многим, можно выбрать, куда идти...

Эта мысль, пришедшая еще во сне, мигом встряхнула Ивана Африкановича. Он сел, зябко вздрогнул, сознание быстро прояснилось.¹⁰¹

With this realization, Ivan Afrikanovich regains, or perhaps gains *for the very first time* a sense of self: it is *he, Ivan Afrikanovich*, that is lost in the woods. The return of this conscious awareness encourages him to continue to struggle for his survival, but the recognition of his own identity under such dire circumstances also triggers a complete existential crisis upon awakening the following morning:

Иван Африканович раньше никогда не боялся смерти. Думал: не может быть так, что ничего не остается от человека. Душа ли там какая, либо еще что, но должно ведь оставаться, не может случиться, что исчезнет все, до капельки. Бог ли там или не бог, а должно же что-то быть на той стороне...

Теперь же он вдруг ощутил страх перед смертью, и в отчаянии приходили обрывочные жестокие мысли:

“Нет, ничего, наверно, там нету. Ничего. Все уйдет, все кончится. И тебя не будет, дело привычное... Вот ведь нет, не стало Катерины, где она? Ничего от нее не осталось, и от тебя ничего не останется, был и нет. Как в воду канул, пусто, ничего... А кто, для чего все это и выдумал? Жись-то эту, лес вот, мох всякий, сапоги, клюкву? С чего началось, чем кончится, пошто все это? Ну вот, родился он, Иван Африканович...”¹⁰²

Despite the very specific chain of circumstances that led to this moment—the birth of his ninth son, his “illegal” reaping of hay, the decision to leave the village, the death of his wife—the central question located at the heart of *Privychnoe delo*’s eponymous subchapter is utterly universal. In *O literaturnom geroe*, Lidiia Ginzburg wrote that one of Tolstoy’s greatest

¹⁰⁰ Vasiliĭ Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 252.

¹⁰¹ Vasiliĭ Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 252.

¹⁰² Vasiliĭ Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 253-254.

achievements was his ability to depict not just an individual character, but the processes and phenomena of “общая жизнь.” In order to do so, Tolstoy made use of both dialog and monolog in order to illuminate these general aspects of life: “Новое отношение к слову персонажей коренится все в том же толстовском стремлении к познанию общей жизни в ее сверхличных процессах и закономерностях. Разговор—одни из процессов жизни. И речь как таковая, типы и цели высказываний, самый механизм диалога становятся для Толстого предметом изображения и полем художественных изучений.”¹⁰³ But as the critic Vladimir Gusev noted, Ivan Afrikanovich does not think or express himself in the same manner as Ivan P’ich or Konstantin Levin. Vladimir Kamianov analyzed the specific way in which Afrikanovich’s “peasant psychology” grappled with this “старая, как мир, дума о бренности собственного бытия и вечном движении жизни”:

Огорчительно это или нет, но герой В. Белова вряд ли научится мыслить четкими формулами. Даже в момент резкого душевного сдвига, когда мир для него впервые распался на "я" и "не я", он решает отвлеченную задачу не через соображение, а через воображение, не дает абстрациям отделиться от чувственного опыта (если человек, привыкший мыслить категориями, скажет: "конечность индивидуального бытия", то Иван Африканович - "в ту сторону его никогда не было и в эту... не будет")¹⁰⁴

Ivan Afrikanovich’s thoughts continue over several paragraphs in a mixture of quoted speech and free indirect discourse, and the combination of the third person with his proper name is repeated at least three times in quick succession. Afrikanovich’s illeism is not a symptom of egomania or a reflection of his infantile nature, but instead gestures at the first assertions of the self-awareness held up by Lukacs as a critical component of a primary literary character in *Physiognomy*:

In itself the extreme situation contains the contradictions in the intense and pure form essential for art, but a character's reflections about his own actions are absolutely necessary for transforming this "thing in itself" into a "thing for us".

Normal, everyday reflection hardly suffices. The reflection must be raised to the superior level about which we have spoken—objectively (as regards the level of the intellection itself) and subjectively (as regards the linking of the reflection to the situation, character and experience of the protagonist).¹⁰⁵

The crisis induced by Ivan Afrikanovich’s individuation is ultimately resolved with a newfound awareness of his own place within the chain of existence: his scattered thoughts turn from the loss of his wife and the pending extinction of his own self towards the continuing existence of his children and the surrounding natural world:

А вот умерла Катерина, и стало понятно, что ничего после смерти и не будет, одна чернота, ночь, пустое место, ничего. Да. Ну, а другие-то, живые-то люди? Гришка,

¹⁰³ Lidia Ginzburg, *O literaturnom geroe* (Leningrad: Sov. pisatel', Leningr. otd-nie, 1979), 171.

¹⁰⁴ V. Kamianov, “Evklidu-Evklidovo,” *Voprosy Literatury*, no. 4 (1969): 32.

¹⁰⁵ Georg Lukacs, “The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization,” in *Writer and Critic* (New York: Merlin Press, 1970), 160.

Антошка вон? Ведь они-то будут, они-то останутся? И озеро, и этот проклятый лес останется, и косить опять побегут. Тут-то как? Выходит, жить-то все равно не остановится и пойдет как раньше, пусть без него, без Ивана Африкановича. Выходит, все-таки, что лучше было родиться, чем не родиться. Выходит...

The crisis has returned Ivan Afrikanovich to a new equilibrium: he has passed from an innate, “problematic” communion with nature—his “childlike” existence in the first half of the novella—to a conscious awareness of himself—он, Иван Африканович—and his place within the universe. For a Neo-Kantian critic like Lev Anninskii, the true significance of Afrikanovich’s time in the wilderness lies not in the knowledge gained but the means by which it was attained:

Последнее раздумье Ивана Африкановича содержит — номинально — те же самые идеи, что были восприняты всем деревенским миром по традиции. Это идеи неистребимой самооценности природной, народной жизни, не имеющей начала и конца. Но прежде эти идеи были размыты, растворены, разведены в миру, во всех, во всем. Теперь они встали как моральный закон перед отдельным человеком. Он должен решать, он — а не «что-то» за него.¹⁰⁶

When viewed in this way, “*Privychnoe delo*” is not a celebration of the peasant world, but a story of the formation of a moral subject. Leiderman and Lipovetskii do not find that Ivan Afrikanovich has made a definitive break with the world of tradition, but they do chart a similar course of self-discovery:

В сущности, весь сюжет «Привычного дела» представляет собой драматическую историю личности, горько расплачивающейся за «нутряное» существование, за зыбкость своей жизненной позиции и лишь ценой страшных, невозвратимых утрат возвышающейся к миропониманию.¹⁰⁷

From a narrative standpoint, Ivan Afrikanovich’s brush with death is clearly the climax of the novella, and the character emerges from the forest a changed man. Whatever newfound knowledge he has gained, however, is trapped on the narrative plane, offered up to the reader and not transmittable to any other character in the text. When he is discovered on the edge of the forest by the village drunk Mishka, nothing of his extraordinary experience is conveyed to his rescuer:

—Пьяной, что ли? Спросил Мишка.

