Production of Sensibility: Institutions and Discourses of Russian Sentimentalism

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SHORT ABSTRACT

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This thesis offers a study of Russian sentimentalism—a late-eighteenth-century literary movement focused on the depiction of emotions and experiences of private individuals. Drawing on a wide range of primary sources, including the original works and translations published in Russia; French, German and English writings of the time; private correspondence and memoirs, it situates Russian literature of sensibility in the institutional, intellectual and literary contexts that shaped it.

The thesis argues that sentimentalism played a central role in the development of the public sphere and the associated new culture of privacy and interiority in the Russian Empire.

It reconstructs the networks of institutions, including secret and learned societies, schools, literary associations and print media, that facilitated the production and circulation of sentimentalist writing, and shows how the literature of sensibility was promoted in the educational institutions of the time. It argues that sentimentalism occupied an ambiguous position in a rapidly expanding literary field, contributing, in the writings of Nikolai Karamzin, to the professionalisation of authorship while remaining rooted in amateur literary practices.

Focusing on the texts themselves, the thesis identifies short, first-person meditative prose as the key and previously understudied genre of Russian sentimentalism, tracing its connections to European models, particularly the French prose poems. It analyses the models of subjectivity articulated in these writings, showing how they draw on tradition of spiritual

exercises, sensualist philosophy and emerging culture of leisure, and how they promote new forms of self-discipline and self-cultivation. Finally, the thesis examines the broader cultural impact of Russian sentimentalism, arguing that it helped shape individual and collective identities of the Russian elite. Through print culture, it created imagined communities of readers and contributed to new attitudes towards the self, the local nature and the national past among the educated classes of the Russian Empire.

LONG ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines late eighteenth-century Russian sentimentalist literature. It reconstructs the institutional setting and print culture that created the conditions for the production and dissemination of fictional and semi-fictional texts concerned with the emotions and experiences of private individuals. It analyses these texts, outlining their key generic characteristics and identifying the literary models that informed them. It further investigates the relationship between the conceptions of the self underlying sentimentalist literature and the broader intellectual traditions of the eighteenth century. It explores the role of this literary movement in the development of the Russian literary field. Finally, it addresses the cultural impact of Russian sentimentalism, seeking to clarify the role it played in shaping the attitudes, beliefs, practices and identities of the educated classes of the Russian Empire.

As a literary movement associated with such canonical authors as Aleksandr Radishchev and Nikolai Karamzin, Russian sentimentalism has generated a substantial body of scholarship. Since the nineteenth century, extensive research has been devoted to its key authors and texts. A number of illuminating studies have examined the genres of Russian sentimentalist literature, including the literary travelogue and the tale, as well as its style and its significance for the transformation of the Russian literary language. Other work has explored the philosophical and political background to the writings of Radishchev and Karamzin, along with their literary and self-fashioning strategies. More recent scholarship has convincingly situated individual authors, works and aspects of Russian sentimentalism within the broader context of pan-European

intellectual and cultural history of the age of Enlightenment. However, no comparable attempt has been made with Russian sentimentalism taken as a whole and considered as the product of the collective efforts of dozens of individuals rather than of two or three canonical authors. The key contribution of this thesis, therefore, lies in offering a new account of Russian sentimentalism that firmly situates the movement within a range of contemporary social, cultural and intellectual contexts, and seeks to define its role in the fundamental transformations that characterised eighteenth-century Russia and Europe.

To this end, the thesis draws on a wide range of primary sources, including original works and translations published in late eighteenth-century Russian periodicals and as separate editions; French, German and English writings that were read, translated or referenced in Russia at the time; as well as private correspondence and memoirs. It approaches this body of material from several interconnected perspectives, informed by literary criticism, literary history, the history of ideas, cultural history and anthropology and the sociology of literature, among others, and united by an effort to thoroughly historicise the phenomenon under consideration. In developing an overarching interpretive framework for the study of Russian sentimentalism, the thesis takes as its point of departure the theory of the public sphere as formulated by Jürgen Habermas and subsequently revised in historical scholarship. According to this approach, a key development in eighteenth-century Europe was the emergence of the institutions and practices of the public sphere, which became a new source of political, social and cultural authority, complementing and often overshadowing the traditional authority of royal courts. This new sphere of debate, interaction and communication was shaped by the efforts of both the state and private individuals; for the latter, it offered ample opportunities for self-expression and self-exploration, contributing to the increasing visibility and prominence of the private sphere of love, family, friendship and interiority in eighteenth-century culture. In this context, literature

and the culture of sensibility emerged as crucial vehicles for the public articulation of this new form of private subjectivity.

Recent scholarship tends to agree that elements of this new culture of publicness were present in late eighteenth-century Russia, and that the country's educated elites were able to attain a degree of relative independence in the intellectual and cultural sphere. Against this backdrop, the thesis argues that sentimentalism played a major role in these processes by imagining and disseminating new models of subjectivity and new ways of relating to the world. For members of the Russian elite, the literature of sensibility offered a middle ground between the demands of strict self-discipline imposed by the state, religion or moral philosophy and the forms of leisurely self-cultivation more readily available to them than to the rest of society. The publication of sentimentalist writings became a collective practice through which the experiences and emotions of private individuals were represented and shared with the reading public via print media. The frequent similarities between these texts and their reliance on a limited repertoire of thoughts and feelings point to their status as instances of a particular cultural system, products of a distinctive discourse of the self that came to occupy a dominant position in Russian culture at the turn of the nineteenth century.

This thesis aims to reconstruct the institutional, intellectual and literary conditions that made possible the production and reception of this discourse, and to characterise its principal features. In doing so, it pursues three main lines of inquiry which come to the fore or recede into the background over the course of the chapters. First, it traces the emergence and development of the institutions—secret and learned societies, schools, literary associations and periodicals—that gave rise to the public sphere in which sentimentalist fiction was produced and circulated. Second, it examines the forms assumed by the majority of sentimentalist writings published at the time, discussing the literary models they followed. Finally, it explores

the understanding of the self articulated in these texts, identifying the intellectual sources of this model of subjectivity and its cultural impact.

Chapter 1 sketches the development of the literary public sphere during the reign of Catherine II. The political culture the empress sought to establish in the first decades of her rule entailed the transfer of a degree of agency to members of the educated classes who were encouraged to act for the benefit of the fatherland. Together with the expansion of the book trade, this fostered the development of literature and of the cultural sphere more broadly. In this context, the chapter focuses on the activities of Freemasons centred on the publisher Nikolai Novikov, who began his literary career in close proximity to Catherine's cultural projects but later turned to more independent pursuits, for which new opportunities had emerged. Driven by ideals of moral edification through reading and practices of self-examination, they made use of the infrastructure of a state educational institution—Moscow University and its printing house—to create a network of literary associations and periodicals through which to disseminate their ideas. A number of students were recruited and supported to participate in these literary activities as translators and editors. This environment proved conducive to the reception of European literature of sensibility which enjoyed considerable popularity in this milieu. The chapter demonstrates that this powerful infrastructure remained largely intact even after Catherine's persecution of Novikov and other Moscow Freemasons in 1792. In the 1790s, its resources were largely redirected towards the publication of original and translated works of sentimentalism.

Chapter 2 shifts the focus from the institutional contexts in which sentimentalist writings were produced and published to the texts themselves. It argues that the key genre of Russian sentimentalism—one that came to dominate periodicals in the 1790s but has been largely neglected in existing scholarship—was a form of short, first-person meditative prose centred

on the depiction of the experiences and perceptions of the individual self. The chapter identifies English, French and German literary parallels and models for this genre, demonstrating that the closest analogies to the Russian works are to be found in the tradition of the French prose poem, which was widely translated and read in Russia in the late 1780s, on the eve of the emergence of original Russian examples of the genre. Close readings of individual pieces of sentimentalist meditative prose, together with discussions of the discourses that informed them, form one of the guiding threads of the thesis, reappearing at key moments in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

The examination of the institutional setting of Russian sentimentalism is continued in Chapter 3. It explores how, in the late eighteenth century, the reading and translation of the literature of sensibility became part of the educational process, emerging as an exercise in the teaching of languages and rhetoric. It argues that this educational background played a major role in the development of Russian sentimentalism, ensuring the familiarity of educated youth with sentimentalist fiction and inculcating its values of privacy and interiority. Chapter 4 focuses on a different set of institutional dynamics—namely, the role of sentimentalism in the formation of the Russian literary field. The final decades of the eighteenth century were marked by the expansion of the publishing industry and the book trade, leading to the gradual professionalisation of literature. In relation to these developments, Russian sentimentalism occupied an ambiguous position. On the one hand, the chapter shows how Nikolai Karamzin sought to raise awareness of the professional status of writers, including through his engagement with questions of copyright and the concept of authorship. At the same time, he could not entirely leave behind the view of literature as a leisurely pursuit rather than a proper profession, and Russian sentimentalism as a whole, while benefiting greatly from the expansion of the publishing industry, remained largely amateur in character.

