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*Teaching Russian Classics In Secondary School Under Stalin
(1936-1941)*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contributes to existing discussions of Soviet subjectivity by considering how the efforts of the Party leadership and state agencies to shape personal and collective identities were mediated by the teaching of Russian classics to teenagers. It concentrates in particular on the history of literature course provided by Soviet schools for the upper years. The study addresses the following questions: (1) How was literary expression employed to instigate children's emotions and create interpretive habits as a way of inculcating a Soviet worldview? (2) What immediate effects did the methods have on teenagers? (3) What were the long-term effects of this type of indoctrination? Answering these questions required close reading of material produced by official authorities, such as methodological programmes, teachers' aids, professional journals, and textbooks for class instruction, and also of material produced by those at the receiving end of Stalinist literary instruction, including both sources contemporary to the period under scrutiny (i.e. diaries written between 1936 – 1941), and later autobiographical material (memoirs, oral history).

I argue that for many teenagers growing up during this period, indoctrination in the classroom blurred the boundary between reality and fiction, and provided a moral compass to navigate their social environment, to judge others as well as themselves along prescribed lines, and model their lives on the precepts and slogans of the characters and authors they encountered, particularly the 19th-century radical democrats. Retrospective accounts – interviews, memoirs, and written responses to questions – expose the durability of the moral and ethical

lessons derived from Russian classics and reveal the enduring Soviet emotional complex formed by this literary instruction.

Investigating the impacts of the study of Russian classics on Soviet recipients, particularly from elite groups such as the city intelligentsia, my discussion highlights the political traction of the literary in, for instance, forming feelings of group belonging and strong emotional responses to differing views. I conclude with a discussion of the relation of this to long-term political effects, including the re-appraisal, in the twenty-first century, of Stalin-era teaching methodology as an effective way of instilling patriotic sentiments in students, and the legacy of Soviet perceptions and practices in the expression of personal and collective identities in the post-Soviet period.

FULLER ABSTRACT

Created by specialists in pedagogy in the mid-1930s and used for decades afterwards, the methods of teaching literature that evolved during the Stalin era aimed to shape children's perceptions, worldview, values, and emotions. This course in the history of Russian literature for the upper school years was carefully drafted and implemented through a set of centralised measures: a unified programme and curricula; authorised editions of textbooks; a five-point mark system; centralised standards for examinations; the exercise of careful control over the methodology used by teachers (e.g. through the provision of manuals and a system of inspections by local education authorities – ONO); precise and continuous teacher training and supervision by administrators in the schools (the *zavuch*, or head of studies, the director). By examining both normative material and the words of those who attended these literature lessons and experienced first hand the teaching methods which shaped their outlook, I seek to address two wide questions: (1) How literary expression, which could be thought of as a form of individual expression (and had certainly had that role in the 19th-century literary texts that made up a substantial part of the syllabus), fitted with the goals of a highly regimented and authoritarian educational system; and (2) What was the relationship between the alternative values of the Russian classics taught as part of the course and those fostered by the interpretive framework of the Soviet education system (and were any strange attitudes and emotions interpreted in terms of the familiar framework)?

A more detailed set of questions that I address comprises the functions of programmes and textbooks, the function of the course's teaching methodology,

such as character study and visual aids, the contemporary response to the methods used, and the short-term and long-term effects of this type of literary instruction. Specifically, I consider the following questions: (1) What were the aims of this type of indoctrination (a term that I use advisedly, since the explicit effort to influence thinking was regarded as an entirely positive process during the Stalin era)? (2) How was the employment of literary texts expected to advance them? (3) Were these aims reached prior to World War II? (4) Were there any unexpected effects, both short-term and long-term consequences, on the recipients of this history of literature course?

To answer these research questions, I read methodological programmes, teachers' aid publications, including pedagogical journals, official textbooks, and the material gathered from those at the receiving end of these teaching methods – their diaries, memoirs, interviews, and other autobiographical material. This thesis thus explores the teaching of Russian classics and its effects on pupils, drawing on methodological approaches from oral history, life writing, and a more traditional close reading and textual analysis. As well as offering analysis of the situation in the schoolroom, I relate this to a broader historical framework, and in particular, to recent discussions of 'Soviet subjectivity' and of Soviet propaganda and ideology in a broad sense, and the reception of these. The Stalinist era's *mirovozrenie* (worldview) and the Soviet propaganda that aimed at inculcating it, as well as the extent to which such *mirovozrenie* was internalised or resisted, have been objects of analysis by scholars, but the emotional component of education in the secondary school of the late 1930s, especially with a focus on how it was received by children and to what short-term and

long-lasting effects, with a few exceptions, has not.¹ To fill this gap, normative material, diaries of schoolchildren, memoirs, and interviews of former students of this type of education are assessed in this thesis. Similar primary material was explored by other scholars with the purpose of understanding ‘national identity formation,’² ‘the hermeneutics of the self,’³ the workings of ‘subjectivity,’⁴ and the dreams of Soviet adults.⁵ I seek both to build on this academic work and, where necessary, to challenge its findings. I take issue with Jochen Hellbeck, *inter alia*, on the intrinsic appeal of communist ethics, with Irina Paperno on the motives behind the narrative compulsion with which Soviet subjects convey their experience, as well as her emphasis on Alexander Herzen’s foundational

¹ John Dunstan, *Soviet Schooling in the Second World War* (Basingstoke: University of Birmingham, 1997), the first part of Dunstan’s book covers the pre-war period; Larry E. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991); Idem, *Stalin’s School: Moscow’s Model School No. 25, 1931-1937* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999); Idem, ‘School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953,’ in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects*, edited by Ben Eklof, Vera Kaplan (London: F. Cass, 2005), pp. 56-101; E. Thomas Ewing, *The Teachers of Stalinism: Policy, Practice, and Power in Soviet Schools of the 1930s* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); David Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda*, edited by Kevin M. Platt, David Brandenberger (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Anna Krylova, ‘Soviet Modernity in Life and Fiction: The Generation of the ‘New Soviet People’ in the 1930s’ (unpublished PhD dissertation, John Hopkins University, 2000); Alla Sal’nikova, ‘Transformations in Russian Children’s Texts During the First Years of the Bolshevik Rule: Internalizing “Sovietness”’, in *School Exercise Books: A Complex Source for a History of the Approach to Schooling and Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, edited by Juri Meda, Davide Montino, Roberto Sani, 2 vols (Florence: Polistampa, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 387-403; Timothy Johnston, *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life under Stalin 1939-1953* (Oxford: OUP, 2011). The most recent exception is Jan Plamper’s article ‘Ivan’s Bravery’, in *Learning How to Feel: Children’s Literature and the History of Emotional Socialization, 1870-1970* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), pp. 191-208.

² David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

³ Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

⁴ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). Idem, ‘Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of Stepan Podlubnyi (1931-1939)’ in *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 77-116. Idem, ‘Writing the Self in the Time of Terror: The Diary of Aleksandr Afinogenov’ in *Self and Story in Russian History*, edited by Laura Englestein and Stephanie Sandler (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 69-93.

⁵ Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

role in the historicist self-consciousness of Soviet diarists.⁶ I also address Evgeny Dobrenko's studies, in which he assesses the impact Socialist realist novels had on the young minds of the period while downplaying the influence of pre-revolutionary classics, emphasising the limited access to them.⁷ I complement and expand upon David Brandenberger's work on mobilisations efforts through nationalist propaganda prior WWII.⁸ I add to Benjamin Tromly's recent study of the intelligentsia identity among university students beginning with the late Stalinist period by examining the words of those who attended literature lessons and experienced at first hand the teaching methods, which shaped their identity.⁹

The period this thesis addresses was one in which the level of state intervention in the arts and in other spheres of cultural production and social institutions, including education and, more particularly, the teaching of literature, increased significantly, and when attitudes towards socialisation also shifted. For example, the appointment in September 1929 of Andrei Bubnov as the head of Narkompros (The People's Committee of Enlightenment) and the 'demotion' of Valerian Pereverzev, a methodologist who fostered a strictly Marxist socio-historical approach to the history of literature, represented critical ideological shifts of the period. The emphasis shifted from a socio-economic historical paradigm towards an emotional, patriotic one – one could also say, from

⁶ Irina Paperno, 'Personal Accounts of the Soviet Experience', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian history* 3:4 (2002), 577-610 (p. 578).

⁷ Evgenii Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo chitatelia* (St-Petersburg: Gumanitarnoe agentstvo, 1997), pp. 141-142.

⁸ Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*.

⁹ Benjamin Tromly, *Making the Soviet Intelligentsia: Universities and Intellectual Life under Stalin and Khrushchev* (New York: CUP, 2014).

rationalistic analysis towards celebration. Held up as ‘the norms of polite behaviour’, enthusiasm and exultation were thrust upon Soviet adults, being omnipresent in popular music, film, radio programmes, as well as in state-sponsored social undertakings – parades and activities at palaces of culture. This trend was duly noted and addressed in studies of the fast growing field.¹⁰ In the wake of the international surge of interest, scholars have also thoroughly investigated the history of emotions in Russia.¹¹ Political uses of affective education through children’s literature had started to be explored.¹² Children were an easier target than adults, and the ‘education of feelings’ in classrooms facilitated the formation of the ‘right’ feelings and the ‘normal’ intensity of feeling.¹³ My thesis seeks to enhance the understanding of this process by focusing on literary instruction’s power to shape the mind-set of children, and the role of emotional education in this process.

¹⁰ Jan Plamper compares the field with a launched rocket in his updated English edition of *History of Emotions: Introduction*, translated by Keith Tribe (Oxford: OUP, 2015), p. 7.

¹¹ *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv. Podkhody k kul’turnoi istorii emotsii*, edited by Ian Plamper [Jan Plamper], Mark Eli [Marc Elie], Shamma Shakhadat [Schamma Schahadat] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010); Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000); Sheila Fitzpatrick, ‘Happiness and *Toska*: An Essay in the History of Emotions in Pre-war Soviet Russia’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50:3 (2004), 357-371; *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, edited by Evgeny Dobrenko, Marina Balina (London: Anthem Press, 2009); Gábor Rittersporn, *Anguish, Anger, and Folkways in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014).

¹² Plamper, ‘Ivan’s Bravery’, in *Learning How to Feel*, edited by Frevert et al., pp. 191-208. Plamper’s article deals with an earlier period.

¹³ Catriona Kelly explored these issues in her essay ‘A Joyful Soviet Childhood: Licensed Happiness for Little Ones’, in *Petrified Utopia*, edited Dobrenko, Balina, pp. 3-18; also see Catriona Kelly, ‘“Malen’kie grazhdane bol’shoi strany”: internatsionalizm, deti i sovetskaia propaganda’, *Nlo* 60 (2003), 218-251, also available online < <http://www.chukfamily.ru/Kornei/Biblio/kelli.htm> > [accessed 5 August 2015]; Eadem, ‘Pravo na emotsii, pravil’nye emotsii: upravlenie chuvstvami v Rossii posle epokhi Prosveshcheniia’, in *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv*, edited by Plamper, Eli, Shakhadat, pp. 51-77 (especially pp. 68-77 on Soviet and Stalinist periods); on friendship cult see Eadem, ‘“V nashem velikom Sovetskom Soiuzhe tovarishch – sviashchennoe slovo”. Emotsional’nye otnosheniia mezhdur det’mi v sovetskoi kul’ture’, *Detskie chteniia* 3:1 (2013), 38-73; Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, ‘Learning to Be Soviet: Stalinist Schools and Celebrations in the 1930s’, *History of Education Quarterly* 42:3 (2002), 403-413; Evgeny Dobrenko, ‘“The Entire Real World of Children”: The School Tale and “Our Happy Childhood,”’ *Slavic and Eastern European Journal* 49:2 (2005), 225-248; *Konstruiruia detstkie. Filologiia. Istoriiia. Antropologiia*, edited by M. R. Balina, V. G. Bezrogov, S. G. Maslinskaia, K. A. Maslinskii, M. V. Tendriakova, S. Sheridan (Moscow: Azmut, Nestor-Istoriia, 2011).

As is made clear from contemporary normative material (*Pravda* directives, school programmes, and methodological instructions for teachers), under Stalin the emotional education of children in secondary schools became an important constituent of both the education policy of the 1930s and of the mass mobilisation trend in general. Alongside this, in the Introduction to this thesis I also discuss a theoretical framework proposed by one of the most influential figures in the Stalin era, Sergei Eisenstein, his theory of ‘pathos’, and of indoctrination through art’s capacity to excite and shape emotional responses to doctrine and other phenomena, mainly through the structuring of visual and associative memory.

In the first chapters, I pay special attention to the literature course’s development from the early 1920s to mid-1930s – the period in which the method used in Soviet schools was finally consolidated. Chapter One delineates this development, and at the same time the consistent features of the course. In terms of the course’s content, the literary texts studied were arranged chronologically and included critical works by such 19th-century radical democrats as Belinskii, Chernyshevskii, Dobroliubov. The indoctrinative potential of the authors’ biographies (in its purified form), along with introductions to literary periods and movements with an emphasis on ‘the literary struggle’, formed a large part of the course. In this chronologically arranged content, a central place was given to 19th-century Russian-realist novels and stories. They were assigned an illustrative function – to expose the evils of the pre-revolutionary past.

In chapter One I also focus on the prominent features of this methodology – first and foremost, the employment of literary imagery (*obrazy*), such as character studies, which played an important role in the process of moral upbringing. It becomes apparent that Russian classics had a mimetic function assigned to them, as children were encouraged to relate the literary phenomena to real life, and as a range of socially significant character ‘templates’ was used for instilling appropriate moral values. As I argue, the study of Russian pre-revolutionary classics was meant to uproot the putative pre-revolutionary ‘bourgeois’ mentality through a character analysis that exposed socially and politically unacceptable features and emphasised how a Soviet person was different.

One of the most prominent features of the course was its repeated emphasis on intensifying children’s emotionality through literature’s ‘natural’ appeal to the emotions. A selection of Russian classical poetry was thought to be particularly useful to these ends. Poems and selected prose passages were studied by heart. Emotionally heightened dramatic reading was recommended alongside frequent oral exams and presentations; theatre trips and radio dramatic programmes were also suggested. But no less importance was given to patriotic *pathos* [high-flown rhetoric], and to the expression of emotionally charged social commitment. The approach to literature, while sentimental (in the neutral sense, i.e. engaged with the inculcation of feeling), was also utilitarian – it was called upon to serve the goals propounded by the radical democrats, whose work was frequently quoted in textbooks and teachers’ journals.

Chapter Two describes in detail two key principles of the course that fashioned the study of literature into an effective instrument of indoctrination: visual aids (*nagliadnost'*), a notion inclusive of metaphors and social types, as well as illustrated continuity (*preemstvennost'*) of these types. Both served to promote and illustrate a simplified vision of continuous and inevitable social evolution from capitalism to socialism and thus legitimise Soviet state power. This was achieved by divorcing literary protagonists from their works and arranging them into an artificially connected line of historical types (Onegin, Pechorin, Rudin, Bazarov, etc.), which paradoxically included real life characters – revolutionaries and other political figures (Lenin, Stalin) – alongside the protagonists of fiction. The evolution from a superfluous person to the New Soviet man was thus illustrated through literary study. The course was understood as historical and systematic (as required by the laws of Marxism-Leninism), whilst also being ideologically charged and moralistic. It was directed towards the political modification of identity through guided reading, and the inculcation of a set of prescribed interpretative practices that aimed to structure the cognitive and emotional habits of children.

Chapter Three addresses the contemporary response to the course among Soviet adults. The new methodology was not only discussed in special journals – relevant articles and directives were also published in *Pravda*. Luminaries, such as Kornei Chukovskii and Grigorii Gukovskii, also assessed the efficiency of the new course in the history of literature and its practical implementation. They both confirmed the social and political importance of Soviet teenagers' exposure to Russian classical literature, drawing attention to its shortcomings and

potential harmful effects. Chukovskii complained of children's poor absorption of literary facts and the lack of emotional impact of the course upon them, in practice if not in pedagogical theory, while Gukovskii pointed out the dangers of developing a naïve realist approach to literature as the result of an overemphasised character analysis.

In the subsequent chapters I determine the impact of the literature course on children's worldview and their affective relationships, as well as the extent to which these educational principles endured in their later lives, based on contemporary diaries and later recollections of those who underwent the school programme.

The impact of the course on children at the time, as reconstructed from diaries, is addressed in chapter Four. My selection of diaries was governed by the period in which they were written – the late 1930s. The diarists' representativeness was also a factor in the selection process. Taking into account the fact that the course in the history of literature was offered for the top years, and usually available only to the metropolitan population and the elite, as well as the fact that writing diaries in rural areas was also limited by practical factors (e.g. lack of paper) as well as cultural barriers, I focus on young members of the Soviet intelligentsia living in cities and towns (although I have used life-writing and interviews with former students from rural areas where the course was available in full to suggest that the results may have been similar). Within this framework, I aim to look at a variety of social types, analysing not only the diary of David Samoilov (Kaufman), the son of well-educated Jewish intellectuals living in Moscow, and

attending a top school in the capital, and of Moscow-based Nina Kosterina, the daughter of the journalist and Civil war veteran Aleksei Kosterin, but also the diary of Iurii Tverdin (Tverditin), of Russian background, living in the provincial town Samara (Kuibyshev at the time) and attending a normal school with the same curriculum, and the commonplace book of Ul'iana Gromova, living in a small East-Ukrainian town Pervomaika of Krasnodon region and completing the 10-year course of secondary education there. This last source stands apart and is analysed towards the end of the chapter in order to explore the findings based on a close reading of the other diaries.

Another type of diary, and one that is helpful in assessing the question of how specific the 'Soviet' (as opposed to 'Russian') experience may have been is that of Georgii Efron, son of the writers Marina Tsvetaeva and Sergei Efron. Georgii (known in the family as 'Mur') grew up and was educated abroad until he was 14 years old, and thus lacked exposure to the early years of Soviet socialisation. (It can be added that his father's Jewish origins also had very limited impact on his experience, since the Efrons were thoroughly assimilated.) Georgii's cultural capital was exceptional due to his parents' social and cultural position, which raises the issue of his diary's possible exceptionality too. But Efron's literary sophistication contributed to his awareness of the Sovietisation process he was undergoing as part of his Soviet education, making this source invaluable to my project. Efron's observations thus contrast usefully with the other diarists' records, since he draws attention to features that they simply take for granted.

The collation of the five diaries demonstrates to what extent the analytical habits and emotional attitudes learned during school's literary instruction affected Soviet children's goals and judgement of their social milieu and of themselves. Soviet schoolchildren's internal perceptions and emotional vicissitudes were intense and uneven. Socialisation proved to be a taxing task, and one which partially compelled them to rely on ideologically coloured, pre-made formulas, even if the children often used such formulas to legitimate forbidden emotions and individualist drives. As I demonstrate, the newly introduced methods of teaching literature in the upper years of Soviet schools during high Stalinism contributed to this process to a considerable degree.

Chapter Five examines David Samoilov's later life records. Since Samoilov is the only diarist of those examined in the preceding chapter to survive the war, I analyse his later writings to identify whether there were significant changes in his worldview when he reached adulthood, or something that resembled more closely a further development of views he held as a teenager. I conclude that if Samoilov's ideological view changed over his lifetime, especially his views on the intelligentsia and assessment of its role for the preservation of the 19th-century moral codex, many analytical habits (a particular type of historical thinking, a tendency to generalise) and emotional reactions to social situations (e. g. frustration at failure to arrive at a common point of view) persevered. How representative were the long-term effects expressed by Samoilov? This is the question I address in chapter Six.

Since Kosterina, Tverdin, Gromova, and Efron died in the war, I add other respondents to assess the long-term impact of literary instruction, as far as it can be reconstructed from life-writing, memoirs, and interviews. The selection criteria remained similar to those of the diaries: the period during which the subjects attended secondary school. The subjects' social background is uniformly (with several exceptions given in footnotes) similar to Samoilov, Kosterina, and Tverdin's – the new metropolitan intelligentsia. Many of the subjects in this sample are from Jewish families, which further corroborates the widely attested significance of this group for the Soviet intelligentsia and intellectual values without undermining the validity of my conclusions for other groups in the Soviet society. I consulted accounts of their past by former 1930s Soviet schoolchildren, namely those of Elena Bonner (1923-2011), Naum Korzhavin (1925-), Galina Vishnevskaja (1926-2012), Inna Shikheeva-Gaister (1925-2009), and a number of autobiographical poems by Boris Slutskii (1919-1986), as well as oral histories. In this chapter I address the subjects' memories of specific texts and what the texts meant or continue to mean to them. I conclude that the majority of subjects remember texts studied in school as being the sources of their sentimental, moral, and civic notions. One of the most interesting cases is the memories of works by L. N. Tolstoi, who is invoked by several respondents as a source of moral upbringing. Literature study in general (including extracurricular theatrical plays and poetry readings) is remembered as a peer-bonding activity and triggers memories of close friends among classmates.

I also pay close attention to the way in which people's strategies of argument were shaped by their schooling, for instance, the emphasis on types in classroom

discussions of literature or on revolutionary romanticism, and the writings of radical democrats.

The emotional imprint of the instruction remained visible in the respondents' self-acknowledged capacity to engage with literary texts and relate literature to their lives. The Soviet school's emphasis on the struggle for the right cause, as well as its constant invocation of heightened emotionality in general, got transformed into a respect for life's vicissitudes among historical subjects, and an appreciation of the complexity of the historical period they grew up in. The products of the Soviet schoolroom were later to see value and meaning in difficult times and tribulations. I argue that these were the direct results of the indoctrination that schoolchildren underwent, results that continued to manifest themselves throughout the lives of Soviet memoirists and respondents. Thus my thesis is a contribution to the understanding of Soviet adult psychology and the centrality of pedagogy to this.

The main contribution of this thesis is to bring back the literary into discussions of Soviet subjectivity. Directed at the Soviet intelligentsia, the social layer that was considered most likely to recreate and disseminate these learned patterns of thought and feeling, this type of literary instruction had political traction in the Soviet Union and contributed to the country's general literary centrism. The durability of the emotional complex acquired as part of children's encounter with literary texts also indicates that the 'Soviet legacy' went far beyond the explicit ideological content of the school programme. Indeed, long after most pupils had forgotten slogans and poems about Party leaders and events in the

Communist calendar (or had developed contempt for and resistance to these), they continued to hold many of the habits of mind and to engage in the practices that they had learned in their literature classes at school, even if these classes were often perceived retrospectively as a kind of 'breathing space' (*otdushina*) from the suffocating values that were inculcated in the Stalin-era classroom.

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ABBREVIATIONS IN FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lvs – *Literatura v shkole*

Nlo – *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*

OUP – Oxford University Press

CUP – Cambridge University Press

Spb – St Petersburg

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I have used the Library of Congress system with some exceptions (in the main text, some proper names are spelled as they usually appear in English, e.g. Evgeny, Herzen, while the names of foreign writers and others are given in their original form: Victor Hugo not Viktor Giugo, Shakespeare not Shekspir, etc.).

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INTRODUCTION

a. Early Soviet Educational Policies

From the very first, the Bolshevik government assigned to education the crucial ideological task of forming new generations and reforming the old within Communist ideals and ethics.¹⁴ One of the earliest signs of this, even before the issue of the Decree on the United School of Labour, was the ban on religious teaching in schools in January 1918.¹⁵ The revolutionary twenties saw a range of fascinating experiments and implementations of progressive theories.¹⁶ Yet the precise ways in which these ideas were meant to be implemented raised heated debates. In particular, the structure and curricula of secondary education caused disagreements among the newly formed Soviet agencies.¹⁷

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion of the Bolshevik government's efforts to regulate children's daily life, including through education, see Catriona Kelly, 'Shaping the "Future Race": Regulating the Daily Life of Children in Early Soviet Russia', in *Everyday Life in Revolutionary Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*, edited by Eric Naiman and Christina Kiaer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 256-281; Lisa Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades: Revolutionizing Childhood in Soviet Russia, 1917-1932* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001).

¹⁵ 'Dekret o svobode sovesti, tserkovnykh i religioznykh obshchestvakh', 20 January (2 February) 1918, in *Dikrety Sovetskoi vlasti* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1957), vol. 1, pp. 373-374; 'Polozhenie ob edinoi trudovoi shkole Rossiiskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Federativnoi Sovetskoi Respubliki', 30 September (16 October) 1918, in *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR, Obshcheobrazovatel'naia shkola. Sbornik dokumentov, 1917-1973*, edited by A. A. Abakumov, N. P. Kuzin, F. I. Puzyrev, L. F. Litvinov (Moscow: Pedagogika, 1974), pp. 133-137.

¹⁶ Scholars have looked in detail into some of these experiments, see for example N. S. Timasheff, 'The Soviet School Experiment', *Russian Review* 4:2 (1945), 72-87; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934* (Cambridge: CUP, 1979); John Dunstan, *Soviet Education Under Scrutiny* (Glasgow: Jordanhill College, 1987); Larry E. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991); Idem, *Stalin's School: Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), pp. 7-12; William Partlett, 'Schools as Laboratories of Revolutionary Humanism: Russian Revolutions and S.T. Shatskii's Rural Schools, 1905-1932' (unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2006). Key Russian studies include Evgenii Balashov's analysis of the Soviet school's attempts at political modification of children's minds in his *Shkola v Rossiiskom obshchestve 1917-1927 gg. Stanovlenie "novogo cheloveka"* (Spb: Bulanin, 2003) and E. A. Ialozina, *Pervaia sovetskaia reforma shkoly 1917-1931 gg.: Problemy, resheniia, opyt* (Rostov-on-Don: Izdatel'stvo rostovskogo universiteta, 2006).

¹⁷ On debates over secondary education between different administrative bodies see James C. McClelland, 'The Utopian and the Heroic: Divergent Paths to the Communist Educational Ideal', in *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, edited by Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 114-130 (p. 115).

Among those who took an active role in promoting new progressive models were Anatolii Vasil'evich Lunacharskii (head of the Narkompros, the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment, 1917-1929),¹⁸ Lenin's wife Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaja (Deputy Commissar, 1929-1939), as well as V. N. Shul'gin and S. T. Shatskii.¹⁹ Civil-war contingencies and resistance to the Narkompros' main focus on polytechnic principle brought new educational organisations into being – such as Glavprofobr (the main agency administering professional education) and Glavsotsvos (the main agency responsible for overseeing 'socialist upbringing').²⁰ Lenin's involvement in these battles over educational programmes was never direct, yet his opinion mattered a great deal, and bore enough weight to get O. Iu. Shmidt, the head of Glavprofobr, fired in 1921.²¹ The controls over all social institutions by Party top bureaucrats and administrators were to grow in time.²² Eight years later, under the new head of Narkompros, Andrei Sergeevich Bubnov, another set of experimental methods was introduced.²³ The effects of radical change did not last for long, however. The

¹⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick addressed Lunacharskii's role in her *The Commissariat of the Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917-1921* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970); also see her *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

¹⁹ On Shatskii see Partlett, 'Schools as Laboratories of Revolutionary Humanism'.

²⁰ On Glavprofobr see Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society between Revolutions, 1918-1929* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p. 58. On Glavsotsvos see Randall D. Law, 'Progressive Educators and the Professionalization of Educational Research in the USSR, 1917-1927', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 47 (2013), 200-220 (p. 211). On Glavsotsvos also see 'Kommentarii k "Literatura i marksizm"', in A. V. Lunacharskii, *O vospitanii i obrazovanii*, edited by E. D. Dneprov, K. S. Erinova, F. S. Ozerskaia, A. M. Arsen'ev, et al. (Moscow: Pedagogika, 1976), pp. 468-483 (p. 605).

²¹ Shmidt's offence had been to take his arguments against Krupskaja's ideas beyond the party educational conference held in early 1921, and on to the pages of *Pravda*. Shmidt was against polytechnic education, called it utopian, and thought that 'not studies but economics [would] bring the new man' to life. A compromise was reached and *Sovnarkom* issued yet another decree on reorganisation in February 1921. McClelland, 'The Utopian and the Heroic: Divergent Paths to the Communist Educational Ideal', in *Bolshevik Culture*, edited by Gleason, Kenez, Stites, p. 123.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²³ Larry E. Holmes summarises the experiments of the 1920s and dwells in detail on the turn towards Stalinism in his 'School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953', in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects*, edited by Ben Eklof, Vera Kaplan (London: F. Cass, 2005), pp. 56-101.

decrees of the CC of 5 September 1931 and 25 August 1932 put an end to the experimental zeal.²⁴ By the time Stalin's daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva was old enough to go to school in 1933, the Soviet educational system was at the start of a major programme of reforms.²⁵

Despite the ruthless conflicts around educational policies,²⁶ the Soviet jubilee volume of 1967, *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR*, made claims for a single trajectory from Lenin's directives and decrees signed by him to the consistent efforts in the same direction of the twenties and thirties; it ended by celebrating the achievements of the educational system fifty years after the October revolution.²⁷ This Soviet publication offers a chronology that carries vital omissions when collated with the events mentioned and discussed in scholarly literature in English.²⁸ Unlike Soviet commentators, who passed discreetly over changes of leaders and their impact, most Western scholars set the development

²⁴ Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) 'O nachal'noi i srednei shkole', 25 August 1931 (5 September 1931 – publication date) and Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) 'Ob uchebnykh programmakh i rezhime v nachal'noi i sredei shkole, 25 August 1932', in *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR, Obshcheobrazovatel'naia shkola*, edited by Abakumov et al., pp. 156-161, 161-164.

²⁵ 'Svetlana Alliluyeva' (1926-2011), *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online Edition* <<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Svetlana-Alliluyeva>> [accessed 7 September 2015].

²⁶ Larry E. Holmes reconstructs in detail the drama in which the Culture and Propaganda Department (Kul'tprop), closely connected with Central Committee and Politburo, brutally overtakes Narkompros, annulling its resolutions, criticising and chastising its head officials for by-passing Kul'tprop, and eventually, getting rid of its key personalities. Holmes, 'School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953', in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia*, edited by Eklof, Kaplan, pp. 59-60.

²⁷ Mikhail A. Prokof'ev, *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR: 1917-1967* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1967).

²⁸ One early Western observer, Beatrice King, was also able to perceive a clear line and commitment to 'the attainment of Bolshevik aims' as late as 1938 in Beatrice King, 'Soviet Education: Its Phases and Purpose', *Slavonic and East European Review* 17:49 (1938), 135-150 (p. 135). She remained convinced in this unity of purpose after her trip to Russia in 1936, when she was able to witness first-hand some of the educational reforms of the mid-1930s that had put a stop to the 'jumble of experiments' and comment on them. See Beatrice King, *Changing Man: The Education System of the U.S.S.R.* (London: V. Gollancz, 1936). This interpretation by a contemporary raises the interesting question of whether, seen from the inside, Soviet education actually retained any of the experimental or innovative charge, in the late 1930s, characteristic of its first few years. As a reformer committed to 'progressive education' in the British context, King was not a detached witness.

of Soviet educational system in a wider socio-political context,²⁹ and the changes they describe reflect the minute shifts in Soviet policies on a larger scale.³⁰ More recent work in Russian has also emphasised the importance of changing educational models at different periods, and the complexity of educational policy over the years.³¹ Thus, the consensus in recent scholarly work is that wide-ranging shifts in educational policy certainly did occur at the start of the 1930s.

On the surface, the reforms could be roughly summarised as a return to the pre-revolutionary model, steeped in Western European educational traditions. Such scholars as Nicholas Timasheff, Robert Tucker, Moshe Lewin, and others see these reforms as a part of a larger trend in the Soviet leaders' policies of the mid-1930s, known as 'the Great Retreat,' in Timasheff's felicitous phrase.³²

²⁹ Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse*; John Dunstan, *Soviet Schooling in the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); Holmes, *Stalin's School*; E. Thomas Ewing, *The Teachers of Stalinism: Policy, Practice, and Power in Soviet Schools of the 1930s* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); on drastic changes in official attitudes and a new emphasis on students' discipline and academic achievements see Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 93-96.

³⁰ For discussion and references of key works see Andy Byford and Polly Jones, 'Policies and Practices of Transition in Soviet Education from the Revolution to the End of Stalinism', *History of Education* 35 (2006), 419-426 (p. 421).

³¹ M. V. Boguslavskii, *Razvitie obshchego srednego obrazovaniia: problemy i resheniia. Iz istorii otechestvennoi pedagogiki 20-kh godov XX veka* (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia obrazovaniia, 1994); *Lektsii po istorii otechestvennoi pedagogiki*, edited by F. A. Fradkin, M. G. Plokhova, and E. G. Osovskii (Moscow: Sfera, 1995); Evgenii Balashov, *Shkola v rossiiskom obshchestve 1917-1927 gg. Stanovlenie "novogo cheloveka"* (Spb: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003); E. A. Ialozina, *Pervaia sovetskaia reforma shkoly 1917-1931 gg.: Problemy, resheniia, opyt* (Rostov-on-Don: Izdatel'stvo rostovskogo universiteta, 2006); *Sovetskaia sotsial'naia politika 1920-1930 godov: ideologiya i povsednevnost'*, edited by P.V. Romanov, E. P. Iarskaia-Smirnova (Moscow: Variant, 2007); *Uchebnyi tekst v sovetskoii shkole: sbornik statei*, edited by S. G. Leont'eva, K. A. Maslinskii (Spb: Institut logiki, kognitologii i razvitiia lichnosti, 2008); O. Iu. Bogdanova, S. A. Leonov, V. F. Chertov, *Teoriia i metodika obucheniia literature*, 5th edn (Moscow: Akademiia, 2008); *Antropologiya sovetskoii shkoly. Kul'turnye universalii i provintsial'nye praktiki*, edited by S. G. Leont'eva, K. A. Maslinskii, M. V. Romashova (Perm': Permskii gos universitet, 2010); Evgenii Balashov, *Pedologiya v Rossii v pervoi treti XX veka* (Spb: Nestor-Istoriia, 2012); *Ostrova utopii: Pedagogicheskoe i sotsial'noe proektirovanie poslevoennoi shkoly (1940-1980-e)*, edited by I. V. Kukulin, M. L. Maiofis, P. A. Safronov (Moscow: Nlo, 2015).

³² Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: the Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York: Dutton, 1946). While Timasheff, writing in 1945, names the years 1923 and 1933 as the beginning and the end of experimental education, Larry E. Holmes chooses the summer of 1931 as the starting year of the reforms in his more recent article 'School and Schooling under Stalin,

Timasheff's thesis (and Lev Trotskii's, in *The Revolution Betrayed*)³³ was widely discussed and generally accepted. However, it has been recently subject to challenge. For example, David Brandenberger effectively contends that no tangible evidence of *intentional* ideological revisionism has been found in opened archives. He promotes a different view of the reasons behind Stalinist reforms – as dependent upon the historical contingencies of the legitimisation of the state and the mobilisation of the population.³⁴

Whether interpreting these as an intentional return to pre-revolutionary structures or a move driven by pragmatics and contingencies, scholars generally agree that the propaganda methods employed during the period this thesis addresses were comprehensive.³⁵ In this vein, the analysts who conducted the Harvard Interview Project, in which several hundred interviews with former Soviet citizens were collected and studied in 1950-1960, concluded that the Stalinist propaganda machine was in many ways effective.³⁶ While the Harvard Interview Project's ruminations on Soviet psychology are notably crude³⁷ and

1931-1953', in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia*, edited by Eklof, Kaplan. Also see Holmes, *Stalin's School*, p. 10.

³³ Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004).

³⁴ David Brandenberger, 'Nationalist, Heretic or Populist?', *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 38:5 (2010), 757-760 (p. 758).

³⁵ Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985).

³⁶ The Harvard Refugee Interview Project or The Harvard Project for the Soviet Social System, developed by Alex Inkeles and Raymond Bauer in the 1950s. For the description of the project see Alex Inkeles, Raymond A. Bauer, *The Soviet Citizen: Daily Life in a Totalitarian Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959). The project's digitized materials are available online < <http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/index.html> > [accessed 25 July 2015]. Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: OUP, 2000) is an example of a work that made an effective use of the Harvard Interview Project.

³⁷ Consider, for example, one of the studies that relied on the theory of authoritarian personality and designed the 'projective questions' prior to interviewing subject: Helen Beier, Eugenia Hanfmann, 'Emotional Attitudes of Former Soviet Citizens, as Studied by the Technique of Projective Questions', *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 53:2 (1956), 143-153 (p.

also ignore mediation, these sources do point to the widespread satisfaction with education during the Stalinist era itself.³⁸

One social institution that played an important role in the mass mobilisation and was especially useful in the socialisation of children – the future citizens and soldiers – was the Soviet school. Historians acknowledge that the school system was designed to instil political commitment in its pupils.³⁹

By 1935, children with a non-proletarian background, who had not been admitted to academic secondary schools previously, were able to join the compulsory education system. This was, by design, now open and available for all, at least until the fees were introduced in 1940. The law of 1934 that allowed such children to be exposed to a Soviet-regimented curriculum was indicative of the state's growing confidence in the system's power to mould minds accordingly.⁴⁰ This confidence extended to include some pre-revolutionary content. The new reformed Soviet school was to continue to promote Bolshevik

143). On the HPSSS respondent pool's partial reflection of Soviet society in the early postwar period and other methodological limitations see David Brandenberger, 'A Background guide to Working with the HPSSS Online' < http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/working_with_hpsss.pdf > [accessed 19 August 2015].

³⁸ Inkeles and Bauer, *The Soviet Citizen: Daily Life in a Totalitarian Society*, pp. 34-39.

³⁹ John Dunstan, *Soviet Schooling in the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, University of Birmingham, 1997); Larry E. Holmes 'Part Of History: The Oral Record and Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937', *Slavic Review* 56:2 (1997), 279-306 (pp. 298-299); Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 225-227; David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), especially chapter 4 'Ideology in the Prewar Classroom.' Olga Kucherenko in her *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941-1945* (Oxford, New York: OUP, 2011) reconstructs the ideological upbringing efforts, including in school curricula, prior to WWII in the first part of her book (pp. 27-112), see especially pp. 40-46 on school activities and heroic pathos. For an early study of the effective indoctrination attempts of Soviet educational institution see Thomas Woody, *New Minds: New Men? The Emergence of the Soviet Citizen* (New York: Macmillan, 1932).

⁴⁰ Holmes, however, sees this trend as a kind of continuity from the 1920 in his 'School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953', in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia*, edited by Eklof, Holmes, Kaplan, p. 90.

ideology, but now with one concession – instead of rejecting the pre-revolutionary past, the Party now aimed to recycle it through presenting it into a new light.⁴¹

b. Changing Attitudes to the Russian Classics

Stalin's epoch changed the revolutionary attitude to pre-revolutionary Russian literature that had characterised the 1920s both in the classroom and beyond, as was evident, for example, in the publishing output of the day.⁴² In the early 1960s, Maurice Friedberg assessed the Soviet change of attitudes towards the literary heritage, from the nationalisation of literature in 1918 to the capitalisation on Russian classics in the 1930s, as reflected in publishing. He reached astute conclusions relevant to secondary schools' literary instruction at the time.⁴³ Publishing enjoyed relative freedom in the 1920s, and mass publication of classics was also used to advance literacy during the *likbez* campaign.

Alongside this, Friedberg pointed to attitude changes in this field, as in education, during the mid-1930s. On the one hand, the earlier selective tendency was further developed, with the content of some works being approved of as progressive while simultaneously the authors who had produced it might more broadly be condemned as not so progressive, for example Gogol' and

⁴¹ In addition, some pre-revolutionary structures were introduced. Thus, Ann Livschiz argues that the reforms planned in the mid-thirties were to make the Soviet school 'pre-revolutionary in form, Soviet in content.' Ann Livschiz, 'Pre-revolutionary in Form, Soviet in Content?: Wartime Educational Reforms and the Postwar Quest for Normality', *History of Education* 35:4 (2006), 541-560.

⁴² See chapter 5 'Literature and the Arts' in Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture From Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁴³ Maurice Friedberg, *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1962).

Dostoevskii.⁴⁴ On the other hand, literary critics of the 1930s attempted to rehabilitate Russian pre-revolutionary authors as forerunners of Soviet thought, selectively using their most tendentious quotations as evidence. Overall, Friedberg identified three main techniques applied to classic Russian literature that was called to service in the construction of the new man: a careful selection of works, heavily edited editions, and a narrow ideological interpretive framework, provided in prefaces. Friedberg, calling these techniques 'hagiographic', compared them to the exegetical practices of Jewish Talmudic interpreters, and he also identified the main sources: Belinskii, Chernyshevskii, Dobroliubov, Lenin – the 'founding fathers of Soviet literary criticism' who were never to be disputed or omitted.⁴⁵ Thus the ideas of the Russian Enlightenment were drawn upon through these authors' critical theory and successfully applied to Russian classical works. The same techniques were used also in creating a survey of literary movements of the 19th century through the prism of these critics' idea of literature's service in social development. Instead of the former rejection of the pre-revolutionary heritage, some of its literary works were being salvaged and used as the foundation of a new canon with didactic significance. This process was also reflected in the centralised literary curriculum and the official approach to teaching classic Russian literature in the Soviet schools of the 1930s (as I will discuss later in this thesis).

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 113, pp. 195-198.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 114-117.

First-hand research confirms that the authors of official textbooks did indeed adopt techniques similar to those identified by Friedberg.⁴⁶ The textbooks had to be approved by Narkompros and re-edited under its supervision. Although literary texts selected for the upper years of the history of literature course were supposed to be read in full (in Soviet editions for schoolchildren), most likely the level of students' reliance on textbooks was high.⁴⁷ It was possible to graduate without cover-to-cover reading of all works prescribed by the school programme, either by using notes (*konspekty*) or simply by reading the textbook. However, as my interviews with former students make clear, the canonical texts were indeed read in full by most pupils in metropolitan schools.⁴⁸

Schoolchildren also read outside the assigned material.⁴⁹ The lists of *vneklassnoe chtenie* (extracurricular reading) were given in the programme.⁵⁰ The lists

⁴⁶ Russian scholar Evgenii Ponomarev produced a series of articles devoted to Soviet textbooks of literature, Evgenii Ponomarev 'Chemu uchit uchebnik?', *Neva* 2 (2010) < <http://magazines.russ.ru/neva/2010/2/po17.html> > [accessed between 1 and 15 September 2011].

⁴⁷ On teachers's dependence on textbooks in Stalin's period see Catriona Kelly, "'Shkol'nyi val's': povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskoi shkoly v poslestalinskoe vremia', *Antropologicheskii forum* 1 (2004), 104-155 (p. 133, footnote 1); Larry E. Holmes' respondents from an elite school No. 25 remembered their literature instructor encouraging them to go to the Lenin library to read assigned texts in full. Larry E. Holmes 'Part Of History: The Oral Record and Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937', *Slavic Review* 56:2 (1997), 279-306 (p. 290).

⁴⁸ As attested by respondents (although belonging to a later period), the interviews with Olga Ivashenko (1934), 21 January 2013, Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan; with Lydiia Kandourova (1938), 13 February 2013, Rostov-On-Don, Russia; with Liudmila Paraponova (1936), 10 January 2013, Tatsinskii, Russia.

⁴⁹ Children were supposed to keep track of their extracurricular readings, as attested by one of Larry E. Holmes' respondents, 'Part of History: The Oral Record and Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937', p. 293. Cf. Catriona Kelly, "'Thank You for the Wonderful Book": Soviet Child Readers and the Management of Children's Reading, 1950-75', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6:4 (2005), 717-753 (p. 718, footnote 2).

⁵⁰ *Programmy srednei shkoly. Russkii iazyk. Literatura* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1937), pp. 33-34; 'Spisok proizvedenii, rekomenduemykh dlia vneklassnogo chteniia uchashchikhsia VIII-X klassov', in *Programmy po literature, Literatura VIII-X klassy* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1939), pp. 63-67.

included works by both Russian classical authors and foreign authors.⁵¹ The latter, in translation, were available to children in pre-war Soviet Union.⁵² In 1934 a new 'School Series of Classics' came into existence to serve the needs of the programme in literature. The series made books assigned by the programmes available for schoolchildren in full, including books for *vneklassnoe chtenie*. An overview of the published material was scrutinised in *Literatura v shkole*.⁵³

An edition of the 'School Series of Classics' included an introductory article and commentaries to help young readers understand works and facts far removed from their own time or home. But these commentaries also served as an ideological tool, placing the work into a political context. Where appropriate, the role of the political leaders in appreciating a classic was also emphasized. For example, a 1935 edition of Saltykov-Shchedrin's 'Gospoda Golovlevy' was criticised on account of its introduction article omitting an important fact: the introduction's author highlighted that Lenin often used expressions and images from Shchedrin's work, forgetting to mention that Stalin also cited him

⁵¹ See a list of suggested works for extracurricular reading in years 8-10 in *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1937, pp. 33-34. (To avoid confusion, further short references for programmes will have this format, in which the year of publication is given without parenthesis.) Foreign classics included Victor Hugo's *Ninety-Three*, Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, *Ibid.*, p. 31. Works by Molière, Balzac, Shakespeare were suggested in *Programmy srednei shkoly, Russki iazyk i literatura, 5-7 klassy, ob'iasnitel'naia zapiska, 8-10 klassy, programmy* (Leningrad: Izdanie PULVO, 1936), pp. 19-20, 24, 31.

⁵² See examples of schoolchildren's letters (1936-1937) to the journal of translated literature in Nailya Safiullina, 'Window to the West: From the Collection of Reader's Letters to the Journal *Internatsional'naia literatura*', *Slavonica* 15:2 (2009), 128-161 (p. 146 and pp. 147, 156-157). In their letters children discuss the foreign works they appreciated or wished to see in the future issues of the journal. Also on a publisher of translated literature up to 1934 see Mariia Malikova, 'Izdanie perevodnoi belletristiki v Sovetskoi Rossii 1920-kh godov po materialam vnutrennikh izdatel'skikh retsenzii', *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 32 (2012), 23-54.

⁵³ For example, the 1935 publications were assessed in S. A. Andreev, S. M. Petrov, "'Shkol'naia seriia klassikov" v 1935 g.', *Lvs* 3 (1936), 80-84.

extensively.⁵⁴ Foreign works published by the series were assessed on the quality of translation.⁵⁵

Sometimes both *vneklassnoe chtenie* and assigned works featured in *chitatel'skie dnevniki* – special commonplace books (*chitatel'skie dnevniki*) that contained favourite citations from the books children read.⁵⁶ The habit of collecting favourite citations from books often stayed with students and was practised even at the war front.⁵⁷ These diaries demonstrate the return of the Russian classics and foreign works of literature into the Soviet readers' universe.

The government involvement in schools' humanities programmes was justified with reference to the thesis of cultural revolution: in order for the new communist generation to achieve the highest levels of progress, they first had to be enabled to absorb the best of their cultural heritage.⁵⁸ Apart from this official aspiration, however, literature comprised a perfect ground for ideological indoctrination, which could have been a reason for increasing the amount of hours assigned to its study.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 81.

⁵⁵ For example, a translation of Hugo's *Les Misérables* was criticised by S. A. Andreev, S. M. Petrov, Ibid., p. 83.

⁵⁶ Commonplace books were a widespread phenomenon since the second half of 19th century. For further discussion see Aleksandr Shaposhnikov, 'Chitatel'skie dnevniki: vozmozhnosti ispol'zovaniia', in *Shkol'nomu bibliotekariu o semeinom chtenii* (Moscow: Russkaia shkol'naia bibliotechnaia assotsiatsiia, 2007), pp. 90-94. For an example of instructions on how to keep such a diary see I. V. Vladislavlev, *Kak vesti zapis' o pročitannykh knigakh (Dlia shkoly i samoobrazovaniia)* (Moscow, Spb: Kniga, 1918).

⁵⁷ "Mnogo pisat' mne meshali boi...": *frontovye zapisi 1941-1945 godov*, edited by A. Minaeva, O. Nikolaev (Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo, 2005), p. 7.

⁵⁸ George Z. F. Bereday, 'Class Tensions in Soviet Education', in *The Politics of Soviet Education* edited by Bereday (New York: Praeger, 1960), pp. 57-88 (p. 66).

⁵⁹ As Larry Holmes remarks, humanities are 'most prone to politicization' and the increase of hours allocated to Russian language and literature teaching in the new fixed programmes was expected to guarantee the sought after political commitment: '[f]rom the early 1930s to the mid-1950s, the hours devoted to Russian language and literature comprised about 30 per cent of the

It followed that Soviet teachers of Russian Literature, or of any other subject for that matter, were supposed to be employees of the state in its creation of a new Soviet generation, untainted by pre-revolutionary bourgeois mentality.⁶⁰ Russian pre-revolutionary literature was employed to address any possible nostalgia for pre-Soviet times, which could be passed on to children by older relatives. There was a preference for texts that portrayed life before 1917 as extremely harsh.⁶¹ Students of newly reformed schools were also to read about current Soviet achievements in industry and culture to make sure that contrast between the pre-revolutionary misery and current progress was engraved onto their minds.⁶²

However, the most conspicuous change in methods of teaching literature in secondary schools concerned the affective upbringing of the 1930s of Soviet generation. Although, as John Dunstan has correctly observed, 'affective' and 'cognitive' elements are difficult to separate in the school curriculum, programmes of literature and other normative material for teaching literature reveal a unique emphasis on the education of children's emotions and the

total curriculum. From its introduction in the mid-1930s, history alone held pride of place at 10 per cent of the total.' Larry Holmes, 'School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953', in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia*, edited by Eklof, Holmes, Kaplan, p. 62.

⁶⁰ For the discussion of policy changes under Stalin in terms of how these affected teachers see E. Thomas Ewing, 'Restoring Teachers to Their Right: Soviet Education and the 1936 Denunciation of Pedology', *History of Education Quarterly* 41:4 (2001), 471-493 (p. 473); Idem, 'Stalinism at Work: Teacher Certification (1936-1939) and Soviet Power', *Russian Review* 57 (1998), 218-235.

⁶¹ Larry E. Holmes quoting extensively from documents held in Krupskaja Collection in the Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History, former Tsentral'nyi partiinyi arkhiv instituta marksizma-leninizma (now Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii RGASPI), demonstrates how the study of Russian classic literature was assigned with a particular task and 'the subject became a major vehicle for condemning the pre-revolutionary old and praising the post-revolutionary new.' Larry E. Holmes, 'Legitimizing the Soviet Regime: School No. 25, 1931-1937', in *School and Society in Tsarist and Soviet Russia*, edited by Ben Eklof (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 176-203 (p. 183).

⁶² Holmes mentions that children had to learn about steel production in Russian language lessons. Holmes, 'Legitimizing the Soviet Regime', in *School and Society in Tsarist and Soviet Russia*, edited by Eklof, p. 184.

instigation of heightened emotionality in them through literature's so-called 'natural' appeal to sentiments.⁶³ Some scholars have noticed this trend; in delineating the conflict between a free expression of emotion and self-possession in Russia, Catriona Kelly highlights the Soviet classroom as a space in which a strong emotional response to works of literature, nature, and patriotism was encouraged.⁶⁴ This corresponded with the more general cultural atmosphere of the 1930s, one that permeated the children's world and was uncritically absorbed by them.

c. Eisenstein's 'Formula of Ecstasy'

While not every culture distinguishes between emotion and thought,⁶⁵ in the West such a dichotomy is perceived as universal and has been sanctified since medieval times, often with the preference for reason over unruly emotions. In Russia this perception can be traced back to the Enlightenment.⁶⁶

⁶³ John Dunstan, 'Curriculum Change and the Soviet School', *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 9 (1977), 111-123 (p. 111).

⁶⁴ Catriona Kelly, 'Pravo na emotsii, pravil'nye emotsii: upravlenie chuvstvami v Rossii posle epokhi Prosveshcheniia', in *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv. Podkhody k kul'turnoi istorii emotsii*, edited by Ian Plamper [Jan Plamper], Mark Eli [Marc Elie], Shamma Shakhadat [Schamma Schahadat] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010), pp. 51-77 (p. 72). On Soviet and especially Stalinist period see pp. 68-77.

⁶⁵ In Buddhist thought, for example, there are no separate words for 'thought' and 'emotion', Daniel Goleman, *Destructive Emotions: And How We Can Overcome Them: a Dialogue With the Dali Lama* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), p. 159. Interestingly, modern science discovers that the brain activity for emotion coincides with the area activated with complex reasoning, *Ibid.*, p. 183. Other scholars have remarked on the difficulty of separating the ethical content of upbringing efforts from an affective one: *Interpreting Emotions in Russia and Eastern Europe*, edited by Mark D. Steinberg, Valeria Sobol (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), p. 11. Also see William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feelings: a Framework For the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), p. 31, for cognitive psychology on the difficulty of sustaining distinction between thought and emotion, and pp. 34-62, for the discussion of the anthropological approach and examples of how private feelings could be shaped by social practices.

⁶⁶ See Catriona Kelly, 'Pravo na emotsii, pravil'nye emotsii: upravlenie chuvstvami v Rossii posle epokhi Prosveshcheniia', in *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv. Podkhody k kul'turnoi istorii emotsii*, edited by Plamper, Elie, Schahadat, pp. 51-77.

The system by which human subjects appraise values and perceptions is to a degree culturally predetermined: the measures needed for the process of appraisal can be taught in childhood and adolescence.⁶⁷ Hence emotional and aesthetic responses cannot but be contingent upon the cultural contexts a person grew up in. Language often accommodates this overlap of the emotional, aesthetic, and ethic components of meaning. Consider for example the term 'nekrasivo', applied to a certain unbecoming behaviour (the English 'fair' seems to have lost its aesthetic connotation to the ethical one) or another dichotomy, one of purely aesthetic appreciation vs. *ideinoe* 'pleasure' assessment, as identified by Elena Bonner, when she remembers or possibility reconstructs her childhood feelings about the Red Square: 'Площадь эта мне очень нравилась, но это было не эстетическое наслаждение, как в Ленинграде, а идейное' (my italics).⁶⁸ A sum total of such 'ideological' pleasures, indignations, and other emotional responses converge into a particular worldview, *mirovozrenie*, which is essentially a partial apprehension of reality.

Apart from the emotional responses to phenomena that were supposed to comprise a Soviet worldview, emotional expression itself was connected with the issues of national security. Such high-positioned figures as Stalin could afford a poised calm attitude, as he would be beyond the suspicion of indifference to the Party's course of which others might have been accused. Indifference was out of

⁶⁷ Neurocognitive studies claim that on the physiological level of brain basic emotions are experienced universally, but the context in which they arise and the intensity and significance which people attach to something that in another culture would be considered fleeting and insignificant (exaggeration, brooding, dwelling on it), in other words, emotion's duration, intensity and expression vary across cultures. Goleman, *Destructive Emotions*, p. 159.

⁶⁸ Elena Bonner, *Dochki-Materi* (New York, NY: Chekhov Publishing, 1991), p. 118.

place but also considered dangerous as it could mask a more hostile attitude.⁶⁹ Therefore, the appropriate expression of loyalty to the state was gaiety (*vesel'e*), propagated, for example, by the overwhelming quantity of popular marches of the 1930s.⁷⁰ One of them positions a song itself as a necessary companion which helps the *komsomol'skoe plemia* in their struggle and 'conquests of space and time':

Легко на сердце от песни веселой,
Она скучать не дает никогда.
И любят песню деревни и села,
И любят песню большие города.⁷¹

It is possible to see a development of this call for *vesel'e*, masked as an already ubiquitous practice, in cities and villages alike: joyful marches evolved from a number of specific professional ones towards a more general march of '*veselye rebyata*'- *komsomol'tsy* and finally towards the abstract and all-inclusive *March of Enthusiasts* (1940).⁷² To be a modern young person in the late 1930s was to look, and therefore feel, cheerful and optimistic.

⁶⁹ Catriona Kelly finds that with the rejection of pedagogy in 1936 a new pedagogical emphasis on discipline that expected of children self-control began (Kelly, 'Pravo na emotsii, pravil'nye emotsii', *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv*, pp. 68-69). This ideal of self-control (taken from a life of war heroes) belongs to a particular context, one of facing an enemy, a model including both disciplined behaviour in appropriate context (in the school, before the bell that marks the end of a 45-min lesson rings and after it) and emotional expressivity (in voice, words, gesture) is not contradictory in principle, and as Kelly later concedes, in practice, the system of expressing feelings had a more complicated character. Kelly, 'Pravo na emotsii, pravil'nye emotsii: upravlenie chuvstvami v Rossii posle epokhi Prosveshcheniia', in *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv*, edited by Plamper, Elie, Schahadat, p. 70.

⁷⁰ I. O. Dunaevskii, A. A. D'Aktil', 'Marsh entuziastov' (1940); I. O. Dunaevskii, V. I. Lebedev-Kumach, 'Marsh veselykh rebiat' (1934); N. V. Bogoslovskii, E. A. Dolmatovskii, 'Liubimyi gorod' (1939); A. F. Tonin, G. Bykov, 'Boevaia stalinskaia (Komsomol'skaia)' (1938) < <http://www.sovmusic.ru> > [accessed 5 May 2013].

⁷¹ I. O. Dunaevskii, V. I. Lebedev-Kumach, 'Marsh veselykh rebiat' (1934) < <http://www.sovmusic.ru/download.php?fname=vrebyata> > [accessed 5 May 2013].

⁷² I. O. Dunaevskii, A. A. D'Aktil', 'Marsh entuziastov' (1940) < <http://www.sovmusic.ru/download.php?fname=enthusia> > [accessed 5 May 2013].

Modern physiology also tells us that mimicry, an initial display of an emotion, becomes internalised in stimulating (albeit with less intensity) the brain areas which are usually activated when the emotion is genuinely experienced.⁷³ Such scientific discoveries potentially carry significant contributions to our understanding of the working of visual propaganda and advertising which involves human faces and photography. This process of moving from a look to a feeling is clearly represented by the 'living emblems' of GTO - 'Ready for Labour and Defence of the USSR'- a movement for physical culture training which was initiated in 1931.⁷⁴ GTO distributed awards in the shape of different badges, such as in Figure 1, which is a picture of a 2nd-LEVEL badge for sportsmen who achieved the required norms.⁷⁵ The 'Ready for Labour and Defence' (GTO) badge shows a runner, breaking the finish line ribbon, perhaps symbolising the success of Soviet culture thanks to its youth, against the background of a gear and red star, representing 'labour' and 'defence', as designed by a 15-year-old Moscow school boy, with a final version created by a Soviet artist, M. S. Iaguzhinskii.⁷⁶

⁷³ For further discussion of 'emotional contagion' through mimicry see Sigal G. Barsade, Andrew P. Knight, 'Group Affect', *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour* 2 (2015), 21-46 (pp. 23-26).

⁷⁴ On GTO see Alison Rowley, 'Sport in the Service of the State: Images of Physical Culture and Soviet Women, 1917-1941', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 23:8 (2007), 1314-1340 (p. 1317); K. E. Lukichev, 'Istoricheskii opyt vnedreniia mekhanizmov gosudarstvennogo upravleniia v sfere razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i massovogo sporta', in *Materialy IX Vserossiiskogo foruma 'Zdorov'e natsii - osnova protsvetaniia Rossii'* (Moscow: [Avtorskii kollektiv], 2015), pp. 351-362.

⁷⁵ The United All-Union Sports Classification was created in 1935, based on pre-existing norms for different sports. The norms were often amended, for instance, in 1937, 1941, and 1949. 'Edinaia vsesoiuznaia sportivnaia klassifikatsiia', in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu*, edited by G. I. Kukushkin, 3 vols (Moscow: Fizkul'tura i sport, 1961), vol. 1, p. 368.

⁷⁶ Lukichev, 'Istoricheskii opyt vnedreniia mekhanizmov gosudarstvennogo upravleniia v sfere razvitiia fizicheskoi kul'tury i massovogo sporta', p. 359.



Figure 1. A 2nd-level GTO badge.⁷⁷

The 'living emblems' popular in the Stalin years represented such badges at frequent parades and public celebrations.⁷⁸ The participants in the 'living

⁷⁷ "Znaki "Gotov k trudu i oborone SSSR", *Avtorskie kollektsii i nagrudnye znaki* < <http://izhig.ru/nagrudnye-znaki-svs/znaki-gotov-k-trudu-i-oborone-sssr-1939-god.php> > [accessed 24 September 2015].

⁷⁸ For further discussion of Soviet public celebrations see Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades!: Celebration in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000). Petrone argues that such parades were meant to enlighten the masses through emotional appeal and agitate gaiety in the Soviet masses.

emblem' in Figure 2 have the politically correct expression on their faces – one that might characterise, say, an enthusiastic runner of the kind seen on the badge.



Figure 2. A GTO Living Emblem, Physical Culture Parade, 1936.⁷⁹

Yet such fidelity to the *Zeitgeist* representation was not a given, as one can tell from Figure 3, an example of a young GTO sportsman with a serious and concentrated look. All the same, Figure 3 is rather an exceptional photo, taken

⁷⁹ 'GTO', *Togda* < <http://www.togdazine.ru/tag/rro> > [accessed 5 May 1913].

from Max Penson's collection of usually smiley portraits of children and adults from 1930s.



Figure 3. Max Penson, *a GTO Living Emblem*, 1936.⁸⁰

Well propagated in visual arts, film, and music were emotions of joy and exultation.⁸¹ Why were there such efforts to promote these particular emotions?

⁸⁰ Max Penson's photographs are relatively unknown. Applying methods propagated by Rodchenko in 1928, Max Penson produced photo reports on Uzbekistan's sovietisation process in 1930s. A former teacher himself, children are not rare subjects of Penson's reports and thus are of particular interest to me. Max Penson Collection < <http://www.maxpenson.com/gallery> > [accessed 5 May 2013].

The question occupied the film director, Sergei Eisenstein when he taught the theory of pathos in his cinematography courses. As Eisenstein put it '[...] она [the concept of pathetic composition] была настолько подробно обследована, что еще с тридцатых годов включалась мною в курс преподавания режиссерской композиции патетического фильма.'⁸² Later Eisenstein put to pen this theory, based on his own cinematographic experiments and literary examples, in his work *Neravnodushnaia priroda*, the second part of which is devoted entirely to artistic methods of reaching and transmitting exultation and contains curious conclusions on the ideological uses of this process.⁸³

To illustrate his points Eisenstein analyses the 'Milk Separator' scene from his propaganda film 'Old and New' (*General'naia liniia*) 1929.⁸⁴ Eisenstein elucidates the technology of driving a viewer to an exalted state through a series of 'repetitive bursts'⁸⁵ and movement as if 'outside of oneself' 'through increasing intensity of emotional content', by work of Zola and Gogol', his own films, and

⁸¹ For further discussion of the officially licensed emotion of happiness see *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, edited by Marina Balina and Evgeny Dobrenko (London: Anthem Press, 2009).

⁸² Sergei Eisenstein, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia. V shesti tomakh*, edited by S. I. Iutkevich, 6 vols (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964), vol. 3, p. 187. Although Eisenstein does not provide any references for his theory, it might have much to owe in terms of origins to Leo Tolstoi's theory of emotive 'infection', 'zarazheniia', explicated in his treatise 'Chto takoe iskusstvo', see Alina Orlova's 'Emotsii v iazyke russkoi khudozhestvennoi kritiki (1890-1910-e gody)', in *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv*, edited by Plamper, Elie, Schahadat, pp. 187-201.

⁸³ Eisenstein, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia. V shesti tomakh*, edited by S. I. Iutkevich, vol. 3, p. 72.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁸⁵ That Eisenstein's teaching during his lecturing was ecstatic itself could be summoned from an episode which he remembers, when an excited student came up to him to say that the lecture about ecstasy made him think about an innovative weapon, *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188. The student even went on to share the idea with a military agency that dampened his enthusiasm by saying that this idea had already been worked upon. Perhaps, they referred to a self-propelled rocket launcher *Katiusha* used during WWII?

those of Charlie Chaplin. Eisenstein identifies and establishes the universal nature of this generative drive to ecstasy, as it is expressed in and transmitted by art.

What is of particular interest to me, however, is Eisenstein's analysis of the indoctrinative uses of an affective state of exultation.⁸⁶ An 'outside of self' experience appears to Eisenstein to be particularly vulnerable to ideological programming due to its inherent need to be linked with concrete forms – ideas and images:

[...] *это внепредметное, внеобразное, «внесодержательное» психическое «состояние», – конечно, наиболее страстно и настойчиво ищет конкретности, в которую [оно должно] «материально» воплотиться, ищет материала, через который [должно] стать осязаемо реальным.*⁸⁷ (my italics)

Thus, the state of exultation, albeit aroused by external stimuli, is not associated with any form initially, is form-less and image-less, and in need for an attachment to a form, image, icon, or symbol.

What was in essence a neutral physiological state of arousal could be linked to (or rather raided by) a cluster of ideas and images to peculiar enslaving effects. Eisenstein is careful to relate such process of indoctrination encompassing physiological and emotional realms to a religious exploitation of an exalted state of mind, also quoting and referring to Jesuit Ignatius Loyola's exercises, but eventually he does go beyond a safe circumference of his references to mention

⁸⁶ For psychological research on the role of emotional arousal in indoctrination see Robert S. Baron, 'Arousal, Capacity, and Intense Indoctrination', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 4:3 (2000), 238-254.

⁸⁷ Eisenstein, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia. V shesti tomakh*, edited by S. I. Iutkevich, vol. 3, p. 213.

Marxism and utopic social reforms: 'Об этой «технике» можно прочесть и в литературе, и не только художественной, но даже и в марксистской.'⁸⁸ Eisenstein returns to world literature for examples of similar potential for ecstasy.⁸⁹ To him literature, poetry and prose alike, contains within itself the potential to enthuse and inspire. And he feels necessary to add towards the end that he sees this artistic 'formula of ecstasy' most visible in 'the highest form of social reality', such that one of the Soviet classless society.⁹⁰ Perhaps Eisenstein realised that there were other reasons for such visibility of the application of the 'formula of ecstasy' in the USSR: political will to propagate the cult of the leader, patriotism, and collective solidarity.

Konstantin Bogdanov looked into the Russian roots of the Soviet character of the ecstatic feeling, as described by Eisenstein. Bogdanov analyses the Soviet elation, *vostorg*, in its connection with feelings of collective solidarity, the emotional self-esteem of a collective, and patriotic pride.⁹¹ Bogdanov demonstrates how Russian civic rhetorical [*oratorskaia*] culture was formed in XVII-XIX centuries under the influence of the Orthodox homiletic and epidictic traditions, in contrast to the Western one, formed under judiciary and council traditions. He believes that this affected Russian civic rhetoric to the extent of creating a 'consolidating genre'⁹² of political address, in which one expects the audience to agree and share major biases. The consolidating genre differs from the

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 211- 214.

⁸⁹ 'Одинаковым в конечном счете вождением пылают Данте, Пушкин, Симонов или Маяковский.' Ibid., p. 217.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Konstantin Bogdanov, 'Otkrytye serdtsa, zakrytye granitsy: o ritorike vostorga i bespredel'nosti vzaimoponimaniia', *Nlo* 100 (2009), 136-155.

⁹² The term was introduced by Georgii Khazagerov in his *Politicheskaia ritorika* (Moscow: Nikkolo M, 2002).

'democratic' genre which attempts to win over an audience through a rational argument, thus convincing those of initially divergent views. Bogdanov traces the development of *vostorg* (along with competing terms, such as *enthusiasm*) to the late Soviet culture, quoting a Soviet film of the 1960s in which 'happiness' is seen as mutual understanding, and points out that this cultural tradition of self-congratulatory feeling of elation from sharing the same point of view excludes those who might think differently. Communities who overestimate mutual understanding through experiencing *vostorg* and elation at such imaginary unity of thoughts and emotions are thus closed communities, if not antagonistic, to those who differ and cannot take part in the communal elation, Bogdanov concludes.

Stalin's administration, which promoted public celebration and spread printed expressions of the people's contentment with the regime, did not take it for granted that citizens would automatically share the regime's values.⁹³ To facilitate the state of social agreement in such a stratified society as Soviet Union, new citizens had to learn to see eye to eye – a task that the Soviet educational institute took upon itself in the 1930s. Added to this, the happiness of children became an important ideological tenet of the period.⁹⁴ Eisenstein's 'formula of ecstasy' was applied widely in the social institution of moral regulation for children. Quite a few of the enthusiastic songs of the late 1930s encouraged the idea of being happy and singing like children, 'kak deti'. This is due to the widespread idea that happiness comes naturally to children, especially when

⁹³ For further discussion of these values see David Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁹⁴ See Catriona Kelly, 'A Joyful Soviet Childhood: Licensed Happiness for Little Ones', in *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, edited by Balina, Dobrenko, pp. 3-18.

they congregate. This natural excitement was also capitalized by the state in many different ways, for example popularizing politicised games.



Figure 4. Mark Markov-Grinberg, *Ataka*. The 1930s.⁹⁵

Consider Figure 4, representing an ‘attack’ during the pioneer game ‘Zarnitsa’: it does not merely represent the ‘pure’ joy of a good game on a sunny day, but joy which is already framed by a political context, and although these games were not ubiquitous, children’s activities were saturated with ideological content.⁹⁶

Podvizhnye igry were the frequent subject of methodological studies and also a a point of focus for Narkompros who prohibited certain games.⁹⁷ Apart from such

⁹⁵ Dar’ia Gorshkova, ‘Sovetskaia epokha v snimkakh Markova-Grinberga’, *Buro* 24/7, 17 February 2012 < <http://www.buro247.ru/culture/arts/5436.html> > [accessed 3 May 2013].

⁹⁶ For example, a Russian respondent who went to school in the late thirties in Chelyabinsk region does not recall politicized games, but many other details of school activities, lineika, etc. ‘vse kak polozheno’, Oxf/Lev V-04 PF 9 (A,B). Also Oxf/Lev P-05 PF 28 (A,B) SNI. On the ideological permeation of children’s play see Kelly, *Children’s World*, pp. 432-436.

⁹⁷ For example, in the 1930s Sergei Rubinshtein was developing his theory of game that would later become part of his *Osnovy obshchei psikhologii* (Moscow: Uchpedgiz, 1940). In 1936 Narkompros acknowledged that games associated with role-playing required the adoption of ideologically significant positions. By decree No. 714 ‘O detskikh igrakh’ of 9 September 1936

obvious forms of channelling the natural capacity of children to feel excited into the network of political associations and connotations, another vehicle capable of inspiring emotions was called to serve indoctrination goals – literature. It was required of teachers of literature to teach their students to feel deeply and ‘correct’ emotions at that – the task that was even articulated by Stalin himself.⁹⁸

Exacerbated by the excitement natural to this age group deriving from peer interaction in school, the increased pressure of discipline, and dramatic historical events, and sharpened by the pedagogical methods in use in the literary classroom, vehement adolescent emotions acquired a specific political role, as in Eisenstein’s theory of indoctrination through *pathos*.

Narkompros forbade games that it considered harmful: ‘Категорически запретить проводить с детьми а) игры «политизированные», профанирующие и вульгаризирующие политическое образование, например «политбой», «политвикторина», «политудочка», «Друзья и враги народа» «политкегли» и т. п.; [...] в) игры, ставящие отдельные группы играющих или одного участника в положение, враждебное пролетариату: «Красные и белые», «Белый где ты» (из сборн. Палепа), «Под обманом соглашателей», «Бойтесь ли фашистов» (из сборн. Корнилина и Радина), «Рабочие и прогульщики» и т. п.’; Several methodological texts published between 1925 and 1930 were forbidden by this decree. ‘O detskikh igrakh. Prikaz po Narkomprosu No. 714 ot 9 sentiabria 1936 g.’, *V pomoshch’ uchitelii: metodicheskii biulleten’ LOONO 6* (1936), 5-7.

⁹⁸ Much later Stalin would clearly articulate this task of teachers of literature in a passage, which is interesting not only for its message, but also from the point of view of Eisenstein’s rhetorical analysis of driving towards an ecstatic emphasis through bursts of repetitions: ‘Дело учителей-словесников не только помочь молодежи понять глубокое идейное содержание произведений нашей литературы, но и научить их чувствовать, ценить красоту русского слова, богатство, силу, выразительность, энергию и нежность, гибкость и остроумие нашего «великого, свободного и могучего» языка, языка общенародного, созданного «не одним каким-нибудь классом, а всем обществом, всеми классами общества, усилиями сотен поколений.»’ Stalin, *Marksizm i voprosy iazykoznaniiia*, 7 vols (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1950), vol. 1, p. 42.

d. Happy or Angry Youth in the Prewar Soviet Union?

Gábor Rittersporn holds a different view of the state's handling youth's vehement emotions in the 1930s.⁹⁹ In his study that looks at the Soviet everyday life to identify patterns that comprised it and contributed to its demise, he highlights emotions of a different kind: anguish and anger. Rittersporn claims that young people in the 1930s responded to the social pressures of the period – the news of conspiracies, enemy agitation, and terror – with anger and violence. Relying on documentary evidence, he draws attention to the problems of homeless children and juvenile delinquency in the 1930s, the official neglect of or inadequate response to these problems, corporal punishment, the harsh attitude of school, and the general 'trivialization of violence' in the 1930s to the extent that, as Rittersporn asserts, violence became an integral part of young people's internal lives.¹⁰⁰

Considering Rittersporn's claim of a 'trivialization of violence', it is possible to question his view of 'anger' as the key emotive response of Soviet pre-war youth.¹⁰¹ For example, Larry E. Holmes, in his study of a Moscow elite school, argues that both the school's teachers and students, who attended the school in the 1930s, internalised and cherished most Stalinist values, including the necessity of violence, optimism, and the belief in progress.¹⁰² Of course,

⁹⁹ Gábor Rittersporn, *Anguish, Anger, and Folkways in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014). In particular, see chapter 4 'From Revolution to Daily Routine: Endemic Violence, Suspicious Youth, Angry Bolsheviks', pp. 87-111.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-94.

¹⁰¹ On the difficulties of assessing children's satisfaction with their childhoods and also on the extent to which the official slogans of 'happy childhood' permeated adult memories of their youth, see Catriona Kelly, 'Sovetskii soiuz: rai dlia detei?', Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet: seminar 'Kul'tura detsva: normy, tsennosti, praktiki' < <http://childcult.rsuh.ru/article.html?id=58601> > [accessed 16 July 2015].

¹⁰² Holmes, *Stalin's School*, p. 17.

Rittersporn and Holmes address different strata of Soviet youth.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, I follow Holmes in contending that indoctrination and mobilization efforts of the 1930s in Soviet school were effective and relied on the heightened emotions of enthusiasm and national pride. (Rittersporn, despite his emphasis on young people's dissatisfaction, does agree that the majority of young people supported the regime, and the 'outbursts of anger', including 'genuine revolt',¹⁰⁴ were the result of the clash between their fidelity to revolutionary ideals and the system's failure to implement its promises.)¹⁰⁵

Juliane Fürst's study of the post-war official and alternative youth cultures also highlights the contradiction between youthful idealism and the state's policies contributed to the nonconformist social behaviour.¹⁰⁶ Post-war youth, defined by Fürst as 'Stalin's last generation', was different from the previous generation, the one that was old enough to fight in the war, in that it 'mastered doubt and belief simultaneously.'¹⁰⁷ According to her, the post-war generation did not necessarily oppose Soviet culture, but rather searched for their identity outside of the officially sponsored rituals and ideology.

¹⁰³ For an example of anti-soviet 'moods' entering the school space consider a speech by director of Moscow school at a 1937 CC meeting on the work of komsorgs: 'Вот в школе у меня имел место случай антисовесткого разговора, выяснилось, что говорил тот, у кого родня сослана. Только, что вчера узнали, мы сегодня делаем распоряжение, а приходит вожатый из райкома комсомола и говорит: «нас уже там прорабатывают». Там и РОНО заявляет: «опять...Горбунов!» И так директору приходится скрывать кое-какие случаи, чтобы не говорили, невозможно, чтобы каждый сморчок превращался в большое политическое дело. Ребята дома разные разговоры слушают, вместо того, чтобы раз'яснить им тот или иной вопрос, мы сразу его отталкиваем.' *Gorodok v tabakerke: detstvo v Rossii ot Nikolaia II do Borisa El'tsyna (1890-1990)*, edited by Vitalii Bezrogov and Catriona Kelly, 2 vols (Moscow: Nauchnaya kniga, 2008), vol. 1, p. 349.