—Не пьяной, парень... Голодной...—еле вымолвил Иван Африканович.

—Да ну? —Мишка захохотал, помогая Ивану Африкановичу залезть на сани.—А я думал, пьяной Африканович.

—Дело привычное...—опять отмахнулся Иван Африканович и бессильно

¹⁰⁶ Lev Anninskii, “Tochka opory,” *Don*, no. 7 (1968), 187.

¹⁰⁷ N Leiderman and M.N. Lipovetskii, *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody: v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Moskva: Izdatel’skii tsentr “Akademiia,” 2010), 70.

откинулся на сосновые кряжи.

Мишка так ничего и не понял.¹⁰⁸

The silence that presumably follows is a reflection of the fundamental incompatibility between peasant speech as employed in the novella and the artistic articulation of what Afrikanovich experiences in the forest. The novella's conclusion takes place two days after his rescue, and while his physical strength has returned, the conversations Ivan Afrikanovich has with his neighbors are just as inconsequential as before his experience. When he steps away from his peers, however, a change manifests itself in the relationship between narrator and hero that, according to Leiderman and Lipovetskii, demonstrates Ivan Afrikanovich's cognitive evolution:

Затем, описывая всяческие приключения и похождения Ивана Африканович, повествователь как бы отступал перед “сказовым” внутренним голосом героя, “озвучивающим” стихийное восприятие мира. А вот с той поры, когда Иван Африканович возвышается до бесстрашного и мудрого взгляда на жизнь, отношения между речевыми зонами героя и автора меняются. Теперь повествователь вбирает мысль героя в свой голос и передает ее своим словом, литературным, строгим, лишь слегка подкрашенным личностными метами персонажа.¹⁰⁹

Vadim Kozhinov in an aforementioned article used a very similar phrasing to describe Belov's technique: “Вбирая голос Ивана Африканович в свой голос, писатель преследует цель не “поднять” героя до себя, но, скорее напротив, самому “подняться” до его человеческой полноты и цельности.”¹¹⁰ Note that the final state as described by Leiderman and Lipovetskii effectively reverses this operation: post-epiphany, the hero's consciousness has literally *risen up* to a higher plane. This is not a meeting of author and hero as equals, as in Bitov's *Pushkinskii dom*, nor is it a pure merging of their voices; the narrator absorbs the hero's consciousness, and the vocal autonomy that Ivan Afrikanovich possesses throughout the novella is curtailed. It is an artistic decision by Belov to do so, of course, and it seems that a choice has been made between the text's mimetic experiment in the representation of a peasant interiority and the epic and mythical thematics that would come to dominate later Village Prose works. In a meditative final passage, the narrator emphasizes the cyclicity of seasons and nature's eternal return, but in the novella's penultimate paragraph, it is made clear to the reader one last time that our access to Ivan Afrikanovich's inner world is a product of our readerly position, and that within the world of the text, he remains alone, unable to express his “бесстрашный и мудрый взгляд на жизнь” to those around him: “Иван Африканович весь задрожал. И никто не видел, как горе пластало его на похолодевшей, не обросшей травой земле,—никто этого не видел.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Vasili Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 256.

¹⁰⁹ N Leiderman and M.N. Lipovetskii, *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody : v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Moskva: Izdatel'skii tsentr “Akademiia,” 2010), 70.

¹¹⁰ Vadim Kozhinov, “Tsennosti istinnye i mnimye,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 5 (January 31, 1968): 5.

¹¹¹ Vasili Belov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991), 260.

Conclusion

Vasilii Belov was one of several writers asked to respond to a 1967 survey by *Voprosy literatury* under the heading “Литература и язык.” Prose writers were asked an additional question:

*Как Вы в своей творческой практике разрешаете проблему стилистической координации прямой и авторской речи? Как оцениваете Вы то, что в некоторых произведениях современной прозы язык автора и язык персонажа почти неотличимы друг от друга?*¹¹²

In his answer, Belov made it clear that he found this question to be one of the pressing facing writers of his day:

Проблема стилистической координации прямой и авторской речи также очень интересна. Для меня она даже в какой-то мере болезненна. Беда в том, что либо герой идет на поводу у автора и начинает говорить авторским языком, либо сам автор идет на поводу у героя и начинает говорить его словами. И получается стилистическая языковая несовместимость. Правда, мне думается, что существует некая тонкая, неуловимо-зыбкая и имеющая право на существование линия соприкосновения авторского языка и языка изображаемого персонажа. Грубое, очень конкретное разделение этих двух категорий так же неприятно, как и полное их слияние. Впрочем, все это у кого как...¹¹³

In the struggle between the representation of the hero’s inner world and the author’s higher message of the text, Belov, like other Village Prose writers, ultimately chose the path privileging the author.¹¹⁴ In the early 1970s he published excerpts of what would become the novel *Kanuny* [*The Eves*], set on the eve of collectivization. Igor’ Shaitanov noted that a change had already occurred in Belov’s method of characterization:

Я уже говорил о "Привычном деле", то же можно сказать и о "Канунах".

Там также вначале погружение в мир персонажа, ибо читатель не сможет верно оценить и понять происходящее, если его не ввести в сознание, мышление героев, отличное по своему складу от его собственного. В "Привычном деле" знакомство началось на уровне языка, бытовых представлений и отношений. В "Канунах" Белов сразу же идет к фантастическим, мифологическим по сути, представлениям, сохранившим значение для человека деревни. Начало тем более верное, что "Кануны" - роман исторический, хотя историческая дистанция сравнительно

¹¹² Vasilii Belov, “Literatura i iazyk,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 6 (1967): 89.

¹¹³ Vasilii Belov, “Literatura i iazyk,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 6 (1967): 99.

¹¹⁴ Elena Klepikova believes that this relationship was even more inverted in Belov’s work pre-*Privychnoe delo*: “В первых книгах Белова бытовой материал сильнее авторского замысла. Белов напоминает художника-портретиста, который настолько захвачен оригиналом, что забывает о необходимости личной оригинальности.” “Ot byta k eposu. Zametki o tvorchestve Vasiliia Belova,” *Avrora*, no. 9 (1971): 58–59.