Alongside the examination of genres and institutions, these chapters analyse in detail the various models of the self underlying Russian sentimentalist literature and offer an interpretation of their cultural function. Chapter 2 argues that the depiction of the self in sentimentalist meditative prose is informed by practices of self-discipline and self-cultivation, deriving from the ancient Greek and Roman tradition of spiritual exercises and from more modern forms of aesthetic contemplation of nature, which, as the chapter demonstrates, were well known in the educated circles in which the literature of sensibility circulated. Chapter 3 argues that the sentimentalist model of subjectivity was further shaped by the tradition of sensualist philosophy, which, as is shown, enjoyed considerable prominence among late eighteenth-century Russian intellectuals and influenced contemporary pedagogical thought. Chapter 4 considers a different model of the self that emerged in Russian literature of sensibility, particularly in the writings of Karamzin and his followers—one less constrained by the demands of self-discipline and didacticism and more open to the self-indulgent pursuit of pleasures, including sensual ones. The chapter relates this vision of an emancipated self to shifts in the attitudes and practices of the Russian elite associated with the spread of luxury and the culture of leisure. Finally, Chapter 5 argues that the print culture of Russian sentimentalism produced imagined communities of readers based on shared responses to memorable narratives often linked to specific locations. It further suggests that Russian sentimentalism contributed to the emergence of new attitudes towards local geography and the national past, thereby shaping not only individual but also collective identities among the educated classes of the Russian Empire, who, by the turn of the nineteenth century, combined an intensified attention to interiority with an equally strong sense of national belonging.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis studies late-eighteenth-century Russian sentimentalist literature. Sentimentalism occupies a rather ambiguous place in Russian literary history. Its importance for the general development of Russian literature is hardly in doubt, as it played a key role in setting the stage for the arrival of Romanticism by promoting a new focus on the individual self, the expression of feelings, the creative imagination and nature.[1] Yet in so doing, it participated in a broader shift in attitudes and literary practices that was also evident in the writings of a range of authors who had little or nothing to do with sentimentalism, including such a towering and unclassifiable figure as Gavriil Derzhavin. The poems of Edward Young and James Macpherson's Ossian, whose reception shaped much of Russian literature of sensibility, equally influenced self-professed critics of sentimentality, who sought to address religious and national themes in an archaic language and a sublime style.[2] Similarly, another prominent literary phenomenon of the time, nascent Gothic fiction, while certainly cognate with sentimentalism, also had its own distinctive history and set of characteristics.[3] Overall, the picture of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Russian literature was not one of clear-cut divisions but rather of a variety of intertwined trends and intermediary positions between the two poles of 'archaists' and 'innovators', both of whom combined, in different proportions, Neoclassical and Romantic modes of writing.[4] In this context, sentimentalism emerges in close connection with preromanticism, either as one of its variations or as its counterpart, and is often

[1] Andrew Kahn, 'Russian Literature between Classicism and Romanticism: Poetry, Feeling, Subjectivity', in *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism*, ed. by Paul Hamilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 493–511.
[2] Iu. D. Levin, *Vospriiatie angliiskoi literatury v Rossii: Issledovaniia i materialy* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1990); Iu. D. Levin, *Ossian v russkoi literature (konets XVIII – pervaia tret' XIX veka)* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980).
[3] V. E. Vatsuro, *Goticheskii roman v Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002).
[4] Iu. N. Tynianov, 'Arkhaisty i Pushkin', in Tynianov, *Pushkin i ego sovremenniki* (Moscow: Nauka, 1968), pp. 23–121; Iu. M. Lotman, 'Poeziia 1790–1810-kh godov', in *Poety 1790–1810-kh godov*, ed. by M. G. Al'tshuller and Iu. M. Lotman (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1971), pp. 5–62.

seen as an anticipation of Romanticism.[5] The recently published *New Cambridge History of Russian Literature* takes this approach to an extreme by treating sentimentalism, reduced to the literary expression of melancholy, in only a couple of pages and regarding it solely as a prelude to Romanticism (itself, in turn, reduced to Vasilii Zhukovskii).[6]

Moreover, the two canonical authors associated with sentimentalism, Aleksandr Radishchev and Nikolai Karamzin, are readily detachable from the context of this literary movement and are often treated with little reference to it. Radishchev, whose *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu* (1790) combined a sentimentalist travelogue with political critique and led to the author's persecution by Catherine II, may be seen as an early representative of Russian radical thought, influenced by the French Enlightenment and displaying a sensitivity to the plight of enserfed peasants that anticipated the social awareness of nineteenth-century Russian literature.[7] Karamzin, by contrast, produced a range of works, not all of them equally 'sentimental' in character, that may be regarded as early examples of the psychological prose later developed by subsequent generations of writers; at the same time, as a state historian and conservative political thinker, he contributed decisively to the shaping of what became the ideology of Official Nationality in Nicholas I's Russian Empire. So marked were the differences between Radishchev and Karamzin, both politically and stylistically, that in Soviet scholarship Russian sentimentalism was divided into two conflicting strands associated with these two

[5] For example, see Rudolf Neuhäuser, *Towards the Romantic Age: Essays on Sentimental and Preromantic Literature in Russia* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974).
[6] Ilya Vinitsky, 'Sentimentalism and Romanticism', in *The New Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, ed. by Simon Franklin, Rebecca Reich and Emma Widdis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 71–88 (pp. 71–3).
[7] On the changing approaches to studying Radishchev, see A. A. Kostin, 'Pisateli, kotorykh ne bylo? "Predshestvenniki" Radishcheva i konstruirovanie istoriko-literaturnogo kanona', in *Chteniia Otdela russkoi literatury XVIII veka*, vol. 8, ed. by A. A. Kostin (Moscow and Saint Petersburg: Al'ians-Arkheo, 2018), pp. 65–116.

major authors, one 'progressive' or 'democratic' and the other 'reactionary' or 'noble'. This division impeded the emergence of a coherent interpretation of the movement as a whole.[8]

An attempt to overcome these simplistic divisions was made by Natal'ia Kochetkova, whose 1994 study remains the most detailed treatment of Russian sentimentalism to date.[9] Rich in factual material and observations, and comprehensive in its command of primary and secondary sources, it nevertheless does not fully articulate a clear argument about late-eighteenth-century Russian literature of sensibility, struggling to differentiate between the phenomenon itself and its intellectual and cultural background, and largely ignoring its institutional setting. The rest of the existing scholarship on Russian sentimentalism has instead tended either to focus on individual authors and genres or to examine the role played by this kind of literature in contemporary cultural life. A number of important studies have investigated the place of sentimental travelogues and narrative fiction, especially the works of Radishchev and Karamzin, in Russian literary, intellectual and cultural history.[10] In what is arguably the most important study of Karamzin ever written, Iurii Lotman examines the writer's strategies of self-fashioning and the significance of his literary persona for his contemporaries and posterity.[11] In one of the most recent influential works on Russian sentimentalism, Andrei Zorin's 2016 monograph, the literature of sensibility is discussed in terms of its cultural

[8] For a book-length statement of this approach, see P. A. Orlov, *Russkii sentimentalizm* (Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1977).
[9] N. D. Kochetkova, *Literatura russkogo sentimentalizma (Esteticheskie i khudozhestvennye iskaniia)* (Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 1994).
[10] Gitta Hammarberg, *From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin's Sentimentalist Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790–1840* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000); Andrew Kahn, 'Self and Sensibility in Radishchev's *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*: Dialogism, Relativism, and the Moral Spectator', in *Self and Story in Russian History*, ed. by Laura Engelstein and Stephanie Sandler (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 280–304; Andrew Kahn, 'Nikolai Karamzin's Discourses of Enlightenment', in Nikolai Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveller*, transl. by Andrew Kahn (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004), pp. 459–551; Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006); Rodolphe Baudin, *Nikolaï Karamzine à Strasbourg. Un écrivain-voyageur russe dans l'Alsace révolutionnaire (1789)* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2011), and others.
[11] Iu. M. Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina* (Moscow: Kniga, 1987).

function, as a provider of models of feeling and behaviour that shaped the selves of the educated classes in Russian society at the time.[12] Drawing on the insights of all these works, this thesis aims to offer a new account of Russian sentimentalism, seeking to combine attention to literary form with a discussion of the intellectual contexts, institutional foundations and cultural functions of the literature of sensibility in Russia.

Understanding Russian sentimentalism is impossible without reference to the broader European trend of which it formed a local variation. In recent accounts of eighteenth-century intellectual and social developments associated with the notion of the Enlightenment, the literature and culture of sensibility occupy a significant, if not central, position, being understood as firmly grounded in contemporary contexts and circumstances.[13] The philosophical background to the rise of sentimentalism was provided by some of the most influential thinkers of the age, including John Locke, with his seminal reassessment of the role of sensation in cognition; the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson, with their theory of the moral sense; as well as Adam Smith, with his insistence on sympathy as a governing force of social life. Whatever differences separated these teachings, in their popular reception their elements were combined to produce a vision of a sensitive individual endowed with developed sensibility, natural benevolence and fellow-feeling, resulting in a capacity for intense emotion, an inclination to virtue and responsiveness to the plight of others. It was this conception of the self that came to underlie much sentimentalist writing of the period.[14] The degree of direct engagement with these theories in eighteenth-century Russia was uneven.

[12] A. L. Zorin, *Poiavlenie geroia. Iz istorii russkoi emotsional'noi kul'tury kontsa XVIII – nachala XIX veka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2016); Andrei Zorin, *The Emergence of a Hero: A Tale of Romantic Love in Russia around 1800*, transl. by Leo Shtutin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

[13] Sensibility figures prominently in such recent synthetic accounts of the age of Enlightenment as Ritchie Robertson, *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness, 1680–1790* (London: Allen Lane, 2020) and Steffen Martus, *Aufklärung: Das deutsche 18. Jahrhundert – ein Epochenbild* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2015).

[14] For more on this, see Gerhard Sauder, *Empfindsamkeit*, vol. 1: *Voraussetzungen und Elemente* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974), pp. 65–85.