¹⁰⁴ For further discussion of rebels and dissent see Rittersporn, *Anguish, Anger, and Folkways in Soviet Russia*, chapter 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 87.

¹⁰⁶ Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

My thesis addresses pre-war youth, who attended the upper years of the Soviet school prior to WWII and who were old enough to fight in the war. These veterans, as Fürst asserts, contributed to the generational rift between themselves and young people growing up after the war by their dominating veteran authority.¹⁰⁸ I contend that they derived this authority from the stronghold of their ideological upbringing and that the type of indoctrination the pre-war young people underwent in school instilled an acute generational consciousness, which, as Fürst asserts, the postwar generation lacked. This thesis examines how this generational consciousness was inculcated through literary instruction.

Relatively few works touch upon the affective upbringing of children through the teaching of Russian classical literature and its short- and long-term psychological effects. Existing studies tend to focus on children's literature without taking into account adult literature's influence on children.¹⁰⁹ Also, few scholars attempt to

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 59-62, 315.

¹⁰⁹ For example, on official literature for adults and its impact on the grown-up audience, see Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature*, translated by Jesse M. Savage (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); Idem, *The Making of the State Writer: Social and Aesthetic Origins of Soviet Literary Culture*, translated by Jesse M. Savage (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); on children's literature, Idem, "'The Entire Real World of Children': The School Tale and 'Our Happy Childhood,'" *Slavic and Eastern European Journal* 49:2 (2005), 225-248; Evgeny Steiner, *Stories for Little Comrades: Revolutionary Artists and the Making of Early Soviet Children's Books*, trans. Jane Anne Miller (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); William B. Husband, "'Correcting Nature's Mistakes': Transforming the Environment and Soviet Children's Literature, 1928-1941', *Environmental History* 11:2 (2006), 300-318; John McCannon, 'Technological and Scientific Utopias in Soviet Children's Literature, 1921-1932', *Journal of Popular Culture* 34:4 (2001), 153-169; Marina Balina dealt with children's literature in her *Russian Children's Literature and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2008); Eadem, "'It's Grand to be an Orphan!': Crafting Happy Citizens in Soviet Children's Literature of the 1920s', in *Petrified Utopia*, edited by Dobrenko, Balina, pp. 99-114; also see Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, 'Learning to Be Soviet: Stalinist Schools and Celebrations in the 1930s', *History of Education Quarterly* 42:3 (2002), 403-413; *Konstruiruia detstkie. Filologiya. Istorii. Antropologiya. Kollektivnaia monografiia. Trudy seminara*

draw a connection between the notions taught in school and their expression in adulthood.¹¹⁰

e. Structure of the Thesis

In what follows, I assess the pre-war teaching instruction that partook of emotional stimulation and communist ethical upbringing through Russian classical literature studied in school. I scrutinise both the pedagogy and its reception. The reception chapters address conceptual, emotional, and perceptual habits resulted from this pedagogy, both short-term and in the long run.

Chapter 1 examines educational programmes for literature in terms of content and the chronological development of the role assigned to Russian classics from the early 1920s to the consolidation of the course in 1936-1937. I highlight a mimetic function assigned to the Russian classics in the methodological attempts to teach children to relate the literary phenomena to real life. I also focus on the instigation of emotions and the employment of images (*obrazy*) in children's moral upbringing. I stress the inclusion of the radical democrats' critical theory

"Kul'tura detstva: normy, tsennosti, praktiki", edited by M. R. Balina, V. G. Bezrogov, S. G. Maslinskaia, K. A. Maslinskoi, M.V. Tendriakova (Spb: Azmut, Nestor-Istoriia, 2011); Svetlana Maslinskaia (Leont'eva), "Pionerskaia" belletristika vs "bol'shaia" detskaia literatura', in *"Ubit' Charskuiu...": paradoksy sovetskoi literatury dlia detei (1920-1930)*, edited by M. P. Balina, V. Iu. V'iugin (Spb: Aleteiia, 2012), pp. 231-245; Eadem, 'Nuzhen li detskii pisatel'? (K istorii stanovleniia sovetskoi detskoi literatury), *Detskie chteniia* 6:2 (2014), 381-398; Catriona Kelly, 'A Joyful Soviet Childhood: Licensed Happiness for Little Ones', in *Petrified Utopia*, edited by Balina, Dobrenko, pp. 3-18; on friendship cult in propagated by children's literature see Eadem, "'V nashem velikom Sovetskom Soiuze tovarishch - sviashchennoe slovo". Emotsional'nye otnosheniia mezhdur det'mi v sovetskoi kul'ture', *Detskie chteniia* 3:1 (2013), 38-73; See also *Detskie chteniia* 6:2 (2014) – an issue edited by Marina Balina under the title 'Children's Literature as a Territory of Conflict: Texts, People, Institutions'.

¹¹⁰ Exceptions include Catriona Kelly, who, for example, points out that one of the results of the Soviet propaganda for children was adults' difficulty in adapting to the post-Soviet period: "'Malen'kie grazhdane bol'shoi strany": internatsionalizm, deti i sovetskaia propaganda', *Nlo* 60 (2003), 218-251 (p. 251).

and the application of their ideas, including that of literature's service in social development, to Russian classics in the curricula.

Chapter 2 focuses in more detail on the methodology used in this pedagogy, such as the use of illustration and visual aids. Extricating *obrazy* of literary characters from literary works and subsequently analysing them as types (representatives of social milieu) aimed to structure children's imagination of the socio-historical and literary process. These types from literary works, both classical and Soviet, were studied chronologically to illustrate the socio-historical development of Russia. Political figures were conspicuously included in this study.

Thus the first two chapters examine the history of literature course's content and methodology. Chapter 3 addresses contemporary criticism of the methodology in terms of its implementation in practice and its potential harmful effects, as observed and described by two prominent figures, Kornei Chukovskii and Grigorii Gukovskii.

The effects of this type of education were immediately palpable during WWII and throughout students' life-time. In chapter 4 I address the short-term impact on children at the time, as reconstructed from diaries, paying close attention to diarists' thinking, their attitudes to love and friendship and sensitivity to peer pressure. I highlight the role literature plays in their choices and alignment of personal goals with those of the collective, as well as how the tension between their individualist drives and the growing sense of social duty affected their

writing aspirations and style (e.g. the purpose of the diary writing and the use of political clichés or metaphors).

The evolution of the impact of the literary instruction in time, as can be reconstructed from life writing, memoirs, and interviews, is analysed in chapters 5 and 6. David Samoilov's views on the intelligentsia and assessment of its role for the preservation of the 19th-century moral notions are at the centre of chapter 5. Here I also highlight literature's role in his personal relations, emotional reactions to social situations, historical thinking, and other analytical habits throughout his life-time. I confirm these findings in chapter 6 by looking at other respondents, the majority of whom remembered the texts studied at school as the source of their moral and civic notions. I highlight how their strategies of argument and emotive responses preserve the traces of their schooling, despite ideological reversals.

Thus one of key questions of the thesis is the impact of childhood on adulthood – something that has been elided by the attention to childhood and adulthood as separate phases of existence. The psychological learning process undergone by children in the course of their school education was just as significant as that undergone by Soviet adults, but has had far less discussion in the scholarship, focused as that is on 'Soviet subjectivity' among the latter.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ For groundbreaking studies in this respect see Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

1. PROGRAMMES AND METHODS FOR TEACHING LITERATURE IN SOVIET SCHOOLS (1921-1941)

Надо помочь ребенку через искусство [...] яснее мыслить и глубже чувствовать.
Н. К. Крупская¹¹²

In this chapter I focus on the content of the school curriculum and the recommended methods for teaching literature in the upper years of Soviet schools, analysing normative material published and disseminated between 1922 and 1941. The periodization I introduce is not the same traditionally used. My purpose here is to establish the official attitudes to Russian classics and the role assigned to teaching pre-revolutionary works in the upbringing of Soviet teenagers during high Stalinism (1936-1941). In doing this (and also gauging the effectiveness of these efforts in the chapters that follow), I challenge Andy Byford and Polly Jones' conclusion, drawn from their examination of 'the quotidian reality' of Soviet Russia with regards to educational reforms. Specifically, I refute their argument that 'a pervasive sense of disorder bordering on chaos' existed, making it hard to delineate clear lines of development or tendencies, which the policies supposed.¹¹³ I suggest that in 1936 a unique (and effective, as I argue in other chapters) Soviet approach to teaching the Russian classics emerged, based on emotional stimulation. Such stimulation was achieved not only through emphasising the emotional nature of literature as an art form, the melodramatic reading of texts, and the reciting of poetry by heart, but also through a particular approach to the study of literary characters.

¹¹² N. K. Krupskaja, 'O zadachakh khudozhestvennogo vospitaniia' (1927), *Pedagogicheskie sochineniia v desiati tomakh*, edited by N. K. Goncharova, I. A. Kairova, 10 vols (Moscow: Akademiia pedagogicheskikh nauk RSFSR, 1959), vol. 3, pp. 313-317 (p. 317).

¹¹³ Andy Byford and Polly Jones, 'Policies and Practices of Transition in Soviet Education from the Revolution to the End of Stalinism', *History of Education* 35 (2006), 419-426 (p. 423).

A Russian historian, Evgenii Ponomarev, examining the ideological changes in Soviet literature textbooks for the upper years from their first appearance in the early 1930s until the thaw period, has similarly stressed the clear didactic agenda and tendencies expressed in state sponsored textbooks. Yet in contrast to Ponomarev's work, my reading of programmes and pedagogical aids extends to include several preceding stages, in order to better appreciate the changes that took place in the mid-1930s. This inclusion of a broader time-span provides a more precise picture of the method's development, and incidentally qualifies Ponomarev's conclusions on the new addition of Lomonosov's biography to the literature textbook of 1934, placing them into a wider context which sheds light on the role of biographies in Soviet literary studies – something that only emerges in a final sense from 1936.¹¹⁴

This level of precision in the study of the development and consolidation of the unique Soviet method of teaching literature, designed to inculcate a certain worldview (*mirovoztrenie*), provides a good basis for assessing the short-term and long-lasting effects of such education on students' minds, which I undertake in the following chapters, but does more than that: it also elucidates other scholars' work on children and the history of education in the Soviet Union. For instance, it places in context children's *verbatim* use of quotes by Dobroliubov, Belinskii, and Lenin as observed by Dorena Caroli in her study of school exercise

¹¹⁴ Evgenii Ponomarev, "Osnovatel' russkoi literatury" M. V. Lomonosov i literatura XVIII veka v sovetskoi shkole', in *Uchebniki detstva: iz istorii shkol'noi knigi VII-XXI vekov: Trudy seminara 'Kul'tura detstva: normy, tsennosti, praktiki'*, volume 3, issue 13 (Moscow: RGGU, 2013), pp. 169-195 (pp. 180, 181); Idem, 'Chemu uchit uchebnik?', *Neva* 2 (2010) <<http://magazines.russ.ru/neva/2010/2/po17.html> > [accessed between 1 and 15 September 2011].

books.¹¹⁵ In addition, my reading of normative material for teaching literature in schools of the 1930s dovetails with tendencies pinpointed by Brandenberger and Dubrovsky in their study of the changes that came about in the methods applied to teaching history.¹¹⁶

I particularly build on Brandenberger's later extensive analysis of national identity formation among Russian speakers in Stalinist society between 1931 and 1956.¹¹⁷ According to Brandenberger, the newly reformed education of the masses and popularization of culture played a crucial role in this formation, as did the renewed interest in Russian pre-revolutionary literature. Of particular interest to me are his chapters focusing on history instruction in the pre-war classroom and the popularisation of state ideology through mass culture, including a revived interest in 19th-century Russian literature. After all, I focus on the *history of literature* course for the upper years in the late 1930s. The authors of the course's methodological material did stress that any directives for teachers of history for older students were also relevant to teachers of literature.¹¹⁸ My reading of normative material for teaching literature in secondary schools of the late 1930s confirms Brandenberger's findings, whereby

¹¹⁵ Dorena Caroli, 'Soviet Children's Writings: School Exercise Books, Letters to the Authorities, Personal Diaries and War Memories', *History of Education and Children's Literature* 7:1 (2012), 201-239 (p. 209).

¹¹⁶ D. L. Brandenberger and A. M. Dubrovsky, "'The People Need a Tsar': The Emergence of National Bolshevism as Stalinist Ideology, 1931-1941', *Europe-Asia Studies* 50:5 (1998), 873-892. Other historians looked closely at the changes in education, noticing the growing patriotic agenda in Soviet Russia: Larry E. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991); Idem, *Stalin's School: Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999). For the emergence of a new hero type by the mid-1930s see Catriona Kelly, "'Malen'kie grazhdane bol'shoi strany": internatsionalizm, deti i sovetskaia propaganda', *Nlo* 60 (2003), 218-251 (p. 231); Eadem, *Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero* (London: Granta Books, 2005), pp. 148-149.

¹¹⁷ David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

¹¹⁸ N. A. Glagolev, 'O prepodavanii literatury', *Lvs* 3 (1936), 3-7 (p. 3).

the state programme promoted patriotic upbringing through a curriculum with a 'celebration of tradition and sacred names, dates, and events.'¹¹⁹ Equally, the programmes for teaching literature corroborate his evidence of the increased centralisation of the school curriculum and textbooks.¹²⁰

However, I question Brandenberger's evaluation of the new teaching methods. He argues that teachers' reading of textbooks during lessons, the use of question-and-answer drills, lengthy dictations, mechanistic recopying of passages and other 'formulaic teaching' that stressed 'rote memorization' were relics of a preceding period or 'inevitable outcomes' of the intense centralised programmes and difficult conditions in schools.¹²¹ My evidence speaks to the contrary. These methods were meant to contribute to the new tasks of inculcating a particular worldview. The programmes examined below reveal these methods to be part of the prescribed and promoted methodology of the late 1930s, running in stark contrast to the more flexible approaches of the 1920s programmes.

Brandenberger also raises another (related) issue concerning the emotional component of the new agitational trend. In advancing his argument in *National Bolshevism*,¹²² and elsewhere,¹²³ that the 1930s saw a propaganda shift from the 1920s 'impersonal focus on materialism and class' towards 'accessible, heroic tales' from the past, Brandenberger underscores the populist character of the

¹¹⁹ Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, p. 37.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 67.

¹²² Ibid., pp. 4, 8, 28-37.

¹²³ David Brandenberger, 'Stalinist Populism and the Accidental Creation of Russian National Identity', *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 38:5 (2010), 723-739 (pp. 726, 729).

new trend.¹²⁴ Brandenberger mentions the arousal of sentiments in the process of formation of national identity on several occasions,¹²⁵ yet, without dwelling on this in any detail. For example, when quoting from a teaching manual that '[c]hildren must *hate* their country's enemies and *revel* in the heroism of the Russian people who defended and preserved their motherland from invaders' (my italics),¹²⁶ Brandenberger focuses on the evidence that this quotation provides for a radical departure in Soviet textbooks from the usable past as it was understood in the late Imperial era: Soviet teaching had acquired the goal of 'instilling a sense of patriotic identity.' He takes for granted the curriculum's solicitation of a strong emotional response from children in the process of formation of such a 'sense.' That patriotic feelings were becoming part of the new Soviet sensibility (rather than sense) remains undeveloped in his analysis.

The unwillingness to probe further into the mechanisms of teaching children to love and hate *correct* entities, or indeed those of encoding adult public sentiments with *proper* emotional responses, is a lacuna of Brandenberger's study which I aim to tackle. This omission may also lead Brandenberger to limit the indoctrination potential of Russian 19th-century classics: '[...]from the perspective of the 1930s, most of the classics were backward-looking, sentimentalist, and linked to Socialist Realism Socialist realism only by genre' and only taken as a whole, the classical canon could 'confer upon Soviet arts and letters a sense of authority, pedigree, and tradition.'¹²⁷ In my own readings of the programmes of teaching literature, apart from paying special attention to

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 726, 729.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 729-730.

¹²⁶ Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, p. 65.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 81-82.

vospitanie chuvstv, I question Brandenberger's view that individual literary classics' 'backward-looking' features were perceived as having little indoctrinational potential. I consider the possibility of classics being deployed in the process of indoctrinating children and in doing so, I develop Brandenberger's point relating to the 'populist' character of agitation.

My focus here is on the formation (taking place from the end of the 1920s and consolidated by the end of the 1930s) of teaching methods that sought to employ emotional stimulation and ideological encoding of children's emotions through teaching literature, especially 19th-century Russian works. Apart from the direct methods of emotional stimulation through expressive reading, poetry and theatrics inside the classroom and beyond, the methods promoted an emotional response to literary characters (*obrazy*) and types, extracted from the 19th-century Russian classics. Since the boundaries of fiction and reality were purposefully blurred within the realist theoretical framework of the literary history course, it was assumed that *obrazy* had their prototypes in life and thus were a means of moral education and of eliciting children's emotional reactions to others through this lens of learned typification.¹²⁸

My analysis also contributes to a more general discussion of the epoch with its emphasis on theatricality or its peculiar information processing, as observed by

¹²⁸ In her *Refining Russia: Advice Literature, Polite Culture and Gender from Catherine to Yeltsin* (Oxford: OUP, 2001) Catriona Kelly brings forward Eric Naiman's argument on how 'the unfolding of historical events (and perception of that unfolding)' might have been 'uniquely dependent on literary models' (Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 19). Kelly suggests that there remains the need to investigate this 'question of literature's importance in events and perceptions in Russia.' Kelly, *Refining Russia*, p. 243.

Jeffrey Brooks who underscores that under high Stalinism the emphasis was not on inculcating 'what' to think, but rather 'how' to think and 'what to consider news' or, more generally, what should be considered significant.¹²⁹

Finally, what follows challenges a recent view that the Soviet historical approach to teaching literature has its roots mainly in the pedagogic ideas of the 19th century.¹³⁰ In 1916, when the pre-revolutionary *All-Russia Congress of Teachers of the Russian Language* discussed the structure of literary instruction in secondary school, attendees of the congress were divided on the issue of literature's relation to history. Some supported the historical approach to the study of literature (in its connection to the historical development of society), whilst others advocated an 'aesthetic' approach to literary instruction in secondary school.¹³¹ The latter teaching method promoted close attention to the literary form and the history of its development. Twenty years later, an official source claimed the Soviet methodology for teaching literature at secondary school had inherited 'the best of the pre-revolutionary legacy' – the historical approach – *immediately* after the October revolution of 1917.¹³² A careful look at the Soviet programmes of teaching literature in schools reveals a different picture.

¹²⁹ Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹³⁰ A.V. Fedorov, 'Russkie klassiki XIX veka v sovremennykh uchebnikakh: traditsii i novatsii', in *Filologiya i shkola*, edited by V. Yu. Troitskii (Moscow: IMLI RAN, 2008), pp. 302-317 (p. 303).

¹³¹ 'K itogam s"ezda prepodavatelei rodnogo iazyka', *Rodnoi iazyk v shkole* 7 (1916-1917), 322-333 (p. 328).

¹³² A. D. Grechishnikova, 'Prepodavanie literatury v sovetskoi shkole (1917-1947 gg.)', *Lvs* 5 (1947), 43-56 (p. 43).

Firstly, it is possible to delineate at least three distinct stages of development undergone by official tendencies in the methodology of teaching Russian classical literature, prior to the establishment of a 'stable' course of Russian literary history for secondary schools in 1936-37.¹³³ Secondly, the approach's main features, imbued in the Soviet political agenda, set it clearly apart from the pre-revolutionary methods.¹³⁴ Also, the period I focus on was one in which the level of state intervention in literature teaching increased significantly compared to the preceding 1920s, and when attitudes to socialisation shifted.

The chronological reading of programmes reveals growing socialisation efforts, centralisation of school curricula and central control of methodology, and drastic ideological shifts, most suggestively, the 'demotion' of Pereverzev. It marked the demise of sociology and revolutionary internationalism, an ideological rejection of 'proper' Marxism in favour of the amalgamate of Marxist rhetoric¹³⁵ and state-building historical narratives that focused on personalities, including fictional personas, as I contend.¹³⁶ This blurring had a purpose and a role in Stalin's

¹³³ Recent university textbooks on pedagogical history reflect the changes in Soviet methodology of literature in secondary schools, see O. Iu. Bogdanova, S. A. Leonov, V. F. Chertov, *Teoriia i metodika obucheniia literature*, 5th edn (Moscow: Academia, 2008), chapter 2, pp. 58-62.

¹³⁴ B. G. Bobilev similarly contradicts the majority of his peers who see the pre-revolutionary tradition in the course's historicism in claiming that the main basis for the course structure was Lenin's *periodization* of the development of revolutionary movement in Russia in his 'O metodologicheskikh osnovakh prepodavaniia russkoi slovesnosti: traditsii i perspektivy analiza khudozhestvennogo teksta v shkole', in *Filologiya i shkola*, edited by V. Yu. Troitskii (Moscow: IMLI RAN, 2008), pp. 272-301 (p. 272).

¹³⁵ Raymond Bauer was among the first scholars to describe the ideological changes in Soviet Marxism that took place between 1928 and 1934. See his *The New Man in Soviet Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952).

¹³⁶ Brandenberger argues that 'conventional political history narrative' was 'to capture the public's imagination and promote a unified sense of civic identity' (not immediately, but from 1934 onwards). In terms of such narratives for children, Brandenberger reminds his readers that both Lenin's wife Nadezhda Krupskaya and Andrei Bubnov, who was appointed as Narkom of Enlightenment in 1929, argued for appealing to youths' concrete thinking. Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, pp. 33-42. More generally, the low expectations of cognitive sophistication

personality cult. The programmes for the history of literature course in secondary schools of 1930s reveal some critical ideological shifts of the period.

a. Stage One: Flexible Approach with a Formalist Component

No official programmes for teaching literature at school existed in the Soviet Union until 1921. The first programme for the United School of Labour, issued by the Enlightenment Committee (which in fact had the function of recommendations only), demonstrated a preoccupation with literary form above all. It stressed the artistic form's direct and intuitive influence on readers, underscored the dual significance of the literary course – the emotionally-aesthetic and the ideologically-social – and suggested young people read a range of different works in their entirety; reading works from different time periods and countries was called *literaturnoe chtenie*.¹³⁷ A more systematic historical review of Russian literature was suggested only after a prolonged period of 'literary reading' and only if students exhibited intellectual maturity. Even then, the programme advised combining a historical overview of Russian literature with 'literary reading'.¹³⁸ The works were clustered either by their form or poetic motifs: 'Таким образом группировку произведений, без чего наше чтение не будет систематическим, возможно строить по двум признакам: по признаку формы и по признаку поэтического содержания (мотивов).'¹³⁹ The suggested reading lists took into account the psychological characteristics of

on the part of Soviet adults in the end of 1920s facilitated this shift towards the new propaganda that relied on historical narratives and heroes.

¹³⁷ *Primernaia programma po literature dlia shkoly II-oi stupeni* (Moscow: Narodnyi kommissariat po prosveshcheniiu, Otdel edinoi trudovoi shkoly, 1921), p. 3.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

different age groups. The programme called upon teachers to be flexible and pay close attention to students' psychological and 'spiritual' needs:

План преподавания литературы в Единой Трудовой Школе должен быть согласован с психологией учащихся, должен быть почерпнут не только в системе самого предмета, но и в системе ученической души. Решающими моментами являются процесс восприятия учащимися художественных произведений и весь комплекс их духовных запросов.¹⁴⁰

The students' 'needs' were defined as follows: the first group (13-14 year old students) who had a 'joyful attitude to life' required adventure and fantastic literature; the second group (14-15 year olds), who were beginning to experience sentimental and romantic feelings, were supposed to have highly emotional responses to life and express dissatisfaction with the environment; they required works with 'heroes looking for truth and understanding such truth differently.'¹⁴¹ It was only in the third group (pupils of 16-17 years of age) that a historical overview of Russian literature and critical works illustrating the historicoeconomic development of society could be introduced. The programme thus offered a different approach to each group of students and divided works by genre into 'fantastic', 'humanist', 'idealist' and 'heroic', 'socio-artistic', 'realist', and satirical works among others. The lists merely *suggested* works to be selected by the teacher and included Russian classics.¹⁴²

The importance of literary reading, which drew on the perusal of a work of literature in its entirety, was underscored in the programme of 1922, which was very similar to its predecessor in both content and wording.¹⁴³ It also

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁴³ *Programmy po literature* (Rostov-on-Don: Gos izdanie, 1922), pp. 55, 50.

emphasised the absence of the need for a systematic historical approach until the very last year of instruction of 16-17 year old students. Instead, it strongly suggested an 'immanent' analysis, paying attention to form, style, and poetic content, defined as an 'emotionally-aesthetic' analysis of a work of literature. Such analysis, supplemented with commentaries of a philosophical, cultural, and historical nature, was deemed suitable for 15-16 year old students, who were thought to exhibit an inclination towards 'critical thinking and an interest to real life and relations, an attempt to review social ideals and striving to become active and defend one's thoughts and ideas'.¹⁴⁴ It was then, allegedly, that the understanding of the class struggle in the 'literary reflection' became psychologically possible. The 5th group of the 2nd step of The United Labour school included 16-17 year old students who were 'developing life principles' and possessed a 'tendency to synthesise and generalise.' The purpose of their literary instruction was to provide generalisations of a historico-cultural and historico-literary nature, as well as to place 'contemporaneity into a historical framework and perspective'.¹⁴⁵ The assigned tasks of such literary instruction were usually followed by lists of suggested reading.¹⁴⁶

It is important to note that these programmes were created in Moscow and reproduced word for word in different regions of the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ But,

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 51, 68.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁴⁶ See the list of suggested works in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. For discussion of the traditional teaching of literature in 1920s see M. V. Boguslavskii, *Razvitie obshchego srednego obrazovaniia: problemy i resheniia. Iz istorii otechestvennoi pedagogiki 20-kh godov XX veka* (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia obrazovaniia, 1994), pp. 12-14.

¹⁴⁷ I have consulted and collated programmes issued in Moscow, Leningrad, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine. *Programmy srednei shkoly, Russkii iazyk i literatura*, 3rd edn (Baku: AZERNESHR, 1936); *Programmy srednei shkoly, Russkii iazyk i literatura, 5-7 klassy, 8-10 klassy, programmy*

despite this drive to centralise pedagogical materials from the first, what was most striking about these early programmes was that they repeatedly highlighted their advisory and non-obligatory role, thus leaving the teacher some room for independent approaches to his or her literary instruction:

Предлагаемые программы не имеют своей целью регламентировать работу преподавателя. За последним сохраняется право самостоятельно строить и осуществлять свой курс. [...] Преподаватель не призван исправлять творчество Достоевского, Толстого, Успенского, Некрасова, а изучать их, применяя каждый раз те методы, какие наилучшим образом подходят к особенностям изучаемого автора или произведения.¹⁴⁸

As well as allowing a high degree of trust to teachers in choosing an appropriate methodology for teaching a work or author, the programme advised teachers also to cultivate initiative in their own work – to inspire personal creativity and independent work in their students. Thus among the suggested methods of teaching were classroom discussion (*svobodnye besedy*), student reports (*referaty*) and essays on both literary and free topics that concerned teenagers. Interactive and independent student activities were encouraged, such as collective work inside and outside of the classroom, literary clubs (*literaturnye kruzhki*), crafts and illustration (*podelki, risunki, illiustratsii*), student-made journals and newspapers (*literaturnye zhurnaly, sborniki i stengazety*), excursions to museums and exhibitions, fieldwork for gathering examples of the folklore tradition, and so on.¹⁴⁹ These teaching methods and activities were conducive to developing students' initiative and independent thinking.¹⁵⁰

(Leningrad: PULVO, 1936); *Programmy po literature, VIII-X klassy* (Kiev: Narkompros USSR, 1937); *Programmy srednei shkoly. Russkii iazyk i literatura* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1937).

¹⁴⁸ *Primernaia programma*, 1921, pp. 4, 7.

¹⁴⁹ *Programmy po literature*, 1922, pp. 53, 54.

¹⁵⁰ According to William Partlett, these elements of the educational approach persevered in the Project method of 1923-1927 and the subject-centred methods of the 1930s, see William Partlett,

Although literary clubs and student newspapers would survive into the 1930s, the teacher's control in any such activities would be increased, limiting students' independence in the 1930s.¹⁵¹

b. Stage Two: Classics Under Threat

It was into these extracurricular literary reading and clubs that in 1923 the authorities suggested Russian classics be placed, thus removing them from the obligatory list of works.¹⁵² In 1923 a new methodological approach, with little room for Russian classics, came into force. The new approach was called *kompleksnyi metod*.¹⁵³ It emphasised a closer connection between school and life, 'a new specific method of study of reality.'¹⁵⁴ This called for new *kompleksnye* programmes created by Gosudarstvennyi uchenyi sovet (GUS), in which the study material was grouped not by subjects, but around three main themes – labour, society, and nature. There were two different sets of GUS programmes – one for metropolitan schools and the other for rural areas.¹⁵⁵

'Bourgeois Ideas in Communist Construction: The Development of Stanislav Shatskii's Teacher Training Methods', *History of Education* 35:4-5 (2006), 453-474.

¹⁵¹ On changes in official attitudes with regard to children's autonomy towards expectations of obedience see Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 93.

¹⁵² 'Ob"iasnitel'naia zapiska', *Novye programmy dlia edinoi trudovoi shkoly* (Gosizdatel'stvo, 1923), pp. 19, 21. See also the lists of suggested reading 'Primernyi spisok proizvedenii dlia klassnogo i vneklassnogo chteniia', *Programmy minimum edinoi trudovoi shkoly 1-oi i 2-oi stupeni* (Petrograd: Otdel snabzheniia Petrogubono, 1923), pp. 9-12, 57-68.

¹⁵³ For further description of the method, programmes, and bibliography see A. P. Pinkevich, *Sovetskaia pedagogika za desiat' let (1917-1927)*, 2nd edn (Moscow: Rabotnik prosveshcheniia, 1927), pp. 91-96.

¹⁵⁴ *Metodicheskie pis'ma. Pis'mo pervoe. O kompleksnom prepodavanii* (Moscow: Rabotnik prosveshcheniia, 1924), p. 3. Also see Bogdanova, Leonov, Chertov, *Teoriia i metodika obucheniia literature*, p. 61.

¹⁵⁵ *Novye programmy edinoi trudovoi shkoly pervoi stupeni* (Moscow: Rabotnik prosveshcheniia, 1924), p. 13.

The thematic approach, which became popular in those years of *laboratornyye plany* and project methods, could not easily accommodate Russian classics. Thus in 1924, the CC of the Ukrainian CP(b) suggested that, since topics such as 'labour' and a range of contemporary concerns could not be reflected in the works of Russian classic literature, it was not worthy of study.¹⁵⁶

'Complex' programmes, in which literature was completely 'diffused', were not popular with teachers; the general discontent led Narkompros to create a special committee to work on a new programme.¹⁵⁷ In the summer of 1927, GUS issued new updated programmes, created by a group of literary historians under the direction of V. F. Pereverzev; these programmes combined thematic approach with a more traditional teaching of subjects.¹⁵⁸

Thus, it was not until 1927 that literature stopped being a mere illustration of different themes and became a separate subject.¹⁵⁹ The Russian classics found their way back into the school curriculum, albeit in the light of what would be later branded as 'vulgar sociology,' and without any biographical study of the authors.¹⁶⁰ In 1928, delegates at the Congress of Teachers of Russian Language

¹⁵⁶ A. D. Grechishnikova, 'Prepodavanie literatury v sovetskoi shkole (1917-1947 gg.)', p. 46.

¹⁵⁷ 'Kommentarii k "Literatura i marksizm"', in A. V. Lunacharskii, *O vospitanii i obrazovanii*, edited by E. D. Dneprov, K. S. Erinova, F. S. Ozerskaia, A. M. Arsen'ev, et al. (Moscow: Pedagogika, 1976), pp. 601- 606 (p. 603).

¹⁵⁸ Pinkevich, *Sovetskaia pedagogika za desiat' let*, p. 93.

¹⁵⁹ Bogdanova, Leonov, Chertov, *Teoriia i metodika obuchenii literature*, p. 61.

¹⁶⁰ *Vulgar sociology* was a critical approach that took into account the social class to which an author or artist belonged. It was often schematic and generalising in that it grouped various and often strikingly different works under the historical epoch narrowly defined according to Marxist stages in history – feudal, early capitalist, etc. It was mainly associated with the school of M. N. Pokrovskii, *Programmy srednei shkoly. Russkii iazyk i literatura* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1937), pp. 22-23. For further discussion see N. N. Shneidman, 'The Russian Classical Literary Heritage and the Basic Concepts of Soviet Literary Education', *Slavic Review* 31:3 (1972), 626-638 (pp. 627-628); Catriona Kelly, 'Pushkin's Vicarious Grand Tour: A Neo-Sociological Interpretation of 'K vel'mozhe' (1830)', *Slavonic and East European Review* 77:1 (1999), 1-29 (pp. 1-2).

and Literature in Moscow was addressed by Nadezhda Krupskaja, who presented a major policy-making report, 'Communist Education and Literature.'¹⁶¹ In it, Krupskaja proposed that, regardless of students' difficulties in reading Russian pre-revolutionary masterpieces, teachers of literature were supposed to help their students to *correctly* understand these works.

Anatolii Lunacharskii, speaking at the same Congress, laid out the basis for the future approach to teaching literature in secondary schools:

[...] нам нужно рассматривать литературное произведение с точки зрения того, какие же в нем таятся моральные и общественные импульсы, чему оно учит, куда оно ведет, и в момент, когда оно возникло, какие цели оно преследовало или какие цели на самом деле ему присущи, если писатель, может быть, даже и не сознавал этого. А в таком случае какое место занимает это литературное произведение в общей истории развития общественности, какое место оно занимало в тот момент, когда оно появилось, и почему оно живо до сих пор и в каком именно смысле оно живо [...].¹⁶²

To extricate the moral and social significance of a work of literature became the central point of this approach. It was also presumed that a work of literature necessarily owed its existence to some particular social ends of which its author might have been unaware, and to which it owed its longevity. To uncover these socially significant aims, both at the time of the work's creation and in the present, would become the main task of literary analysis of a classic.

¹⁶¹ N. K. Krupskaja, 'Kommunisticheskoe vospitanie i literatura (doklad na 1-oi vserossiiskoi konferentsii prepodavatelei russkogo iazyka i literatury)' (1928), *Pedagogicheskie sochineniia v desiati tomakh*, edited by N. K. Goncharova, I. A. Kairova, 10 vols (Moscow: Akademiia pedagogicheskikh nauk RSFSR, 1959), vol. 3, pp. 318–326 (pp. 323–325).

¹⁶² A. V. Lunacharskii, 'Literatura i marksizm' (1928), in *O vospitanii i obrazovanii*, edited by Dneprov et al., p. 472.

The following year, another key example of this analysis appeared when Lunacharskii gave a speech on Griboedov on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the author's death.¹⁶³ In it, Lunacharskii pointed out the ways in which classics were important and could continue to affect and teach contemporary readers:

Маркс сказал, что идиотом будет тот, кто не понимает, какое колоссальное значение имеет классическая литература (а следовательно, и Грибоедов) для пролетариата, потому что если человек описывает свою губернию или уезд за сто лет до нас, то это значит, что он уловил исторические причины событий и ему удалось найти там кое-что, что набрасывает свою страшную тень на всю жизнь человека, взять хотя бы период собственничества, который надо было реформировать.¹⁶⁴

Marx's claim that the literary depiction of historical phenomena could prove useful to the proletariat in its portrayal of the oppressive 'dark shadow' over a common man at certain stages of historical development and of the need for reforms suggested that literature could be used instrumentally – as a key to understanding harmful political systems. This link between classics and criticism of the social order of the past, drawn by Lunacharskii in 1929, marked the return of the literary legacy into vogue.

c. Stage Three: The First Half of the 1930s

It was in 1931-1932, however, that the first real rupture in Soviet educational history occurred.¹⁶⁵ By decrees of the CC of 5 September 1931 and 25 August 1932, the seven-year polytechnic school was reorganised to form the incomplete

¹⁶³ A. V. Lunacharskii, 'A. S. Griboedov', in *A. S. Griboedov v russkoi kritike: Sbornik statei*, edited by A. M. Gordina (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1958), pp. 324-342.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

¹⁶⁵ For a concise discussion of the transition from the experimental stage and the turning point in Soviet education see Holmes, *Stalin's School*, pp. 10-12.

secondary school of 8 years and complete secondary school of 10 years.¹⁶⁶ More importantly from the point of view of instruction in literature, the decrees stressed the importance of the *systematic* teaching of subjects, which meant highly centralised and standard programmes and textbooks across the country.

These established programmes and textbooks were referred to as 'stable'. The decrees also called for a cohesive historical approach to humanitarian disciplines; the authors of stable programmes and textbooks were required to increase 'elements of historicism.'¹⁶⁷ From that moment until the 1940s, every programme of literature quoted repeatedly from these decrees, including in such places of prominence as the inside cover.¹⁶⁸ The fact that the number of editions of these programmes increased dramatically also confirmed the authorities' commitment to the unification and centralisation of the new educational methodology.¹⁶⁹

A striking feature of the new programmes of literature was their combative language and aggressive tone, especially when addressing supposedly out-dated and ideologically incorrect approaches. For example, the programme of 1932,

¹⁶⁶ Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) 'O nachal'noi i srednei shkole', 5 September 1931; Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) 'Ob uchebnykh programmakh i rezhime v nachal'noi i srednei shkole, 25 August 1932', in *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR, Obshcheobrazovatel'naia shkola. Sbornik dokumentov, 1917-1973*, edited by A. A. Abakumov, N. P. Kuzin, F. I. Puzyrev, L. F. Litvinov (Moscow: Pedagogika, 1974), pp. 156-161, 161-164.

¹⁶⁷ Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) 'Ob uchebnykh programmakh i rezhime v nachal'noi i srednei shkole, 25 August 1932', in *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR, Obshcheobrazovatel'naia shkola. Sbornik dokumentov, 1917-1973*, pp. 161-164.

¹⁶⁸ *Programma dlia srednei shkoly (gorodskoi i sel'skoi), 5-8 goda obucheniia, russkii iazyk i literatura* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1933), predislovie; *Programmy dlia srednei shkoly* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1935).

¹⁶⁹ For example, *Literaturnoe nasledie v novoi shkole, rabochaia kniga po literature pervoi treti XIX veka dlia shkol povyshennogo tipa i samoobrazovaniia*, edited by I. M. Nusinova (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdanie, 1931) had 75 000 published copies.

further promoting the new view of literature as ‘a specific type of class ideology’ and a ‘weapon of class struggle’, harshly criticised Pereverzev’s approach:

Преподаватель литературы должен в практической работе положить эти основные принципы марксистско-ленинского литературоведения, борясь с вульгарно-материалистической и меньшевистской теорией Переверзева, который искусство рассматривает, как «игру в жизнь» и как безыдейное и механическое воспроизведение социального характера, что приводит к «аполитичности» и к игнорированию роли классовой борьбы в развитии литературы. [...]

Преподаватель литературы должен бороться и с право-«левацкими» теориями группы «Литфронта», составившейся из осколков переверзианства, воронщины и Лефа и пытавшейся навязать свою антиленинскую теорию искажения объективной действительности и романтического ее приукрашивания, что извращало ленинское понимание партийности в литературе.¹⁷⁰

Harsh criticism of the literary-critical and pedagogical approaches of earlier eras was one of the most recurrent established features of the programmes of the 1930s. The programmes in no uncertain terms stressed that theories which suggested individual impressions and interpretation of reality in the creative process of arguably the most intense individual endeavour – authoring fiction – no longer had any place among the official approaches to teaching the classics. Fiction’s function as an *accurate* reflection of social reality was repeatedly emphasised. This idea about fiction served as both a criterion for the didactic potential of a literary work and as the master theory behind the recommended methods of teaching literature. In the light of this CC-approved approach, a classic became a weapon in the class struggle and a tool of the indoctrination of youth.

¹⁷⁰ FZS *programmy, Russkii iazyk i literatura*, 4th edn (Narkompros RSFSR: Gossudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel’stvo, 1932), p. 42.

A passage from the 1932 programme illustrates the change in attitude towards Russian classics as tools of indoctrination:

Нам надо не пассивное ознакомление с литературой классиков, а *активная переработка их художественной и культурной ценности* в свете тех задач, какие стоят у нас в борьбе за социализм.¹⁷¹ (my italics)

Reading classics, students were to develop a 'critical approach' or aversion, judging by the language used to describe it, to bourgeois and religious values, individualism and other elements of alien ideology. Thus, an emotional component of an antagonistic kind was introduced into the teaching of literature. It was different from the aesthetic, or *immanent*, approach of developing sensitivity to the feelings of poets and authors that had been expressed in the early 1920s. This trend of encouraging a reaction to phenomena of the past in terms of negative emotions is first glimpsed in the strong language denoting hatred of differing literary theories, but is also used in describing the classics' portrayal of a different social order permeated with bourgeois values. The trend is apparent on the stylistic level: for example, when normative materials refer to A. N. Ostrovskii's portrayal of the ignorance (*nevezhestvo*) of 'despotic family relationships', the epithet '*dikoe*' is used, or Saltykov-Shchedrin's characters' life principles are listed in an emotionally escalating row as a range of negative vilified features: *litsemerie, khanzhestvo, khitrost', lest', podkhalimstvo*.¹⁷²

In addition, as part of such 'energetic transformation of the artistic and cultural significance of the classics,' the programme ordered teachers to quote Lenin and

¹⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 43-44.

¹⁷² *Programmy srednei shkoly, russkii iazyk i literatura 5-6, ob "iasnitel'naia zapiska, 8-10, 1936, pp. 19, 23.*

Stalin on culture and literature.¹⁷³ For the first time, it was clearly spelled out that a programme was a state document and its instructions were obligatory. Thus the methodology was wrested from teachers' hands and prescribed in detail, with compulsory inclusion of lecture-overviews on class struggle of the period to which a work belonged, reading of works in the classroom as well as at home, written exercises and collective discussion of a prescribed theme as well as reading and reciting by heart of short excerpts and poems.¹⁷⁴ The trends corresponded to a renewed emphasis on academic standards,¹⁷⁵ as well as the drive to imbibe schoolchildren with a sense of history as 'an effective catalyst for patriotic sentiments.'¹⁷⁶

At the same time, the socio-historical economic approach of Pereverzev was preserved in the way these works were grouped. For example, the programme of 1933 divided assigned works into 'feudal and capitalist formations'. Year 8 (15 and 16-year-olds) was supposed to study 'Russian literature of late feudalism and developing industrial capitalism: Derzhavin, Fonvizin, Radishchev,' while year 9 (16 and 17-year-olds) concentrated on Pushkin and Turgenev, Chernyshevskii, Dostoevskii (representing the 'reform stage') and Leo Tolstoi, Nekrasov, Saltykov-Shchedrin to represent the 'epoch of the changes of feudal social relations,' backed up by the western examples of Balzac and Zola.¹⁷⁷ The

¹⁷³ *FZS programmy*, 1932, p. 46.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁷⁵ See Catriona Kelly, *Children's World*, pp. 95-96; Ann Livschiz, 'Pre-revolutionary in Form, Soviet in Content?: Wartime Educational Reforms and the Postwar Quest for Normality', *History of Education* 35:4 (2006), 541-560.

¹⁷⁶ See Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, p. 31, pp. 63-76.

¹⁷⁷ *Programma dlia srednei shkoly (gorodskoi i sel'skoi)*, 1933, pp. 1-4. Such periodization was based on Lenin's theory of the phases of the revolutionary movement in Russia. For discussion see Frederic Lilge, 'The Study of Literature in the Soviet School', in *Teaching in the Social Sciences*

programme of 1933 remained intact in the following year, except for the addition of some extra works for study.¹⁷⁸ These were the critical writings of revolutionary democrats, Belinskii and Dobroliubov. The 1934 introduction to the programme also strongly recommended teachers take into account an additional issue of the *Directions to Programmes by Narkompros RSFSR*. These directions were combined with the programme of 1932-33 and were published as the new programme of 1935.¹⁷⁹ That year teachers also learnt that any deliberate deviation from the programme (*uchebnyi plan*) would be subject to disciplinary proceedings.¹⁸⁰

Another conspicuous change, enacted in 1933, was the emphasis upon literature's potential to inculcate the 'Marxist-Leninist worldview':

Перед новой политехнизирующей школой стоит задача дать учащемуся [...] марксистко-ленинское мировоззрение, дать зарядку на активную борьбу, дать умение не только «объяснить мир», но и «изменить его» [...].

Литературный факт огромной социальной важности, факт, обусловленный всей сложностью процесса классовой борьбы, поэтому изучать его следует во всех связях и не только как надстройку, но как надстройку, активно воздействующую на базис [...] В книге имеется материал, объясняющий литературные явления не только как факт, но и как фактор классовой борьбы огромной социальной

and the Humanities in the USSR, edited by W. K. Medlin, C. P. Bednar, Martin Levit, Frederic Lilge (Washington, DC: US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1959), pp. 31-40 (pp. 32-33).

¹⁷⁸ *Programmy srednei shkoly, 8,9, i 10 klassy, Literatura*, 2nd edn (Narkompros RSFSR, 1933).

¹⁷⁹ *Programmy dlia srednei shkoly*, 1935, p. 2. This adaptation of the programme went in step with regular purging of bibliographies, as evidenced, for example, in *Biulleten' Narkomprosa*. Here, People's Commissar for Enlightenment Andrei Bubnov directed that a range of books on the methodology of Russian language, which quoted Trotskii, an allegedly counterrevolutionary book by A. Selishchev *Iazyk revoliutsionnoi epokhi: Iz nabliudeniia nad russkim iazykom poslednikh let, 1917-1926* (Moscow: Rabotnik prosveshcheniia, 1928) and a book *On Language* by Rybnikova, which contained quotes from the thick journal *Slavia* published in Prague (Uspenskii's *Russian Language After Revolution*, S. Karcevski, *Système du verbe russe*) must be excluded from circulation. 'Ob iz"iatii riada knig po metodike russkogo iazyka. Prikaz po Narkomprosu No. 160 ot 25 fevralia 1935 g.', *Biulleten' Narkomprosa* 8 (1935), 6.

¹⁸⁰ 'Ob ob"iavlenii vygovora direktoram 10-oi shkoly Frunzenskogo raiona i 1-oi shkoly Kirovskogo raiona Moskvy za narushenie uchebnogo plana, utverzhdennogo narkomprosom. Prikaz po Narkomprosu No. 161 ot 20 fevralia 1935 g.', *Biulleten' Narkomprosa* (1935), 7.

важности.¹⁸¹ (my italics)

A literary work was affirmed to be more than a reflection ('a fact') of class struggle; it was, rather, a weapon, an 'active factor', in it. The new programme quite openly declared the school's agitational agenda – to 'charge' (like guns with powder) students for an active struggle.

In order to achieve this goal of instrumentalising literature in the class struggle, extra-textual materials were required. It was essential to address the political context in which the Russian classics were produced and their political significance in the present day:

Отзывы, оценки современников, борьба мнений вокруг литературного произведения раскрывают не только процесс утверждения того или иного произведения, его признания и его функционирования в последующих поколениях, но и ведут к пониманию того, как должны быть переоценены классики в наши дни. [...] Классики в школе нужны, но они должны быть переоценены с позиций марксистско-ленинского мировоззрения.¹⁸² (my italics)

This shift of emphasis underlined the new trend of capitalising on the classics and their contemporary critical reception for the didactic aims of the reformed school programme. This 're-evaluation' (as it was explicitly termed) was reflected first of all in the grouping of the classics, including foreign classics, into economic stages of sociological development. For example, the stage of medieval feudalism was represented by *The Song of Roland* and *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, the feudal aristocratic period by *Don Quixote* and *Hamlet*, while Molière and Schiller were deemed suitable for illustrating the stage of developing industrial

¹⁸¹ *Programma dlia srednei shkoly (gorodskoi i sel'skoi)* (1933), predislovie.

¹⁸² Ibid.

capitalism.¹⁸³ This class-based approach would not, in fact, dominate for long. The use of critics as authority would last for much longer.

d. A 'Stable' Programme for the History of Literature (1936-1941)

In the academic year of 1936-1937 the programme changed again. Two reasons were given in the programme: the centenary of Pushkin's death in 1937 and the course review that had followed the inspection of a selection of schools. The latter had supposedly revealed that the curriculum of Russian classics for year 8 was far too difficult to finish in just one year.¹⁸⁴ A caricature in *Pravda* of 8 August 1936 (Figure 5) showed a teacher and students sweating through impolitely hurried visits to famous Russian authors.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁸⁴ *Programmy srednei shkoly, Russkii iazyk i literatura*, 1936, p. 30. For the list of works studied see Appendix 3.

¹⁸⁵ This is related also to the rise of a preoccupation with good manners (*kul'turnost'*) both in the narrow sense, as well as cultivation in terms of reading. Periodicals of the time were usually littered with references to *kul'turnost'*, referring to the different practices the concept implied, according to Catriona Kelly and Vadim Volkov, 'Directed Desires: *Kul'turnost'* and Consumption', in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940*, edited by Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford: OUP, 1998), pp. 291-313 (p. 294). Also see Vadim Volkov, 'The Concept of *Kul'turnost'*: Notes on the Stalinist Civilizing Process', in *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 210-230, especially a section 'Reading and the Common Cultural Horizon', pp. 223-225. Volkov names 1936-37 as the high point of models for *kul'turnost'* presented in the press.



Figure 5: Konstantin Rotov, *Students Visit Leo Tolstoy*.¹⁸⁶

Another reason to change both programmes and textbooks, as the front-page article ‘To Nurture the Love of Classic Literature in Schoolchildren’ in *Pravda* made clear, was the criticism of the ‘vulgar sociological’ approach to the study of literature that was coming from the highest levels of government:

Великие художники прошлого принадлежат трудовому народу, унаследовавшему все культурные ценности предыдущих классов, и не в наших интересах держать эти ценности под спудом, распылять их и превращать в

¹⁸⁶ *Pravda*, 8 August 1936, p. 3.

историческую ветошь, как пытаются это сделать вульгарные социологи.¹⁸⁷

Here it was not necessarily the historical periodization of Pereverzev's programmes that was attacked, but the dry scholarly approach that made literary history too abstract for children, without the emotional engagement with heroes and authors alike:

Великие художники *живы* для нас. Их труды не пропали даром: лучшие их произведения будили умы и помогали народу двигаться вперед и тем самым найти путь к освобождению. Художественные произведения классиков, *живые дыханием жизни и биением горячего человеческого сердца, могут помочь нашей молодежи понять не только прошедшее, но и настоящее.*¹⁸⁸ (my italics)

In line with this reaffirmation of organicism,¹⁸⁹ the class-based approach was now derided as 'vulgar sociological'; it allegedly reduced literary classics to dry, 'dead' information on the class stratification of pre-revolutionary Russia that bore little importance for and had little impact on Soviet youth.¹⁹⁰ Literature, even of the past, must disturb and agitate, in a pedagogically useful sense, instead. It was supposed to contribute to the important goal of *samokritika*, or the 'examination of self' that shaped members of the collective and made them measure themselves, often with negative results, against ideals.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ On the origins of the theory of 'the alive person' in 1928 by RAPP writers and the widespread use of the vocabulary of organicism in the 1930s see Vladimir Papernyi's description of the binary pair 'dead-alive' in his *Kul'tura "dva"* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1996), pp. 160-168. Papernyi also draws a connection between the organicism and the expression of joy and happiness, p. 167.

¹⁹⁰ This repudiation of 'vulgar sociologism' went with the general move away from 'class war' rhetoric that was observable in 1935-1936, as part of the run-up to the promulgation of the 'Stalin Constitution'.

¹⁹¹ For discussions of Soviet subjectivity see *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*, edited by Veronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya, Thomas Lahusen (New York: New Press, 1995); Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934-1941* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1997); Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Soviet Culture: a Study of Practices* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Igar Halfin, *Terror in My Soul* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Jochen Hellbeck,

The shift of emphasis onto the individual self, *lichnost'*, in the Stalinist epoch required certain tools with which to analyse this self; and these tools were provided by the study of literary characters.¹⁹² While the previously emphasised class approach held the social environment that formed class consciousness responsible for the potential shortcomings of the self, the use of literary authors and characters as 'living' *exempla* contributed to shifting the responsibility for one's ideological sins and psychological shortcomings onto the individual reader.

This agitation through literature was also related to the old issue of the political ends of the arts, especially pertinent in the context of 19th-century Russian classical literature and the controversy between the realist writers and radical democrats.¹⁹³ The latter's utilitarian ideas on literature's social uses triumphed eventually, at least on the pages of Soviet textbooks, and resulted in the consolidation of a Russian classical canon within the critics' interpretive framework.¹⁹⁴ The 19th-century radical critics, who now began to occupy a

Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Timothy Johnston, *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life under Stalin 1939–1953* (Oxford: OUP, 2011); *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*, edited by Catriona Kelly and Mark Bassin (Cambridge: CUP, 2012).

¹⁹² On the new dictum of individuation and 'the cultivation of each single individual' during the Stalinist epoch see Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Soviet Culture: a Study of Practices*, pp. 229-230.

¹⁹³ For the discussion of the conflict between radical critics and pre-revolutionary authors see Rufus W. Mathewson, 'The Soviet Hero and the Literary Heritage', *American Slavic and East European Review* 12:4 (1953), 506-523 (p. 518). Also see Rufus W. Mathewson, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature*, 2nd edn (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1975), pp. 3-4.

¹⁹⁴ On the formation and russification of the canon see Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 173. For a very interesting discussion on 'the roots of the realist aesthetic' in the 'revolutionary democrats' and Belinskii see Regine Robin's *Le Réalisme socialiste: une esthétique impossible* (Paris: Payot 1986), especially the chapter 'Le parcours de la critique' pp. 120-140. She questions the direct legacy and examines both the discursive basis of the critical texts of the 19th century Russia in their contradictory aspects and the 19th century literary texts, with its fixation on a 'cultural image' – a certain type of hero. Several decades previously, Rufus

significant role in the study of the Russian classics at school, had always warned against an excessively abstract approach to 'ideas', i.e. political programmes. This is best expressed by Belinskii: 'поэтическая идея – это не силлогизм, не догмат, не правило, это – живая страсть, это – пафос!'¹⁹⁵

Thus, apart from minor changes and additions of Soviet war literature in the 1940s, this history of literature course for upper years, which a programme of 1951 would call 'satisfactory and stable', was set in the academic year of 1937-1938.¹⁹⁶

Of interest are also the methods by which teachers were supposed to ensure proper levels of 'excitement'. The ones that I shall concentrate on here are the use of the technique of 'expressive reading' and the discussion of characters in ways that invited engaged, evaluative judgements.

e. Emotional Stimulation

A published overview of the selective inspection of schools for the academic year of 1936-1937 'The Results (*Itogi*) of the 1936/37 Academic Year', in emphasising the role of a pedagogue, described an exemplary teacher of literature in the following way: 'Лучинский, преподаватель 3-й Орехово-Зуевской школы. [...] Увлекаясь сам своим предметом, увлекает и учеников. У него нет

W. Mathewson explored the outline of the hero problem in 19th-century Russian literature and indicated the uses Soviet critics made of this aspect of the national past. Mathewson, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁹⁵ V. G. Belinskii, 'Sochineniia Aleksandra Pushkina. Stat'ia piataia', *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, edited by V. I. Kuleshova, 3 vols (Moscow: OGIZ, 1948), vol. 3, pp. 368-423 (p. 378).

¹⁹⁶ *Programmy srednei shkoly, Literatura, VIII-X klassy* (Moscow: Izdanie Akademii pedagogicheskikh nauk RSFSR, 1951), p. 3: 'В старших классах средней школы установился и вполне оправдал себя краткий курс истории русской литературы с элементами литературы народов СССР и зарубежной литературы.'

равнодушных к литературе, как нет и неуспевающих.’¹⁹⁷ Emotional engagement was thought to contribute to academic progress. The publication was sprinkled with mentions of students’ feelings (*chuvstva*), sometimes in an unusual context:

Чрезвычайно важно заранее продумать, как необходимо закончить урок, как подвести итоги, чтобы ученики *почувствовали* то новое, что они сегодня получили.¹⁹⁸ (my italics)

The new information was supposed to be absorbed at the emotional level. The lesson must end on a rhetorically high-pitched note, not unlike public lectures by communist leaders.¹⁹⁹

Itoги highlighted one of the main drawbacks of the academic year 1936/37 as being lack of sensitivity to ‘literature as an art form’:

Увлечение учителей и учащихся (в старших классах) историко-литературным анализом художественного произведения и «литературоведческими концепциями» в ущерб восприятию и осмыслению литературы как искусства.²⁰⁰

Elsewhere it also claimed that ‘анализ мыслей, чувств, переживаний – это основное в работе словесника в средней школе.’²⁰¹ It was no longer advisable to keep an analytical distance from the work of literature, now underlined as being first and foremost an artistic – and hence emotionally salient – work.

¹⁹⁷ *Russkii iazyk i khudozhestvennaia literatura v nepolnoi srednei i srednei shkole, Itogi 1936/37 uchebnogo goda* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1937), pp. 59-60.

¹⁹⁸ *Itoги 1936/37*, p. 57.

¹⁹⁹ See for example, the scenes of public speeches in *The Great Citizen*, directed by Fridrikh Ermler (Lenfilm, 1937).

²⁰⁰ *Itoги 1936/37*, p. 45.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

These generalisations had a direct impact on the way in which teachers were supposed to handle literature in class. The publication criticised lessons with insufficient collective reading of literary texts, praised the practice of learning textual passages by heart, and provided detailed instruction for the study of lyric poetry. In approaching a poem, teachers were cautioned not to butcher it through excessive rational analysis:

В художественном целом все мотивы подчинены определенному идейно-образному, лирическому заданию, они органически слиты в живой ткани стихотворения и всей своей совокупностью *вливают на наши переживания*. Вычленение отдельных мотивов, изолированное их осознание ведут к разрушению той *эмоциональной взволнованности и приподнятости, с которыми мы воспринимаем и переживаем вместе с автором его внутренний мир*.²⁰² (my italics)

An excessive analysis of motifs, including the ideological motifs of the poem, was thought capable of stifling emotional stimulation prematurely. In other words, if too much attention was given to analysis, this, it was argued, carried the risk of an approach that led to isolation from the author's perspective and intentions, and atomized the impact of the work itself.²⁰³ In this holistic and organic view of art, feelings played a key role.

With regard to the new tasks assigned to literature teaching, the programme of 1939 obliged instructors of literature to teach their students to 'feel' intensely while reading a work:

На уроках литературы преподаватель должен научить учащихся не только осознавать, понимать произведение, но и

²⁰² Ibid., pp. 55, 56.

²⁰³ Cf. Catriona Kelly, 'Pravo na emotsii, pravil'nye emotsii: upravlenie chuvstvami v Rossii posle epokhi Prosveshcheniia', *Rossiiskaia imperiia chuvstv. Podkhody k kul'turnoi istorii emotsii*, edited by Ian Plamper [Jan Plamper], Mark Eli [Marc Elie], Shamma Shakhadat [Schamma Schahadat] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010), pp. 51-77, on the Soviet and especially Stalinist period see pp. 68-77 (p. 72).

переживать его; уроки литературы должны быть *эмоционально приподнятыми*.

Преподаватель воспитывает волю, ум и сердце учащихся на образцах героического прошлого русского народа, отращенного в памятниках художественной литературы. *Атмосфера сильных страстей, цельных характеров, ярких проявлений борьбы, которыми так богата художественная литература, благотворно действует на молодое воображение и чувство.* Задачей каждого преподавателя является всемерное развитие героических черт в сознании и характере своих учащихся.²⁰⁴ (my italics)

The programme thus explicitly stated that the goal of this heightening of emotions in literature lessons was to develop heroic features in students' consciousness and characters. At the same time, the process was supposed to develop students' aesthetic sense: 'Воспитание здоровых ярких эмоций, эстетического чувства также входит в задачу преподавателя литературы.'²⁰⁵ Teachers were called to capitalise on the 'ambience of strong passions' of Russian classics in order to affect 'the will, mind and heart' of their students through 'examples of a heroic past.' Detailed instructions on how to conduct lessons with this goal of stimulation of emotions in mind were abundant in methodological literature.²⁰⁶

This approach was emphasised across all pedagogical aids, such as the journal for teachers *Literatura v shkole*, which originated in 1936. There, the emphasis was also placed on the teacher's lecture and reading of texts, as well as on students' 'expressive' reading:

Надо уметь показать ту потенциальную энергию, которая заложена в каждом произведении, надо *соответствующим чтением литературного произведения вызвать у учащихся*

²⁰⁴ *Programmy po literature, Literatura VIII-X klassy* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1939), pp. 9-10.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ A. A. Lipaev, 'Metodika lektsii po literature v shkole', *Lvs 1* (1936), 63-73; Idem, 'Metodika provedeniia uroka literatury', *Lvs 4* (1936), 84-92.

*эмоциональные переживания. Это эмоциональное воздействие достигается путем выразительного чтения, без которого нельзя целиком раскрывать содержание произведения, его художественные достоинства. Поэтому преподаватель литературы должен прежде всего владеть в какой-то мере искусством исполнения.*²⁰⁷ (my italics)

Students were thus supposed to learn a similar reading technique and use it in their own presentations, including in the extracurricular activities of literary circles. A teacher in his article in *Sovetskaia pedagogika* described helping his student to prepare a report on Maiakovskii: 'Здесь проверялось не только содержание доклада, но и музыкальное звучание каждой фразы.'²⁰⁸

Where possible, available technology (gramophone, radio, cinema) was used to expose students to actors and authors reading poetry, including texts that were not set for work in class.²⁰⁹ From the recordings that were used in the classroom and still remain from that period it is possible to see the level of drama and emotion such readings exhibited.²¹⁰ Students were encouraged to imitate and perform in a dramatic way in their oral reports. The growing demand for oral collective exercises in class is also palpable in the writings of late 1930s methodologists.²¹¹ Thus classics were to be 'revived' for the young readers, quite

²⁰⁷ G. P. Firsov, 'O vyrazitel'nom chtenii v shkole', *Lvs* 5 (1936), 62-68 (p. 62).

²⁰⁸ V. M. Kalashnikov, 'Bor'ba za edinyi orfograficheskii rezhim v shkole', *Sovetskaia pedagogika* 4-5 (1940), 98-103 (p. 102).

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²¹⁰ Take, for instance, the following description of literature lessons, published by the leading journal for teachers of the late 1930s: 'На уроках литературы и литературного чтения успешно был использован патефон. Учащиеся слушали чтение лучших стихов и отрывков из художественной прозы современными артистами, мастерами художественного слова. В каждом классе слушали не только программный материал, но и сверхпрограммный.', *Ibid.*

²¹¹ On the overall growth of emphasis on oral education see Henry Chauncey, who says that after tests were abandoned in the early 1930s, when the progressive education was ditched, an emphasis was placed on oral examination in his 'Some Notes on the Education and Psychology in the Soviet Union', *The American Psychologist* 14:6 (1959), 307-312 (p. 311). This might be related to other state-created rituals, such as meetings, that required people to speak up, so that their political commitment could be assessed: see Serhy Yekelchuk 'The Civic Duty to Hate: Stalinist Citizenship as Political Practice and Civic Emotion (Kiev, 1943-53)', *Kritika: Explorations in*

literally.²¹²

Not only was the literature lesson required to draw on emotional stimulation methods, including recitation, collective oral reading or reports; extracurricular activities, literary and theatre circles were also encouraged, to continue such work beyond regular school hours. Contrary to the similar phenomena in the 1920s, these activities were to be closely monitored by teachers. The following passage, advocating the careful management of homework by means of a plan corrected in advance by the teacher, demonstrates to what degree students' thoughts were expected to be directed:

Необходимо и для классных и для домашних работ установить такой порядок, чтобы учащиеся (особенно слабые), составив предварительный план, отдали его на просмотр учителю. Учитель должен указать, что следует добавить, в каком направлении развернуть содержание, как перестроить порядок мыслей, -- словом, надо притти (*sic*) на помощь учащемуся, когда он затрудняется и испытывает большую потребность в поддержке руководителя.²¹³ (my italics)

If individualism belonged to an alien ideology and had to be criticised as a value during literature lessons, then individual expression was positively encouraged. But rather than stemming from original thinking and exposition, it was supposed to be channelled into an individual's dramatic performance, expressive reading or recitation. As a *performance*, this always depended on the assumption that someone was communicating with listeners, to whom the performer was supposed to convey his or her virtuous and useful emotions. There was therefore

Russian and Eurasian History 7:3 (2006), 529-556 (p. 530).

²¹² Evgenii Ponomarev in his series of articles devoted to the Soviet textbook of literature recaps an ideal lesson. In it, the teacher's role was similar to that one of an actor. Ponomarev, 'Chemu uchit uchebnik?', *Neva* 2 (2010) < <http://magazines.russ.ru/neva/2010/2/po17.html> > [accessed between 1 and 15 September 2011].

²¹³ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1939.

no intrinsic contradiction between the individual and collective value of 'expressive reading'; both were in harmony.²¹⁴

Emotional stimulation had another clear application, which Leliakov, the author of a methodological aid, elucidated thus:

Наша литература чрезвычайно богата как положительными, так и отрицательными образами. Раскрывая их перед учащимися, мы даем им возможность переживать целую гамму чувств – от негодования и отвращения ко всему низкому, грубому, лживому до глубокого восхищения и преклонения перед истинно благородным, мужественным, честным. Никакие рассуждения, самые красноречивые, никакие доводы, самые убедительные, не могут оказать на юный ум такого воздействия, как яркий, правдиво нарисованный образ.²¹⁵ (my italics)

Students' ability to respond emotionally to characters, provided teachers guided such response, was also needed for the development of a moral judgement system. A literary character was 'unpacked' in such a way in the classroom as to elicit a particular emotion – hate or love, derision or admiration. The purpose was to link an attractive character trait in a literary hero with a positive emotional response and vice versa. This created a system of emotionally charged judgement-reactions that students could apply to their immediate social reality.

f. Obrazy

Pedagogically useful character traits were entrenched in (or rather extracted from) literary characters, which students were to study in detail. An article by Professor L. I. Timofeev in the centre of the issue of *Pravda* of 8 August 1936

²¹⁴ Oleg Kharkhordin makes similar points about the 1930s. On internalisation of communal mechanisms as the means for individual self-fashioning see Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Soviet Culture*, pp. 241-255.

²¹⁵ P. E. Leliakov, 'Rabota nad obrazom-personazhem na urokakh literaturnogo chteniia', *Russkii iazyk i literatura v srednei shkole* (Kiev: Narkompros USSR, 1939), p. 8.

identified the main criteria for choosing which classics were to be taught. The main selection criterion, Timofeev argued, ought to be the usefulness of the work in question, which came down to the verisimilitude of its literary characters. In the new methods of teaching literature in upper years, 'live' literary types were meant to serve as models of human behaviour, as well as to represent the historical conditions of different stages of Russian history in its influence on such types:

Школы должны ввести в культурный кругозор школьника лучшие произведения, наиболее значительные литературные типы, раскрывающие ту жизнь, которая их создала, и дающие читателю «живые образцы» поведения человека.²¹⁶ (my italics)

These types, allegedly sketched from life, provided students with psychological models, despite the temporal distance between these characters and their Soviet readers. As such, they were more didactically useful and students were invited to compare themselves and their relationships with them:

Изучая литературу, школьники изучают жизнь и самих себя в ней. Перед школьником впервые встают большие вопросы о человеческом поведении, об отношениях людей. В «живых образцах» литературных произведений школьник должен получить ответы на самые естественные и простые переживания, на свои ощущения и думы о природе, о любви, о красоте.²¹⁷

As the boundary between literature and life was thus slimmed down, students were supposed to 'find answers' to their teenage queries on nature and relationships. These answers were increasingly controlled by normative material. In attempting to provide 'answers' to teenagers' most natural and simple queries regarding their feelings and thoughts about crucial things, the

²¹⁶ L. I. Timofeev, 'Zadachi prepodavaniia', *Pravda*, 8 August 1936, p. 3.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

school thus usurped the family's role in the formation of values, with the aim of unifying the value judgements of Soviet generations. A literature lesson thereby acquired the functions of a sermon. If these were the general aims, there were, however, some nuances. For example, the approach took into account the psychology of the age group of students who were interested in heroes in general. This was the legacy of the methodology of the 1920s.²¹⁸

One of the most prominent methodologists and teachers at the time, Maria Rybnikova, wrote: 'Нужно воспитывать дух героизма на Евпатии Коловрате, на Илье Муромце, на Тарасе Бульбе, нужно давать примеры патриотизма на образах Пушкина и Гоголя [...].'²¹⁹ To achieve this exemplary function, a literary hero was supposed to be examined in a particular light during a lesson, the appropriate analysis usually being prescribed by the programme. For example, the programme of 1939 prescribed teachers to spend 8 academic hours on D. I. Fonvizin's comedy 'Nedorosl' highlighting the following:

Образ Стародума как выразителя взглядов на государственный строй, на крепостное право, на воспитание, на достоинство личности. Жизненность отрицательных образов комедии, художественная блеклость положительных образов.²²⁰

Russian classics assigned by programmes were the source of positive and negative *obrazy*. Apart from listening to a lecture on this in class, students were to read textbooks, which described *obrazy* in a similar fashion, and write essays

²¹⁸ *Primernaia programma po literature dlia shkoly II-oi stupeni*, 1921, pp. 13-14.

²¹⁹ M. A. Rybnikova, *Ocherki po metodike literaturnogo chteniia*, 3rd edn (Moscow: Uchpedgiz, 1963), p. 15. This book was written, according to the author, during her work in Narkompros in 1939 and first published in 1943.

²²⁰ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1939, p. 26.

that analysed characters. This type of composition was called *kharakteristika*. In year 8, programmes prescribed teaching students to give a simple *kharakteristika* of a character (e.g. 'kharakteristika Mitrofanushki Fonvizina'); in years 9 and 10 students were supposed to be able to give a more complex, that is to say, more 'generalised' characterization: 'с установкой на анализ и обобщение (например, «Обломов и обломовщина», «Характеристика Базарова», «Новые люди» в романе Чернышевского «Что делать?»)).²²¹

As an example of a 'generalised' (*obobshchennyi*) negative type, a *Literature in School* article entitled 'Portraits of Men in Cases' suggested introducing students to a type, extracted from Chekhov's three stories 'The Man in a Case', 'Gooseberries', and 'On Love', as one type.²²²

Another article in *Literatura v shkole* discussed a different example of an 'almost extinct' type, Shchedrin's Iudushka. The essay's author quoted from Shchedrin's works to underscore the 'dark tones' of his writer's paintbrush.²²³ Yet it was Gogol's *The Dead Souls* that was thought to provide the best examples of how a character could incarnate an 'ugly aspect' of pre-revolutionary Russia, for example Pliushkin, whose collecting of items became proverbial.²²⁴

These negative types were contrasted with positive characters, such as

²²¹ Ibid., p. 17. In terms of students' written workload, the programme prescribed no less than 5 essays in class and 3 as homework in year 8, while in year 9 this changed to 4 essays in class and 4 at home and in year 10, no less than 6 in class and 2 at home. The allocated time to write an essay in class was two academic hours. Ibid.

²²² T. G. Morozova, 'Portrety futliarnykh liudei', *Lvs 1* (1936), 41-50 (pp. 43, 45).

²²³ E. I. Korol'kova, 'Kompozitsiia "Gospod Golovlevykh"', *Lvs 1* (1936), 51-57 (p. 53).

²²⁴ P. I. Kazanskii, 'Literaturnyi plakat v shkole', *Lvs 1* (1936), 84-87 (pp. 84-85).

Turgenev's *Rudin* or Chernyshevskii's *Rakhmetov*, among others. For example, the programme of 1936 prescribed to dwell on the image of *Rakhmetov* and emphasise the following: 'Образ Рахметова – идеал разночинца-революционера, готовящегося к борьбе с самодержавием.'²²⁵

However, the history of literature course was laid out in such a way that the study of Soviet literature during the last year of school provided the main pool for positive examples.²²⁶ The best example of this would be *Pavlik Korchagin* from Nikolai Ostrovskii's novel *How the Steel was Tempered*; heavily influenced by the models of resolute and self-sacrificing behaviour that they encountered the hero's self-sacrifice became the model that was needed in the pre-war Soviet Union.²²⁷ By that point (year 10), students were expected to be proficient in comparing themselves with the characters and to have an appropriate emotional response to their different traits and be able to identify with their heroism. (Mythologised historical figures were also promoted as models, along with the main characters in children's literature).²²⁸

When analysing literary works in a classroom setting, students were invited to empathise with certain characters and 'correctly' judge their choices. In *Literatura v shkole* 1940 Vladimir Gabo (1885-1966), a teacher at Leningrad

²²⁵ *Programmy srednei shkoly, Russki iazyk i literatura, 5-7 klassy, ob'iasnitel'naia zapiska, 8-10 klassy, programmy, 1936*, p. 21.

²²⁶ On the mythological function of the super-hero of the 1930s see Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

²²⁷ Evgenii Ponomarev, 'Chemu uchit uchebnik', *Neva* 6 (2010), < <http://magazines.russ.ru/neva/2010/6/po10.html> > [accessed 5 August 2015].

²²⁸ See Kelly, "'Malen'kie grazhdane bol'shoi strany'", p. 231; Eadem, *Comrade Pavlik*, especially chapter 2; Svetlana Leont'eva, *Literatura pionerskoi organizatsii: Ideologiya i poetika* (Tver': Tverskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2006).

school No. 4 and a frequent author in pedagogical journals,²²⁹ shared students' reports and discussions on the theme of love and friendship as 'reflected in literature', including in works by Byron, Pushkin, Goethe, Tolstoi among others:

Не останавливаясь на своеобразии социальных условий и понятий разных эпох, поскольку это было всем ясно, молодежь стремилась выяснить мировоззренческую основу, на которой она должна решать для себя вопрос о любви и дружбе.

Все решения, которые даны в указанных произведениях [Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 'Gypsies' by Pushkin, Byron's *Don Juan* and *Child Harold*, Pushkin's *Don Juan* and *Boris Godunov*], были признаны негодными. Мы должны в понимание любви прежде всего ввести больше элемента дружбы, без которого не ясна и любовь.²³⁰

It is remarkable that the particularity of social conditions in different epochs was skipped over. The focus was placed on judgement, comparison, and didactic outcomes. Based on such literary examples, students chose positive and negative models of expressing feelings of love and friendship. Young people in this literary circle used literature as a source material that they could judge in order to come up with a clear, if rigid, guidance on what was defined as love and friendship within their own contemporary reality.²³¹

The children of this literary circle raised the question whether it was indeed possible to trust books on the issues of love, friendship, and life choices.²³² Under the teacher's guidance, the class answered this question to the following effect:

Художественная литература и история – зеркало и объяснение жизни. Литература в нашей стране помогает и понять жизнь, и действовать в ней, поэтому партия окружает

²²⁹ Teacher Vladimir Gabo was the author of 'Pis'mennye raboty i ikh ispravlenie', in *Voprosy prepodavaniia russkogo iazyka v shkolakh dlia vzroslykh* (Moscow, 1928); 'Praktika ispravleniia uchashchimisia sobstvennykh rabot', *Russkii iazyk v sovetskoi shkole* 1 (1931).

²³⁰ V. S. Gabo, 'Tema "liubvi i druzhby" v literaturnom krughke', *Lvs 4* (1940), 45-53 (p. 45).