невелика - полвека, но это полвека, поменявшие характер деревни и ее жителя.¹¹⁵

Instead of language and its individualized form, voice, Belov had now taken up the much broader material of myth and history. *Kanuny* was published in full in 1976, and while it was praised by critics for its sweeping scope, it was not nearly as impactful as *Privychnoe delo*. In an interview with *Voprosy literatury*, the critic Boris Bursov revealed that he found Belov's new methods unconvincing:

По "постройке" "Кануны"—роман-хроника: нет сквозного, главного героя в обычном понимании, хроникальность видна в самой фактуре произведения. А между тем перед нами типичнейший роман. Героем его стало само время. Этим я вовсе не выдаю достижение Белова за некий рецепт. Да и какой талант станет писать роман по рецепту! Художественное открытие всегда сугубо индивидуально, но, коль скоро совершено, оно становится достоянием всех. Конечно же, большой успех в искусстве часто парадоксален, а потому имеет свою оборотную сторону: в "Канунах" мало ярких характеров. Но если бы их было больше, не могло ли получиться так, что они растворили бы в себе самую суть рассказанного БЕЛОВЫМ?¹¹⁶

The shrinking of character in Belov's work reached its apotheosis in the *glasnost'* era and the publication of his novels *Vse vpered!* [*The Best is Yet to Come*]¹¹⁷ and *God velikogo pereloma* [*The Year of the Great Break*]. If the anti-Semitism and Russian chauvinism of Belov's thematics was plain to see to anyone who chose to acknowledge it in *Kanuny*,¹¹⁸ these works are dominated by an apocalyptically pessimistic view of the late Soviet present that threatens to flatten all characters to absurdity. A review by Dmitrii Urnov begins by mocking the impossibility of Belov's characters, who, seemingly unmotivated, spout their bizarre opinions about worldwide conspiracies and feminism to anyone who will listen: "...нам представлены люди, у которых мысль дальше известного предела не продвигается. Высказывая решительные утверждения, эти люди не задумываются о том, надежны ли их тезисы, не опровергаются ли те же тезисы одним махом."¹¹⁹

When critics attempt to account for this transformation—from the vitality of Ivan Afrikanovich to the paper cutouts of *Vse vpered!* or the anti-Semitic caricatures of *God velikogo pereloma*—there is a general tendency to point either to socioeconomic circumstances (the dissolution of Soviet institutions, the vanishing Russian village, the rampant rise of nationalist attitudes) or preexisting cultural patterns (Orthodox conservatism, Russian binarism). But the seeds of this conflict—between the mimetic and thematic poles of the work—can be seen in the narrational contradictions that run through one of the most canonical works of Village Prose. In *Privychnoe delo*, the mimetic-thematic alignment in realist literature as described in Lukács'

¹¹⁵ Igor' Shaitanov, "Reaktsiia na peremeny," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 5 (1981): 50-51.

¹¹⁶ Boris Bursov, "Zhizn' - traditsiia - literaturnyi protsess." By V. Dmitriev. *Voprosy literatury*, no. 12 (1978): 122.

¹¹⁷ Vasili Belov, *The Best Is yet to Come*, trans. P.O. Gromm (Moscow: Raduga, 1989).

¹¹⁸ See, for example David Gillespie, "Apocalypse Now: Village Prose and the Death of Russia," *The Modern Language Review* 87, no. 2 (April 1992): 411. and Semen Reznik, "Okhota Na Volkov," *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*, July 28, 1989.

¹¹⁹ Dmitrii Urnov, "O blizkom i dalekom," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 9 (1987): 116.

Physiognomy is challenged by the impossibility of reconciling the evocation of peasant speech and peasant subjectivity with the delivery of the work's overarching message in that same language. Faced with a choice between the mimetic and the thematic, it is clear in light of Belov's ensuing writing that the resolution he and other Village Prose writers chose was the dissolution of character.

Conclusion

“Those aren’t people, they’re just letters on paper”

This dissertation has examined the dynamic relationship held by late Soviet texts towards the mimetic aspect of characterization and the depiction of individual human beings in literature. Oscillating between aspiration and rejection, this dynamic manifested itself in the work of Yuri Trifonov, Andrei Bitov, and Vasiliï Belov despite the diversity of their literary styles and subject matter. By examining their careers over the course of decades, we can see that for each of these authors, this dynamic only grew more complex as the period came to a close. In the preceding three chapters, significant differences emerged among Trifonov, Bitov, and Belov in their own artistic attempts to capture human beings in words. Each author holds a different conception of the aims of the mimetic: Trifonov captivated audiences with his ability to recreate the mannerisms and *milieu* of the Soviet intelligentsia, but his Fyodorovian obsession with capturing “living people” with full fidelity led him to center the problems of characterization within and among his characters themselves; both his fiction taken as a whole and the protagonists within it are constantly stymied by the necessity and the complexity of knowing other people fully. The young Bitov dreamed of merging the practice of writing with the process of experience, transcribing the thoughts and anxieties of his young protagonists as they floated through Leningrad. This preoccupation with the mental over the material easily gave way to an increasing interest in the synthetic aspect of character. The mimeticism of Vasiliï Belov oscillated between the ethnographic—a transcription and cataloging of the dialectical mannerisms and cultural norms of his native region of Vologda—and the intensely individualized usage of voice and internal monolog. Critics proclaimed that Belov the author seemed to cede the textual stage to his protagonists, who manifested themselves before the reader through their words. The mimetic power of Belov’s early writing is challenged by an incompatibility between the representation of a distinctly peasant subjectivity and the text’s larger thematic messaging. This conflict is explored in my reading of *Privychnoe delo*, and points to the later predominance of the thematic aspect in the author’s later work.

Despite the very different forms the mimetic aspect takes on in the work of these three authors, one finds at the heart of each a constitutive *absence* that serves as the catalyst for creative development in each of them. For Trifonov, this is a physical, aching absence: the absence of those closest to him, lost to war and political terror. In his later works, this awareness is captured by his technique of indexical characterization, which attempts to represent a missing other through the impressions and traces left behind. The chasm felt by Andrei Bitov is born from a loss of culture. After the solipsism of his Leningrad sketches, Bitov plays gleefully in the crumbling edifice of socialist realism and the cult of the positive hero in works like *Takoe dolgoe detstvo* and *Puteshestvie k drugu detstva*. Upon returning to the heritage of Russian realism in *Pushkinskii dom*, however, he finds a breakage that is impossible to overcome. Rather than simply make a statement on the irreality or simulative nature of Soviet culture, as some critics contend, Bitov reconfigures the relationship between author and hero by placing himself *alongside* and no longer *inside* his protagonist. The loss felt by Village Prose writers is physical as well as cultural, and the genre as a whole is steeped from the 1960s onwards with nostalgia over a rapidly vanishing Russian countryside. The impending disappearance led the *derevenshchiki* to attempt to preserve the people and customs of Russia’s provinces, if only in writing, but in *Privychnoe delo* the larger social world of Ivan Afrikanovich is somehow

atrophied, and he exists in isolation from his fellow villagers. The novella's conclusion only emphasizes his solitude, and his innermost thoughts are available to the reader only through the intervention of the narrator's authoritative language.