There is ample evidence that the leading Russian sentimentalists—Karamzin, Radishchev and Mikhail Murav'ev—were well acquainted with Locke, Smith and even Shaftesbury, to the extent of quoting or translating their works.[15] At the same time, as Andrew Kahn notes, the majority of Russian 'authors are at second or third remove from their philosophical sources', confining themselves to the 'literary application of philosophical ideas' rather than to their 'systematic analysis'.[16] Shaftesbury, for example, was virtually unknown in Russia, yet he exerted a considerable influence on a range of German writers, including Moses Mendelssohn, Johann Georg Sulzer and Christoph Martin Wieland, who were widely read and translated at the time, thereby ensuring the transmission of his ideas through intermediary texts.[17] In any case, then, the intellectual premises of Russian sentimentalism can ultimately be traced back to their European roots.

The focus on sense perception in epistemology and on spontaneous emotional reactions in moral philosophy was accompanied by a broader shift in scientific outlook, which gave new prominence to physical sensibility in accounts of human life and the natural world.[18] The introduction of the concepts of sensibility and irritability in medicine, advanced by Albrecht von Haller, together with the general development of physiology and a growing interest in the mind–body problem, significantly affected the ways in which characters came to be represented in eighteenth-century European literature, which increasingly explored the somatic experiences and psychological paradoxes at the heart of human behaviour.[19] As Valeria Sobol has

[15] See Kochetkova, *Literatura russkogo sentimentalizma*, passim. See also Chapter 3 of this thesis.
[16] Kahn, 'Nikolai Karamzin's Discourses of Enlightenment', p. 471.
[17] On Shaftesbury's reception in Germany, see Mark-Georg Dehrmann, *Das "Orakel der Deisten": Shaftesbury und die deutsche Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008).
[18] Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); Stephen Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism and the Rise of Sensibility: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1680–1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[19] Anne C. Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998); Catherine J. Minter, 'Literary *Empfindsamkeit* and Nervous Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Modern Language Review*, 96, 4

demonstrated, traces of European philosophical and medical theories of the self and the body may be discerned in the vocabulary and imagery of many works of Russian sentimentalism.[20] The leading figures of Russian literature of sensibility explicitly addressed theoretical questions concerning the interaction between body and mind and the immortality of the soul, with Karamzin engaging closely with the writings of Mendelssohn, Johann Kaspar Lavater and Charles Bonnet on the subject and Radishchev producing an entire treatise, *O cheloveke, o ego smertnosti i bessmertii*, which draws on a wide range of European works concerned with similar problems.[21]

Yet, while the sentimentalist understanding of the workings of the self and the nature of sociability can be linked to cutting-edge developments in philosophy, science and medicine, sentimentalism in many respects also exhibits affinities with attitudes and practices associated with Christianity. It has often been argued that, in its assertion of the primacy of feeling over reason, its promotion of benevolence and philanthropy and its insistence on interiority and self-examination through writing, sentimentalism emerges as a secularised inheritor of such religious movements as Methodism in England or Pietism in Germany.[22] In the case of the Russian Empire, a comparable role as a precursor to sentimentalism is often attributed to Freemasonry.[23] While Russian Freemasonry—which, in general, lacked a coherent religious or cultural programme and was largely confined to a small minority of the educated elite— is not

(2001), 1016–28; Alexander Košenina, *Literarische Anthropologie: Die Neuentdeckung des Menschen* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2016).

[20] Valeria Sobol, 'Nerves, Brain, or Heart? The Physiology of Emotions and the Mind-Body Problem in Russian Sentimentalism', *Russian Review*, 65, 1 (2006), 1–14. See also Andrei Kostin, 'Radishchev's *Diary of One Week* as a Story of Madness', in *Emotion und Kognition: Transformationen in der europäischen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Sonja Koroliov (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 107–16.

[21] On the sources of Radishchev's treatise, see I. I. Lapshin, *Filosofskie vzgliady A. N. Radishcheva* (Petrograd: Byloe, 1922); A. N. Radishchev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2 (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1941), pp. 370–84 (annotations by Grigorii Gukovskii).

[22] Sauder, *Empfindsamkeit*, vol. 1, pp. 58–64; Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), pp. 21–3.

[23] Natalia Kochetkova, 'Le sentimentalisme russe et la franc-maçonnerie', *Revue des études slaves*, 74, 4 (2002–2003), 689–700.

directly comparable to mass religious movements, which attracted thousands of adherents from all social strata, its contribution to the shaping of Russian literature and the culture of sensibility is beyond doubt and will be a recurring theme in the chapters that follow (see especially Chapters 1, 2 and 3). The difficulty of identifying a precise position for sentimentalism vis-à-vis science or religion is indicative of a broader set of challenges that arise when examining the social and intellectual implications of eighteenth-century culture of sensibility, which has proved extremely difficult to pin down to any single ideology or political position.

There exists a long-established tendency to link sentimentalism with progressive or even radical causes. In his seminal study, William Reddy interprets the emotional excesses of the culture of sensibility as a reaction against the oppressive constraints of the Ancien Régime and connects them with the Jacobins.[24] According to Lynn Hunt, the compassion for the sufferings of others disseminated by sentimentalist fiction contributed to the articulation of the idea of human rights and informed the abolitionist movement.[25] Yet, as David Denby demonstrates in his study of French literature of sensibility, sentimentalist rhetoric was used by both supporters and opponents of the French Revolution, as it was equally possible to couch in the language of feeling and sympathy the conservative utopia of social harmony and the radical critique of economic inequality and abuses of power.[26] Many scholars adopt a more measured assessment of the degree of political radicalism inherent in sentimentalism. They argue that, in the majority of cases, the responses of the culture of sensibility to virtue in distress, the predicaments of poverty, the cruelties of colonialism and other social ills oscillated between an altruistic attempt to understand and pity others and an egotistic self-indulgence, as if sentimentalists were seeking

[24] William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[25] Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2007).
[26] David J. Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

to find a precarious middle ground between the expression of sympathy and the pursuit of self-interest—described by Adam Smith as two fundamental drives shaping social life—and often sliding into the self-comforting position of a privileged voyeuristic observer who quite enjoys the spectacle of human misfortune.[27] A similar tension is readily identifiable in the Russian case, where sentimentalism encompassed Radishchev's radical critique of serfdom and slavery, Karamzin's more moderate compassion for the poor as well as numerous instances of outright self-indulgence. Such shifts from one position to another, and back again, often occur within the same text, as the self-undermining narrator with fluctuating moods and attitudes is a characteristic feature of the literature of sensibility.[28]

Perhaps nowhere is the fundamental ambiguity of the culture of sensibility more evident than in its role in the transformation of family structures and notions of gender and sexuality in European societies, for which the eighteenth century is generally considered a pivotal epoch.[29] On the one hand, sentimentalism, with its attention to emotions and the feeling body, corresponded to the emergence of a more positive attitude towards sensual, this-worldly pleasures, including those of love and sex, in the age of Enlightenment.[30] What is more, its visions of the weeping men of feeling, of tender friendships and of other forms of human companionship beyond the model of the heteronormative family—visions that often frustrated not only nineteenth-century posterity but also many contemporaries, who were preoccupied with the fear of emasculation ostensibly stemming from excessive sensibility—open up

[27] See, among others, Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Thomas Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction: Ethics, Social Critique and Philanthropy', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780*, ed. by John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 572–601; Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
[28] This set of questions has been extensively explored in Kirill Ospovat, '*Poor Liza* and Russia's Sentimental Marketplace' (a talk at the Jordan Center, New York University, 11 December 2020). I thank Kirill Ospovat for sharing with me a manuscript of his forthcoming study on which this talk was based.
[29] Karen Harvey, 'The Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies, and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 45, 4 (2002), 899–916.
[30] For an overview, see Robertson, *The Enlightenment*, pp. 301–7.

eighteenth-century sentimentalism to readings that emphasise its subversion of gender norms and its reworking of traditional understandings of masculinity and femininity.[31] At the same time, however, many scholars argue that European sentimentalism, and especially the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, contributed to the emergence, at the turn of the nineteenth century, of a modern patriarchal order that strictly limited upper-class women's participation in the public sphere and assigned them the roles of wives and mothers responsible for household management and child-rearing.[32]

The Russian case broadly conformed to these developments. As Michelle Lamarche Marrese has demonstrated, eighteenth-century Russian noblewomen enjoyed property rights denied to their European counterparts. Yet, over the course of the nineteenth century, they were gradually deprived of this agency, as the slowly developing Russian legal framework ultimately imposed upon them a patriarchal order. This legal discrimination was underpinned both by traditional Christian notions of a wife's obedience to her husband and by new, Western-influenced ideas that associated femininity with the private sphere, advocated women's separation from public life and valorised domesticity and motherhood as women's proper occupations—ideas already present in Catherine II's *Ustav blagochiniia* (1782) and more fully articulated in the age of Nicholas I.[33] Elsewhere, Marrese has traced the emergence, in the second half of the eighteenth century, of a new female identity in Russia based on motherhood and affectionate spousal love, as evidenced in the letters of noblewomen, some of whom drew

[31] For more on this, see G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Gitta Hammarberg, 'Gender Ambivalence and Genre Anomalies in Late 18th–Early 19th-Century Russian Literature', *Russian Literature*, 52, 1–3 (2002), 299–326; W. Daniel Wilson, 'But Is It Gay? Kissing, Friendship, and 'Pre-Homosexual' Discourses in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Modern Language Review*, 103, 3 (2008), 767–83.
[32] For a comprehensive discussion, see the essays collected in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. by Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
[33] Michelle Lamarche Marrese, 'Gender and the Legal Order in Imperial Russia', in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 326–43.

on European literature of sensibility in shaping their self-perception.[34] In her overview of the history of the Russian family, Barbara Engel, in a chapter tellingly entitled 'The Culture of Sensibility: 1761–1855', likewise examines the growing prominence of affectionate language used to express spousal, parental and filial sentiments during this period.[35] Taken together, these findings suggest that a new culture of domesticity began to take root among the upper classes of Russian society in the late eighteenth century.