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

литературу таким вниманием.²³³

Such willingness to learn from earlier generations was part of a pedagogical approach that relied on tradition and thus ran contrary to the revolutionary approach of the 1920s, with its experimental and innovative tendencies that aimed to break free from pre-revolutionary values and methods.²³⁴ As has been noted above, the turn towards pre-revolutionary literature reflected the change in educational and agitational policies of the party hierarchy. Quotes by classic authors that pointed to literature's didactic potential thus became pertinent in the 1930s.²³⁵

The essay's author acknowledged that, in the new history of literature course, children were 'subtly' (in this particular instance) directed to learn the behavioural norms from their guided reading ('образы дружбы и любви').²³⁶ Thus, a carefully-chosen selection of authors (the list of works was assigned by the teacher) were considered particularly valuable with regards to matters of the heart. It was advised to approach love and friendship not sporadically and intuitively, but reasonably. Significantly, friendship in a love relationship was emphasised by teacher and students alike.

A series of negative literary examples of friendships included Onegin and Lenskii («от делать нечего друзья»), Ivan Ivanovich and Ivan Nikiforovich (приятели

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ On the hybrid character of the pedagogical model of 1920-1930 – anthropocentric and sociocentric tendencies – see S. G. Novikov, 'Vospitanie rossiiskoi molodezhi 1920-1930-kh godov: vzgliad cherez prizmu kul'turno-istoricheskoi genetiki', *Obrazovanie i obshchestvo* 5 (2006), 95-97.

²³⁵ Gabo, "Тема "liubvi i druzhby"", p. 47.

²³⁶ Ibid.

на почве одинаковой растительной и пошлой жизни), whose *obraz* analysis begged for one conclusion: 'Нет, безыдейная «дружба» старого мира также не нужна.'²³⁷ Thus 'ideological' entered the emotional sphere with the intent to direct social relations of children and future citizens, at least on a theoretical level. In this process, character analysis in the literary classroom gained a significant role.²³⁸

Novels were not the only source of positive examples for children. A classic author's biography was also considered highly valuable educational material: Cherneshevskii's friendship with Dobroliubov, Cherneshevskii's relation to his own wife.²³⁹ Soviet biographies of heroes and celebrities were also discussed so that students could learn from their emotional choices.²⁴⁰ The common conclusion about these people's behaviour and feelings towards others was guided by a clear ideological position: 'От передовой колхозницы Бондаренко (в очерке Овечкина) до великого летчика В. Чкалова – все они жизнь свою и работу мыслят только как частицу социального процесса наших дней.'²⁴¹

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 45.

²³⁸ Soviet text written for children played another major role in the education of feelings in Soviet children. For further discussion of models of friendship and romantic relationships propagated in texts for children and how these teachings were implemented into practices in the Stalin epoch as remembered by Oxf/Lef respondents see Catriona Kelly, "'V nashem velikom Sovetskom Soiuze tovarishch – sviashchennoe slovo". Emotsional'nye otnosheniia mezhdur det'mi v sovetskoii kul'ture', *Detskie chteniia* 3:1 (2013), 38-73.

²³⁹ Gabo, "Тема "liubvi i druzhby"", p. 46. Another 'excellent example' of 'ideinaia' friendship was Taras Shevchenko's relation with the black actor Ira Oldridge. The story of their friendship was reported in a journal of the period (S. Zarechnaia, 'Ob odnoi druzhbe', *30 dnei* (1939)) as a symbol of friendship between people who were discriminated against: 'Я Ольриджа люблю и жалею крепче брата, говорил поэт.' Ibid., p. 51.

²⁴⁰ 'Образцы поведения в жизни и труде героев и знатных людей нашей родины: Д. Пананин «Жизнь на льдине», М. Водопьянов «Два года на полюсе», Г. Байдуков «О Чкалове», М. Раскова «Записки штурмана», И. Спирин -- «Записки военного летчика», И. Гудов «Путь стахановца», В. Коккинаки Курс на восток», Овечкин «Прасковья Максимовна».' Ibid., p. 50.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

A similar strategy was suggested in one's choice of an object of affection in love:

Если ты любишь кого-либо, но ваши отношения не помогают культурному, политическому и моральному росту обоих или одному из вас мешают, это – не настоящая любовь. Она скоро окончится и оставит только неприятный осадок.²⁴²

Examples from Kaverin's work 'Two Captains' and Nikolai Ostrovskii's novel backed up this pragmatic attitude to romantic love. Friendship was considered to be a more important element in a love relationship: 'Настоящая любовь опирается на дружбу и без нее ложна и часто пошла.'²⁴³ Interestingly, the point of delaying the consummation of romantic feelings was emphasised on several occasions: 'Если чувства обогащают обоих, приводят к желанию стать лучше ради другого, то это хорошие чувства. Быть может, из них *впоследствии* вырастет настоящая любовь.'²⁴⁴ Again, it was Kaverin's work that was used as an example of this process to an extent in which the schoolchildren reached a very conservative conclusion that 'Дружба переходит в любовь тогда, когда любовь имеет целью семью.' As for those precocious Soviet Romeos and Juliets, pure sublimation was suggested:

У подростков-мальчиков бывает стремление к исключительному обществу какой-либо одной девочки, настойчивые думы о ней, восхищение ее красотой... То же – у девочек к мальчику. Впоследствии, когда они вырастут, может развиться серьезная любовь. Если эти переживания побуждают подростков быть лучше, учиться, работать энергичнее, т. е. содействуют их обоюдному развитию, то они везде допустимы.²⁴⁵

It is perhaps arguable whether a pragmatic attitude to love was indeed advised to teenagers, since suitability on all three levels (ideological, moral, and physical)

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

was called for, with the ideological leading the triad.²⁴⁶ That such an ideal was hard to find or sustain was not part of this school discussion. One issue that was raised, however, was suicide in the name of love, the conclusion to which the children were subtly – or not so subtly – guided towards by their teacher was this: 'ни Анну Каренину, ни Вертера, ни Катерину мы не возьмем в пример, а считаем их жертвами социального строя.'²⁴⁷ When it was pedagogically exigent, the historical context was conveniently brought forward, as in the case of Anna Karenina, Werther, and Katerina.

Hence it is feasible to conclude that school methodologists' main concern with regards to children's attitudes to love and friendships was to encourage children to postpone love relations until after their graduation from school and to introduce ideological considerations into their choices of friends and love-interests. These behavioural norms were introduced in the literary classroom. Thus, through literary *obrazy* teachers of literature attempted to educate and regulate children's feelings and behaviour alike. Many of these *obrazy* were drawn from Russian classical works.

g. Conclusion

The history of how literature was used for emotional education bears out, and elucidates further, David Brandenberger's argument: the imagery from Russian history and literature was used in promoting 'a mass sense of patriotic

²⁴⁶ 'Глубокая, постоянная любовь бывает тогда, когда оба во всем подходят друг другу (идейно, морально, физически) и дополняют один другого, образуя вместе как бы единую человеческую личность.' Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

loyalty.’²⁴⁸ I emphasise, however, that this was often done at the level of emotions. History of literature courses for the upper years capitalised on Russian classics through affective methods of education.

Education used history and literature to back up loyalty to the state and its policies to the effect that, if one spoke against state policy, one was also speaking against Pushkin and the rest of Russian geniuses. Although the list of works itself did not differ greatly from the earlier programmes, the idea behind their study changed considerably in comparison with Pereverzev’s programmes and, moreover, in comparison with the programmes of the 1920s: classic works no longer illustrated socio-economic stages, nor did they exemplify an artistic act of contemplation of the artist’s reality and social environment.²⁴⁹ Instead, their function was first and foremost the moral education of children. On the model of these books, children were to learn a correct, emotional, yet judgemental, response to literary heroes. This was done through developing children’s awareness of characters’ different psychological traits and their immediate recognition of these traits through artistic portrayal,²⁵⁰ teaching them to judge these traits’ appropriateness in the current social order (traits’ social function) and the language in which to criticise others and self (*kharakteristika*).

In the close analysis of normative material, the classics’ potential for polarising children’s emotions, through a particular methodology prescribed for the classroom of the late 1930s, becomes apparent. As I have shown, emotional

²⁴⁸ Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, pp. 96, 112.

²⁴⁹ *Programmy po literature*, 1922, p. 50.

²⁵⁰ This process is addressed in detail in the next chapter.

stimulation, and capitalization on literature's appeal to emotions, are the missing elements of popularisation of 'a coherent, systematic usable past' and imagery in Brandenberger's analysis. I also take a different position from Brandenberger's evaluation of the formulaic methods used in the pre-war classroom. The methods of the 1930s appropriated and transformed the literary legacy, as well as certain methods of teaching literature in the early 1920s, tailoring them towards specific political aims. The psychological ideas of the 1920s, with the aim of matching the psychological needs of developing minds with appropriate lists of literary works and characters, were now put to use in the ideological programming of minds through the study of literature.

2. VISUALISATION AS AN INDOCTRINATION TOOL: *NAGLIADNOST'*, *OBOBSHCENIE*, AND *PREEMSTVENOST'*

The first chapter addressed the programmes' content. This chapter will analyse the prominent features of methodology, such as visual aids, generalisation, and a survey of literary movements of the 19th century, illustrated through literary types. Thus, I will address both visualisation in texts (*obraz* in the sense of image or visual realisation) and visualisation of texts and their surrounding material – e.g. author portraits and the laws of socio-historical development.²⁵¹

Victoria Bonnell, examining the art of Soviet political posters, pointed out a drastic change in the 1930s. She argued that the function of Soviet imagery changed from merely representative to didactic, fashioning model identities and narratives.²⁵² Following her ideas of political art of the 1930s providing a visual script, this chapter demonstrates how visualisation of a historical process as a lawful (natural) evolution was meant to secure students' loyalty to the state.²⁵³

In her recent study on post-war secularisation in the republic of Mari, Sonja Luehrmann devotes one chapter to examining the role of visual aids and *nagliadnost'* in the Soviet anti-religious propaganda.²⁵⁴ Identifying *nagliadnost'* as a Soviet era neologism, she points out that figurative speech, effective

²⁵¹ A recent work in Russian explored textbooks's visual language, albeit for younger readers of a different period: "*Na fone Pushkina vospitannoe detstvo*": *pedagogika vizual'nogo v uchebnike i na kartine. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov i materialov*, edited by M. V. Tendriakova, V. G. Bezrogov (Moscow: Azimut, 2011).

²⁵² Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 38.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 21-22.

²⁵⁴ Sonja Luehrmann, *Secularism Soviet Style: Teaching Atheism and Religion in a Volga Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011). The chapter on *nagliadnost'* is called 'Visual Aids', pp. 143-164.

examples and statistics all counted as ‘visual aids’ in this type of propaganda.²⁵⁵ Tracing the term’s earlier usage to Lenin and its likely origin to 19th century German philosophy, she concludes that its meaning is akin to an intuitive apprehension expressed in an image, well suited for bundling up information and emotional appeal.²⁵⁶ A related concept from 19th-century German philosophy – *Anschaulichkeit* – denoted the capacity of objects of contemplation to stimulate a cognitive process that combined sensory perception and generalisation.²⁵⁷ Luehrmann differentiates between a Kantian type of generalisation and a form of contemplation offered by Goethe, that provides ‘holistic visions of the essential features of a species or phenomenon’ and points out that the concept’s survival in the Soviet Union owed much to the 19th-century radicals’ fondness for both Hegel and Schelling, both of whom propagated Goethe’s meaning of the term.²⁵⁸ While Luehrmann also notices that *nagliadnost’* was part of pre-revolutionary pedagogical reformist traditions, she relies on other experts on Soviet educational policy²⁵⁹ in claiming that the Soviet state of the 1920s and 1930s was too suspicious of reformers trained before the revolution to implement the concept in its pedagogical efforts. This fallacy is perhaps due to Luehrmann’s focus on a different period altogether, as she looks directly at the postwar literature to explore *nagliadnost’* in the Soviet anti-religious propaganda. On the contrary, as this chapter will demonstrate, the concept of *nagliadnost’* was given a prominent role in the methodological

²⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 144, 146.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 147.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of the Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917-1921* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970); Emily D. Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself: The Russian Idea of Kraevedenie* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp. 97–123.

material for literary study in secondary schools of the 1930s.

David Brandenberger has stressed the role of *nagliadnost'* in the populist efforts of high Stalinism, and Gor'kii's recommendations of its appropriateness in the history of literature course.²⁶⁰ In extension of Brandenberger's work, I argue in this chapter that the normative material for literary study advocated *nagliadnost'* in the classroom and it was employed to guide such cognitive processes as visualisation and generalisation towards internalisation of the Soviet idea of the historical process and legitimacy of the Soviet state.

a. Authors' Images and Illustrations

Soviet textbooks were illustrated, with each author studied becoming familiar first through his portrait. Typically, these images were incorporated into the text, into the author's biographical information. For example in figure 6, Pushkin is shown as a young boy amidst the text that speaks of his childhood. The image is taken from an 1822 engraving produced after a drawing by K. P. Briullov.²⁶¹ In the textbooks, the images of Pushkin are usually taken from engravings and portraits carried out in his lifetime, as in figure 7, where an older Pushkin is represented by an illustration from a portrait by O. A. Kiprenskii, a famous 19th-century portraitist.²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 29.

²⁶¹ 'Briullov Karl Pavlovich (1799-1852)', *Populiarnaia khudozhestvennaia entsiklopediia*, edited by V. M. Polevoi et al., 2 vols (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1986), vol. 1 A-M, p. 101.

²⁶² 'Kiprenskii Orest Adamovich (1782-1836)', *Populiarnaia khudozhestvennaia entsiklopediia*, edited by V. M. Polevoi et al., vol. 1 A-M, p. 331.

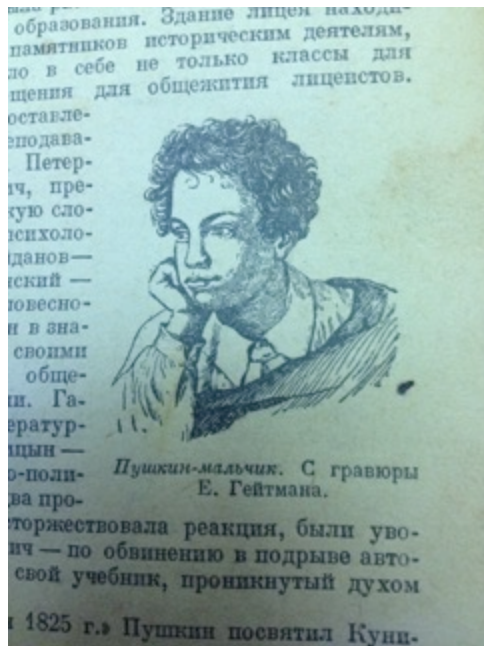


Figure 6. From an engraving by Egor Geitman, *Pushkin as a Boy*.²⁶³



Figure 7. From a portrait by Orest Kiprenskii, *A. S. Pushkin*.²⁶⁴

In the illustrated textbook by N. I. Pospelov and P. V. Shabliovskii the images'

²⁶³ N. I. Pospelov, P. V. Shabliovskii, *Russkaia literatura, uchebnik dlia VIII klassa srednei shkoly* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo Narkomprosa RSFSR, 1939), p. 243.

²⁶⁴ Pospelov, Shabliovskii, *Russkaia literatura*, p. 253.

artists were not always acknowledged. For example, in figure 6 the name of the engraver is provided, but not the original artist from whose drawing the engraving was made. Similarly, in figure 7, the reader learns the name of the portraitist but not of the engraver (V. V. Mate).²⁶⁵ The information for the image of A. S. Griboedov, an engraving by V. V. Mate after a portrait by I. N. Kramskoi, in figure 8 is left out altogether.²⁶⁶



Figure 8. From an engraving by V. V. Mate after a portrait by I. N. Kramskoi, A. S. Griboedov.²⁶⁷

To help teachers, and by extension students, visualise both authors and their characters, illustrations were also included in methodological literature. Biographical essays in *Literatura v shkole* were illustrated with large images (plates) of authors to provide teachers with additional visual material they could use in class. For example, the images of the portraits of Pushkin, carried out during his lifetime, were large enough to serve this purpose (figures 9 and 10). The same was true for the images of the radical critic N. A. Dobroliubov (figure

²⁶⁵ 'Mate Vasili Vasil'evich (1856-1917)', *Populiarnaia khudozhestvennaia entsiklopediia*, edited by V. M. Polevoi et al., vol. 1 A-M, p. 437.

²⁶⁶ 'Kramskoi Ivan Nikolaevich (1837-1887)', *Entsiklopediia russkikh khudozhnikov* < <http://www.artonline.ru/encyclopedia/292> > [accessed 5 September 2015]

²⁶⁷ Pospelov, Shabliovskii, *Russkaia literatura*, p. 219.

11). Pushkin's portrait (in figure 9) was printed on a separate glossy page. Other issues had similar pages with portraits of Belinskii (figure 12) and Gor'kii (figure 13). Both images are unacknowledged, although an artist's signature is visible in the corner of Gor'kii's portrait.

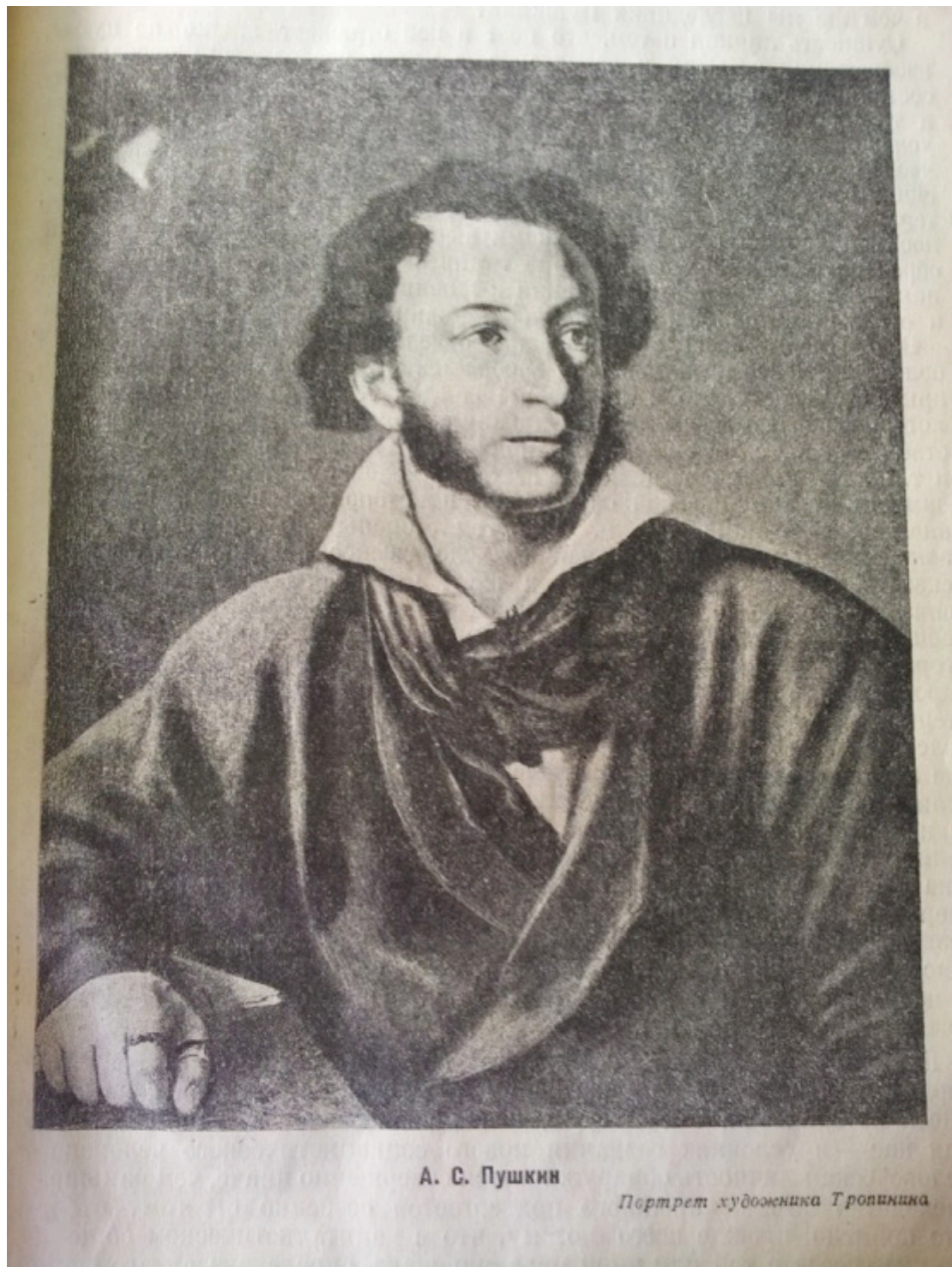


Figure 9. From a portrait by V. A. Tropinin, A. S. Pushkin.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ L. I. Timofeev, 'Lirika A. S. Pushkina (o spetsifike liricheskoi poezii)', *Lvs* 1 (1936), 10-21 (p. 13).

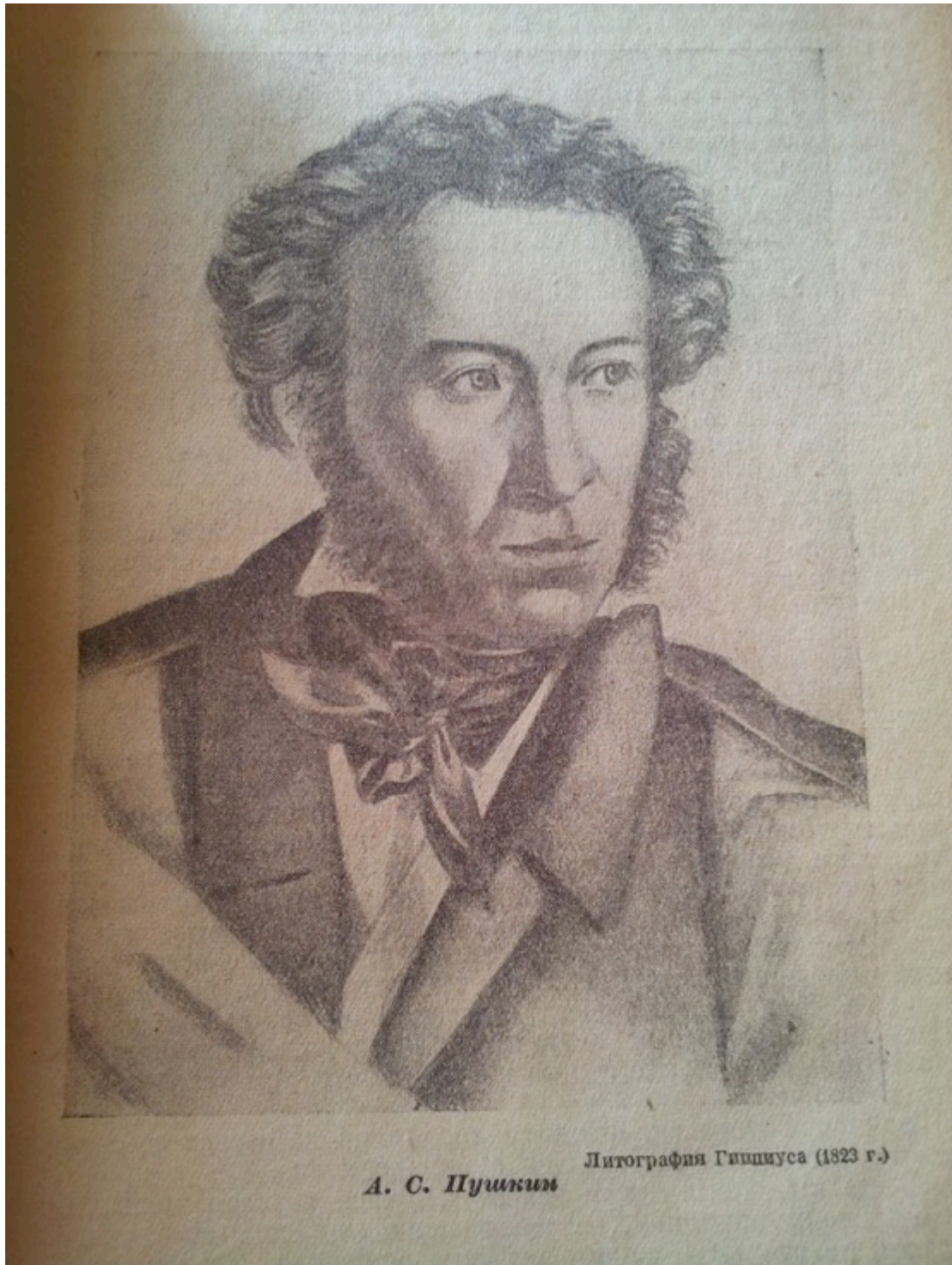


Figure 10. G. F. Gippius, *A. S. Pushkin*.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ N. A. Glagolev, 'Pushkin i sovremennost', *Lvs 6* (1936), 14-31 (p. 17).

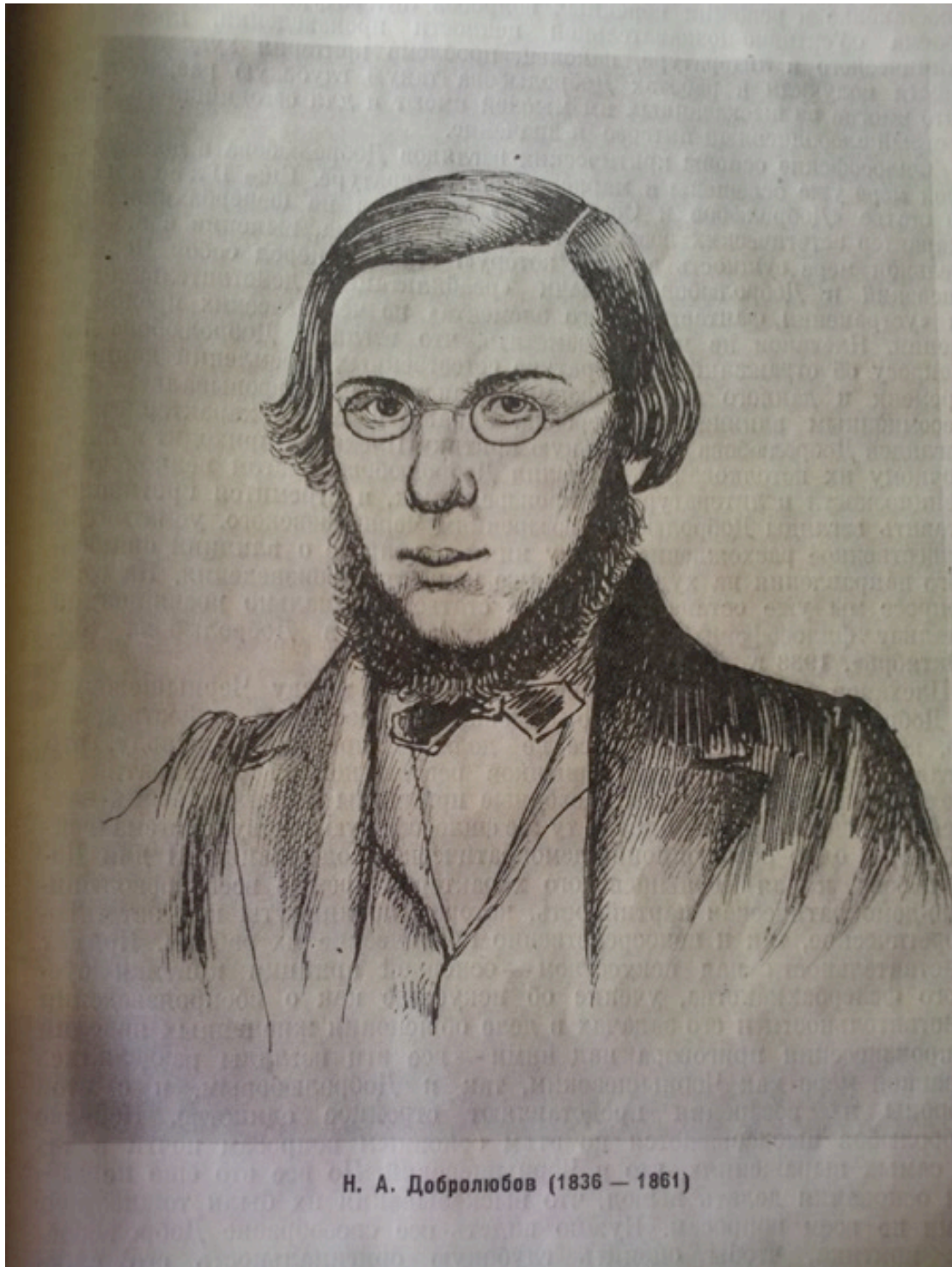


Figure 11. N. A. Dobroliubov.²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ N. A. Glagolev, 'Dobroliubov o realizme i real'noi kritike', *Lvs 1* (1936), 22-30.

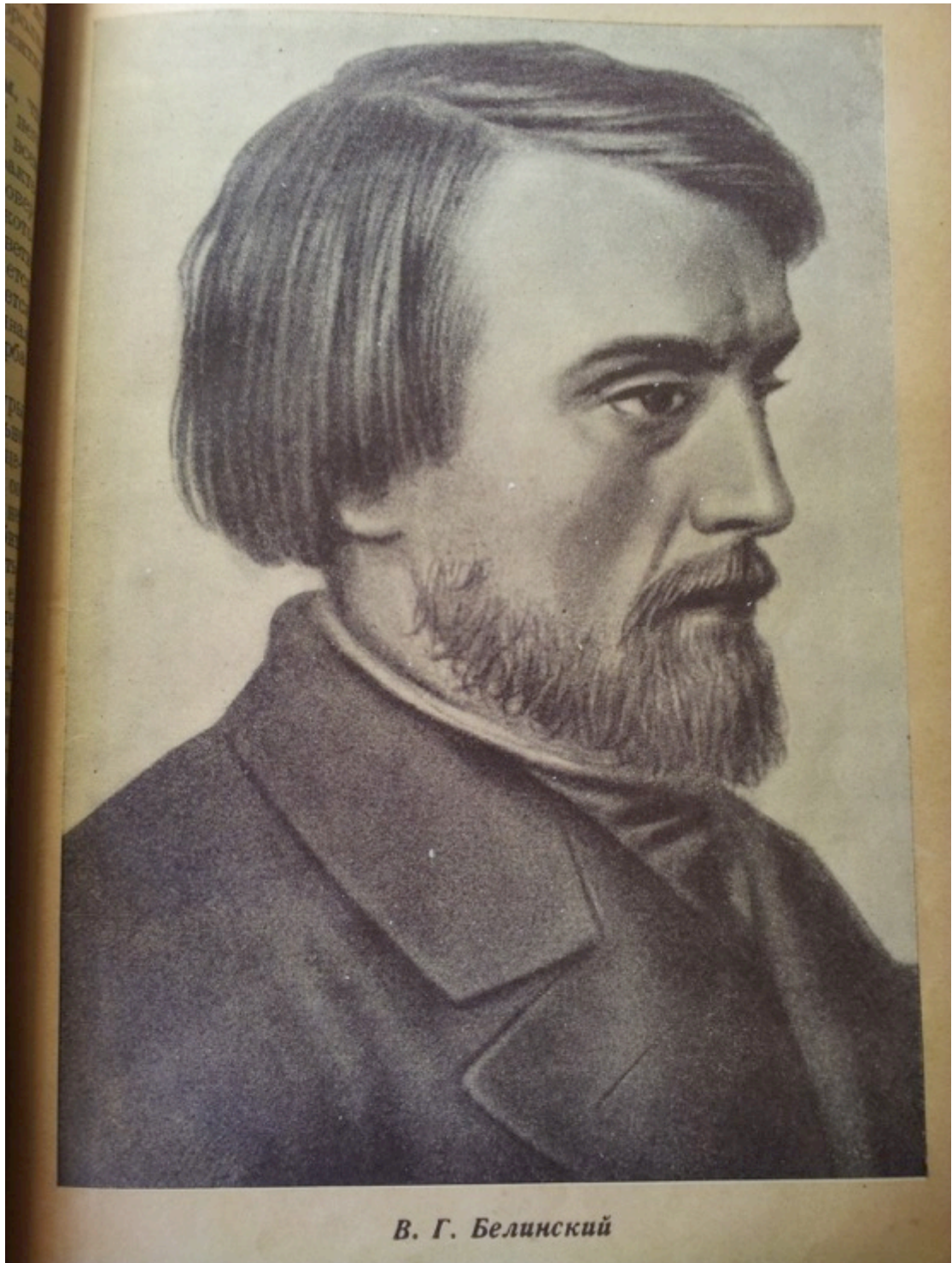


Figure 12. Unknown, *V. G. Belinskii*.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ N. A. Glagolev, 'Esteticheskoe nasledie V. G. Belinskogo', *Lvs 4* (1936), 37-57.

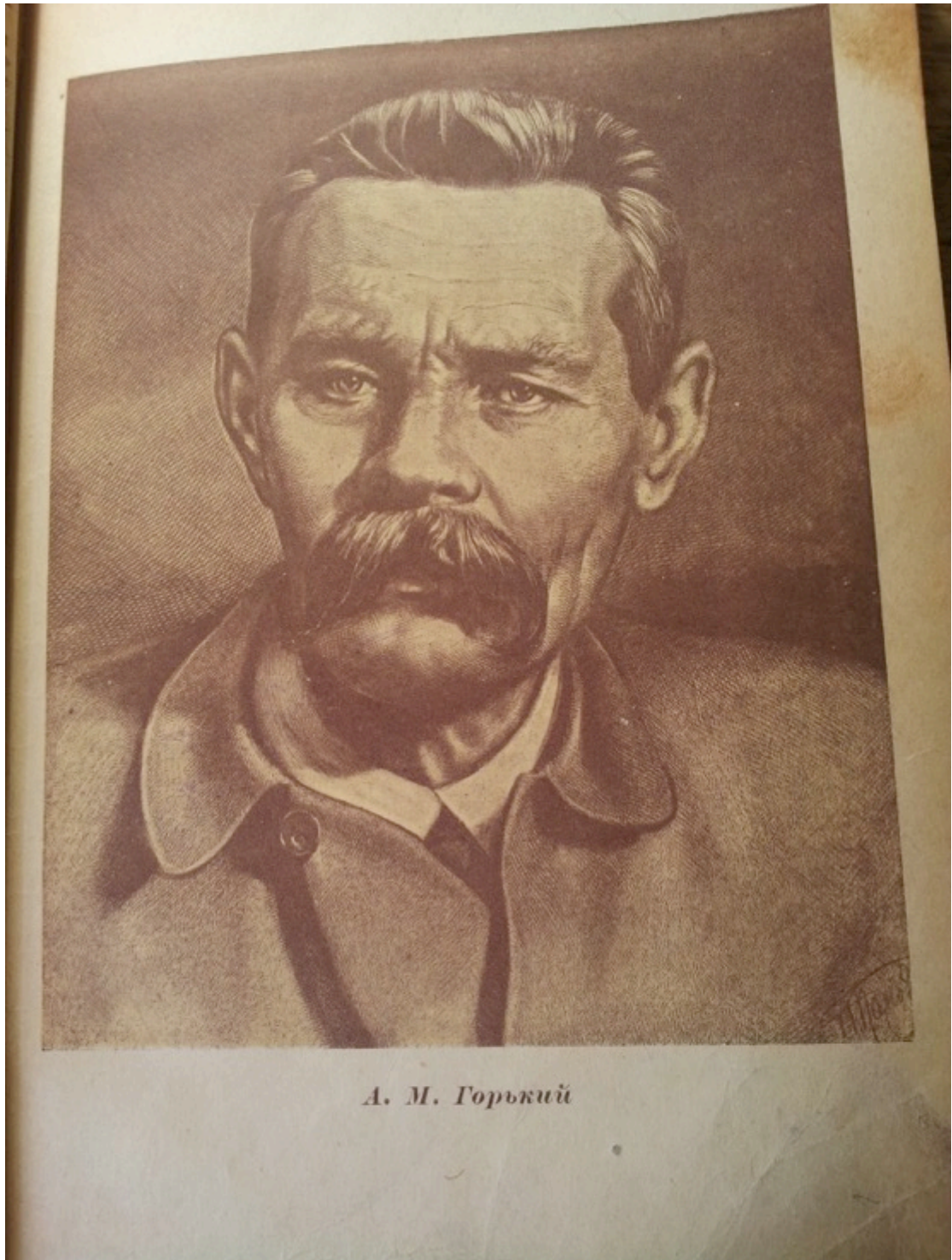


Figure 13. [By Panov], *A. M. Gor'kii*.²⁷²

Alongside authors' portraits, illustrations of literary works were also incorporated into the textbooks' essays about literary works. For example, figure

²⁷² N. A. Glagolev, 'Klassik sotsialisticheskogo realizma', *Lvs 4* (1936), 19-36.

14 features a scene from Griboedov's comedy 'The Woe From Wit' by the 19th-century artist M. S. Bashilov, who illustrated the comedy's first uncut edition (1862).²⁷³

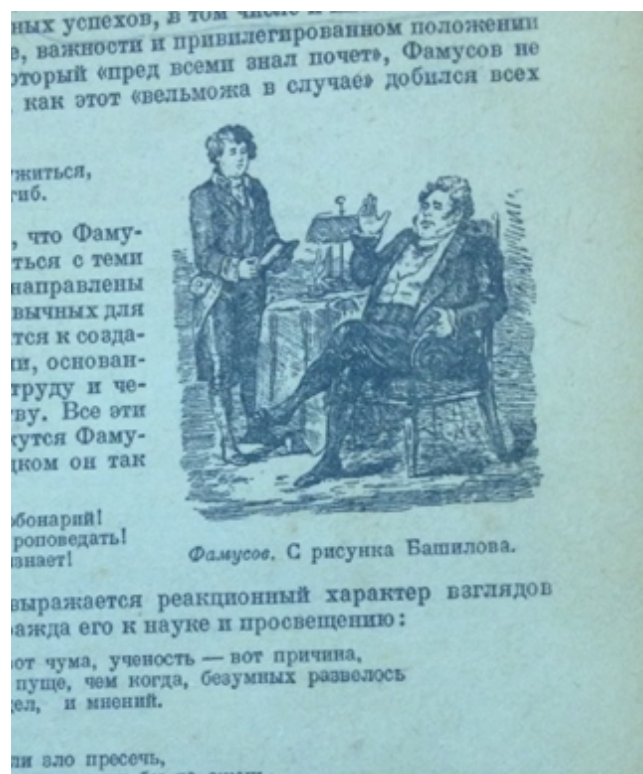


Figure 14. From a drawing by M. S. Bashilov, *Famusov*.²⁷⁴

Using visual aids in the classroom was highly encouraged by the methodological literature.²⁷⁵ The effect of this would be that only authors' faces would become unmistakably familiar to students, but also the representations of characters. Added to this, the visualisation of literary characters, aided by illustration, had, as I will now discuss, another function – that one of consolidating the

²⁷³ V. F. Amus "Gore ot uma" kak esteticheskaia problema', *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 47-48 (1946), 189-211 (p. 199).

²⁷⁴ Pospelov, Shabliovskii, *Russkaia literatura*, p. 225.

²⁷⁵ A. D. Grechishnikova, 'Nagliadnye posobiia na urokakh literatury', *Lvs* 2 (1936), 68-78.

understanding of Russian and Soviet social types and Russian socio-historical development.²⁷⁶

b. The Historico-Literary Process Illustrated By Characters

During the years leading up to WWII the history of literature courses reflected the accelerated pace of ideological indoctrination. 20 academic hours were devoted to introductory lectures, such as *Literature as ideology*. Their content was given in short propositions:

Идеология как отражение жизни в сознании людей. Общественный, исторический, классовый характер идеологии. Значение отражающих жизнь идей для практической деятельности общества – производственной, общественной, политической. [...] Возможность противоречия между идейными замыслами, убеждениями писателей и правдивым отражением жизни в их произведениях. (my italics)²⁷⁷

Ideology was thought of as the reflection of reality in people's minds, a series of images related to society, history, and class distinctions. Such imagery, the reflected reality, in literary works could even be in conflict with authors' ideologies. To enable instructors to teach these topics, however, the methodological note devoted more space to up-to-date precise ideological content and, in addition to Lenin, included quotes from Stalin and Molotov's speeches, in which the enemies of state were condemned or selected Soviet authors praised.²⁷⁸ Teachers were encouraged to study Stalin's speeches in

²⁷⁶ On the new trend, 'typification' in political posters in the 1930s, when an image, *tipazh*, rendered 'a social category' see Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, pp. 38-39, 217-218.

²⁷⁷ *Programmy srednei shkoly. Literatura, VIII-X klassy* (Narkompros, 1939), pp. 59-60.

²⁷⁸ Trotsky and Radek were added to the list of those who were criticised previously – Pereverzev, Voronsky, Bukharin, Kamenev, Averbakh. *Programmy srednei shkoly. Russkii iazyk i literatura* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1937), p. 21. Stalin's quotes with or without references to him were present: 'Маяковский как "лучший талантливейший поэт нашей советской эпохи" (Сталин)', *Ibid.*, p. 15. Stalin's role would grow with time in these programmes, for example the programme of 1952 would suggest that the directives of the CC have a direct bearing on the teaching of literature in schools and that the language analysis of works should be based on

detail, be politically up-to-date²⁷⁹ and raise the issue of class struggle at 'the literary front' when teaching.²⁸⁰ The programmes aimed to raise teachers' political acumen by providing references to appropriate quotations and presumed a lessening of students' personal approach to literature study by repeatedly emphasising the controlling role of a teacher.²⁸¹

Yet teachers' power was strictly regulated too. To ensure they could not fail to grasp the 'ideological gist' (*ideinoe sodержanie*) of a literary work, strict interpretive guidelines were included in the updated programmes. This 'ideological gist' was outlined in short propositions.²⁸² These sketches for each work of literature offered teachers precise bullet points of their lectures and the conclusions students were expected to reach as a result of the guided reading.

Thus the programme of 1937 stated clearly:

В VIII-X классах, в отличие от неполной средней школы, изучается история литературы. Преподавание истории литературы имеет целью подвести учащихся к пониманию закономерностей историко-литературного процесса.²⁸³

The understanding of the laws of the historico-literary process, as seen by ideologists and methodologists of the late 1930s, as well as the internalisation of the process, became the course's main objective. However, in the sketches

teachings of Stalin on language. *Programmy srednei shkoly. Literatura, VIII-X klassy* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii pedagogicheskikh nauk RSFSR, 1952), p. 13.

²⁷⁹ 'Преподаватель истории литературы в своей работе прежде всего должен руководствоваться теми указаниями, какие даны товарищем Сталиным в его докладе и заключительном слове на февральско-мартовском пленуме ЦК ВКП(б).' *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1937, p. 21.

²⁸⁰ 'Особенно важно систематически ориентировать в вопросе борьбы партии и всей нашей литературной общественности с врагами народа, с троцкистско-фашистской агентурой в литературе учеников X класса, где изучается преимущественно современная советская литература.' *Ibid*, p. 22.

²⁸¹ *Ibid*.

²⁸² For example, the one for Griboedov's comedy 'The Woe From Wit' the following guidelines were offered: 'Резкая критика старого строя, обличение барства, крепостного права, бюрократизма. [...]' *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1939, p. 30.

²⁸³ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1937, p. 21.

offered to teachers in the programmes, the historico-literary process remained a series of flashcards of abstract ideas, difficult to digest for adults, let alone adolescents. Hence, the call for a more concrete representation was issued. This implied a particular method of character-study, which was not limited to moral upbringing and *kharakteristika*. The protagonists of Russian classics acquired a generalising function – to illustrate socio-historical and literary development.

The study of literary character was part of the introductory lecture (alongside with the *Literature as Ideology* lecture) with the following propositions for a general study of characters:

*Образы действующих лиц произведения; типичность их социальных характеров; выделение в образе-типе определенной черты характера, составляющих жизненную позицию героя. [...] Образы второстепенных персонажей, характеризующих главных героев, мотивирующих их поступки. Образы природы (пейзаж) и обстановки; их роль в раскрытии и оценке характеров героев.*²⁸⁴ (my italics)

According to this methodology, everything in a work, including descriptions of nature, could contribute to the characterisation of a protagonist, which was more than a character or *obraz* – a type.

1) The Negative Type

The programme of 1936 prescribed spending 12 lessons ('academic hours') on Chekhov's 'Kryzhovnik' and 'Vishnevyi sad' in year 9: 'Рассказ Чехова «Крыжовник», раскрывающий тупую ограниченность, самоудовлетворенность и собственнические идеалы провинциально-

²⁸⁴ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1939, p. 60.

помещичьей среды.²⁸⁵ It was to be studied in connection with Chekhov's other two stories 'The Man in a Case' and 'On Love'. Apart from the narrative device – the stories are told during a day out hunting – the pedagogical aid for teachers insisted on highlighting that the stories were united by a central idea, the negative type represented in them: 'the person in a case' (*chelovek v futliare*), i.e. someone of hidebound and restricted perceptions²⁸⁶ An article in *Literatura v shkole* explained in detail how the main idea of Chekhov's stories was supposed to be shown through the image [*obraz*] of the man in a case ('проводимая на основе образного показа').²⁸⁷ Echoing the programme (the story was an attack on moral short-sightedness, 'осуждение тупой ограниченности'), the article provided illustrations of the type (figures 15, 16). These illustrations followed an excerpt from the literary text, given underneath, and underscored characters' negative traits. They were not far from being caricatures. Another memorable example of such illustration of a negative type is Iudushka from M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin's *The Golovlevs* (figure 17).

²⁸⁵ *Programmy srednei shkoly, Russki iazyk i literatura, 5-7 klassy, ob'iasnitel'naia zapiska, 8-10 klassy, programmy* (Leningrad: Izdanie PULVO, 1936), p. 24.

²⁸⁶ T. G. Morozova, 'Portrety futliarnykh liudei', *Lvs 1* (1936), 41-50 (p. 41).

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.



Figure 15. Zakhar Pichugin, *Belikov*.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 45.

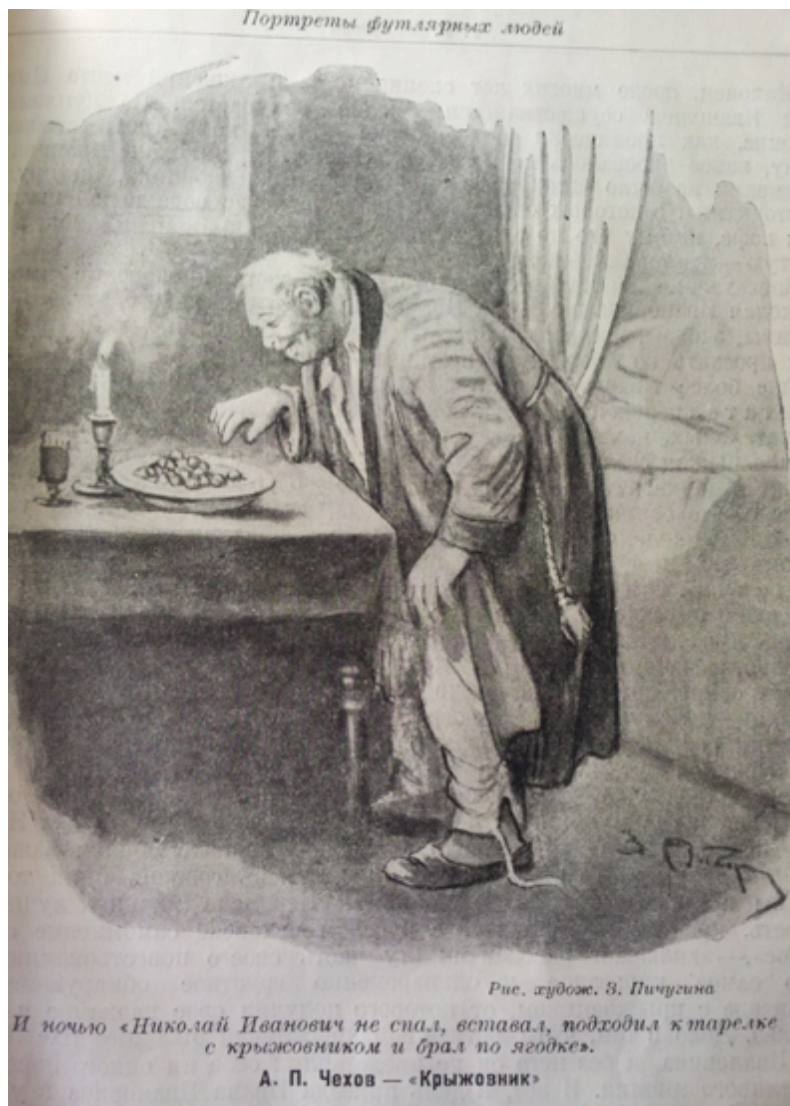


Figure 16. Zakhar Pichugin, *Nikolai Ivanovich* from 'Kryzhovnik.'²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 43.

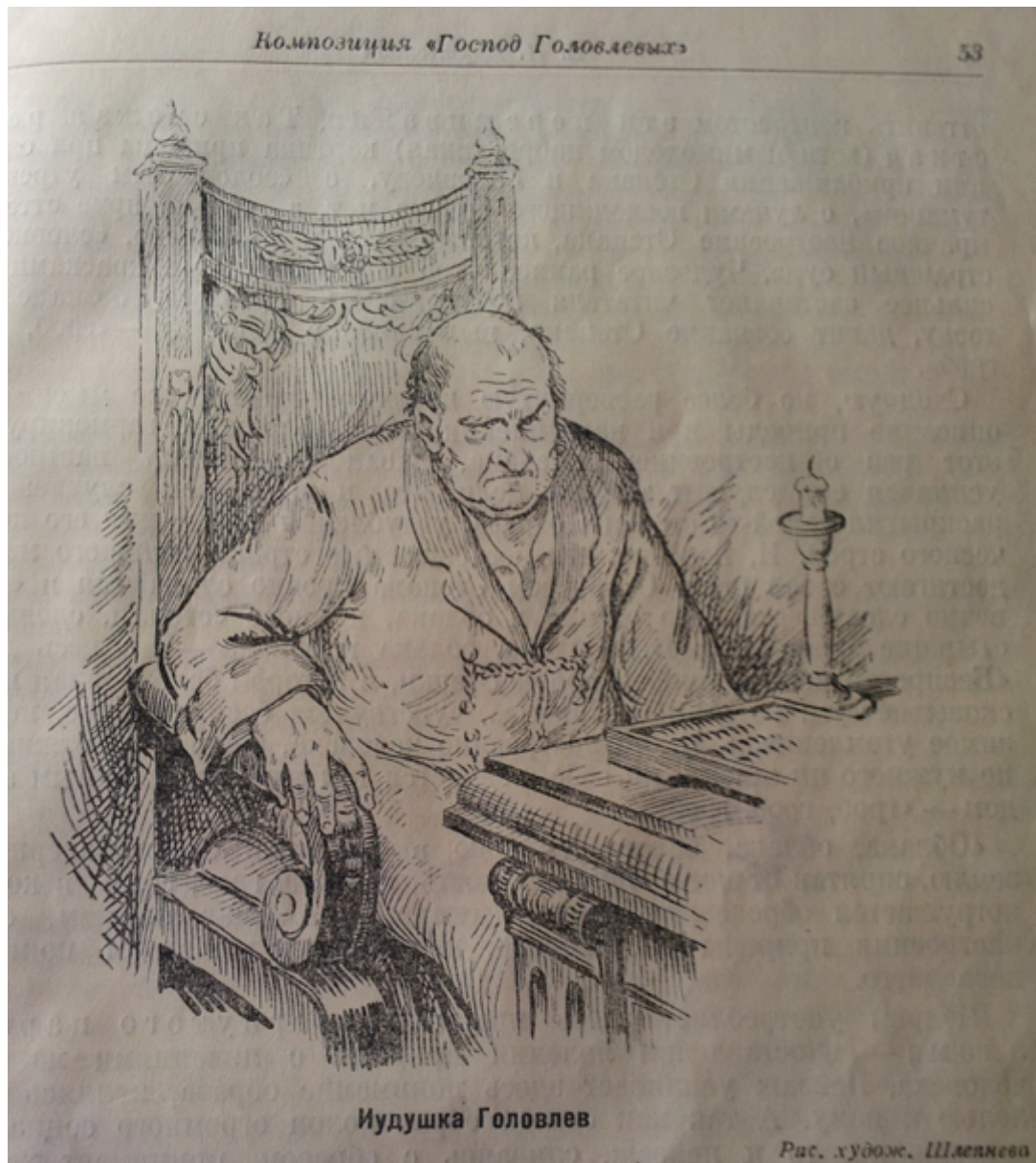


Figure 17. [Vasilii S. Shlepnev], *Iudushka Golovlev*.²⁹⁰

A few methodologists raised the role of portraits to the revelation of 'the essence' of a literary work. For example, an essay on the use of literary posters in the study of *The Dead Souls* drew a close connection between the visual effects of Gogol's representations and the main ideas of his work:

«Мертвые души» дают непревзойденную четкость обрисовок в обобщенных, синтезированных образах уродливых сторон феодально-помещичьей России. Это представляет благодарнейший материал для такого плаката, в котором

²⁹⁰ E. I. Korol'kova, 'Kompozitsiia "Gospod Golovlevykh"', *Lvs 1* (1936), 51-57 (p. 53).

доминирующее место занимала бы именно портретность -- «типаж».

Из сопоставления типов Манилова, Плюшкина, Собакевича и т.д. наиболее ярко раскрывается эпоха 40-х годов. Ясно, что художник, оформляющий плакат к «Мертвым душам», именно путем портретов-характеристик должен наиболее рельефно и остро выявить *сущность* гоголевской поэмы.²⁹¹ (my italics)

The literary poster was thus thought to be an ideal medium for crystallising the visual elements in literary representation. The 1934 edition of *Dead Souls* contained famous illustrations by A. A. Agin,²⁹² previously published separately in 1846-1847 and 1892.²⁹³ Alongside the illustration of Gogol's Pliushkin by A. A. Agin (figure 18) was published another illustration of the same figure, by P. M. Boklevskii (figure 19).

²⁹¹ P. I. Kazanskii, 'Literaturnyi plakat v shkole', *Lvs 1* (1936), 84-87 (pp. 84-85).

²⁹² N. V. Gogol', *Mertvye dushi* (Moscow: OGIZ GIKHL, 1934).

²⁹³ A. A. Agin, E. E. Bernadskii, *Sto risunkov k poeme N. V. Gogolia 'Mertvye dushi'*, 18 vols (Spb: Eduard Prats, 1846-1847); *Sto risunkov k poeme N. V. Gogolia 'Mertvye dushi'* (Spb: D. F. Fedorov, 1892).



Figure 18. A. A. Agin, *Pliushkin*.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ 'Agin Aleksandr Alekseevich (1817-1875)', *Populiarnaia khudozhestvennaia entsiklopediia*, edited by V. M. Polevoi et al., vol. 1 A-M, p. 13.



Figure 19. P. M. Boklevskii, *Pliushkin*.²⁹⁵

A well-executed portrait, accepted as a type, sometimes served as a symbol or even as the essence of the historical period it belonged to.²⁹⁶

Interestingly, the production of drawings and paintings of the 19th-century classics was thought to have different principles behind it than the mere illustration of Gor'kii's work:

Если в плакате «Мертвые души» лучше всего дать галерею

²⁹⁵ 'Boklevskii Petr Mikhailovich (1816-1897)', in *Populiarnaia khudozhestvennaia entsiklopediia*, edited by V. M. Polevoi, vol. 1 A-M, p. 87.

²⁹⁶ Kazanskii, 'Literaturnyi plakat v shkole', p. 86.

типов, то в плакате «Мать» преобладающее место займет массовая сцена – первомайская демонстрация. Отдельные персонажи на этом плакате явятся только штрихами. [...] Классовая борьба в «Главной улице» Д. Бедного показана как поражение и победа – временное поражение и окончательная победа пролетариата. Иначе говоря, поэму можно было бы назвать «1905-1917 гг.». *Само произведение представляет, если можно так выразиться, героический плакат.*²⁹⁷ (my italics)

In this passage it becomes apparent that the reductionism of such an approach to *nagliadnost'* could lead, in extreme cases, to the interpretive fallacy of reducing the meaning of a work of literature to a single (heroic in this case) idea-image. Although this was not a widespread practice and the majority of methodologists promoted the use of illustrative material as supplementary, the tendency to rely on such a reduction was nevertheless promoted among Soviet schoolchildren through the principle of *nagliadnost'*. Generalisation of this type was also practised and even encouraged in methodological literature for teachers. A particular role was reserved for conclusions – *vyvody* – which also had a reductive generalising character. The process of arriving at these certainties and loyalties was less intellectual than thoroughly based on attention to imagery.

Remarkably, the connecting line between literary characters of different authors could be also emphasised through illustrations. For example, one methodologist suggested illustrating the study of A. N. Ostrovskii with paintings by P. M. Boklevskii, an artist who had also illustrated Gogol'. Apparently, the dramatic compositions of his paintings also critically depicted the 'dark kingdom' of pre-revolutionary Russia:

²⁹⁷ Kazanskii, 'Literaturnyi plakat v shkole', p. 86.

[...] можно остановиться на иллюстрациях к пьесам «Бедная невеста» и «Бедность не порок» работы художника Боклевского, также с демократических позиций обличающего «темное царство»./ Рассматривая эти иллюстрации, учащиеся, уже знакомые с художником, отметят черты гоголевских образов и героев Островского в изображении Боклевского. Так, Коршунов напоминает Собакевича, Беневоленский – Чичикова и т.д./ Картины крупнейших художников и карикатуры, использованные на занятиях по Островскому, помогут учащимся глубже и живее понять образы великого драматурга, уяснить их огромное идейно-художественное значение.²⁹⁸

The paintings were meant to help transmit the ideological gist of a studied work, reinforcing the strict interpretive framework. For example, a tenuously related episode – the subject of the painting in figure 20 – was suggested as an example to highlight the horrors of pre-revolutionary times during the study of works by Ostrovskii. Thus, the illustrations' role was deemed not only demonstrative but also corroborative, confirming the narrow ideological interpretation that was set out in the methodological guidelines.



Figure 20. Firs Zhuravlev, *Pered ventsom*.²⁹⁹

In her article in *Literatura v shkole*, the methodologist Grechishnikova suggested

²⁹⁸ O. B. and O. L. Toddes, 'Kartina pri izuchenii proizvedenii A. N. Ostrovskogo', *Lvs* 5-6 (1938), 113-118 (pp. 117-118).

²⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 118. 'Zhuravlev Firs Sergeevich (1836-1901)', *Populiarnaia khudozhestvennaia entsiklopediia*, edited by V. M. Polevoi et al., vol. 1 A-M, p. 247.

that teachers should use the journal *Literatura v shkole*, along with *Literaturnyi sovremennik*, *Literaturnyi kritik* and *Literaturnaia ucheba*, as a source for visual aid material.³⁰⁰ Old pre-revolutionary journals (at least, of a politically appropriate kind) were also deemed helpful. For example, illustrations from the satirical journal *Gudok* (figure 21). The poster in figure 21 contained a dialogue, a pun that differentiated mere proclamations of political convictions from the readiness to suffer for them.



Figure 21. Poster from *Gudok* 9 (1862).³⁰¹

Grechishnikova thus raised the issue of using a pithy quotation as part of an illustration to help the memorization of the substance of a character or situation:

Несомненно, что, помимо указанных пособий, школа как наглядным материалом пользуется и кино, и диапозитивом, и театром, музыкой. [...] / Принцип наглядности – принцип громадной воспитательной силы. Правильное использование их в целях воспитания нашей молодежи средствами художественного слова, -- вот наша задача. Будущий строитель социалистического общества – наш теперешний

³⁰⁰ Grechishnikova, 'Nagliadnye posobiia na urokakh literatury', p. 73.

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 74.

подросток – должен владеть знанием, должен *знать материал в совершенстве*, -- только тогда в его руках художественное слово станет верным оружием в борьбе за социализм.³⁰² (my italics)

To master knowledge in order to participate in the struggles of socialism was, at least within the materials promoting this heavy emphasis on the visual approach, to internalise a system of images in their interrelatedness.

2) The Superfluous People

The study of each work of literature presumed a treatment of its characters in detail. The programme of 1937 already claimed a subtle shift in the approach to '*obrazy*'. Previously programmes had said a character or poetic image was part of the author's ideology and beliefs, which were formed by his historical circumstances. By 1937 the connection between an *obraz* and the epoch which produced it was treated as direct and divorced from the author, from the agency that created it. The key task for the student in this study was to identify a character's 'truthful' and typical features, characteristic of the author's historical reality, and to be able to give a '*kharakteristika*' of an explicitly evaluative kind.³⁰³ This echoed Lunacharskii's view of the potential of literary types for educating a generation³⁰⁴ but took it further towards ideological indoctrination.

³⁰² Ibid., p. 77.

³⁰³ 'Раскрывая познавательное значение произведений Пушкина, Гоголя, Л. Толстого, М. Горького и др., следует доводить учащихся до полного и отчетливого представления о литературных персонажах, надо выяснить степень их правдоподобности и типичности, определяя при этом и идеологическую позицию автора и историческую обстановку, содействующую проявлениям и развитию тех сторон действительности, какие нашли свое отражение в этих персонажах.' *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1937, pp. 30-31.

³⁰⁴ 'Правдивый тип в литературе — это и есть портрет, и чем он шире захватывает, тем более он приобретает художественности и общественной значимости. /В таком виде давал портреты Грибоедов, и притом в речи и в действии, а к этому комедиограф и призван. Синтетически, не окарикатуривая, взять сквозь смех самую необходимую сущность фигур, типизирующих целую полосу, целую породу в современном обществе, —

The analysis of character types now assumed a paramount importance: 'Обучение связной и исчерпывающей характеристике героев следует признать одной из существенных задач преподавания литературы в старших классах' (original emphasis).³⁰⁵ The key concept expressed here is 'connected', referring to a comparative study of characters across the works studied, independently of date or authorial intention.

The fact that not only programmes highlighted the importance of this particular method – other late-1930s published methodological materials too referred abundantly to such character study – confirms the centrality of the approach. It was described in detail in a range of methodological aids as one of the main tasks of teaching literature in upper years.³⁰⁶ Another example is the first issue of *Literatura v shkole*, in which its head N. A. Glagolev writes in the inaugural article:

Почему мы остановились так подробно на вопросе о методах преподавания, о типическом в литературе, о содержании литературного процесса? Потому, что эти вопросы должны занять одно из центральных мест в работе нашего журнала. Проблема типического в литературе, как и проблема характера, -- одна из наиболее сложных и наименее разработанных проблем в нашей научной литературе.³⁰⁷

Glagolev traced back the concept of the typical in literature, as well as the issue

этому нужно учиться, и этому, пожалуй, ни у кого нельзя так научиться, как у Грибоедова.' A. V. Lunacharskii, 'A. S. Griboedov' (1929), in *A. S. Griboedov v russkoi kritike: Sbornik statei*, edited by A. M. Gordina (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1958), pp. 324-342 (p. 339).

³⁰⁵ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1937, p. 31.

³⁰⁶ 'При раскрытии художественного образа мы пользуемся такими приемами: сперва ведем с учащимися вступительную беседу, потом разбираем наиболее яркие и характерные для данного образа места произведения, ставим ряд вопросов и составляем краткие планы и, наконец, подводим итог, суммируя разрозненные впечатления от данного образа в одно целое, и составляем общий план для устного пересказа или письменной работы. P. E. Leliakov, 'Rabota nad obrazom-personazhem na urokakh literaturnogo chteniia', *Russkii iazyk i literatura v srednei shkole* (Kiev: Narkompros USSR, Upravlenie shkol, 1939), p. 9.

³⁰⁷ N. A. Glagolev, 'Ocherednye zadachi zhurnala', *Lvs 1* (1936), 3-9 (p. 7).

of character, to the radical critics, and the journal devoted much attention to them. In its 'consultation' rubric, which addressed possible methodological queries posed by teachers, *Literatura v shkole* dealt with the elements of literary work and *obrazy* in particular:

Типические образы дают или обобщение черт и свойств, присущих определенной социальной группе в определенный же исторический период (Базаров, Рахметов, Онегин), или обобщение черт и свойств, возникших в ту или иную эпоху под воздействием идеологии господствующего класса и присущих отдельным представителям различных социальных групп («Скупой рыцарь» Пушкина).³⁰⁸

It was not sufficient that students would have to analyse literary characters, understanding their social flaws and exercising moral judgements over them, and echoing textbooks' authors and teachers. Students were encouraged to think of these as social types. And there was an important role reserved to these literary types as well – one of historical *preemstvennost'*.

Professor Timofeev, writing in *Pravda* in 1936, reminded his colleagues about the importance of the historical context of the literature lessons that focused on 'zhivye obrazy'.³⁰⁹ He advised teachers to consider Stalin, Kirov, and Zhdanov's comments on the teaching of history in school and to apply a similar attitude to the historical understanding of literature, which first and foremost implied a rigid periodization that could be concretely represented through a range of literary types. A similar call for 'learning from' the reforms of history teaching in secondary school was made by N. A. Glagolev in the journal *Literatura v shkole*.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ G. A. Abramovich, 'Kakovy osnovnye elementy literaturno-khudozhestvennogo proizvedeniia', *Lvs* 1 (1936), 94-96 (p. 94).

³⁰⁹ L. I. Timofeev, 'Zadachi prepodavaniia', *Pravda*, 8 August 1936, p. 3. Also see his article 'O tipicheskom kharaktere v literature', *Lvs* 2 (1936), 41-45.

³¹⁰ N. A. Glagolev, 'O prepodavanii literatury', *Lvs* 3 (1936), 3-7 (p. 3).

Maxim Gor'kii's detailed notes on the textbook for the 9th year (G. Abramovich, B. Brainina, A. Egorin), written in 1934, were also published on the same page of *Pravda* in abridged form.³¹¹ The introduction to the article noted that the textbook's authors had already taken Gor'kii's comments into consideration. In them, Gor'kii addressed the problem of historical introductions to the periodization of literary history, warning that this periodization should not be simplified and that the didactic potential of historical parallels should not be overlooked. He advised adding a list of main events to each period, but also complicating the historical commentary. For example, it was important to explain why under the Romanovs' rule, the German feudal elite had occupied prominent administrative positions – this was, he contended, because of the Romanov dynasty's inherent mistrust of Russians in administrative positions. Gor'kii also criticised the oversimplified introductory chapter to Leo Tolstoi: he saw a parallel between the fight of the boyar elite against Peter the Great and the aristocracy's fight against Nicolas I and wanted the authors of textbooks to be able to draw students' attention to these historical parallels, uncovering the roots of feudalism in the liberal opposition to the tsars and bureaucracy. This, Gor'kii thought, was relevant to the study of Leo Tolstoi, because his work tackled the pressures of an aristocratic upbringing.

Historical clarifications were necessary not only in order to understand a literary character. For example, Gor'kii thought it insufficient to state, in a chapter on Dostoevskii, that the author was against revolutionaries, without clarifying what

³¹¹ Maksim Gor'kii, 'Zametki na uchebnik literatury', *Pravda*, 8 August 1936, p. 3.

kind of revolutionaries he rejected. These clarifications were meant to bring literature and history closer together in readers' minds:

Потребность новой жизни, новых людей – слова очень туманного содержания, надобно указать более реальные и ясные причины тревожного и критического настроения Чацких, Печориных, Рудиных и прочих этого рода. [...]

Особо смущает *слабо подчеркнутая связь литературы с жизнью*. Тургенев утверждал, что в основу характеров, изображаемых им, он всегда берет характер одного лица, затем добавляет к нему черты характеров сродных.³¹² (my italics)

Using the plural when referring to Chatskii, Pechorin, Rudin and other literary characters, Gor'kii already took for granted that these were drawn from life and had a historically representative function. The programmes' authors paid heed to Gor'kii's advice and constructed a connecting line of these historical types, exemplified by literary characters from different classic works with the goal of political indoctrination in mind.

A prime example of the close connection between life and literature, according to Gor'kii, was given by Chernyshevskii's characters, inspired directly by identifiable real people. But Gor'kii went further, and suggested creating relations between these types:

Следовало бы указать, кто из них родственник Базарова, кто – Рудина, да отметить и гоголевские типы.

Вообще было бы гораздо *нагляднее* для школьников, если бы им показали *преемственность* типов по линиям: Недоросль – Фонвизина, Подколесин – Гоголя, Обломов – Гончарова, Безухов – Л. Толстого и т. д. Чацкий, Онегин, Печорин до Санина и далее. Рахметов до подпольщиков типа Куйбышева. Поставленные в такие ряды типы показали бы школьникам и влияние эпох на организацию характеров, и силу изобразительности каждого автора, и *преемственность*

³¹² Ibid.

идей, коими литература питалась.³¹³ (my italics)

Gor'kii thought it practical to create such a relation between literary types of Russian classics for schoolchildren's clear understanding of the intellectual and social history of Russia and how each historical stage affected character formation. Following this advice, some heroes were indeed arranged into 'a historical chain' of *obrazy*, one of the most infamous examples being the chain of 'superfluous people'.

First coined by Turgenev,³¹⁴ the term 'superfluous people' later expanded to become an entire gallery of literary heroes. Either listless (Onegin or Pechorin), or vehement (Rudin or Bazarov), the so-called *lishnie liudi* were allegedly representative types of people who could not develop or apply their talents under the social structure of their societies at the time.³¹⁵ Soviet analysis of the superfluous people tended to put a 'class war' spin on this established type (a representative of the exhausted gentry etc.), and was often buttressed with appropriate illustrations. For example, figure 22 represents Onegin, fatigued and bored. Figure 23 is a typical representation of Chatskii, unable to be heard or appreciated.³¹⁶

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ I. S. Turgenev, *Dnevnik lishniago [sic] cheloveka* (Spb: I. Glazunov, 1911).

³¹⁵ A. M. Lavretskii, 'Lishnie liudi', in *Literaturnaia entsiklopediia v 11 tomakh*, 11 vols (Moscow: OGIZ RSFSR, 1932), vol. 6, columns 514-540; Rufus W. Mathewson, 'The Soviet Hero and the Literary Heritage', *American Slavic and East European Review* 12:4 (1953), 506-523 (p. 509). On the literary historian, D. A. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii, who played an important role in developing the idea of *lishnie liudi* see Catriona Kelly, 'The Education of the Will: Advice Literature, *Zakal*, and Manliness in Early-Twentieth-Century Russia', in *Russian Masculinities in History and Culture*, edited by Barbara Evans Clements, Rebecca Friedman, Dan Healey (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 131-151 (pp. 140-141).

³¹⁶ Lavretskii considers Chatskii to be a superfluous person. This was not always the case, since Chatskii's Decembrist ideas were often emphasized, turning him into a revolutionary figure. Lavretskii, 'Lishnie liudi'.



Figure 22. *Onegin*.³¹⁷

³¹⁷ A. M. Lavretskii, "Problema "lishnikh liudei v russkoi literature"", *Lvs 3* (1936), 8-19 (p. 11).



Figure 23. *Chatskii*.³¹⁸

3) The New Man

A different type of hero, the new man, was called for by the 19th-century radical democratic critics.³¹⁹ They applauded the protagonists of Chernyshevskii's 'What

³¹⁸ Lavretskii, 'Problema "lishnikh liudei v russkoi literature"', p. 15.

Is To Be Done?'. But the problem of the 'superfluous person' was considered as solved in a classless society: the Socialist revolution 'turned any superfluous people into people in high demand' (exemplified by literary characters from the works of Socialist realism).³²⁰ The best example in the school programme was Nikolai Ostrovskii's *Pavka Korchagin*. Soviet illustrations of the new heroes, including the 19th-century protagonists, represented resolute active men, as in figures 24 and 25.



Figure 24. V. A. Milashevskii, *Rakhmetov*.³²¹

³¹⁹ For example, N. A. Dobroliubov, 'Chto takoe oblomovshchina?', *Otechestvennye zapiski* I-IV (1859), M. A. Antonovich, 'Asmodei nashego vremeni', *Russkii vestnik* 2 (1862). Both articles are referred to by Rufus W. Mathewson, 'Soviet Hero And The Literary Heritage', p. 508.

³²⁰ A. M. Lavretskii, 'Problema "lishnikh liudei v russkoi literature"', p. 19.

³²¹ N. G. Chernyshevskii, *Chto delat'? Iz rasskazov o novykh liudiakh*, edited by N. V. Vodovozov, illustrations by V. A. Milashevskii (Moscow: Academia, 1937).



Figure 25. E. A. Kibrik, *Pavel Korchagin*.³²²

In contrast to the static representations of superfluous men (usually portrayed as listless, idle, and deep in thought, see figures 22, 23), the new heroes were portrayed in-motion, as if caught in the middle of a purposeful action. Typical of this are illustrations of Rakhmetov from Chernyshevskii's *What Is To Be Done?* (Figure 24) and Korchagin from *How The Steel Was Tempered* (Figure 25). Both characters are shown in mid-activity, apparently full of energetic purpose.³²³ Juxtaposing the superfluous men and the new men rendered the idea that the Soviet state had indeed solved the problem of superfluous men.

³²² E. Z. Balabanovich, 'Ostrovskii N. A.', *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, edited by A. A. Surkov, 9 vols (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1962-1978), vol. 5 (1968), columns 500-502; A Soviet artist, 'Kibrik Evgenii Adol'fovich (1906-1978)', *Populiarnaia khudozhestvennaia entsiklopediia*, edited by V. M. Polevoi et al., vol. 1 A-M, p. 325.

³²³ On the representation of the new man in the 1930s see Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, pp. 36-43. Bonnell highlights that 'intense effort and determination' was supposed to be the typical emotional expression of the Stalinist model citizen, p. 41.

4) Political Figures

Gor'kii was mostly concerned with the *preemstvennost'* in literature. His take on literary characters as a snapshot of a socio-historical type and the idea of needing to draw historical parallels within Russian history and establishing connections between literary types based on these parallels, were implemented in the programmes with a slight but significant spin. The connecting line of heroes from the infamous superfluous men to the new men began to include not only literary figures, but also real political figures, thus enhancing its potential for political indoctrination. This use of concrete examples showed the principle of *nagliadnost'* at work in making sure that children in the upper years of secondary school saw 'the laws of the historico-literary process.'³²⁴ In this way, the history of literature course for the higher years capitalised on the Russian classics to inculcate in children a sense of the 'natural' development from 19th-century Russian intellectual thought to modern state policies. Education used history and literature to back up the rationale for loyalty to the state and its policies:

История и литература в советской школе призваны воспитывать в детях горячую любовь к социалистической родине, к нашей великой партии и жгучую ненависть к ее врагам, к врагам рабочих и крестьян, фашистам и фашистскому отребью – троцкистско-бухаринским шпионам и диверсантам.

Историко-литературный анализ, изучение произведений, использование творчества классиков в воспитательном плане, *связь изучаемого материала с современностью* – вот что характерно для преподавания литературы в школе. Изучая былины о русских богатырях, современное творчество народов Советского Союза, гениальные произведения Пушкина, Толстого, Гоголя, Горького и других великих писателей, советский школьник проникается пафосом общественного служения своему

³²⁴ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1937, p. 21.

народу, великой силой советского патриотизма.³²⁵ (my italics)

The approach openly used historical and literary analysis to establish an overt, if counter-factual, connection between literary characters and the contemporary ideal type of the New Soviet citizen. Russian classics served as items of 'the chain of literary development reflecting the concretely historic process of class struggle.'³²⁶ In other words, the programme traced the evolution of Russian literature all the way to the Congress of Soviet Writers (All-Union Writers Conference).³²⁷ It was as if this programme had its own 'unity of form and content,' linking disparate works of literature into a peculiar mosaic that produced a grandiose and illustrated myth of Russian society's exodus, from the darkness of feudal and capitalist regimes into the paradise of the future Communist state via the Soviet present (to which each studied Russian classical author contributed, as far as he could in his 'limited class consciousness', as a fighter against the injustice of his own epoch and a prophet of socialism).³²⁸

The character study in the new method went hand in hand with the study of biographies. The contribution made to communist upbringing by teaching the biographies of Lomonosov, Radishchev, Pushkin, Belinskii, and Maiakovskii was increasingly emphasised.³²⁹ Belinskii, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevskii were brought into the curriculum also as personalities – as anti-types to the 'superfluous man' who was supposed to be characteristic of 19th-century psychology in its negative

³²⁵ M. P. Mal'tsev, 'Dvadtsat' velikikh let', *Lvs* 6 (1937), 12-27 (p. 18).