The dramatic changes to the production of literature and Soviet society in general under Mikhail Gorbachev only intensified the tension surrounding the mimetic, which could now be expressed clearly and explicitly in Soviet literature. Mikhail Kuraev's novella *Kapitan Dikshtein*, began in 1977 but only published in 1987, succinctly stages this dissertation's central dynamic of both the drive towards and the impossibility of the mimetic in the late Soviet period. *Kapitan Dikshtein*'s initial notoriety came from its depiction of the 1921 Kronstadt rebellion in an official publication. Before *glasnost*, any representation of the rebellion, even a whitewashed one, was practically impossible, but Kuraev's account is sober and unhurried striving, for an aura of documentary authenticity. The historical reconstruction is bookended between a description of the morning routine of a pensioner, Igor Ivanovich Dikshtein, and his death of a heart attack in the town of Gatchina sometime in the 1960s. The didactic emphasis of Soviet criticism was still active during the late 1980s, of course, but critics, with their greater freedom, interpreted the novella's central protagonist along all three axes identified by Phelan. The thematic aspect is generated largely through the work's engagement with Soviet history: coming after the author's decades-long work as a screenwriter at Lenfilm, Kuraev's early fiction works often depict historical events while simultaneously adopting what Rosalind Marsh calls "a postmodernist view of the accidental, disrupted nature of the historical process, suggesting that there is no historical 'truth' existing in isolation from the patterns imposed on it by historians."¹ This anti-historicist view has paradoxically led Dikshtein and particularly his fate to be read allegorically as representative of the "little man caught up in the events of his time,"² he is not merely an individual human being but *emblematic* of the many millions of human beings trapped in some way in the "black holes" of Soviet history.³ Phelan argues that the synthetic element of character—the fact that a fictional human being is in fact fictional, a textual construct—is always present, although the reader can be more or less aware of this fact. Dikshtein's synthetic nature is tauntingly brought to the reader's attention in the novella's opening pages: "I suppose that each person who knew Igor Ivanovich Dikshtein personally has a *moral obligation* to preserve from oblivion the features of this man who factually didn't exist; this would actually constitute an attractive fantastic element in any narration about him."⁴ The narrator's italicized words above

¹ Rosalind Marsh, *Literature, History and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia, 1991-2006* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2007), 177.

² Ludmila Prednawa, review of *Night Patrol and Other Stories*, by Mikhail Kuraev and Margareta O. Thompson, *World Literature Today* 69, no. 1 (1995): 177.

³ Lev Anninskii insists on the character's individuality but nonetheless turns the figure of Dikshtein into a general lesson in morality under totalitarian regimes in Lev Anninskii, "Kak uderzhat' litsa?," *Zvezda*, no. 9 (September 1989): 218–21. For more on Kuraev's use of the term "black hole," see Boris Noordenbos, *Post-Soviet Literature and the Search for a Russian Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 31-32.

⁴ Mikhail Kuraev, *Night Patrol and Other Stories*, trans. Margareta O. Thompson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 14. Emphasis in the original.

[“Полагаю, что на каждом из знавших Игора Ивановича Дикштейна лично лежит *нравственная обязанность* сохранить от забвения черты человека, которого фактически как бы не было, что, собственно, и составил бы привлекательный фантастический элемент всякого повествования о нем”]

point equally towards the mimetic aspect of character, a sly acknowledgment that *despite this fictionality*, one keeps on reading, a point reinforced with another aside a little further down the page: “Actually, why should a man who, it might turn out, didn’t even exist suddenly claim anyone’s attention? Or aren’t there any other heroes around? Or is the author completely...”⁵

The first half of *Kapitan Dikshstein* is dominated by the mimetic aspect in an almost pure form: aside from the narrator’s playful digressions, the reader is treated to a lengthy, loving account of the pensioner’s morning from the moment of his awakening. The bulk of these passages is made up of almost pure description. It is difficult to draw out a greater moral, socioeconomic, or other thematic meaning from a particularly meditative section on Dikshstein’s choice of outerwear for the day and the particular relationships he has with his *vatnik*, jacket, and coat, for example. Even if one were to do so, at almost two pages long, the price of reading such a passage as anything but mimetic within the limited space of the narrative would be simply uneconomical. Many commenters have noted *Kapitan Dikshstein*’s Gogolian narrator and its fantastic elements—it is subtitled, after all, a fantastic novella—but the style of these descriptions is realist, particularly in their focus on material objects and the *realia* of everyday life in the unheroic 1960s. A review in *Pravda* noted the influence of the Russian classics on *Dikshstein*: “It’s as though the certain “old-fashionedness” of M. Kuraev’s style is tasked to remind us of the tradition of our native prose. Following it, the author upholds the absolute value of the human person, its right to realize its capabilities.”⁶

The second half of the novella—the account of the Kronstadt rebellion—is mostly related in the staccato, official language of historical documents. It is only here, however, where the reader learns the secret of Dikshstein’s non-existence: the mundaneness of Igor’ Ivanovich’s life exists in spite of the fact that many years ago, during the Kronstadt rebellion, the “real” Dikshstein was executed over a misunderstanding. The ‘impostor’ quietly existing before the reader in the present day assumed his identity. The concept of mimetic character is contingent upon not just the “value” of a human individual, but its integrity as well, and the peculiar hybrid formed by the nameless sailor’s adoption of Dikshstein’s name has undone the cornerstone of character—the proper name, as related by Barthes in *S/Z*: “When identical semes traverse the same proper name several times and appear to settle upon it, a character is created... The proper name acts as a magnetic field for the semes; referring in fact to a body, it draws the semic configuration into an evolving (biographical) tense.”⁷ The failure of the mimetic is thus not a product of the literary work’s inherently synthetic nature, as the reader is first led to believe, but arises from a sociohistorical problem that lies *outside the text*. *Kapitan Dikshstein* begins with a masterful depiction of an individual human being in the realist tradition before exposing the inability of these conventions to adequately convey this late Soviet individual in writing, caught as they are between an aheroic present and a haunted past. Kuraev’s novella manages to engage with all three of Phelan’s modes in the space of less than 150 pages, but it serves as an especially fitting coda to this dissertation because it activates the synthetic, thematic, and mimetic in a manner that

⁵ Mikhail Kuraev, *Night Patrol and Other Stories*, trans. Margareta O. Thompson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 15.

⁶ A Neverov, “Raspriamlenie lichnosti,” *Pravda*, January 6, 1988.

[“Некоторая ‘старомодность’ стиля М. Кураева как бы призвана напомнить нам о традиции отечественной прозы. Следуя ей, автор утверждает абсолютную ценность человеческой личности, ее право на реализацию своих возможностей”]

⁷ Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 67-68.

elevates the latter even while asserting its impossibility.