Andrew Kahn draws attention to the promotion of the values of privacy and domesticity in Karamzin's *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, in which the Russian traveller praises English social life for the importance it accords to the family.[36] In Karamzin's poem 'Poslanie k zhenshchinam' (1795) and his society tale *Iuliia* (1796), the assertion of an inherently feminine, intuitive grasp of truth, set in contrast to masculine rational cognition, both elevates women and insists on their radical difference from men. The two sexes are thus presented as fundamentally incommensurable, their distinguishing features essentialised and understood as rooted in the respective constitutions of their bodies. The same tension between praising women as more 'natural' than men, as embodiments of virtue and possessors of innate good taste (and thus the ideal audience for literature) and simultaneously assigning them the role of passive recipients, inferior to the masculine creative author shaped Karamzin's literary programme as formulated in a number of poems and essays of the late 1790s and early 1800s. This programme was further developed and disseminated by his numerous followers, contributing to what Judith Vowles has termed 'the feminisation of Russian literature', in which the negotiation of gender identity

[34] Michelle Lamarche Marrese, 'Performing Womanhood in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Cultural Identity in the Letters of Ekaterina Rumiantseva and Dar'ia Saltykova', in *The Europeanized Elite in Russia, 1762–1825: Public Role and Subjective Self*, ed. by Andreas Schönle, Andrei Zorin and Alexei Evstratov (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), pp. 90–111.
[35] Barbara A. Engel, *Marriage, Household, and Home in Modern Russia: From Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), pp. 21–40.
[36] Kahn, 'Nikolai Karamzin's Discourses of Enlightenment', pp. 498–500, 511–3.

became a significant factor in both the production and the consumption of literature.[37] According to Marrese, by the early nineteenth century, amid the rise of concerns with national identity and language, on the one hand, and the spread of new notions of gender, on the other, women came to be viewed simultaneously as carriers of national traditions and virtues and as agents responsible for the corruption of the nation's language and morals.[38]

In all these processes and developments—whether through the celebration of domesticity, the representation of the female body with almost medical specificity, the conceptualisation of biologically grounded differences between men and women or the assignment of new roles to women in social and cultural life—sentimentalist literature played a not negligible role. Yet the paradox is that the end of the eighteenth century in Russia—a period when sentimentalism ostensibly sought to exclude women from the public sphere—saw a considerable rise in the number of women authors, many of whom, as Wendy Rosslyn has shown, published their writings in periodicals closely associated with sentimentalism.[39] Even if these numbers remain modest in comparative perspective—the anthology of Russian women poets of the period includes fewer than twenty names, in contrast to more than a hundred of their English counterparts in Roger Lonsdale's anthology[40]—this was nevertheless a decidedly new situation for the Russian literary field. The 1790s witnessed a proliferation of female

[37] Judith Vowles, 'The "Feminization" of Russian Literature: Women, Language, and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Russia', in *Women Writers in Russian Literature*, ed. by Toby W. Clyman and Diana Greene (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood, 1994), pp. 35–60. See also Gitta Hammarberg, 'The Feminine Chronotope and Sentimentalist Canon Formation', in *Literature, Lives, and Legality in Catherine's Russia*, ed. by Anthony G. Cross and Gerald S. Smith (Nottingham: Astra, 1994), pp. 103–20.

[38] Michelle Lamarche Marrese, '"The Poetics of Everyday Behavior" Revisited: Lotman, Gender, and the Evolution of Russian Noble Identity', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 11, 4 (2010), 701–39.

[39] Wendy Rosslyn, 'Making Their Way into Print: Poems by Eighteenth-Century Russian Women', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 78, 3 (2000), 407–38. See also Catriona Kelly, 'Sappho, Corinna, and Niobe: Genres and Personae in Russian Women's Writing, 1760–1820', in *A History of Women's Writing in Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 37–61.

[40] See *Russian Women Poets of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. and transl. by Amanda Ewington (Toronto: Iter Inc., 2014); *Eighteenth Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology*, ed. by Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

authors, including Ekaterina Svin'ina, Aleksandra Khvostova, Mariia Pospelova, Aleksandra and Natal'ia Magnitskaia, Aleksandra Murzina and others, whose prose and poetry, often published as separate collections, were informed by sentimentalist poetics. Insofar as Russian sentimentalism and the expanding publishing industry encouraged educated amateurs to see their writings into print, the literary situation at the end of the eighteenth century was conducive to the flourishing of female authorship and created opportunities for women writers to become, if not professionals, then at least publicly visible. Although the majority of women authors, certainly under the pressure of far stricter gender-specific prohibitions and expectations than their male counterparts, were prone to a high degree of didacticism in their texts, this did not prevent Khvostova from producing outstanding works—extremely popular at the time—which, as Sarah Dickinson argues, sought to forcefully articulate gendered emotions and experiences.[41] Even if Karamzin, in line with a broader late-eighteenth-century trend, in some of his writings tended to impose stricter gender boundaries and exclude women from the public sphere, he took an interest in Khvostova's work and offered his assistance in preparing it for a second edition, as she was a respected member of high society and came from a well-positioned family with which he maintained connections.[42] In short, the role of sentimentalism in the transformation of gender norms and roles in Russian society and the literary field was far from unambiguous, as it contributed to a series of contradictory developments.

Given that the literature of sensibility was such a multifaceted and variegated phenomenon, originating from diverse sources, operating in a wide range of contexts and supporting often conflicting causes, is it possible to offer an interpretation that situates it in the broader picture of eighteenth-century social and cultural history? Arguably the most influential

[41] Sarah Dickinson, 'Aleksandra Xvostova, Nikolaj Karamzin and the Gendering of *Toska*', in *Melancholic Identities,* Toska *and Reflective Nostalgia: Case Studies from Russian and Russian-Jewish Culture*, ed. by Sara Dickinson and Laura Salmon (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2015), pp. 31–56.
[42] See 'Perepiska N. M. Karamzina', *Bibliograficheskie zapiski*, 1, 19 (1858), 579–92 (p. 587).

attempt to do so remains *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) by Jürgen Habermas. In this seminal study, Habermas famously argues that, in the course of the eighteenth century, Western European societies experienced a shift from the 'representative' to the 'bourgeois' public sphere: absolute royal power, manifested to subjects through majestic court ceremonies and church rituals, began to give way to a new kind of authority, stemming from the rising bourgeoisie and operating through institutions, media and practices in which private individuals rationally discussed matters of common interest and thus articulated 'public opinion' that sought to influence political decision-making.[43] Habermas also identifies an intermediary between early modern representational culture, centred on princely courts, and the fully developed nineteenth-century political public sphere—namely, the 'literary public sphere', consisting of salons, coffee houses, clubs, learned societies and periodicals in which literary and art criticism flourished, creating the infrastructure and discursive practices for properly political debate.[44]

The place accorded to the literature of sensibility in this account is highly prominent. Informed by Marxism, Habermas closely relates the emergence of the public sphere to the development of capitalism and the formation of the bourgeoisie—the class to which belonged those private individuals who came together to constitute the public. For these individuals, a key source of meaning and identity became the intimate sphere of their lives, exemplified in the conjugal family and in affectionate relationships between spouses and between parents and children. In the ostensibly pure humanity and autonomy of their private existence, middle-class men found a secure position from which to claim political power and influence over public affairs.[45] What this entailed was a dialectical interrelation between the public and the private.

[43] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), esp. pp. 1–56.
[44] Ibid., pp. 51–6.
[45] Ibid., pp. 27–31, 43–51.

The subjectivity of these bourgeois men was 'an audience-oriented (*publikumsbezogen*) subjectivity', and their culture of domesticity was characterised by 'a privateness oriented to an audience'.[46] It is in this context that Habermas discusses European literature of sensibility, arguing that drama, and especially the novel, as well as the practices of letter-writing and diary-keeping, served as vehicles for self-expression and for the exploration of this new kind of subjectivity seeking 'a psychological emancipation' before demanding 'the political-economic one'.[47] In other words, sentimentalism shaped the new culture of privacy on which the entire edifice of the modern public sphere in European societies was built.

The model proposed by Habermas, influential as it is, has been contested and rejected on many key points. The full details of the ensuing debates need not concern us here; what is essential for present purposes is that the majority of critics reject the narrow and rigid Marxist framework that leads Habermas to identify eighteenth-century social and cultural transformations with the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the rise of the bourgeoisie. Summarising the findings of his own and others' research, the historian Andreas Gestrich argues that the institutions and practices of the public sphere were not inherently oppositional or middle-class in nature; on the contrary, it was often the state, the Church and aristocratic elites that created the communicative infrastructure for the new culture of publicness and used it to disseminate news and shape the opinions of loyal subjects by appealing to their patriotic sentiments.[48] T. C. W. Blanning offers a rich picture of eighteenth-century Europe in which the development of the public sphere complemented, rather than superseded, the 'representational culture' centred on royal courts, with noble and bourgeois elites frequently mingling and jointly enjoying the material prosperity and cultural refinement of the age. From this perspective, the

[46] Ibid., pp. 28, 29, 43, 49.
[47] Ibid., pp. 46, 48–51.
[48] Andreas Gestrich, 'The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate', *German History*, 24, 3 (2006), 413–30.