³²⁶ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1936, p. 15.

³²⁷ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1936, p. 31. In year 10, students were supposed to study the selective speeches and conclusions of the Writer's Congress.

³²⁸ This was in line with 'the discourse of power' (moving from the capitalist darkness to socialist 'light') as described by Igal Halfin in his book *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

³²⁹ *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1939, pp. 9-13.

manifestation. Although works by Dobroliubov and Belinskii had been included in the programme since 1934, in 1936 a new emphasis was placed on the study of the critics' biographies in year 9.³³⁰ More tenuously (given that they were not literary figures, but this point was never raised or questioned), communist leaders became the ideal *obrazy* to emulate for the New Soviet man. Continuity and legitimacy were established through Gor'kii's original principle of *preemstvenost'*, embodied through concrete 'images' (*obrazy*), and also represented visually, often through evocative parallels.

The cover of the journal *Literatura v shkole* 5-6 (1938) relied on the iconography used on the cover of Herzen's annual journal *Poliarnaia zvezda*,³³¹ as designed by William James Linton (see figures 26-28).

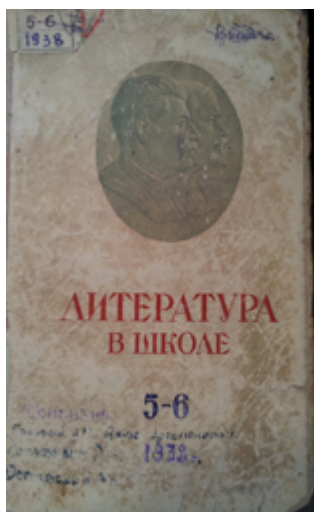


Figure 26. Stalin, Lenin. Cover, *Literatura v shkole* 5-6 (1938).

³³⁰ Evgenii Ponomarev, "Osnovatel' russkoi literatury" M. V. Lomonosov i literatura XVIII veka v sovetskoi shkole', in *Uchebniki detstva: iz istorii shkol'noi knigi VII-XXI vekov: Trudy seminara 'Kul'tura detstva: normy, tsennosti, praktiki'*, volume 3, issue 13 (Moscow: RGGU 2013), pp. 169-195 (p. 169).

³³¹ 'Poliarnaia zvezda', *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, edited by B. A. Vvedenskii, 2nd edn (Gosudarstvennoe nauchnoe izdatel'stvo 'Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia', 1955), vol. 34, p. 119.



Figure 27. Stalin, Lenin. Inside cover, *Literatura v shkole* 1 (1936).

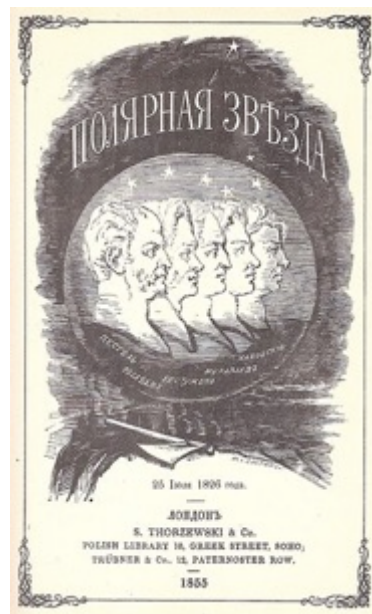


Figure 28. William James Linton, Cover, *Poliarnaia zvezda* (1855).

Efforts were made in the 1930s to retrieve Herzen's archives and to reprint a

critical edition of *Kolokol*, though these ultimately proved fruitless. Yet the academic research that went into the edition's preparation brought forth a range of publications devoted to *Poliarnaia zvezda*.³³² Hence some of Herzen's material was made accessible to the pedagogues of the time, including in the journal *Literatura v shkole*.³³³

Another example of these parallelisms appeared in 1937, Pushkin's anniversary year, when an article in *Literatura v shkole*, devoted to the history of Soviet school, was illustrated by scenes from Stalin's biography.³³⁴ The illustrations were conspicuously similar to those illustrating Pushkin's biography. In figure 29 young Pushkin reads his poem in front of the overjoyed Derzhavin, while in figure 30, young Dzhugashvili proudly confronts his strict teachers of Tiflis seminary. In figures 31 and 32 both Pushkin and Stalin are portrayed as actively engaged in the activities of secret societies.



Figure 29. Pushkin's exam in Tsarskoe selo.³³⁵

³³² Vadim Vatsuro, Natan Eidel'man, "Poliarnaia zvezda dekabristov – "Poliarnaia zvezda" Gertsena', *Nlo* 42 (2000) < <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2000/42/dialog.html> > [accessed 8 August 2015].

³³³ N. A. Glagolev, 'Literaturno-kriticheskie vzgliady A. I. Gertsena', *Lvs* 2 (1936), 30-40.

³³⁴ Mal'tsev, 'Dvadtsat' velikikh let', pp. 14, 17, 27.

³³⁵ Glagolev, 'Pushkin i sovremennost'', p. 21.



Figure 30. Bagrationi, *Dzhugashvili's Expulsion from the Seminary in Tiflis.*³³⁶



Figure 31. *Pushkin Participates in a Secret Society.*³³⁷

³³⁶ Mal'tsev, 'Dvadtsat' velikikh let', p. 14.

³³⁷ Timofeev, 'Lirika A. S. Pushkina (o spetsifike liricheskoi poezii)', p. 19.



Figure 32. P. Busyrev, *Stalin Leads Adjarians in Batumi*.³³⁸

The article ended on a high note, thanking 'Stalinskii Tsentral'nyi Komitet'³³⁹ and, following the principle of *nagliadnost'*, was illustrated with a photograph of grateful Soviet students (figure 33), enacting the ritual expression of gratitude in a visual image.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ Mal'tsev, 'Dvadtsat' velikikh let', p. 17.

³³⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

³⁴⁰ On rituals of gratitude in Soviet public culture see Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture From Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). On the function of the 'thanking' ritual for propaganda for children see Catriona Kelly, 'Grandpa Lenin and Uncle Stalin: Soviet Leader Cult for Little Children', in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships*, edited by Polly Jones, Jan C. Behrends, and E. A. Rees (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 102-122 (p. 108). In this essay Kelly, tracing the history and identifying functions of the personality cult, highlights that Stalin's images as a child or adolescent were rather common (p. 107).



Figure 33. Physical culture parade. 1937.³⁴¹

The images of Lenin, Stalin, or Lenin and Stalin together (see figure 34 or title page figure 27) are frequent on the pages of literary textbooks and methodological literature alike.³⁴²



Figure 34. From a painting by P. V. Vasil'ev, *Lenin Speaks to Stalin*.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Mal'tsev, 'Dvadtsat' velikikh let', p. 27.

³⁴² See coloured plates in *Lvs 1* (1938).

³⁴³ 'Velikii prazdnik narodov Sovetskoi strany', *Lvs 1* (1938), 5-8 (p. 7).

The fact that Stalin regularly cited favourite authors in his speeches³⁴⁴ – another track for the absorption of literary material throughout Soviet society – accommodated such inclusion of the political into the sphere of pedagogy of literature. Yet these inclusions had another role – the leaders, dead or alive, were thus becoming part of the symbolic and imaginary continuity:

Наша партия воспитывает политических деятелей ленинского типа, о которых говорил в своей речи товарищ Сталин, до конца преданных делу социализма, мудрых, честных и бесстрашных в борьбе с врагами народа.

Образцом такого политического деятеля ленинского типа является наш вождь, отец и учитель товарищ Сталин.

«Образ Сталина вздымается над миром, объединяя мысли и чувства миллионов, пробуждая их волю к борьбе, зажигая их верой в победу, -- образ бесстрашного мужественного большевика, который всей своей жизнью показывает пример беззаветного служения народу.»³⁴⁵

Obraz Stalina was part of the artificial yet politically fruitful line of literary types, from superfluous people to the new type of men, that is to say part of a Russian literary tradition that affected the imagination of Soviet citizens.³⁴⁶

More generally, the *obraz* as employed in pedagogical literature of the Stalin era does not coincide with a historical subject or literary character because it is divorced from its original context; it is rather an idealised generalised mental

³⁴⁴ On Stalin's citing from Russian classics see Sergei Iarov, 'Ritorika vozhdiei: V. I. Lenin i I. V. Stalin kak oratory', *Zvezda* 1 (2007), paragraph 26 < <http://magazines.russ.ru/zvezda/2007/11/ia11.html> > [accessed 9 August 2015].

³⁴⁵ 'Velikii prazdnik narodov Sovetskoi strany', p. 7. The quote is from 'Polnaia pobeda bloka kommunistov i bespartiinykh', *Pravda*, 14 December 1937, p. 1.

³⁴⁶ Catriona Kelly in her study of the Stalin cult for children argues that the Soviet use of representation was 'radically novel', especially in comparison to the traditions of tsarist ruler symbolism, and points to both 'easily recognizable tropes' and 'more elusive images' of the propaganda for children. Catriona Kelly, 'Riding the Magic Carpet: Children and Leader Cult in the Stalin Era', *Slavic and East European Journal* 49:2 (2005), 199-222 (p. 203).

visualisation, which joins extra-contextual ideological signifiers.³⁴⁷ Such a process of perception of others, be they fictional or historical, was taught in school through literature methodology.

c. Conclusion

In 1846, Gogol' refused A. A. Agin and E. E. Bernadskii's rather lucrative offer to publish an illustrated edition of *Dead Souls*. The author explained his reasons in a letter to P. A. Pletnev: '[...] я — враг всяких политипажей и модных выдумок. Товар должен продаваться лицом, и нечего его подслащивать этим кондитерством.'³⁴⁸ Such an edition nevertheless appeared in 1934, when the principles of *nagliadnost'* and *preemstvennost'* were put to the political use of indoctrination. In the history of literature course, these principles were more than illustrations and connecting devices for the literary works studied and served the overall agenda of the course.

The principles of *nagliadnost'* and *preemstvennost'* contributed to making literary characters into types that advanced the Soviet story of socio-historical development through literary study. They could also reduce an artistic meaning to the function of *oblichenie* and generalisation of a literary idea, visualising a

³⁴⁷ Jan Plamper in his study of the origins of the Stalin cult and involvements of officials in visual representations of Stalin cites the anecdote of Artem Sergeev (Stalin's adopted son). In it, Stalin, the historical subject, allegedly points out to his son Vasili that he himself is not the Stalin of the people's imagination, the Soviet power of the newspapers and portraits. Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: The Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 2012), p. xiii. Plamper suggests that the cult was mainly a visual phenomenon. I agree but would argue that it is possible to extend the definition of the visual to include 'the visualised' – the process of visualisation, fashioned by the literary pedagogy, which thus had a role in the cult alongside the mass media and political art. Another point emerges if one applies a term *obraz* – that one of the Russian orthodox tradition, in the context of which the episode with students' turning the image of Stalin to the wall because 'the energy pouring from the leader's image made it impossible to converse freely' makes sense. Plamper, *The Stalin Cult*, p. xvi.

³⁴⁸ N. V. Gogol', 'Pis'mo Pletnevu P. A., 20 marta n. st. 1846 g. Rim', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, edited by N. F. Bel'chikov, B.V. Tomashevskii, A. N. Mikhailova, 14 vols (Moscow, Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1952), vol. 13, p. 45.

type, as Gogol' had warned. The types from different classic works were connected chronologically among themselves to represent the laws of socio-historical process – from an individualistic lost superfluous hero to a purposeful and socially useful new man. The line culminated in the figure of an ideal communist, with Stalin as its best model.

Thus the protagonists of classic Russian literature, along with real historical characters, illustrated the historical process that justified Soviet power. The course also ensured that children possessed a gallery of image-types in their minds against which they would judge their surroundings. In addition, the new methods of memorisation of poems and texts encouraged children to learn poetry by heart as a series of images;³⁴⁹ Soviet children were thus called to actively exercise their imagination in their literary lessons. The provision of abundant visual aids, such as illustrations of classical texts, also prompted an intense interaction between children's spontaneous internal impressions and the state-sponsored imagery that was suggested to them.

Whether the political aims of the course were successful will be seen in the chapters devoted to the reception of this type of indoctrination. Before addressing these questions, it is productive to consider contemporary critics' opinion of the course and their warnings as to the possible problematic consequences of the emphasis on typification, generalisation, and illustrations.

³⁴⁹ The extracts that needed to be studied by heart were listed in the programme of 1939. *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1939, pp. 62-63.

3. CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES TO THE NEW METHOD

The results of the new teaching methods were never taken for granted. They were regularly assessed by school directors, GORONO, and OBLONO, as well as through regular annual inspections. Inspectors' comments were usually published and programmes could be slightly adjusted according to their suggestions. Thus, a methodological note considered the results of a course review based on a selective inspection of schools for the academic year 1935/36:

В программе 9-го класса наибольшие трудности для понимания учащихся представил роман Достоевского "Преступление и наказание". Усвоение этого произведения было обследовано в ряде провинциальных школ, и результаты оказались во многих случаях отрицательные. Более или менее удовлетворительно справились только школы: Шуйская, Писцовская, Исакогорская, Балахнинская им. Бубнова и Архангельская. Этот роман напрасно включен в программу, и его следует изъять.³⁵⁰

Following this criticism by the commission, Dostoevskii was removed from the programme the following academic year. (A few other works were also removed from the programme but recommended as part of the extracurricular reading list, such as *Fata Morgana* by Kotsiubinskii.)³⁵¹

Separately from such official inspections of programmes' implementation into practice, a few high-profile personalities published their own evaluations of the new standard course in history of literature in *Pravda* or similar publications. For example, Viktor Shklovskii was briefly involved into the discussion of the new method in 1936. Shklovskii, after having consulted examples of school

³⁵⁰ P. D. Kraevskii, B. V. Rozhdestvenskii, *Literatura v nepolnoi srednei i srednei shkole, Instrukтивно-metodicheskoe pis'mo* (Narkompros, 1936), p. 11.

³⁵¹ *Programmy srednei shkoly. Russkii iazyk. Literatura, VIII-X klassy* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1937), p. 32.

essays preserved by a regional GORONO in 1936, demonstrated the poor effect current methods had on children's work. 'Толстой, Гоголь, Пушкин в ученических сочинениях не отличаются друг от друга' – Shklovskii wrote in *Pravda* in 1936.³⁵² To prove his point he quoted extensively from students' written work.³⁵³ He mainly blamed the authors of textbooks who, in his opinion, encouraged a schematic approach to the classics by suggesting such essay topics as 'The Education of Aristocratic Youth Based on *Onegin*', 'The Nobility of Moscow and St Petersburg based on Pushkin's novel *Onegin*', 'Onegin as a Representative of the Aristocratic Youth of 1820s', or 'Aristocracy according to Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*'. Shklovskii complained that invoking these issues approximated to the study of the aristocracy, a historical study in essence, rather than that of literature, and as a result, the students produced schematic answers. He complained of a dry and fragmented approach ('Художественное произведение – это не осиновое полено, которое можно колоть в щепу.'), incapable of transmitting any of the pleasure of reading literature to schoolchildren.³⁵⁴ In concert with other critics of the textbooks in 1936, Shklovskii contributed to the changes that took place in programmes and textbooks after 1936.

At the April VLKSM Congress of 1936, a direct confrontation between Kornei Chukovskii and Grigorii Gukovskii emerged over the biographies of classic

³⁵² Viktor Shklovskii, 'Deloproizvodstvo po literature', *Pravda*, 8 August 1936, p. 3.

³⁵³ For instance, Shklovskii quotes from students' essays: 'В 20-х годах 19-го века начинается разложение дворянского быта. Это нашло отражение в произведениях А. С. Пушкина'; ' В поэме «Мертвые души» Гоголя [...] автор также показал упадок натурального хозяйства и зарождение торгово-промышленной буржуазии.' Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

authors studied in school.³⁵⁵ Chukovskii took Gukovskii to task for his introduction to an edition of Krylov's fables.³⁵⁶ He criticised Gukovskii for painting a less than positive portrait of Krylov as a person.³⁵⁷ This confrontation may have had a role to play in the changes in programmes of 1937.³⁵⁸

In the late 1930s both authors were actively engaged in the discussion of school programmes of literature. Their opinion mattered since Kornei Chukovskii (1882-1969) was a famous children's poet and translator from English, while Gukovskii was a famous academic and teacher.³⁵⁹ Apart from his role as a children's author, Chukovskii was a widely respected and feared literary critic.³⁶⁰ Despite the fact that 'Krokodil' and some of Chukovsky's other books (for instance, *Mukha-Tsokotukha*) were criticised in the 1920s, including by the then head of Narkompros Nadezhda Krupskaiia, in the 1930s, his reputation was restored, rising as the influence of the so-called 'pedological school' came under assault.³⁶¹

Grigorii Gukovskii (1902-1950) graduated from Petrograd University's historico-philological faculty in 1923 and forged his academic career in the northern

³⁵⁵ 'Iz rechi Chukovskogo na s'ezde VLKSM: O detiakh, literature i Narkomprose', *Izvestiia*, 24 April 1936, p. 3.

³⁵⁶ I. A. Krylov, *Basni*, edited by G. A. Gukovskii and B. I. Koplán (Leningrad: Detizdat, 1936).

³⁵⁷ 'Iz rechi Chukovskogo na s'ezde VLKSM: O detiakh, literature i Narkomprose', *Izvestiia*, 24 April 1936, p. 3.

³⁵⁸ Belinskii's laudatory essays on Pushkin became the model for biographical reports on other authors, whose biographies were purged of unseemly material. See *Programmy srednei shkoly*, 1937, p. 28.

³⁵⁹ Lidiia Lotman, 'On byl nashim professorom', *Nlo* 55 (2002) <<http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2002/55/lotm.html>> [accessed 1 June 2015].

³⁶⁰ Viktor Erlich, 'Introduction', in Kornei Chukovsky, *Diary, 1901-1969*, edited by Viktor Erlich, translated by Michael Henry Heim (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. ix-xviii (pp. ix-xii).

³⁶¹ "Polnaia bezydeinost', perekhodiashchaia v ideinost' obratnogo poriadka". Bor'ba s "chukovshchinois", *Kommersant*, 6 March 2015.

capital, in the State Institute of Art History, the Communist Institute of Journalism, and finally The Pushkin House (The Russian Academy of Science). He was arrested in 1949 and died in prison.³⁶²

Chukovskii and Gukovskii's view of the literature taught in school will help to reconstruct a fuller picture of how these methods were employed in practice, very different from the descriptions of ideal (and thus recommended) lessons found in journals such as *Literatura v shkole* or *Sovetskaia pedagogika* and other laudatory reports.

Chukovskii's biographer Irina Luk'ianova addresses, in her detailed account of the writer's life and work the cases where Chukovskii wrote about the practice of teaching literature in school in major newspapers in the late 1930s.³⁶³ However, she distorts the situation, suggesting that he 'hated' Narkompros' methods for teaching literature in school, fighting with the state machine, trying to 'turn it in the opposite direction'.³⁶⁴ As I will demonstrate in this chapter, Chukovskii's role in the new methodology of teaching literature in school was collaborative, not antagonistic, and he did much to facilitate the workings of 'the state machine'. He embraced one of the main tenets of emotional teaching of literature and criticised mainly the dry language of textbooks and flaws of teaching in practice, not the governing concepts and principles.

With regard to Gukovskii, I take issue with Evgenii Ponomarev and his view of

³⁶² Andrei Zorin, 'Grigorii Aleksandrovich Gukovskii i ego kniga', in G. A. Gukovskii, *Russkaia literatura XVIII veka. Uchebnik* (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 1999), pp. 1-5 (pp. 1, 4).

³⁶³ Irina Luk'ianova, *Kornei Chukovskii* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2006), pp. 614-639.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 616.

this writer as a founder of ‘stadial’noi teorii literatury’ responsible for the ideological teaching methodology.³⁶⁵ Aside from the often tenuous comparisons Ponomarev draws between quotes from Gukovskii’s monograph on the history of Russian literature in the 18th century and textbooks of 1939-1941 (Ponomarev admits that Gukovskii’s name is not mentioned among the textbooks’ authors, which to Ponomarev is another proof of ‘the inscription of “the stage theory” into the Soviet ideological structure’),³⁶⁶ Ponomarev holds Gukovskii responsible for the ‘distribution’ of the ‘stages theory’ in university and school teaching of literature.³⁶⁷ An earlier more comprehensive article on Gukovskii and his adaptation of theory places his engagement with textbooks as late as 1938, when the main features of the method were already created and functioning.³⁶⁸ The testimony of Lidiia Lotman, an eyewitness of the period, to the widespread influence of the ideology that went into the stages theory contradicts Ponomarev’s argument.³⁶⁹ I will demonstrate that far from being a direct influence, Gukovskii was (as early as 1939) highly critical of the methodology adopted in schools.³⁷⁰ Chukovskii’s attack upon him at the 1936 Congress of the Komsomol, mentioned above, would simply not have been possible had Gukovskii been expounding the party line. That it was Chukovskii

³⁶⁵ Evgenii Ponomarev, ‘Kak sdelana ideologiya nauki. Krakh professora G.A. Gukovskogo’, *Russian Literature* 63 (2008), 397-425.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

³⁶⁸ Vladimir Markovich, ‘Kontseptsia stadial’nosti literaturnogo razvitiia v rabotakh G. A. Gukovskogo 1940kh godov’, *Nlo* 55 (2002) < <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2002/55/mark.html> > [accessed 1 June 2015].

³⁶⁹ Lidiia Lotman, ‘On byl nashim professorom’, *Nlo* 55 (2002) < <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2002/55/lotm.html> > [accessed 1 June 2015].

³⁷⁰ Ponomarev does make concession in the second half of his article, mentioning briefly this work as one in which Gukovskii begins ‘to fight the methodology, for which he was responsible himself’ (‘ополчается на себя самого’). Ponomarev then concludes that Gukovskii fell victim to his own trap – ‘the stages theory of literature’. Ponomarev, ‘Kak sdelana ideologiya nauki. Krakh professora G.A. Gukovskogo’, p. 421.

and not Gukovskii who had caught the tone of the times was suggested by the fact that the former's denunciation appeared in no less a place than the pages of *Izvestiia*.³⁷¹

a. Chukovskii

Kornei Chukovskii was one of the most eloquent critics of Narkompros programmes for literature, as well as textbooks. His numerous articles in the press and several speeches given at congresses eloquently exposed the programme's faults. He derived his information, he claimed, from attending school lessons and also from directly engaging with schoolchildren. Chukovskii's intense monitoring of literature lessons stretched geographically to encompass the Ukrainian republic, Voronezh region and others, in addition to numerous schools in Moscow and Leningrad. One of his major reproaches in 1935 and 1936 was related to the issue of emotional education – children should be taught a love of reading and not just shown how to spit out random facts about Russian classics: 'Наркомпрос упорно скрывает от них того Пушкина, которого они могли бы полюбить. [...] Пусть зубрят по программе, без всяких эмоций!'³⁷² He criticised what he saw as inappropriate selections from Russian classics in the official school textbooks, including for example only Pushkin's most archaic verse. Chukovskii insisted that the selection of classics could be improved to better match children's interests:

Недавно мне стало особенно ясно, до какой степени детям нужны — хотя бы на первых порах — такие образцы стихов и

³⁷¹ 'Iz rechi Chukovskogo na s'ezde VLKSM: O detiakh, literature i Narkomprose', *Izvestiia*, 24 April 1936, p. 3.

³⁷² Kornei Chukovskii, 'Postavshchiki literaturnykh sukhareï', *Pravda*, 23 December 1935, p. 3.

прозы, которые могут увлечь, взволновать и обрадовать их.³⁷³
(my italics)

His main demands from the authors of programmes and textbooks was that they should stir children's emotions and encourage enjoyment at their contact with literature.

It is important to note that one point of Chukovskii's discontent with these programmes was their sole reliance on Russian authors, at the detriment of excellent poets from other Soviet peoples:

Казалось бы, если хочешь вселить в их сердца горячие чувства к литературному творчеству братских народов, научи их восхищаться стихами Тычины, Чаренца, Маркиша, Лахути, Табидзе.³⁷⁴ (my italics)

Chukovskii lamented the fact that these gaps in the inclusion of non-Russian poets were not compensated for in any other way, for instance by extra attention 'to the historical process reflected in literature.'³⁷⁵ In another article, he presented his evidence of the programme's failure in this respect – children's utter confusion of facts of literary history.³⁷⁶ After having assessed 7th year spring exams at a Leningrad school, he discovered that many of the pupils receiving excellent marks believed that 'Leo Tolstoi participated in the Napoleonic wars' and that 'Chekhov was a contemporary of Zhukovskii', while 'Pushkin lived under the reign of Alexander III'. These examples of ignorance compelled Chukovskii to attend two other schools, where he had an opportunity

³⁷³ Ibid. 'Похоже, что Наркомпрос вообще не желает внушать детям любовь к литературе. / Из всего Лермонтова детьми наиболее любима 'Песня про купца Калашникова', и, конечно, Наркомпрос не включил эту песню даже в программу внеклассового чтения. То же самое и с 'Детством' Толстого. Дети так любят читать про детей! Но составители школьной программы не сделали им поблажки в тут.' Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Kornei Chukovskii, 'Literatura i shkola', *Pravda*, 30 October 1935, p. 4.

to collect more evidence of 7th-year students' muddled historical knowledge.³⁷⁷ A minor, but important detail was that Chukovskii criticised the failure to instill historical knowledge of literary facts *before* students embarked onto the history of literature course in the upper years. Some teachers also believed that the history of literature course should begin much earlier. For instance, A. S. Tolstov, a teacher and Moscow school No. 25 deputy director, suggested teaching the course in literary history from year 6 since a considerable number of students left after year 8 with mixed up literary facts in their arsenal.³⁷⁸

Paying particular attention to the needs of children in years 6 and 7, Chukovskii studied Florinskii's textbook in detail,³⁷⁹ again being highly critical of it.³⁸⁰ Firstly, Chukovskii accused the textbook of gross simplification of historical facts: 'И какое упрощенчество во всей этой лжи [...] К таким ли методам мышления о процессах литературной истории должны мы приучать наших школьников?' Secondly, he underscored the textbook's odiously dry style of narration: 'корявый, бюрократический стиль, который я назвал бы наркомпросовским.'³⁸¹ This style was part of the methods' major problem – namely, the lack of any emotional appeal to children. Chukovskii would not tire

³⁷⁷ Ibid. For example, Chukovskii writes that children believed that Goncharov was the father of Pushkin's wife, that Nikolai Alekseevich Nekrasov could not meet Gogol' in St Petersburg because they lived in different centuries, etc.

³⁷⁸ A. S. Tolstov, 'Neobkhodimy novye programmy', *Pravda*, 8 August 1936, p. 3.

³⁷⁹ S. M. Florinskii, N. A. Trifonov, *Literatura XIX-XX vv. Uchebnik dlia 6 i 7 klassov srednei shkoly* (RSFSR, Moscow: Narkompros, 1935).

³⁸⁰ Kornei Chukovskii, 'Razgovor s shestiklassnikom', *Pravda*, 13 December 1935, p. 4.

³⁸¹ Ibid.: 'Такой бездушный канцелярский стиль проходит через всю эту книгу. В статье о Лермонтове, например, говорится: «Наиболее характерным для данного периода...» «Не трудно видеть, что в данном стихотворении...» «Для нас ясно, что в данном произведении...» / Так как словарь у авторов до крайности скуден, то про самые разнообразные произведения словесности они часто повторяют одну и ту же банальщину: '- Литература ярко отразила (стр. 44)./ - Лермонтов ярко отразил (стр. 45)./ - Шевченко ярко отразил (стр. 115)./ - Гоголь ярко обрисовал (стр. 82)./ - Лермонтов ярко рисует (стр. 56).'

of reproaching Narkompros on these grounds.

Kornei Chukovskii best expressed the ideological importance to the entire Soviet project of winning over children's hearts through the study of literature in one of his other essays in *Pravda* – 'The Poetry of Narkompros.'³⁸² In it, he lamented over a 170-page manuscript collection entitled 'Album of Love and Suffering', compiled by Nina Chichil'eva and a few other 14-year-old schoolgirls from the Voronezh region. The majority of poems copied were not from the school curriculum. Chukovskii summarised the album's point of view as follows:

Если рассматривать этот альбом как некий трактат о любви и страдании, получится приблизительно такая концепция.

Женщина должна не забывать ни на миг, что все мужчины (как выражается этот альбом) — «подлецы», «изменщики», «скотины», «лукавцы» и «стервы», и потому она должна вести себя с этими «лукавцами» возможно хитрее, чтобы они остались, так сказать, околпаченными. Женская невинность есть ценный товар, который нужно продавать подороже. Ту женщину, которая забывает об этом, «Альбом для любви и страдания» именуется жалкой «простячкой» и приводит у себя на страницах множество поучительных случаев, когда «простячкам» пришлось поплатиться за доверчивую свою «простоту».³⁸³

Chukovskii was appalled at this portrayal of the battle of sexes in the lyrics collected in the album and at the manipulative female tactics promoted in it.³⁸⁴ In his opinion, this view on relationships between men and women belonged to an outdated and, more importantly, adversary worldview: 'Мировоззрение монолитное, стройное и – в достаточной степени гнусное. То самое

³⁸² Kornei Chukovskii, 'Poeziia po-Narkomprosovski', *Pravda*, 18 January 1936, p. 6.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.: 'Вся девичья тактика – по словам этого мудрого альбома – именно в том и должна состоять: примани к себе возможно больше поклонников и насмехайся над каждым: тогда за хорошую цену тебе удастся продать свою миловидность и молодость. В чем эта хорошая цена заключается, ясно обозначено на странице 96: «Нас три сестры. Одна за Графом, /Другая Герцога жена, /А я – их всех милее, младше, –/ Простой морячкой жить должна!»'

мировоззрение, для полного уничтожения которого и существует советский строй.' He asked himself and others the question how this poetry and worldview had managed to survive during 19 years after the revolution.³⁸⁵ Chukovskii conceded that he understood all too well the reasons for this concentration of pre-Soviet mentality ('средоточие обывательской затхлости'): family background continued to compete for influence on children's taste. However, it was school that Chukovskii primarily blamed for not catering to the emotional needs of these girls with a decent collection of classic poetry, which could educate their feelings in a more noble way.

[...]какие же другие стихи противопоставила школа этим мерзопакостным, но столь пленительным для молодежного сердца стихам?

Если бы школа умела *обрадовать, очаровать, взволновать* этих девочек произведениями высокой поэзии, если бы преподавателям русской словесности *удалось так заразить их своими эмоциями*, что они на самом деле ощутили бы счастье оттого, что на свете был Пушкин, вся эта смердяковская гниль сама собой отпала бы от них, и сердцещипательный лакейский романс был бы для них раз навсегда размагничен.³⁸⁶ (my italics)

It was only through a strong emotional appeal, Chukovskii argued, that the Soviet school could succeed in instilling the right worldview amongst its youngest ranks. Part of that appeal was, he stressed, aesthetic in nature and could be ensured quite simply through a better selection based on genuinely musical poetry. This would ensure improvement of children's taste. Analysing the

³⁸⁵ Ibid. In 1912 Chukovskii attacked a popular writer Lidia Charskaia, whose books, he claimed, were a source of vulgar emotions for young readers, see Kornei Chukovskii, 'Lidia Charskaia' (1912), *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, 6 vols (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1969), vol. 6, *Stat'i 1906-1968 godov*, pp. 150-162. Charskaia's novels were read by children growing up in the 1930s, for example, see Elena Bonner, *Dochki-Materi* (New York, NY: Chekhov Publishing, 1991), p. 217. Also see Svetlana Maslinskaia (Leont'eva), "'Pionerskaia" belletristika vs "bol'shaia" detskaia literatura', in *'Ubit' Charskuiu...': paradoksy sovetskoi literatury dlia detei (1920-1930)*, edited by M. P. Balina, V. Iu. V'iugin (Spb: Aleteiia, 2012), pp. 231-245; Beth Holmgren, 'Why Russian Girls Loved Charskaia', *Russian Review* 54:1 (1995), 91-106.

³⁸⁶ Chukovskii, 'Poeziia po-Narkomprosovski', p. 6.

collected poems' poetic properties, Chukovskii concluded that the girls had an undeveloped ear for poetic sounds, for which only their school was to blame. In similarly strong words, he accused Narkompros of a hostile or careless attitude towards poetry. Chukovski brought forward various examples of violations of 'poems' music' and sloppy rhymes in school textbooks (in particular attacking the author E. Ia. Fortunatova, whose books for the early years were approved by Narkompros and distributed by the millions). In conclusion, Chukovskii called for the involvement of professional poets in the production of early pedagogical aids and textbooks for schoolchildren: only a masterful pen could produce scholastic literature capable of a strong aesthetic appeal to children – something that, according to Chukovskii, was of paramount political significance in terms of the upbringing of future citizens.

During his speech at the April VLKSM Congress of 1936, Chukovskii raised another issue – the way biographies of classic authors were studied in school.³⁸⁷ In congratulating Detizdat on an excellent edition of Krylov's fables, Chukovskii nevertheless criticised Gukovskii's introduction in it. Chukovskii deemed a less than laudatory biography unproductive because it diminished the potential to impress Krylov's readers:

И, издавая его [Крылова] книгу, мы должны и детей *заражать нашим восторгом* перед теми огромными словестными ценностями, которые созданы таким гениально-упорным трудом. (my italics)

He argued that readers' adulation must stretch from a classic work to its author.

³⁸⁷ 'Iz rechi Chukovskogo na s'ezde VLKSM', p. 3.

He recalled attending a school lesson devoted to Valerii Briusov (whom Chukovskii had known in person), where a teacher ‘mistreated’ the poet’s character in a similar vein, albeit with ‘the good intention’ of condemning symbolists in general. The side-effects were, however, counterproductive:

Ученики смотрели на учителя хмуро и мрачно: зачем же изучать этого самого Брюсова, если он был такой идиот? (Смех). Учитель все время говорил: Брюсов не понял того-то, не знал того-то. Учителя винить невозможно, такова программа Наркомпроса. (Бурные аплодисменты, смех).³⁸⁸

Inclusion of authors’ biographies was a relatively recent addition to the programmes (since 1934).³⁸⁹ The treatment of Russian authors’ class provenance was a ‘work in progress’ at the time of the 1936 Congress. Chukovskii thus alerted the Congress and *Pravda* audiences to the possibility that authors’ biographies might contribute to children’s attitudes towards their work, and indeed to literature in general, and thus to the importance of purging such biographies of less than positive material with regards to an author’s character. Critiquing Narkompros in this and other respects, Chukovskii emphasized again that young people’s perception of the legacy of Russian classical authors was by no means a trivial affair:

А между тем от того, как наш школьник воспримет наследие Пушкина, Тургенева, Некрасова, Салтыкова-Щедрина, Льва Толстого, Горького, в значительной мере зависит будущая культура Советской страны.³⁹⁰

Since the quality of textbooks and programmes of literature was of paramount

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Egvenii Ponomarev, “‘Osnovatel’ russkoi literatury” M. V. Lomonosov i literatura XVIII veka v sovetskoi shkole’, in *Uchebniki detstva: iz istorii shkol’noi knigi VII-XXI vekov: Trudy seminarov ‘Kul’tura detstva: normy, tsennosti, praktiki’*, volume 3, issue 13 (Moscow: RGGU, 2013), pp. 169-195 (p. 169).

³⁹⁰ ‘Iz rechi Chukovskogo na s’ezde VLKSM’, p. 3.

importance, professional writers should collaborate with methodologists and pedagogues on reforming the programmes and improving textbooks. Chukovskii reported on a failed attempt to bring the two camps together – he had been the only writer attending a meeting of pedagogues and methodologists. He suggested a few other initiatives that could help make young minds fall in love with literature and poetry, in particular Russian classic literature:

Влюбить детей в литературу, в поэзию, вплотную приблизить их к творчеству классиков, не по-школьному, свободно и весело познакомить их с историей, с теорией словесности, привить ни на всю жизнь те знания и навыки, которые и зовутся культурой.³⁹¹

Chukovskii's concern was children's knowledge of classic literature, obtained, he argued, through light-hearted and joyful learning activity – something he did not often witness in schools, overburdened as they were by dense Narkompros programmes. He believed that the Soviet school's literary curriculum should be different from the tedious academic traditions that 'turned learning process into a dull drill.'³⁹² This difference was needed to accommodate 'the new era of personal feelings, relations, and thoughts,' as Chukovskii recalled a conversation between a mother and her son in an anecdote extracted from a politically significant speech by Stetskii, when a boy sees an elephant in a zoo and asks his mother whose animal it is. To the mother's reply that the elephant belongs to the state, the boy responds: 'So it means, it is a little bit mine'. Chukovskii draws a conclusion from this anecdote: 'И эти четыре слова характеризуют собою *новую эру человеческих чувств, отношений и мыслей*, небывалую на нашей планете (my italics).³⁹³ Soviet children were 'to own' their literary cultural

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

heritage. Partaking in such communal cultural riches could not be done through drills, but through learning to love and enjoy reading the classics, he argued.

A year later, Chukovskii, having promoted precisely this attitude to classics among children, was thrilled to report on the new attitude towards Pushkin as 'one's own' in 1937. The younger generations, who only in 1935, according to his earlier reports, had been bored to tears at having to read an unfortunate selection of Pushkin's archaic poems,³⁹⁴ now 'owned' the great poet, whose legacy had been glorified by 1937 – the centenary of Pushkin's death:

Школьников в СССР свыше двадцати пяти миллионов, и все они за Пушкина готовы хоть в огонь. / Пойдите на Всесоюзную Пушкинскую выставку, в зал, где представлен Пушкин в творчестве советских детей, и вы своими глазами увидите, что Пушкин для советского школьника — один из лучших людей. Отнюдь не старинный писатель, а современник, почти однокашник и, главное, вполне советский человек.³⁹⁵ (my italics)

Pushkin was not only loved by children, but inspired patriotic sentiments in them, Chukovskii claimed. He positively assessed children's multiple projections of their own tastes and inclinations, loves and hates, on to their image of Pushkin:

[дети] вычеркивают долгое столетие, которое легло между ними и Пушкиным, и щедро наделяют поэта своими собственными вкусами и склонностями./ Безошибочным детским инстинктом они чувствуют в нем своего. И попробуйте, спросите у них, особенно у школьников младшего возраста, как, например, относился бы Пушкин ну хотя бы к фашизму, — они без минуты раздумья в один голос ответят, что Пушкин, живи он сейчас, ненавидел бы фашистов так же пламенно, как ненавидят они./ В миллионах стихов, сочиняемых нынче школьными поэтами о Пушкине, он изображается бойцом и героем.

³⁹⁴ Chukovskii, 'Postavshchiki literaturnykh sukharei', p. 3.

³⁹⁵ Kornei Chukovskii, 'Plemia mladoe...', *Pravda*, 13 February 1937, p. 4.

This naïve transference was interpreted by Chukovskii as a sign of love towards the poet and his works, the love Chukovskii called for from the beginning of his critical assessments of Narkompros programmes for literature. He was also pleased to report on children's improved poetic taste expressed in their own poetry. In the poems children devoted to Pushkin presented by Chukovskii in the article, schoolchildren exhibited a tendency to borrow freely from the 'classic legacy':

Пушкин, словно буреветник,
Вьется смело над царями,—
написала о нем в Кисловодске шестиклассница Мая Юдина и выразила этим, так сказать, общешкольное отношение к Пушкину. [...] Естественно, все эти стихотворцы стремятся обрадовать Пушкина тем, что борьба его была не напрасна, что та свобода, о которой он когда-то мечтал, стала в нынешнее время реальностью:

Ты видишь, Пушкин, вот где он,
Расцвет *пленительного счастья*,
Россия встала ото сна,
И на дворцах советской власти
Мы пишем ваши имена! ³⁹⁶ (my italics)

The innocuous imitation, free borrowings, and inter-textual references (e.g. Pushkin as Gor'kii's *Burevestnik* or the reciting of lines from Pushkin himself), were again a source of joy to Chukovskii who praised the talents of several young participants in Pushkin's death anniversary celebration in Moscow. Obviously carefully selected to attend this event, these talented children could rhyme on the spur of the moment ('Это чтение вкуснее варенья... — сказал мне под Киевом второклассник Игнатий Граб, когда я в пионерлагере прочитал у костра отрывок из «Руслана и Людмилы»') and thus demonstrate their love

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

and enjoyment of the classics.³⁹⁷

Even in this laudatory article where Chukovskii corroborated the success of the literature programmes, he indirectly attacked Narkompros on the grounds of vestiges of 'vulgar sociology' in the study of Russian classics, presenting a satire composed by year 10 students as evidence. Students from school No. 15, Dzerzhinskii region, Leningrad, had written a novella, 'Dantes vystrelil', in which they made fun of the approach to Pushkin. A recently resurrected(!) poet is impressed with the Soviet Union but then he attends a lesson on *The Bronze Horseman*, where a teacher claims that the Neva storm was Pushkin's representation of the Decembrist revolt. This saddens the author, who further, listening to the literary comments by Soviet scholars, has to concede that in his poem devoted to Kern ('Ia pomniu chudnoe mgnoven'e') Anna Petrovna was an allegory of freedom.³⁹⁸ Yet these students' skill in productively making fun of the textbooks' formulaic generalisations was itself an excellent illustration of successful pedagogical work. Although it was hard to judge by this one example, children's ability to separate extra-literary content from the classics themselves heartened Chukovskii and would also delight Shklovskii, who similarly called for a more holistic and less ideological approach to literary analysis in school.

In 1939 Chukovskii attacked a textbook by G. L. Abramovich for its dry language

³⁹⁷ Ibid. 'А в Москве я познакомился с девочкой! двенадцати лет, Марой Воронцовой, которая в прелестных стихах поэтично и просто выразила Пушкину свое восхищение— именно за то, что он такой прекрасный поэт: / 'Ты добр и прост, — я это знаю./ Простишь ты вольность мне мою. / Итак, мой Пушкин, посвящаю/ Тебе я песенку свою./ Люблю тебя, твои творенья,/С тобой во сне и наяву,/В тебе ищу я вдохновенья,/С тобой расту, тобой живу./Люблю с Людмилою прекрасной/В саду волшебном я гулять./Над Карлом, чудищем ужасным,/Люблю до слез я хохотать./С Марией бедной я страдаю.../и т. д.' Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

in an essay on Turgenev.³⁹⁹ Repetition of epithets ('bright' and 'brilliant') applied to Turgenev's style not only misrepresented the author's prose, Chukovskii complained, but also produced a boring and numbing effect on young readers. The textbook's description happened to match a teacher's lecture of the author's work at the lesson Chukovskii attended. The lecture, Chukovskii reasoned, was in line with the programme – presenting Turgenev as a publicist rather than 'the great master of the word' ('совершенно забывая о том, что речь идет об огромном художнике, который именно поэтическим своим обаянием волновал не одно поколение русских людей'). To prove his point about the necessity of emotional stimulation of children during literature lessons, Chukovskii quoted from Maiakovskii's 'To Sergei Esenin' and 'Poetry' and mentioned Belinskii's legacy in this respect.⁴⁰⁰

Chukovskii's position was easy to understand – a leading children's poet himself, he demanded of Narkompros an increased emphasis on poetry, and insisted that

³⁹⁹ Kornei Chukovskii, 'Literatura v shkole', *Pravda*, 28 December 1939, p. 4. 'Если и Тургенев блестящ, и его рассказы блестящи, и его романы блестящи, если Добролюбов так же блестящ, как и либеральный водолей Георг Брандес, то слово «блестящий», равно как и «яркий», в качестве определения литературных явлений сводятся буквально к нулю.'

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.: 'Литературу надо преподавать не равнодушными устами, а именно восхищаясь и заражая своим восхищением других.'

Вы ж
такое загибать умели,
что другой
на свете
не умел,—

писал Маяковский, обращаясь даже к далеко не первоклассному автору. И когда говорят молодежи о Гоголе, о Чехове, о Блоке, о том же Маяковском, Толстом,— нужно взволнованно и радостно, на конкретных примерах показать молодежи, что именно эти люди умели такое, чего никто на свете не умел, в чем могучее своеобразие их творчества, почему написанные ими слова

приводят в движенье
тысячи лет
миллионов сердца,

а у нас—в учебниках,—если и говорят иногда о стиле того или иного великого мастера, дело сводится к мертвой регистрации случайных и внешних приемов. Как будто и не было в нашей литературе Белинского!

textbooks should discuss Russian classics in lively and accessible language. To make his point, he reported a conversation he once had with a teacher after having listened to a particularly 'dry' lesson. When he suggested to the teacher she might try and conduct her lesson differently, with more excitement and emotion, she retorted that the programme was so intense that she simply did not have enough time for any emotions. Her priorities lay elsewhere:

Должна же я учить моих школьников и правильной орфографии, и пунктуации, и развить в них умение письменно излагать свои мысли, и дать им понятие о теории словесности, и проработать фактический материал.⁴⁰¹

This recognition of the emphasis on academic values in the programme did not mollify Chukovskii, however.

In addition to the very dense programme, the sheer number of children in classes complicated the transmission of any deep love for Russian classics. Yet Chukovskii continued to insist in the press that emotional stimulation and engagement during lessons would only help fulfil these tasks and raise the academic progress of students.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid. This was a widespread notion, for example in an anonymous article 'Parodiia na khoroshuiu rabotu, ili rasskaz o tom, kak ne nado pisat' pedagogicheskuiu povest', *Sovetskaia pedagogika* 3 (1937), 174-176, the author shares a similar point of view. The article describes a work from the Uchpedgiz series 'Schools and Teachers of Socialist Countries' by Ivan Evdokimov, who wrote in particular about Nina Vasil'evna Pokrovskaia, a teacher of literature at the Mamoshin school. Apparently Pokrovskaia didn't believe that exultation was productive, and Evdokimov reported this, for which he was criticised on pp. 174-175 of *Sovetskaia pedagogika*:

Во всех примерах нарушается стройность урока, последовательность наложения материал учителем; автор развязно вкладывает в уста т. Покровской следующую фразу: «Я даже ловлю себя иногда на ошибках в этой области. Увлечешься, и стройность урока нарушается» (16)

Эту фразу он кладет в основу всех глав, описывающих учебную работу. Как будто бы у увлекающегося своей работой учителя увлечение должно обязательно противоречить стройности изложения материала. (my italics)

At the same time, Chukovskii did acknowledge himself that the literary lessons he had witnessed often satisfied him: 'Прекрасные уроки по литературе можно наблюдать в наших школах нередко.'⁴⁰³ But he ascribed successes in teaching to talented pedagogues rather than programmes, and in 1940, at a meeting devoted to teaching literature in schools, he, along with Marshak, called for teachers to be granted more flexibility and freedom. (He also added that children should be taught more independent critical assessment of classic works.)⁴⁰⁴

However, the more lively engagement with Russian classics advocated by both Chukovskii and Shklovskii had its own dangers for young minds, as Grigorii Gukovskii, another prominent figure in literary studies, repeatedly cautioned.

b. Gukovskii

Grigorii Gukovskii, as an academic, a literary historian, and a teacher himself, was much better placed to judge the new course of history of literature. In the late 1930s, he dealt with first-year university students of literature and lamented in the press that he was often obliged to re-educate them, having to make them forget concepts learnt at school.⁴⁰⁵ In the late 1930s Gukovskii worked at the literature faculty of Leningrad's City Institute for the Professional Improvement of Teachers. (A publication devoted to the assessment of the history of literature course in schools was scheduled to be published by Uchpedgiz in 1939, but the publication was delayed and the Institute published an abridged version of the

⁴⁰³ Chukovskii, 'Literatura v shkole', *Pravda*, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁴ Kornei Chukovskii, 'Russkaia Literatura v shkole', *Pravda*, 6 March 1940, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁵ G. A. Gukovskii, 'Literaturovedenie i voprosy prepodavaniia literatury v shkole', in *K voprosu o prepodavanii literatury v shkole*, G. A. Gukovskii, S. V. Klitin (Leningrad: Leningradskii gorodskoi institut usovershenstvovaniia uchitelei, 1941), pp. 3-45 (p. 4).

academics' assessment of the programme in 1941.) Gukovskii's central complaint was about the schematic and uniform analysis applied to practically any work of literature studied in school; he also protested that the methodology of teaching literature had become 'self-centred', divorced from its subject-matter and thus taken on a formal character.⁴⁰⁶

Gukovskii also raised a pragmatic issue relating to the programme published in 1940 – to him it hardly seemed feasible to study that many works within the allocated amount of time.⁴⁰⁷ He also felt that historical context was addressed separately from the studied works of literature, as if two separate analytical approaches were promoted: a non-historical and a historical one.⁴⁰⁸ Quoting from V. V. Golubkov's textbook, Gukovskii demonstrated how the historical approach for the higher years was often considered as supplementary, as if it were a 'superstructure' located above the school's usual method. Leaving the historical context aside reduced the analysis to simplified characterisation:

Анализ по преимуществу складывается из характеристик героев, или т. наз. изучения «образов». Затем – отдельно в сущности – говорится об «изобразительных средствах», а затем идет «закрепление», опять сводящееся к характеристикам больше всего. На этом и заканчивается изучение, если не считать абстрактных замечаний о том, что «образы» очень похожи на живых людей, а это доказывает реализм писателя.⁴⁰⁹

Gukovskii predicted that the outcome of this practice of character study, severed from a literary work's style, its individual meaning, and the historical conditions that contributed to its creation, would lead to the inculcation of moralising

⁴⁰⁶ Gukovskii, 'Literaturovedenie i voprosy prepodavaniia literatury v shkole', p. 5.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

judgements, and superficial ones at that, rather than to a growing competence in literary reading or analysis:

«Образ» извлекается из произведения[...], и описывается так, как будто бы это был живой человек, стоящий перед учениками в классе, описывается по сверхисторическим условным морально-психологическим критериям. [...] а в умах ребят постепенно складывается убогая схоластическая нравоучительная мерка, которой и измеряются без всякого различия и императрица Елизавета Петровна, и Артамонов, и Базаров, и Буй-тур Всеволод, и Ленский.⁴¹⁰

To Gukovskii an *obraz* is not the equivalent of a portrait ('образ – это не портрет')⁴¹¹ and it was important to take into account the structure of a work of literature in order to decide whether it was possible at all to discuss a character as representative of a particular social milieu, a type. For example Gukovskii differentiated between Turgenev's novel *Rudin* and Pushkin's *Onegin* in terms of their artistic structures. The former lends itself to analysis through the *obraz* of its protagonist precisely because the work is centred around this protagonist and his typified features of character, while a very different structure went into the creation of *Onegin*, namely a non individual-typological one. Hence, Gukovskii contended, a different methodology was called for in the study of Pushkin's characters.⁴¹² If both methodologists and the teachers who followed them ignored such nuances, they would contribute to students' 'naïve naturalist' perception of a work of literature.

Gukovskii expounded his views on the 'naïve naturalism' or 'naïve realism' and its harms in his later work, some of which was based on observations dating

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 15.

back to the late 1930s. This included an in-depth study of school methods written in 1947 – *The Study of Literary Work at School*.⁴¹³ In it, Gukovskii criticised current methodological aids as providing teachers with merely didactic techniques, rather than thorough methodological foundations and comprehension of the entire process of teaching literature in school, leading to unwholesome results, naïve-realism or naïve-naturalism being one of them. He wrote:

[...] наши ученики читают книги «наивно-реалистически» или, вернее, «наивно-натуралистически», причем больше всего они воспринимают в книге события и характеры людей, особенно *людей*, в которых они видят «всамделишных» живых людей.⁴¹⁴ (original emphasis)

Although the naïve-naturalist perception was to some extent unavoidable among young readers and often harmless, and Gukovskii brings up certain beneficial emotional effects of such reading in his study,⁴¹⁵ the method was mostly used in an unbalanced way – too much emphasis was placed on the psycho-moral analysis of a literary figure. Gukovskii warned that this approach contained serious dangers of misapplication:

«Человековедение» же как метод чтения и восприятия литературы – это еще более беспринципная сама по себе штука. Ну что из того, что юноши и девушки узнают, что бывают на свете люди нерешительные и «рефлектирующие» («Гамлеты»), а бывают и люди волевые и ловкие

⁴¹³ G. A. Gukovskii, *Izuchenie literaturnogo proizvedeniia v shkole: Metodologicheskie ocherki o metodike* (Tula: Aftograf, 2000).

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴¹⁵ Gukovskii thus underscored emotional upbringing through literature: ‘Разве это плохо, что девочки «влюбляются» в князя Андрея и втайне мечтают о встречах на путях жизни с таким человеком, и – совсем втайне – о любви к нему «всерьёз»? Разве это плохо, что мальчики и девочки мечтают о себе – во взрослом состоянии – как о Павле Корчагине, Лизе Калитиной или – пораньше – даже как о капитане Гаттерасе или д'Артаньяне? Нет, это совсем не плохо, это даже очень хорошо. Если бы этого не было, если бы у наших детей не было *живого, активного переживания образов как действительности*, если бы не было у них «веры» в реальность изображенного в книге, не могло бы – в их возрасте и на их ступени познания мира – быть вообще активной рецепции искусства и, следовательно, оно, искусство, не могло бы оказывать и необходимого воспитательного воздействия на души учащихся’ (my italics). Ibid., p. 12.

(«Растиньяки»), а бывают люди непоэтичные, бывают изверги – Иудушка, а бывают и светлые люди-герои и т.д. и т.п. Само по себе это «признание» и бессмысленно, и ненаучно, и неверно, и плоско, *и приводит оно только к тому, что ребята приучаются быстро, легкомысленно и пошловато перемывать косточки своим товарищам, да и учителям, определяя их характеры в порядке сплетен и по схеме многочисленных сочинений (в классе и на дому), посвящённых характеристикам героев-объектов изображения книги.*⁴¹⁶ (my italics)

Gukovskii warned against this method on psychological grounds: it developed an unwholesome social habit of analysing others and a tendency to gossip. Furthermore, the crude extraction of a character from the fabric of a literary work trained minds to read for 'characteristic traits' only and quickly assign protagonists with a label based on limited information and too few details of description.⁴¹⁷ Naturally transferred to life – something that was also encouraged – the skill would turn into a quickness of judgement of others on superficial details and perceptions, a kind of misapprehension. Gukovskii also underscored that apart from such harmful outcomes in social terms, teaching students to apply character analysis in this way would also lead to a harmful ideological outcome, when a character was perceived as divorced from its socio-historical conditions and assessed and judged as an individual:

Они (students) приучаются иной раз мыслить «образ», т.е. в данном случае характер, не столько как функцию социально-историческую, сколько как личную случайность (это уж и вовсе нехорошо, в плане воспитания мировоззрения вредно).⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p. 25. Gukovskii warns of a development of a superficial judgement: '[...] учащиеся привыкают вчитываться в текст внимательно вглядываться в него; они приучаются находить в тексте и извлекать из него нужную цитату; они приучаются понимать характерологический смысл слов и действий, правда, в простейших соотношениях. Например, видя, что человек кланяется, хихикает и лебезит перед начальством они говорят, что этот человек подхалим; или, усмотрев в словах «героя» глупость, они умозаключают, что он глуп.' Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

Gukovskii was treading on thin ice here at a time when Marxist thought had undergone a Stalinist transformation and emphasis was placed on personal responsibility for misdemeanours, self-improvement of *lichnost'* and purges of sins within itself or social body.⁴¹⁹

Gukovskii was wary of transferring the moral judgement of negative characters to some of the traits of the people who surrounded young readers -- the artificial and required connection between the reality of the past as seen from the Russian canon and the world that was contemporary to students. Gukovskii evoked an episode he witnessed in around 1937, when a teacher finished her lesson on 'Pesnia o kuptse Kalashnikove' with the following conclusion:

'Вот видите, дети, какой был Калашников хороший, храбрый, сильный, верный своей чести. А вот вы, дети, часто даже не выполняете ваших социалистических обязательств и к тому же еще плохо подметааете класс.'⁴²⁰

The pride the teacher exhibited at her own shrewdness in using a classic work for socialist upbringing was most indicative of the method's strong emphasis on drawing a connection with the contemporary material. The episode revealed to Gukovskii the fundamental unwholesomeness of this feature of the method:

Дело здесь вовсе не в том, что это случай анекдотический (и я бы не поверил возможности его, если бы не наблюдал его сам, причем учительница гордилась своим достижением в воспитательном применении классического произведения), – а в том, что при всей своей гротескности этот случай лишь выявляет в комической, доведенной до абсурда форме такое методическое явление, которое в более «приличной» форме встречается в школе постоянно. Суть его заключается в искусственности связующего моста мысли и эмоции,

⁴¹⁹ On new emphasis on individual cultivation and responsibility for flaws before the social body and departure from the traditional Marxism see Raymond Bauer, *The New Man in Soviet Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952) and Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Soviet Culture: a Study of Practices* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 229-230.

⁴²⁰ Gukovskii, *Izuchenie literaturnogo proizvedeniia v shkole*, p. 8.

перекидываемого между тем, что изображено в изучаемом произведении, и тем, что окружает самих учащихся.⁴²¹

The bridge between a work of literature and the contemporary world of students was required by the programme and methodological aids. Hence the pervasiveness of the phenomenon to which Gukovskii attested.⁴²²

Gukovskii shared his critical position with regards to the non-historical, character-based analysis of Russian classics in school, with the unscientific and artificial connection between the world of a novel and students' everyday lives by no means only because he had to correct school programmes' unscrupulous effects on his first-year students of literature at the university level. He was speaking from deep conviction. Just like Chukovskii, Gukovskii believed in the vital importance of early exposure to literature in school.⁴²³ Unlike Chukovskii, however, Gukovskii took a much more neutral, detached, historicised – one could say, academic – approach to the study of literature. The contradiction between the two positions was at some level resolvable – Chukovskii's observations are reasonable in terms of the likely responses of small children, while Gukovskii's more analytical approach might lend itself better to adolescents. But in the polarised world of Stalinist culture, with its emphasis on a single, canonical resolution of every question, the two could only be perceived, and understand

⁴²¹ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁴²² Ibid., p. 23.

⁴²³ The following quote is most revealing of his belief in literature's power to affect young minds for years to come: 'Кто не знает, что литература – это великий советник и организатор души человека. [...] Ученики читают книги, и не те только, которые изучаются в школе, многие из них прочитывают очень большое количество книг. Нужно прямо сказать, что юность, именно те годы, когда юноша или девушка учатся в старших классах школы – это время самых усиленных и самых важных чтений. В эти годы книги оказывают огромное влияние; книги, прочитанные в 16-17 лет, а вместе с тем и мысли, и чувства, передуманные и перечувствованные за книгой в эти годы, запоминаются на всю жизнь, влияют мощно и плодотворно.' Gukovskii, 'Literaturovedenie i voprosy prepodavaniia literatury v shkole', p. 43.

themselves, as antagonists.

c. Conclusion

Whether Gukovskii was right and books read during adolescence affect children productively or with harmful results for the rest of their lives, both scholars addressed here shared a belief in guided reading in school as a politically and socially important activity. Both agreed that current programmes approached Russian classics with inadequate patterns of analysis that either dulled children's interest in Russian classical literature or taught them to regurgitate formulas learned from the textbooks or during class. Yet the evidence from the study of programmes suggests that the scholars' criticism did not make much impact on Narkompros, with the exception of Chukovskii's call to purge biographies of any untoward information about the authors whose works were studied in school.

I should also stress that Chukovskii repeatedly placed emphasis on the importance of an increased emotional engagement in teaching methods in practice. This actually agreed with Narkompros demands. Gukovskii's call ran contrary to the programmes' intent. Gukovskii insisted on the necessity for increased attention to the historical analysis of classics at the expense of the widespread simplified and fragmented character study, which may have resulted in objectionable analytical habits among young readers, habits that will be scrutinised further in the following chapters.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIARIES, 1936-1940

As shown in chapter 3, Gukovskii raised the pertinent issue of the possible and likely even harmful effect which the literary analysis practised in secondary school in the late 1930s might have on adolescents' minds.⁴²⁴ He warned that the literary instruction prescribed by the method could have a limiting effect on children's analytical habits and emotional responses.⁴²⁵ This chapter, in which I address the short-term effects of the teaching method of the school course of literary history teaching method in the higher years, corroborates Gukovskii's observations.

I pay particular attention to the effects of the method's emphasis on analysing *obrazy*-type and on stimulating young readers' emotions. I further examine what reverberations it had in their immediate social environment, on their relation with and judgement of others and themselves. Although I am mainly interested in whether literary lessons could indeed affect teenagers' attitudes to love and friendship in the short term, I also explore whether the method had any indirect effects on children's analytical habits, thinking patterns or 'subjectivity', as these were expressed through diary writing.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ G. A. Gukovskii, 'Literaturovedenie i voprosy prepodavaniia literatury v shkole', in *K voprosu o prepodavanii literatury v shkole*, G. A. Gukovskii, S. V. Klitin (Leningrad: Leningradskii gorodskoi institut usovershenstvovaniia uchitelei, 1941), pp. 3-45 (p. 4).

⁴²⁵ G. A. Gukovskii, *Izuchenie literaturnogo proizvedeniia v shkole: Metodologicheskie ocherki o metodike* (Tula: Aftograf, 2000).

⁴²⁶ There is an extensive literature dealing with Soviet adult identity of the period. For discussions of Soviet subjectivity see *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*, edited by Veronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya, Thomas Lahusen (New York: New Press, 1995); Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934-1941* (Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1997); Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Soviet Culture: a Study of Practices* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Igar Halfin, *Terror in My Soul* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

I bring this query to my reading of four Soviet diaries: two schoolboys' diaries – the diaries of David Samoilov (Kaufman), writing during the academic years of 1934-1937, and a ninth-year schoolboy from Samara, Iurii Tverdin [Tverditin], writing during the academic year of 1938-1939, a schoolgirl's diary – Nina Kosterina, writing during 1937-1941, and a commonplace book by Ul'iana Gromova, writing down quotes from her readings in 1939-1942.⁴²⁷

Samoilov's diaries were initially prepared for publication and published by his wife after his death.⁴²⁸ Tverdin's diary was preserved by Iurii Orlitskii and then further edited and published in a collection on Russian childhood, edited by Vitalii Bezrogov and Catriona Kelly.⁴²⁹ Ul'iana Gromova's diary is preserved in

University Press, 2006); Timothy Johnston, *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life under Stalin 1939–1953* (Oxford: OUP, 2011). For an overview of scholarly discussions on Soviet subjectivity see Eric Naiman, 'On Soviet Subjects and the Scholars who Make them', *Russian Review* 60 (2001), pp. 307-315 and a more recent article by Katharina Uhl "'Oppressed and Brainwashed Soviet Subject" [1] or "Prisoners of the Soviet Self" [2]? Recent Conceptions of Soviet Subjectivity', *Bylye Gody* 28:2 (2013), pp. 4-10. A few scholars have recently addressed young people's identity formation: Anna Krylova, 'Identity, Agency, and the "First Soviet Generation"' in *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe*, edited by Stephen Lovell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 101-121; Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Olga Kucherenko, *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941-1945* (Oxford, New York: OUP, 2011).

⁴²⁷ P. 32.

⁴²⁸ David Samoilov, edited by Galina Medvedeva, *Znamia* 8 (1999), < <http://magazines.russ.ru/znamia/1999/8/samoilov.html> > [accessed between 15 September 2012 and 15 February 2013]. This online version is slightly abridged. I refer here to a later edition of Samoilov's diaries edited by Galina Medvedeva, Aleksandr Davydov, Elena Nalivaiko. David Samoilov, *Podennye zapisi*, 2 vols (Moscow: Vremia, 2002), vol. 1.

⁴²⁹ 'Dnevnik deviatiklassnika' (Samara, 1938-39, from the personal library of Prof. Iu. B. Orlitskii), in *Gorodok v tabakerke: detstvo v Rossii ot Nikolaia II do Borisa El'tsyna (1890-1990)*, edited by Vitalii Bezrogov and Catriona Kelly, 2 vols (Moscow: Nauchnaya kniga, 2008), vol. 1, pp. 361-386. I will also refer to the unedited version of Tverdin's unpublished diary, providing a date of an entry in the original format, which is, perhaps significantly, inconsistent throughout the manuscript. I am grateful to Orlitskii and Bezrogov for allowing me access to the unedited version of Tverdin's diary.

the museum 'Molodaia Guardiia' in Lugansk, Ukraine.⁴³⁰ Kosterina's diary is widely available.⁴³¹ It was first published in *Novyi mir* and then by *Detskaia literatura*.⁴³² Samoilov's, Kosterina's, and Tverdin's diaries are written in a vivacious style and provide a glimpse into a child's overall experience of school in Soviet times, with a focus on literature lessons and reading. How representative are these diaries?

Samoilov and Kosterina attended Moscow schools, while Tverdin studied in one of the best schools in the Soviet provincial town of Samara (or Kuibyshev, as it was known at the time).⁴³³ Gromova studied in a small town Pervomaika in Eastern Ukraine. Nevertheless, the school programme was identical across the country by the time these pupils reached the upper years, and the history of literature course occupied a rather important place, both in terms of teaching hours and the responsibility for the ideological upbringing assigned to it.⁴³⁴ All four children must have read the consolidated canon of classical works and the last year of their secondary school was certainly consecrated to the study of Soviet literature. All of the diarists attested their deep love of reading and at least

⁴³⁰ Krasnodon, Museum 'Molodaia guardiia', f. 1, d. 12, № 241, pp. 2-6. Extracts from the diary were published and discussed in M. I. Krylova, 'Krasnodon. 1940-1942 (Zapisnaia knizhka Ul'iany Gromovoi)', in *Vstrechi s proshym. Vypusk 5*, edited by I. A. Andronnikov, N.B. Volkova, K. N. Kirilenko (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1984), pp. 311-322.

⁴³¹ Nina Kosterina, 'Dnevnik. 1936-1938', in *Zolotoi fond dnevnikovedeniia* < <http://dnevnikovedenie.ru/index.php/2012-12-04-16-48-02/49-2013-01-21-11-12-42> > [accessed 15 April 2015], (henceforth 'Kosterina').

⁴³² 'Dnevnik Niny Kosterinoi', *Novyi mir* 12 (1962), 31-105; *Dnevnik Niny Kosterinoi* (Moscow: Detskaia literatura, 1964).

⁴³³ Introduction by Iu. B. Orbitskii to the unedited version of the diary.

⁴³⁴ Thus, Larry E. Holmes informs us that '[f]rom the early 1930s to the mid-1950s, the hours devoted to Russian language and to literature comprised about 30 per cent of the total curriculum. From its introduction in the mid-1930s, history alone held pride of place at 10 per cent of the total,' in his article 'School and Schooling under Stalin, 1931-1953', in *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia: Legacies and Prospects*, edited by Ben Eklof, Larry E. Holmes and Vera Kaplan (London: F. Cass, 2005), pp. 56-101 (p. 62).

two of them, Samoilov and Tverdin, aspired to a literary career, and successfully so.⁴³⁵

Diaries may have been initially assigned in schools as a tool for improving one's language skills, as suggested by Jochen Hellbeck.⁴³⁶ In his larger work on Soviet diaries of the adults of the 1930s, Hellbeck nevertheless cites the Bolshevik emphasis on self-transformation and its ideology's 'extraordinary appeal' to the self as the main reasons for the widespread diary-keeping.⁴³⁷ I owe much to Hellbeck's work in terms of the methodology of this chapter – a close linguistic analysis of the entries of his subjects of study with the goal of identifying stable features of Soviet subjectivity.⁴³⁸ However, I take his research questions further by focusing on issues of mediation.

Hellbeck rejects as an all-encompassing explanation of the Soviet mental world the 'totalitarian' paradigm, which claims that ideology was imposed onto Soviet subjects, who are assumed to have been in possession of liberal aspiration to autonomous determination. Hellbeck also disagrees with some of the conclusions of social historians espousing the revisionist paradigm that views

⁴³⁵ David Samoilov became a world-renowned poet, Tverdin's poems were published first in local newspapers and then in central ones: *Bud' gotov* (1939-1940), *Kuibyshevskii zheleznodorozhnik* (1940), and *Pionerskaia pravda* (1939-1940), according to Orlitskii. Iu. B. Orlitskii, 'Predislovie', in Tverdin's Unpublished Diary (henceforth Tverdin), p. 2.

⁴³⁶ Jochen Hellbeck, 'Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of Stepan Podlubnyi (1931-1939)' in *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 77-116 (p. 82). Hellbeck's analysis demonstrates how the individual he studies uses his diaries as both a record of an evolution of his self and a tool through which he consciously 'perfects' his psyche in order to align his beliefs with those ascribed by the state programme. Hellbeck, *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Fitzpatrick, p. 81.

⁴³⁷ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 5.

⁴³⁸ In his turn, Hellbeck expresses indebtedness to Stephen Kotkin's 'groundbreaking study' *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995). Hellbeck refers to him as the first scholar to challenge the totalitarian paradigm in Hellbeck, *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Fitzpatrick, p. 70.

Soviet subjects as collaborators with the regime and active participants in the Bolshevik project, if only in the name of self-interest. By producing a synthesis of both approaches, Hellbeck traces the internalisation of the state programme by individuals. He finds it striking that even in criticism of the state's policies Stepan Podlubnyi, one of the diarists he studies, cannot imagine an alternative to the Bolshevik ideals against which he invariably assesses the current regime. It is the lack of the alternative sources for identity and the language in which it could be clothed that prevents Hellbeck's diarist from developing a subjectivity independent of the Soviet system.⁴³⁹

Hellbeck envisions ideology as a 'ferment working in individuals', a 'living and adaptive force' interacting with his or her subjectivity.⁴⁴⁰ Yet he does not seem to be interested in the precise mechanisms through which such 'ferment' might have been initially introduced and the process in which it wins over the hearts of Soviet subjects. The power of 'appeal of the Communist project'⁴⁴¹ remains somewhat mysterious in Hellbeck's analysis, at least for the period he addresses – high Stalinism, distanced from the post-Revolutionary era, permeated as this was with contagious enthusiasm, and separated from the civil war period by more than a decade. On the examples of the diaries, Hellbeck demonstrates that 'the self-consciousness of an individual living in the Soviet system was informed by Bolshevik notions of what man should be.'⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Hellbeck, *Stalinism: New Directions*, edited by Fitzpatrick, p. 80.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Persuasive as his analysis is, Hellbeck does seem to take for granted his subjects' need to join the collective project. Hellbeck also fails to discuss what type of individuals might have been predisposed to respond to the Communist appeal and what fraction of Soviet society they were likely to represent. It also seems vital to ask, for example, how 'the Communist appeal' reached the hearts of the individuals? Where and how did Soviet subjects acquire these beliefs, and what were the mechanisms pursued by the state programme with the purpose of reaching the self-consciousness of Soviet subjects? What was the reason for the fact that alternative models for subjectivity did not appeal (since Hellbeck is clearly wrong to suggest that these models were not available, given that schoolchildren read such quantities of 19th-century literature)?

If Hellbeck approaches the diaries of adults with the intention of demonstrating how deeply Soviet system engaged its citizens in a process of 'self-improvement and self-perfection' and what were the boundaries of 'critical thought in a repressive political system,'⁴⁴³ I address children's writings with the purpose of uncovering how teaching of Russian classics might have been used by the Soviet system to shape children's thinking at a crucial stage of their development, when the notions of the self and its relationship with others take linguistic form and when emotions are experienced intensely.

I will also bring this agenda to one other diary, of a different kind. It belongs to the son of Marina Tsvetaeva, Georgii Efron, who moved to the Soviet Union as an

⁴⁴³ Ibid., p. 82.

adolescent, having been brought up and educated up to that point in Europe.⁴⁴⁴ His entries mention his new school life, but are significantly different to those of the other diaries, written by children who had only ever experienced the Soviet school system. Yet, apart from the lack of immersion into the Soviet educational system from an early age, there is another crucial difference between Efron and the other children whose diaries I compare here. Both of Efron's parents were writers; thus, Efron's access to a richer 'cultural inheritance' might necessarily mitigate any conclusion on his alternative to the Soviet system identity development. Despite my awareness of the need for caution on this score, I hope the exercise is nevertheless productive in highlighting common problems and aspects Soviet teenagers of the late 1930s were facing and divergent ways in which they thought about and dealt with common ideals and patterns of self-expression.

The focus on 'literary optics' and the 'formation of Soviet reader' will remain intact throughout. Evgeny Dobrenko, in his *Making of the State Reader*, has demonstrated how active steps were taken by the state to ensure that the classics legitimised Soviet literature as a heir to the best tradition through the dissemination of a particular technique of reading and by means of aesthetic and ethical upbringing.⁴⁴⁵ According to Dobrenko, the planning of this indoctrination programme took place at the highest levels of power and it proved to be highly successful in instilling the new vector in state ideology in the minds of Soviet readers. At the same time, although Dobrenko does look briefly at the reception

⁴⁴⁴ Georgii Efron, 'Dnevnik', *1001.ru* < <http://1001.ru/books/efron/> > [accessed between 15 September 2012 and 15 February 2013].

⁴⁴⁵ Evgenii Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo chitatelia: sotsial'nye i esteticheskie predposylki retseptsii sovetskoi literatury* (Spb: Akademicheskii proekt, 1997), pp. 147-151.

end of the state programme, his main interests are elsewhere and he does not address the effects of the literary methods capitalising on Russian classics upon the students of secondary schools under Stalin in any detail.⁴⁴⁶ On the contrary, in citing a Soviet methodologist's expectations as to how Soviet literary characters were to influence young readers, Dobrenko (like Hellbeck) denies that pre-revolutionary heroes could exercise a comparable impact.⁴⁴⁷ I would like to question this and a few other assumptions of his (such as that the school canon encompassed the limits of one's acquaintance with literature)⁴⁴⁸ by closely examining the words of those who attended such literature lessons in the late 1930s. There is also much to supplement Dobrenko's glance at the reception of the remarkably long-lasting historico-literary course first introduced to Soviet schools in the mid-1930s. The process of imbibing communist values by children through reading literature in a particular way which might have guaranteed the 'joining the collective in spirit' and the imprisonment of children in the Soviet 'network of signs and meanings'⁴⁴⁹ was complicated and contradictory, and in it Russian classics had a multifaceted role.

Thus at the centre of this chapter are the effects of the method of character analysis on the issues pertaining to the formation of personal ethics – ideas of the self, of rapport with others, including friends, romantic interests and published authors, life's goals and attitudes to the present moment, self-control or the lack thereof. I also pay attention to the method's influence on

⁴⁴⁶ Evgenii Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo pisatel'ia: sotsial'nye i esteticheskie istoki sovetskoi literaturnoi kul'tury* (Spb: Akademicheskii proekt, 1999), p. 7.

⁴⁴⁷ Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo chitatelia*, p. 141.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴⁴⁹ Evgeny [sic] Dobrenko, "The Entire Real World of Children": The School Tale and "Our Happy Childhood", *Slavic and East European Journal*, 49:2 (2005), 225-248 (p. 230).

metaphorical thinking and on writing style, as observable in the diaries of Soviet children, and contrasted to that one of a boy with a divergent cultural background.

a. Applying Character Analysis to Oneself and Others

Iurii Tverdin, writing in 1939, clearly demonstrates the reflective ability that allows him to step outside of his experience and analyse his emotional state:

Последнее время на меня нашла какая-то туча, которая низверглась и облила меня апатией ко всему. Мне вдруг надоело жить. Мне стало скучно. И все это я объясняю тем, что «пошился» по алгебре. Да, «пошился» крепко.⁴⁵⁰

The new emphasis on academic progress, rather than a student's social activism, characteristic of the Soviet schools of the late 1930s,⁴⁵¹ caused much anxiety over the possibility of failure, and all three students, Tverdin, Samoilov, and Kosterina, spilled these worries onto the pages of their diaries on several occasions. Nina Kosterina, for example, thus attested to an intense academic pressure at school: 'Я совсем измучилась. Даже бессонница и головные боли. Скорей бы праздники. Нас распустят на три дня.'⁴⁵²

Additional pressure came from the fact that one's academic progress not only had personal significance, but impinged upon the 'honour' of the entire year group: '[...]вопрос стоит о чести всего класса. Я должен сдать этот, будь он трижды проклят, немецкий язык!'⁴⁵³ Tverdin experienced peer-pressure quite

⁴⁵⁰ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 361.