The fact that these authors' encounters with the mimetic mode ended in failure should not lead us to discount the importance of the search and experimentation that led them to this conclusion, and it is indeed this reaching out towards the mimetic as much as their ultimate reckoning with it that defines characterization during the long period of "developed socialism." It should be emphasized that the "failure" I speak of is not by any means *aesthetic* in nature. It refers instead to the inadequacy of the "set of conventions" inherited by these authors to represent fictional people within the boundaries of a textual universe. Emerging from decades of literary criticism and production dominated by a thematic understanding of character, Soviet writers encountered the limits of mimetic realism only because of the intensity and desire with which they approached the problem of writing living people into their prose works. This desire emerges more clearly in the context of what came to dominate Russian literature in the immediate post-Soviet era. In the wake of *glasnost's* historical reckoning and the mass upheaval of *perestroika*, the 1990s literary scene can be broadly categorized as *synthetic* in nature, where mimetic characters seemed not merely impossible, but ridiculous as well. The seeds of this synthetic shift first emerged during the Brezhnev era, flourishing in particular in the expansive territory of unofficial literature and the multimedia school of Moscow Conceptualism. What separates writers like Bitov or Kuraev from those to follow like Vladimir Sorokin or Viktor Pelevin is not necessarily a change in technique or execution, but instead a difference in *intention*. Both *Kapitan Dikshtein* and Sorokin's early short stories painstakingly create mimetic worlds only to tear them down, but where Kuraev's novella draws attention to the tragedy of the individual rendered unknowable by history, Sorokin's inevitable twists seem only to confront the reader with an emptiness that was there from the very beginning. This pursuit of the mimetic—no matter the outcome—is what sets aside much of Soviet literature between the mid-1960s to the late 1980s. This drive—along with its inevitable frustration—can be seen in Trifonov's exasperated plea to his critics in this 1972 article in *Voprosy literatury*: "You can't say that about a living person, but for a literary person it's fine. That's what I don't understand."⁸ Almost exactly twenty years later, already in a far different literary era, Vladimir Sorokin uttered this neat reversal: "When they tell me 'how can you mock people like that?', I tell them: "Those aren't people, they're just letters on paper."⁹

⁸ ["О живом человеке нельзя, о литературном человеке—можно. Вот этого я не понимаю"] Iurii Trifonov, "Vybirat', reshat'sia, zhertvovat'," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 2 (1972): 63.

⁹ [Когда мне говорят 'как можно так издеваться над людьми?', я отвечаю: 'Это не люди, это просто буквы на бумаге.'"]

Vladimir Sorokin, "Vesti iz onkologicheskoi kliniki," by Aleksandr Genis and Petr Vail, *Sintaksis*, 32 (1992) 141.

Bibliography

- Abramov, Fedor. "Dereven'ku zovut Timonikha (K 50-letiiu Vasiliia Belova)." *Sever*, no. 10 (1982): 91–95.
- Andreev, Yurii. "V zamknutom mirke." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 10 (March 3, 1971): 5.
- "Anketa 'LG.'" *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 40 (October 5, 1977): 10.
- Anninskii, Lev. "Kak uderzhat' litso?" *Zvezda*, no. 9 (September 1989): 218–21.
- . "Ochishchenie proshlym." *Don*, no. 2 (1977): 157–60.
- . "Tochka opory." *Don*, no. 7 (1968).
- Aristoteles, and Malcolm Heath. *Poetics*. London: Penguin Books, 1996.
- Atarov, Nikolai. "Raionnye budni." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, October 25, 1952.
- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Bakhtin, M. M, Michael Holquist, Vadim Liapunov, and Kenneth Brostrom. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Epic and Novel." In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, 3–40. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- . *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 1: Filosofskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*. Vol. 1. 7 vols. Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2003.
- . *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 2: "Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo", 1929 stat'i o L. Tolstom, 1929 zapisi kursa po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922-1927*. Vol. 2. 7 vols. Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2000.
- . *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh. Tom 3: Teoriia romana, 1930-1961 gg*. Vol. 3. 7 vols. Moskva: Russkie slovari: iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2012.
- . *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1993.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, Vern W MacGee, Caryl Emerson, and Michael Holquist. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.
- Bakich, Olga. "A New Type of Character in the Soviet Literature of the 1960s: The Early Works of Andrei Bitov." *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 23, no. 2 (1981): 125–33.
- Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2002.
- . "The Reality Effect." In *The Rustle of Language*, 141–48. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1989.
- . *Writing Degree Zero, and Elements of Semiology*. London: J. Cape, 1984.
- Barthes, Roland, and Richard Howard. *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. London: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Baxter, John. "Mimesis." In *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, edited by Irena R. Makaryk. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- Belaia, Galina. "Pereput'e." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 12 (1987): 75–103.
- . "Rozhdenie novykh stilevykh form kak protsess preodoleniia 'neutral'nogo' stilia." In *Teoriia literaturnykh stilei*, edited by N.K. Gei, 460–85. Moskva: Nauka, 1978.
- Belinskii, Vissarion. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii. Tom I, Stat'i i retsenzii. Khudozhestvennye proizvedeniia: 1829-1835*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1953.
- Belov, Vasilii. "Literatura i iazyk." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 6 (1967): 88–156.
- . *Sobranie sochinenii*. Vol. 1. 5 vols. Moskva: Sovremennik, 1991.
- Bitov, Andrei. "Akhilles i cherepakha." In *Stat'i iz romana*. Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1986.

- . “Bitva.” In *Stat’i iz romana*. Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1986.
- . “Blizkoe retro, ili Kommentarii k obshcheizvestnomu.” *Novii Mir*, no. 4 (April 1989): 135–64.
- . *Dachnaia mestnost’*. Moskva: Sovetskaia rossiiia, 1967.
- . “Grupnovaia fotografiia.” *Literaturnaia gazeta*. August 18, 1964.
- . *Imperiia v chetyrekh izmereniiakh*. Vol. 1. 4 vols. Moskva: TKO AST, 1996.
- . *Neizbezhnost’ nenapisannogo : godovye kol'tsa, 1956-1998-1937*. Moskva :, 1999.
- . *Nulevoi tom: [roman, povesti, rasskazy, stikhi]*. Moskva: AST, 2014.
- . *Pushkinskii dom*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978.
- . *Sobranie sochinenii*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1991.
- Bocharov, A. G, and G. A Belaia. *Sovremennaia russkaia sovetskaia literatura: kniga dlia uchitelia*. Moskva: Просвещение, 1987.
- Borisova, I. “Privychnoe delo zhizn’.” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 143 (December 3, 1966): 3.
- Brovman, Grigorii. “Izmereniia malogo mira.” *Sovetskaia literatura*, no. 10 (March 8, 1972): 5.
- Brown, Deming. *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Bursov, Boris. Zhizhn’ - traditsiia - literaturnyi protsess. Interview by V. Dmitriev, 1978.
- Bykov, Dmitrii. “Vremia Shulepy.” *Druzhba narodov*, no. 5 (2014): 175–77.
- Chalmaev, Viktor. “Filosofiia patriotizma.” *Molodaia gvardiia*, no. 10 (October 1967): 272–93.
- Chances, Ellen B. *Andrei Bitov: The Ecology of Inspiration*. Cambridge [etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- “Character, n.” In *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. Accessed April 21, 2020. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30639>.
- Chatman, Seymour. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Chernikova, N. “Iu. Trifonov: Roman ‘Utolenie zhazhdy.’” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 6, 1965.
- Chudakova, Marietta. “Zametki o iazyke sovremennoi prozy.” *Novyi mir*, no. 1 (1972): 212–46.
- Chung, Bora. “The Writer as Translator in Andrei Bitov’s The Teacher of Symmetry.” *Slavic and East European Journal* 63, no. 4 (2020): 562–78.
- Clark, Katerina. “Socialist Realism With Shores: The Conventions for the Positive Hero.” In *Socialist Realism Without Shores*, edited by Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- . *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Clark, Matthew, and James Phelan. *Debating Rhetorical Narratology: On the Synthetic, Mimetic, and Thematic Aspects of Narrative*. Ohio State University Press, 2020.
- Condee, Nancy. “Cultural Codes of the Thaw.” *Nikita Khrushchev, 2000*, 160–76. *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*. Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1982.
- Dedkov, Igor’. “Stranitsy derevenskoi zhizni (Polemicheskie zametki).” *Novyi mir*, no. 3 (March 1969): 231–46.
- Dobrenko, E. A. “Siuzhet kak vnutrennee dvizhenie” v pozdnei proze Iu. Trifonova.” *Voprosy russkoi literatury*, no. 1 (1987): 44–50.
- Dobrenko, Evgeny. *A Political Economy of Socialist Realism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