French Revolution emerges as the result of the failure of the Ancien Régime to adapt to changing social and cultural conditions—something that other European monarchies managed more successfully, recasting their political cultures by striking a balance between traditional structures of power, the growing autonomy and authority of the cultural and intellectual sphere and the new ascendancy of abstract, depersonalised notions of the state and the nation.[49] These revisions have a direct bearing on the understanding of sentimentalism. Dispensing with the idea of a self-conscious bourgeois class in pre-revolutionary France, Sarah Maza interprets the culture of sensibility as an attempt to articulate—in response to social inequalities and to the perceived moral dangers of excessive luxury—a new collective identity based on shared values of virtue, philanthropy, domesticity and patriotism, and aimed at overcoming social boundaries and divisions.[50] The bearers of this culture could be drawn from the educated classes regardless of noble or middle-class origin.

Further qualifications are needed when attempting to apply a Habermasian framework to the Russian case. Clearly, there was no bourgeois class gaining prominence and claiming power in the eighteenth-century Russian Empire. As the editors of a recent volume on the development of the public sphere in Russia argue, the country's history does not correspond to a narrative of state power gradually becoming subordinate to a civil society constituted by private enterprising individuals; yet this should not preclude us from recognising a rich Russian history of changing 'regimes of publicness', which, in different periods and contexts, either

[49] T. C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660–1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also T. C. W. Blanning, *The French Revolution: Class War or Culture Clash?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

[50] Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 59–68. For a related treatment of how intimate relationships between private individuals provided a vehicle for addressing in public discussion a wide range of social and political questions, see Sarah Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

encouraged or hindered public discussion.[51] To put it differently, despite the specific trajectory of its development, Russia was affected by similar transformations to those that occurred in Europe. One way to conceptualise the fundamental shift that began to reshape Russia in the eighteenth century is to draw, as Simon Dixon does, on modernisation theory, bearing in mind that the advance of 'modernity' should not be measured against the normative yardstick of Western European societies.[52] Andreas Schönle and Andrei Zorin, whose approach focuses primarily on the cultural practices and attitudes of the educated classes of the time, prefer to speak of 'Europeanisation', arguing that, by the end of the eighteenth century, Russian elites, converging in lifestyle and outlook with their Western counterparts, succeeded in creating enclaves of autonomy and self-cultivation relatively independent of the state—even if these were often imaginary and fraught with contradictions.[53] All this suggests that, once stripped of its economic determinism and Marxist teleology, the Habermasian model may still prove useful for interpreting eighteenth-century Russian literature and culture.

It is one of the central contentions of this thesis that the key feature of European culture of sensibility identified by Habermas—its paradoxical 'privateness oriented to an audience'—also characterises Russian sentimentalism. The thesis argues that late-eighteenth-century Russian literature of sensibility became a medium for the representation of an 'audience-oriented subjectivity' of private individuals. By the 1790s, dozens of educated Russian men and women, making use of sentimentalist genres and of an expanding literary field with an ever-increasing number of periodicals, began to publish texts that purported to reflect their genuine

[51] T. Atnashev, M. Velizhev and T. Vaizer, 'Dvesti let opyta: ot burzhuaznoi publichnoi sfery k rossiiskim rezhimam publichnosti', in *Nesovershennaia publichnaia sfera. Istoriia rezhimov publichnosti v Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2021), pp. 5–81.
[52] Simon Dixon, *The Modernisation of Russia, 1676–1825* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 1–7.
[53] Andreas Schönle and Andrei Zorin, *On the Periphery of Europe, 1762–1825: The Self-Invention of the Russian Elite* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018). See also the studies collected in *The Europeanized Elite in Russia, 1762–1825: Public Role and Subjective Self*, ed. by Andreas Schönle, Andrei Zorin and Alexei Evstratov (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

intimate experiences. This was an act of making the private and the singular visible to the anonymous multitude of the reading public. In an important essay, Andreas Schönle has argued that this project ultimately came to nothing, as Russian sentimentalism failed to do justice to the inner depths and uniqueness of the self, adhering instead to the general and remaining oriented towards public bodies rather than private individuals.[54] However perceptive this analysis may be, it rests on an unduly narrow understanding of privacy and subjectivity, judging eighteenth-century Russian culture from the normative standpoint of twentieth-century liberal democracies and their legal systems designed to protect the rights of private individuals from intrusion. There is no doubt that the self as depicted in the literature of Russian sentimentalism did not conform to the standards of ineffable Romantic subjectivity. Yet what is crucial is the very intention to depict private life, the shift in focus, the gesture itself rather than any retrospective assessment of the result. By claiming to write about themselves and by sharing descriptions of their inner lives with the reading public through print media, Russian sentimentalist authors contributed to the differentiation and cultural recognition of the private sphere—a development that historians regard as a general trend of the eighteenth century.[55] The symbolic demarcation of the private realm, the arrival of culture in this previously inarticulate sphere of human existence and experience marked the beginning of a major shift in the social practices and ways of thinking of the upper classes of Russian society—a shift that may, with due reservations, be linked to the transition towards 'modernity'.

Of course, the new culture of privacy did not come to dominate the social and cultural life of the period entirely. As John Brewer has argued in his study of eighteenth-century English culture, the cult of sensibility, which ostensibly rejected civilisation in favour of nature, was in

[54] Andreas Schönle, 'The Scare of the Self: Sentimentalism, Privacy, and Private Life in Russian Culture, 1780–1820', *Slavic Review*, 57, 4 (1998), 723–46.
[55] Sarah Maza, 'Historians and Eighteenth-Century Private Life: An Overview', in *Representing Private Lives of the Enlightenment*, ed. by Andrew Kahn (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010), pp. 21–33.

fact a product of the same refined urban milieu in which the culture of politeness flourished, so that the same individuals could enjoy worldly sociability and celebrate the virtues of simplicity and seclusion in the countryside.[56] In a similar fashion, in late-eighteenth-century Russia the development of sentimentalism, and of the culture of privacy, interiority and domesticity associated with it, among the educated classes did not entail a withdrawal from public life or state service, nor the abandonment of the related practices, attitudes and beliefs.[57] On the contrary, the culture of sensibility offered a new language and a new vantage point from which elites could rearticulate and reaffirm their values and orientations. The profuse expression of friendly sentiments became a necessary element of letter-writing, couching in affectionate language communication between patrons and clients as well as between superiors and subordinates.[58] The new style of the Russian language, developed by Karamzin and his followers, decisively influenced the form of official documentation at the turn of the nineteenth century.[59] Yet even setting aside such direct overlaps between sentimentalism and more practical spheres of life, the rise of the culture of sensibility in Russia brought about the emergence of an entirely new dimension of social life, one that had previously been barely captured by the symbolic forms of culture and that significantly reconfigured the relationship

[56] John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 99–107.
[57] On the multiple public and private identities of the educated nobility of the time, see Andrei Zorin, 'Leaving Your Family in 1797. Two Identities of Mikhail Murav'ev', in *Interpreting Emotions in Russia and Eastern Europe*, ed. by Mark Steinberg and Valeria Sobol (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), pp. 87–120; M. B. Velizhev, 'I. I. Dmitriev i Vol'ter. O mekhanizmakh formirovaniia "dvoinoi identichnosti" literatora v nachale XIX veka', *Russkaia literatura*, 3 (2017), 170–83.
[58] See the special issue of the journal *АvtobiografiЯ*, 10 (2021): *Epistolary Emotions in Early Imperial Russia (1770–1830)*.
[59] For more on this, see Iu. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskii, 'Spory o iazyke v nachale XIX veka kak fakt russkoi kul'tury ("Proisshestvie v Tsarstve tenei, ili Sud'bina rossiiskogo iazyka" – neizvestnoe sochinenie Semena Bobrova)', in Lotman, *Istoriia i tipologiia russkoi kul'tury* (Saint Petersburg: Iskusstvo, 2002), pp. 446–600 (p. 460); M. L. Maiofis, *Vozzvanie k Evrope: Literaturnoe obshchestvo "Arzamas" i rossiiskii modernizatsionnyi proekt 1815–1818 godov* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008), pp. 311–9.

between the individual and the collective, introducing a subjective perspective on matters of public interest.

By focusing on how the self came to be imagined in Russian sentimentalist literature, this thesis aligns itself with a body of scholarship concerned with the history of subjectivity—a field that seeks to reconstruct changing notions of the self and the various techniques and practices through which it is constituted in different times and places.[60] Drawing on this approach, the anthropologist Maria Pirogovskaya has recently examined the culture of medical self-observation and the related practice of diary-keeping, which fostered specific modes of attention to one's own bodily experiences, as important factors in shaping the selves of educated Russians in the mid-eighteenth century.[61] Along similar lines, this thesis argues that Russian sentimentalist literature—the sudden and unprecedented emergence from the late 1780s onwards, in periodicals and in separate editions, of dozens of original texts focused on the representation of private emotions and experiences and insisting on their authenticity and rootedness in the immediate circumstances of their authors' lives—operated in the late-eighteenth-century Russian Empire as a powerful discourse of the self, shaping perceptions and producing individual and collective identities among the educated classes of Russian society.