⁴⁵¹ Ann Livschiz, 'Pre-revolutionary in Form, Soviet in Content? Wartime Educational Reforms and the Postwar Quest for Normality', *History of Education*, 35:4 (2006), 541-560 (p. 541). On selective rehabilitation of the pre-revolutionary school structure and heritage see *Ibid.*, pp. 542-546.

⁴⁵² Kosterina, 4 November 1936.

⁴⁵³ Tverdin, 29 December 1938.

literally, when his classmates visited his house to impress upon him the importance of studying for his German test. Samoilov's diary also has an entry in which he wrote approvingly of disciplining his classmates with fists, all for the sake of winning a *sotssorevnovanie* between years.⁴⁵⁴

When assessing his fears and reproaching himself for getting bad marks, instead of giving such a descriptive picture of his emotional state and the reasons behind it as above, Tverdin relied on a concise literary code: 'я – Обломов в современной обстановке.'⁴⁵⁵ To those familiar with Goncharov's novel or its Soviet school interpretation this allusion is enough to bring a specific image, albeit generalised and lacking detail, to mind – a person who is lost, deprived of energy and filled with apathy.⁴⁵⁶ In the schoolboy's diary, this reliance on a literary template was especially evident when he was describing others, his class mentor in this case: 'Игнаша лебезил. [...] Настоящий *гоголевский подхалим*, только в советских рамках' (my italics).⁴⁵⁷ Kosterina also uses literary references to describe others and at the same time express her attitude to them, for example when she dislikes one of her classmates: 'Я как-то утверждала, что Щеглов из тех – 'рожденный ползать – летать не может,'⁴⁵⁸ or praises the man she likes: 'поступки последних дней убеждают меня в том, что передо мной действительно Человек по-горьковски.'⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁴ 'Теперь, кто будет разговаривать на уроках, того будем бить. Дашь раз по уху и замолчит. Главное у нас это дисциплина, по учебе мы вторые в школе.' *Podennye zapisi*, p. 19. 5 January 1936.

⁴⁵⁵ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 377.

⁴⁵⁶ I. A. Goncharov, *Oblomov* (Moscow: Detgiz, 1935).

⁴⁵⁷ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 375. On negative types see p. 111.

⁴⁵⁸ Kosterina, 4 November 1938.

⁴⁵⁹ Kosterina, 20 June 1941.

Often only the apparent features of the other person were taken into account at the time of assigning him or her a literary type. Thus, it was his friend's outfit that finally 'convinced' Tverdin to equate the person in front of him with a character from Griboedov's play *Woe from Wit*:

Совсем военный человек. Военщина сидит и внутри и наруже [sic]. *Разговор* весь военный, *форма* дополняет все это и позволяет окончательно *убедиться*, что перед собой видишь «Скалозуба».⁴⁶⁰ (my italics)

Skalozub's portrait in the literary textbook of the time showed him in a military uniform, and teachers were also encouraged to show photographs of the prominent actors who performed the roles of these characters in the play staged in the 1930s. It was likely that similar mental images came to Tverdin's mind when he described his friend.

In sharp contrast runs Efron's description of an acquaintance. It was not the type that Efron seemed to be concerned with, but the subject or individual (*individuum*) and his features:

В Дом отдыха приехал некий Пяст — странный субъект болезненно-эпилептического вида с собачьими глазами и страдающий определенной одышкой и грузно-неповоротливым телом, равно как и узкой головой с высокожелтовато-морщинистым лбом. Видно, что этот Пяст чем-то опасно болен, но *жалость, которую к нему по этому поводу испытываешь, оттеняется некоторым омерзением*. Сегодня, говорят критики, приедет их собрат Корнелий Зелинский. Посмотрим, что это за *индивидуум*.⁴⁶¹ (my italics)

In his portraits of others, Efron provided descriptive details, and his judgement was reserved and restricted to the impression that this person made on him at

⁴⁶⁰ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 365.

⁴⁶¹ Efron, 20 March 1940.

the time. He demonstrated high sensitivity to his own emotional response to the person in front of him, distinguishing, for instance, pity from disgust, and giving a sense of owning these feelings. Those who were immersed in character analysis in the Soviet school entertained a quite different string of thoughts about others.

Samoilov, Kosterina, and Tverdin used the method of literary characterisation in highlighting a social type among their acquaintances. On several occasions Tverdin was quite explicit about this method applied to a real person from among his acquaintances:

Это вообще тот *тип*, который считает Дантеса и Мартынова выше их жертв. [...] мне кажется, что это отпрыск тех «ненужных людей», которые стали уже умирать, но вот, как последний *представитель*, как попытка приспособиться к жизни и является – этот Бдиль.

Будучи *ненужным – лишним человеком* в обществе он, выдвигая себя, приспособляясь к настоящей жизни, старается свести к нулю тех, которые всеми силами заботятся о его устройстве и благополучии.⁴⁶² (my italics)

One should mention here that Bdil' was fighting for the affection of a girl our diarist also seemed to have taken a shine to, which could have something to do with this classification of Bdil' as a 'superfluous person'. This analysis classified Bdil' as a social type highlighting its representative features to the effect that one learnt little of Bdil' as a person, but much about the diarist's attitude towards him. Earlier Tverdin inadvertently offered an insight into his motivation for 'analysing' Bdil's *obraz*:

Первый раз я его встретил на лит[ературном] кружке. [...] Принявши тогда его за порядочного человека, я назвал вчера его сволочью. [...] Почему же я Бдиля называю сволочью? Я не знаю почему, но слово "сволочь" я с него не сниму и никто

⁴⁶² *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 373.

меня не заставит снять его. Вообще я отвечаю за свои слова.
Да, я отвечаю.

*Для того, чтобы найти ответ на этот вопрос, мы
возьмем его образ.⁴⁶³ (my italics)*

The diarist confessed that he was unclear about why exactly he wanted to belittle Bdil', but could easily justify his feelings with the analysis of the other's *obraz* as a vilified character of a pre-revolutionary novel. The analysis followed Tverdin's judgement rather than preceded it. Significant in the quote is the conspicuous 'we' in 'we would look at his *obraz*'; the application of the method brought Tverdin's mind back to the literary classroom, where the method was exercised and perfected.

In his diary, Samoilov reveals his plan of writing a poem that would deal with superfluous men in Soviet times. He called it a 'genealogy of Pechorins', a type by which he felt surrounded, describing them in derisive terms: 'Среди нашей молодежи немало архаизмов. [...] Я знаю их насквозь – это юноши и девушки моего круга.'⁴⁶⁴

Another example of Tverdin's application of this method to his classmate is worth of notice:

Сегодня подзудил Перца [short for Peretsman, since in another entry the boy is mentioned twice as both Perets and Peretsman]⁴⁶⁵
с велосипедом и катался с час. Вот тип - неописанный еще.
Лесть - основная черта. Методы общения - все отличительно
от других людей. *Впрочем велосипед дал.⁴⁶⁶ (my italics)*

⁴⁶³ Tverdin, 30 November 1938.

⁴⁶⁴ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 121. 30 May 1937.

⁴⁶⁵ Tverdin, 19 September 1938.

⁴⁶⁶ Tverdin, 26 April 1939.

Significant in this entry is the word 'however' with which Tverdin qualified an otherwise negative portrayal of 'this un-described type' (the type was yet 'unknown' in his diary or perhaps more generally, in the literary history course). The qualifying adverb introduces Perets' positively evaluated action of sharing his bike with the diarist. Although Tverdin claims objectivity in his character analysis applied to classmates, it is nevertheless tainted by his bias based on their interaction. Interestingly, the preceding description of the boy lists 'unfit communication methods' among the negative features of his friend Perets. To communicate differently from others is a negative feature in Tverdin's world.

Kosterina described the social types in her year 10 using similar terms. Like Tverdin, she was motivated to perform such analysis by a conflict with her classmate: 'Вчера у меня произошло маленькое столкновение с Глебовой, и это натолкнуло меня на мысль описать девочек нашего класса.' She entitled this exercise 'Нравы и типы десятого класса' and identified three types among the girls in her form, naming them to reflect each group's main features: 'Девочек же я делю на три группы: '«болото», «барышни» и «комсомолки»'.⁴⁶⁷ The literary source of 'boloto' and 'baryshni' could have been Gor'kii – in another entry she mentions seeing his play 'Meshchane.'⁴⁶⁸ Interestingly, she confessed to having difficulty identifying types among boys, who seemed to her a homogeneous group. Significantly 'komsomolki', the group she believed herself a part of, were described as the closest group to the boys, capable of having friendships with them.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁷ Kosterina, 25 October 1938.

⁴⁶⁸ Kosterina, 25 November 1938. See p. 196.

⁴⁶⁹ Kosterina, 25 October 1938.

Such examples of applying what was essentially the literary analysis practised in secondary school classrooms to real people that the diarists encountered in their everyday lives are numerous in Tverdin, Kosterina, and Samoilov's diaries. Further testimony to the practice's ubiquity is borne by Tverdin's entries on children's playful attitude to characterisation:

А. Д. диктовала программу испытаний, Норкин, услышав про Обломова, сказал:

- Кто такой Обломов - я не знаю?

А. Д. помедлила, вероятно искала остроу, чтобы ответить ошарашившему ее ученику.⁴⁷⁰

Tverdin implies here that the teacher was shocked at a student who escaped hearing about a protagonist of the 19th-century novels assigned for school study by Narkompros. Realising that the student was joking, the teacher threatened to penalise him by lowering his mark. In the context of the literary classroom's practices, such activities of these schoolchildren become understandable.

These and similar episodes testify to the fact that the analytical exercises during literature lessons acquired a strong hold on children's minds, as they were easily transferred into the realm of children's intense social interaction.

At times Tverdin demonstrated lucidity as to whether he was analysing someone's *obraz* or providing a *kharakteristika*:

Дам *некоторые характеристики наших учителей*. [...] Ей приблизительно лет пятьдесят. Грубая по натуре. Неимоверно толстая и грузная. Лицо обрусгло. Имеет кличку

⁴⁷⁰ Tverdin, 25 April 1939.

"динама", которую носит уже несколько лет подряд. Спрашивает серьезно и "плохо" ставить любит.⁴⁷¹ (my italics)

This *kharakteristika* follows a typical pattern of an '*obraz* analysis' – from physical appearance to socially significant actions, in line with the teacher's strict marking criteria in such cases.

The analysis of a character, assessed from a point of view of Russia's historical development and judged according to their contribution to social progress, along with the encouragement of students to relate to these characters in a highly specific way, developed in Soviet children a habit of evaluating others. Significantly, awareness of the mental process of transferring character analysis onto real people, which is part of the humour of the pranks above, was not always apparent (for instance in Tverdin's analysis of Bdil' above, or of his girlfriend Mira below). In Tverdin's diary, such awareness seems to exist in inverse proportion to the level of personal involvement with the object of analysis.

In one of his entries, Samoilov described his experience of the process of perceiving others. In particular, he highlighted the role emotions played in it. Since he was unable to feel neutral about someone, his initial perception of the other had to be either highly positive or highly critical. He called this explicitly 'an image' of another, not unlike a literary *obraz*:

Я не могу относиться к человеку равнодушно, я должен или любить его, или ненавидеть, и потому, прежде чем узнать кого-нибудь, я создаю в своей голове *образ* этого человека, отвратительный или прекрасный. Потом, когда я познаю

⁴⁷¹ Tverdin, 21 September 1938.

человека, мне часто приходится менять мнение о нем.⁴⁷² (*my italics*)

This image was based on a superficial perception of another, he confessed, a perception that had to be adjusted to reality later on. Yet what is significant about this process is that the 'reality-check' against which the initial image of another person could not sustain its validity was also ridden with literary references and comparisons and hence as likely to be as skewed as the initial perception. Thus Samoilov's diary entry contains both the initial literary comparison in perceiving one of his female acquaintances and the later adjustment and conclusion about her:

Я принял всерьез эту комедию с самоубийством, эту «страстную» любовь, эти комические страдания. Я вообразил, что это глубокая и незаурядная Татьяна наших дней. [...] действительно, что у нее есть? Ничего, кроме темной суеверности, развращающего меня самолюбия, удивительного эгоизма, выдуманных страданий и тощего умишки. Интересно посмотреть, какие книги она читает. [...] В общем это «идеальная» натура, которую так хорошо изобразил Белинский.⁴⁷³

Samoilov saw this acquaintance as Pushkin's Tatiana, later changing his mind about the depth of her character, drawing a parallel with critical descriptions of sentimental types by Belinskii.⁴⁷⁴

These literary parallels with people he met are the norm rather than the exception in Samoilov's school diary.⁴⁷⁵ Certainly the fact, revealed by a later entry, that at the time he also was preparing for a Pushkin evening at school

⁴⁷² *Podennye zapisi*, p. 66. 20 May 1936.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴ Samoilov must have had Belinskii's article 'Evgenii Onegin' in mind. V. G. Belinskii, *Sochineniia Aleksandra Pushkina*, edited by N. I. Mordovchenko (Leningrad: Goslitizdat, 1937).

⁴⁷⁵ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 79, 123.

might have had a bearing on his revised opinion of his acquaintance.⁴⁷⁶ Nevertheless, in Samoilov's mind, Belinskii's derisive reference got stuck to this person and in a later entry after another meeting he again reduced his impression of her to the 'type' described by Belinskii.⁴⁷⁷

Assessment of others learned from the character study in literary classroom inevitably reproduced the moral judgements with which these types were initially introduced. The teaching method used explored literary characters' personal features in terms of how far they contributed (or failed to contribute) to the social ends of human experience. This *per se* was enough to prompt a shift of emphasis away from more independent self-exploration; pupils were meant to be focusing on a person's social role rather than the individual idiosyncratic qualities of self and others that make a person human. How that self played out in the communication with others and in the grand oeuvre of society was at the centre of this. The study had obvious practical implications.

Analysing representative characters in literature, the protagonists that transgressed normative behaviour standards, was one means of ensuring the younger generation kept their behaviour and attitudes within the boundaries of the accepted moral norms of social conduct. These clear ethical criteria by which students were to assess not only fictional heroes, but also themselves and others, encouraged categorical responses, especially where the others were concerned. In his capacity as diary writer, Tverdin had the freedom to identify with Oblomov

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 67. 25 May 1936.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 72-73. 9 June 1936: 'Проявление «идеальности» по (Белинскому)!'.

on one day, and a positive hero such as Chernyshevsky's Rakhmetov, on another, depending on his mood, but others under the scrutiny of such simplified assessment were rarely re-evaluated. On one occasion Tverdin described an episode when he himself was subjected to such simplified evaluation. Tverdin's class mentor (klassnyi rukovoditel'), whose task it was to write a *kharakteristika* of each student, must have reported an occasion of Tverdin's misdemeanour:

Игнат подал заявление об отставке его от должности кл[ассного] руководителя. Он уже подал докладную с характеристикой каждого ученика. Наверное меня сумел раскрасить всеми своими красками-способностями. [...] Завтра комсом[ольское] собрание. Я попал в протокол комитета, как выпивающий. Вот может завариться буза, *выпил раз на пятак, а раздули чорт [sic] знает на сколько.*⁴⁷⁸ (my italics)

That such judgement could be passed on the evidence of a singular episode or a visual detail was the main flaw of the analytical habit, resulting from the practice of a simplified character analysis, devoid of context. Academician G. A. Gukovskii warned precisely of this outcome.⁴⁷⁹

Tverdin was conscious of being the victim of precipitous judgement, yet he himself indulged in dismissing others on similar grounds, especially where an obvious bias – such as jealousy or a conflict with a strict teacher of his least favourite subject – was present. As in the case with Bdil', the 'superfluous person' served as a suitable label for any annoying 'other': in a teenage categorical fashion, such people were unwelcome in one's life and hence in society at large. But the concept of a 'superfluous person' also contributed towards the diarists'

⁴⁷⁸ Tverdin, 15 December 1938.

⁴⁷⁹ P. 165.

fear they might themselves fall into this category, and thus only reinforced their desire to belong to the collective.⁴⁸⁰

In the quote about his rival Bdil', Tverdin perceptively remarked that such 'unneeded people are becoming extinct.' This is more indicative of the fact that being an outsider who is not part of the collective struggle for socialist progress was becoming inconceivable to the young generation, rather than being a reference to the gruesome acts of the state's deliberate liquidation of such people prior to and at the time this entry was made.

Other entries in Tverdin's diary testify to his growing dependence on belonging to the collective, to a 'we' of sorts, along with the need for social interaction:

В себе я замечаю давно одно явление. Когда я нахожусь в среде людей, хотя бы даже с одной М., то я живу. Как только я остаюсь один на один с собой – я умираю. Стремленья к жизни нет! Полный упадок сил. Полный крах светлых надежд. Меня мучает моя судьба.⁴⁸¹

The writer realised that his interaction with others had become the source of his will to live and inspiration of his dreams of bright future, as well as the source of his narrative in the diary.⁴⁸²

Kosterina's diary contains an entry in which she describes coming back from a prolonged absence to find herself isolated and 'forgotten'. Since she was used to

⁴⁸⁰On the collective pressure in self-fashioning of Soviet identity see Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Soviet Culture*, pp. 241-252.

⁴⁸¹ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 374.

⁴⁸² Vitalii Bezrogov, one of the editors of Tverdin's unpublished diary, remarked on the entry of 20 May 1939: '[Не может выйти в своем дневниковом дискурсе-повествовании за пределы школы, она определяет практически всю социальность автора; заканчивается учебный год – и ужас: о чем писать, о чем переживать и что описывать?]

intense social interaction, she found this new situation hardly bearable: 'О-о, я не знала еще до сих пор, что такое одиночество! Одна, всегда и всюду одна! Я истерзалась, замкнулась.'⁴⁸³ To make things worse, she shuts down even more and feels that others are mocking her loneliness, imagining that her classmates are acutely aware of her feelings. Interestingly, books and theatre offer her some solace during this difficult period: 'Только книги и театр немного спасали меня.'⁴⁸⁴ In the course of the entry she confesses that her feelings of loneliness had something to do with her jealousy of another classmate who became very popular during Kosterina's absence from school. She reproaches herself in the diary for experiencing such 'base, shallow' feeling.

If existence outside of one's peer network seemed vacuous, then Tverdin also saw life without academic progress (which incidentally also contributed to the social competition of his form against other school's units/years) as plain scary:

Тогда либо пулю в лоб либо кончать учиться. И первое и второе жжет сердце и без ножа режет, но иного выхода нет. Бросить учиться: значит потерять в жизни все, что было намечено.⁴⁸⁵

As this sense of the identity of a student and thus a future integrated element of the socialist society grew in Tverdin, so did the necessity of academic progress. To step off the planned conveyor system producing the future Soviet cadres was to become an outcast and 'lose everything'. To Efron also, who consciously worked towards becoming a Soviet person, passing exams (*ispytaniia*) was important in terms of fitting into this social environment that was new to him,

⁴⁸³ Kosterina, 4 March 1939.

⁴⁸⁴ Kosterina, 4 March 1939.

⁴⁸⁵ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 384.

although in a parallel private concern, it would not do his image any good if he had to repeat a year – he was already the tallest boy in his current year 7.⁴⁸⁶

One should note that Samoilov's love of study did not seem to be based on any such fear. In his diary he seemed less concerned with his academic performance, and expressed his own interests and attitudes to knowledge:

Наука! Я обожаю науку! Но не школьную, скучную, сухую, порой просто ненужную, ту, которую насильно *вкладывают* в наши мозги. Я люблю *впитывать* в себя науку сам. Величайшее наслаждение заниматься тем, что тебя интересуется.⁴⁸⁷ (my italics)

Young Samoilov was able to distinguish active teaching from a more independent absorbing of learning, which gave him entirely different kind of satisfaction – pleasure. His diary contains a record of extracurricular readings:

Днем мы с Пуцилло ходили по букинистам, искали книг. В одном из магазинов потеряли друг друга. /Я купил стихотворения Тютчева и по философии Кондильяка.⁴⁸⁸

Есенин пьян своей поэзией, *он тонет в ней, он махнул рукой на мир, он мучительно отрывает куски своей души и воплощает их в звучные строфы.*⁴⁸⁹ (my italics)

When roaming second-hand bookstores, children looked for authors outside the curriculum,⁴⁹⁰ yet their interest in poetry most likely began or was intensified at school that also influenced the way in which the young judge of style writes about Esenin. In his evaluation of Esenin, Samoilov echoes the most emotional

⁴⁸⁶ Efron, 2 March 1940.

⁴⁸⁷ Podennye zapisi, p. 59. 20 January 1936.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 50. 30 December 1935.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid. Later in this entry he admits that one should love and model on Esenin poetry, provided one puts aside ('otbrosiv') his sad moods.

⁴⁹⁰ There is a motive for this: the desire to stand out and impress peers with the knowledge outside of school programme. That this knowledge would include poetry is significant of the poetry's status among their peers.

passages from Gor'kii.⁴⁹¹ This heightened emotional inter-textuality revealed the impact of teachers' efforts to promote both the love of poetic expression in children and the emotional approach to discussing it.

Kosterina wrote in her diary about reading different poets. Because she was aware of taking this literature closely to heart, she worried about their contradictory influence:

Гейне, Есенин, Лонгфелло, Маяковский – я их могу с одинаковым увлечением читать одного за другим. И они уживаются во мне, как в большой квартире уживчивые квартиранты. Но порой мне кажется, что уживчивость эта обманчива и грозит мне большими неприятностями, а может быть, уже неслышно подтачивает мою психику и мое сознание.⁴⁹²

The girl is semi-aware here of diverging from the ideological influence intended by the school curriculum. Nevertheless, she ends the entry with a self-reassurance of her communist conviction – she sees her path 'clearly': 'Нет, не может быть – пульс мой полнокровный, путь свой вижу ясно.'⁴⁹³

b. Connecting the Literary with the Real

Whether socially dependent, as in the case of Tverdin and Kosterina or simply socially active, like Samoilov, Soviet children focused to a larger extent than

⁴⁹¹ 'Да, я мучительно и тревожно люблю Россию, люблю русский народ [...] именно он должен особенно настойчиво стремиться к расширению и углублению души, вместительности впечатлений бытия. Для пролетария дары искусства и науки должны иметь высшую ценность, для него - это не праздная забава, а пути углубления в тайны жизни. Мне странно видеть, что пролетариат в лице своего мыслящего и действующего органа "Совета Рабочих и Солдатских Депутатов" относится так равнодушно и безразлично к отсылке на фронт, на бойню, солдат-музыкантов, художников, артистов драмы и других нужных его душе людей. Ведь, посылая на убой свои таланты, страна истощает сердце свое, народ отрывает от плоти своей лучшие *куски*' (my italics). Maksim Gor'kii, *Nesvoevremennye mysli: Zametki o revoliutsii i kul'ture* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990), parts XXI, LVI < <http://ilibrary.ru/text/2378/p.21/index.html> > [accessed 1 September 2015].

⁴⁹² Kosterina, 27 July 1939.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

Efron on their social interactions with classmates at school, and literary material featured prominently in their reflections about their social environment. For example, Tverdin described an episode in which he was upset by the behaviour of one of his classmates, Emma, who tried to introduce his girlfriend to other men. Apart from expressing his strong discontent at Emma, assigning her abusive names in decidedly unliterary Russian, he compared an element of this situation to a literary one:

Большой сволочью оказалась Эммка. Видите ли в расписание ее биксования вошло то, чтобы познакомить Мирку с какой-то шпаной из коридора Дома Кр[асной] Ар[мии]. Правда у ней это не вышло, но попытки были и есть.

Получилось вроде как у Пушкина в «Графе Нулине» - Мира мне рассказала все, хотя Эмма категорически запретила ей об этом говорить. Вероятно боится сука потерять репутацию, которой к сожалению давно уже нет. Есть же люди на земле, мечущие яд! А я то, (зач.: только) моргослепый дурак, только перед этим так в душе превознес ее и даже сожалел, что порвал близкие товарищеские отношения. Нет, от таких змей в человеческом одеянии, подальше!⁴⁹⁴ (my italics)

Significantly, these literary comparisons provided the young writer with the weight of evidence, and a person could be dismissed in categorical conclusive fashion.⁴⁹⁵ (Yet the comparison itself is tenuous: in Pushkin's comic poem, a wife tells her husband about Graf Nulin's advances during her husband's absence, so that readers are left to make up their own minds about what she has actually done, with one possible interpretation being that she is far from being an

⁴⁹⁴ Tverdin, 16 January 1939. 'Graf Nulin' was not part of the school curriculum, but it is not surprising that Tverdin read it, since Pushkin's complete works were recommended for *vneklassnoe chtenie. Programmy srednei shkoly. Literatura, VIII-X klassy* (Narkompros, 1939), p 63.

⁴⁹⁵ Other examples, including Samoilov's, of these categorical concise conclusions similar to literary chapters' conclusion.

innocent loyal wife. The interpretation may reflect, though, what the boy had been told at school.)⁴⁹⁶

Comparison with a fictional situation from novels studied at school is woven naturally into Tverdin's narratives. At times literary material had a sufficient resonance with a social situation as to have a direct impact on his decisions and intentions. Thus Tverdin recorded an incident of a game called 'Opinion' which he had played (tipsily, it would seem) with his classmates at a party:

Все в сборе. Началась игра в мнения. Больше всех, кажется, досталось мне. Говорили, что М. держит меня под каблуком, что я забыл все и всех ради нее. Скучная, однообразная игра надоела.⁴⁹⁷

Although the boy expressed his annoyance at this criticism from his friends and transferred it to the game, the diary preserved an entry in which he reproached himself for the very same misdemeanour:

С тех пор как я полюбил Миру: я совершенно забыл *друзей и товарищей*. На всех я смотрю как непосредственные необходимые, но ненужные мне вещи. Кроме того я забыл всех. Для нее я готов сделать все, но для других я считаю необязанным. Я думал, что любя ее должен на все смотреть как на обыденные явления ненужные мне. Друзей можно оставить и забыть. Все время отдать только ей и ее любви. Все неприятности и радости можно делить только с ней. Но нет! Эта пьеса [Арбузова «Таня»] сломала во мне эти установки. Нельзя быть равнодушным даже к себе. | Я люблю ее и буду любить, но потерять из-за этого друзей, *уходить в собственные интересы, откалываться от масс* я не должен, ибо *отходя из любви к М. от массы я делаю преступление*. Я равнодушен ко всему ... даже к себе.⁴⁹⁸ (my italics)

⁴⁹⁶ A. S. Pushkin, 'Graf Nulin, 1825', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 16 tomakh*, edited by Maksim Gor'kii, D. D. Blagoi, S. M. Bondi et al., 16 vols (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1937-1959) vol. 5, *Poemy, 1825-1833* (1948), pp. 1-13.

⁴⁹⁷ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 367.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

The protagonist of Arbuzov's play gives up her professional calling (and hence is indifferent to herself) in the name of love for a husband who eventually abandons her. Eventually she succeeds in becoming a doctor and thus becoming a part of the collective.⁴⁹⁹ For Tverdin to indulge in innately and intensely private feelings was equated with betraying one's environment. Such an environment would seem to include both 'friends' and 'comrades' who are collated into a general term – 'the masses' later in the paragraph. To a teenagers' limited experience the meaning of 'the masses' might have begun at home – with friends and comrades at school: '[о]бразов в школе много, правда все они похожи один на другого, но тем лучше надо дать типичный образ массы людей.'⁵⁰⁰ It is perhaps the immediate environment at school (in addition to the 'back yard' playmates and the experience in a classroom or street-roaming with classmates)⁵⁰¹ that became the source of appraisal of what the 'masses' and belonging to them meant. Thus Tverdin's disregard of the collective in the name of love was considered a crime, and not against an abstract entity but 'the mass' with familiar faces at that. The private sphere of romantic feelings was thus contrasted to the social life with friends and was coined as a 'shallow life' – 'отход[а] от массы в личную, мелкую жизнь.'⁵⁰² But what is significant here in terms of the literary material's role in Tverdin's conundrum was that the play he saw contributed to this view and brought about a dramatic change in the boy's outlook, whilst the peer-pressure expressed in the game 'Opinion' only seemed

⁴⁹⁹ A. N. Arbuzov, *Tania: Dramaticheskie stseny v 4 chastakh* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1938).

⁵⁰⁰ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 362.

⁵⁰¹ Idem, p. 381: 'У наших ребят есть одно занятие для проведения времени. Соберутся группой и начинают шляться по улицам отпуская всякие реплики и остроты, толкая друг друга в лужи и стараясь причинить друг другу какой-нибудь вред. По пути группа растет, или наоборот, отсеиваются те, у которых ноги по колено [...] в воде. Так было и вчера. Пришел я в школу, оттуда и началось наше паломничество по городу.'

⁵⁰² Ibid., p. 366.

to annoy him. This was symptomatic of the high level of authority exercised by the authors of canonical literary texts⁵⁰³ (to which the literary lessons at school contributed) and also demonstrated the immediate application of literary phenomena to one's own personal circumstances. Here Tverdin exhibited a similar analytical process to the one used when applying character types to people, but this time it was more pronounced in that it superimposed the literary onto his own psychological reality – the efforts of the history of literature course to erase the boundaries between fiction and reality in the young minds paid off.

Nina Kosterina, just like Tverdin and Samoilov, applied moral conclusions from literature to her life experiences.⁵⁰⁴ She also incorporated literary references from the classics studied at school in her descriptions of her own life events in her diary. For example, when she received a letter from her father and had some foreboding of what lay ahead, she wrote that she wanted to exclaim the words of Taras Bul'ba's son: 'I hear you, Daddy!'⁵⁰⁵ Another time, lyrical literary passages resonated with Kosterina's own experience and she had to write her own impressions down in her diary:

Ночь. Тишина. Затихает гул Москвы. Пора спать, но передо мной Горький – «Дед Архип и Ленька». Прочла полстраницы и схватилась за дневник. Так живо, так ясно представилась картина – дед и Ленька на берегу Кубани. И тут же свое — в пышной зелени берега Волги у Хвалынска, белые песчаные отмели.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰³ Zinovy Zinik in an autobiographical novel remarks on 'the prominent place the writer occupied in the Russian psyche' in connection with 'the proverbial Russian warmth of closely knitted relationship within a tight clan of friends, the sense of chosenness (*sic*) about belonging to the spectacular Russian spiritual history...' in Zinovy Zinik, *The History Thieves* (London, Seagull Books, 2010), p. 19.

⁵⁰⁴ Kosterina, 20 June 1936.

⁵⁰⁵ Kosterina, 15 December 1937.

⁵⁰⁶ Kosterina, 27 October 1938.

Significantly, under the recent influence of Gor'kii's prose, her own entry is written in a much more lyrical style than usual.⁵⁰⁷

Similarly to Tverdin, Kosterina goes to the theatre to see Gor'kii's play *Philistines* and intends to apply the lessons learned to her own life. Kosterina draws a connection between the play and contemporary life around her, in line with the emphasis on such connection in the programmes and methodology for literature, and comes to the conclusion she should act. She promises to fight against the bourgeoisie:

Очень сильная пьеса. Много в нашей жизни похоже на жизнь «мещан», хотя пьеса Горького написана давно. Бороться с мещанством надо, и буду бороться. Мещанством, как болотом, втягиваются не только люди недалекие, но умные и культурные.⁵⁰⁸

Kosterina here mentioned 'the swamp' in connection to the bourgeoisie as a class; a month earlier she applied the same metaphor to one of the three types of girls she highlighted in her form.⁵⁰⁹ This is likely to be an unconscious borrowing from Gor'kii (and perhaps Blok, since in one of her October records she writes about reading Blok's 'Intelligentsiia i revoliutsiia' and quotes from it).⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁷ A few examples of Gor'kii's laconic descriptive sentences, which Kosterina imitates: 'Было уже темно. Тишина прерывалась звуками песни, долетавшей издали с реки.' 'Медленно наступала весенняя ночь. Тишина становилась полной, глубокой [...]' from 'Ozornik' in Maksim Gor'kii, *Sobranie sochinenii*, edited by I. A. Gruzdev, 23 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1929), vols 1-2, pp. 242- 257 (pp. 254, 256).

⁵⁰⁸ Kosterina, 25 November 1938.

⁵⁰⁹ In his journalistic works Gor'kii also speaks of the danger: 'все еще не исчезла опасность свернуть незаметно для себя в болото мещанского благополучия'; 'Мелкая буржуазия, городское мещанство заражает [рабочий класс] [...] и вовлекала сотни рабочих в тепленькую тину своего болотца, увеличивая количество паразитов трудового народа.' Maksim Gor'kii, 'Za rabotu! (1931)', in *Publitsisticheskie stat'i* (Leningrad: OGIZ LENGIKHL, 1933), pp. 305-309 (p. 306). Also see p. 182 of this thesis.

⁵¹⁰ Kosterina, 31 October 1938. Aleksandr Blok, 'Intelligentsiia i revoliutsiia', in *Stikhotvoreniia, poemy, teatr*, edited by V. I. Orlov (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1936), pp. 479-483.

Kosterina learns important lessons not only from plays, but also from her readings. For example, having read H. G. Wells *Love and Mr Lewisham* she draws a conclusion to herself: 'Из всего этого поняла, что надо быть осмотрительным при женитьбе. Не дай бог попасть на такую пустоту, как Этель! Бедный мисгер! [...] Жизнь – игра.'⁵¹¹ In drawing this and other lessons from literary works, read as part of her course or as extracurricular reading, Kosterina does not question the authors' authority. This connection between literature and life and the free adaptation of literary wisdom to reality was effectively taught by the method used in the literary classroom.

Efron differed in his attitude to writers' authority. He was capable of a critical position towards the texts he read and his own response to them. For example, here he acknowledges his possible bias as a 15-year old reader:

Прочел «Братья Карамазовы» Достоевского. Местами очень увлекательная и интересная книга. Все же общий тон — испуганный, и религиозная истерика это усугубляет. Есть отдельные персонажи абсолютно живые и правдивые (штабс-капитан «мочалка» и т.п.). Но в общем, книга туманная (из-за примеси религии).

Прочел «О любви» Стендаля. Книга холодная, умная, но в какой-то мере уже документальная, утратившая (по крайней мере, в СССР) часть своей актуальности. Написана эта книга хотя и порой блестяще, но чересчур (по-моему) холодно. Когда пишешь о женщинах, нельзя так холодно писать (конечно, *все это размышления 15-летнего человека*, так что...). В этой книге отсутствует восхищение перед физическими качествами женщин, перед этими сокровищами — это также плохо. В этой книге есть *много остроумных мыслей и встречаются порой верные аксиомы, остальное — теоремы*. [...] К любви книга относится слишком серьезно, «научно», сухо. Все-таки слишком мало иронии над

⁵¹¹ Kosterina, 9 October 1938.

самим собой (т.е. над влюбленным), мало передается желание близости с женщиной как источник незабываемых минут и, наконец, слишком много романтизма. СССР — страна без романтизма, оттого читать «О любви» — довольно парадоксально чувствуешь себя.⁵¹² (my italics)

Efron is aware of both 'axioms' and 'theorems' in Stendhal's work, but does not pick and digest either of them uncritically. He successfully invokes an important element of the Soviet critical criteria – whether the book is topical enough and answers the needs of modernity (*aktualnost'*), yet he also gives a mature analysis as to why this might not be the case. Efron offers an insight for why the book does not resonate with him: there is a certain lack of the romantic attitude necessary to understand and relate to Stendhal's work on love. He is self-aware about his own likely limitations as a reader (the callowness of an inexperienced 15-year-old). And he seems to be particularly perceptive on this occasion. Indeed, romance did not fit comfortably with the collective aspirations of the USSR to which Tverdin's, Kosterina's, and Samoilov's entries also testified.

c. Literature and Romance

Tverdin's entry of 16 March 1939 recorded a love story centred on his classmate Tata Kislitskaia who began skipping lessons and was rumoured to want to change schools. Tverdin decided to find out what was the matter, which perhaps was part of his social role as both *starasta* of the class and member of the VLKSM committee. He invited Tata for a conversation in his home. Tata saw a book on his table – *The Sorrows of Young Werther* – and asked him whether he liked it. Tverdin answered that the book was not topical enough, the love described there

⁵¹² Efron, 17 May 1940.

was not Soviet: 'Как-то не современно... Любовь не нашего покроя - ответил я./ Ну конечно, тебе не понятно! - Задумчиво сказала она.' Tverdin could have exaggerated when painting Tata's image as a girl suffering from unrequited love and a romantic reader of Goethe at that. However, it is significant that he continued telling her story without missing an opportunity to insert another literary reference to his narration:

Только домой мы шли трое - она, Гаврик и я. Дорогой Гаврик ей прочел *мораль подобную Онегинской*. Она шла *задумчивой* и всю дорогу молчала. [...]

Она опустила глаза и слезы упали из ее глаз. Мне невероятно стало жалко ее. Ее *бедную страдающую* девушку. Она страдает, а не понимает, что все это напрасно. [...] Дома она мне сама рассказала о всех чувствах теснящих душу ее. (my italics)

The description of soulful Tata contained literary epithets reminiscent of Pushkin's Tatiana. Tata herself explained her attraction to Gavrik as to an intriguing 'type' that she could not understand:

Я думала, что Гаврик *непонятый тип*, и хотела разгадать его душу, мне он казался обиженным и я смотрела на него, как смотрит мать на своего сына. Но его отношения ко мне были крайне дерзкими. [...] (my italics)

Tverdin used his personal story as an example of a passing infatuation in order to help Tata sober up, emotionally speaking, and convince her of the futility of fleeting romantic feelings. (Tverdin acted not unlike Pushkin's Onegin did with Titiana.) Tverdin called these infatuations childish and impractical and in the end managed to convince Tata to see her love trouble as trivial and insignificant. Tverdin recorded her saying: 'Мне все дело кажется глупостью. Мне только жалко год, который терзал мою душу.' After this, Tverdin describes the change in the girl: '[...] и действительно, *Тата стала иная - непохожая на прежнюю задумчивую, наивную, мечтающую о чем-то неизвестном,*

девушку. Вот какая история произошла с Кислициной' (my italics).⁵¹³Significantly, using his own story, Tverdin thinks he is 'proving' to Tata the fleeting nature of infatuation. Both Tverdin and Tata seemed to take for granted that 'a story', whether literary or real, could provide a tangible proof, evidence and a precedent to help resolve a personal situation and make a decision. This technique was transferred from the method of social upbringing through literary example (especially in matters of the heart, such as friendship and love), as practised in the literary classroom. In the end Tata was indeed changed, as if dropping her impersonation of Goethe and Pushkin's romantic characters and coming back to the Soviet reality in which other priorities won over her heart's desires, with a comrade's help. (This outcome, at the same time, is reminiscent of Onegin's sobering influence on Tatiana.)

Literature also plays an important role in Kosterina's romantic relationships, for instance when she describes her relationship with her classmate Grisha. Apart from allowing Nina to read his poems and his diary,⁵¹⁴ Grisha, Nina records, expresses his feelings to her in Maiakovskii's poetic stanzas and philosophises about their relationship, alongside with his thoughts on Turgenev, in his diary.⁵¹⁵ In her own diary, she does a similar thing: she records her impression of Stefan Zweig's *Letter from an Unknown Woman* alongside her new infatuation: 'О-о, как оно [the letter] меня тронуло, больше того – потрясло. Я плакала над письмом, потом вспомнила Леву и стала плакать над собой.' And then she calls her feeling 'nonsense', 'stupid feelings', and predicts that she would laugh at

⁵¹³ Tverdin, 16 March 1939.

⁵¹⁴ Kosterina, 23 April 1938.

⁵¹⁵ Kosterina, 2 May 1938.

herself.⁵¹⁶ The following day she records a quote from Zweig in which an unknown woman speaks of her feeling as secret and unshared and Nina is concerned whether sharing her own love feeling with her diary or her friend would make her stray and be too different from Zweig's heroine she has learnt to love. And again, she ends the entry with the self-reproach that she is thinking about trivial unimportant things.⁵¹⁷

The object of Nina's infatuation is slightly older and it seems that this becomes a barrier to the relationship. The sexual advances of a much older man, a lecturer on the new Constitution, Kosterina found, on the other hand, utterly unacceptable.⁵¹⁸ Another important moment between Grisha and Nina, recorded by the latter, is revealing of Soviet criteria for 'the right' relationship: in one of their conversations, it becomes apparent that to Grisha *understanding* of Nina and her motives is more important than reciprocation.⁵¹⁹

A more subtle influence on teenagers' attitudes towards romantic relationships can be seen from Tverdin's own love story with Mira. The exemplary literature lesson that discussed love and friendship, analysed in chapter 1, led children to conclude that friendship within a love relationship is of vital importance.⁵²⁰ This line of thinking can be seen in Tverdin's self-reproaches: 'Я забываю, что она человек и смотрю на нее как на женщину, как на представителя пола, что снижает силу отношений и приводит к некоторой возвышенности над ее

⁵¹⁶ Kosterina, 1 August 1939.

⁵¹⁷ Kosterina, 2 August 1939.

⁵¹⁸ Kosterina, 4 and 7 March 1937, 19 December 1937.

⁵¹⁹ Kosterina, 4 November 1938.

⁵²⁰ P. 93.

женским бессилием.⁵²¹ Tverdin is uncomfortable with a romantic relationship and even though he confesses a strong attraction to Mira, he tries to control it and sublimate the relationship into a form of friendship or comradeship: 'Я ищу в тебе товарища, но пока что его трудно найти. На первом месте у тебя не дружба, а любовь из которой вытекают липкие (зач.: стр) ручейки ревности.'⁵²²

Tverdin described Mira as well-read. She loves the diarist in a bookish way, according to Tverdin, while he believes that 'real love' must contain something else apart from love, and the word itself frightens him:

И любит она по книжному [...] Нет настоящей любви, в которой кроме любви нет ничего. Мне как-то странно писать слово "любовь" – хочется заменить его чем-то.... Мне хочется на нее смотреть как на человека равного себе [...].⁵²³ (my italics)

Tverdin is disturbed by the word love in its bookish meaning and wished it were possible to substitute the word itself. This new word would have helped him cope with Mira's female allure and power over him. Here it becomes apparent that Tverdin, like Samoilov and Kosterina, has absorbed modern Soviet attitudes to gender relationships, in which the word 'love' was no longer suitable to describe the new ethics with regards to sexual attraction between young Soviet people. Tverdin's attempts to control his attraction within the imposed boundaries of Soviet ethics are recorded throughout the diary.

⁵²¹ Tverdin, 30 November 1938.

⁵²² Tverdin, 16 January 1939.

⁵²³ Tverdin, 4 January 1939.

Samoilov's diary contains a similar struggle. Samoilov records his infatuations with one classmate or another, revealing himself as a reader of romantic literature:

Татьяна. Какое прекрасное имя! Я влюблен до безумия. Я готов целый день смотреть на нее. О, истинная любовь есть только в созерцании! Отнюдь я не собираюсь признаваться ей. Я счастлив, что люблю ее. Это бескорыстная любовь, не требующая взаимности. *Как некий герой Куприна* я благодарен ей за то, что она существует. Как счастлив был я, когда она одарила меня своим взглядом! Пусть это *банально и пошло*, но это так. Целые перемены стоял я в углу зала и следил за ней.⁵²⁴(my italics)

Although acknowledging his feelings as highly romantic ones (he compares himself to a hero from Kuprin's short stories), he admits that such feelings might be considered 'banal and dirty' in the Soviet social context and eventually chooses a safer route – a comradely love with the one who 'complies with all the rules of communist ethics' seems to be a more appropriate feeling:

Недаром Пуцилло предостерегал меня от этого [romantic love]. Он говорил: «Любовь — это внешний блеск, главное — уважение».

Я раньше мало замечал. Последние дни мы делали стенгазету поздно оставались вместе. *Работа сближает*, и я открыл в ней много такого, чего не видел издали. Эта девушка *построена по всем правилам коммунистической морали и нет в ней подлых пережитков обывательско-мещанских правил*.⁵²⁵(my italics)

Samoilov's new choice is not only 'built according to the rules of communist morality', but also lacks the obsolescent features of the vilified bourgeoisie, which, like Tverdin, he believes to belong exclusively to a negative historical era. Quite naturally perhaps, such comradely love based on the strict criteria of

⁵²⁴ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 40. 10 October 1935.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43. 6 November 1935.

communist ethics does not last, and graduates instead into an utter renunciation of love now replaced by the devotion to this ethics:

Любовь моя окончательно переродилась в дружбу. Ничто не тяготит меня теперь. Все прошедшее *глупо и пошло*. Мы еще не *доросли до настоящих чувств*. Теперь я вполне спокоен. Я нашел то, что хорошо, и то, что плохо. Я нашел высшую этику — коммунистическую, ей я и буду следовать всегда.⁵²⁶ (my italics)

Unable to sustain feelings for a more socially appropriate love interest, he finds love feelings themselves 'silly and dirty' at his age, he decides he is not ready for such feelings, or rather 'they' are not ready, referring to his entire age group. In earlier entries, he judges that instincts are not fully developed at this age, as he can dream about love, but kissing disgusts him:⁵²⁷

Интересно, что физические отношения вызывают сейчас во мне отвращение. Чувство гадливости охватывает после объятия или поцелуя, и не только они сами, но даже представление о них противно. Наша любовь есть как бы дружба, и такой она должна быть.⁵²⁸

Literary lessons that strictly followed the prescriptions, and aimed to highlight the importance of friendship over romantic feelings in relationships between men and women, had been effective in Samoilov's case.⁵²⁹ Young Samoilov did not dare to admit that the pace of sexual development might differ from one individual to another. There is an unconscious shift from the 'I' to 'us' and back. Such projection of his own individual feelings onto the entire peer group, the projection of personal experience onto the collective, is both a sign of his

⁵²⁶ Ibid., p. 45. 18 November 1935.

⁵²⁷ This could be symptomatic of a more general anti-romantic Soviet attitude. Pedology was officially condemned, but the ideas of its main propagators might have been around, for instance, the idea on the importance of conserving sexual energy by children and young people, as expressed by A. B. Zalkind, 'Revoliutsionnye normy polovogo povedeniia molodezhi', *Revoliutsiia i molodezh'* (Moscow: Izdanie kommunisticheskogo universiteta imeni Sverdlova, 1925), pp. 70-99.

⁵²⁸ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 36. 29 September 1935.

⁵²⁹ V. S. Gabo, 'Tema "liubvi i druzhby" v literaturnom kruzhke', *Lvs 4* (1940), 45-53.

growing obsession with belonging to it and a result of the pedagogic emphasis on the fact that the Soviet school was an inappropriate place and time for love.

In sharp contrast to the Soviet diarists, Efron is bothered less with whether his love interests comply with any politically correct social criteria:

Интересно, как Майя выглядит в летнем платии (*sic*) — Должно быть, здорово. Она и так хорошенькая в ее теперешней одежде, а в летней, наверное, совсем «зажигательна».⁵³⁰

At one point, he acknowledges the foreignness of such appreciation of women's physical appearance: 'Мы с ним [his cousin] глазели на московских женщин и оценивали их качества (чисто парижское занятие).'⁵³¹ In his description of girls, he assesses them in the following order: their appearance, intellectual capacity, character and the emotion they trigger in him, independently of any concern for appropriateness of his feelings in the eyes of any community. Whether there is enough in common between them seems to be the main question he poses when contemplating a relationship with a woman. More often, however, he anticipates his own future experience with women in quite different terms: 'Меня очень интересуется, когда у меня будет первая лежанка с женщиной.'⁵³² In contrast to Samoilov, Efron is not unduly worried by thoughts of kissing a girl:

А все-таки достать себе девушку необходимо. Как я буду горд, когда я с ней буду ходить! И, укрывшись от чужих взоров, мы будем целоваться! Эх! Конечно, вполне возможно, что все это придет позже, так лет этак в двадцать. А возможно, что это придет раньше, чем я думаю.

⁵³⁰ Efron, 5 April 1940.

⁵³¹ Efron, 13 April 1940.

⁵³² Efron, 10 April 1940.

У меня иллюзий нет — «чистого» продолжительного наслаждения не существует ни в какой земной области, но, бесспорно, существуют незабвенные и замечательные моменты, которых нужно ухватить гораздо больше и лучше.⁵³³

Imagining these pleasurable scenes with women does not seem to cause any pangs of guilt or other anxious feelings in Efron, in sharp contrast with Samoilov and Tverdin, who try to disguise their sexual urges with more appropriate friendly and comradely terms in their diaries and express anxiety at the strength of their desires. As to the word pleasure, it is present in Samoilov's diary, but in a very different context – that one of an active struggle ('bor'ba') for ideals.⁵³⁴

As is hardly surprising, Efron is sceptical about the possibility of comradeship between a man and a woman:

С девушкой не может быть такого же нормального общения, как с мальчиком, — это абсолютно невозможно. Если Муля думает, что в данном случае можно, то он глуп (т.е. может быть, отношения и будут «нормальными»), но тогда он не предусмотрел моего «нормального» влечения.⁵³⁵

Efron is aware of the possibility of his sexual interest being aroused during his communication with young women. Some of his entries are quite explicit in this respect.⁵³⁶ As a rule, in contrast to the other adolescents, Efron exhibits a higher level of awareness of his personal egotistic bias in social interactions.

⁵³³ Efron, 23 April 1940.

⁵³⁴ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 54, 99.

⁵³⁵ Efron, 20 April 1940.

⁵³⁶ He explores at length his infatuation with a married Bulgarian neighbour. Efron, 18 March 1940, 21 March 1940.

To contemplate what a 'normal' desire outside communist ethics might be was a luxury Soviet schoolchildren could not afford, at least in their teenage years. Even dreams of love were subject to socialisation and were patrolled by a watchful eye. To all this the Soviet literary interpretive framework contributed, so that it felt 'silly and dirty' to be in love like one of Kuprin's heroes.⁵³⁷

Like Tverdin and Samoilov, Kosterina believed in the possibility of being friends with boys, even when she recorded a semi-sexual sensation during her dance with a classmate whom she invited to her 15th year birthday party: 'Когда Алик обнял меня за талию, а я положила руку ему на плечо, то невольно вздрогнула – такое было волнующее и радостное чувство.' Nevertheless, her conclusion is typically Soviet: she records that overall the birthday party 'скрепил мою дружбу с мальчишками, но рассорил с девочками.'⁵³⁸

Tverdin goes as far as putting forward in one of the most emotional entries of his diary the conditions under which he could love his Mira:

Мирочка...Ты вязнешь в мещанстве, сама того не замечая. Мира поверь мне, нет не мне, другим, а другие то же самое говорят. Мирочка пожалей себя и сделай радость мне! Стань *полноценной, жизнерадостной, веселой, бодрой, СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ДЕВУШКОЙ*. Если станешь, то можешь быть уверенной, что я буду любить тебя...⁵³⁹ (my italics, diarist's capitalisation)

To the schoolboy's mind, to be an adequate modern Soviet young woman she has to be cheerful and energetic. And he insists on that the girl he is in love with fits

⁵³⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 40. 10 October 1935.

⁵³⁸ Kosterina, 20 June 1936.

⁵³⁹ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 381.

into this ideal image as close as possible. Tverdin's stipulation that one's love interest must comply with the socially approved ideal was not idiosyncratic behaviour. Pedagogic literature demonstrates that Soviet children openly discussed the issue of a worthy target for their amorous feelings.⁵⁴⁰ The quote above shows how much influence the others' opinion had on Tverdin's own rationalisation of his feelings for Mira. Although it might be characteristic of teenagers in general to seek their peers' approval of their love choices, Soviet teenagers were specifically instructed in this respect in their literary classroom.

d. Models of Friendship – the Unity of Thought

Friendship caused problems along similar lines – the guidelines for choosing 'ideologically compatible' mates were explicit, including those propounded in literature lessons.⁵⁴¹ The diarists testified that these guidelines influenced them. For example, Samoilov's friendship with another boy was threatened by divergent views. He tried to understand his friend's position, but found it difficult to reconcile it with his own beliefs:

[Zgil] Часто ходил он на проповеди митрополита Введенского, который некогда полемизировал с Луначарским и является теперь главой "обновленческой" церкви! (Церковь всегда умеет приспособиться к обстоятельствам). [...]
*Взгляды Згеля угрожают нашей дружбе.*⁵⁴² (my italics)

Samoilov acknowledged the cause of the problem: the politically incorrect views of his friend. Renovationists (*obnovlentsy*) were the Russian Orthodox clergy who collaborated with the state in an attempt to renovate the church in the Soviet Union reconciling Marxism and Christianity. Often using Bolshevik tactics to gain

⁵⁴⁰ P. 93.

⁵⁴¹ P. 93.

⁵⁴² *Podennye zapisi*, pp. 54-55. 5 January 1936.

support, *obnovlentsy* were mistrusted by most believers. Neither were they popular with the state, once Metropolitan Sergii had written his statement of accommodation with Bolshevism in 1927. From then onwards, and more particularly the mid-1930s, they were treated with increasing harshness and the movement was on its way to its eventual liquidation in 1943.⁵⁴³

Tverdin ran into a slightly different problem. His friend Boris was reported to drink heavily. And due to Tverdin's important social position on the Komsomol committee of his school, as well as the fact he was a *starosta* of his year, he began to distance himself from Boris:

Сегодня был Комитет и разбирали некоторых. Я остановлюсь на одном как раз на Борисе *бывшем* друге моем. Правда я и сейчас *якобы* дружу с ним, но *по сознанию моему мне кажется*, что это даже уже не дружба, а просто некоторые, может быть ярко выраженные, товарищеские отношения.⁵⁴⁴ (my italics)

His 'conscience' dictated to him who could be considered a friend and who was probably just an acquaintance. This conscience was shaped by external opinion and communist ethics, internalised by Tverdin and expressed in his rationalisation of friendship: to associate closely with someone meant to run the risk of having their flaws projected onto one. Tverdin did take some risks with alcohol, for instance when participating in a teenage prank, such as group consumption of liqueur (*nalivka*) and herring during a lesson. The prank was accompanied by giggles and laughter and utterly outraged the teacher. In it,

⁵⁴³ For further discussion of the history of the *obnovlencheskaia* church see Edward E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), especially chapter 6, pp. 169-205, that deals with the period of 1928-1946.

⁵⁴⁴ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 368.

Tverdin successfully attempted to impress his peers, most likely of the opposite gender, since the initiator of the prank was a girl with whom he shared his desk.⁵⁴⁵ (Tverdin had many an opportunity to reassert his authority of a disciplined and disciplining Komsomol leader in his class; for example, when he stops his class from leaving the lesson too soon and reports experiencing rage, when one of the boys among of his classmates tries to make fun of his authority of a Komsomol leader.⁵⁴⁶) However, the risks Tverdin took with his prank at the lesson must have been of less dangerous to his reputation than a continued close friendship with a publicly acknowledged school drunk. From Tverdin and Samoilov's diaries it is possible to see how association with others was becoming self-censured, along with an additional pressure on these children – to comply with the mainstream ideology and an ideal image of the Soviet teenager. Otherwise, a dose of social isolation and the psychological discomfort associated with it was unavoidable, as in Efron's case.

Efron shares with his diary his realisation that he does not fit into the new environment and the reasons why:

У меня нет "общего круга", нет среды, нет постоянного общения с людьми. Может быть, я не располагаю иметь друзей, потому что я ненавижу шаблон, банальность и не похож на других. *В общем - наплевать - я никогда не нуждался в друзьях [...]* Но я рад, что имею знакомых...⁵⁴⁷ (my italics)

It is significant that the lack of friends does not bother him at this point. As long as he has some acquaintances, he does not seem concerned. However, as his

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 362.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 363.

⁵⁴⁷ Efron, 9 March 1940.

socialisation in his Soviet school progresses, the continued lack of friends begins to worry him:

Пока все идет в моей жизни криво и неважно: нет у меня ни одного друга – это первое. Нельзя же считать другом настоящим приспособленческого Митьку, к тому же столь "упадочника" и, в сущности, *порочного элемента*, который ничем мне не может помочь, ничего разъяснить, в котором *нет ни капли советского духа, с которым можно только вспоминать французские старые анекдоты*, остроумничать, разглядывать прохожих и издеваться над самими собой? Нет, Митька не друг, а только пустоватый *компаньон*, который, к тому же, всегда рад из тебя вытянуть денежки. Мне бы хотелось друга культурного, просвещенного и в то же время *вполне советского, который страстно интересуется как и СССР, так и мировой политикой, человека умного и веселого*.⁵⁴⁸
(my italics)

Not only is Efron clear about what his potential friend's required characteristics (cultured, clever, merry), but he wants someone with a 'Soviet' mentality. Mit'ka does not meet these requirements and Efron uses the word 'companion' to classify his French cousin who is found wanting in Soviet qualities and mentality. 'A companion' is a rare concept-word in the Soviet Union, while a 'depraved element' must be part of Efron's newly acquired Soviet vocabulary. Fairly soon, Efron's vocabulary stretches further to include the word 'comrade', as he declares his intention to enjoy life without friends or comrades: 'Нужно уметь находить приятное и без друзей и товарищей, и в этом заключается моя теперешняя задача.'⁵⁴⁹ Efron's diaries reveal a growing feeling of loneliness, as if Efron's sovietisation gradually increased the need for others in this otherwise self-reliant, creative, and artistic boy, who was a voracious reader, frequently exposed to numerous cultured personalities through his mother's social circles:

⁵⁴⁸ Efron, 16 May 1940.

⁵⁴⁹ Efron, 20 June 1940.

Хотя мое одиночество и дает богатую пищу для размышлений, тем не менее оно ужасно скучно. Не иметь не только *близких друзей, "своих", но и даже товарищей* - это просто ужасно! Всюду ходить всегда одному - отвратительно скучно. Например, в Парке культуры и отдыха: одному там просто нечего делать, а уже вдвоем все аттракционы и театры покажутся в сто раз интереснее, потому что можно делиться впечатлениями и *вместе "переживать"*.⁵⁵⁰ (my italics)

Only several months ago, a lack of friends left him indifferent, as he admitted that had never had a need for them. The contrast between his school ambience and his mother's circle used to please Efron.⁵⁵¹ Now he is concerned about not only lacking close friends, but also comrades. His need for sharing impressions and 'experiencing' (emotionally) things 'together' with his peers has significantly grown. A slightly later diary entry testifies to the same effect, betraying his fully-fledged irritability at his loneliness, also expressed as a feeling of annoyance with his mother:

И все еще абсолютно нечего делать, черт! Мать валяется и читает "Дневник" Ж. Ренара. *Ей абсолютно начхать, что я так хреново скучаю. Все же это совершенное г...! Пойти погулять? А куда идти? А вечер такой хороший и свежий. В сквере деревья вздыхают, город весь тут, со всеми своими звуками... и вот. Мне до черта скучно. Ни товарищей, ни друзей. НИ-ЧЕ-ГО!*⁵⁵² (my italics, original capitalisation)

The style of these entries differs from the earlier ones. Although it is possible to brush aside this need for friends as a 'natural' necessity in all teenagers, it is nevertheless important to take into account Efron's own analysis of the reasons behind his rising discomfort at his lack of friends:

Кроме Митьки, у меня нет друзей, и когда я смотрю на веселых юношей и девушек на площадях и улицах, *мне*

⁵⁵⁰ Efron, 27 June 1940.

⁵⁵¹ 'Приятно опять окунуться в глупую и веселую школьную жизнь, и я люблю пикантность того, что после школы я попадаю в Дом отдыха (завтрак) в совершенно противоположную духу нашего класса обстановку и атмосферу, и разговоры, и люди другие. Это действительно очень пикантное положение.' Efron, 18 March 1940.

⁵⁵² Efron, 3 July 1940.

*делается горько, что я не могу веселиться. Ma foi, получается что-то вроде complexe d'infériorité. [...] Я - культурный человек, долго жил за границей. Это все - отлично. Но подлинных человеческих отношений с молодежью у меня нет, и я чувствую себя неполноценным человеком. Я хочу сохранить только самое лучшее от Парижа - и отбросить тряпье назад. К чорту! У меня должны быть какие-то прочные отношения со сверстниками. [...] Действительно, это довольно ненормальное явление: 15-летний молодой человек Советской страны не имеет друзей!*⁵⁵³ (my italics)

On the anniversary of the October revolution, Efron is particularly upset at his own inability to share in the celebratory mood. He used to live abroad for a long time and would like to preserve the best qualities acquired in Paris, yet he acknowledges possessing some other 'foreign' traits of which he would now like to divest himself in order to develop some firm footing in his relations with his Soviet peers. Now more than ever before he finds it abnormal for a 15-year old Soviet boy not to have friends. At this moment, he is ready to accept Mit'ka as his only friend, while back in May he found Mit'ka too imperfect to be considered. Efron's lucidity as to the reasons for his social situation is remarkable: 'Отсутствие общих интересов, стремлений, ассоциаций, образа мышления.'⁵⁵⁴ Efron's own conclusion (and the analysis of his diaries confirm its veracity) is that his 'associations' (cultural horizon), analytical habits, and way of thinking (*obraz myshlenia*) differed from those of Soviet teenagers. This affected his capacity to establish friendships with his Soviet peers, despite Efron's growing need to assimilate, exacerbated by Soviet school's emphasis on the collective.

⁵⁵³ Efron, 7 November 1940.

⁵⁵⁴ Efron, 18 May 1941.

e. Goals, Anxieties and Matters of Style

As our Soviet diarists assimilate to their environment, it becomes palpable that not just the views held by the Soviet children on relationships, love, friendship that are filtered through the lens of contemporary ethics, but more generally, their attitude to life. Their understanding of what constitutes aspects of a meaningful life is also informed by the idea of a socially useful and meaningful goal. Thus, Tverdin contrasts the notion of an ordinary existence to that of 'life', a new concept, albeit unclear and vague:

историю существования... я не говорю о жизни, так я это не называю жизнью, так под словом «жизнь» мы стали понимать что-то светлое и ясное, полезное и разумное.⁵⁵⁵

In this light, the diary format itself begins to pose a problem. By definition, a diary focuses on the writer's experience through a subjective, individual lens, therefore our diarist feels the need to redeem such autonomous and private activity by assigning it an additional function, one that might prove useful to the collective. In other words, this private activity may be justifiable if it has a social purpose:

Все же я питаю надежду когда-нибудь начать писать о школе настоящего времени.

С этой целью я решил записывать все важные эпизоды школьной жизни. *Я учусь сам – сам ученик, следовательно сам «образчик».*

А образов в школе много, правда все они похожи один на другого, но тем лучше – надо дать типичный образ массы людей. / Много еще недостатков в школе. Но что же сделаешь – они есть, следовательно на них надо обратить внимание и стараться исправить. А пока буду собирать материал. Ценные эпизоды буду заносить в дневник.⁵⁵⁶ (my italics)

⁵⁵⁵ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 372.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 361-362.

It is hardly surprising that other students would 'look similar to one another' if they are identified as a uniformed 'social type' of a Soviet student. To think of others and oneself in terms of the representative function – a kind of depiction (*obrazchik*) – is the side effect of the Soviet approach to teaching literature, in which the mind is trained in a somewhat problematic *semiosis* where all things private, including ordinary episodes and individual occurrences, are viewed as the 'material' for a more esteemed theoretical understanding of man within socio-historical development. Here Tverdin also demonstrates a tendency to want to 'live' for the future, he is always looking forward. The present, along with private, is undervalued.

Like Tverdin and Samoilov, Kosterina had an awareness of being a representative Soviet youth: when she begins her first diary and ponders over its title, she settles on *The Diary of An Ordinary Girl* (*Dnevnik obyknovennoi devushki*). The diarist considered herself to be a representative girl of her times.⁵⁵⁷

Samoilov records a need to align diary keeping with the socially useful function of being historically representative, and he plans to enlarge his diary to include important political events.

До сих пор я не писал ничего о внутреннем и внешнем политическом положении нашей страны и всего мира, считая это не входящим в задачи дневника, поразмыслив же, я решил, что был похож на крота, ничего не видящего вокруг. С сегодняшнего дня я постараюсь заносить в дневник

⁵⁵⁷ Kosterina, 20 June 1936.

важнейшие политические события, оценивая их со своей точки зрения.⁵⁵⁸ (my italics)

He realises that in being concerned with exclusively private affairs he resembled a 'mole' and sets a goal to enlarge his diary with historical events and thus make a useful record for posterity. Samoilov declares the intention to record the current events from a point of view in some indefinite and imaginary future. Inso doing, he loses interest to depict what he might have thought mundane everyday occurrences, although his plan to describe important political events, although voiced, ironically, remains largely unfulfilled.

Meanwhile, Efron's diary unselfconsciously records both the minute details of his life: 'иду пить чай'⁵⁵⁹ and the current events on an international scene, knowledge of which is often derived from his mother's social circle.⁵⁶⁰ Moving seamlessly between the two, it seems he does not need to remind himself to include politically significant events; he is just interested in them:

Поговаривают о том, что немцы хотят захватить Гибралтар и пробраться через Египет к Суэцкому каналу. В школе — хорошие результаты: по литературе получил отлично. [...] Читаю Чехова и восторгаюсь.⁵⁶¹

Overall, in his description of others and when assessing or questioning his own feelings towards them, Efron appears more mature to a modern reader; his person comes across as well-grounded: yes, he is worried about his personal future and relationships, the future of his immediate relatives, but unlike the others, he is not so inclined to assess and devalue the present from some

⁵⁵⁸ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 41. 12 October 1935.

⁵⁵⁹ Efron, 18 March 1940.

⁵⁶⁰ For example, Efron writes: '[...] Хожу в красных заграничных башмаках. Мало рисую. Только что узнал, что Германия перешла границу в Голландии и Бельгии и что началось занятие этих стран.' Efron, 10 May 1940.

⁵⁶¹ Efron, 23 March 1940.

imaginatively correct future point of view, which creates anxiety not necessarily over their future, but whether they are on the right track towards it. Efron seems to lack the anxieties characteristic of the other diarists, possibly due to a more seasoned personal stance: perhaps he was more familiar with such anxieties, or perhaps better able to exercise some form of control over them:

С возобновлением моих школьных занятий я меньше думаю о моем будущем, и это, безусловно, хорошо, так как прикрывает мозг от бурь и надежд (*в сущности, одинаково... глупых вещей*). Тем не менее есть вещь, в которой я определенно уверен: это что настанут для меня когда-нибудь хорошие денечки и что у меня будут женщины... больше, чем у других. Это — здорово, и я в этом абсолютно убежден.⁵⁶² (my italics)

Efron's projections are not abstract: it is his private prospects and aspirations that he thinks about. His diary thus remains a space in which he exercises and reinforces autonomous reflection.

Samoilov, Kosterina, Tverdin are concerned whether they spend too much time and energy thinking about trivial private matters and are missing out on the grandiose construction of the future around them. The dependence on the external (and to a large degree abstract) criteria seems to pull them away from the grounding centre of private reflection towards a reflexive role, a persona (the image of an ideal type of a Soviet schoolchild and a future Soviet citizen, well-integrated into community).

⁵⁶² Efron, 20 March 1940.

Despite their clear need to belong to the collective, the diarists' adolescent longing for an individual expression is intact and is perhaps even stronger because of the increased emphasis on the social interaction and peer network.

To comply with communist ethics, which demanded subordination of personal interests to those of the collective, and at the same time required that a Soviet subject strive to 'distinguish'⁵⁶³ him- or herself (without straying from that ethics) are the two drives that often occupy the diarists' thoughts and create anxiety in them. 'Кем смогу я быть? Обыкновенным, серым человеком. Пропали, пропали мечты!', laments Samoïlov.⁵⁶⁴ 'Меня мучает моя судьба,' confesses Tverdin.⁵⁶⁵ Samoïlov admits that he is seeking at once his own personal ethics and the great truth of humankind:

Искания мои разделяются в основном на поиски *цели и идеи*, на поиски Великого закона, великой правды всего человечества и поиски *своей личной этики, того, что "хорошо" и что "плохо"*.

Цель и идея моей жизни пока не очень еще ясны для меня, я ищу их. В основном они сводятся к созданию великого общечеловеческого блага и служению этому благу. Кроме того, как *наверное и все люди моего возраста, я отвожу себе не совсем заурядное место в создании этого самого блага. Часто воображение рисует мне героические картины борьбы и гибели за идею или триумф поэта – певца общечеловеческой идеи.*⁵⁶⁶ (my italics)

The desire to serve the Great Good for all is thus complicated with a somewhat contradictory urge for personal distinction⁵⁶⁷ in such service, although the

⁵⁶³ To cite Zinovii Zinik's interesting observation, when he remembered his summers at a pioneer camp: this was not so much a need to differ *per se* as a need to stand out among a specific group of others. Interview with Zinovii Zinik, 5 September 2012, London, UK.

⁵⁶⁴ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 44. 9 November 1935.

⁵⁶⁵ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 374.

⁵⁶⁶ *Podennye zapisi*, pp. 33-34. 25 September 1935.

⁵⁶⁷ At times, Samoïlov's strife for any sort of 'greatness' becomes a strong call expressed in a categorical teenage fashion: 'Каждый человек должен стараться совершить великое.'

diarist sees them as complimentary. Yet personal ambition is a strong individual and immediate need that cannot be satisfied with dreams of future distinction.

Here is how this ardent yearning to be different is voiced by young Tverdin:

Мне кажется, что кто-то мне говорит: «Ты не должен жить, как живут все», да мне и самому нет охоты так жить – мне хочется что-то другое. Но что именно? Из-за этого вопрос судьбы моей тревожит меня как никогда. Мне хочется жить сейчас, а не в мечтах. Мечты – туман! А вот как прояснится в этом тумане моя будущая жизнь.⁵⁶⁸

It is hardly surprising that the alternative to the 'life like everyone else' is unclear to him, cannot be pinned down amidst the overwhelming emphasis on the collective goals and models of behaviour. And the tension between the immediate need to differ as an individual and the acquired need to serve the common dream of the bright future, the meaning of which remains vague, produces a peculiar unsettling effect.

Efron might be referring to a similar turmoil as the 'tempests and hopes' – in the passage cited above⁵⁶⁹ and dismisses them as silly. His later insight is chilling in his mature grasp of the reality of things:

Чему я научился во время моего пребывания в СССР? — Я научился жить каждым днем и не думать о будущем, раз это будущее все равно от меня абсолютно не зависит.⁵⁷⁰

Here he might be referring to his family's precarious situation (his father and sister were already detained at the time of this entry); elsewhere he points out that school distracts him from gloomy thoughts of the life lessons he is to learn

Великая подлость лучше, чем мелкая добродетель.' *Podennye zapisi*, p. 34. 25 September 1935.

⁵⁶⁸ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 374.

⁵⁶⁹ p. 217.

⁵⁷⁰ Efron, 2 April 1940.

during his life in the USSR. For Tverdin, Kosterina, and Samoiloв the opposite is true and the school is where the inception of their dreams of the common good takes place, along with the desire to contribute towards it, and not in a mediocre fashion.

For Samoiloв, school also serves as the playground for his drive to differentiate himself. He knows what it takes to both join the group in a comradesly fashion and win a leading role in that group:

Чтобы стать товарищем, надо иметь общие интересы, найти исходную точку; чтобы стать популярным, надо чем-нибудь отличиться, надо кормить сенсациями.

Я люблю быть “своим парнем”, я люблю быть со всеми в хороших отношениях.⁵⁷¹

It is the group dynamics and intense social interaction that provide Samoiloв with the knowledge of how to join in (become ‘*svoi*’), but also fuel the need for personal recognition in him, especially when he feels slighted by a gang in his class:

Я ушел оскорбленный, но с твердым намерением завоевать популярность и *стать своим*. Чтобы завоевать класс, надо завоевать его верхушку. Я ждал случая и, наконец, он представился.⁵⁷²(my italics)

He proceeds recording the details of how he used an opportunity to join in a dispute between a teacher and another classmate. He takes issues with the teacher and shows off some knowledge and reading outside of the school curricula. Such reading proves useful indeed in any attempt to impress others within a school culture that puts great emphasis on academic progress. Whether his motivation to read extra-curricular literature is social in nature or intrinsic to

⁵⁷¹ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 30. 4 September 1935.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*

Samoilov's love of reading is hard to say, but his diary demonstrates both an actively sought access to books that were not included into the school programme and reliance on the knowledge derived from such reading in advancing his prestige among peers. Tverdín too relies on his solid knowledge of literature and ideology to gain respect of his group and jumps at the opportunity to prove wrong his *klassnyi rukovoditel'*.⁵⁷³

At one point Samoilov seems to reconcile his own aspirations to stand out with the dependency on being a part of a larger alliance by forming his own group, whose legitimacy within the acceptable political currents he is ready to defend:

Вчера был устроен диспут о неофутуризме (так называется *моя группа*), где я в продолжительном докладе провозглашал основы коммунистической этики. Как водится, нашлись у меня и противники, которые заявили, что в пионерской организации недопустимы какие-либо фракции или общества. На это я им отвечал, что мы не фракция и не общество, что мы ничего общего с футуризмом Маяковского не имеем и являемся передовым отрядом пионерорганизации, ее активом. Спор продолжался часа три. [...] В конце концов, футуризм как идея победил. Осуждена в нем была только форма.⁵⁷⁴ (my italics)

To defend his personal endeavour successfully requires mastery of political language and concepts with which the collective operates: the outlawed 'fraction' and 'society' vs. the permissible 'pioneer actif' – core group. It allows him to differentiate his literary group and interests from any politically incorrect tendencies. Yet, in a more private setting, he is attentive to the criticisms from the outside and tries to adjust his activities accordingly:

[П]оказывал я стихи и Пуцилло. Он сказал, что писать я могу, но не нравится ему "высокий штиль" и отсутствие

⁵⁷³ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 374.

⁵⁷⁴ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 45. 18 November 1935.

современных мотивов. В пример он приводил Некрасова: простота и выразительность. Он прав. Нужно найти прекрасное в настоящем. Сейчас ищу я тему для монументального произведения из эпохи гражданской войны.⁵⁷⁵

Putsillo's disapproval of Samoilov's style is based on the criteria promoted in their literature lessons, as 'contemporary motifs' were one of the tenets of the Socialist realism. Despite of the decision to look for the beautiful subject matter in the present, the taste for the monumental remains stronger.

Efron acknowledges without any scruples or camouflage that his participation in the school's extra-curricular activity, for example, would help improve his image, although he finds the activity itself boring:

На классном собрании сегодня руководитель нашего класса поручил мне и одной девочке приготовить доклад о Маяковском. Я уже написал свой доклад — вышло как-будто ничего. Потом меня выбрали в комиссию, которая пойдет в седьмой класс 2й смены, чтобы там зачитать наше обязательство-соревнование с этим классом. Все это — скучища, но *это хорошо, если повысит мой престиж.*⁵⁷⁶ (my italics)

Efron is not embarrassed about seeking recognition. And it is remarkable how often similar self-seeking by the other diarists has to be camouflaged as a socially significant action, such as, for example, correcting others' views. Thus, in a spirit of reformism, Samoilov engages in a conflict with his chemistry teacher and takes it up to the director of the school:

У директора. Химичка не явилась. Директор соглашается с моими доводами. Заявляет, что поведение химички исправится. *Общественное дело — выиграно.*⁵⁷⁷ (my italics)

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 48. 6 December 1935.

⁵⁷⁶ Efron, 10 April 1940.

⁵⁷⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 60. 3 February 1936.