- . *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Docker, John, and Subhash Jaireth. "Introduction: Benjamin and Bakhtin: Vision and Visuality." *Journal of Narrative Theory* 33, no. 1 (2003): 1–11.
- Dostoevskii, Fedor. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*. Vol. 26: Dnevnik pisatel'ia 1887.--. 30 vols. Leningrad: Nauka, 1984.
- El'sberg, Iakov. "Poiski i ozhidaniia." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, March 8, 1967.
- Eremina, S., and V. Piskunov. "Vremia i mesto prozy Iu. Trifonova." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 5 (1982): 34–65.
- Erofeev, Viktor. "Pamiatnik proshedshemu vremeni." *Oktiabr'*, no. 6 (June 1988): 203–4.
- Etkind, Alexander. *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. Stanford University Press, 2013.
- Fanger, Donald. "The Peasant in Literature." In *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, edited by Wayne Vucinich, 231–62. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968.
- Fedorov, Nikolai. *Sochineniia*. Moskva: Mysl', 1982.
- Felski, Rita. "Introduction." *New Literary History* 42, no. 2 (2011): v–ix.
- Figlerowicz, Marta. "Introduction." In *Flat Protagonists: A Theory of Novel Character*, 1–20. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Forster, E. M. *Aspects of the Novel*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985.
- Geideko, V. "Ot opisaniia k osmysleniiu." *Sibirskie ogni* 3 (1965): 173–80.
- Genette, Gérard. "Boundaries of Narrative." *New Literary History* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1976): 1–13.
- Gibian, George. "The Urban Theme in Recent Soviet Russian Prose: Notes Toward a Typology." *Slavic Review* 37, no. 1 (1978): 40–50.
- Gilburd, Eleonory. *To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture*. Harvard University Press, 2018.
- Gillespie, David. "Apocalypse Now: Village Prose and the Death of Russia." *The Modern Language Review* 87, no. 2 (April 1992): 407–17.
- Gillespie, David C. *Iurii Trifonov: Unity through Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . "Time, History, and the Individual in the Works of Yury Trifonov." *The Modern Language Review* 83, no. 2 (1988): 375–95.
- Gimein, A. "Nulevoi chas." *Kontinent*, no. 20 (1979): 369–73.
- Ginzburg, Lidiia. *Literatura v poiskakh real'nosti*. Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1987.
- . *O literaturnom geroe*. Leningrad: Sov. pisatel', Leningr. otd-nie, 1979.
- . *Zapisnye knizhki: vospominaniia : esse*. Sankt-Peterburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 2002.
- . *On Psychological Prose*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Glinkin, Pavel. "Zemlia i asfal't." *Molodaia gvardiia*, no. 9 (September 1967): 240–55.
- Goraovskii, Aleksandr. "Geroi ili 'oblomok tselogo'?" *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 36 (September 2, 1981): 4.
- Grinberg, I. "A rasti emu-v nebo." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, January 19, 1965.
- Groys, Boris. *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Gusev, Vladimir. "O proze, derevene, i tselnykh liudiakh." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 14, 1968.
- Hagen, Stephen. "The Stories of Andrei Bitov, 1958-1966: A Search for Individual Perception." Durham University, 1980.

- Hellebust, Rolf. "Bakhtin and the 'Virtual Sequel' in Russian Literature." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 44, no. 4 (2000): 603–22.
- Hicks, Andy. "Semen Babaevskii and the Struggle to Revivify the Rural Theme." *Studies in Slavic Cultures (SISC)*, no. 6 (May 2007).
- Hochman, Baruch. *Character in Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Hosking, Geoffrey. "The Russian Peasant Rediscovered: 'Village Prose' of the 1960s." *Slavic Review* 32, no. 4 (December 1973): 705–24.
- Hosking, Geoffrey A. "Vasilii Belov-Chronicler of the Soviet Village." *The Russian Review* 34, no. 2 (1975): 165–85.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Iakimenko, Lev. "Povest' o studentakh." *Pravda*. January 8, 1951.
- Ianovskii, Nikolai Maksimovich. "Mimesis." In *Novyi slovotokovatel', raspolozhennyi po alfavitu*. Vol. 2. Sankt-Peterburg: Akademiia Nauk, 1804.
- Itoги Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda: SSSR (svodnyi tom)*. Moskva: Gosstatizdat TsSU SSSR, 1962.
- Ivanova, Natal'ia. *Proza Iurii Trifonova*. Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1984.
- . "Sud'ba i rol'." *Druzhba narodov*, no. 3 (1988): 244–55.
- . *Tochka zreniia: o proze poslednikh let*. Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1988.
- Ivbulis, V. "Ot modernizma k postmodernizmu." *Voprosy literatury* 30 (September 1989).
- Jakobson, Roman. "On Realism in Art." *Language in Literature*, 1987, 19–27.
- . "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances." In *Language in Literature*, 95–114. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- James, Henry. *The Art of Fiction: And Other Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.
- Jones, Polly. "Iurii Trifonov's Fireglow and the 'Mnemonic Communities' of the Brezhnev Era." *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 54, no. 1/2 (2013): 47–72.
- . *Revolution Rekindled: The Writers and Readers of Late Soviet Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Kaganovsky, Lilya. "The Cultural Logic of Late Socialism." *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3, no. 2 (2009): 185–99.
- Kamianov, V. "Evklidu-Evklidovo." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 4 (1969): 26–47.
- Kamianov, Vladimir. "Ne dobrotoi edinoi." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 47 (November 22, 1967): 4.
- Karabchievskii, Yurii. "Tochka boli. O romane Andreia Bitova 'Pushkinskii dom.'" *Grani*, no. 106 (December 1977): 141–203.
- Kermode, Frank. "Lyova's Death Was Temporary." *The New York Times*, January 3, 1988.
- Kharkhordin, Oleg. *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1999.
- Kitzinger, Chloe. "Illusion and Instrument: Problems of Mimetic Characterization in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy." University of California, Berkeley, 2016.
- Klepikova, Elena. "Ot byta k eposu. Zametki o tvorchestve Vasiliia Belova." *Avrora*, no. 9 (1971): 58–61.
- Kliger, Ilya. "Heroic Aesthetics and Modernist Critique: Extrapolations from Bakhtin's 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity.'" *Slavic Review* 67, no. 3 (2008): 551–66.
- Komaromi, Ann. "Andrei Bitov's Pushkin House: A Critical Analysis of the Late Soviet Hero." *The Russian Review* 72, no. 3 (2013): 390–408.