The chapters that follow explore in detail the interplay between different models of subjectivity articulated in sentimentalist fiction, emphasising the tension between the enduring influence of the idea of self-discipline and the urge to secure a more relaxed, self-indulgent way of life. However, one major question that will loom in the background of the subsequent discussion needs to be addressed at this stage. It concerns the place of religion in the

[60] *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. by Roy Porter (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).
[61] Maria Pirogovskaya, 'Birth of the Russian Patient: Somatic Modes of Attention and the Embodied Self in a Mid-Eighteenth-Century Russian Diary', *Social History of Medicine*, 35, 3 (2022), 910–26.

construction of the sentimentalist self. More recent scholarship no longer considers the eighteenth century to be an age of unilinear secularisation, foregrounding instead the rich tradition of the religious Enlightenment, which enjoyed considerable popularity by seeking to reconcile Christianity with the scientific and intellectual achievements of the period.[62] In eighteenth-century Russia, many members of the educated elite experienced a degree of alienation from the traditional Orthodox Church, finding solace in alternative forms of spirituality, including Freemasonry.[63] At the same time, the learned high-ranking Orthodox clergy were open to the spirit of 'enlightened theology', avidly reading and translating contemporary devotional literature from the West and seeking to balance faith with reason.[64] According to Kirill Ospovat, the tension between the secularisation of culture and the continuing attraction of religious authority informed the genre of spiritual odes, which became important for the self-fashioning of many eighteenth-century readers.[65] In this context, it comes as no surprise that many works of Russian sentimentalism are saturated with references to God and with displays of deeply pious emotion. Yet the setting for these expressions of religious sentiment is not the institutionalised Church but nature, described as a rational and beautiful universe in which the wisdom and benevolence of its Creator are manifested. This mode of viewing the natural world was informed by the tradition of physico-theology, well known both in Europe and Russia.[66] It was also related to the practices of aesthetic contemplation of nature,

[62] David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008).
[63] Schönle and Zorin, *On the Periphery of Europe*, pp. 97–118.
[64] Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *Religion and Enlightenment in Catherinian Russia: The Teachings of Metropolitan Platon* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2013); Andrey V. Ivanov, *A Spiritual Revolution: The Impact of Reformation and Enlightenment in Orthodox Russia* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), esp. pp. 168–74.
[65] Kirill Ospovat, *Pridvornaia slovesnost'. Institut literatury i konstruktsii aboliutizma v Rossii serediny XVIII veka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2020), pp. 182–246.
[66] Marcus C. Levitt, *The Visual Dominant in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), pp. 151–83; Ospovat, *Pridvornaia slovesnost'*, pp. 247–97.

for whose rise the eighteenth century was a pivotal moment.[67] The self imagined in sentimentalist literature retains a traditional reverence for God but grounds it in a form of natural theology not confined to any particular denomination. This example illustrates the way in which Russian sentimentalism adapted and reshaped the attitudes and beliefs of the educated elites of the time, offering them more 'modern' and subjectivised models of thought and action.

The thesis approaches Russian sentimentalism as a phenomenon produced by the interplay of social institutions, print culture, literary genres and techniques and the intellectual currents and forms of knowledge dominant at the time. The chapters that follow trace the development of Russian literature and the culture of sensibility by reconstructing the networks in which the ideas, practices and attitudes that made Russian sentimentalism possible circulated and which formed the immediate context for the creation and reception of sentimentalist fiction. This approach results in a granular thick description of late-eighteenth-century Russian literary and intellectual life shaped by the interactions of numerous individuals through which broader patterns of cultural and literary development operated.

Chapter 1 focuses on the institutional setting in which Russian sentimentalism emerged and evolved in the last decades of the eighteenth century and points to the shifts in attitudes and ideas that were conducive to its rise. It discusses the structure and workings of the Russian literary public sphere as it took shape during the reign of Catherine II, who, through her interventions in cultural life, allowed a certain degree of intellectual independence and encouraged authors to pursue their own literary projects. This political culture, which introduced elements of publicness into what remained a predominantly 'representational'

[67] Daniel Mornet, *Le sentiment de la nature en France de J.-J. Rousseau à Bernardin de Saint-Pierre* (Paris: Hachette, 1907); Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500–1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983); D. G. Charlton, *New Images of the Natural in France: A Study in European Cultural History, 1750–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

culture, together with the expansion of the publishing industry, created the structural conditions for the emergence of sentimentalist literature—the appearance in print of a body of writings concerned not with the empress and the court, but with the inner lives of private individuals. The idea that citizens could contribute to the public good and the flourishing of the state through their own actions in the public sphere gained currency, and it was in this atmosphere that the writer and publisher Nikolai Novikov embarked on his career. He became a key figure among the Moscow Freemasons, whose efforts resulted in the formation of an extensive infrastructure of literary associations, periodicals and educational practices as well as the establishment of connections between literarily inclined students and printing houses centred on Moscow University. The Masonic project only partly overlapped with the culture of sensibility, yet, after the notorious persecution of Novikov in 1792 and the subsequent decline of Masonic influence, this infrastructure largely remained intact and became vitally important for the flourishing of Russian sentimentalism in the 1790s.

Chapter 2 shifts the focus from the institutional context to the literature of sensibility itself, discussing the genre of writing that came to dominate the sentimentalist periodicals edited in the milieu sketched in the preceding chapter. This was the genre of first-person short meditative prose depicting the perceptions, emotions and thoughts of the individual self, often set in a natural environment. Tracing its literary genealogy, which encompassed a wide range of works and traditions associated with European literature of sensibility, and demonstrating how original Russian writings followed the lead of French prose poems, widely read and translated in Russia at the time, the chapter also examines sentimentalist meditative prose as a vehicle for new conceptions of the self. In their attempts at self-fashioning, late-eighteenth-century educated Russians could draw on the traditions of Ancient Greek and Roman and Christian spiritual exercises, but also on the practices of aesthetic contemplation of nature and

self-cultivation. The meditative prose of Russian sentimentalism thus emerges as a medium in which these models of subjectivity were enacted and negotiated. Suspended between the imitation of established models and the reproduction of conventional patterns, on the one hand, and the exploration of the individual self, on the other, it inaugurates the depiction of the interaction between subjectivity and nature that would find its fullest expression in the literature of Romanticism.

Chapter 3 turns to the educational contexts of Russian sentimentalist literature and its visions of the self. The practices of reading and translating European literature of sensibility were widespread in educational institutions such as Moscow University and its Noble Boarding School, which, somewhat paradoxically given their state-sponsored status, inculcated notions of private life in the minds of students. Their exercises in writing and publishing fiction constituted an additional factor in the growth of sentimentalist literature during this period. The teaching of languages, rhetoric and literature in Russia at the time was influenced by sensualist philosophy, disseminated, among others, through Masonic circles. The chapter links the educational uses of the literature of sensibility to the widespread preoccupation among contemporary intellectuals with the derivation of ideas from sensory experience and their organisation into coherent systems, with the noble emotions of the sensitive protagonists of sentimentalist fiction serving as models of appropriate ways of thinking and feeling. Sensory experience and moral sensibility were also central to the discipline of pedagogy, which was transmitted to Russia from Germany through the same Masonic and educational networks in which Russian sentimentalism originated. This context endowed the depictions of the self in sentimentalist meditative prose with a significant degree of implicit didacticism.

Chapter 4 examines the movement of sentimentalism away from excessive moralising and its role in the evolution of the Russian literary field towards greater autonomy, focusing on

the writings of Nikolai Karamzin. Alongside pedagogy, the discipline of aesthetics was also transferred from Germany to Russia around the same time. At this stage of its development, aesthetics was closely concerned with sensation as the origin of aesthetic experience. It thus functioned as a theory of sensuous pleasure derived from art and nature, and in this capacity was actively promoted by Karamzin. Supported by this philosophical framework, his writings emphasised the role of sensory experience and this-worldly pleasures in human life, maintaining a delicate balance between the demands of morality and religion and the embrace of a more hedonistic attitude to life. The new model of the self advanced by Karamzin was quickly adopted by many of his followers, whose works, celebrating earthly pleasures and occasionally invoking transgressive eroticism, formed a strand of sentimentalism attuned to the more modern, secular and sensual aspects of the age of Enlightenment. Karamzin also made a concerted effort to promote among the Russian reading public a new understanding of the author both as a professional agent in the literary field and as an exceptionally gifted individual endowed with refined sensibility. The tension between these two aspects of the writer's identity corresponded to the intermediary position of Russian sentimentalism, which could not fully overcome the demand to please and/or instruct its audience.

Chapter 5 combines attention to literary form with a reconstruction of the cultural impact of Russian sentimentalist literature. It moves from an analysis of the sentimentalist self to a discussion of the ways in which sentimentalist communities were imagined by writers and readers of the literature of sensibility. The chapter explores the relationship between the print culture of Russian sentimentalism and changing attitudes towards local nature and geography. Many works of sentimentalist fiction are set in specific locations and provide detailed descriptions of natural scenery. Some of these places became objects of tourism, with texts shaping emotional communities of readers and fostering a sense of shared experience and

collective identity. These practices enabled sentimentalism to contribute to the articulation, at the turn of the nineteenth century, of a new sense of the national past and belonging, anchored in particular locations and disseminated through the written word. Thus, despite its emphasis on the individual, sentimentalism also cultivated new forms of collective identity.