A private conflict is seen as a publicly significant event. In taking steps to reform others Samoilov does not recognise his own need for personal gratification, but rather sees his actions as service to the common interests. On another occasion he decides to change the lives of a few of his classmates who do not seem to participate in the collective due to their family background:

Я решил во что бы то ни стало ввести их в общественную жизнь. Я обещал зимой водить их на каток. Это не шутки. Так коверкаются человеческие души! *У нас не должно быть обездоленных. [...] Можно, наконец, ради такого дела пожертвовать на время своими личными интересами.*⁵⁷⁸ (my italics)

Significantly, in this paragraph his 'I' gets replaced by a 'we': *we* 'must not have' outcasts. It is hardly clear what personal interests that remain untainted by the service to the common good in his mind he has left to sacrifice in order to bring more conscripts to the collective.

Tverdin also finds a niche for his self-expression within the collective and envisions his life as one that allows for the creative streak in his character and literary talent to serve his country:

Я вижу путь и путь большой, на нем препон суровых много, но будут сломлены они и я шагну дорогой дивной жизни и буду жить, творить во благо родины своей.⁵⁷⁹

Yet the expression of this vision is stunted. Naturally, the lack of life experience and mature personal values, deprivation of autonomous reflection and a learned disregard of the minute, concrete and homely experience which is necessary for development of individual style and metaphors, cause this reliance on ideological clichés.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 43. 31 October 1935.

⁵⁷⁹ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 386.

Among the sources for these types of self-description were 19th-century critics of Russian classics, Socialist Realist novels, and the Soviet newspapers that pupils were required to read and summarise.⁵⁸⁰ For example, Tverdin jumps at an opportunity to impress his peers and responds to his class mentor:

Игнаша (...) кричал без пощады. Хотел меня размалевать перед классом на одной простой вещи, но не удалось. В своем выступлении-крике, где он яростно обрушился на комсомольцев, сказал:
«Думаю, что сейчас даже Т-Н не ответит на вопрос, кто может стать коммунистом?»
Без замедления я встал и с некоторой гордостью ответил:
«Коммунистом может стать тот, кто обогатил память знанием всех тех богатств, которые выработало (sic) человечество».⁵⁸¹

The ability to cite by heart was much appreciated and expected from students, especially in literature lessons.⁵⁸² Many quotes found their way into the diaries, often without quotation marks to set them apart from the diarist's own thoughts. Such omissions are perhaps part of that communist aspiration based on the task set out by Lenin to 'enrich memory' with the pearls of wisdom that 'belong to humanity at large'. The habit of memorisation helped in freely absorbing material from school education. A central paradox was that literature studies contributed to the process of absorbing clichés, while the necessity to legitimate individualistic drives facilitated appropriation of the ideologemes. Tverdin creates an entire mosaic of borrowed expressions:

⁵⁸⁰ Newspapers were added to the obligatory reading lists in the programmes of literature for upper years in 1933.

⁵⁸¹ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 374. The quote is from V.I. Lenin, 'Zadachi soiuzov molodezhi', speech at III All-union Russian Communist Union of Youth, 2 October 1920 <http://vivovoco.astronet.ru/VV/PAPERS/VLADLEN/VIL_03.HTM> [assessed 30 May 2015].

⁵⁸² Dorena Caroli, who studied school exercise books of late 1930s, remarks on 'almost verbatim' passages by classics of the radical movement (Belinskii, Dobroliubov, Lenin) repeated by children without any citation marks. Dorena Caroli, 'Soviet Children's Writings: School Exercise Books, Letters to the Authorities, Personal Diaries and War Memories', *History of Education and Children's Literature* 7:1 (2012), 201-239 (p. 209).

Железная грудь и *стальной кулак* нужны для того, чтобы проторить дорогу к светлому дню жизни. Борьба. Это слово врывается в каждое новое поколение, как *лучи солнца в подземелье*. Оно именно необходимо как солнце. Однако солнце для всех поколений греет одинаково, а слово «борьба» звучит для всех по-разному. Если раньше в этом слове чувствовалось свержение самодержавия, уничтожение, посредством его, существующего строя, то теперь оно звучит как символ стремящийся к ясной светлой жизни, как символ посредством которого можно построить коммунизм. [...] Мне *ужасно хочется жить*, но только так как хочется.⁵⁸³ (my italics)

The iron fist, the bright days of life, struggle, the sunray(s) in the underground (which echoes Dobroliubov's article about Aleksandr Ostrovskii's play 'Groza' routinely studied at school) comprise a string of ideological quotations that should have been marked as such in the text. These ingredients of a semi-conscious borrowing come from both the literature textbooks and press. Apt phrases were appropriated by the collective memory that bothered little with sources. For example, Kosterina writes after the death of G. K. Ordzhonikidze: 'Потеря за потерей: Киров, Куйбышев, Горький, Орджоникидзе — *старая гвардия* умирает' (my italics).⁵⁸⁴

Tverdin uses as his own a phrase that literally a few pages before has been cited from a news article about Sergei Kirov:

«Годовщина злодейского убийства С. М. Кирова. Вот пример настоящей жизни. Ведь не кто иной как он сказал: «Чорт возьми как еще хочется жить!» Но подлые враги народа не дали ему жить. Пущенная в пуля была последней вылазкой *презренных врагов*. Вместе с С. М. они убили и себя. Но их нам совершенно не жалко и тысячи их *предательских шкур* не

⁵⁸³ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 378.

⁵⁸⁴ Kosterina, 21 февраля 1937. The expression 'старая гвардия умирает', known as *le mot de Cambronne*, is cited in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* but was also used in the contemporary press. See for example, 'Vernyi soratnik Lenina i Stalina', *Pravda*, 20 November 1935, p. 1; I. Kiselev, 'Lenin i sovetskaia molodezh', *Pravda*, 21 January 1936, p. 4; 'Rech' tov. S. L. Il'inskogo', *Pravda*, 3 December 1936, p. 3.

заменяют одной восторженной души Сергея Мироновича не угасимого борца за светлое будущее.⁵⁸⁵ (my italics)

Such careless insertion of common epithets and expressions begins to dominate later entries in Tverdin's diary. Kosterina's diary likewise records the ease with which she produces phrases when delivering public speeches.⁵⁸⁶

Similarly, superlatives that were applied in print to describe all things Soviet were absorbed into Samoilov's diary: 'О, наша чудная, единственная, счастливая страна!';⁵⁸⁷ 'У нас *самая* идейная в мире армия [...]' (my italics).⁵⁸⁸

Such pride and praise are present in the entries that speak about Samoilov's good mood. Significantly, he chose not to ascribe this happiness to his own private capacity of enjoying life and but instead praised the country he lived in. His enjoyment of reading Russian classics was also expressed through similar praise: 'Русская литература – *самая* жизненно-глубокая' (my italics).⁵⁸⁹

Kosterina often attended theatre, cinema, and galleries and noted her impressions in her diary.⁵⁹⁰ At times, she acknowledged the superiority of Soviet productions over foreign ones, for example, when expressing her appreciation of Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times*, but remarking that she preferred the Soviet film *Circus*.⁵⁹¹ One of the lyrical passages of her diary is devoted to Moscow, the

⁵⁸⁵ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 374.

⁵⁸⁶ Kosterina, 14 September 1938.

⁵⁸⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 56, 10 January 1936.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42, 12 October 1935.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 98, 21 December 1936.

⁵⁹⁰ On the popularity of theatre and cinema going among Soviet children, including in the 1930s, see Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 475.

⁵⁹¹ Kosterina, 19 August 1936. *Modern Times*, directed by Charlie Chaplin (United Artists, 1936). *Tsirk*, directed by Grigorii Aleksandrov, Isidor Simkov (Mosfilm, 1936).

city: ‘ [...] Москва! Только одно это слово волнует и наполняет душу гордостью, настраивает на песенный, былинный лад. [...]’⁵⁹²

At one point, Kosterina is aware of her chauvinistic feelings of national pride, rooted in cultural artefacts and history:

Я — русская. Вначале испугалась — не шовинистические ли струны загудели во мне? Нет, я чужда шовинизму, но в то же время я — русская. Я смотрела на изумительные скульптуры Петра и Грозного Антокольского, и чувство гордости овладело мной — это люди русские. А Репина — «Запорожцы»?! А «Русские в Альпах» Коцебу?! А Айвазовский — «Чесменский бой», Суриков — «Боярыня Морозова», «Утро стрелецкой казни» — это русская история, история моих предков.⁵⁹³

This patriotic sentiment stayed with Kosterina even after her father’s arrest.⁵⁹⁴

Samoilov used superlatives to express his own categorical opinions, maxims:

*Самое худшее преступление, по-моему, предательство. Предателю нет оправдания. Самая гадкая вещь — ложь. Всегда надо говорить правду или молчать.*⁵⁹⁵ (my italics)

These categorical conclusions are akin to formulaic conclusions practised in literary instruction when summarising a literary period or the ideological gist of a Russian classical work.⁵⁹⁶ To express his opinions on the literature he read, young Samoilov relied on aphorisms provided by literary critics, Chernyshevskii

⁵⁹² Kosterina, 20 January 1939.

⁵⁹³ Kosterina, 10 December 1939.

⁵⁹⁴ Aleksei Kosterin was arrested in 1938. Nina Kosterina, ‘Dnevnik’ in *Zolotoi fond dnevnikovedeniia* < <http://dnevnikovedenie.ru/index.php/2012-12-04-16-48-02/49-2013-01-21-11-12-42> > [accessed 18 January 2015].

⁵⁹⁵ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 34, 25 September 1935.

⁵⁹⁶ P. 110.

and Belinskii.⁵⁹⁷

Samoilov and Tverdin sought formulaic conclusions in response to the events of their teenage lives recorded in their diaries. For example, Samoilov recorded his desire to reach a pointed conclusion, to generalise (*totalise*) their experience: 'Хочется синтезировать все происходящее, хочется урегулировать все многообразие явлений и подчинить все одному могущественному закону.'⁵⁹⁸ It is not too bold to suggest that the intentionally lowered critical filter (through education) and the numerous indoctrinating messages, often conflicting with the reality around them and the family influence, as well as the influence from extracurricular readings, to which they were exposed in the late 1930s, might have been overwhelming for teenagers. The reaction to such conflicting messages was a desire for a more synthetic processing of the phenomena.

What becomes apparent, however, is that no 'dead' metaphors or maxims resolved their anxieties. Having denied themselves a grounding in the present and minute, their need for a perceived totality of experience was increased. This could be the most comfortable position from which to confront life's complexities. Samoilov expresses discomfort and regret about lacking totality and unified experience in his social interactions:

Я подвел черту под *рассеянным периодом* своей жизни, продолжавшимся эти два месяца. Я понял, как гадка и

⁵⁹⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, pp. 62, 81, 106.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33. 25 September 1935.

недостойна эта рассеянная светская жизнь, не подходящая ни для моих интересов, ни для нашей эпохи.⁵⁹⁹ (my italics)

His interests are more in line with the interests of the epoch, therefore he decides to reduce what he sees as over-indulgence in romantic and leisurely pursuits and focus his attention to socially significant progress. Tverdin, writing in January 1939, during the last day of his vacation, is reluctant to accept the burden of 'n-quantity of atmospheres' that pose a problem he has to solve if he is to have a meaningful life: 'Завтра в школу.| Это значит снова сесть за парту и принять на свои плечи n-число атмосфер'.⁶⁰⁰ He is resolved to combine them into a clear purpose and meaning, as defined by the communist ethics.

Kosterina also expressed anxiety: '[...] тоска и безнадежность мчатся вместе со мной и давят мозг'.⁶⁰¹ Her cure against it was reading: 'Только в книгах нахожу покой'.⁶⁰² In one entry, she attempted to imagine what lied ahead:

Кончается третья тетрадь моего дневника. Третий кусок моей жизни. Каждый раз, когда кончается тетрадь и ее приходится откладывать в архив, мне почему-то грустно. Мысленно прослеживаю свою жизнь — детство и юность. Быстро летит. [...] И вот я вышла на порог «большой» жизни и вижу: *расстиляется передо мной туманно-лиловая даль, манит неведомыми радостями, обещает бури в своих просторах и сладостный покой в каких-то далеких гаванях. Но прежде всего мне хочется бури: /Под ним струя светлей лазури,/ Над ним луч солнца золотой,/ А он, мятежный, просит бури,/ Как будто в бурях есть покой!*⁶⁰³ (my italics)

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 43. 6 November 1935.

⁶⁰⁰ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, p. 377.

⁶⁰¹ Kosterina, 8 October 1939.

⁶⁰² Kosterina, 2 November 1938.

⁶⁰³ Kosterina, 23 May 1940.

The words *buria* and *pokoi* appear often in Kosterina's diary.⁶⁰⁴ Kosterina sought solution for her anxieties in a 'struggle': 'Изнываю от будничной, медленно текущей жизни. Хочется нового, будоражного (так). Я даже период экзаменов люблю — время подъема, борьбы, порывов.'⁶⁰⁵ It is not surprising then to read her reaction to the news of war, when she addressed herself:

Вы помните, Нина Алексеевна, как вы втайне мечтали пережить большие, волнующие события, мечтали о бурях и тревогах? Ну вот вам — война! Черный хищник неожиданно, из-за черных туч кинулся на нашу родину. Ну что ж, я готова... хочу действий, хочу на фронт...⁶⁰⁶

This entry corroborates the success of pre-war mobilization efforts, especially taking into the account that Sergei, Kosterina's new serious love interest (an older Komsomol leader leaving eastwards (!) during the German army's advancement into the country), pleaded with her to join him in the evacuation.⁶⁰⁷

Effective mobilization is also evidenced the diarist's unconscious borrowings of clichés.⁶⁰⁸ In few days, she would write: 'Надо что-то решать и в первую очередь надо быть честным с самим собой, не прятать трусливо голову от вражеских вихрей.'⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁴ Kosterina, 23 June 1941; 3 September 1941.

⁶⁰⁵ Kosterina, 16 November 1940.

⁶⁰⁶ Kosterina, 23 June 1941.

⁶⁰⁷ Kosterina, 2 November 1941. For further discussion of the Soviet young women's readiness to participate in military actions see Anna Krylova, 'Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender: Rearing a Generation of Professionally Violent Women-Fighters in 1930s Stalinist Russia', *Gender & History* 16:3 (2004), 626–653.

⁶⁰⁸ 'Хищник' – a term used in Soviet press to describe fascism and imperialism. See 'Frantsuzskie protesty v Tokio', *Pravda*, 29 February 1940, p. 4; 'Rech' ispolniaiushchego obiazannosti prezidenta Latviiskoi Respubliki, ministra-prezidenta tov. A. Kirkhenshteinsa', *Pravda*, 6 August 1940, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁹ Kosterina, 28 June 1941. 'Вражеские вихри' could have been an appropriation of 'вихри враждебные' from unknown composer, translator G. M. Krzhizhanovskii, 'Varshavianka' (1905).

In contrast, Efron's use of literary borrowings and references remains conscious, and his citation marks intact, even when his judgement betrays a Soviet point of view on class. For example, in describing his bourgeois neighbours, he writes: 'Это самые что ни на есть низкопробные мещане: сплетники, «клопы обывательюсы» — по Маяковскому.'⁶¹⁰ In assessing the effects of the trials which he and his family have to go through, he demonstrates a very careful writing style, providing concessions, clarifications, references to his previous entries in parenthesis:

Переносу я все эти испытания хладнокровно (*или стараюсь переносить*), потому что мне кажется, что и в этих тяжких для меня временах есть своя цель: если они меня не сломили морально (хотя и отчасти сломили физически, см. мои болезни), то они (*тяжкие времена*) непременно выковуют (*sic*) из меня человека, мало чего боящегося и морально стального.⁶¹¹ (*my italics*)

Although the traces of Soviet socialisation are present in this entry (in his attitude to suffering with the expectation that difficult times will make him a morally strong 'steel' person), Efron focuses on the future effects of suffering on his personal character and happiness: 'Все эти испытания могли меня сломить, но в конечном результате воспитают стального человека и разовьют ум и волю к счастью этого человека — *меня*' (original emphasis).⁶¹² In another entry, he demonstrates attention to detail when analysing the meaning of a metaphor:

Она [сестра Аля] пишет, что «все дело рук Павлика и что ей много досталось из-за него: — Так вот где таилась погибель моя, мне смертию кость угрожала». [...] И «смертию кость угрожала» — это ясно говорит о решающей роли Павла

⁶¹⁰ Efron, 21 May 1940.

⁶¹¹ Efron, 16 May 1940.

⁶¹² Efron, 16 May 1940.

в этом деле. И «кость» — потому что Павел худой и такой же длинный, как Митька.⁶¹³

Such treatment of a metaphor requires a certain ease with a 'trivial' private experience and autonomous reflection, which the other diaries seem to lose in their concern with abstract issues.

In particular contrast to the position of the other diarists are Efron's thoughts on using categorical formulas and generalisations:

С годами, мне кажется, что «цели» жизни, ее ощущение и психология меняются, так что (кроме марксистских) «формулы» философские не применимы (разные афоризмы о женщинах, о чести и храбрости и т.п.), и не применимы именно из-за их мнимой «всеприемлемости» (общечеловечности), а человек-то и меняется, и если эти формулы и хороши, то только в данном возрасте, где они и могут быть проверены и приемлемы. Так что нужно избегать обобщений (главным образом о женщинах) и «законов»-формул (вроде Шамфора), а делать как считаешь нужным, не пытаясь «обобщить».⁶¹⁴

Efron comes to the conclusion that change is inevitable and no laws or formulas could reflect it, although he pointedly made a concession for Marxist formulas. This mature flexibility and contextual consideration in drawing any 'once and for all' conclusion about life, women, courage, honour, etc. was a rule that Efron followed in his diary in sharp contrast to the hard-sought rigidity of judgement displayed by the other teenage diaries. This contrast in the diaries' style is palpable, to the effect that reading Efron's diary is tantamount to an encounter with its author Georgii Efron, while young Samoilov, Tverdin, and Kosterina in recording their dreams, hopes, and anxieties, excel in achieving precisely what

⁶¹³ Efron, 23 March 1940.

⁶¹⁴ Efron, 29 May 1940.

they set out to do – leaving a record of an epoch with its formatting powers of a Soviet mind-set.

While the common features of the purely Soviet three diaries were conspicuous enough to draw these conclusions, it is important to highlight some differences that do exist. In particular, there are notable differences between Kosterina's diaries and the other two. These differences have a clear gender background, and add more colour to the portrait of 'an ordinary' Soviet girl.⁶¹⁵

In contrast to the Soviet boys, Kosterina was interested in articles of apparel: 'Прошел день моего рождения совершенно незаметно. Только Тоня подарила мне красненькую сумочку.'⁶¹⁶ In another entry she recorded: 'Я купила себе дешевенькую, но прелестную шляпку. Она подойдет к моему красненькому платью.'⁶¹⁷ She was concerned with her own appearance, often considering herself unattractive.⁶¹⁸ She recorded her surprise when others found her otherwise.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁵ On the educational efforts of the 1920s to diminish gender differences, placed in international context, and the turnaround in the 1930s see Catriona Kelly "Khochu byt' traktoristkoi!" (Gender i detstvo v dovoennoi sovetskoi Rossii), *Sotsial'naia istoriia* (2003), 385-410. See also Karen Petrone's chapter 'Imagining The Motherland: The Celebration of Soviet Aviation and Polar Exploits' on women-pilots and the clash between the official proclamations of women's equality and 'an officially sanctioned "traditional" rhetoric' in the 1930s in her *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 62-75.

⁶¹⁶ Kosterina, 16 April 1937.

⁶¹⁷ Kosterina, 21 March 1937.

⁶¹⁸ Kosterina, 13 April 1938; 16 November 1941.

⁶¹⁹ Kosterina, 5 September 1936.

Kosterina recorded enjoying other hobbies than reading and socialising, such as playing guitar with a repertoire that went beyond Soviet marches: 'За лето я сделала большие успехи на гитаре. Выучила несколько вальсов, фокстротов, песенок.'⁶²⁰

Kosterina came across as more emotional than either Tverdin or Samoilov. In other words, she recorded being moved by her reading, to tears at times, more often and more profoundly than the two boys. For example, when she read in a newspaper about women's lives in Poland, where women allegedly gave birth in atrocious conditions, Kosterina was deeply disturbed by the descriptions of those women and their babies and cried into her pillow.⁶²¹ Kosterina also cried after a girl, a daughter of the enemies of the people, had been expelled from the Komsomol. Kosterina complained in a letter to her father and then copied the letter in her diary: 'После собрания мне было очень тяжело, и дома я долго плакала. Разве она виновата, что ее родители за что-то арестованы?'⁶²² But mostly it was literature that touched the heart of this voracious Soviet reader.⁶²³

Gromova's diary stands apart from the sources analysed above because it is essentially a diary of her reading.⁶²⁴ It begins with a registry of books she read during her summer vacation, in preparation for year-8 literature course, a few

⁶²⁰ Kosterina, 11 August 1937.

⁶²¹ Kosterina, 20 June 1936.

⁶²² Kosterina, 13 September 1937.

⁶²³ See for example an entry when reading Gor'kii's leads to a sleepless night. Kosterina, 20 June 1936.

⁶²⁴ Ul'iana Gromova was born in 1924, the youngest of five children, into a modest family of a miner, a veteran of the First World War, and a Cossack woman in a small town of the Krasnodon region. She went to a regular school in 1932 and graduated with almost all excellent marks in 1942, shortly before the German army occupied her settlement. Under the occupation, she joined the resistance movement 'Molodaia gvardiia' and died in early 1943.

entries dealing with her work as a pioneer leader for the young 'Octobrists', and quotes from the books she read.⁶²⁵ The registry demonstrates that Gromova was a thorough student of her literary course, closely following the programme's requirements in her summer reading list. The choice of quotes is revealing as to what caught her attention and confirms the following points made above about the other diarists: the exaggerated authority of books, the importance of friendship and heightened emotions (*passionarnost'*), and finally an emphasis on sacrifice and heroism for a high cause.

The motto of Gromova's notebook is Gor'kii's call to love books because they help with the disorderly stream of thoughts and teach you to love humans. She quotes Lenin from his 'Zadachi soiuzov molodezhi' on the legacy of capitalism in that there is gap between a book and life: 'Одно из самых больших зол и бедствий, которые остались нам от старого капиталистического общества, это полный разрыв книги с практикой жизни.'⁶²⁶ (Tverdin also quotes from this source.)⁶²⁷ Gromova's attention was drawn to textbooks that insisted on the verisimilitude of pre-revolutionary literature: 'Лучшие произведения прошедших эпох ценны для нас как правдивые картины прошлой жизни; они углубляют наши знания о далеком прошлом (в этом их познавательное значение).'⁶²⁸ She also recorded pedagogical thoughts by Nikolai Pomialovskii on the formation of personality, on childhood and

⁶²⁵ Krasnodon, Museum 'Molodaia guardiia', f. 1, d. 12, № 241, pp. 2-6 (henceforth 'Iz zapisnoi knizhki Ul'iany Gromovoi').

⁶²⁶ 'Iz zapisnoi knizhki Ul'iany Gromovoi', p. 3. V.I. Lenin, 'Zadachi soiuzov molodezhi', speech at III All-union Russian Communist Union of Youth, 2 October 1920, <http://vivovoco.astronet.ru/VV/PAPERS/VLADLEN/VIL_03.HTM> assessed 30 May 2015.

⁶²⁷ P. 224. V. I. Lenin, 'Zadachi soiuzov molodezhi', speech at III All-union Russian Communist Union of Youth, 2 October 1920 <http://vivovoco.astronet.ru/VV/PAPERS/VLADLEN/VIL_03.HTM> [assessed 30 May 2015].

⁶²⁸ 'Iz zapisnoi knizhki Ul'iany Gromovoi', p. 3.

adolescence as two crucial periods when the moral development, on which the entire life of a person depends, happens.⁶²⁹

Gromova's quotes on emotional extremes and heightened emotional experiences are of particular interest. She quotes Pisemskii's words: 'Экстаз - есть то возбужденное состояние, когда человек под влиянием духовно-нравственного движения ничего не сознает, что происходит вокруг него.'⁶³⁰ Gromova also quotes Blok several times, one such quote from 'Intelligentsiia i revoliutsiia' being on the categorical emotional approach to life: 'Жить стоит только так, чтобы предъявлять безмерные требования: все или ничего; ждать нежданного; верить в то, что должно быть на свете.'⁶³¹ (Blok's 'Intelligentsiia i revoliutsiia,' was also read by Nina Kosterina.)⁶³² Gromova writes down a related thought about conquering difficulties from Jack London's *The Cruise of the Snark*: 'Чем больше препятствия, тем больше удовольствие от их преодоления.' Gromova's later entries on heroism and sacrifice are also from Jack London's *The Iron Heel*: 'Гораздо легче видеть, как умирают герои, чем слушать вопли о пощаде какого-нибудь жалкого труса.'⁶³³ This is one of the last quotes recorded on 9 November 1942, that follows a similar call for bravery in words of V. Rozov 'К nezrimomu solntsu' recorded on 28 October 1942: 'Смелость города берет!/ Дерзайте и не сторонитесь препятствий, /Смелый человек чудеса творить может, и/

⁶²⁹ Ibid., p. 2. Nikolai Pomialovskii, *Ocherki Bursy* (Moscow: Detgiz, 1936).

⁶³⁰ Ibid., p. 3. This quote was cited in the definition of 'ecstasy' in *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo iazyka v 4 tomakh*, edited by D. N. Ushakov, 4 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarei, 1940), vol. 4, column 1409.

⁶³¹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶³² P. 196.

⁶³³ 'Iz zapisnoi knizhki Ul'iany Gromovoi', p. 5.

никакие пропасти ему не страшны!⁶³⁴ The heroism that Gromova read about in books must have contributed to her heroic actions in the resistance, the actions that would be fictionalised shortly after the war and continue to be referred to in Russia. The method of teaching literature, answering Lenin's call on getting rid of the gap between life and fiction, is exemplified by Ul'iana Gromova who lived by her chosen quotes and became a war hero as well as a heroine of Aleksandr Fadeev's novel *The Young Guard*.⁶³⁵

In a way Gromova's short life, heavily influenced by literature, can be seen as exemplifying what could almost be described as a 'circle of books and life', wherein literature influences real life which, in turn, begets new literature: Gromova's reading of vast amounts of heroic adventure literature may have been the principal influence behind her own actions in the resistance. Along with like-minded friends, they engaged in a wartime campaign that led to the arrest and brutal execution without trial of these young Komsomol members, a mere few days before the Red Army's liberation of their village. Their exploits were subsequently written into a new heroic adventure novel, made into films, lauded, and inspiring new Russian readers to this day.⁶³⁶

f. Conclusion

Efron, whose education took place in a different non-Soviet environment prior to his first year in the Soviet Union, to which most of the entries studied here

⁶³⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

⁶³⁵ A. A. Fadeev, *Molodaia gvardiia* (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1947).

⁶³⁶ For further discussion of the story of *The Young Guard* and its role in the post-war propaganda see Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), chapter 4 'Wartime Heroes For Post-War Youth', pp. 137-166.

belong⁶³⁷ comes across as a formed individual capable of autonomous reflection and a calm judgements. His style of writing is thoughtful, with balanced attention to the details of his immediate present, political events at large, projections into his personal future, hopes and worries. He accepts Soviet key concepts and views on class, wants to assimilate, but lacks extreme anxiety about failing to do so.

The other diarists are significantly more 'Soviet'. The following mechanisms are seen at work on the minds of them and their peers: 1) In drawing comparisons between the representative types from the selected works and the people from their environment children learn to make generalisations about others, often motivated by a bias. 2) The self-reflection learned from such lessons serves more for moral guidance, rather than a deep assessment of one's thoughts and feelings. 3) The shift of emphasis away from the psychological features of literary characters towards their contribution to the society reinforces the ethics based on subordination of individual goals to those of the collective. 4) The anxiety about not being part of the collective, a superfluous person, bolsters the need to align the personal goals with those of the collective, albeit abstract ones.

This contradicts Dobrenko's view on the lack of the 'programming' potential in classical heroes, whose example in fact carried weight, if only as a kind of negative reinforcement. The students used 'the page' to compare themselves against it and make sure they did not resemble Oblomovs, the dying-out class of the bourgeois, and other 'superfluous people'. They also modelled their

⁶³⁷ Efron once comments on this: 'Хорошая у меня закалка: во Франции учился 4 года в католической школе, в России - 2 года в коммунистической.' Efron, 11 September 1941.

behaviour towards the opposite gender on such classics as *Onegin*. These pre-revolutionary models conflicted with the Soviet attitudes to sexual love.

Following this analysis, I have to take issue with Hellbeck in several respects. By ignoring the issue of mediation, he mistakenly assigns communist ideology with a transcendent power of appeal to the self, ignoring other influences on the 1930s Soviet personality. (The differences that I observe here may have to do with generation, but that is not a factor that he considers.) Although Hellbeck does mention the pervasiveness of ideological rhetoric, yet he claims that the language of the self could have little to do with the 'preformulated ideological litany'.⁶³⁸ In making these assertions, he undervalues the state efforts in education as well as its reliance on peer pressure in reinforcing ethical norms and ensuring that 'alternative sources for identity' did not appeal. We can see these forces in the sources examined here. For instance, Samoilov is embarrassed to feel like one of Kuprin's characters, or Tverdin wants to remake his brooding classmate Mira (who is not unlike Pushkin's dreamy Tatiana) into a girl *a la soviétique*, cheerful and modern. This is surely explained by constant vilification of certain character traits in school, reinforced by peer pressure. Thus, disillusioned by romantic love, Samoilov comes to the conclusion that his friend 'was right' in warning him that 'respect is more important than love'.⁶³⁹ Similarly, a female friend of Tverdin, Nina, who is clearly (to a detached reader's eye) in love with the diarist, keeps pointing out to him Mira's socially unseemly

⁶³⁸ Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind*, p. 7.

⁶³⁹ *Podennye zapisi*, 10 October 1935.

characteristics.⁶⁴⁰ He accepts this without reflection because he and Nina share the same moral schemas.

Furthermore, with orientation towards the future and growing awareness of being representative of their epoch, the young writers began to depict less their ordinary activities and more the anxieties they felt over whether they are on the right track to contribute towards (and deserve) this future.

Finally, if Hellbeck sees tensions in his diarists' writing and assigns them to the contradiction between the ideological picture and an author's observational truths, I see the main reason for similar tensions exhibited by the young diarists elsewhere – in the contradictory drives for individual expression and the urge to align it with the collective.⁶⁴¹ The tensions seem to activate in these students a desire for unity and clarity of purpose, which causes anxiety in front of the 'diffused period' of life or 'n-quantity of atmospheres' in school.

Thus, literary studies which in some cultural contexts, including early twentieth-century Russia, were seen as the foundation of individual perceptions and belief generated a rigid ethical assessment of self and others, while providing stencils according to which any individual drive might be represented.

⁶⁴⁰ *Gorodok v tabakerke*, 377.

⁶⁴¹ See S. G. Novikov, 'Vospitanie rossiiskoi molodezhi 1920-1930-kh godov: vzgliad cherez prizmu kul'turno-istoricheskoi genetiki', *Obrazovanie i obshchestvo* 5 (2006), 95-97.

5. DAVID SAMOILOV: THE EVOLUTION OF A WORLDVIEW

Throughout his entire life, Samoilov kept recording his thoughts and feelings.⁶⁴² For him, the diary habit transcended the era of which it was characteristic. These records are now available in different editions, preserving his reflections on topics ranging from minute events of his life to the current state of literature and state literary policies.⁶⁴³ On the other hand, Samoilov's literary musings have not had the same level of attention as those by Lidiia Ginzburg, for example.⁶⁴⁴ Irina Paperno mentions Samoilov's life-writings with regard exclusively to their variety of form.⁶⁴⁵ Catherine Merridale exemplifies war traumatic experience by Samoilov's acknowledgment of the difficulty in recording atrocious details of the war in his diaries or recalling them later in the memoirs.⁶⁴⁶ David Gillespie's study of Soviet writers' and literary critics' diaries does include a brief analysis of Samoilov's autobiographical records.⁶⁴⁷ He remarks on Samoilov's courage in

⁶⁴² After graduating from his secondary school, Samoilov studied at MIFLI, the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History. He volunteered to join Finish war but was rejected for medical reasons. At the start of WWII, Samoilov joined labour front, but fell ill and was evacuated to Samarkand where he attended the Pedagogical Institute. In 1942 he went to war and was wounded in the beginning of 1943. In 1944 he continued military service in an intelligence unit of the Belarusian front. He began publishing in 1941. He translated from East-European languages. He was married twice. He moved to Estonia in 1974 and died there in 1990. 'David Samoilov', *Russkaia poeziia XX vek. Antologiiia*, edited by Sergei Fediakin, Valentina Mal'mi, Iurii Poliakov, V. Slavetskii, Vitalii Smirnov, A. Karpov, Al. Mikhailov, Vladimir Kostrov (Moscow: Olma-press, 1999), p. 462.

⁶⁴³ Based on the poet's own plan, his autobiographical essays were published in one volume: David Samoilov, *Pamiatnye zapiski* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1995). A combination of autobiographical prose and later diaries were published in 2000: David Samoilov, *Perebiraia nashi daty* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000). In 2002, his diaries were published in two volumes: David Samoilov, *Podennye zapisi*, 2 vols (Moscow: Vremia, 2002). The most recent edition of his autobiographical prose includes A. S. Nemzer's interpretation and approximate dating of his autobiographical prose: David Samoilov, *Pamiatnye zapiski (sbornik)*, edited by G. I. Medvedeva, A. S. Nemzer (Moscow: Vremia, 2014).

⁶⁴⁴ See *Lydia Ginzburg's Alternative Literary Identities: A Collection of Articles and New Translations*, edited by Emily Van Buskirk and Andrei Zorin (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012).

⁶⁴⁵ Irina Paperno, *The Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 3-5.

⁶⁴⁶ Catherine Merridale, 'Culture, Ideology and Combat in the Red Army, 1939-45', *Journal of Contemporary History* 41:2 (2006), 305-324 (p. 39).

⁶⁴⁷ David Gillespie, 'First Person Singular: The Literary Diary in Twentieth-Century Russia', *Slavonic and East European Review* 77:4 (1999), 620-645 (pp. 640-642).

recording his 'personal interpretation of key historical events', the arrest and trails of Andrei Siniavskii and Iulii Daniel', as well as Iurii Galanskov and Aleksandr Ginzburg and the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Gillespie points out that Samoilov recorded the events and results of de-Stalinisation.⁶⁴⁸ However, he is interested only in Samoilov's function as a historical witness.

In fact, Samoilov's comments did not only record de-Stalinisation as an external event, but also revealed his own reception of the reforms that affected all spheres of Soviet life.⁶⁴⁹ In this chapter I will closely examine the changes to Samoilov's earlier attitudes, and the phases by which these occurred. Exact dating of Samoilov's later autobiographical notes is not always possible, but his wife, Galina Medvedeva, recalled that he began writing these in the late 1960s.⁶⁵⁰ Among the jottings are many of a philosophical and autobiographical nature. These are important to me insomuch as they reveal traces of Samoilov's early upbringing, in particular his views that were shaped in his literary classroom. More specifically, I seek to answer the following questions through a close reading of his diaries: 1) What memories of Russian classics read in school did he record throughout his lifetime? 2) What stylistic and analytical habits remained intact from his diary as a teenager that also contain traces of his literary education? 3) Which of his early ideas influenced by the course gradually evolved or drastically changed? For instance, do his ideas on intimate

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 641.

⁶⁴⁹ On definition of the term see *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, edited by Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 2-5.

⁶⁵⁰ Galina Medvedeva, "Prevrashchaius' v prozu, kak voda – v led", in David Samoilov, *Perebiraia nashi daty* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000), pp. 5-10, p. 5. I will specify the exact date of his diary entries (*Podennye zapisi*) and approximate dates of his autobiographical and philosophical notes, where possible (*Pamiatnye zapiski*).

relationships change? How aware is the adult Samoilov of his indoctrination as a child?

Samoilov's assessment of his early indoctrination is clearly related to the context of de-Stalinisation. As Polly Jones points out in her discussion of Soviet drama and literature of the period, 'unmasking the endurance of Stalinist psychology' was one of the central dynamics of de-Stalinisation.⁶⁵¹ Jones argues that de-Stalinisation invited writers to rewrite the Stalinist past, and that a new wave of de-Stalinisation in the early 1960s encouraged a deeper scrutiny of the Stalinist years.⁶⁵² Hence even if Samoilov began to look back at his school years as early as 1941, it is possible to assert that his later re-interpretation of his youth went hand in hand with the state policies assigned to Soviet writers and the public.

When Jones highlights the limits of de-Stalinisation, she points out that the reforms taking place in historiography and literature affected the way in which events were remembered and forgotten and revealed the perpetuation of the Stalinist ideas on minds and memory.⁶⁵³ This is clearly germane to Samoilov's stance.

The persistence of several key features of the Stalinist mind-set was not a singular phenomenon. Many scholars have noticed how even anti-Soviet views

⁶⁵¹ Polly Jones, 'Memories of Terror or Terrorizing Memories? Terror, Trauma and Survival in Soviet Culture of the Thaw Author(s)', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86:2 (2008), 346-371 (p. 351).

⁶⁵² Polly Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 9.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

are expressed in Soviet form.⁶⁵⁴ Viktor Erofeev's famous article on the end of Soviet literature identified the narrow limits of the worldview, which Soviet writers, including liberal and dissident writers, inherited from the official attitudes towards literature.⁶⁵⁵ Samoilov's autobiographical writings have markedly revealing material about mental and expressive horizons. In this chapter I will focus on these elements, and the legacy of Soviet literary studies under Stalin. I will point out how Samoilov, when he is looking again at his earlier self, does this in the conceptual frame of Soviet school literature studies.

One other idea stands out in particular in Samoilov's diaries – his view on intelligentsia and his gradually evolving self-identification as part of the new Soviet intelligentsia,⁶⁵⁶ as well as the re-conceptualisation of the role of the old intelligentsia. A few scholars have noticed that Soviet dissidents claimed particular lineage – that one of the 19th-century Russian intelligentsia, while Soviet writers and critics used pre-revolutionary Russian literature and cultural values to evaluate the modern period.⁶⁵⁷ Katerina Clark points out that under Stalin, 'the values of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia were adopted to a hyperbolic degree by both intellectuals and the state.'⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁴ Benjamin Nathans, 'The Dictatorship of Reason: Aleksandr Vol'pin and the Idea of Rights under "Developed Socialism"', *Slavic Review* 66:4 (2007), 630-663; Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁶⁵⁵ Viktor Erofeev, 'Pominki po sovetskoi literature' (1989), *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 4 July 1990.

⁶⁵⁶ For further discussion of Stalin's role in creation of a new elite ('intelligentsia' of the working class) see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); in particular, chapter 7 'Stalin and the Making of a New Elite', pp. 149-182.

⁶⁵⁷ Jay Bergman, 'Soviet Dissidents on the Russian Intelligentsia, 1956-1985', *Russian Review* 51:1 (1992), 16-53 (p. 23); Gillespie, 'First Person Singular', p. 639.

⁶⁵⁸ Katerina Clark, 'The King Is Dead, Long Live the King: Intelligentsia Ideology in Transition,' paper presented to the conference 'Russia at the End of the Millennium,' Stanford University, 1998, p. 6 < http://web.stanford.edu/group/Russia20/volume/pdf/clark_fin99.pdf > [accessed on 26 September 2015].

Scholars such as Igal Halfin, Stuart Finkel and most recently Benjamin Tromly have analysed in depth the self-definition and mental world of the Soviet intelligentsia. In his influential study, *Darkness into Light*, Halfin, examines the student purges of 1924 and the discursive practices that were used in the manipulation of Soviet identity.⁶⁵⁹ Finkel, beginning with the expulsion of the old intelligentsia in 1922 and 1923, discusses the measures taken to remove the old intelligentsia altogether and argues that the constraints for the Soviet intelligentsia during the NEP period, when the Bolsheviks shaped the public sphere (*obshchestvennost'*) and promoted civic engagement while banning any dissent, were harsh. One of his conclusions is that the Soviet idea of intelligentsia excluded the sense of historic mission characteristic of the old intelligentsia. I take issue with this and follow more closely Benjamin Tromly's recent study on Soviet intelligentsia.

Relying on oral history, Benjamin Tromly assesses former Soviet university students under Stalin and looks at how they were preoccupied with their identity as intelligentsia. Their self-perception was based on a combination of concepts, including those from Soviet ideology, thus combining the official discourse with more traditional notions. Quite justly, Tromly contends that the old intelligentsia model survived in an altered form. A similar argument has been articulated in Irina Paperno's recent study.⁶⁶⁰ I agree with this analysis and demonstrate how the study of 19th-century literature contributed to this

⁶⁵⁹ Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

⁶⁶⁰ Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), especially pp. 11-15.

preservation of the old ideals of Russian intelligentsia. The history of literature course's historical and social method contributed to this self-definition and self-search, exemplified in Samoilov's life-writings.⁶⁶¹

Like Hellbeck, Tromly ignores the Soviet official sources of the old intelligentsia values available to the Soviet children prior to their university years in the history of literature course at secondary school. But such evidence is extremely illuminating. Samoilov's writings make clear the exposure to old intelligentsia values through the study of classic literature, albeit often as negative examples in sharp contradiction to the communist ethics he initially struggles to fully embrace. How Samoilov deals with this contradiction as a young adult and as an older man is the central theme of this chapter.

I first look at Samoilov's memories of classic authors, of the course's methods such as *obrazy*, and of the instigation of emotions. I then assess the level of his awareness of the indoctrination process that he had undergone in the school's literature courses as well as, most importantly, his evolving views of the old and new intelligentsia and his own belonging to it.

a. The Return To School Classics

The Russian classics continued to feature frequently in Samoilov's diary throughout his life. As early as 1941, Samoilov mentions the Russian classical works about childhood that were read at school, listing these among his personal

⁶⁶¹ Benjamin Tromly, *Making the Soviet Intelligentsia: Universities and Intellectual Life under Stalin and Khrushchev* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014).

favourites.⁶⁶² Samoilov re-reads Gogol's *The Dead Souls* again in 1941 and confesses that the novel now inspires 'a new feeling in him,' praising Gogol' for his mastery of imagery and language that continue to affect his soul and mind.⁶⁶³ He would return to works from the school curriculum as late as 1964.⁶⁶⁴

In 1943, Samoilov re-read Tolstoi.⁶⁶⁵ His evaluation of the author's contribution to the history of literature ('Толстой открыл прообраз социализма в структуре народной войны')⁶⁶⁶ is characteristic of the Soviet literature course's method of ideological projection into the past, the analysis of past periods within the light of the October Socialist revolution to come, whereby a 19th-century author could be seen as a prophet of the socialist future.⁶⁶⁷

Samoilov's high appraisal of realism in 1943 is another proof of the endurance of the literary tastes he developed at school: 'Натурализм, символизм, реализм – различные «дозы» прекрасного. Первые два содержат меньше «свободы». Истинно творческое – реализм.'⁶⁶⁸ Also, in his early entry on Gogol', Samoilov cannot help reverting to his teenage habit of comparing one classic author to

⁶⁶² 'Я люблю читать истории о детстве. «Детство Темы», «Детство Никиты», детство Николеньки Иртеньева, даже Пантелеймона Романова «Детство». Я знаю и другие: «Детство» Горького, «Дэвид Копперфилд».' *Podennye zapisi*, p. 141. October 1941.

⁶⁶³ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 131. 20 December 1938.

⁶⁶⁴ In 1963 Samoilov again writes in his diaries about school-curriculum classics, saying that Tolstoi saw before all others 'нравственные пути спасения.' *Ibid.*, p. 355. 3 April 1963. In an entry of 25 October 1964, Samoilov compares Lermontov and Pushkin's poetry. *Ibid.*, p. 366.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 160. 16 June 1943. '«Детство Никиты». У Толстого нет лучшей книги. Вся, вся хороша до мельчайших деталей.'

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177. 31 August 1943.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 177. 31 August 1943.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166. 25 June 1943.

another in a generalised fashion, in terms very similar to those of his teenage diary.⁶⁶⁹

In his later writings, too, Samoilov continued to comment within the moral and aesthetic universe of the 1930s Soviet classroom. For instance, in an undated note, he expressed appreciation of Tolstoi, highlighting the author's moral lessons when listing him among the greatest thinkers.⁶⁷⁰ He also continued to ponder *obrazy* and their role in the human thinking processes: 'Сущность же образа остается непознаваемой тайной искусства, как и его высшая цель.'⁶⁷¹ Although Samoilov slightly shifts the definition of the term, he still employed it in a central organising capacity, as an embodied idea and a symbol of art's essence.

Samoilov's descriptions of situations or people through references to literature and literary characters are also in line with his teenage diaries. For example, he evokes a type from Ehrenburg's work to describe his peers' attitude to similar types of people: 'Мы не были на стороне Володи Сафонова, но он нам был интересен.'⁶⁷² Similarly, describing a person he meets in 1958, Samoilov is reminded of a character from Tolstoi's *War and Peace*.⁶⁷³ When describing a group of young people with the alternative to Soviet school ideas on life and art,

⁶⁶⁹ 'Гоголь – первый, до Бабеля, Паустовского и Олеси, который открыл настоящие краски прозаического языка./ Достоевский, Толстой, Чехов, Горький – настоящие прозаики в узком и определенном значении этого слова. Это значит, что целое для них – все. Которых можно воспринимать лишь целиком./ У Гоголя же каждая фраза так же хороша, как и каждая повесть. Смелость его безгранична.' *Podennye zapisi*, p. 132. 20 December 1938.

⁶⁷⁰ *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 483. 23 March 1982.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 489. 31 August 1987.

⁶⁷² *Podennye zapisi*, p. 140. XX October 1941. Samoilov refers to I. G. Ehrenburg's *Den' vtoroi* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1935).

⁶⁷³ 'Очень понравился мне младший Иванов – Кома, умный, сердечный, честный человек, похожий на Пьера Безухова. (Иванов Вячеслав Вс.)' *Ibid.*, p. 298. 9 марта 1958.

Samoilov uses a literary reference to capture that group's essence: 'Это был тот же декаданс, Васисуалий Лоханский в матросских штанах.'⁶⁷⁴ Samoilov's habit of comparing real persons to fictional or historical characters clearly harks back to his formative school years, even if not all comparisons or references directly refer to the classic works studied in class. For example, there is an entry from 1948, in which Samoilov compares an acquaintance to a historical figure, but then qualifies his comparison: 'Савонарола домашний, страшущийся жены. Добродушный инквизитор.'⁶⁷⁵

b. Romance and a Literary Dimension

In the previous chapter I discussed the literary course's influence on teenagers' romantic relationships and friendships. The effects of the teaching about relationships with others 'through literature' or 'with reference to literary examples'⁶⁷⁶ in this respect can be seen in Samoilov's later entries. Well into adulthood, he continued to record his infatuations. These records provide insights into the development of his views on women and sex and the way in which the literary is intricately inscribed in his feelings and attitudes.⁶⁷⁷

Samoilov draws many a literary parallel when recording his love stories. For example, he compares himself to one of Flaubert's characters: 'Не знаю, как

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 148. October 1941. Vasiusalii Lokhanski is a character from Il'ia Il'f, Evgenii Petrov, 'Zolotoi telenok', *Sobranie sochinenii v 4-kh tomakh*, 4 vols (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1938-1939).

⁶⁷⁵ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 244. 23 March 1948.

⁶⁷⁶ See pp. 93-94.

⁶⁷⁷ The preoccupation with romance, which features largely in his records as a young man, gradually decreases until fading away almost entirely from his older notebooks (the one significant exception is the following note, made when Samoilov was in his late 30s): 'Последнее свидание с Кл. Мне кажется мы нужны друг другу именно так.' (Italics in original) *Podennye zapisi*, p. 297. 5 March 1958.

далеко еще увлечет меня «воспитание чувств.»⁶⁷⁸ On another occasion, he calls himself an Azerbaijani or Armenian troubadour, 'влюбленным и глупым ашугом.'⁶⁷⁹ At one point, he compares a woman to a page from a good book: 'Еще поцелуй – и я уезжаю. Сегодня, завтра./ Я как будто читаю хорошую книгу: жаль расстаться с прочитанной страницей, и все же еще больше хочется знать: что же дальше?'⁶⁸⁰

Overall, Samoilov's early affairs are lived with characteristic intensity. He is often aware of his tendency to project drama on to his relationship with women, for example, when imagining triangles and developing negative scenarios in his mind: 'Почему мы видим меньше, чем чувствуем?/ Мне чудится поправная дружба и отпетая любовь.'⁶⁸¹ His entries devoted to his love trials are long, written in short and abrupt sentences that betray a mind in turmoil. He identifies his state as a mania, acknowledging that unfounded jealousy constitutes a large part of it.⁶⁸² Thus, as a young man, Samoilov continues to experience this essentially private emotion as an uncomfortable intrusion upon his other socially important pursuits. Samoilov's internal conflict could be seen as illustrating how the romantic notions of love and relationships, instilled into Russian school

⁶⁷⁸ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 137. 13 May 1939. Flaubert's works were published in the 1930s: Giustav Flober, *Sobranie sochinenii v 10 tomakh*, edited by A. V. Lunacharskii, M. D. Eikhengol'ts, 10 vols (Moscow, Leningrad: GIKHL, 1933-1938). Samoilov refers to Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale*, available in volume 3: *Vospitanie chuvstv*, translated by A. V. Fedorov, A. V. Dimitrevskii (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1935).

⁶⁷⁹ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 137. 2 November 1939. Samoilov could have been familiar with an Armenian *ashug* Saiat-Nova, translated by Valerii Briusov. Saiat-Nova, *Pesni* (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1939). *Pravda* published articles about *ashug*-poets, for example two articles of the same issue: 'Tvorchestvo naroda' and Georgii Khubov, 'Tvorchestvo Azerbaidzhana', *Pravda*, 2 April 1938, p. 4; S. Tregub, 'Dusha naroda', *Pravda*, 23 November 1938, p. 3; 'O grammofonnoi zapisi natsional'noi muzyki', *Pravda*, 2 November 1938, p. 3.

⁶⁸⁰ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 171. 2 August 1943.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 135. 27 January 1939.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 137. 13 May 1939.

children through literature models, clashed with the otherwise 'rational' focus on 'social service' and the importance given to a wise and productive use of their time. Such an ambiguous dichotomy may well have been the cause of Samoilov and his contemporaries' over-anxious reaction to romantic feelings.

Elsewhere, he directly identifies his problem – love interferes with his creative pursuits: 'У меня характер мономана. Любовь мешает мне творить, творчество мешает любить. Я должен быть увлечен совершенно. Иначе ничего не получается.'⁶⁸³ Although the literary is prominently inscribed into his early love stories, in a similar way to his teenage entries, love feelings hold him back from the different type of creation to which he aspires. Samoilov demands of himself that he should write something grandiose and important to all, with 'big words': 'А писать нужно о большом и важном для всех и большими словами.'⁶⁸⁴ Yet love's strong emotional upheaval does not allow him to concentrate on what he considers to be worthy and grandiose topics.

In several entries, he describes his suffering as an acute love-sickness that even inspires thoughts of suicide: 'Потому что пустота, внезапно открывшаяся, готова была поглотить. До самоубийства.'⁶⁸⁵ Another description of hurt pride moves him to tears, which he interestingly expresses in a claim that men's tears are the most poignant: 'Я унижаюсь и страдаю от гордости. [...] Выдержу ли я? Дважды не уметь сдержатъ слез. Мужские слезы самые

⁶⁸³ Ibid., p. 169. 17 July 1943.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 137. 13 May 1939.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 137. 2 November 1939.

горькие. Есть ли после этого бог на земле.'⁶⁸⁶ Yet, despite the apparent strength of his desire, he is unwilling to consummate his love with the object of his affection when the opportunity arises.⁶⁸⁷ This is not a singular episode of Samoilov not wishing 'to cross the line'. Several years later, older but still relatively young, Samoilov records a similar episode, experiencing the pangs of consciousness at the idea of intimacy with a different woman:

Вчерашние поцелуи девушки и сегодняшние – женщины. Нет. Вчера слаще. К ним не примешивается никакая горечь, никакие протесты совести. Пусть она считает меня идиотом – я не пошел дальше.⁶⁸⁸

What is persistent in these early records of romantic encounters is his discomfort with physical intimacy and thoughts of sex that he crisply identifies as 'пошлые мысли.'⁶⁸⁹

When he describes several simultaneous love affairs (which most likely did not go beyond the kissing he describes in the diary) while stationed in Poland as a soldier, his feelings fluctuate between enjoyment and disgust: 'Все то же пустейшее существование. Все эти романы развлекают меня только на минуту и в остальное время кажутся глупыми и отвратительными.'⁶⁹⁰ Significantly, on one occasion Samoilov is lucid as to a possible reason why he is uncomfortable with contemplating a more serious relationship with the woman he likes: 'Чувствую бесплодность своих отношений с З. Едва в шутке наметилось что-то серьезное, как *мучительной стала разница взглядов на*

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 137. 4 November 1939.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 137-138. 16 November 1939.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 168. 11 July 1943.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 133. 1 January 1939.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 215. 8 April 1945.

мир и на себя, существующая между нами' (my italics).⁶⁹¹ To Samoilov their differing worldviews render a love affair 'fruitless'. This essentially ideological condition for a fruitful love relationship goes back to the literary classroom, where a similarity in ideology was emphasised as essential to both love and friendship, and where friendship had to comprise a large part in a love relationship.⁶⁹² A different belief system would be an insurmountable obstacle to a love relationship for someone of Samoilov's educational background.

c. Judging Others by 19th-Century Yardsticks

In the late 1930s children were taught to apply ideological criteria not only in their romantic encounters, but more generally also. Samoilov remembers these criteria in adulthood, yet he acknowledges another, contradictory, means of assessing people. He juxtaposes the two sets of measures he uses when judging others: those of the 19th century and the communist ones. Furthermore, he projects on to his peers possessing the same contradictory yardsticks: 'Нас мучают мерки XIX века, нас сбивает с толку добродушие, мы подходим к людям с абстрактными критериями добра и зла.'⁶⁹³ By 1948 he is convinced that the more tolerant 19th century criteria should be abandoned in favour of strict communist ethics: 'Мы понимаем, что коммунизм—это работа, ежедневный тяжелый труд. [...] Нужно целиком отдать себя одной правде. Нужно жестоко воспитывать в себе прямоту партийного взгляда.'⁶⁹⁴ He even propagates judgements prescribed by the Party somewhere in print and

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., p. 212. 16 March 1945.

⁶⁹² See pp. 93-94.

⁶⁹³ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 247. 2 April 1948.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

copies his appeal to others in his diary.

Significantly, Samoilov feels the need to buttress this position with a literary reference: no longer can the conflict between Victor Hugo's characters – Cimourdain and Marquis de Lantenac suffice as model. The new Party line demands a closer look at personal motives: 'От положительных величин характера требуется не только *величина*, но и *направление* (original emphasis).'695 Here Samoilov preaches even more ruthless evaluation of people's characters, based not only on their past and current political activism, but also on their goals. He used the same literary reference back in 1941, when describing how the purges of 1937 tested his and his peers' loyalty to the state: 'Я вспоминал Гюго. «Я тебя арестую», -- сказал Симурден. «Я тебя одобряю», -- ответил Лаптенак. Мы не могли думать иначе, мы приветствовали Симурдена.' 696 Thus the predicaments of the French revolution, as depicted and represented by Victor Hugo in his romantic historical novel *Ninety-Three*, provided Soviet young readers with examples to solve their own social dilemmas.⁶⁹⁷

Even as a young adult, however, in 1948, Samoilov confesses to his diary that he is unable to apply strict communist criteria to others. When he meets a fellow

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 139-140. XX October 1941.

⁶⁹⁷ Works by Victor Hugo were widely available in the 1930s. For example, only in 1935 both Detgiz and Goslitizdat published Hugo's *Ninety-Three*. Hugo, *Devianosto tretii god*, edited for children by Sof'ia Vinogradskaia, translated by M. A. Shishmareva (Moscow: Detgiz, 1935); *Devianosto tretii god*, translated by M. A. Shishmareva, introduction by B. V. Gimmel'farb (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1935); *Devianosto tretii god*, translated by M. A. Shishmareva (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1935).

human being, he cannot help being lenient in his judgement: 'А когда приходит ко мне человек, я не умею его оценивать так. Я слишком мягок, слишком расплывчат.'⁶⁹⁸ What Samoilov identified as 19th-century ethics continue to play an important role in his relations to others.

It was the lot of Samoilov's contemporaries to be torn between strict communist ethics and the softer humane criteria of 19th-century literature, between the harsh judgements of *samokritika* and classic authors' love for their flawed heroes. They were educated to be susceptible to literary models, yet offered contradictory, indeed mutually exclusive, examples to follow. This internal struggle between 19th-century humanitarian ideas and the Soviet ideological slogans remained perceptible in Samoilov's entries until the end of 1940s.

The 19th-century morality would eventually win Samoilov over, as I demonstrate below. But part of the reason why Samoilov was able to recognise the contradictory judgement criteria early on is because he often looked back to analyse his early years of indoctrination. His evaluation of his socialisation process, including through literature study, was important for him, and it is of historical importance too, insofar as it allows us to assess the principles he had been socialised to.

d. Memories of Indoctrination in the Literary Classroom

Samoilov retrospectively criticised the 'vulgar sociology' he experienced as a young child in the early 1930s that, according to him, contributed to a certain

⁶⁹⁸*Podennye zapisi*, p. 248. 2 April 1948.

scepticism characteristic of his generation.⁶⁹⁹ He sounds categorical in this condemnation of the 'vulgar sociologism', and thus loyal to the style of his teenage diaries. He also mentions *nagliadnost'* as an indoctrination tool for children and evaluates it in a characteristically (for Stalin's era) positive way: 'Дети маловосприимчивы к абстракциям. Они переводят их на язык вещественных понятий и запоминают так на всю жизнь. Первые внушения должны быть наглядными.'⁷⁰⁰ He claims that the 'vulgar sociological' approach made insufficient use of visual aids. Visual aids, according to this account, were integrated into the school curriculum only later, when Samoilov was already a teenager.

He is highly critical of having absorbed syllogisms and unprocessed ideas as a young boy – something he sees when rereading his own diary. He recognises his teenage writing style as manifesting a reliance on borrowed formulas that disguised his psychological and emotional drives: 'спор инстинктов и почти отсутствуют идеи. Это вавилонское смешение различных силлогизмов. Не мудрено, что мы с таким трудом выпутывались из них.'⁷⁰¹ Yet, he continues to employ clichés in his entries as a young man, for example when deciding to change his poetic style: 'Поэтический «штурм унд дранг» кончился. Бунт на корабле подавлен. Мятежники сброшены с корабля современности. Пора начинать думать лучше и неожиданней.'⁷⁰² This self-reproach offset by plans for the future is also in line with his earlier teenage entries.⁷⁰³

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 142. XX October 1941.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., p. 141. XX October 1941.

⁷⁰² Ibid., p. 134, 19 February 1939.

⁷⁰³ P. 228.

One of the most persistent features of Samoilov's diaries is turning back to his own past in order to define himself and his generation. This is also a trace of the historical study of literature in school – thinking of the socio-historical development through definition of generations. Although he absorbed the negative attitude to reflexivity, he continuously engages in reflecting on his own generation, on the body of his collective. As early as 1941, the 21-year-old young man tries to capture in words the common traits of friends and schoolmates. He expresses his appreciation for collective education, persistently relying on the pronouns 'we', 'ours':

Так или иначе, нас приучали быть вместе. Мы жили коллективно. *И после всегда каждый прежде всего искал людей. Индивидуализм был болезнью возраста или реакцией. Только самые мнительные и болезненные остались в этой черепаховой скорлупе. Они стали оппозицией поколению сорокового года. Они презирали нас за самоуверенность, за горячность, за задор.*⁷⁰⁴ (my italics)

He evaluates the high level of sociability taught to children and the acquired necessity for people as the main positive trait of his upbringing. In this entry he also reveals the socially desired character traits reinforced by this socialisation: confidence, gaiety, enthusiasm (*goriachnost'*). Among socially unacceptable features one must reform in oneself Samoilov lists: reflection, the feeling of exclusivity, and individualism.

Samoilov admits that many of his peers possessed reflexivity, another undesired trait, but tried to hide it: 'Рефлексия была не в почете. Таких считали хлюпиками и оставляли в покое. Нужна была прямота и веселость. Многие

⁷⁰⁴ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 142. October 1941.

думали, но таились.'⁷⁰⁵ Thus Samoilov testifies to the high degree of peer pressure as to how a modern young person must be or, at least, appear to be. At one point, looking back he acknowledges the shared feeling of discomfort *vis-à-vis* life's complexity and the desire to find totality of experience (something that both Samoilov and Tverdin recorded as teenagers):⁷⁰⁶ 'Мы тренировали мозги, чтобы преодолеть дробность жизни. Нам хотелось найти целое и служить ему.'⁷⁰⁷

Samoilov and his university peers turned to reading to find answers to their questions. They read Hegel: 'Мы прочли это и многое другое. Мы спорили вечерами до одурения.'⁷⁰⁸ In this description, an intense interaction with peers during his life as a student at IFLI becomes apparent.⁷⁰⁹ In fact, socialising increased at the university level because of the shared interest or specialisation, in this case literature studies. More importantly, the students continue to read 'together' and discuss their readings long beyond their study hours. It is hardly surprising that these young people thought alike: '39-й год был годом романтики. Люди нашего поколения впервые встретились. Они изумились тому, что мыслят одинаково и вместе с тем разнообразно.'⁷¹⁰ The entries devoted to his years after leaving school confirm the important role guided reading had in the development of these young people's minds. This process,

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶ P. 228.

⁷⁰⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 140. October 1941.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 141. October 1941. Also: 'Мы были упоены дружбой. Ночи проходили в разговорах. Мы уходили на рассвете из прокуренной комнаты. У нас были свои тщательные правила и свои песни.' *Podennye zapisi*, p. 139. October 1941.

⁷⁰⁹ IFLI (or MIFLI) – the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Literature, and History.

⁷¹⁰ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 139. XX October 1941.

however, began at school, and Samoilov is aware of the means used in this type of indoctrination that he and his peers underwent.

In 1941, Samoilov is clearly a recipient of a class-stratified Soviet education despite criticising such education's infamous 'simplistic approach' as of the early 1930s, the so-called 'vulgar sociology.' Samoilov describes at length the flaws of the pre-reform literature course:

Снаружи все, казалось, было ясно и просто: были классы. Они боролись. [...] Личностей не было. Пушкин – среднепоместное дворянство. Лермонтов – тоже среднепоместное. Толстой – патриархальное крестьянство. Личностей нет. Есть борьба классов. А Шекспир? Как быть с Шекспиром, он тоже среднепоместное? А Ленин? Он тоже не личность?⁷¹¹

This evaluation of the sociological approach to authors, the Pereverzev period, is remarkable in several respects. Firstly, Samoilov the young man makes clear the central role that history of literature played in his generation's upbringing. Secondly, this description shows his awareness of the change that took place in the mid-1930s, a shift away from the more traditional Marxist class-based approach to literature towards a Stalinist version, nationalist and emotional. In this approach the responsibility for becoming a Soviet citizen also lay with the individual and biography and personal heroism were emphasised more than historical conditions. This was precisely the type of education that Samoilov and his peers underwent in the literary classroom during their last years of secondary school.

⁷¹¹ Ibid., p. 143. XX October 1941.

Further in this entry, he continues to evaluate the role the Party played in the educational reforms as belated but praiseworthy: 'Порядок в идеологиях навели потом. Быстро и решительно. Петр Первый стал личностью, а Шекспир – гением. Появилась категория «народа» и «родины».'⁷¹² Thus, Samoilov recognises the Party's direct interference in the programmes for literature and history studies and applauds its role in bringing forth such historical personalities as Peter the Great and geniuses like Shakespeare. This emphasis on personality will continue to affect Samoilov.

In 1943 he writes about the correlation between historical conditions and a historical personality, essentially refuting Marxist approach to the question by claiming that 'historical conditions are formless,' and it is a personality that gives clear shape to historical conditions.⁷¹³ Samoilov here is a faithful student of his history of literature course, which shifted emphasis from the historico-economic conditions of production to individual heroes and personalities. That this type of indoctrination had its uses in personality cult is evident from his following thoughts as a young man:

Может быть, никогда исторический характер не принимал столь четких форм, как у Сталина. Воссоздать его *образ* хоть сколько-нибудь детально – нелепость. Никогда еще изгибы характера настолько не совпадали с изгибами эпохи. И правда, последней приходилось иногда трещать.⁷¹⁴ (my italics)

Samoilov would not hold strongly or for long the belief about Stalin's figure as 'a sharp-contour flashing-out of the historical period' and about the strength of his personality in responding to historical contingencies and altering them. In a later

⁷¹² Ibid., p. 143. XX October 1941.

⁷¹³ Ibid., p. 193. 4 November 1943. On the perception of Stalin's *obraz* in the history of literature course see p. 140.

⁷¹⁴ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 194. 4 November 1943.

entry Samoilov speaks of Hitler's ideology as an apotheosis of the bourgeois society,⁷¹⁵ thus broadly returning to a Marxist analysis. Nevertheless, the prominence of a personality acting within history and bending rather than reflecting historical period continues to haunt Samoilov's thoughts for a long time. As far as it is possible to judge from his later entries, the respect Samoilov holds for such 'personality' would in fact persevere and is expressed in his appreciation of writers' biographies – another parallel feature of the literature course of the late 1930s.

The prominent role occupied by writers' biographies in the literary curriculum from 1934⁷¹⁶ influenced the way in which Samoilov regarded the inherent connection between writers' lives and their creative work. In 1943, Samoilov writes: 'Биография – половина поэта. Гомер – это спор семи городов. Тиртей – это легенда о боевой песне. Рембо без биографии был бы половиной поэта (эх бы Паустовскому такую!).'⁷¹⁷ In 1946 he writes: 'Какими тесными сплетениями сосудов и нервов привязаны мы, поэты, к своим биографиям. Как должны мы уметь жить, чтобы уметь писать!'⁷¹⁸ He calls for a creative approach to one's life, and in his imagination even death becomes a romantic device that would cut short a promise of a genius:

Жизнь нужно делать, как художественное произведение. Плохо, если самое лучшее в ней метафоры (sic). Неважно если несколько фраз в ней будут неудачны. Вдохновение – вот самое главное.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., p. 218. 17 April 1945.

⁷¹⁶ Evgenii Ponomarev, "Osnovatel' russkoi literatury" M. V. Lomonosov i literatura XVIII veka v sovetskoi shkole', in *Uchebniki detstva: iz istorii shkol'noi knigi VII-XXI vekov: Trudy seminara 'Kul'tura detstva: normy, tsennosti, praktiki'*, volume 3, issue 13 (Moscow: RGGU 2013), pp. 169-195 (pp. 180, 181).

⁷¹⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 178. 4 September 1943.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid., p. 228. 24 January 1946.

Если бы я умер двадцати лет, сказали бы, что из меня мог бы получиться гениальный поэт. Стоит ли жить до шестидесяти, чтобы доказать обратное.⁷¹⁹

In this entry Samoilov toys with the romantic idea that the untimely death of a talented poet is better than a long life in which one fails to sustain the image of a genius or exceptional talent (in service to one's *patria*). (Perhaps he has in mind the biographies of Pushkin, Lermontov, Maiakovskii, and his own peers who perished in the war: poet Mikhail Kul'chitskii, writer and literary critic Mikhail Molochko.)⁷²⁰

Young Samoilov's view on art's capacity and even duty to shape minds and personality is also significant: 'Искусство есть творчество, не только потому, что оно творимо, а потому что оно формирует характер.'⁷²¹ He concludes that art which is merely entertaining does not inspire a person to strive to become better, hence it belongs to the future, when all people are reformed.⁷²² This is a leftover from the emphasis on radical democrats' legacy.⁷²³

In 1946, young Samoilov is also certain as to what traits must be reformed in a person and where these traits had sprung from: the 19th-century hero whom Samoilov invokes in his diaries. Moreover, this literary type no longer has a place in modern literature: 'Отрицающий герой XIX века давно погиб для

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., p. 225. 25 December 1945.

⁷²⁰ Mikhail Kul'chitskii (1919-1943) was born in Khar'kov, knew Boris Slutskii, and moved to Moscow to study at MIFLI. He volunteered for service in the Red Army in 1941 and died in 1943. *Russkaia poeziia XX vek. Antologiia*, edited by Fediakin et al., p. 447; Mikhail Molochko was born in Belarus', his work published in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and *Literaturnaia gazeta*. He was a 3rd-year student of IFLI when he volunteered to serve in the Red Army during the Finnish war, as a result of which he was killed in 1940. Mikhail Molochko, *Zhil-byt mal'chishka* (Minsk: Mastatskaia literatura, 1976).

⁷²¹ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 164. 22 June 1943.

⁷²² Ibid., p. 164. 22 June 1943.

⁷²³ p. 78.

искусства. Эта судьба ждет всех, кто будет тянуться к нему.⁷²⁴ Thus, he inadvertently acknowledges that these models continued to have an appeal to some of his contemporaries and used to exercise power over his younger self.

e. Vilification of the Intelligentsia (1941-1946)

Young Samoilov admits to having undergone a long journey of fashioning himself into a Soviet man. I discuss this journey in detail because it reveals the literary models having a prominent role in the process.

In 1941 Samoilov describes his personal hesitations and inclination to self-censure in the late 1930s.⁷²⁵ Although at first confessing to a personal flaw in his character (painful self-searching), he then projects it onto his entire generation. He calls it the 'disease' of his generation, while claiming that he and his peers had been 'immune against sophisticated consciousness, dissatisfaction, and vanity', referring again to the efficient indoctrination efforts at school.⁷²⁶ Young Samoilov identifies the source of these inadequate attitudes in the painful transition from the 19th to the 20th centuries: 'Болезнь переходной эпохи, которую оставил нам лимератический интеллигент XIX века, весь этот лимератический век.'⁷²⁷ The rare word 'limeratic' may be an invention of Samoilov's, and is probably derived from the French *limer* (to file one's nails), suggesting a mixture of narcissism and nervousness.⁷²⁸ Such an over-sensitive, soft-living type was

⁷²⁴ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 228. 15 February 1946.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144-145. XX October 1941.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145. XX October 1941.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁸ It could be a reference to the effete manicures carried out by Pushkin's *Onegin*, chapter 1, 25. A. S. Pushkin, *Evgenii Onegin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 16 tomakh*, edited by Maksim Gor'kii, D. D. Blagoi, S. M. Bondi, et al., 16 vols (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1937-1959), vol. 6

studied in detail but interpreted negatively at school. Indeed, Samoilov's portrayals of the intelligentsia generally are characteristically 'Stalinist': he applies a range of derisive terms of the kind found in pedagogical discourses of his schooldays.⁷²⁹

In several entries, Samoilov reveals that he had been actively fighting against some character traits of this kind in himself: 'Я начал с избавления от интеллигентского предрассудка исключительности.'⁷³⁰ Apart from this sense of entitlement and exceptionality, the intelligentsia type, in Samoilov's description, appears to have weak (even 'degenerate') physical features. Thus, for example, he welcomes the war's physical hardships as these help him get rid of these frailties: 'Занятия. Наряды. Мало сна. Мало пищи. И все же откуда-то берется жизнерадостность. Я чувствую, что вторично победил себя – победил свое дряблое интеллигентское тело.'⁷³¹ In this entry, he betrays the acute awareness of his social background and reveals a characteristically Soviet attitude to it.

Yet Samoilov had positive models of intelligentsia at home and in literature. The following entry from 1943 demonstrates his need to reconcile these two contradictory perceptions of the intelligentsia in his own mind:

Наконец категория народности перестала быть для интеллигенции абстрактной. Появилась интеллигенция нового качества и новой гордости. Мы избавились от вековой

(1937), pp. 1-205, p. 15.

⁷²⁹ For example: 'В идеях интеллигентского «пафоса отречения» всегда есть неудовлетворенное *тщеславие* и обида продавца, невыгодно произведшего сделку. *Мятущийся интеллигент [...]*' (my italics). *Podennye zapisi*, p. 229-230. 30 March 1946.

⁷³⁰ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 175. 24 August 1943.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188. 14 October 1943.

*мягкотелости и колебаний. Мы можем гордиться тем, что мы интеллигенты, не боясь стать снобами. Нам не нужно заискивать перед народом. Мы сами народ.*⁷³² (my italics)

It is significant that this reconciliation with the fact that he is part of the intelligentsia, albeit the new Soviet type, is achieved through another category propagated in his literature study at school – *narodnost'*.

His ruminations upon the intelligentsia would evolve to a complete acceptance of the older type of intelligentsia and their value system, as I will describe below. Yet prior to this, young Samoilov admits to having undergone a long journey of self-fashioning himself as a Soviet man. This journey is worth reviewing in detail because it reveals the prominent role given to the literary in the process of psychological transformation.

In 1941 Samoilov had fresh memories of his teen years' self-searching period. He reconstructs the painful process in which he had to translate abstract Soviet concepts, such as *lichnost'* and *kollektiv*, into tangible 'reality': 'Мир усложнялся. Абстрактные категории должны были приложиться в реальности. Меня мучило время.'⁷³³ Interestingly, Samoilov uses the same verb *muchat'* as Tverdin ('меня мучает моя судьба')⁷³⁴ to refer to the difficulty of taking in and coping with the complexity of his times. Although the painful self-searching was considered a social inadequacy, it was clearly a characteristic of the entire generation, as Samoilov affirms how the processes of 'self-involvement, negation, and self-searching' must have been dealt with on one's own, since these were

⁷³² *Podennye zapisi*, p. 170. 28 July 1943.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, p. 146. XX October 1941.

⁷³⁴ See p. 229.

rejected and not discussed. Those who succeeded in their 'work on the self' became more reserved and shied away from 'baring their soul' to others.⁷³⁵

Samoilov also remembers and describes those who were not able to give up the notions of exceptionalism, especially a few young people with aristocratic backgrounds. Samoilov was part of such an exclusive group at one point and admits to being fascinated at first. His upbringing eventually leads him to judge this group on the grounds of its anti-Soviet exclusivist moods; in his description young Samoilov equates their social flaws to physical ones. He writes that some members of the quasi-sect suffered from 'physical degeneration' ('Было какое-то физическое вырождение в этих людях.');

they displayed 'enormous vanity and a secret vice.'⁷³⁶ Significantly, Samoilov disapprovingly notes their taste for Blok, and uses it against this group, comparing them to vampires.⁷³⁷ Aleksandr Blok's poetry was part of the 10th year-curriculum study of symbolists. 'Pliaski smerti' were studied in the light of the moral degradation of the pre-

⁷³⁵ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 145. XX October 1941.

⁷³⁶ Ibid. The secret vice Samoilov refers to could be either homosexuality, forbidden under the 7 March 1934 antisodomy law, or masturbation, which had been considered a waste of precious energy since the late 1920s. On the 'recriminalisation' of homosexuality see Dan Healey, 'Homosexual Existence and Existing Socialism': New Light on the Repression of Male Homosexuality in Stalin's Russia', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8:3 (2002), 349-378. Also see A. B. Zalkind, 'Revoliutsionnye normy polovogo povedeniia molodezhi', *Revoliutsiia i molodezh'* (Moscow: Izdanie kommunisticheskogo universiteta imeni Sverdlova, 1925), pp. 70-99. On attitudes to adolescents' sexuality in Russian see Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven, CO: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 573-577.

⁷³⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 147. XX October 1941: 'Я тогда не различал этого. Они любили блоковские «Пляски смерти». Я вдруг вспомнил об этом с ужасом:

Он изнемог от дня чиновной скуки,
Но лязг костей музыкой заглушен...
Он крепко жмет приятельские руки
Живым, живым казаться должен он.'

revolutionary Russian city.⁷³⁸ Hence Samoilov's disapproval is in line with the standard school-level literary teachings of the time.