- Kompaneets, V.V. "Problema khudozhestvennogo psikhologizma v diskussiiakh 1920-x godov." *Russkaia literatura*, no. 2 (1974): 197–209.
- Kormilova, M.S. "Kritika perioda" perestroiki" o romane A. Bitova" Pushkinskii dom": metodologicheskaiia inertsiiia i novye printsipy kriticheskogo analiza." *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, 10, no. 6 (2009): 169–84.
- Kozhinov, Vadim. "Tsennosti istinnye i mnimye." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 5 (January 31, 1968): 5.
- Kozlov, Denis. "The Historical Turn in Late Soviet Culture: Retrospectivism, Factography, Doubt, 1953–91." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 3 (2001): 577–600.
- Kriachko, Larisa. "Listy i korni." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 48 (November 29, 1967): 5.
- Kuraev, Mikhail. *Kapitan Dikshtein: Povesti*. Moskva: Profizdat, 1990.
- . *Night Patrol and Other Stories*. Translated by Margareta O. Thompson. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994.
- Kuzicheva, Alevtina. "Pisatel' griadushchego stoletiiia." *Znamia*, no. 8 (1999): 193–96.
- Kuznetsov, Feliks. "Chetvertoe pokoleniie." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 27, 1961.
- . "Vasilii Belov." In *My - molodye*. Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 1969.
- Lahusen, Thomas. "Socialist Realism in Search of Its Shores: Some Historical Remarks on the 'Historically Open Aesthetic System of the Truthful Representation of Life.'" In *Socialist Realism Without Shores*, edited by Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko, 5-26. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Leiderman, N, and M.N. Lipovetskii. *Ot "sovetskogo pisatel'ia" k pisatel'iu sovetskoi epokhi: put' Iuriiia Trifonova*. Ekaterinburg: AMB, 2001.
- . *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody : v dvukh tomakh*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Moskva: Izdatel'skii tsentr "Akademiia," 2010.
- . *Russkaia literatura XX veka: 1950-1990-e gody : v dvukh tomakh*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Moskva: Izdatel'skii tsentr "Akademiia," 2010.
- Leving, Yurii. "Vlast' i slast' (' Dom na naberezhnoi' Iu.V. Trifonova)." *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, no. 75 (October 2005): 258–90.
- Lipovetsky, Mark. *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999.
- Lipovetsky, Mark, and Mikhail Berg. "Literary Criticism of the Long 1970s and the Fate of Soviet Liberalism." In *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*, edited by Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov, 207–29. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.
- Liszka, James Jakób. *A General Introduction to the Semeiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Lukács, Georg. "Solzhenitsyn and the New Realism." *The Socialist Register*, no. 2 (1965): 197–215.
- . *Studies in European Realism*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1972.
- Lukacs, Georg. "The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization." In *Writer and Critic*, 149–88. New York: Merlin Press, 1970.
- Makhlin, V. "Postol'ku, poskol'ku...: Pamiati Vadima Valer'ianovicha Kozhina." In *Bakhtinskii sbornik*, edited by V. Makhlin, 5:617–29. Moskva: Iazyki Slavianskoi kul'tury, 2004.
- Margolin, Uri. "Structuralist Approaches to Character in Narrative: The State of the Art." *Semiotica* 75, no. 1–2 (1989): 1–24.

- . “The What, the When, and the How of Being a Character in Literary Narrative.” *Style* 24, no. 3 (1990): 453–68.
- Markov, Georgii. “Radost’ znakomstv.” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 11, 1963.
- Marsh, Rosalind. *Literature, History and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia, 1991-2006*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2007.
- Mathewson, Rufus W. *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2000.
- Meyer, Ronald. “Andrej Bitov’s ‘Pushkinskij Dom.’” Indiana University, 1986.
- Milkova, Stiliana. “Reading Games/Games of Reading: Iurii Trifonov’s House on the Embankment and Forms of Play beyond Samizdat.” *Poetics Today* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2009).
- Morris, Jeremy. “From Chudak to Mudak? Village Prose and the Absurdist Ethics of Evgenii Popov.” *The Modern Language Review* 99, no. 3 (July 2004): 696–710.
- Motiashov, Igor’. “Otvetsvennost’ khudozhnika.” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 12 (1968): 3–32.
- Naiman, Eric. “What If Nabokov Had Written ‘Dvoinik’? Reading Literature Preposterously.” *The Russian Review* 64, no. 4 (2005): 575–89.
- Neverov, A. “Raspriamlenie lichnosti.” *Pravda*. January 6, 1988.
- Newton, Adam Zachary. *Narrative Ethics*. Cambridge (Mass.); London: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- . *To Make the Hands Impure: Art, Ethical Adventure, the Difficult and the Holy*. Fordham University Press, 2015.
- Ovechkin, Valentin. *Trudnaia vesna*. Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1956.
- Pankov, Viktor. *V zhivom potoke*. Moskva: Sovremennik, 1979.
- Paperno, Irina. *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- . *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.
- . *“Who, What Am I?”: Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self*. Cornell University Press, 2015.
- Parthé, Kathleen F. *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Paton, S. “The Hero of His Time.” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 64, no. 4 (1986): 506–25.
- Pertsovskii, V. “Pokoriaias’ techeniiu.” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 4 (1979): 3–35.
- Petelin, V. “O svetlom i gor’kom.” *Ogonek*, no. 29 (July 1966): 26–27.
- Phelan, James. *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*. Ithaca, N.Y. :, 2005.
- . *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative*. Chicago: University Press, 1989.
- Pinsky, Anatoly. “The Diaristic Form and Subjectivity under Khrushchev.” *Slavic Review* 73, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 805–27.
- Platt, Kevin. “Yuri Trifonov’s The House on the Embankment and Late Soviet Memory of Stalinist Violence: Disavowal and Social Discipline.” *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, no. 155 (January 2019): 229–45.
- Plekhanov, Georgii. *Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniia*. Vol. 5. 5 vols. Moskva: Sotsial’no-ekonomicheskaiia literatura, 1958.
- Pomerantsev, Vladimir. “Ob iskrennosti v literature.” *Novii Mir*, no. 12 (1953): 218–45.

Prednewa, Ludmila. Review of *Review of Night Patrol and Other Stories*, by Mikhail Kuraev and Margareta O. Thompson. *World Literature Today* 69, no. 1 (1995): 177–78.

“Protiv burzhuaznykh i revizionistskikh teorii v literaturovedenii.” *Voprosy literatury*. August 1958.

Reviakin, A. “Krest’ianskaia literatura.” In *Literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, 5:554–83. Moskva: Kommunisticheskaia akademiia, 1931.

Reznik, Semen. “Okhota na volkov.” *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*. July 28, 1989.

Rozanov, Yurii. “Povest’ V.I. Belova ‘Privychnoe delo’ v zerkale literaturnoi kritiki 1960-x godov.” In *Povest’ V.I. Belova “Privychnoe delo” kak vologodskii tekst*, edited by S. Baranov, 11–31. Vologda: Vologodskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2016.