CHAPTER 1.
Freemasons, Students, Publics: The Institutional Setting of Russian Sentimentalism

The flourishing of Russian sentimentalism of the 1790s was preceded and at least partly caused by a series of events that had taken place in Moscow of the 1780s and led to the creation of a network of institutions and periodicals through which discourses and practices of publicness came gradually to develop private sensibility as a major theme of modern literature. As discussed in the Introduction, the connection between sentimentalist fiction and the rise of the public sphere constituted by private individuals was formulated in the influential study of Jürgen Habermas.[68] The historical narrative constructed by Habermas was widely discussed and challenged by numerous historians who, according to Andreas Gestrich,

> Increasingly [...] see the early modern states and their administrations as the main actors who, however unintentionally, facilitated the rise of a political public sphere by supporting the improvement of communication infrastructures and using the media for their own purposes.[69]

This revised understanding of the origins and nature of the public sphere seems particularly relevant in the case of Russia where, for the most part of its history, various 'weak' publics were subjugated to the state and often relied on its resources for existence.[70] In the eighteenth-century Russian Empire, the printing industry, newspapers and journals, institutions of learning and practices of sociability were all initially products of the top-down state enlightenment. Modern secular literature served as a medium for public representations of imperial power and glory inside and outside the country; codified and sanctioned practices of writing and reading were inculcated in new educational institutions as tools for fashioning the

[68] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989).
[69] Andreas Gestrich, 'The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate', *German History*, 24, 3 (2006), 413–30 (p. 419).
[70] *Nesovershennaia publichnaia sfera. Istoriia rezhimov publichnosti v Rossii*, ed. by Timur Atnashev, Mikhail Velizhev and Tat'iana Vaizer (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2021).

selves of the citizens of the reformed state; learning formed the cultural capital pivotal in future careers; writers were wholly dependent on court patronage.[71] This is not to say that it was a unified, teleological process. On the contrary, the interaction of various individual and collective agents at the crossroads of the state and civil society was uncoordinated. Moreover, during the reign of Catherine II (1762–1796), the structure of the literary field went through significant transformations, eventually creating a space for a variety of positions for writers, private publishing and diversified reading public (or even publics).[72] On the one hand, this partial autonomisation was caused purely by the expansion of the print industry. As Gary Marker argues,

> the flowering of private publishers in the 1780s allowed a much more open access to print for writers and would-be writers, and this gradual realignment of writers with independent publishers in turn contributed to bringing intellectual life to a point where it could sustain itself outside of—if not necessarily in opposition to—the government. And perhaps this partial economic and institutional independence also played an emancipating role in the evolution of the literati's political and philosophical stance.[73]

On the other hand, however, it was a matter of intentional policy: by patronising the Free Economic Society, calling for the establishment of the Legislative Commission and participating in literary activities, the empress had begun to implement a new mode of governing, in which more agency was redelegated from the state to the citizens, from public authority to private individuals.[74] In the last third of the eighteenth century, the gradual rise of the public sphere and broadening of the space for independent action supported, and not entirely controlled, by the state were the contexts in which Russian sentimentalism originated.

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[71] Kirill Ospovat, *Pridvornaia slovesnost'. Institut literatury i konstruktsii absoliutizma v Rossii serediny XVIII veka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2020).
[72] For a recent overview, see Rodolphe Baudin, 'Reading in the Times of Catherine II', in *Reading Russia. A History of Reading in Modern Russia*, ed. by Damiano Rebecchini and Rafaella Vassena, 3 vols (Milan: Ledizioni, 2020), I, pp. 151–78.
[73] Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 122.
[74] See Simon Dixon, *Catherine the Great* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).

In this chapter, I study the interactions of a state educational institution, Moscow University, and a secret society of Freemasons in the 1780s that contributed to the emergence of a field of literary production and consumption with a shared interest in reading, translating, writing and disseminating sentimentalist fiction. By focusing on the writings and actions of the crucial agents of this cooperation, Nikolai Novikov and Johann Georg Schwarz, I demonstrate how they conceptualised relationships between the state, private individuals and public activities and reconstruct the ways these ideas were put into practice. Revisiting the dynamic relationships between the Moscow Freemasonry and the government, I explore the rise and fall of independent literary and intellectual activities in Moscow of the 1780s, which were eventually reappropriated by the state institutions. I argue that both the network of institutions, practices and print culture created by the Masons and their claims to public significance and recognition were of paramount importance for the future development of Russian sentimentalism of the 1790s.

1. Nikolai Novikov and the Discourses and Practices of the Public Sphere

In 1769, Catherine initiated a major literary project the aim of which was to use the periodical press to represent, criticise and correct the presumably corrupt morals and manners of her subjects.[75] Modelled after influential English moral periodicals such as Joseph Addison's *Spectator* (1711–1712), these journals, seemingly independent but profoundly loyal to the empress, playfully staged a self-conscious public sphere—that is, a communicative space for discussion of public affairs by private individuals—by voicing concerns and opinions of the fictional characters of various social standing and engaging in heated polemics with each

[75] W. Gareth Jones, 'The Polemics of the 1769 Journals: A Reappraisal', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 16, 3–4 (1982), 432–43; Viktor Zhivov, '*Vsiakaia vsiachina* i sozdanie Ekaterininskogo politicheskogo diskursa', in *Eighteenth-Century Russia: Society, Culture, Economy*, ed. by Roger Barlett, Gabriela Lehmann-Carli (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), pp. 251–65.

other—the tasks most comprehensively performed by the journal *Truten'* (1769–1770).[76] Its editor, Nikolai Novikov, one of the leading figures in Russian cultural life of the eighteenth century, is traditionally credited with a prime role in the formation of civil society and promotion of private agency in the Russian Empire; and while his supposed independence from and opposition to the state were justifiably put into question by some scholars, his decisive contribution to the rise of the Russian public sphere is beyond doubt.[77]

Born into a noble family, educated in the Moscow University gymnasium and called into military service in the Izmailovsky Guards Regiment in 1762, Novikov, in addition to his official duties, quite soon entered the literary field as a publisher—a position he would occupy for the next three decades. His career path of simultaneously acting in two fields proved its efficiency: apparently, it was a cultural capital accumulated through the interactions with the world of letters and learning that helped Novikov to settle his career, as he was co-opted, along with other educated officers, to serve as a minute taker in the Catherine's Legislative Commision (1767–1768) and later to participate in the empress's literary activities. In the first half of the 1770s, Novikov was in regular contact with Catherine's secretary Grigorii Kozitskii, presenting, through him, his journals, historical editions and dedications to the empress and receiving her gifts and signs of approval.[78] While under imperial patronage, Novikov also sought to present his projects as a private initiative, acting in alliance with, but not by the order of, the state. This cooperation was institutionalised in 1773 in the *Obshchestvo staraiushcheesia*

[76] W. Gareth Jones, 'Novikov's Naturalized *Spectator*', in *The Eighteenth Century in Russia*, ed. by John G. Garrard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 149–65.
[77] On Novikov, see W. Gareth Jones, *Nikolay Novikov: Enlightener of Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and V. P. Stepanov, 'Novikov Nikolai Ivanovich', in *Slovar' russkikh pisatelei XVIII veka*, ed. by A. M. Panchenko and others, 3 vols (Leningrad/Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 1988–2010), II (1999), pp. 363–76, as well as the bibliography there.
[78] N. S. Tikhonravov, 'Pis'ma Sumarokova, Shcherbatova i Novikova k G. V. Kozitskomu', in *Letopisi russkoi literatury i drevnosti*, 4, 3 (Moscow: Tipografiia Gracheva, 1862), pp. 29–48 (pp. 40–8); *Pis'ma N. I. Novikova*, ed. by M. V. Reizin and A. I. Serkov (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo imeni N. I. Novikova, 1994), pp. 7–12, 275–8; V. P. Stepanov, 'Novikov i ego sovremenniki. (Biograficheskie utochneniia)', in *XVIII vek*, 11 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976), pp. 211–9 (pp. 217–9).

o napechatanii knig (Society Striving for the Printing of Books), whose aim was to publish works translated by a literary association founded and sponsored by Catherine in 1768—*Sobranie staraiushcheesia o perevode inostrannykh knig* (Assembly Striving for the Translation of Foreign Books).[79] A public announcement of Novikov's society was made through his journal *Zhivopisets* (1772–1773) in a fictional form of a letter exchange whose vocabulary is worth looking at closely.

In this letter, a correspondent from Yarsolavl informs 'all thinking Russians' about 'the most laudable and the most useful institution private individuals are allowed to think of (о каком токмо частным людям помышлять дозволено)', that is, about Novikov's Society.[80] His praise is twofold. On the one hand, he argues for the importance of 'the flourishing of commerce (торговли)' and the economy of luxury for the state while hoping that the Society will be a model for 'the way trade companies should be established (каким образом надлежит установлять торговые общества)' and will inculcate 'the foundational rules of the commerce' in ignorant merchants.[81] On the other hand, he eulogises printing for dissemination of truth and purging society of errors and prejudices ('очищает общество от заблуждений и предрассудков'). In conclusion, he restates his opinion of the Society as 'the most useful institution of private individuals in our age' and opposes it to other forms of sociability such as 'our clubs, assemblies and similar gatherings'.[82] Thus, the letter articulates an idea of society in which an educated public formed around print media supports cooperation of private individuals in pursuit of shared aims, looks favourably on commercial activities, seeks to promote knowledge and advocates the common good.

[79] V. P. Semennikov, *Rannee izdatel'skoe obshchestvo N. I. Novikova (1773 goda)* (Saint Petersburg: [n. pub.], 1912).
[80] *Satiricheskie zhurnaly N. I. Novikova*, ed. by P. N. Berkov (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1951), p. 440.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., p. 441.