Samoilov also summarises the spirit of this group by referring to a poem by Pavel Kogan:⁷³⁹

После Павел Коган очень точно написал об этом в своей поэме: «Нас мало». Вот основной принцип. «Мы не похожи на других. Других удовлетворяют формулы, а нас нет. Социализм – это прекрасно, но он далек. А нас мало. Мы должны беречь себя для больших дел».⁷⁴⁰

The literary continues to serve Samoilov both in describing and in judging others – habits acquired in his literary classroom. Just as importantly, Samoilov is conscious of the formative power of the literary word on him and is able to apply it at will.

When Samoilov was fascinated by these alternative trends, he tried to acquire the tastes and behaviour patterns of this group of young individualists. He describes how he learned the group's behaviour, especially sentimental behaviour: 'я научился грустить, очень томно описывать это в дневнике или в дружеской беседе'.⁷⁴¹ More significantly, he chooses a particular set of books to accompany him in this socio-political detour. He self-consciously fashions his dabbling into individualism by reading French decadents, André

⁷³⁸ Aleksandr Blok, 'Pliaski smerti. 538-542', *Stikhotvoreniia, poemy, teatr*, edited by V. I. Orlov (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1936), pp. 209-210.

⁷³⁹ Pavel Kogan (1918-1942) was born in Kiev. From 1924 he lived in Moscow. After graduation from secondary school, he entered MIFLI. Despite his relief from army, he volunteered to the front into an intelligence unit. He was killed on 23 September 1942. All of his poems were published posthumously; it is difficult to identify the poem Samoilov had in mind, and in any case, 'nas malo' is a widely-used trope in Soviet (more generally) Russian poetry. *XX vek. Antologiiia*, edited by Sergei Fediakin, Valentina Mal'mi, Iurii Poliakov, V. Slavetskii, Vitalii Smirnov, A. Karpov, Al. Mikhailov, Vladimir Kostrov, p. 430.

⁷⁴⁰ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 147. XX October 1941.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Gide, symbolists, etc.⁷⁴² It is ironic that students could use their susceptibility to literary models taught at school in an anti-establishment way, as here, when Samoilov self-consciously educates himself in what was called ‘a bourgeois mentality’. Writing this in 1941, when he had long rejected the individualistic model, he excuses his younger self thus: ‘Я искал ходов к стершимся школьным истинам, я искал романтики.’⁷⁴³ It was in essence an exploration of the forbidden by a Soviet teenager. Yet this experience, after he rejected his belonging to the exclusivist group, taught Samoilov to mistrust one’s origins:

Одно время я думал, что дети не отвечают за родителей. Может быть, только теперь, когда я думаю об этом периоде своей жизни, мне стало понятно, отчего я был неправ. Люди приходят в социализм, отягощенные пороками предков. Особенно мы, особенно интеллигенция. Наши дети уже не будут знать этих раскаленных клещей, которыми мы вырывали из сердца, из крови ржавые корешки декаданса. *Себялюбие, тщеславие, чистоплюйство, кружковщина, рефлексия, пустословие, мещанская узость* – вот наследие многих из нас.⁷⁴⁴ (my italics)

The metaphor of tearing ‘molten ticks’ from the bleeding heart is so lurid as to suggest a high degree of self-revulsion, but the list of allegedly anti-Soviet qualities is highly conventional, and into it Samoilov inserts a quality with class associations – ‘petit-bourgeois narrowmindedness’, as if the working class were entirely immune to this, or for that matter, self-love, vanity, over-fastidiousness, clique-forming, reflectiveness and garrulousness. This, however, represented a

⁷⁴² ‘Французский декаданс, Андре Жид, символисты вошли в мой репертуар. Я был восприимчив и очень легко ими оперировал. Через пол года я уже знал все, что знают эти люди, знал, чем они живут, и в совершенстве владел сентиментальной азбукой жестов.’ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 148. XX October 1941. Gide was available through *Internatsional’naia literatura*, see Nailya Safiullina, ‘Window to the West: From the Collection of Reader’s Letters to the Journal *Internatsional’naia literatura*’, *Slavonica* 15:2 (2009), 128–161 (p. 129). Also, Andre Zhid [André Gide], *Sobranie sochinenii* (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1935-1936).

⁷⁴³ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 147. XX October 1941.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148. XX October 1941.

high point of Samoilov's assimilation to contemporary anti-intellectualism, though not of his commitment to the literary lessons of his school.

More substantive traces of the literary legacy persevered through time and survived de-Stalinisation, as will be demonstrated below. They included the perception of a close connection between life and literature, thinking of oneself as a representative of a particular historical slice of time (a generation), sensitivity to the historical conditions one grew up in and to one's civic duties. Samoilov projected the latter onto all writers as a duty to create persuasive literature. His claim to the continuation of the Russian intelligentsia's values, as we shall see, appeared with time, although its seeds had been planted in a literary classroom of the 1930s.

f. Historical Choice or Historical Lot? (1941-1970)

The idea of an interconnection between fiction and life often finds expression in Samoilov's diaries: 'Мы отреклись от романтики и стали жить, как жили романтики в книгах'.⁷⁴⁵ Samoilov refers here to the transition from the romantic idea of dying for one's fatherland,⁷⁴⁶ from a hypothetical willingness to a real choice faced by his generation. And when one of his close friends jumps at the opportunity and volunteers for the Finish war, perishing in it, he becomes a legend among Samoilov's group of friends:

⁷⁴⁵ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 196. 7 December 1943.

⁷⁴⁶ Samoilov-teenager recorded his willingness to die for his motherland, connecting this wish to his readings on the French revolution: 'Но пусть война! Мы победим. Я твердо верю в это./Моя любимая мечта это смерть за нашу страну, за мою идею./ Я вступлю в комсомол и в случае войны пойду первым на фронт, чтобы победить. Пускай мне мало лет! Дети Парижской коммуны сражались так же, как и взрослые.' *Podennye zapisi*, p. 42. 12 October 1935.

С войны не вернулся юноша Миша Молочко. Друзья уже создали легенду о нем. Мы вспоминали его фразу: «Романтика эта та будущая война, в которой победим мы» [...] Для нас осталась единственная романтика – победить.⁷⁴⁷

The dead poet's pledge to apply the romantic zeal drawn from books to fighting until victory becomes a sacred oath to the rest of his peers. Thus Samoilov, perceptive as usual, draws a link between the book knowledge and the sentiment of service his peers learned at school, and the real call to arms in 1941.

Samoilov's peer group also created an appropriate title for their generation, one that Samoilov would continue using throughout his life:⁷⁴⁸

В 1940 году мы начали действовать. Государство не знало нас. Мы предлагали ему себя. Мы гордо назвали всех наших поколением сорокового года. [...] Выражением нашего времени были стихи.⁷⁴⁹ (my italics)

To 'the generation of 1940' eager to put their talents at the state's service, poetry was a natural choice of expression.

Samoilov also wonders in 1943 whether Shchedrin-like satire would be possible in a nation inflated with pride from its war-victory: 'Скоро ли после этой войны любовь к России сможет выражаться по-щедрински?'⁷⁵⁰ Samoilov realised back then that irony had no place in 'the new Rome of newest history'⁷⁵¹ and found *pathos* (the emotional intonation of the schoolroom of his day) a more appropriate mood: 'Патетическое состояние человека и искусства есть

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 139-140. XX October 1941.

⁷⁴⁸ See Ariel' Gordetskii, 'Poet "pokoleniia sorokovykh": 3 prochteniiia izvestnykh stikhotvorenii Davida Samoilova', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 22 February 2014 < <http://vm.ru/news/2014/02/22/poet-pokoleniya-sorokovih-3-prochteniya-izvestnih-stikhotvorenij-davida-samoilova-236647.html> > [accessed 31 August 2015].

⁷⁴⁹ *Podennye zapisi*, pp. 139-140. XX October 1941.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 200. 30 January 1943.

⁷⁵¹ 'Социализм – это Рим новейшего времени.' Samoilov, *Podennye zapisi*, p. 200. 17 October 1943.

переходное от “критического” или отрицательного к коммунистическому.⁷⁵² In this entry, Samoilov identifies a liminal step both in art and human consciousness as a highly romantic state, which is a preliminary state to communism.⁷⁵³ Samoilov the young man does not fail to notice how the inspired desire to serve was also channelled into the war and evaluates this positively, specifying that the mission is the only possible emotionally resonant motif of post-war poetry: ‘Единственный пафос поэзии наших дней – это самосознание целого поколения людей, ставших в войну движущим фактором государственной жизни.’⁷⁵⁴ Thus Samoilov reaffirms the interconnection between life and literature as a full circle: the romantic notions of civic service that sprung from a specific type of indoctrination through literature are channelled into defending one's motherland and should become, according to Samoilov, the central theme in poetry.

Samoilov saw the romance of ‘the generation of 1940’ in their ability to respond to the call of duty instilled in them. He first articulates this in 1941, acknowledging that soldiers could be heroes, cowards, and ordinary people:

Люди нашего поколения разными путями пришли к одному: все на фронт. Здесь были герои, трусы и обыкновенные люди. Никто не отрекся от войны. Если мне придется когда-нибудь писать, я напишу о том, как категории долга стала для нас господствующей. *Это единственное чувство, которое следует внушать людям с пеленок: долг.*⁷⁵⁵ (my italics)

⁷⁵² Ibid., p. 189. 17 October 1943.

⁷⁵³ ‘Подобно тому, как героическая эпоха греков была временем формирования классического идеала (а все последующие времена лишь его разрушением), так и наше время – время становления нового идеала, эпоха патетического.’ Ibid., p. 194, 7 November 1943.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 228. 15 February 1946.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 140. XX October 1941.

Despite their diversity, they all had an overarching sense of duty to their country. Samoilov would not tire to evaluate this sense as positive in his very last entries, although the meaning of duty would change from a duty to the state to a more general civic duty. Pre-revolutionary literature had an important role in instilling this sense. When Samoilov's attitude to the 19th-century literary hero changed, the meaning of duty also shifted.

The sense of civic duty had been inculcated in his peers, including during the history of literature course with its emphasis on the critical theory of the radical democrats. In 1948 Samoilov still vividly remembered the source of this civil position:

Учиться мыслить, во многих отношениях, следует у шестидесятников. Какой простор, какое благородство, какое ощущение силы и достоинства!

А между тем идейные задачи нашего поколения мощней и шире их задач. Во времена Белинского, Герцена, Чернышевского общественное развитие России, в частности литература, достигли такой значительности, что необходимо было сызнова (или впервые!) взглянуть на русскую историю с новой точки зрения – отыскать в ней причины этой значительности.⁷⁵⁶ (my italics)

When he compares the tasks of his generation to those of Herzen's, at the same time forgetting to acknowledge Dobroliubov's legacy, he nevertheless shows that he has subconsciously absorbed the critic's work, citing the title of one of his most famous essays: 'Мы – поколение 40-х годов России – призваны быть светом в темном царстве послевоенной Европы./ Поколение безупречно честных, так должны нас называть' (my italics).⁷⁵⁷ He pronounces this judgement even after witnessing and recording the vindictive atrocities

⁷⁵⁶ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 238. 5 March 1948.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 227. 5 January 1946.

committed by Soviet troops in Germany.⁷⁵⁸ It is perhaps easy for him to think of his own peers as honourable, since his personal ethical code is admirable and he takes a vow not to hurt a German woman or child: 'Горе Германии, заслуженное горе, прошло перед моими глазами, и я поклялся себе не обидеть жены и дитяти врага своего.'⁷⁵⁹ Instead of becoming disappointed by the behaviour of many soldiers, the war only reinforced his loyalty to his peers and his view of their own generation as pure with their idea of civic duty.

Initially, however, the realities of war must have shaken Samoilov's romantic perception of dying for one's fatherland. This can be seen in the entries made in 1942, when Samoilov first faced the life-threatening conditions of war. Samoilov's diary of that period contains different types of entries in terms of style. Thus, his entry of 12 of August 1942 betrays the fear of death and an ardent desire to live and continue to write.⁷⁶⁰ It seems that this fear activates his attention to the minute detail of a soldier's life: 'Я ем запрещенный виноград. Я кусаю сочную кисть и глотаю мягкие веточки. Я не гурман. Я не умею сосать по яголке. Так во всем. Нужно объесться.'⁷⁶¹ He describes the minute. When he does so, he identifies with a French diarist: for example, after recounting an episode of sharing a cigarette with other soldiers, using their characteristic dialect ('здешний или тутошний'), he concludes: 'Я Жуль Ренар поневоле'.⁷⁶² He writes in short sentences: 'Я пишу, как смертник', 'Следует

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 222. 21 April 1945; p. 223. 24 April 1945.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 209. 7 February 1945.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 151. 12 August 1942.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., p. 151. 16 August 1942.

⁷⁶² Ibid., p. 152. 17 August 1942.

быть французом – писать дневник.⁷⁶³ In his war entries, he is also sensitive to nature around him: 'Уже пахнет Русью. Облака. Прохлада. Но вокруг еще степь.'⁷⁶⁴ Yet his usual style and traces of his early socialisation reappear.

There are entries in which he moves away from his own war-time conditions towards 'a we,' an expression of the collective psyche: 'Мы предлагаем за счастье самую дорогую цену – жизнь. Может быть, мы уплатим эту цену, не получив ничего.' This 'we' is invariably present when he invokes patriotic feelings: 'Родина? Она стала нашей судьбой. Мы думаем о себе; это и есть мысли о родине.'⁷⁶⁵ It seems that the patriotic feeling became a source of meaning and hope to Samoilov, something he projects onto his own peers. He also appears self-conscious of coming across as over-patriotic to future generations: 'Может быть, потомки скажут, что мы нудим, что мы ригористы, что каждое наше третье слово – Россия. Что ж, лишь бы они были счастливы, как мы.'⁷⁶⁶ This entry is arguably the best evidence of Samoilov-the young man's patriotic upbringing in his being able to see his generation and its lot as happy for the chance to put their patriotism to real use.

The durability of his upbringing is also seen from coming face to face with the egoistic survival instincts of others. Samoilov experiences a crude awakening as to the negative sides of human nature. On 27 August 1942, Samoilov describes an episode of unfair sharing when he gave all he had, while others saved some food

⁷⁶³ Ibid., p. 151. 13 August 1942.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 152. 23 August 1942.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 151-152. 16 August 1942.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 158. 11 June 1943.

for themselves. ('Мне грустно. Но люди остаются людьми.') Yet within the same entry, he 'talks himself into' the familiar optimistic position:

Нет, я не сдамся, не скисну, не потеряю веру в тот мир,
за который пришел сюда! «Горе нам, -- говорили мечтатели
прошлых времен, -- ведь мир противоречит нашей мечте!»
«Горе тому миру, -- говорят люди сорокового года. –
Горе тому миру, который противоречит нашей мечте!»⁷⁶⁷

It is in his generation and their active position as builders of the world, in contrast to those dreamers that lived before, that Samoilov derives this optimistic view. He is a true Soviet soldier-citizen that has conquered his initial fear: 'А между тем я полон планов и уверен в себе как никогда. Я, рядовой солдат, серая шинель, чувствую себя гениальным. Это ли не социализм?'⁷⁶⁸ Here socialism for Samoilov is a state of confidence in himself and his values, more importantly, it is a type of feeling ('chuvstvuyu').

Young Samoilov is less aware of the traces of the state sponsored appeal to emotions in his upbringing through literature teaching, nevertheless present in his philosophising. He merges thoughts and feelings into one category and confirms the importance of feelings and emotionality, as emphasised in school: 'Мысль или чувство – что выше? [...]Чувство поднимает мысль, дает ей размах и силу. Мысль превращает чувство в творческую энергию.'⁷⁶⁹ Significantly, not only is emotion fused with thought in Samoilov's understanding of the role of emotions in art, but 'political passion' is also an inherent part of the artistic process: 'Искусство [...] вдруг ощутило простор творческой свободы

⁷⁶⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 153. 27 August 1942.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 157. 16 December 1942.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 168. 6 July 1943.

творческой свободы, энергию, *политическую* страсть' (my italics).⁷⁷⁰ At this stage, art and politics are inevitably connected, which is the result of his literary studies in school, especially of the legacy of the radical democrats that would be transformed later on.

g. Transition: From State Service To Civic Duty (1948-1989)

The real test of Samoilov's ideals did not come from the life threatening war but through the Soviet state's deviations from its own revolutionary policies. At first, Samolov attempted to justify the return to pre-revolutionary structures, which, unlike some other Soviet citizens (and some historians), he interpreted not as a retreat, but a step forward:

Обращение к традиции (кадетские корпуса, офицеры, гвардия, женские и мужские школы и т.д.) означает не регресс, а вступление нашего государства в пору зрелости, в классический этап развития. Уже нет нужды в пышном отрицании. Мы и так слишком мало традициональны.⁷⁷¹

But in another entry, he sounds surprised at some of these moves. The 1943 Concordat with the Russian Orthodox Church awakened his particular suspicions. 'Совещаются с митрополитами, награждают митрополитов. Что это? Мы признали силу церкви или хотим сделать ее силой?'⁷⁷²

Close to the end of the war, however, an unexpected thought that the state is self-interested appears: 'Государство и корысть нераздельны. Государство – это форма, в которую облачается корысть.'⁷⁷³ It is hard to tell what the cause of

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 168. 6 July 1943.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid., p. 178. 3 September 1943.

⁷⁷² Ibid., p. 189. 17 October 1943.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., p. 211. 20 February 1945.

this entry was. Soon afterwards Samoilov articulated a range of views in which he expressed conviction that contemporary writers must follow the line of the CC: 'Как всегда, литература отстала от политики. Решение ЦК спасает литературу от провинциального прозябания. Генеральный путь литературы – широкие страсти.'⁷⁷⁴ To comply with the political line, he planned to write a work of literature that would uplift the spirit of the generation.⁷⁷⁵ Whether he was projecting his own doubts and scepticism on to his coevals, or had actually encountered other doubters and sceptics after the war, is not of primary importance here. He was still at the service of the state in his desire to create a poem that would put things into the right Soviet perspective.

It was around this period that Boris Slutskii criticised Samoilov's poetry on the grounds of its tendentiousness. Samoilov disagreed with him: 'Просто моя государственная тенденция выражается во мне гораздо яснее и активная сторона поэзии стоит на первом плане.'⁷⁷⁶ (Samoilov's turn to criticise Slutskii for 'retrospective pathos' would come much later, in 1964, when Samoilov's ideas on literature and the state's role in guiding it had drastically changed: 'Потуги Слуцкого и его ретроспективный пафос – скучны и жалковаты.'⁷⁷⁷)

In 1948, Samoilov continued to believe in art's duty to serve the state.⁷⁷⁸ In retrospect, he would say that it was in this year that he underwent a

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 232. 28 August 1946.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 231. 20 August 1946.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 233. 12 September 1946.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 361. 25 October 1964.

⁷⁷⁸ 'Перечитывал стенограммы съезды писателей. Это документ первостепенного интереса. «Попутнический» дух еще сильно веял в то время. Когда-то мне казалось это

transformation and awakening as to the suffocating role of the state in literary affairs.⁷⁷⁹ Upon careful reading, indeed, that year, 1948, has a few sobering entries. Samoilov complained that literature had become a nomenclature profession of sorts, that authors were given prescriptions to the tiniest details, including rhymes and meters. Anybody who dared to ignore the rules was called the author of non-literature ('«все прочее», не литература'). Recording all this, Samoilov came to the conclusion that the real state of things was actually the reverse: only a free author would produce good literature.⁷⁸⁰ Apart from these entries on the contemporary constraints on art, Samoilov's political reversals would be explicitly revealed in his diaries only 9 years later, in 1957.⁷⁸¹

At this point, political disappointment brought changes in his view of the goals of literary creation and art in general. He began to question the belief that art must serve the state's goals. The precious energy of self-discovery (*samopoznanie*) had been channelled into the spheres of politics and science, making the analytical consciousness ('destructive in its essence') overpower the synthetic consciousness ('artistic and philosophical'). That is why, he concluded, the 20th century had not produced any great poetry or philosophy, the last genius being Sholokhov.⁷⁸²

интересным. Б[ухарин] хотел увести поэзию от политики, все его оговорки пустая болтовня.' *Podennye zapisi*, p. 242. 11 March 1948.

⁷⁷⁹ 'Читал повесть Л. К. «Софья Павловна»/Я прозрел в 48-м.' Не must refer to Chukovskaia's 'Sofi'ia Petrovna'. *Ibid.*, p. 303. 30 September 1962.

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 253. 20 May 1948.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 283. 16 May 1957.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*

By now, Samoilov was characteristically categorical in his denial of any positive role to politics in art: 'Политический фатум вновь погубил искусство, как некогда в пору эллинизма. [...] Политике нет дела до истины. Истиной для нее является внешняя цель, порой противоречащая внутренним законам развития человечества.'⁷⁸³ And then in the same entry his mood changes, a hope is expressed for a new era of synthesis that will certainly come, when art gets rid of analytical and scientific pretensions.⁷⁸⁴ Once again, even if his initial views on the service of art to politics drastically change, the manner in which he discusses his new opinion, categorical and optimistic, preserves his early schooling: 'Это искусство выйдет за рамки «науки» и «традиции», двух призраков, которыми политика задурманивает голову людям художественного труда.'⁷⁸⁵

In 1964, Samoilov found a confirmation of this prophecy in Solzhenitsyn's work⁷⁸⁶ This literature neither served the state nor pretended to fight against it. Solzhenitsyn's writings came from a period, Samoilov specifies, to which he himself belonged or would like to belong, that is above state service or rejection of the state: 'Это литература, преодолевшая разочарование человека в формах общественной организации и поэтому психологически независимая от политической возни и не страшущаяся угнетения, не угнетенная.'⁷⁸⁷ This literature, concludes Samoilov, affirms the eternal moral

⁷⁸³ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 283. 16 May 1957.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 284. 16 May 1957.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 284. 16 May 1957.

⁷⁸⁶ Samoilov had referred to Solzhenitsyn previously (for instance, on 29 December 1962, *Podennye zapisi*, p. 318). This last entry may have been written after *Matryona's Place*, published in *Novyi mir* in the end of 1963.

⁷⁸⁷ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 351. 8 February 1964.

order over the temporary and social: 'Вечные начала нравственности и познания, заложенные в нем, сильнее, чем временность его общественных условий.'⁷⁸⁸ Alongside his altered view of the relation between politics and literature, Samoilov's attitude to the 19th-century literary hero had changed. The meaning of duty was now civic duty, rather than duty to the state.

Samoilov proved loyal to the idea of civic service both in poetry ('чувства добрые' [...] надо пробуждать', he wrote, echoing Pushkin's 'Ja pamiatnik sebe vozdvig')⁷⁸⁹ and more generally in society, when he invoked his entire generation's 'sense of civic duty':

Исторический опыт нашего поколения огромен. Идея нравственного усовершенствования и духовной независимости выстрадана нами. Особенность этой идеи в нас состоит в том, что мы не утратили *чувства гражданских обязанностей*.⁷⁹⁰ (my italics)

Thus, at the height of the second wave of de-Stalinisation, Samoilov characterised his generation as having broken free ('spiritual independence') from the political indoctrination, yet preserving the central value of the Russian 19th-century intelligentsia. This value, however, was propagated by the state in the 1930s and was in line with the literary teachings of the 1930s.

In later entries, Samoilov retrospectively explores what had inspired him and his poet-friends in their attitude towards poetic service to the state:

Идею слияния поэзии с властью не мы придумали. Она перешла к нам от старших. *Такова была атмосфера, в которой*

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 352. 8 February 1964.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 350. 31 January 1964.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 340. 6 October 1963.

*мы росли, такова была традиция Маяковского, которому мы верили.*⁷⁹¹ (my italics)

Samoilov draws a connecting line between the pre-revolutionary tradition of Russian classical poetry (at least, through the lens of the radical democrats) and that of Maiakovskii. He argues that the rapport between poetry and state power was known in Russia before the Soviet epoch and clarifies his use of the word 'tradition' applied to Maiakovskii. He explains how the young people from his poetic circle reconciled the perceptible contradiction between revolutionary ideals and anti-revolutionary authoritative and nationalist tendencies in the state's policies: 'Идея различия нравственных норм тактики и стратегии принималась всеми нами. В Слуцком она глубоко и надолго засела.'⁷⁹² Thus even if he did undergo a change in perspective as to the role of politics in literature, civic aspirations in poetry and life, the sense of civic duty, would remain important to him.

Samoilov does not give up entirely on the idea of literature and art's service to society or switch to 'the art for art's sake' persuasion. It is now not the political sphere, but the sphere of morals, to which he assigns art's service: 'В морале должно быть *высокое* (original emphasis).'⁷⁹³ Six years after this entry, he records a meeting with poets Joseph Brodskii and Anatolii Naiman, both from a significantly younger generation. Samoilov admits to his diary that Brodskii is a great poet, yet alien to his own views. Brodskii is an egocentric and superhuman type of poet that flees from 'clarity of moral order.'⁷⁹⁴ Samoilov finds Brodskii's

⁷⁹¹ *Pamiatnye zapiski (sbornik)*, p. 200. [1987-1989].

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*

⁷⁹³ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 287. 4 June 1957.

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 343. 30 November 1963.

idea that the irrational expressed in poetry is born in the consciousness of a poet dangerous, since it comes down to poetry having nothing to do with moral order.

To Samoilov the two realms – poetic and moral – are not one and the same but intricately intertwined. To deny this connection is ungrateful, writes Samoilov: 'Но отрицание связи между ними – та же степень неблагодарности, как отрицание связи между солнцем и светом, хотя понятие последнего гораздо шире и «всеобщее», чем понятие солнца.'⁷⁹⁵ The source of Samoilov's beliefs as to the connection between poetry and the moral realm comes as a surprising reversal of his views as a young man: Samoilov places the source in 19th century literature and the old intelligentsia, his family, who managed to preserve and pass on these notions.⁷⁹⁶ And at this stage, he feels the need to re-evaluate his own self, including through diary writing.

h. Moral Ideals vs Political Ideas (1960s-1989)

In his 'search for himself' through memoir writing,⁷⁹⁷ Samoilov contemplates the roots of moral beliefs of his own generation and traces their ideology of romantic revolutionism back to the Decembrists. When looking for the very roots of the pre-revolutionary generations that preserved a moral codex and represented a

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁶ The reversal is hardly surprising, in the 1930s Samoilov internalised what Katerina Clark explains as the state legitimisation efforts through texts – propagation of the values of the 19th-century intelligentsia, with literature at its heart. Clark, 'The King Is Dead, Long Live the King', pp. 6-7.

⁷⁹⁷ '«Для чего это воспоминание? — вновь настойчиво спрашиваю я себя. — Для чего эта память, так настоятельно требующая излияния чернил на бумагу?» [...] главная мысль моя, главная цель — воссоздание собственного «я», исследование его опыта и через опыт возвращение к самому себе. Воссоздать собственное «я» и взглянуть на него со стороны.' *Perebiraia nashi daty*, pp. 29-30. Late 1970s – early 1980s, according to Galina Medvedeva, 'O sostave', *Pamiatnye zapiski (sobranie)*, 2014, pp. 689-699 (p. 690).

'highly moral type', Samoilov draws an unbroken line back to the events of 1925, the Decembrists, in a manner of a former Soviet schoolboy. He compares the Decembrists with the historical type of Soviet dissidents:

Декабристское дело оказалось выше поражения. Именно после него сформировался высокий, образцовый для России нравственный тип. Диссиденты такого типа не создали.

Декабристы оказались после Сенатской, где они были людьми порыва и мечтания, людьми дела, людьми просвещения. [...]

Декабризм оказался неповторим.⁷⁹⁸ (my italics)

One would expect Samoilov to echo the classics in his description of the Decembrists (Odoevskii, P. V. Annenkov, and Belinskii), but what is more interesting to note is his view that the Decembrists truly lived up to their ideals in Siberia.

What makes Samoilov envious of the Decembrists is that they had a chance to prove their emotional commitment to ideals in action, including through suffering for them. Soviet dissidents of the post-Stalin period did not enjoy the historical luxury, as Samoilov sees it, of implementing their ideals in reality. In constituting this difference between the Decembrists and the dissidents of his own generation, once again he reveals his long-term commitment to the romantic ideals instilled during his school years.

⁷⁹⁸ *Perebiraia nashi daty*, pp. 481-482. 25 May 1981.

The older Samoilov was more aware of the affective education at school. In 1979, Samoilov described his own generation as sentimental and suggested that they were deliberately educated to be so:

В нас есть десятилетиями воспитанный сентиментализм, мешающий все жестко додумать до конца, до голой схемы./ Наверное, до поры до времени правящему слою невыгодно, чтобы в любую сторону было додумано до конца.⁷⁹⁹

Thus Samoilov juxtaposes the sentimentalism of his own generation and an abstract rationalism that enables one to see through the political manipulations. He considers such sentimentalism to be the desired outcome of Soviet pedagogical efforts. Yet, at the same time, he indirectly praises some welcome side-effects of the Soviet emotional upbringing, when he speaks of his grandfather's traits of character, 'inherited' by him to some extent: 'Мы все состоим из кусков самочувствия, доставшихся нам от предков. Я знаю, что досталось мне от матери, что от отца. Когда я равнодушен, я — дед.'⁸⁰⁰ Samoilov connects his grandfather's emotional cool, 'nonchalance' (although Samoilov concedes that his grandfather was not a reserved or tacit person) to his lack of interest in history, including his personal autobiography. Samoilov sees in his grandfather's lack of interest in reflecting upon the past a deficiency of historical consciousness, with its tendency to evaluate the past and experience pride, shame, or nostalgia.

'Когда я теперь о нем вспоминаю, я думаю, что, в сущности, мало знал деда. [...] он никогда не пытался ничего рассказать о себе, о своей предыстории. У него не было потребности в истории, хотя бы в своей собственной, и повествования о себе не было не от скрытности натуры или от присутствия душевной тайны. Дед, напротив, был человек открытый, бесхитростно устроенный. Он не умел говорить о себе, а

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 477. 7 March 1979.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 37. Late 1970s – early 1980s.

только о грамматике, не умел гордиться ничем другим, кроме имеющих сведений, из-за особого своего устройства, счастливого, потому что защищенного от боли проживания жизни, а по существу — бедного и недостаточного для устройства истинной личности.⁸⁰¹ (my italics)

Samoilov's assessment of this lack is remarkable: while he argues that this may have protected his grandfather from emotional suffering, he believes it to be a kind of emotional poverty in the structure of one's personality. In contrasting his generation to his grandfather's, Samoilov reveals an appreciation of the acquired traits of his own generation, in which historical consciousness ('necessity in history'), emotional vulnerability ('poignant experiencing of life'), and ideology ('pride for achievements other than one's own') are interconnected.⁸⁰² The affective education (*vospitanie chuvstv*) through literary studies was effective in prompting such an association. Even if the political convictions of the 1930s had been upturned or worn off with the passing of time, the value attached to rarefied emotions and the belief in their superiority to a state of level-headed (bland) self-control remained.

Meanwhile, Samoilov's notion about the intelligentsia evolved to a complete acceptance of an older type of intelligentsia and their value system, and his self-identification as part of a Soviet intelligentsia.

At this point, Samoilov returned to the Hugo reference, but remembered it differently. Tracing the source of his generation's radical beliefs to school and literature, he tried to distance himself from common, intolerant attitudes: 'Я,

⁸⁰¹ Ibid., p. 36. Late 1970s – early 1980s.

⁸⁰² Ibid.

несмотря на всю нетерпимость времени, был терпим. А время учило совсем другому: 'В школе шел спор о том, прав ли Симурден, убивая Говена. И большинство склонялось к тому, что прав.'⁸⁰³ Samoilov confesses to sharing most of the ideals with his peers, but also acknowledges an internalisation of the 'concepts' absorbed from his family. He discriminates between the moderate humane concepts of the intelligentsia he came from and the cruel absolute ideals of the epoch, promoted in school and the media.

Я был воспитан в понятиях умеренных и гуманных. Эти понятия как-то странно уживались с жестокими идеями времени. И все же в результате понятия оказались долговечнее идей.⁸⁰⁴

Whether he is recalling his earlier self accurately here is open to doubt. Nevertheless, the realisation, or most likely retrospective imagination, of his ability, even as a young man, to separate traditional values from doctrine was something that preoccupied Samoilov in his mature years. Retrospectively he believed these values 'outlived' the ideals.⁸⁰⁵

Samoilov changed his views on the older intelligentsia in his later years, claiming that this social stratum preserved moral notions and ideals:

Духовной миссией этого слоя оказалось сохранение понятий.

⁸⁰³ *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 108. [1980s].

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁵ In Iurii Leonidovich Kucherov's poems about his childhood, one text juxtaposes the changing matter of life with the constant to which his personal attachments belong:

Менялось многое, конечно,
В стране, и в мире, и в Москве,
Но прошлое – оно навечно
В моих погодках и во мне.
Навечно уголок столицы,
Где я родился долго жил,
Навечно голоса и лица
С кем просто знался и дружил.

The immutability of affection and affect is thus juxtaposed to the changeability of ideas and history – an unexpected long-term result of a process of indoctrination that sought to capitalise on feelings for the sake of political dogma. Iurii Kucherov, 'Stikhi o detstve', Bezrogov Collection.

И если в нашем обществе сохранились нормальные понятия о *чести, достоинстве, терпимости, труде, назначении человека*, то это результат незаметного труда наших отцов и матерей, «щипаных» интеллигентов 20-х и 30-х годов.⁸⁰⁶ (my italics)

But in reflecting on some of the reasons behind this survival of values, in his description of his milieu, his contemporaries' relation with authorities, and the mission of this 'social stratum', Samoilov, once again, demonstrates that his Soviet educational analytical habits are intact. He is thinking in terms of generations, continuity, and historical missions. The inculcated values of the 19th-century Russian intelligentsia inevitably came to the fore, upstaging communist ethics.

In another entry from his later autobiographical prose, Samoilov contrasts the Soviet *intelligentsia*, to which he feels he belongs, with the pre-revolutionary one, which, he believes, differed in important ways and was attacked in mainstream literature for its un-Soviet qualities:

Интеллигентный слой того времени был *уже, компактней, замкнутой*, с известными даже сословными амбициями, но и с замечательной традицией честности, порядочности, семейной морали, уважения к делу, сознания своей просветительской миссии, со своим кругом чтения и обязательным демократизмом и народолюбием.⁸⁰⁷ (my italics)

Remarkably, according to Samoilov, the *intelligentsia* of the past was more closely knit, more careful in socialising. He had by now become aware that his father's generation, with their own concept of honour, was deliberately distanced from his own, 'Stalin's first generation.'⁸⁰⁸ Official socialisation efforts

⁸⁰⁶ *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 108. [1980s].

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81. [1980s]

⁸⁰⁸ On the challenges of self-perception and official culture's contradictory attitude towards Stalin's first generation see Anna Krylova, 'Identity, Agency, and the "First Soviet Generation"', in *Generations in Twentieth-Century Europe*, edited by Stephen Lovell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 101-121.

had attempted to weaken the impact of upbringing by this older *intelligentsia*.⁸⁰⁹

Yet at the same time, the official course offered a version of older values in literature, values that were shared with their peers.

In 1962 Samoilov records an entry describing his visit to Marshak. The visit was warm and satisfactory, they discussed many topics and found many ideas in common. Characteristically, Samoilov feels pleasantly surprised at sharing the worldview of his older interlocutor, as was the case in this meeting: ‘...я подивился сходству наших понятий. Это сходство было так приятно нам обоим, что не хотелось расставаться, и возникло ощущение доброй теплоты.’⁸¹⁰ The pleasure derived from sharing a worldview is typical of his generation.⁸¹¹ This entry reveals the source of common (to both Marshak and Samoilov) beliefs about the connection between literature and moral order – ‘пушкинское начало прошлого века, когда было общество и идеей литературы была честь. Потом пришла идея совести у Толстого и Достоевского, т.е. дисгармония, разлад и длинноты’ (my italics).⁸¹² Samoilov held that his generation absorbed this moral order through literature, and he especially highlighted Tolstoi and Blok.⁸¹³ Samoilov also considered that his peers’ historical experience allowed them to confirm the importance of

⁸⁰⁹ Irina Paperno notices that to memoirists the ‘intimate circles of like-minded friends and the visionary community of the “Russian intelligentsia”’ ‘seems more important to their identity and authorship than the family’. Irina Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 41.

⁸¹⁰ *Podennye zapisi*, p. 316. 23 December 1962.

⁸¹¹ P. 252. Also see Konstantin Bogdanov’s discussion of communities that seek mutual understanding and collective solidarity in his article ‘Otkrytye serdtsa, zakrytye granitsy: o ritorike vostorga i bespredel’nosti vzaimoponimaniia’, *Nlo* 100 (2009), 136-155.

⁸¹² *Podennye zapisi*, p. 316. 23 December 1962.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 355. 3 April 1964.

independent thought and moral self-perfection, and that the civic duty inculcated into them had much to do with this.⁸¹⁴

It is important to note that the mature Samoilov's exoneration of his own generation was akin to a Soviet classroom analysis of a superfluous man: the hero was not to blame in a final sense, and should not be harshly judged, since his choices were limited by the historical circumstances.⁸¹⁵ There was a big difference, nevertheless, in the emotional attitude of Samoilov's generation – 'the prisoners of the historical lot' have fully embraced it.⁸¹⁶

Умники того времени гордятся тем, что уже тогда все понимали. А они не понимали одного и самого главного: что назначение нашего поколения – воевать и умирать за нашу *действительность*, что иного исторического выбора у нас нет, что для многих это и будет главным назначением жизни. [...] На деле у нас не было чувства фатальной обреченности, мы были веселыми и здоровыми молодыми людьми. Но не пришлось еще прилагать наши схемы на практике.⁸¹⁷ (my italics)

To fight and die for their 'actuality' was the role reserved to Samoilov's generation. Despite the fact that Samoilov and his peers faced a tragic lot, at the time these boys did not feel fatalistic about the upcoming war and their mood was generally happy.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁴ Ibid., p. 340. 6 October 1963.

⁸¹⁵ Rufus Mathewson underlined that the superfluous hero did not represent retrogressive values, but was a victim of such. Rufus W. Mathewson, 'The Soviet Hero and the Literary Heritage', *American Slavic and East European Review* 12:4 (1953), 506-523 (p. 509).

⁸¹⁶ I refer to the title of Juliane Fürst's article, in which she demonstrates how young people of the late Stalinist period could only express their dissidence within the Soviet theoretical framework, Juliane Fürst, 'Prisoners of the Soviet Self?: Political Youth Opposition in Late Stalinism', *Europe-Asia Studies* 54:3 (2002), 353-375.

⁸¹⁷ *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 156. [1987-1989], according to Galina Medvedeva, 'O sostave', *Pamiatnye zapiski (sobranie)*, 2014, pp. 689-699 (p. 690).

⁸¹⁸ G. S. Smith writes in his introduction to Slutskii's poetry: 'Male Russians born within five years on either side of 1917 were more likely to meet a premature death than other generations in modern European history. Paradoxically, a larger proportion of the intellectuals among them seem to have grown up as convinced optimists and idealists than at any other time. Boris Slutsky

Samoilov also admits that his generation's ('our') worldview was weak and false and crumbled with time, yet he paradoxically feels certain that it was 'honest':

Трудно писать про это, потому что тогдашнее наше мировоззрение оказалось во многом слабым, ложным и постепенно распалось.

Но твердо могу сказать, что оно было *честным мировоззрением* и отнюдь не исчерпывалось идеей служения искусства власти.

[...]

И ощущение эпохи у нас было. Тут уж я могу сказать, что оно компенсировало неполноту или неточность помыслов. Оно не было заблуждением.⁸¹⁹ (my italics)

In his peers' sincere political and philosophical search, he finds the central meaning of the epoch. The emphasis on feeling is important. He believes that their worldview, channelled into poetic endeavour, was more than mere servitude to the authorities; it must have had some honest principles at its core. Importantly, what justified their honest 'worldview' was the 'feeling of the epoch' (an emotional and intuitive understanding of the unique historical events, perhaps?) that compensated for the lack of ideological clarity and could not be considered 'a mistake.' No, to him this 'feeling of the epoch' had its own truth, and thus it retained its value.⁸²⁰ Elsewhere Samoilov insists that those to whom ideology was not empty words 'matter' more than those who knew it to be based on lies:

[sic], *Things That Happened*, edited and translated by Gerald Stanton Smith (Moscow, Birmingham: Glas, 1999), p. 1.

⁸¹⁹ *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 156. [1987-1989].

⁸²⁰ Perhaps here Samoilov hints at Ushakov's dictionary's sense of the word *prochuvstvovat'* (on the normative nature of this dictionary see p. 301): '1st: Понять чувством, проникнуть чувством в смысл чего-нибудь.' *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo iazyka v 4 tomakh*, edited by D. N. Ushakov, 4 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarei, 1939), vol. 3, column 1045. If the ideology was believed in this way, these feelings could not be erroneous or dishonest, for feelings cannot be mistaken, only misplaced.

Но дело-то не в том, что идеология была ложной и бессодержательной для идеологов, -- она была реальной и содержательной для нас.

К примеру -- если даже интернационализм к 30-м годам стал псевдонимом сталинского державного эгоизма, то *в нас он оставался чистым элементом воспитания и реальным взглядом на проблемы взаимоотношений наций*: неважно, что его нет в недрах официальной идеологии, важно, что он *остался* признаком идеологии моего поколения, его мыслящей части.

Важны не те, для кого идеи были ложью, а те, для кого они были правдой.⁸²¹ (my italics)

In this defence, Samoilov is a student of his times – emotional and loyal to his peers. He also raises the important point that, although the continuity of ideology from the Decembrists to the Stalinist epoch proved to be artificial and the two differed drastically, it is through the exposure to the Decembrists tradition in Russian classical literature and radical critics' theory —in essence, through thorough attempts at indoctrination — that the former recipients of indoctrination could reinstate the validity of a more durable moral type and recognise (or remember) the alternative voices from their childhood and the legacy of the pre-revolutionary *intelligentsia*. The *pathos* (in the sense of emotional stimulation) that accompanied their indoctrination left a permanent mark that is channelled elsewhere – into the strength of commitment to a moral order cleansed of ideology, to peers, and to Russian classical literature.

Samoilov's aesthetic position is also significant as it contains traces of his appreciation of *pathos* as a rhetorical concept. Thus Samoilov, who also preserved the secondary school's programmes' penchant towards generalisation, took issue with Mikhail Epshtein, the much younger literary

⁸²¹ 'O real'nosti nashei iunesheskoj ideologii', in *Pamiatnye zapiski (sbornik)*, 2014, p. 428. Short 'essays' like this one were essentially notes on the margins of *Pamiatnye zapiski*, hence written between the late 1960s and 1990.

critic, about the ineptness of Russian longing – defending the latter as a *pathos*-embued motif in Russian literature and nation in general. In 1988, Samoilov symptomatically presented this feeling as fruitful:

Литературовед М. Эпштейн (весьма неглупый) судит в своем снобизме русскую литературу и русскую нацию за бесплодность тоски. Тоска эта по высшему, что и отличает русских от наций, лишенных тоски. Эта тоска становится бескорыстным, бесстрашным действием в грозные часы русской истории. Тогда она победительна, победна. Русская тоска — тоска по свободе в вечной несвободе, к которой могла бы привыкнуть любая другая нация, кроме русских и испанцев.⁸²²

The exceptionalism of the Spanish and the Russians expressed by Samoilov could go back to the pre-war years, when Samoilov could have absorbed the Soviet press's emphasis on the Spanish republic's ardent hate of fascism being equal to that one felt by the Russians.⁸²³ The difference between Samoilov and Epshtein's views perhaps lies in their different generations' evaluations of *ethos* or *pathos* in terms of the productivity of these two different means of persuasion, an evaluation which in the end could come down to a simple taste for different artistic genres.⁸²⁴

⁸²² *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 491-492. 10 August 1988.

⁸²³ On 'geroicheskii ispanski narod' see *Ispaniia v bor'be protiv fashizma. Sbornik statei i materialov* (Moscow: Partizdat TsK VKP(b), 1936); V. Knorin, 'Za chto boretsia ispanski narod', *Bor'ba klassov* 10 (1936), 1-4; M. Erkoli, *Ob osobennostiakh ispanskoi revoliutsii* (Moscow: Partizdat TsK VKP(b), 1936); *Geroicheskaia Ispaniia* (Moscow: Partizdat TsK VKP(b), 1936); Dolores Ibarruri (Passionariia), *Fashisty ne proidut!* (Moscow: Partizdat TsK VKP(b), 1936); *My s vami. Sbornik, posviashchennyi geroicheskoi bor'be ispanskogo naroda* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1936); T. Korradov, 'Dvadtsat' let bor'by za mir', *Istoriik-marksist* 4:62 (1937), 62-80; K. Marks i F. Engel's, *Revoliutsiia v Ispanii. Stat'i i korrespondentsii (1854-1873)* (Moscow: Partizdat TsK VKP(b), 1937) among many others. The trend to highlight Spanish 'zhazhda svobody, zhazhda kul'tury, zhazhda spravedlivosti' and 'narodnyi bunt' continued for several decades. Kh. Garsiia, 'Stat'i. Bor'ba rabocheho klassa Ispanii v zashchitu respubliky, protiv fashistskoi ugrozy (1931-1934)', *Voprosy istorii* 8 (1953), 57-73 (p. 57); D. E. Kunina, 'Mezhdunarodnaia konferentsiia po istorii dvizheniia soprotivleniia', *Voprosy istorii* 12 (1962), 186-191.

⁸²⁴ The classical scholar Aleksei Losev in his entry in a Soviet philosophical encyclopaedia defines *pathos* as 'a rarefied psychic state', which is traced to the classical aesthetics where this rather painful and anxious mental state is opposed to *ethos*, the morally stable character: A. F. Losev, 'Pafos', in *Filosofskaia entsiklopediia*, edited by F. V. Konstantinov, 5 vols (Moscow: Sovetskaia

Yet if *ethos* could be conceived as a balance from which a clear thinking and effective action originate, then an excessive emphasis on *pathos* as the source of the energy for righteous rather than rational action would invariably produce a 'histrionically gifted' culture, but also one that could be 'histrionically' committed to the assertion of political dogma.⁸²⁵ If the latter perishes, the released force from the commitment to dogma shifts elsewhere – to the emotional attachment to the vehicles of such indoctrination, for example Russian literature and history, co-sufferers of indoctrination, one's peers, or the moral ideals cleansed of political connotation. As the evidence from memoirs suggests, this is precisely the process that did come about.

i. Conclusion

Samoilov's analytical habits, developed during his adolescence in the literary classroom, proved remarkably tenacious. In his later intellectually sophisticated reflection on his own past, Samoilov nevertheless exhibited traits of the familiar discourse highlighting social types. Samoilov's descriptions of the social strata of the 1920s and -30s were generally refined examples of adult intellectual analysis, but they contained traces of the school's history of literature course, from which he never explicitly distanced himself. Also significant was the older Samoilov's awareness of the continuity of social types, their historical legacies and destinies ('нравственную преемственность русских поколений').⁸²⁶ With hindsight, Samoilov could recognise the Great Turn of the Stalinist epoch he

entsiklopediia, 1960—1970) < http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc_philosophy/2959/ПАФОС > [consulted on 25 May 2013].

⁸²⁵ On the self-dramatization of this histrionically gifted nation see Ronald Hingley, *The Russian Mind* (London: Bodley Head, 1977), p. 71.

⁸²⁶ *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 26. Late 1970s-1980s.

witnessed as an adolescent, while at the same time revealing himself as the (in some respects) uncritical recipient of a Stalinist literary education.⁸²⁷

In the later part of his life, Samoilov, initially seduced by the Soviet vilification of intelligentsia identity, claimed a strong commitment to the more traditional values of the older generation (those passed on through the Russian classics) in the later part of his life. Exposure to this literature in combination with the high susceptibility to fictional and fictionalised models inculcated by literary teaching methods, contributed to the continuity of the 19th-century values and social behaviour among members of the Soviet intelligentsia like Samoilov. The writer himself clearly identified Russian classics as a source of these values and behaviour patterns.

Nevertheless, his later attribution of the survival of these values purely to his family raises the question whether it is possible to generalise about Russian classics' and literature study's impact on the Soviet recipients of the course who grew up without live examples of pre-revolutionary intelligentsia among them, that is to say without intelligentsia heritage.⁸²⁸ This question will be addressed

⁸²⁷ For example, literary programmes contained a set of ideological conclusions to help teachers summarise their lessons. *Programmy srednei shkoly, Literatura VIII-X klassy* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1939), pp. 29-33.

⁸²⁸ I would like to thank Professor Andrei Zorin for the suggestion that children who were *potomstvennye intelligenty* (Jewish or not) were officially forbidden by state policies to indulge in their heritage and replaced family history by interest in national heritage; egalitarianism was one of the illusions of the pre-war Soviet state; hence this type of education was available for (and perhaps aimed at) the children of older intelligentsia. I agree with Professor Zorin that Russian classics held a special place for these children, also guaranteed by wider access to a variety of books at home. Yet I also argue that the long-term effects on children of Samoilov's background – Korzhavin, Slutskii, Bonner – were similar to the effects on those who did not have such a pedigree, like Vishnevskaiia. The classics provided these children, at least those children who were susceptible to the teaching methods and indoctrination, fictional models of 19th-century intelligentsia.

in the next chapter, along with the issue of what the other long-term effects of the literary course may have been.

6. DURABILITY TEST: THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF SCHOOL LITERATURE TEACHING

In this last chapter I aim to assess the long-term effects of the centralised history of literature course and its methods on former students who attended upper years of Soviet secondary schools shortly before WWII, at least as far as it is possible to reconstruct these effects from memoirs, interviews, and retrospective narratives.⁸²⁹ Having addressed the most immediate effects that the literary curricula in schools had on shaping young people's subjectivity (their worldview and affective attitudes) in chapter four through the analysis of David Samoilov's, Iurii Tverdin's, Nina Kosterina's, Ul'iana Gromova's, and Georgii Efron's diaries, and having contrasted young Samoilov's retrospective views with his later comments in chapter five, in this chapter I seek to uncover the long term effects of Soviet literature instruction on the subjectivity expressed by other recipients

⁸²⁹ Elena Bonner, *Dochki-Materi* (New York, NY: Chekhov Publishing, 1991); Naum Korzhavin, *Soblaznakh krovavoi epokhi*, 2nd edition, 2 vols (Moscow: Zakharov, 2006), vol. 1; David Samoilov, *Pamiatnye zapiski* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1995); Idem, *Perebiraia nashi daty* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000); Idem, *Podennye zapisi*, 2 vols (Moscow: Vremia, 2002); Galina Vishnevskaiia, *Galina. Istoriia zhizni* (Paris: La Presse Libre et Continent, 1985); Inna Shikheeva-Gaister, 'A Family Chronicle', in *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick, Yuri Slezkine (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 367-390; Boris Slutskii, *Ia istoriiu izlagaiu...Kniga stikhotvorenii*, edited by Iurii Boldyrev (Moscow: Pravda, 1990); Idem, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, 3 vols (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1991). The life history interviews cited here and coded 'Oxf/Lev' were conducted for a project sponsored by the Leverhulme Trust under grant no. F/08736/A 'Childhood in Russia, 1890-1991: A Social and Cultural History' (2003-2006). The interviews are © The University of Oxford. The coding system consists of a project identifier, place code (St Petersburg (SPb.), Moscow (M.), Perm' (P), and Taganrog (T), and villages in Leningrad (2004) and Novgorod (2005) provinces (V)), a date code, a cassette number (PF), and a transcript page (e.g. 'Oxf/Lev SPb-03 PF8A, p. 38'). For further information about the project, see www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/russian/childhood and www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/russian/lifehistory My thanks go to the interviewers, Aleksandra Piir (St Petersburg), Yuliya Rybina and Ekaterina Shumilova (Moscow), Svetlana Sirotinina (Perm'), Yury Ryzhov and Lyubov' Terekhova (Taganrog), Oksana Filicheva, Veronika Makarova, and Ekaterina Mel'nikova (village interviews), to the project co-ordinators, Professor Al'bert Baiburin and Professor Vitaly Bezrogov, and to the project leader, Professor Catriona Kelly, for making this material available to me. Bezrogov collection includes childhood memories prompted by the Russian Academy of Education, which in 1998 published a call for a written response in *Obshchaia gazeta, Novaia gazeta, Sem'ia i shkola*. The second part of the collection comprises interviews conducted by students as part of the course on childhood taught by Professor Bezrogov who preserved both the written responses and the interviews. My thanks go to Vitalii Bezrogov for the access to these valuable manuscripts, as well as for his time and advice in regards to my project and search for primary sources.

of the course.⁸³⁰ Since Tverdin, Kosterina, Gromova, and Efron's commentaries were cut short by their deaths in the war, I attempt a reconstruction of wartime and post-war subjectivity through the addition of other former late 1930's Soviet schoolchildren's accounts of the past, namely those of Elena Bonner (1923-2011), Naum Korzhavin (1925-), Galina Vishnevskaiia (1926-2012), Inna Shikheeva-Gaister (1925-2009), and a number of autobiographical poems by Boris Slutskii (1919-1986).⁸³¹ Apart from the latter, the retrospective records and interviews I address belong to the pre-perestroika or post perestroika periods, the earliest one being Vishnevskaiia's autobiography (1985), when ideology of the Stalin era had long lost official support and alternative political ideas were in vogue. These sources reflect the ideological change.

Slutskii's writings stand apart. I quote from his poetry written between 1939-1977. Iurii Boldyrev, the editor of Slutskii's collection of verse *Ia istoriiu izlagaiu...*, underscored the unique (epico-historical) character of Slutskii's poetry in the introduction to the book.⁸³² Elsewhere Boldyrev has defined Slutskii's poetry as 'dnevnik v stikhakh' a documentary verse chronicle of the 1920s-1970s.⁸³³ I take this as license to treat his poems as reflective evidence – a retrospective evaluation of his past experience. It is important to note that Boldyrev thought that Slutskii had a change of worldview in the 1960s and

⁸³⁰ Samoilov, *Pamiatnye zapiski*; Idem, *Perebiraia nashi daty*; Idem, *Podennye zapisi*.

⁸³¹ *Dochki-Materi*; *V soblznakh krovavoi epokhi*; *Galina*; Shikheeva-Gaister, 'A Family Chronicle', in *In the Shadow of Revolution*, edited by Fitzpatrick, Slezkine.

⁸³² '[...] на протяжении всего своего творческого пути он излагал историю, но делал это не как историк, а как поэт.' *Ia istoriiu izlagaiu...*, p. 1.

⁸³³ Iurii Boldyrev, 'Introduction "Vydaiu sebja za samogo sebja..."', in Slutskii's *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, p. 20.

1970s and that it was a painful process.⁸³⁴ Significantly, Boldyrev writes that young Slutskii, unlike Samoilov, did not have to undergo the struggle against his own elitism because Slutskii grew up in a 'democratic' environment in Khar'kov and his father inculcated the sense of egalitarianism and 'duty before rights' into him.⁸³⁵ Overall, Slutskii's poems are an invaluable resource when it comes to understanding the impact that the early study of literature in school had on his generation.

The main selection criterion used for this diverse array of sources was the period when the subjects attended secondary school (the second half of the 1930s). Given my focus on the history of literature course in the upper years of secondary school, which was generally not available in rural areas, the subjects' social background is similar to Samoilov – the new metropolitan intelligentsia. As with the diaries, there is a representation of people from Jewish families in the sample that well exceeds the proportion of such individuals in the general population, which indicates the widely attested significance for the Soviet intelligentsia and intellectual values of this group.⁸³⁶

In order to begin my analysis, I proceeded to identify cases where people held memories of specific texts read in school and could recollect the meaning that such readings had for them. One of my main research questions was to establish whether their early exposure to Russian classics, within the interpretive framework of the Soviet education system, served to provide a set of alternative

⁸³⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁸³⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

⁸³⁶ See Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

values to those prescribed by Soviet culture, or, on the contrary, contrived to instil a core set of characteristically Soviet values according to which all 'alien' material was interpreted.

Secondly, I paid close attention to the way in which people's strategies of argument were shaped by their schooling, for instance, the emphasis on types in classroom discussions of literature. Although the planned instigation of intellectual and emotional qualities that endure through time is my main area of focus, I am also interested in any accidental results of the indoctrination that schoolchildren underwent and in how these manifested themselves throughout the lives of Soviet memoirists and respondents. What I do leave out is a discussion of the role of teachers.⁸³⁷ Although I dealt in passing with the mentions of teachers in diaries to illustrate my other points,⁸³⁸ and the memoirs I read do contain strikingly vivid memories of favourite teachers,⁸³⁹ the focus of this chapter is on the effects of literature teaching and methodology, to wit, of pedagogy more generally.

The findings of this chapter contribute in particular to the recent scholarly discussion by Jan Plamper on how the reading of children's literature in early Soviet Russia functioned in the process of emotional learning, notably, in the

⁸³⁷ For discussion of teachers see the book and several articles by E. Thomas Ewing. E. Thomas Ewing, *The Teachers of Stalinism: Policy, Practice, and Power in the Soviet Schools of the 1930s* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2002); Idem, 'Restoring Teachers To Their Rights: Soviet Education And The 1936 Denunciation of Pedology', *History of Education Quarterly* 41:4 (2001), 471-493. Larry E. Holmes analysed his respondents' reminiscences of their teachers in Moscow school No. 25. Larry E. Holmes, *Stalin's School: Moscow's Model School No. 25, 1931-1937* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999).

⁸³⁸ Pp. 178, 183.

⁸³⁹ For example, *Dochki-Materi*, pp. 209-210, Oxf/Lev V-04 PF 9 (A). Also see pp. 306, 329.

production of future brave soldiers.⁸⁴⁰ My findings on the effects of the type of indoctrination undertaken in the history of literature course in the late 1930s coincide with Plamper's general conclusion -- 'No socialisation of feelings – no socialism.'⁸⁴¹ In the preceding chapters I demonstrate how the Soviet state followed this policy in providing children with affective education, capitalising on literature read in a specific way. Here I look more closely at the effects.

Sheila Fitzpatrick's discussion of emotions in the 1930s has also been useful to my analysis, even if I take a different approach from hers. As Fitzpatrick demonstrates, it is possible to isolate private emotions, usually personal grief and anxieties, from official Soviet feelings, such as happiness and *vesel'e*, expressed by adults of the time.⁸⁴² I do not wish, however, to follow her example of isolating private emotions from public display or to imitate her by drawing a line between a positive type of feeling (happiness) and a negative (grief, *toska*) in regards to the pre-war emotional experiences of children. It is the intensity of experiencing these emotions that is more important to me. Fitzpatrick, for example, finds such coexistence of both emotions in Platonov's *Happy Moscow* 'striking,' but it is a widespread phenomenon.⁸⁴³ The focus of her analysis is, in any event, on evaluating the actual happy or tragic experiences behind these expressions of emotional states in order to comment on the historical eventuality of the epoch, rather than on the idiosyncrasies of emotional

⁸⁴⁰ Jan Plamper, 'Ivan's Bravery', in *Learning How to Feel: Children's Literature and the History of Emotional Socialization, 1870-1970*, edited by Ute Frevert, Pascal Eitler, Stephanie Olsen (Oxford: OUP, 2014), pp. 191-208.

⁸⁴¹ Plamper, 'Ivan's Bravery', in *Learning How to Feel: Children's Literature and the History of Emotional Socialization, 1870-1970*, edited by Frevert, Eitler, Olsen, p. 206.

⁸⁴² Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Happiness and *Toska*: An Essay in the History of Emotions in Pre-war Soviet Russia', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50:3 (2004), 357-371 (p. 365).

⁸⁴³ Fitzpatrick, 'Happiness and *Toska*', p. 368.

expression and feelings of that culture (which also contribute to its history and historiography and are far from being merely an emotional response to events).

In contrast to Fitzpatrick, I use a different dichotomy, which I find more fruitful for the study of the affective education of the period – one at the level of expressiveness. I refer to the division between calm bearing and self-possession, on the one hand, and exultation (*vostorg*) and the ‘exit from oneself’ (*vyhod vne sebia*), which are underlying elements of *pathos* as described by the contemporary propagandist film director Sergei Eisenstein, whose theory of pathos and its use in indoctrination I addressed in the Introduction to this thesis.⁸⁴⁴ In the light of his theory and the literary teaching methods employed in schools in the late 1930s, I touch upon the long-term effects of this call for emotional intensity taught at school, as constructed by both teaching methods and subject matter with political goals in mind. These effects include sentimental attachment to peers and an appreciation of such concepts as pathos (in the sense of a roused state of mind) and a structural concept connoting a sudden reversal of circumstances, *peripeteia* (*peripety*), transposed into *Weltanschauung* with a preference for emotional intensity and a high tolerance (or even expectation) of life’s vicissitudes. I argue that this preference is a result of the literary education that emphasised pathos in the upbringing method.

Significantly, Ushakov’s dictionary (1935-1940) refers twice to Belinskii, in the first and third meaning of *pathos*. (I rely on Ushakov’s dictionary as a socially significant primary source, because it was a normative rather than descriptive

⁸⁴⁴ See pp. 25-30. Also see Konstantin Bogdanov, ‘Otkrytie serdtsa, zakrytie granitsy: o ritorike vostorga i bespredel’nosti vzaimoponimaniia’, *Nlo* 100 (2009), 136-155.

source, which indicated how language *should* be used.)⁸⁴⁵ According to the quotes from Belinskii in this entry, pathos is a passionate state that is also the highest moral and spiritual (*dukhovnaia*) state of mind because of its tendency to an idea. A secondary meaning defined pathos as enthusiasm, quoting Stalin's guidance as to what exactly pathos should be inspired by or applied to – from the pathos of new construction to the pathos of mastering new technology.⁸⁴⁶ Thus the 19th-century romantic rhetorical concept acquired practical uses in the Stalinist state. In order to direct one's enthusiasm according to the newest state policy, even if only in a fourth meaning given by the dictionary – a mere appearance of enthusiasm, a Soviet citizen was supposed to be able to arouse the noble feeling easily. This habit practised in the literary classroom left peculiar effects in respondents.

In my assessment of the long term and accidental effects of guided reading in secondary school, I also follow the initial tracks laid down by Irina Paperno's study of the autobiographical writings of those who grew up in the Soviet Union, a genre which only became widely available with *glasnost'* and the improvement of publication facilities in post-Soviet Russia.⁸⁴⁷ In the life-stories she read, Paperno has seen 'a shared impulse to make private documents public' and argues that these are essentially products of an 'acute historical

⁸⁴⁵ For further discussion of the dictionary and Ushakov's awareness of the prescriptive nature of his work see Michael Waller, 'The -isms of Stalinism', *Soviet Studies* 20:2 (1968), 229-234 (pp. 229-230).

⁸⁴⁶ *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo iazyka v 4 tomakh*, edited by D. N. Ushakov, 4 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarei, 1939), vol. 3, column 71.

⁸⁴⁷ Irina Paperno, *The Stories of the Soviet Experience: Memoirs, Diaries, Dreams* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009).

consciousness.⁸⁴⁸ According to Paperno, Soviet intellectuals relied particularly on the tradition of autobiography established by Alexander Herzen, from which they inherited 'the authorial position: a historicist self-consciousness that gave meaning and value to their difficult and complex lives, turning diverse personal records into documents of potential historical significance.'⁸⁴⁹ Paperno believes, however, that 'in their relentless self-revelation' Soviet memoirists and diarists 'go far beyond their 19th-century predecessors.'⁸⁵⁰ Using the notorious trope of the 'communal apartment,'⁸⁵¹ Paperno brings forth cases of intertextuality within different memoirs, of memoirists' disagreements with one another, and of the intention to convince others with one's own version of a story. She concludes that '[w]riting and publishing memoirs helps [memoirists] to realign their selves in the face of the community' and to extend this community through writing.⁸⁵²

In her close reading of two memoirs, Paperno is also sensitive to the writers' recording of emotional responses and her overview of other life-stories allows her to highlight that some 'writings, including those by loyal Soviet subjects, focus on the formative role of emotions (fear, want, loss, patriotism), material deprivations, and bodily suffering experienced in the war of 1941–45.'⁸⁵³ Yet she is more interested in these emotions as evidence of 'trauma' and of the

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. xi-xii.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

⁸⁵¹ Samoïlov writes: 'Дети коммунальных квартир — одно из названий нашего поколения.' *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 19-20; Tat'iana Derviz mentions the influence of *kommunalka* on a Soviet person. Tat'iana Derviz 'Riadam s bol'shoi istoriei: ocherki chastoi zhizni serediny XX veka', *Zvezda* 10, 2008 < <http://magazines.russ.ru/zvezda/2008/9/de10.html> > [accessed 31 December 2014]; Cf. Ol'ga Zhigar'kova 'Beseda s Alloi Andreevoi. Detstvo', *My i mir* 2 (2001) < <http://www.gazetamim.ru/mirror/interview/andreeva1.htm> > [accessed 18 July 2015]. For a discussion of communal apartments see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp. 47-50.

⁸⁵² *The Stories of the Soviet Experience*, p. 29.

⁸⁵³ Ibid., p. 24.

'emotional economy of duplicity' that, according to her, informed the Soviet 'sense of self', and does not question the intensity and appropriateness of the emotions described. While Paperno's analysis is sprinkled with such words as 'a need', 'an urge', 'an impulse' to record, she treats the writers' emotions (empathy, hatred, loyalties to intimate friends or disloyalties to lovers) as natural reactions to life's eventualities,⁸⁵⁴ thus taking for granted these emotions' significant role (along with the historical consciousness) in contributing to the very existence of these life-writings. Through my own study of similar primary sources, I found that there were several key questions that Paperno's analysis had failed to properly address: did these intense feelings contribute to the drive behind 'relentless revelations'? could they be an inherent part of the writers' 'historical consciousness' acquired in childhood? Thus, although my overall purpose is different, namely to assess the long term effects of the methods of teaching literature, this chapter incidentally adds to Paperno's examples of Soviet historical consciousness as expressed in memoirs by drawing a tighter connection between such consciousness and emotions instigated in Soviet childhood. It may also shed more light on the reasons behind the abundance of Soviet biographic records.

a. Texts Remembered and Their Resonance

Looking back to her school years, Inna Shikheeva-Gaister testifies to having read 'voraciously and indiscriminately: Turgenev, Gogol, Pushkin, Balzac, Zola, Pushkin's prose [...] not only the classics, however, but all kinds of trash as

⁸⁵⁴ Paperno does mention the role of the state in eliciting emotional reactions, saying that 'the state reached through TV and tapped into the heart-felt, painful' feelings of adults. Ibid., p. 146.

well.⁸⁵⁵ By 'trash' she refers to Soviet novels popular among her classmates, yet her realisation that such novels were 'complete rubbish' was a retrospective one, while the classics she mentions were all part of the school's literary curriculum, familiar to those who went through Soviet secondary schooling of the 1930s.⁸⁵⁶ It is possible that a superficial study of classics in school would also evolve into a more mature appreciation; in adulthood the former students could identify with them on an intellectual and emotional level, whereas in childhood they would merely enjoy fiction because of the influence of their peers.⁸⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the majority of respondents attest to having read a great deal in their childhood, and city-dwellers had often read more widely than the school's literary canon.⁸⁵⁸ There are also exceptional examples of well-read respondents from families in the rural intelligentsia, as recorded by an anonymous respondent born in 1923 who testifies to having had access to a large library, despite being schooled in a country area in the Urals.⁸⁵⁹ Characteristically of former Soviet schoolchildren, this respondent claims that her grandfather's library contained editions of all the classics, with the word 'all' most likely implying everything in the Soviet school

⁸⁵⁵ Inna Shikheeva-Gaister, 'A Family Chronicle', in *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, edited by Fitzpatrick, Slezkine, p. 370.

⁸⁵⁶ For an analysis on the reception of Russian classical and Soviet literature see Maurice Friedberg's article that relies on 329 interviews of Harvard University's Russian Research Centre conducted in 1950-1951 and provides an interesting account of Soviet readers' attitude to the literature available to them in the Soviet Union before the war and their emigration. Friedberg remarks that Russian classics comprised by far the most popular category, with Pushkin and Tolstoi at the top, while Dostoevskii was seen as the most polemical author. Maurice Friedberg, 'Russian Writers and Soviet Readers', *American Slavic and East European Review* 14:1 (1955), 108-121 (pp. 111-112).

⁸⁵⁷ For example, Vinshnevskaiia remembers re-reading Turgenev as an adult. *Galina*, p. 81.

⁸⁵⁸ This is especially the case of Samoilov, Bonner, Slutskii. Maurice Friedberg also discovers that the reading of Soviet adults shortly before WWII included books forbidden in the Soviet Union, Friedberg, 'Russian Writers and Soviet Readers', p. 109, footnote 4. Despite Narkompros' efforts to supply school editions to village libraries, the availability of texts in rural areas was limited at best. Significantly, some respondents who went to school in a rural area have better recollections of studying poetry and could quote extensively from classics. Interviews with Mariia Ivanova (1929), 5 August 2013, Tatsinskii; Liudmila Paraponova (1936), 10 January 2013, Tatsinskii, Russia.

⁸⁵⁹ Oxf/Lev V-04 PF 9 (A). The respondent's grandfather was a village schoolteacher before the revolution of 1917 and had a two-storey house.

literary canon.⁸⁶⁰ Another pupil from a small town, Valentina Vladimirovna Kalinina, born in 1923, highlights that most teachers at her school were exiles from Moscow and St Petersburg, who had a metropolitan-quality education to transmit to their wards.⁸⁶¹ Kalinina remembers having read books by Gogol', Jules Verne, and the popular early twentieth-century author of fiction for girls, Charskaia ('книги ходили из рук в руки').⁸⁶² Yet, a more important aspect than the availability of books — or lack thereof — in the rural areas is highlighted in Shikheeva-Gaister's comment about her peers: 'We all loved to read'.⁸⁶³

The love of reading is reiterated by an Oxf/Lev informant born in 1925 who grew up in a rural area near Novgorod:

Больше всего литературу читали. Я эти книги, вот и счас ребятам говорю: «Ребята, читайте вы классику!» Ведь классика – Лев Толстой, верно? Чехов, Некрасов, Крылов... возьмите басни Крылова: они и счас живые, верно? [...] Они никогда не умрут. [...] На чердак, мы летом спали на чердаке или на сеновалах. И все равно, пока свет вот так, с этой книжкой все время и сидишь. Мы научились больше не как школа, а больше мы от литературы научились. Там же всё описано, жизнь, всё!⁸⁶⁴

The projection of 'we' on to her generation is characteristic. Striking too is the way in which the respondent is revealed to be a recipient of Soviet literary instruction, with its emphasis on 'living imagery' and on the inherent connection

⁸⁶⁰ Friedberg seemed surprised at a 32-year-old engineer knowing the 14-line iambic stanza of *Onegin* and expressing enthusiasm about the fact that Pushkin never deviates from the meter, as well as at some interviewers' claim to have read 'all the classics.' These answers clearly show that the respondents' schooling provided them with literary facts and the illusion that secondary school literary curricula covered 'all the classics.' Friedberg, 'Russian Writers and Soviet Readers', p. 111. Significant also is the American scholar's incredulity at some semi-literate respondents who claimed to have read Tolstoi (Ibid., footnote 11 on p. 12). Interpreted as the desire to impress on behalf of the respondents, the claim could simply point to the lack of understanding what 'having read' implied in the context of Soviet literary instruction.

⁸⁶¹ Valentina Vladimirovna Kalinina (born 1923), Bezrogov Collection, p. 24.

⁸⁶² Kalinina, p. 25

⁸⁶³ Shikheeva-Gaister, 'A Family Chronicle', *In the Shadow of Revolution*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick, Yuri Slezkine, p. 370.

⁸⁶⁴ Oxf/Lev SPb-05 PF 16 (A).

between a classic work and actual life.⁸⁶⁵ What clearly unites both city and rural Soviet school education is the method of teaching literature promoted in schools at the time.⁸⁶⁶ The method repeatedly emphasised the relevance that the literary works chosen for study had to students' lives.

What, in practice, did this mean for teenagers? Galina Vishnevskaja, born 1926, provides an answer in her memoirs. At one point she exclaims: 'И какая все это у Пушкина правда!'⁸⁶⁷ Vishnevskaja describes the process in which this sense of 'truthfulness' and literature's proximity to life came about – her first unfortunate love story *à la Onegin*. Fascinated with both Pushkin's lyrics and Chaikovskii's opera, the young girl follows in Tatiana's footsteps in choosing the object of her affection: strikingly different from other boys in both dress and behaviour and, most importantly, remaining indifferent to her affections. Young Vishnevskaja writes him a love letter, almost an exact replica of Tatiana's, and having received no response from her 'own Onegin', young Galina suffers fervently this self-inflicted rejection, which nevertheless enabled her older self to confirm, many years later, that Pushkin had indeed written truthfully, as though referring to some objective process of substantiation. Fifty years later, she assigns a life-turning quality to this episode:

Эта встреча с великим поэтом и с Чайковским – великим композитором – навсегда решила мою судьбу. Из моей реальной жизни, до предела начиненной картинами пьянства, неприкрытой ложью и трескучими маршами, я вдруг унеслась в иной, доселе неведомый и недоступный мне мир красоты,

⁸⁶⁵ Pp. 77, 86.

⁸⁶⁶ Even if I focus mostly on the effects of history of literature course for upper years in well-supplied city schools, the method's effects are also applicable to children who grew up and went to school in villages, as the analysis of selective interviews confirms.

⁸⁶⁷ *Galina*, pp. 30-32.

волшебных звуков, неземной чистоты. И обратно уже никогда не возвращалась.⁸⁶⁸

Vishnevskaiia's testimony thus elucidates the way in which recipients of a Soviet education had deeply internalised the assumption that the classics of Russian critical realism truthfully portrayed 'life as it is.' More importantly, it illustrates how children were compelled to re-enact in earnest the behaviour based on fictional figures' choices (as well as to learn emotional and cognitive patterns through the interpretation of literary works at school). It was young readers themselves who brought these books closer to life in the way revealed by Vishnevskaiia, who 'перестрадала свою первую и несчастную любовь. Почти по Пушкину.'⁸⁶⁹

Such experiences of translating a fictional situation into reality were productive in that they might reinforce a love of reading. This was the case with Vishnevskaiia: 'После тех дней, перевернувших мою жизнь, я стала много и без разбору читать. И Пушкина, и Лермонтова, и "Анну Каренину" Толстого [...].'⁸⁷⁰ Vishnevskaiia's voracious reading of the classics in school proved significant later in life, when, in the summer of 1951 the singer became seriously ill and refused to undergo surgery that would have put a stop to her singing career. As she records, she spent her days at home, resigned to her fate, until she suddenly felt an urge to re-read Turgenev. She assigns a life-saving quality to the classic works she had chosen to re-read, describing the catharsis it brought to her:

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

Захотелось перечитать Тургенева. «Ася», «Вешние воды», «Первая любовь» -- какие изумительные, поэтичные описания нашей дивной русской природы, какие возвышенные человеческие чувства! У меня кровь приливает к щекам. [...]

Слезы льются потоком из моих глаз, падают на любимые страницы; задыхаясь от волнения, я ни на минуту не могу оторваться от сладостных переживаний.

И вдруг мне захотелось встать. Не может быть, что я должна умереть, -- я также молода, как героини этих книг. Я хочу быть! Хочу жить!⁸⁷¹

From the passage it follows that it was both the familiarity of her childhood favourite classics and the reader's ability to empathise with the protagonists and experience 'sweet feelings' that resurrected her will to live. How characteristic is Vishnevskaiia's capacity to engage with literary texts in this way? Very much so, it would seem, since the method openly insisted on teaching a child to read texts closely, that is emotionally and with a deep empathy for the main protagonists. In an interview conducted in 2003, a woman born in Uglich, a city in Yaroslavl region, confirms that the capacity to empathise strongly was instilled in children during their literature lessons. She remembers crying in the classroom over Korolenko's 'Deti podzemel'ia': 'В общем, как сейчас помню, «Дети» Короленко – мы все наплакались.'⁸⁷² A selection of works from the 19th-century realist tradition that were originally meant for an adult audience became a mainstay of the school literary canon with the aim of illuminating dark episodes from the pre-revolutionary past.⁸⁷³

⁸⁷¹ Ibid., p. 81.