Rutten, Ellen. *Sincerity After Communism: A Cultural History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

Sakharov, Vsevolod Ivanovich. “Alkhimiia prozy.” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, October 3, 1973, 5. ———. *Obnovliaiushchisia mir: zametki o tekushchei literature*. Moskva: Sovremennik, 1980.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Seifrid, Thomas. “Trifonov’s Dom Na Naberezhnoi and the Fortunes of Aesopian Speech.” *Slavic Review* 49, no. 4 (1990): 611–24.

Shaginian, Marietta. “Raionnye budni.” *Izvestiia*. October 26, 1952, sec. Kritika i bibliografiia.

Shaitanov, Igor’. “Reaktsiia na peremeny.” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 5 (1981): 34–60.

Shteinberg, Genrikh. Posleslovie geroiia: Genrikh Shteinberg o podvige i postupke. Interview by Svetlana Bunina, June 2008. <https://lechain.ru/ARHIV/194/lkl.htm>.

Sidorov, E. “Chto za slovom?” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 64 (June 2, 1966): 2–3.

Simonov, Konstantin. “Problemy razvitiia prozy.” *Literaturnaia gazeta*. December 18, 1954.

Slezkine, Yuri. *The House of Government: A Saga of the Russian Revolution*. Princeton University Press, 2017.

Sorokin, Vladimir. Vesti iz onkologicheskoi kliniki. Interview by Aleksandr Genis and Petr Vail, 1992.

Spektor, Tat’iana. “Polozhitel’nyi geroi Iurii Trifonova.” *Russian Language Journal/Russkii iazyk* 50, no. 165/167 (1996): 187–215.

Spektor, Tatiana. “The Christian Subtext in Iurii Trifonov’s Moscow Stories.” University of Kansas, 1995.

Starikova, Elena. “Sotsiologicheskii aspekt sovremennoi ‘derevenskoi prozy.’” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 7 (1972): 11–35.

Struve, Gleb. “Monologue Intérieur: The Origins of the Formula and the First Statement of Its Possibilities.” *PMLA* 69, no. 5 (1954): 1101–11.

Stykalin, A.C. “Komu opasen D’erd’ Lukach?” *Istoricheskaiia ekspertiza* 16, no. 3 (2018): 181–93.

Surganov, Vsevolod. “Da, nazvanie obiazyvaet...” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, October 13, 1971.

Suvin, Darko. “Lukács: Horizons and Implications of the ‘Typical Character.’” *Social Text*, no. 16 (Winter -1987 1986): 97–123.

Świeży, Janusz. “‘Razryvanie mogil’. Prelomlenie idei Nikolaia Fedorova v povesti Iurii Trifonova ‘Drugaiia zhizn’.” *Przegląd Rusycystyczny* 141, no. 1 (2013): 42–64.

Terts, Abram. *Chto takoe sotsialisticheskii realizm*. Parizh: Syntaxis, 1988.

Todorov, Tzvetan. “Narrative-Men.” In *The Poetics of Prose*, 272. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977.

- Tolstoi, Lev. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*. Vol. 1. 90 vols. Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1935.
- Trifonov, Iurii. "Dobro, chelovechnost', talant." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 40 (October 4, 1977): 13.
- . *Dolgoe proshchanie; Drugaia zhizn'; Dom na naberezhnoi; Vremia i mesto; Oprokinutyi dom*. Moskva: Slovo, 1999.
- . "Iz dnevnikov i rabochikh tetradei: Okonchanie. Publikatsiia i kommentarii Ol'gi Trifonovoi." *Druzhba narodov*, no. 11 (1998).
- . "Iz dnevnikov i rabochikh tetradei. Prodolzhenie. Publikatsiia i kommentarii Ol'gi Trifonovoi." *Druzhba narodov*, no. 2 (1999).
- . "Iz dnevnikov i rabochikh tetradei. Publikatsiia i kommentarii Ol'gi Trifonovoi." *Druzhba narodov*, no. 5 (1998).
- . *Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia*. Moskva: Sovetskaia rossia, 1985.
- . *Otblesk kostra; Ischeznovenie: Dokumental'naia povest', roman*. Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1988.
- . "Sopriazhenie istorii s sovremennosti'iu..." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 7 (1987): 170–85.
- . *Starik: roman; Drugaia zhizn': povest'*. Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980.
- . *The Exchange & Other Stories*. Translated by Ellendea Proffer. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002.
- . *Utolenie zhazhdy*. Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1965.
- . "V kratkom-beskonechnoe." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 8 (1974): 171–94.
- . "Vybirat', reshat'sia, zhertvovat'." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 2 (1972): 62–65.
- Trifonov, Iurii, and Robert Russell. *Obmen / The exchange / Yu. V. Trifonov; edited by Robert Russell*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Troitskii, P. "Mnogoobrazie poiska." *Izvestiia*, January 22, 1967.
- Turgenev, Ivan S. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem: v tridtsati tomakh: Pis'ma 10, 1869-1870*. Vol. 10. 30 vols. Moskva: Nauka, 1994.
- Updike, John. "Doubt and Difficulty in Leningrad and Moscow." In *Odd Jobs: Essays and Criticism*, 548–56. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.
- . *Hugging the Shore: Essays and Criticism*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2013.
- Urban, Adol'f. "V nastoiashchem vremeni." *Zvezda*, no. 7 (1973): 214–16.
- Urnov, Dmitrii. "O blizkom i dalekom." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 9 (1987): 113–31.
- Ushakov, Dmitrii, ed. "Khodok." In *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo iazyka*, 4:1166. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarei, 1940.
- Vil'chek, Liliia. "Vniz po techeniiu derevenskoi prozy." *Voprosy literatury*, no. 6 (1985): 34–72.
- Vinogradov, Igor'. "Derevenskie ocherki Valentina Ovechkina." *Novyi mir*, no. 6 (1964): 207–29.
- Voevodin, Vsevolod. "Na melkovod'e." *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 19, 1966.
- . "Otvetstvennost' talanta." *Literaturnaia gazeta*. March 24, 1964.
- Wellek, René. "The Essential Characteristics of Russian Literary Criticism." *Comparative Literature Studies* 29, no. 2 (1992): 115–40.
- Williams, Raymond. "Realism and the Contemporary Novel." In *The Long Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961.
- Woloch, Alex. *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Realist Novel*. Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Zalygin, Sergeii. "Rasskaz i rasskazchik." *Nash sovremennik*, no. 11 (1971): 113–19.

Zdravomyslova, Elena, and Viktor Voronkov. "The Informal Public in Soviet Society: Double Morality at Work." *Social Research* 69, no. 1 (2002): 49–69.

Žekulin, Gleb. "The Contemporary Countryside in Soviet Literature: A Search for New Values." In *The Soviet Rural Community*, edited by James Millar, 376–404. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, n.d.

Zolotonosov, Mikhail. "Otdykhaiushchii fontan." *Oktiabr'*, no. 4 (1991): 166–79.