⁸⁷² Oxf/Lev SPb-03 PF 39 (A,B) ПТП.

⁸⁷³ For example, 'Mumu' was first published in *Sovremennik* 3 (1853), 'Van'ka' – in *Peterburgskaia gazeta* in December 1886, 'Kashtanka' was first published in *Novoe vremia* under a different title 'V uchenom obshchestve' in 1887, and it was first published as 'Kashtanka' in 1892 in Suvorin's edition. Only 'Deti podzemel'ia' was published right away in a children's journal *Rodnik* in 1886, in its abridged form.

A complex mix of empathy for those who suffered, along with indignation at, and hatred of, those responsible – namely, members of the tsarist administration – was deemed the proper emotional response in these lessons. Empathising with those who suffered the injustices of the 19th-century *ancien régime* as described by the realist novel answered Krupskaja's call 'to teach children to feel deeply' or '*prochuvstvovat'* – popular slogan among methodologists of the time.⁸⁷⁴

Elena Bonner's memoirs provide another example of an attitude similar to Vishnevskaja's. Like many other respondents and memoirists, Bonner was an avid reader in her childhood of both the school canon and extracurricular material, and she too assigns a curative power to her favourite authors. Bonner recalls the solace she drew from poetry in the dark times following the arrest of her parents:

Потом вышла на Герцена, свернула на бульвар и, [...] вышла к Пушкину. «Пушкин, тайную свободу...» Ах, как хорошо, что мы уже знали Блока. Что стихи живут в нас. Что они помогают. Я больше не чувствовала себя заразной. И ничего я не стеснялась.⁸⁷⁵

Так мы и уйдем из отчего дома, потому что отчий дом кончился – он (Егорка) с «Квентином Дорвардом», а я с Маяковским.⁸⁷⁶

Bonner's recognition of the political realities not only came as a shock, it was intensely personal too; the familiar authors and characters that helped inculcate

⁸⁷⁴ *Prochuvstvovat'* sense 1st: 'Понять чувством, проникнуть чувством в смысл чего-нибудь.' *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo iazyka v 4 tomakh*, edited by D. N. Ushakov, vol. 3, column 1045.

⁸⁷⁵ *Dochki-Materi*, p. 325.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

the ideology ironically also provided a coping mechanism for the trauma.⁸⁷⁷ Yet, the traumas of late 1930s or disillusionments of a later period quite logically reinforced the ethical and emotional lessons of a Soviet childhood, framed with nostalgia for pre-traumatic experience and the joys one felt when the world was new and shared with one's peers.

The memoirists therefore stress that they not only found solace in the Russian classics during periods of trauma and upheaval, but also learnt important lessons from them. The classics, in particular Leo Tolstoi, are also remembered as providing a solid ethical foundation. Boris Slutskii refers to Tolstoi and Chekhov's ethical impact on several occasions in his own poetic works. According to Slutskii, the Russian classics taught at school had a direct role in his and his generation's ethical upbringing that guided his actions during the war. In the poem 'Besplatnaia snezhnaia baba'⁸⁷⁸ he portrays a scene at a train station where a train car of thirsty Italian prisoners of war give up their last valuables in exchange for sips of water. The lyrical hero reacts indignantly to such inhumane treatment, and his gesture towards the prisoners is in line with the ethical lessons of Tolstoi and Chekhov, which, he confesses, are still fresh in his memory. The lyrical hero speculates that it was precisely because he preserved 'the ardour formed by Tolstoi and Chekhov' (И сохранил, по-видимому, тот пыл, / Что образован чтением Толстого / И Чехова и вовсе не остыл) that he makes a generous gesture and grants the thirsty Italian prisoners a massive chunk of

⁸⁷⁷ On trauma and memories of 1937 and Soviet literature see Polly Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953–70* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), especially pp. 130-172.

⁸⁷⁸ Slutskii, 'Besplatnaia snezhnaia baba' (first published in *Sobesednik (Gorizont)* 2 (1988), *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1, location 5207-5218, Kindle edition.

snow, the snowman, or since gender bears importance here, more specifically, the 'snow woman.' Slutskii suggests here that even if hatred had come to replace internationalism, it had nevertheless not reached the level of inhumanity in these young soldiers, whose hearts were still kindled by Tolstoi and Chekhov's legacies (note here the remarkable choice of words: 'пыл,/Что образован чтением', the ardour formed/educated by reading).

Slutskii's poetry repeatedly insists on the Russian classics' being a source of moral strength and rectitude. In another poem, 'Roman Tolstogo' he highlights the formative role of *War and Peace* on his generation.⁸⁷⁹ Slutskii depicts a hospital with wounded young boys who are far away from home; the only thing that connects them to the former, peaceful world are the four volumes of Tolstoi's novel, 'the most loved one', 'the main one', read by 'the entire country', to the extent that the volumes are actually falling apart from excessive reading. The novel resonates with soldiers, providing them with models of courageous behaviour, and showing them 'how to fight and love' à la Tolstoi ('по Tolstomu'). The lyrical hero of the poem suggests that the entire country has become what it is because of the novel, through seeking its own reflection in the novel. Yet Slutskii also appreciates how Tolstoi's legacy could also be perverted to serve political goals, in this case, fuelling hatred towards the enemy:

Не знаю, что б на то сказал Толстой,
Но добродушье и великодушье
Мы сочетали с формулой простой:
Душить врага до полного удушья.

⁸⁷⁹ Slutskii, 'Roman Tolstogo', first published in *Znamia* 2 (1966), *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 2, location 1357-1378, Kindle edition.

To anyone with a knowledge of the late Tolstoi, this situation is redolent with tragic irony; yet, of course, the late Tolstoi was beyond the ken of the young soldiers themselves.

Slutskii's poem also points to another role, as revealed above by Bonner, that secondary school classics could play in times of trouble: providing solace based on associative memory, serving as a reminder of pre-traumatic times, full of intense peer-bonding, learning, and hope. Slutskii's succinct point in the final two lines might be another confirmation that the victory in the war was indeed sought at all costs, though less in the name of Stalin and his 'short course' than in the name of the peers with whom one shared Tolstoi's lessons:

[...]Толстого знали *мы* давно.
Теперь он стал победы
кратким курсом.⁸⁸⁰ (*my italics*)

Significantly, the 'we' of his generation is sustained throughout, giving the poem a chorus-like quality: the 'lyrical heroes' singing a hymn to the novel's moral power.

In yet another poem, 'Romany iz shkol'noi programmy',⁸⁸¹ Slutskii confesses his unceasing reverence for what he believes had shaped his mind and heart – the literature of school programmes. For the lessons it offered, Slutskii's lyrical hero is ready to forgive camps and pogroms, pointing to the anti-Semitic campaign of the late 1940s. It is the moral lessons learned at school that helped the hero overcome life's vicissitudes, stopping him from compromising his integrity. At

⁸⁸⁰ Slutskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 2, location 1357-1379, Kindle edition.

⁸⁸¹ Slutskii, 'Romany iz shkol'noi programmy', first published in *Novyi mir* 10 (1987), *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1, location 4143-4162, Kindle edition.

those times when he was not guided by his moral compass, he admits to acting in a way contrary to the works studied in the literary classroom (as if absolving them of any responsibility in his wrongdoings). In his ode to the Soviet school literary curriculum, Slutskii is very specific and highlights separately the moral lessons of Pushkin's 'sturdy novella' and Chekhov's 'honest short story', and more generally the 'flame of classic novels,' albeit no longer burning bright, which remains in his heart and promotes courage and honesty. Even if his conscience had to be compromised during a complex adult life, the formative power of the literature studied at school nevertheless deserves his awed recognition. There is also a suggestion regarding the role the classics held for the Soviet Jewish generation of the 1930s, with its 'rootless' (literally 'fatherless') character: 'Вы родина самым безродным,/Вы самым бездомным нора.'⁸⁸² This poem is, at least on the surface, an eloquent and passionate expression of the attachment to ideals and feelings promoted by the literature taught in schools in the late 1930s, of the adolescent affection towards the past that was also a shelter from the afflictions of adult life.

What are the respondents' and memoirists' recollections of the poetry taught as part of the school programme? Is it a coincidence that Samoilov and Slutskii's generation produced so many poets? Elena Bonner remembers her and her school friends' avid interest in poetry in Pushkin's centenary year, 1937. The interest encompassed both poetic works from the literary canon, such as

⁸⁸² I am grateful to Professor Andrei Zorin for pointing out a deeper level of meaning in this poem referring to the anti-cosmopolitan, essentially anti-Semitic, campaign of the late 1940s, as well as the role Russian literature had for the Soviet Jewish teenagers growing up in the 1930s.

Pushkin, Zhukovskii, or Lermontov, and the extracurricular poetry by Karolina Pavlova, Annenskii, Baratynskii, and Esenin:⁸⁸³

Шел «Пушкинский год». Вместе с государственным возвратом Пушкина в школе стало можно читать Жуковского, Лермонтова. Не только «На смерть поэта», но *тревожную, уже тревожащую* любовную лирику. Гога ходил в школу с Баратынским. Севка читал Каролину Павлову и Анненского. Я, хотя дома был томик Есенина, переписывала какие-то стихи *оттуда в заветную тетрадку*. [...] И мы трое начинали утро с обсуждения очередной главы книги Вересаева «Пушкин в жизни». Их изо дня в день печатала газета «Известия».⁸⁸⁴ (my italics)

Romantic poetry resonated well with this age group, and writing poetry was a very common way of expressing the first stirrings of love.⁸⁸⁵ The poems copied were not always from the school curriculum.⁸⁸⁶ For example, Bonner remembers how her school friends reinforced each other's interest in poetry, as well as in the art of making poetry, by reading poetry from both school curriculum and outside of it:

Сева сказал, что лучше почитать Маяковского. Гога сморщился. На что Сева ответил: «не стихи, а «как делать стихи», и достал из портфеля книжку, хвастливо повертел ее перед нами и стал читать оттуда отрывки «Где живет Нита Жо...», «...моя мама Лямина...» и другие такие же. Мы стали смеяться. Особенный смех вызывал «...могу чемодан...» Мы как раз в это время проходили «Вещего Олега». Когда мальчики ушли, я достала из папиного шкафа Маяковского и прочла

⁸⁸³ Both Pavlova and Annenskii's poetry was published in 1939. Karolina Pavlova, *Polnoe sobranie stikhotvorenii* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1939); Innokentii Annenskii, *Stikhotvoreniia* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1939). It is likely, however, that Sevka got both authors' books from a home library, since previous editions of Annenskii's works date from the 1920s, while Pavlova's poetry from 1915. Innokentii Annenskii, *Tikhie pesni* (Peterburg: Academia, 1923). Karolina Pavlova, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: K. F. Nekrasov).

⁸⁸⁴ *Dochki-Materi*, p. 242.

⁸⁸⁵ See for example Nina Kosterina's entry of 22 April 1938, 'Dnevnik' in *Zolotoi fond dnevnikovedeniia* < <http://dnevnikovedenie.ru/index.php/2012-12-04-16-48-02/49-2013-01-21-11-12-42> > [accessed 18 January 2015].

⁸⁸⁶ The noble, in Chukovskii's sense of the word, romantic poetry, including Esenin's poetry, was accessible to these children in the late 1930s, albeit not always in an officially sponsored anthology. Kornei Chukovskii, 'Poeziia po-Narkomprosovskii', *Pravda*, 18 January 1936, p. 6. On Chukovskii's criticism of the poor availability of classical poets to children see pp. 94-96.

«Как делать стихи». А утром, собираясь в школу, я ощутила такую радость, будто начинается праздник.⁸⁸⁷ (my italics)

Aside from a less than reverent attitude to Maiakovskii, Bonner mainly recalls the sheer enjoyment derived from the peer-shared interest in poetry. As Bonner recalls, children integrated such classroom activities as collective reading, learning texts and poems by heart, into their extracurricular activities and exercises, when they were playing games or doing their homework together, a point remembered by others also.⁸⁸⁸

A contemporary of Bonner's firmly associates her own patriotic upbringing in the 1930s with poetry, including verses by Pushkin and Lermontov.

Соб: И какую-нибудь там патриотическую работу, такое тоже Вы не должны были вести?

Инф: А как стихи читали. Как же. А стихи читали же. И такие, и всякие. Не только Пушкина, Лермонтова, но читали какие-нибудь и другие.⁸⁸⁹

Though this particular person's memories of what she read at school are vague, her association of the patriotic work with poetry, including Pushkin's and Lermontov's, is valid because classic patriotic poetry ('Borodino', 'To Chaadaev', etc.) was indeed supposed to inspire joy in defending one's motherland. A carefully chosen selection of classical poems aimed to emphasise political themes of struggle and self-sacrifice in the name of social ideals.⁸⁹⁰ This was

⁸⁸⁷ *Dochki-Materi*, p. 240.

⁸⁸⁸ Oxf/Lev P-05 PF 28 (A,B) SNI.

⁸⁸⁹ Oxf/Lev SPb-02 PF 10 (A,B) BAV.

⁸⁹⁰ Baiburin and Piir comment on 'happiness': 'Of all the multiple intellectual baggage associated with happiness, the most influential in the Soviet period was a high-Romantic conception that linked happiness with struggle, passion, self-immolation to the good of a higher ideal – as in Pushkin's epistle to Alexander Chaadaev...' in Albert Baiburin and Alexandra Piir, 'When We Were Happy: Remembering Soviet Holidays', in *Forum For Anthropology and Culture* 5 (2009), 217-253 (p. 220).

complemented by Gor'kii's, *The Song of the Stormy Petrel* (*Pesnia o burevestnike*, 1905), a potent political allegory that juxtaposes a brave bird and a cowardly penguin, cowering from a storm, a contrast that children were likely to find highly memorable and to even imitate closely in their own poetry.⁸⁹¹ In official usage, the word struggle ('bor'ba') sneaked into the oddest contexts: 'Борьба за хороший, продуманный, четкий урок должна быть развернута немедленно.'⁸⁹² Textbooks on literary history did not shy away from employing martial vocabulary either. This way of describing literary movements was a legacy of earlier programmes and textbooks. The language of the 1920s campaigns ('bor'ba za novyi byt' etc.) outlived the campaigns themselves into the 1930s, while the terms employed by them trickled in and out of children's consciousness.⁸⁹³ The programme of literature aimed to establish a continuous tradition (*preemstvennost'*) from critical realism to Soviet realism, emphasising the lasting importance of social action according to the critical tradition of radical democrats by means of a selection of the most tendentious poems, such as 'Pesnia o burevestnike.' The influence of these poems on the revolutionary figures was also emphasised.⁸⁹⁴ The agitational content of selected works, which was taught in a prescribed manner (control over teaching methods, as far as we know, was becoming stricter), contributed to encouraging a romantic attitude.

⁸⁹¹ Chukovskii brought forth such examples of children's creativity: 'Пушкин, словно буревестник, /Вьется смело над царями.' K. Chukovskii, 'Plemia mladoe...', *Pravda*, 13 February 1937, p. 4.

⁸⁹² *Russkii iazyk i khudozhestvennaia literatura v nepolnoi srednei i srednei shkole, Itogi 1936/37 uchebnogo goda* (Narkompros RSFSR, 1937), p. 57.

⁸⁹³ For example, Tverdin's diary contemplates the word and its history, reaching a conclusion that it is the symbol of the bright future of communism in the usual way in which his contemporaries absorbed and regurgitated borrowed metaphors from both classic and contemporary literature they came in contact with. (*Gorodok v tabakerke*, 378).

⁸⁹⁴ On the evidence of the impact the poem had on revolutionaries, including Lenin, see Andrei Zorin, 'M. Gor'kii-Pesnia o burevestnike', in Andrei Zorin, 'Primechaniia', *LiveJournal*, 5 January 2012 <<http://andrey-zorin.livejournal.com/3687.html?thread=4967>> [accessed 7 September 2014].

In his poem 'Ia uchitel' shkoly dlia vzroslykh',⁸⁹⁵ Slutskii betrays a prominent trace of his education – the utilitarian attitude to literature and poetry, the emphasis on their didactic potential, which the methods of teaching literature promoted. Slutskii places himself among the ranks of the poet-pedagogues: 'Все писатели - преподаватели. / В педагогах служит поэт.' Slutskii reaffirms the didactic role of artistic writing and underscores the unique service provided by the poet in the radical democratic fashion that was emphasized in the pedagogical thought of the 1930s. And when his lyrical 'I' becomes 'we', Slutskii thus joins the tradition of poet-pedagogues that he first encountered in his literature lessons. In this poem Slutskii is also lucid about the epic nature of his own poetry, saying that history lurks 'between' his poetic lines. He thus confesses to possessing a 'historical consciousness', which is expressed through his poetry.

Sometimes self-consciously civic authors left a different legacy in the minds of their young readers. Elena Bonner remembers Gor'kii's works and vividly recalls the distress she felt at the news of his death. This feeling of closeness to favourite authors, while quite different from modelling on authors' romantic revolutionary sense of civic duty, was also characteristic of her generation:⁸⁹⁶

⁸⁹⁵ Slutskii, 'Ia uchitel' shkoly dlia vzroslykh...', first published in *Znamia* 1 (1960), *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1, location 4881-4890, Kindle edition.

⁸⁹⁶ Significantly, Nina Kosterina's diary has a record dated 20 June 1936: '[...] смерть Максима Горького я переживала как личное горе. У нас есть полное его собрание./Многое я уже прочитала, некоторые произведения доводили меня до бессонницы. И вот – Горького нет...' (Nina Kosterina, 'Dnevnik' in *Zolotoi fond dnevnikovedeniia* < <http://dnevnikovedenie.ru/index.php/2012-12-04-16-48-02/49-2013-01-21-11-12-42> > [accessed 18 January 2015].

Смерть Горького. О ней нам сказали вожатые и был какой-то траурный митинг для всего лагеря. Почему я восприняла ее как личную беду? Я к этому времени давно прочла его трилогию, рассказы, наизусть знала и любила «Девушку и смерть» (что сказал о ней Сталин, еще не знала), *наизусть знала* «Макара Чудру». Он был писатель, которого я *любила*.⁸⁹⁷ (my italics)

Bonner does not suppose here that the organized communal mourning could itself have amplified her emotion to the level of a personal loss. Instead, the Soviet schoolchild's sense of close emotional connection with fictional characters and real people one never met in person explains the grief over the passing of a favourite writer. In this model, one could develop such a strong affinity for an author that it felt as though one knew him or her personally. This reinforced the methodological prescriptions, which demanded that teachers should encourage students to 'co-feel rather than analyse a poem' thus aiming at their familiarisation with the internal world of a poet.⁸⁹⁸ Learning a poem by heart would further facilitate the intimacy promoted at school in literature lessons.⁸⁹⁹ Thus the illusion that one knew authors thoroughly from the fragmented and politicised school curriculum was further intensified in the context in which these were studied – both the drill of the school programme and the transference of the intimacy one felt towards one's peers to the authors studied.⁹⁰⁰ The bonding of children during school activities, coloured with a political content,

⁸⁹⁷ *Dochki-Materi*, p. 264.

⁸⁹⁸ P. 80.

⁸⁹⁹ Learning by heart and reciting with a decent theatrical expression did not guarantee understanding of the poem, as one of the respondents from a later period exemplifies. The girl recited 'Burevstnik' with excellent artistic expression, but when prompted by the examiner to explain the meaning of the poem, she started to sob out of desperation at her lack of comprehension of the poem. Oxf/Lev P-05 PF 18 (A,B), PF 19 (A,B) BAV.

⁹⁰⁰ Where the personal is intertwined with the ideal, disillusionment in the former would put political conviction to a real test. There is an interesting letter from 17 June 1934 by a young Komsomol member Kh. Khuttonen, 'Farewell to the Komsomol', in *In the Shadow of Revolution*, edited by Fitzpatrick, Slezkine, pp. 354-355. According to the investigation, the young author was disappointed in Communist men with whom she had love affairs, and suffered from neurasthenia.

also produced the peculiar effect that has been discussed in detail in one of the previous chapters – when the boundaries between the children’s immediate reality and the removed one (political, historical, or fictional worlds) became blurred. The joy of sharing an activity with peers, which also resulted in attachment to peers, extended to include circumstantial characters that were also the objects of these activities (from *dedushka* Lenin, living *vozhd’* Stalin⁹⁰¹ to fictional characters, as well as the authors promoted in the school programme). Bonner’s memoirs reveal this process, and its after-effects in adult consciousness.

This transference ran parallel to another process characteristic of a child’s associative concrete thinking in respect to the literature Bonner studied at school – when an author came to be represented by the physical appearance of a book: ‘марковский в зеленом переплётe Пушкин, синий Некрасов, темно-селеный Гоголь, голубой Лермонтов и голубой же Никитин.’⁹⁰² No doubt there must have been former schoolchildren who preserved exclusively this type of memory of the authors they studied, *prokhodili*, at school. Nevertheless, the process of attentive reading often transformed a two-dimensional page into a much more memorable virtual reality in which a child had the opportunity to empathise with characters.⁹⁰³ Bonner attests to how the guided reading in Soviet school ensured an additional aspect of such transformation – the self-censure of

⁹⁰¹ A slightly different process, when a lack results in attachment, was pointed out to me by Vladimir Kirillovich Lavrov, a communist, my school director and history teacher, born around 1925 and who grew up in a *detdom*. He was an avid Stalinist until his own death in 1998 and acknowledged to his students that he substituted Stalin for an absent father figure in his life.

⁹⁰² *Dochki-Materi*, p. 67.

⁹⁰³ See *Galina*, pp. 31-33.

the reader's personal attitude to characters and authors. Bonner confessed to internalising a self-imposed awareness as to what was permissible to love and what was not. For example, she remembers hearing a lot about the aristocratic wards of her own nanny and was ready to 'love' them in the same way as her nanny did, yet she felt she could not love anyone of that pedigree:

Это был запрет на любовь – не чужой, а свой собственный. Любимыми должны были быть и были «Красные дьяволята». Русские дети, брат и сестра, и их друг – китайский мальчик. Они скакали на лошади, ходили в разведку по заданию «красных», убегали от «белых», стреляли и убивали. Даже герои Маин-рида и Купера не могли стать столь же любимыми. «Газетные воробьи», норвежская девочка Гой Даль бак/ Потом я полюбила Павку Корчагина. [...] Позже я полюбила героев Гайдара и, конечно, Чапаева.⁹⁰⁴ (my italics)

Bonner's fondness for the heroes of Soviet realism was not entirely her own, as it was promoted in the literary classroom and expected of any Soviet schoolchild. From the vantage point of temporal distance, the thought that perhaps her affection to these literary heroes was not her choice does cross Bonner's mind. But this remains an external observation, and one that does not affect her emotional relationship with them.

Like poetry, drama is remembered as another source of intense peer-bonding and socialisation at school. Elena Bonner recalls the founding in her school of a literary circle: 'В школе появился литературный кружок', where children could further deepen and consolidate their interest in literature.⁹⁰⁵ She recalls her friend staging an adaptation of Pushkin's 'Tsygany': 'В это время Севка затеял к новогоднему школьному празднику ставить «Цыган» (sic)

⁹⁰⁴ *Dochki-Materi*, p. 217.

⁹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 242. Kalinina also remembers with warm regards her class mentor (klassnyi rukovoditel') Sarra Semenovna, who helped her students stage 'literary' scenes, among other extracurricular activities. Kalinina, p. 28.

Пушкина.⁹⁰⁶ Naum Korzhavin in his memoirs also remembers drama, pointing out that some of these school plays were heavily politicised. The fact that it was staged and performed by children, including his peers, facilitated the processing of this hidden (and not so hidden) political curriculum: 'обаяние театральности (пусть весьма приблизительной) заставляла заглатывать как само собой разумеющее, и его «идейное содержание», точнее внушение.'⁹⁰⁷ The 'theatrical charm' intensified by enjoyment of peer-shared interests and activities at school, whether directly political in content or neutral in case of staged classics, nevertheless helped the socialisation process.⁹⁰⁸ Whether reading poetry, as in Bonner's example, or preparing a cultural event, such as performances with poetry reading, songs, and drama,⁹⁰⁹ all those involved went through a strong bonding experience. But the affective relationships that emerged were politicised in the process. Thus, Lev Razumovskii remembers a *detdom*, where he supervised activities for the younger children, and what he now calls «политическая мишура» was mixed with other cultural activities:

вся эта дисциплинарная обработка с неприемлемыми на сегодня формами воспринималась нами как должное (ведь никакой альтернативы не было!), как установленный раз и навсегда миропорядок [...] Но при этом еще старался развеселить и занять чем-то интересным моих друзей-воспитанников: учил их рисовать, выпускал с ними газету, организовывал "вечера смеха". *Это сближало. Сомнения и раздумья пришли позднее.*⁹¹⁰ (my italics)

⁹⁰⁶ *Dochki-Materi*, p. 245. Another respondent remembers staging Lermontov's 'Pesnia o kuptse Kalashnikove' in Oxf/Lev SPb-02 PF 11 (A,B) BAV.

⁹⁰⁷ *V soblznakh krovavoi epokhi*, p. 79.

⁹⁰⁸ In chapter 4, the growing dependence on being a part of the group (and through it, of the collective) was discussed in a context of the anxiety around becoming a superfluous person and falling outside of the common project of history making, a kind of negative reinforcement. This is an example of a positive reinforcement.

⁹⁰⁹ Oxf/Lev P-05 PF 28 (A,B) SNI; Oxf/Lev V-04 PF 9 (A,B).

⁹¹⁰ Oxf/Lev Lev Samsonovich Razumovskii (born in 1926).

As Lev Razumovskii testifies, the doubts and thoughts about the politicised content of one's childhood activities came later, although the extent to which people became conscious of the awakening to the process of being socialised in a particular way varied considerably across memoirs and interviews.⁹¹¹ And some would carry the faith in the doctrine throughout their lives, particularly in the case of someone like Tverdin or Kosterina, who both died young during the war. However, apart from the ideological content forced upon literary interpretations and literature-related activities in the late 1930s, the majority of historical subjects remember texts studied in school as being sources of their sentimental, moral, and civil notions. The memory of these is infused with the circumstances in which the literary instruction took place, such as the close social interaction with peers and warm-hearted teachers, or the strictly disciplined learning environment, the often intense reading outside of school and the incorrigible youthfully optimistic attitude to life and the future, despite the complexity of the historical period.

b. Analytical and Sentimental Habits

The majority of memoirists and respondents demonstrate that, even where the ideological beliefs failed to endure in the long term, some analytical habits developed during their adolescence in the literary classroom survived. These concern *khudozhestvennyi obraz* and social types, comparing people to characters, identifying with one's generation, staying loyal to its romantic internationalism and sentimentalism, appreciating *peripeteia* and *pathos*. These

⁹¹¹ Catriona Kelly mentions a peculiar fact about the propaganda for children: respondents remembered it in general terms, without particular details. Kelly suggests that the propaganda's omnipresence might have contributed to this effect. Catriona Kelly, "Malen'kie grazhdane bol'shoi strany": internatsionalizm, deti i sovetskaia propaganda', *Nlo* 60 (2003), 218-251 (p. 250).

habits, however, also enabled them to separate rigid ideological indoctrination from more traditional values (passed on through families and Russian classics) to which they claimed a strong commitment.

The Soviet diaries analysed in chapter 4 displayed a persistent concern with *obraz* and type. This trend is present in later comments by Samoilov and other recipients of pre-war Soviet literary education. Boris Slutskii defines *obraz* through the description of its functions in his poem 'Bronenosets "Potemkin"'.⁹¹² In Slutskii's poem Eisenstein's *obrazy* 'glorify freedom and inspire' (along with the plot) noble feelings, which could be 'awakened' by them. Although there are many other noteworthy points of the poem (for example, the juxtaposition of the cinematic imagery with the reality of the 'cruel century' or the 'altered' behaviour of boys towards girls in the cinema), the poet's remembrance of his literary lessons and of a well-constructed artistic *obraz's* possible effect upon viewers and readers is significant since it echoes methodological normative literature. Pushkin's legacy is also present in this poem ('[...]chuvstva dobre/ ia liroi probuzhdal').⁹¹³

Elena Bonner in her memoirs displays scholastic habits that have reached a level of automatism, such as comparing people to characters based on their physical appearance: 'И когда впервые читала Салтыкова – Щедрина, то решила, что

⁹¹² Slutskii, 'Bronenosets "Potemkin"', *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1, location 4715-4725, Kindle edition.

⁹¹³ A. S. Pushkin, 'Ia pamiatnik sebe vozdvig nerukotvornyi...', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 16 tomakh*, 16 vols (Moscow, Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1937-1959), vol. 3, *Stikhotvoreniia, 1826-1836. Skazki* (1948), p. 424.

у Ржанова есть что-то общее с Иудушкой.'⁹¹⁴ In another example, she combines the features of characters from Gogol' and a fairy-tale and assigns them to a person from her childhood: 'Дмитрий Захарович походил на Тараса Бульбу и на «кота в сапогах» в каком-то хитром варианте.'⁹¹⁵

Bonner repeatedly relies on this device in her memoirs, while taking for granted that her audience shares the same cultural horizon and will be able to recognise the comparisons.⁹¹⁶ Moreover, Bonner's memory often draws connections between her impressions of events in her past and from her reading. For example this is how she remembers meeting a NKVD agent who came to arrest her family: 'Мы встретились глазами. У него были пустые и без какого-либо цвета. Белые. Раньше я читала «белые глаза». Теперь увидела!'⁹¹⁷ Or elsewhere, she reconstructs her feelings as a little girl in Gor'kii's terms: 'Горький как будто подслушал меня – маленькую девочку – своим «а был ли мальчик-то, может, мальчика-то и не было?»'⁹¹⁸ The ability to apply a quote from the school literary canon to a real life situation was widespread and appreciated by teachers of literature, stemming from Narkompros' insistence on drawing parallels between literature and life.

This analytical habit of thinking about 'real' people as types is connected to a tendency towards identification with and description of one's own generation.

Respondents and memoirists often speak of a 'we', referring to their own

⁹¹⁴ *Dochki-Materi*, p. 96.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁹¹⁶ In another example, she reconstructs an immediate historical comparison crossing her mind upon seeing Seva's father for the first time. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

generation, in terms of a historical social type, when trying to define and explain their role in the historical process. Thinking of oneself as a representative of a social group, be it a closely knit circle of friends (for example, Samoilov's poetic circle) or, more widely, a generation, the memoirists and respondents in their reminiscences seek not only to describe their younger 'I', but most importantly to align that *I* with (or sometimes contrast against) their peers and identify the features of their generation. The educational system itself fostered intense socialisation, as a structural background to the analytical and affective upbringing efforts, especially in literary classroom. These early friendships went hand in hand with wider affective upbringing efforts, discussed in chapter one.⁹¹⁹ Reinforced through an emphasis on friendship and comradeship during literature classes and beyond (songs, children's literature, newspapers), these friendships significantly affected the Soviet memoirists to the extent that some of the most pronounced and lyrical memories were of the warm interaction with their friends and peers at school. The common structure provided by school class formation forged a strong group identity, with social competition between parallel years. Smaller group units existed within the larger 'we' of a class or school.⁹²⁰ A select few childhood friends comprise an important part of memoirs and reminiscences, to the effect that crucial decisions are ascribed to them. For example, Samoilov recalls the role his friends played in his decision to change

⁹¹⁹ P. 93. Also see Catriona Kelly, "V nashem velikom Sovetskom Soiuze *tovarishch* – sviashchennoe slovo". *Emotsional'nye otnosheniia mezhdur det'mi v sovetskoii kul'ture*, *Detskie chteniia* 3:1 (2013), 38-73.

⁹²⁰ While it is not always immediately clear from the context whether memoirists refer to a larger concept of *we* (the generation) or to a tightly knit group they belonged to, the tone usually provides additional clues. It is warm and nostalgic when friends are remembered or exalted and righteous when they speak of their entire generation. (For example, see Yu. L. Kucherov's poems in Bezrogov Collection). It also becomes apparent that this intimate 'we' had a stronger emotional impact on an individual, while an abstract 'we' applied to the contemporaries is typically used in projecting some qualities or experiences onto the entire generation.

school: 'В третью школу — Первую опытно-показательную имени Горького в Вадковском переулке (ныне 204-я — на углу Тихвинской и Суцевского вала) *перетащили* меня Феликс Зигель и Жорж Острецов' (my italics).⁹²¹ The passive construction of this sentence is also characteristic of Samoilov's generation – friends and their influence 'happen to one.'⁹²² Bonner remembers how a random choice of friends in the first year led to strong, enduring friendships: 'Первый урок, а вернее первая переменка определили мою школьную жизнь, друзей, круг общения.'⁹²³ These fateful accidental friendships were possible due to the particular structure of the school system where, barring external family circumstances, extreme academic failure, or the opening of a new school that was closer to one's home, children tended to remain in the same year until graduation from their secondary school.⁹²⁴ This contributed to the development of intense friendships among peers, including with those of a different gender.⁹²⁵

In one of his poems 'Posledneiu ustalost'iu ustav' Slutskii explores the alternative fates of a soldier who is dying in the battlefield.⁹²⁶ The possibility of being back

⁹²¹ Samoilov, *Perebiraia nashi daty*, p. 100.

⁹²² Lidiia Razumovskaia remembers sharing desk with a girl Alia that becomes her life-long friend. Bezrogov collection, Lidiia Razumovskaia (born 1921), p. 22.

⁹²³ *Dochki-Materi*, p. 124.

⁹²⁴ Valentina Kalinina remembers a childhood trauma connected to moving to a new school and not being able to integrate into the new class. She reconstructs this story as a case of an organized bullying, which involved not only her two classmates, but also their parents and made her 15-year old self to seriously contemplate a suicide. Bezrogov Collection, V.V. Kalinina (1926), pp. 29-31. Razumovskaia, who was old enough to witness pedagogical tests, which resulted into the rearrangement of years and grouping students according to their development, remembers separation from peers as a negative and painful experience. Bezrogov Collection, Razumovskaia, p. 3.

⁹²⁵ It was hard for Efron, who spent four years in a single-sex French Catholic school, to conceive a similar situation of becoming friends with a girl. See p. 206.

⁹²⁶ Slutskii, 'Posledneiu ustalost'iu ustav...', *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1, location 1446-1464, Kindle edition. It was first published in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 20 July 1956. This publication had a highly critical response. Slutskii was accused of de-heroisation of a soldier,

home, safe in the embrace of his wife, is ruled out – even if he was not enlisted, he would still have joined the army. That is why the dying soldier does not complain. Slutskii goes further than Samoilov in suggesting that this soldier internalised historical inevitability as a moral choice.

When one of his best friends, Kul'chitskii, perished in the beginning of the war, Slutskii, just like Samoilov, reiterated that such a destiny was indeed foreseen and in store for his generation:

Та линия, которую мы гнули,
Дорога, по которой юность шла,
Была прямою от стиха до пули —
Кратчайшим расстоянием была.⁹²⁷

In a speech twenty years later, he would repeat that the war claimed the lives of 'the best of them.'⁹²⁸ What did he mean by that, apart from expressing his love and high estimation of Kul'chitskii as a poet? Slutskii drew then and elsewhere a connection between readers of his generation, who were taught to live on and through the page in their adolescence, internalising rarefied ideals and emotions, making it more likely that they would eventually meet their end in the harsh realities of war or repressions. The belief that those with the highest moral position, the most idealistic, were less likely to survive, was noted by several memoirists.⁹²⁹

anti-heroic, antipatriotic sentiments, according to Boldyrev. *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, p. 15.

⁹²⁷ Slutskii, 'Dekabr' 1941, Pamiati M. Kul'chitskogo', first published in Slutskii, *Vremia. Stikhi* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1959), *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1, location 2886-2897, Kindle edition.

⁹²⁸ Boris Slutskii, 'Speech in honour of 25 years since the victory in WWII', <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlopY-6CBKE>> [accessed 25 January 2015].

⁹²⁹ Kalinina remembers being jealous of a bright Komsomol-unit leader because of her outgoing personality. This girl later dies in war. Kalinina, Bezrogov Collection, p. 33. Korzhavin also writes: 'На самом деле не худшие, а лучшие качества этих людей делали их не приспособленными для выживания в противоестественном обществе. Российская интеллигенция

c. Passion for Struggle

Apart from the interest in social type, continuity, or memories of one's sentimental attachments, the commitment to a just and emotionally intense struggle and strenuous efforts towards a rightful goal appears as another common feature of the subjects of this research. These efforts were highlighted in the secondary school's literary instruction through the emphasis on revolutionary internationalism that was pervasive. Some respondents also remember related incidents in their childhood, in which dramatic methods were employed for a worthy goal. Bonner describes an episode in which she was made to copy again her entire Russian language notebook late into the night in order to improve her bad handwriting and also to memorise spelling and conjugation rules. The task was assigned to her shortly after the girl learnt of a friend's death, and the combination of bereavement and effort resulted in tears: 'И вот я плачу уже о своей жизни и своей смерти! [...] если до этой учительницы и до этих тетрадок я была неграмотная, то с них начался перелом и с орфографией я справилась.'⁹³⁰ In retrospect, Bonner remembers her teacher's gesture with gratitude as she sees the positive outcome ('переломал небрежность'). It does not cross her mind that there might have been a less dramatic way of improving her command of grammar and orthography. The value attached to such a 'breakthrough' and to the drastic means that justified a noble end, is a persistent feature of Soviet memoirists' accounts.

уничтожалась не только лагерями и расстрелами, а и просто так – вытеснялась самой жизнью.' *V soblznakh krovavoi epokhi*, p. 22.

⁹³⁰ *Dochki-Materi*, pp. 209-210.

Tverdin, Samoilov, Korzhavin, Slutskii all channelled their passion for struggle and progress into the art of making poetry (following the recipe offered to the lyric hero of Pushkin's 'The Prophet' – *glagolom zhgi serdtsa liudei* and the idea of inspiring noble feeling that is evoked in 'Monument')⁹³¹ and at least initially within the framework of the accepted ideology.⁹³² There is some evidence for a growing rift between the romanticism of the Bolshevik ideals inherited from the 1920s, and the increasing pressures to conform and emphasis on discipline and authoritative rule that were inculcated under Stalin.⁹³³ Thus Naum Korzhavin recalls Maiakovskii's words to describe his entire generation with its romantic attitude:

Мы – говорю (словами Маяковского) о себе и своих романтических сверстниках – мы стремились во всем «рваться в завтра, вперед,/Чтоб брюки трещали в шаг». И презирали всякую косность, как мещанское противостояние сталинскому «новаторству», которое обнимало все стороны жизни, распространяя это на искусство [...].⁹³⁴

Korzhavin invokes here the revolutionary zeal promoted on a theoretical level during the Great Retreat, to use Timasheff's term. The school's responsibility was to endorse the revolutionary enthusiasm and patriotic upbringing on offer, while at the same time emphasising discipline and the commitment to a strict set of rules. This, according to Korzhavin, confronted children with a palpable contradiction. Korzhavin adds: 'Эпоха эта подбиралась к нам исподволь. Я

⁹³¹ A. S. Pushkin, 'Ia pamiatnik sebe vozdvig nerukotvornyi...', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 16 tomakh*, 16 vols (Moscow, Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1937-1959), vol. 3, *Stikhotvoreniia, 1826-1836. Skazki* (1948), p. 424.

⁹³² Tverdin was even commissioned to write a march of railway workers. He sounds happy in his last diary entry about envisioning his future carrier and is excited about a meeting V. I. Lebedev-Kumach. 'Dnevnik deviatiklassnika', in *Gorodok v tabakerke: detstvo v Rossii ot Nikolaia II do Borisa El'tsyna (1890-1990)*, edited by Vitalii Bezrogov and Catriona Kelly, 2 vols (Moscow: Nauchnaya kniga, 2008), vol. 1, pp. 361-386 (p. 386).

⁹³³ Gábor Rittersporn, *Anguish, Anger, and Folkways in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), pp. 85, 87.

⁹³⁴ *V soblazzakh krovavoi epokhi*, p. 111.

уже говорил, как огорчала меня в детстве тихая подмена мировой революции странным «советским патриотизмом» [...].⁹³⁵ In his later years Slutskii also reconstructs the gap between ideals drawn from reading and reality in his poem 'Chitali, vzgliadyvaia izredka...'⁹³⁶ Eyewitnesses could feel, at least in retrospect, the divergence from the romantic Bolshevik ideals that was taking place around them and affected their lives in several ways. Bonner, who remembers how she happened to witness by accident the *chistka* of her father by his communist comrades, draws a parallel between it and disciplinary action by a teacher at her own in school.⁹³⁷ But it was easier to get rid of the revolutionaries than of the revolutionary ideas in the school literature curriculum, which would maintain its hold much longer and inspire dissident youth movements at a later period.⁹³⁸ Children were taught authoritatively to be emotionally faithful to the principles of the revolutionary movement and even to imitate revolutionary characters. And even if it was possible to learn the wise lessons the classics had to offer on their own, the teenage maximalist attitude spiced by teaching methods, radical critics, and each other's company (the 'we'), was an emotional force to be reckoned with.

⁹³⁵ Ibid., p. 138.

⁹³⁶ Slutskii, 'Chitali, vzgliadyvaia izredka...', *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 3, location 1488-1498, Kindle edition.

⁹³⁷ *Dochki-Materi*, pp. 161, 162.

⁹³⁸ For example, a dissident Pavel Litvinov told the judge at his trial that it was the Russian classics that inspired his dissidence, if one 'reads [them] not just with one's eyes but with one's heart and receives these books as spiritual sustenance,' as reported by Stephen Moeller-Sally in his *Gogol's Afterlife: The Evolution of a Classic in Imperial and Soviet Russia* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002), p. 163. Moeller-Sally in his turn quotes from Andrei Siniavskii, *Soviet Civilization: A Cultural History* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990), p. 232.

Developing this attitude in children during such a problematic period of history may also have had much sadder unforeseen consequences. This appears to have been the case with another friend of Bonner's, Igor, whose answer to Gor'kii's question in his play 'Na dne' as to what is more important, the truth or compassion,⁹³⁹ seems to have been 'both', and was expressed in his suicide.⁹⁴⁰ Suicide was not uncommon among teenagers at the time.⁹⁴¹ In Igor's case, whether or not his gesture was a result of a natural disposition exacerbated by school activities and the political ambiance around him, it was a form of protest and active action. As well as a negative challenge to the system, it was the expression of the 'struggle' encouraged in the classroom, including the literary manifestation of this through the examples of Decembrists, radical democrats, and revolutionaries.

Significantly, Korzhavin also confesses that he still feels the influence of this method, having preserved a large dose of romanticism in his later years. Thus, decades after his Soviet upbringing in the late 1930s, in the USA, Korzhavin was to be surprised at his own feelings of pity towards a relative, a woman, who had emigrated to the USA as a child. He pinpoints his acquired and by now deep-seated commitment to revolutionary romanticism:

Я вспоминаю ее измученных сверстниц, выехавших и невыехавших, для которых каждое платье было (а для

⁹³⁹ *Dochki-Materi*, pp. 244-245.

⁹⁴⁰ This was a dangerous answer at the time, as Fitzpatrick points out that 'pity' was a very negatively coloured emotion. Fitzpatrick, 'Happiness and *Toska*', p. 357.

⁹⁴¹ Kalinina remembers contemplating suicide. In his diary Tverdin records contemplating suicide over academic pressure quite seriously before giving up and recording his frustrations in the diary instead, see *Gorodok v tabakerke*, pp. 384-385. Kosterina records a similar thought occurring to her. Kosterina, 26 September 1938.

оставшегося большинства и остается) событием, которым многое открылось в жизни (хотя бы всерьез – что почем), а некоторым – сквозь все это – *и подлинный смысл культуры и подлинная радость искусства*. Я вспоминаю их и начинаю чувствовать ее несколько обделенной. Поэтому мне и становится ее немного жаль. [...] / Все это достаточно глупо с моей стороны. Да и вообще я впадаю тут *в романтическую гордыню, в демонизм, в снобизм*. Разве так уж мало стать просто хорошим и добрым человеком, матерью большого семейства? Ведь сам я знаю, что горячка массового самоутверждения, охватившая мир, ни к чему хорошему привести не может. Разве было бы лучше, если б этой горячкой заболела и она?⁹⁴² (my italics)

Korzhavin is lucid as to the origin of his emotional responses, but this does not diminish the torment expressed in his memoirs. Whether equally lucid or not, there is abundant evidence of respondents' appreciation of the complexity of their childhood and adolescence.⁹⁴³ One of the most relentless lessons of the history of literature course was that the 'true meaning of culture' and 'authentic joys of artistic appreciation' could only be revealed through the sweat and tears of hardship (*per aspera ad astra*). The value seen in *pathos* in Belinskii's sense of the word (a passionate state tending to an idea) and readiness to suffer for it are characteristic of Korzhavin's generation.

Slutskii also betrays his loyalty to his early education in assigning value to difficult life experiences, while devaluing the mundane quests for secure and comfortable living in another brief poetic testimony 'Nado dumat', a ne ulybat'sia.'⁹⁴⁴ In it, he calls for a serious quest for meaning, reading difficult books, running risks of making mistakes, and not relying on opinions. Only

⁹⁴² *V soblazznakh krovavoi epokhi*, p. 132.

⁹⁴³ Kalinina, p. 2.

⁹⁴⁴ Slutskii, 'Nado dumat', a ne ulybat'sia,' first published in *Taruskie stranitsy. Literaturno-khudozhestvennyi illiustrirovannyi sbornik* (Kaluga, 1961), *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1, location 4327-4339, Kindle edition.

probing on one's own and not for the sake of earning money could amount to worthy life experience, according to Slutskii. In another poem, Slutskii confesses that looking back to his difficult but 'exciting' adolescence, when 'they' were so impatient about their future, he feels nevertheless privileged to have lived in that grandiose epoch ('Какую-то важную льготу/ В том времени чувствую я').⁹⁴⁵ Significantly, when the lyrical hero acknowledges feeling the privilege of having spent his youth in these complex times, waiting together with his peers for the promising future to unfold, he moves away from the unconscious 'we' to the fully conscious 'I'. This allows him to reaffirm one other value concealed in the fact that he was a part of a larger whole. He acknowledges his loyalty to his friends and the value in his younger self's efforts and in the difficult life lessons of the 1930s.⁹⁴⁶ Towards the end of his life, he expresses a sad pride in being educated in his childhood through good books:

Хорошие книги
 читали со школы начальной,
 и выросли с ними,
 и напоены их печалью.
 Их звоном счастливым
 звенят до сих пор наши уши.
 Их медом пчелиным,
 как соты, полны наши души.
 Начетчиком был,
 талмудистом же не был я точно.
 А книжная пыль
 опыляет не хуже цветочной.⁹⁴⁷

Like Slutskii, other respondents often address the contradictions that went into constructing the ideology of Stalin's first generation. Retrospectively the

⁹⁴⁵ Slutskii, 'Tridtsatye gody', first published in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 24 November 1962, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 2, location 367-377, Kindle edition.

⁹⁴⁶ Slutskii, 'Tridtsatye gody', *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 2, location 377, Kindle edition.

⁹⁴⁷ Slutskii, 'Chitatel', *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 3, location 1798-1807, Kindle edition. This poem was first published posthumously in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*.

respondents who are part of this generation have proved to be equipped with tools to analyse the ideology, to separate the political abuses and manipulations from the values transmitted through Russian classical literature and their families.

d. Conclusion

The respondents whose testimonies were analysed to assess the long-term effects of the literary instruction remember themselves as avid readers and claim to have come back to Russian classics as adults. To many of them in their childhood literature provided a coping mechanism and escape from reality, but at the same time some of the respondents remember a reading habit, encouraged by the instruction, whereby a fictional situation would be related to their immediate reality, confirming that classic literature indeed shows the truth. This contributed to the high esteem that literature held for this Soviet generation.

In addition, literature is often remembered as a source of moral upbringing. Respondents remember being taught empathy on examples of literary works, although it had an ideological idea behind it – to demonstrate horrors of pre-revolutionary Russia. Moral lessons, in particular from Tolstoi, prove durable and poignant. Expurgated autobiographies of writers further contributed to the vision of writers as moral leaders, while the radical-democrats studied in literature lessons are remembered as examples of socially committed individuals, on which some respondents modelled their lives.

Literature lessons are often remembered in the context of peer-bonding activities, drama circles, extracurricular literary pursuits. Quite apart from the educational structure that fostered close intimate relationships with other students in class, literature instruction emphasised and contributed to placing friendships and comradeship at the top of the students' priorities. Literature in its turn is remembered as a large part of children's discussions and activities. This contributed to a kind of transference of love and excitement shared by close friends onto the authors and works read and studied together.

In some cases, politicised instruction left a trace of self-censure as to what characters and books could have been loved and which avoided in one's childhood. Yet there are too many cases where respondents recall reading and enjoying forbidden authors, such as Esenin, available to children in shops and libraries, to claim such self-censure to be a wide-spread and lasting effect.

Furthermore, the encouragement of a romantic revolutionary spirit through pre-revolutionary literature, authors, poetry seems to have enabled respondents to take a critical view of the times they lived through, evidenced in their analysis of ideology and Stalin's epoch. Interestingly, some respondents claim awareness of the contrast between the romantic revolutionary spirit they embraced as teenagers and Stalin's counter-policies. Thus some analytical habits learned during the history of literature course equipped them with tools to liberate themselves (if not entirely from the effects of indoctrination, then at least from experiencing survivors' guilt). In spite of this, respondents exhibit the Soviet emotional imprint and analytical habits influenced by the literary instruction.

The accounts of the past and memoirs demonstrate the predilection to thinking in social types taught in school, along with an automatic habit of comparing people to characters. The respondents' emotional responses to their own and others' life-paths reveal an expectation for vicissitudes and effort. Effort and struggle are thought to give a deeper meaning to experience.

One of the most persistent features of the type of indoctrination they had received, however, was their unique socialist sensibility, in which Soviet sentimentalism, emotional vulnerability, loyalty to their peers - sometimes transferred to the political realities which permeated their peer-bonding activities - and narrative impulse, converge.

CONCLUSION

a. Contribution to Knowledge

The 1930s is a period that attracts scholars' attention for good reason: the first decade of Stalin's rule saw rapid developments of both external and internal policies. Soviet society was being actively reshaped and regimented by collectivisation, cultural revolution, modernisation and mobilisation, of which control of literature, the arts, and education was an important constitutive part. My research was driven by a wish to fill several significant gaps in scholarly literature focusing on the period. In particular, I aimed to contribute to an understanding of the mobilisation and indoctrination efforts that were played out over the period by exploring the literary instruction children received prior to WWII. The case I have made here focuses on the impact of literary reading (in particular the reading of texts assigned as part of the school curriculum) on young members of the Soviet intelligentsia in the 1930s.

While the history syllabus introduced during the 1930s has been the topic of extensive discussion, literature teaching, where the same patriotic objectives were imposed, has seldom been addressed as a subject. Western scholarship has uniformly noted the return during the 1930s to the Russian past, yet the employment of Russian pre-revolutionary literary works in efforts to form the new men have largely been ignored.⁹⁴⁸ Furthermore, while scholars have discussed the guidance provided to children by Soviet children's literature, the effects of their study of literature for adults, which comprised the major part of

⁹⁴⁸ One notable exception is Irina Paperno's study *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), in which she examines Chernyshevskii's literary models and their impact.

the literary curriculum, have not been discussed. And while scholars have often remarked in passing the crucial importance of literature to the mental and spiritual world of the Stalin era, precisely how literature shaped this mental and spiritual world is something that has not been discussed with precision.

As I have demonstrated here, the literary classroom provided a perfect arena for social engineering through the systematic methodology created in the 1930s. This methodology revolved around the emotional stimulation of children during their exposure to poetry and literary texts, with emphasis on compassion and high pathos in literature and literary criticism. It also provided social guidance and moral education, relying on the two main qualities of Russian classical literature – *the mimetic function* (through highlighting the verisimilitude of the works addressed by the syllabus, alongside a purposeful erasure of the life/fiction distinction) and *hero-centrism* (through emphasizing the protagonists and their choices). Furthermore, the syllabus grouped literary works in such a way as to promote a metanarrative of the socio-historical development of Russia, illustrated by literary works. The narrative was diluted with political content and meant to legitimise the state. As a result, this approach to literary teaching deliberately set out to affect children’s mind, imagination, and emotions, to have a totalising impact upon the critical thinking of Soviet adolescents.

In assessing the effects of the literary curriculum, I have looked at diaries that have not previously been assigned this level of historical significance, but which turn out to provide crucial insight into the importance of literature to the writers. Later autobiographical writings supply another layer of recollection,

showing how the literary texts read in childhood continued to resonate in adult years. The impact of works read in the schoolroom reveals mental and expressive horizons and emotive responses; it testifies to the strong sense of belonging to one's generation, the defensive stance towards its moral compass (which is in part an emotional complex and in part a preservation of inculcated values), the strong civic notions, and the high appreciation of the authority of literary authors, that characterise the historical subjects whom I have discussed. Through their reactions to the contradictory material that they read, we can gain a sense of the complexity of the historical period they grew up in. The expressions of the resulting emotional complex, the particularly Soviet sensibility and moral sense, are highly visible today.

b. Limits of the Generalisation

The lives of the historical subjects addressed in the research – representatives of the Soviet intelligentsia who attended secondary school between 1936-1941 – have defined the limits of this research. 1936 coincides with the consolidation of the methodology this thesis addressed and 1941 with the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. If space allowed, it would be interesting to study the effects of the methods introduced in 1930s on students from rural areas and those attending schools in other Soviet republics outside of Russia and Ukraine. However, the general research questions addressed here have provided answers that could be tested against the precise experience of other groups.

c. The Syllabus and Its Effects

The new methodology capitalised on the literary legacy to further specific political aims – to foster a patriotic and communist upbringing. The methodology

imparted was character-centred and moralistic. It was intended to blur the lines between fiction and life in order to make pupils more impressionable to an ideologically coloured process of upbringing that was focused on communist values, a sense of collective belonging, and subscription to ideals of social duty. To this end, it aimed to foster emotionality in children (particularly as named in a series of key terms such as *pathos* and *vostorg*), and it employed historicism to encourage loyalty to the new nationalistic and populist political slogans of the period.

In the discussion here, I have considered in detail the means employed by this pedagogy, including making the study of literary characters central to the analysis of a classic work, the use of an abundance of visual aids, the transformation of an individual character into a type (a representative of a particular social milieu), and the arrangement of types in a chronologically connected line to represent the laws of socio-historical literary development. The inclusion of political figures in chains of historical types, exemplified by the Russian classics, was another important strategy. As I demonstrated, literary characters and historical figures were divorced from their context and placed into a new ideological setting – the Soviet story of historical development that legitimised state control.

I have also looked at the contemporary responses to the methodology on the part of two prominent literary critics: the poet Kornei Chukovskii and the academic Grigorii Gukovskii. Both were actively engaged in criticising school programmes of literature, convinced that guided reading in school was a socially

and politically important activity. Chukovskii agreed on the main principles of the methodology – emotional stimulation and patriotic upbringing – and attacked the execution of the methodology in practice. Gukovskii highlighted drawbacks of the methodology that might, he argued, have long-term psychological consequences for children. The impact of the criticism was somewhat muted by personal disagreement between these two leading figures – Chukovskii turned Gukovskii’s biographical introduction to an edition of Krylov into a key case of how *not* to write biography. The method that they addressed was to prevail almost intact for many decades. But of the two, Chukovskii was definitely the more influential, in part because he lived long enough to be an intellectual force at the time when there was more discussion of pedagogical practice, in the 1960s and 1970s.

Examining the reception of literature teaching, I particularly addressed the short-term effects of the canonical teaching methodology’s emphasis on *obraz*-type and shaping teenagers’ attitudes to love, friendship, and judging others, as well as their thinking patterns, as expressed through diaries. The Soviet diarists whose writing I analysed often compared people to literary characters they studied in school, their judgement of others being similar to the literary analysis they learned in school, often using the explicit terminology of such analysis – type, *obraz*. They relied on literary sources as guidelines for their life choices, thought of themselves as representative of their generation, developed social dependency, and more importantly, they learned to appreciate the superiority of a socially significant action over an individual achievement. The latter caused tension between their individual drives and their sense of duty to serve the

collective cause. The tension affected their diaries' style of writing. My analysis also demonstrated that the methodology was effective in patriotic upbringing shortly before and during WWII.

I have examined the development of the views, emotional and analytical habits presaged by the school programme, as evidenced in the later diaries of David Samoilov. David Samoilov's case revealed an evolution of attitudes towards both the 19th-century hero and an older intelligentsia, from vilification (as taught in the literary classroom) and Samoilov's desire to remove all similar traits in himself, to completely embrace the morals and values passed on by the Russian classics and older intelligentsia. The idea of service to the state, emphasised to these children through the teachings of radical democrats, evolved into a more general notion of civic duty. On account of this evolution, Samoilov criticised, yet also exonerated, his generation, whose ideological beliefs were flawed, he admits, but 'honest' in that they were rooted in a strong sense of duty to one's country.

However, for all his capacity to exhibit intellectual distance, Samoilov's later diaries also reveal that the conceptual, emotional, and perceptual habits inculcated in school literature lessons proved particularly tenacious. These include the practice of always comparing striking behaviour with literary models, and the use of a moral vocabulary drawn from the repertoire of the Soviet classroom in order to pass sententious judgement. The same held true for other respondents and memoirists. Among the long-term effects of the literary instruction was the application of moral lessons derived from classic literature

and attention to socio-historical types, including one's own peers. This contributed to the sense of belonging to one's generation and of loyalty to one's peers, and in time also fostered feelings of nostalgia. Even in the post-Soviet period, respondents uniformly revealed their high esteem of authors as moral leaders.

The assessment of the long-term effects of school literature teaching also revealed that the methodology left in former pupils a long-lasting appreciation of both classics and the complexity of the historical period they grew up with. More importantly, the course helped create a durable emotional complex, reactive to divergent opinion and often hostile to neoliberal principles.⁹⁴⁹ All in all, literary teaching played a central role in the formation of a clear emotional identity, which could be called a unique socialist sensibility.

One of the main issues this thesis addressed was how literary expression, which could be thought of as a form of individual expression (in the case of the Russian classics, at least), might have been paradoxically employed to serve the goals of a highly regimented and authoritarian educational system. In the post-Soviet era, this meant that the Soviet educational system has been associated with both parts of the equation – not just authoritarianism, but also individuality and the exercise of personal autonomy. This is one reason why those who experienced Soviet education often defend its values in the present day. In addition, the current discussions of national identity in Russia confirm the legacy of the

⁹⁴⁹ On changes and durability of certain identities in the post-Soviet period (e.g. the imposter) see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off The Masks!: Identity and Imposture In Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 303-317.

expression of the collective identity, to which Stalinist reforms in the method of teaching Russian classics contributed to a large extent, rendering the subject topical.

d. Relevance of the Research in Modern Russia

While much of the argument about school teaching in the 1990s and 2000s focused on history teaching, the teaching of literature has occasionally been discussed also, and by the 2010s, the issue of inculcating a patriotic upbringing by teaching the Russian classics in a goal-centred manner has been revived. In April 2015, Sergei Naryshkin, Chairman of the State Duma, proposed to create a unified concept of teaching literature in school that would contribute to the civic and patriotic upbringing of youth.⁹⁵⁰ Previously, Russian President Vladimir Putin had called for a review of the current programme of teaching literature, in particular in the upper years.⁹⁵¹ He reiterated his call within the context of Russian and national languages teaching,⁹⁵² declaring 2015 the year of literature by Presidential decree.⁹⁵³ Putin suggested granting special status to the subject of Russian literature and language, separating it from 'philology' as such. Professor Alexei Podberezkin drew attention to the 'pragmatism' of this move – a national language is the carrier of ethnic identity and is vital in 'the struggle

⁹⁵⁰ 'Naryshkin vystupaet za edinuiu kontseptseiu prepodavaniia russkogo i literatury v shkole', *Itar-Tass*, 15 April 2015 < <http://tass.ru/obschestvo/1904807> > [accessed 30 September 2015].

⁹⁵¹ 'Putin prizval peresmotret' programmu prepodavaniia literatury v shkole', *RIA Novosti*, 21 November 2013 < <http://ria.ru/society/20131121/978659398.html> > [accessed 30 September 2015].

⁹⁵² 'Putin predlozhil izmenit' status russkogo iazyka i literatury v shkole', *Vzgliad*, 19 May 2015 < <http://vz.ru/society/2015/5/19/746097.html> > [accessed 30 September 2015].

⁹⁵³ 'Ukaz o provedenii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii goda literatury', Official website of the President of Russia, 13 June 2014, <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/45904>> accessed 31 May 2015.

between civilisations' (*'tsivilizatsionnogo konflikta'*).⁹⁵⁴ *Rosobrnadzor* reacted to the state interest in this subject by immediate inspection of literature lessons in school.⁹⁵⁵

In the centre of the discussions of the national curriculum and methodology at both national and local levels, from the All-Russian social organisation 'Association of teachers of Russian Language and Literature' to local institutions and media channels, are the country's literature-centrism and Russian worldview (*'russkii vzgliad na mir'*).⁹⁵⁶ These discussions inevitably emphasise the importance of teaching Russian classical literature in schools for moulding future citizens and critically assess the educational reforms of the 1990s and the 2000s.⁹⁵⁷ The discourse employed is most telling in terms of the durability of the emotional and patriotic complex highlighted in this thesis. For example, Sergei Zinin, Professor of the faculty of methodology of teaching of Moscow State Pedagogical University, argued for studying Tolstoi's *War and Peace* in school in the following terms: 'Когда враг стоял у стен Москвы, количество часов на

⁹⁵⁴ 'Shkol'nyi conservatism: slova prezidenta bol'she ne rukovodstvo k deistviu?', *Regnum*, 20 May 2015 < <http://www.regnum.ru/news/cultura/1926181.html> > [accessed 30 September 2015].

⁹⁵⁵ 'Rosobrnadzor proverit kachestvo prepodavaniia russkogo iazyka, literatury i istorii', *Tribuna*, 13 May 2015.

⁹⁵⁶ See for example an article by Mikhail Golubkov, 'Vremia derzhat' otvet', *Literaturnaia gazeta* No. 6, 11 February 2015 < <http://www.lgz.ru/article/-6-6496-11-02-2015/vremya-derzhat-otvet/> > [accessed 30 September 2015]; 'Kontsepsiia shkol'nogo filologicheskogo obrazovaniia', Youtube channel *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 'Kruglyi stol', Association of Teachers of the Russian Language and Literature and Editorial Board of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 22 May 2014, < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-pzKKzK9iE> > [accessed 20 August 2015]; 'Temu aktual'nosti literaturotsentrichnogo obrazovaniia v Rossii rassmatrivaui v AltGU', *EdCluster.ru*, 12 May 2015, < <http://www.edcluster.ru/PressReleaseedcluster/PressReleaseShow.asp?ID=555301> > [accessed 31 May 2015].

⁹⁵⁷ For the discussion of interpretation and resistance to the neoliberal educational reforms and principles by the educated elites of the post-Soviet space see Elena Minina, 'Neoliberalism and Education in Russia: Global and Local Dynamics in Post-Soviet Educational Reform' (unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2013). For an example of a highly resistant to these (and other) reforms Russophile approach to education and teaching Russian literature see V. Iu. Troitskii, *Sud'by russkoi shkoly* (Moscow: Institut russkoi tsivilizatsii, 2010).

литературу было максимальным – 6 часов в неделю! Чтобы спасти Отечество, нужно читать «Войну и мир» и другие произведения».⁹⁵⁸ Another participant of the forum, O. M. Krainik, warned of the reform's consequences for the mentality of citizens in Gor'kii's terms: 'Последствия кризиса могут быть очень серьёзными. Однако сдаваться никто не согласился. «Мы уже на дне, нужно оттолкнуться и пойти вверх».' The methodologist laments the removal of literature teaching's upbringing role evoking Pushkin and Gogol': «Береги честь смолоду» или «...а больше всего береги и копи копеечку: эта вещь надёжнее всего на свете...»? Another methodologist, E. O. Galitskikh, declared that the consensus of all teachers of literature ("vsem mirom" uchitel'ia) is 'against formalism, indifference, ratings,' because 'literature is needed for life, to reflect consciousness, emotional experience and intellectual tension within personality' and calls for avoiding dry intellectual analysis of texts, often unread, and for substituting this by a 'literary reading' that would 'ignite thoughts and emotions in children.' Significantly, the article describing the forum of the Association was entitled 'The Victory is Ours' ('Pobeda za nami').⁹⁵⁹ While the Stalinist ideology underpinning much of the original 1930s literary history teaching had ostensibly been abandoned, the discourse of those times persisted. Similarly, the understanding of collective emotional identity, with its romantic notions of noble struggle, collective victory and similar 'idealistic' goals, remained, and was increasingly perceived (in traditional style) as a bulwark against the 'western' model of well-being, rationality, or convenience.

⁹⁵⁸ 'Pobeda za nami', *Literaturnaia gazeta (Slovesnik)* 23, 11 June 2014, < <http://www.lgz.ru/article/-23-6466-11-06-2014/pobeda-za-nami/> > [accessed 20 August 2014].

⁹⁵⁹ 'Pobeda za nami', *Literaturnaia gazeta (Slovesnik)*.

Thus this thesis suggested an approach to the study of identity in a literature-centric nation that employs fiction to produce, in the words of Vladimir Vysotskii, 'bookish children'. And in turn, the last stanza of Vysotskii's 'The Ballade of Struggle', honours the subjects of my study while itself subscribing to the Soviet values that they had learned in their extended contact with books, both inside and outside the schoolroom:

Если, путь прорубая
Отцовским мечом,
Ты солёные слёзы
На ус намотал,
Если в жарком бою
Испытал, что почём, -
Значит, нужные книги
Ты в детстве читал! ⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁶⁰ Vladimir Vysotskii, 'Ballada o bor'be' (1975) < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkfbIR4U6d0> > [accessed 31 May 2015]. Vysotskii, V. S., 'Ballada o bor'be' (1975) < <http://www.kulichki.com/vv/pesni/sred-oplyvshix-svechej-i.html> > [accessed 1 September 2015]

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APPENDICES

а. Appendix 1

Предлагаемая программа распределяет художественные произведения, предназначенные для чтения на 1-м и 2-м годах обучения в школе II-й ступени, по нескольким категориям или литературным группам, располагая эти последние по степени трудности их для учащихся. [...]

Конечно, указанные группы (и самая терминология) очень условны, как условно и отнесение отдельных произведений в ту или иную группу.⁹⁶¹

1-й год

I. Фантастическая группа.

1. Русские народные сказки, былины, легенды.
2. Сказки Пушкина, Жуковского.
3. Баллады Жуковского, Пушкина, Толстого А.
(Произведения этих трех рубрик – по выбору преподавателя.)
4. Ашик-Кериб – Лермонтова.
5. Майская ночь – Гоголя (или другой рассказ из «Вечеров»).
6. Вий – Гоголя.
7. Ундина – Жуковского.
8. Песня о соколе – Горького.
9. Сон Макара – Короленко.
10. *Attalea princeps* – Гаршина

II. Гуманистическая группа.

1. Станционный смотритель – Пушкина.
2. Шинель – Гоголя.
3. Муму – Тургенева.
4. Тоска – Чехова.
5. Гостинец – Андреева Л.
6. В ночь под светлый праздник – Короленко.
7. В дурном обществе – Короленко.
8. Старый звонарь – Короленко.

III. Героическо-идеалистическая группа.

1. Полтава – Пушкина.
2. Тарас Бульба – Гоголя.
3. Мцыри – Лермонтова.
4. Борис Годунов – Пушкина.
5. Челкаш – Горького.

⁹⁶¹ *Primernaia programma po literature dlia shkoly II-oi stupeni* (Moscow: Narodnyi kommissariat po prosveshcheniiu, Otdel edinoi trudovoi shkoly, 1921), pp. 15-16.

6. Хаджи-Мурат – Л. Толстого.
7. Красный цветок – Гаршина.

IV. Художественно-реалистическая группа.

1. Капитанская дочка – Пушкина.
2. Тамань – Лермонтова
3. Ася – Тургенева.
4. Казаки – Толстого.

V. Сатирическая группа.

1. Недоросль – Фонвизина.
2. Ревизор – Гоголя.

2-й год

VI. Социально-художественная группа.

1. Горе от ума – Грибоедова.
2. Евгений Онегин – Пушкина.
3. 3. Княжна Мери – Лермонтова.
4. Рудин – Тургенева.
5. Саша – Некрасова.
6. Дядя Ваня – Чехова.
7. Утро помещика – Толстого Л.
8. Власть земли – Глеба Успенского
9. Мужики – Чехова.
10. Бедность не порок – Островского.
11. Молох – Куприна.
12. Белое золото – Мамина-Сибиряка.
13. Севастопольские рассказы – Толстого Л.
14. Записки из Мертвого дома – Достоевского.
15. На дне – Горького.

VII. Философская группа.

1. Медный всадник – Пушкина.
2. Моцарт и Сальери – Пушкина.
3. Демон – Лермонтова.
4. Дон-Жуан – А. Толстого.
5. Хозяин и работник – Толстого Л.
6. Смерть Ивана Ильича – Толстого Л.
7. Слепой музыкант – Короленко.
8. Анатэма – Андреева.

Примечания.

В зависимости от состава класса, некоторые произведения могут переноситься из одного года в другой.

b. Appendix 2

Примерный список произведений для исторического изучения III год.⁹⁶²

Устное поэтическое творчество. Лирика. Старины. Сказки. Духовные стихи.
Старинная русская письменность. Слово о полку Игореве. Повесть об Юлиании Лазаревской. Повести об Ереме, о Горе-Злочастии, о Савве Грудцыне, о Фроле Скобееве.
Ломоносов – Лирика.
Фонвизин – Недоросль.
Державин – Фелица. Бог. Памятник. Жизнь Званская.
Радищев. Путешествие из Петербурга в Москву (избранные главы).
Карамзин – Бедная Лиза. Что нужно автору.
Жуковский – Теон и Эсхий. Камознс. Светлана. Невыразимое.
Грибоедов – Горе от ума.
Пушкин – Лирика. Поэмы. Евгений Онегин. Борис Годунов. Скупой рыцарь. Моцарт и Сальери. Повести Белкина.
Лермонтов – Лирика. Мцыри. Демон. Герой нашего времени. Песня про купца Калашникова.
Гоголь – Вечера на хуторе. Тарас Бульба. Старосветские помещики. Повесть о том как поссорился Иван Иванович с Иваном Никифоровичом. Шинель. Портрет. Ревизор. Мертвые души.
Кольцов, Баратынский, Тютчев, Фет, Некрасов – избранные лирические стихотворения. (11)
Герцен – Былое и Думы (отрывки).
Тургенев – Записки охотника. Рудин. Дворянское гнездо. Накануне. Отцы и дети. Новь. Стихотворения в прозе.
Гончаров – Обломов.
Островский – Свои люди сочтемся, или Бедность не порок. Доходное место. Гроза. Снегурочка.
Салтыков-Щедрин – Сказки (три-четыре по выбору преподавателя).
Пошехонская старина.
Достоевский – Бедные люди. Братья Карамазовы или Преступление и наказание. Толстой – Детство. Отрочество и юность. Война и мир. Хаджи-Мурат. Исповедь. Алеша Горшок.
Гл. Успенский – Нравы Растеряевой улицы. Власть земли.
Гаршин – Художники. Красный цветок.
Короленко – Сон Макара. Слепой музыкант. Река играет. Лес шумит.
Чехов – Степь. Мужики. Вишневый сад.
М. Горький – Челкаш. Песнь о соколе. Бывшие люди. Песнь о буреветнике. На дне. Мать. Детство.
Л. Андреев. – Жили- были. Молчание. Жизнь человека.
Бальмонт, Брюсов, Блок – избранные стихотворения.
Крестьянские и пролетарские поэты нашего времени.

⁹⁶² *Primernaia programma po literature dlia shkoly II-oi stupeni* (Moscow: Narodnyi kommissariat po prosveshcheniiu, Otdel edinoi trudovoi shkoly, 1921), pp. 11-12.

с. Appendix 3

Compulsory programme ⁹⁶³

Восьмой класс

1-я четверть

Былины 2 часа (городской вариант)/3 часа (сельский вариант)

Слово о полку Игореве 4/4

Песнь о Роланде 4/4

Державин. Приглашение к обеду. Фелица 3/4

Фонвизин. Недоросль 5/6

Радищев. Расправа с ассессором (Отрывок из «Путешествия из Петербурга в Москву») 4/6

2-я четверть

Рылеев. Гражданин 3/4

Жуковский. Теон и Эсхин. Светлана 4/5

Грибоедов. Горе от ума (вместе со статьей А. В. Луначарского. «А. С. Грибоедов») 11/24

3-я четверть

Пушкин. Евгений Онегин (с включением статьи Белинского об Евгении Онегине) 14/18

Лермонтов. Герой нашего времени 10/12

4-я четверть

Гоголь. Мертвые души 8/10

Белинский. О «Мертвых душах» Гоголя, «Письмо к Гоголю» и остальной материал, входящий в тему «Белинский» 4/5

Пушкин. Цыгане, Медный всадник. Стихотворения: К морю, Ангар, Цветок, Брожу ли я вдоль улиц шумных, Вновь я посетил, Поэт, Памятник 4/5

Повторение 4/7

Общее количество часов 84/108

Девятый класс

1-я четверть

Гончаров. Обломов (в связи со статьей Добролюбова «Что такое обломовщина») 8/10

Островский. Гроза (в связи со статьей Добролюбова «Луч света в темном царстве») 6/6

Тургенев. Отцы и дети 12/12

Чернышевский. Что делать? 7/8

2-я четверть

Чернышевский. Что делать? (продолжение) 5/6

⁹⁶³ *Khudozhestvennaia literatura v nepolnoi i srednei shkole, instruktivno-metodicheskii material (sostavlenn po dannym vyborochnogo obsledovaniia shkol v 1935 g.), 2nd edition (Narkompros, Uchpedgiz, 1936), pp. 22-24.*

Достоевский. Преступление и наказание 20/22
Толстой. Анна Каренина (начало работы) 2/4

3-я четверть

Толстой. Анна Каренина. (продолжение) 14/14
Некрасов. Кому на Руси жить хорошо. 14/16
Салтыков/Щедрин. Господа Головлевы. 8/10

4-я четверть

Салтыков Щедрин. Господа Головлевы (продолжение) 6/7
Пушкин. Скупой рыцарь, Эхо, Чернь, Поэту, К. А. П. Керн, Разговор
книгопродавца с поэтом, Памятник 7/9
Чехов. Вишневый сад. Крыжовник 12/14
Повторение курса 30/36
Общее количество часов 126/144

Десятый класс

1-я четверть

Сведения по теории литературы 3/3
Горький. Коновалов. Дело Артамоновых 13/18
Блок. Вхожу ли я в темные храмы. Незнакомка. Двенадцать 8/8
Брюсов. Юному поэту. Ассаргадон. Грядущие гунны. Городу. Товарищам
интеллигентам (Третья осень) 8/8
Коцюбинский. Фата Моргана 7/8

2-я четверть

Бедный. Про землю, про волю. Генерал Шкура. На защиту Красного Питера
6/7
Серафимович. Железный поток 10/10
Гладков. Цемент 8/9
Фадеев. Разгром 8/9
Сведения по теории литературы 4/5

3-4 четверти

Маяковский. Война объявлена, Товарищу Нетте – пароходу и человеку. Во
весь голос 12
Шолохов. Поднятая целина 12
Шекспир. Гамлет 16