In a reply letter from the editor, however, this vision of public sphere and civil society is explicitly reinscribed in the absolutist order. After presenting some reflections on the problems of book trade in Russia and the necessity to better distribute books in provinces, Novikov turns to the question of the relationship between public initiative and autocratic power. He claims that Catherine

> все употребила, что только можно сделать государю для просвещения своих подданных, для очищения разумов и сердец их и для искоренения из оных всяких гнусных пороков и предубеждений; осталось нам самим, верным подданным ея, споспешествовать ея намерению и исполнять ея волю для собственного же нашего блаженства.[83]

Novikov treats the Assembly Striving for the Translation of Foreign Books as an institution that promotes this top-down enlightenment and moral discipline whose goals can be achieved with the help of complementary activities of the Society Striving for the Printing of Books. He concludes with a clear-cut delineation of responsibilities of the state and civil society: 'But it is private individuals and not the sovereign who must think about the expansion of this [i.e., book] trade (не государю, но частным людям помышлять должно)'.[84] By simultaneously invoking hierarchies of political power and seemingly horizontal voluntary cooperation in the sphere of economy, Novikov pretended, as W. Gareth Jones put it, 'to be both client and entrepreneur'.[85] This double position reveals his awareness of the importance of accumulating, through various channels, economic, social and cultural capital—not only money, but also connections, reputation, fame. Novikov's understanding of the field of literary production in terms of both commercial and symbolic economy was clearly expressed in *Zhivopisets*:

> Дозвольте мне коротко изъяснить мои мысли о пользе, от типографии происходящей, следующими одного из славных ученых писателей европейских словами; он говорит, что

[83] Ibid., p. 442.
[84] The translation is borrowed from Jones, *Novikov*, p. 86. For the original, see *Satiricheskie zhurnaly*, p. 443.
[85] W. Gareth Jones, 'N.I. Novikov and the Business of Books in Late Eighteenth-Century Russia', *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 1986, 1–10 (p. 5).

> типография, собственно, есть как бы некоторая манифактура в государстве, которая оному приносит честь и прибыль.[86]

Jones claims that this argument was a 'common view' of the era and cites the example of Denis Diderot.[87] It seems possible to locate the exact source of Novikov's quotation. By 'one of the famous, learned writers of Europe' he most probably meant Pierre Desfontaines (1685–1745), mostly remembered for his notorious polemics with Voltaire. In one of his essays, first published in 1742 and included in a collection of his selected fragments in 1757, he argued for the utility of poets for the state, concluding with a thesis translated almost verbatim by Novikov:

> Enfin leurs Ouvrages soutiennent dans le Royaume une Manufacture Littéraire, qui sous le nom de Typographie, fonde un commerce qui s'étend loin, & est pour l'État d'un revenu considérable.[88]

It might also be important, with regard to Novikov's reception of this passage, that Desfontaines supports his argument by a reference to Russia:

> Pour sentir la différence d'une Nation polie par les Sciences à une autre, chez qui règne l'ignorance, il n'y a qu'à jetter les yeux sur l'État de la Moscovie, depuis le règne de Pierre le Grand.[89]

Desfontaines, an important figure in the literary life of the commercial city of Rouen, was part of an intellectual milieu in which, as Ina Schabert argues, 'the advancement of the arts and sciences was held in respect as a process similar, if superior, to the production and promotion of material goods'.[90] Novikov appropriated this set of ideas in fashioning his own peculiar position in the Russian literary field, governed by the concurrent, and largely complementary, logic of court patronage and the nascent market. It is worth noting that, almost

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[86] *Satiricheskie zhurnaly*, p. 446.
[87] Jones, *Novikov*, p. 87.
[88] *L'esprit de l'Abbé Des Fontaines, ou Réflexions sur differens genres de science et de littérature*, 1 (London [Paris(?)]: Clement, 1757), p. 326. The fragment was also included in the other volume of this edition, see *L'esprit de l'Abbé Des Fontaines,* 2 (London [Paris(?)]: Clement, 1754 [1757(?)]), pp. 8–9. It was also quoted in a review in *Journal encyclopédique*, 4, 2 (1757), p. 28. For the first publication, see *Observations sur les écrits modernes*, 31 (Paris: Chaubert, 1742), p. 42.
[89] *L'esprit de l'Abbé Des Fontaines*, 1, p. 326.
[90] Ina Schabert, 'Trading and Translating: English Literature in Rouen, 1730–56', *Translation and Literature*, 26 (2017), 273–94 (p. 275).

twenty years later, when subjected to interrogation, Novikov interpreted his motivation for leasing the printing house of Moscow University in terms of the same notions of 'honour' and 'profit'. Yet these qualities were now recast, in a self-condemning manner, as 'pride (гордость)' and 'avarice (корыстолюбие)'. Apart from his 'love of literature', Novikov claimed that he had wanted 'to improve' the printing house and 'by this, to show myself off (тем себя выказать)', while also hoping 'to make a great profit (иметь великой прибыток)'.[91] Whether speaking approvingly of the common interest or disapprovingly of private interest, Novikov emphasised its complex character, in which material ('profit', 'avarice') and symbolic ('honour', 'pride', 'to show myself off') dimensions corresponded to one another. It seems that these overlapping but by no means identical constellations of patronage and market, state and society, private interest and public good, economic and cultural capital indeed governed his actions, position-takings, trajectories and even his self-interpretations.

During the second half of the 1770s, Novikov was 'stepping over from one kind of support system to another'.[92] Alongside his ties to court, by this time Novikov had developed, as the author of *Opyt istoricheskogo slovaria o rossiiskikh pisateliakh* (1772) and the editor of *Drevniaia rossiiskaia vivliofika* (1773–1775), close connections with the Russian learned world—an amorphous yet thriving network of individuals from various ranks of society who shared an interest in letters, history, geography and other branches of knowledge.[93] In 1777, Novikov, now himself part of this intellectual community, attempted to place it on an institutional footing through print by launching the short-lived weekly periodical *Sanktpeterburgskie uchenye vedomosti*, modelled on European learned journals and primarily devoted to reviewing recently published Russian books. In the 'Foreword', the editors ('Our

[91] M. N. Longinov, *Novikov i moskovskie martinisty* (Moscow: Tipografiia Gracheva, 1867), p. 0101.
[92] Jones, 'Novikov and the Business of Books', p. 7.
[93] On this milieu, see I. M. Polonskaia, 'Novye materialy o izdatel'skoi deiatel'nosti N. I. Novikova', in *Zapiski otdela rukopisei GBL*, 38 (Moscow: Kniga, 1977), pp. 215–23.

society, consisting of several people') situated their project within the established protocols of print communication of a pan-European 'Learned World (Ученый Свет)'. They openly acknowledged in advance the limited authority of their critical judgements: 'our critical consideration of any book is not an arbitrary (своенравное) determination of its fate, but only a declaration of our opinion about it'. They also encouraged the authors under review and their readers to express their own opinions and to challenge those of the editors. The text concluded with a promise 'by our labours, to win the grace (благоволение)' of Catherine, 'the favour (благосклонность) of our Enlightened Public and the recognition of the Men of Letters (одобрение Мужей Ученых)'.[94] What emerges is a complex vision of a public sphere under absolutist rule, marked by a distinction between the general reading public and a community of the learned, a tolerance for diversity of opinion and the overarching figure of an omnipresent sovereign.

In short, in Novikov's projects and declarations of the 1770s, the institutions and practices of the public sphere—print media, the publishing business, edifying reading and the dissemination of knowledge—were conceived as the products of harmonious cooperation between a patron state, identified with the figure of the empress herself, and loyal private individuals and their voluntary associations acting in pursuit of the common good. This understanding continued to dominate during the next phase of Novikov's life.

2. Novikov and the Print Culture of Russian Freemasonry

From 1775 onwards, Novikov 'found another channel to mediate his energies and impulses',[95] and this new field of social interaction was Freemasonry.[96] The Masons formed a

[94] *Sanktpeterburgksie uchenye vedomosti na 1777 god*, ed. by A. N. Neustroev, 2nd edn (Saint Petersburg: Obschchestvennaia pol'za, 1873), pp. [3, 6–7].
[95] Jones, *Novikov*, p. 134.
[96] On Freemasonry in eighteenth-century Russia, see Longinov, *Novikov*; A. N. Pypin, *Russkoe masonstvo. XVIII i pervaia chetvert' XIX v.*, ed. by G. V. Vernadskii (Petrograd: Ogni, 1916); G. V. Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*

network of communities that shared a common esoteric idiom, a set of symbols and codified rituals, and that was separated from and demonstratively opposed to the rest of society.[97] At the same time, Freemasonry was a mode of sociability deeply embedded in the fundamental social structures of the Russian Empire: Masonic connections, forms of interaction and channels of communication served to establish patron-client relationships and facilitate the circulation of material and symbolic capital.[98] Moreover, as Douglas Smith has argued, many of the crucial practices and key concepts of Russian Freemasonry were closely aligned with the principal concerns and aims of the imperial order and the forms of subjectivity it produced. An emphasis on morals and manners ('нравы'), (Neo-Stoic) virtues, the duties of man and citizen, self-discipline and the culture of politeness was common to both the Masonic order and the modern Russian state.[99] At the same time, Freemasonry was one among a number of social and cultural practices that contributed to the rise of the public sphere and civil society in the Russian Empire.[100] Through its strictly codified rules and complex organisation, it helped to give form to otherwise amorphous impulses towards social interaction and cooperation, to lend structure and coherence to networks of informal bonds and patron-client relations and to create an entirely new field in which agents of different social standings could take up positions and accumulate material and symbolic capital. This milieu—a system of specifically Masonic as well as broader social and cultural ties, common orientations and shared interests, sometimes

v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II, ed. by M. V. Reizin and A. I. Serkov, 2nd edn (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo imeni N. I. Novikova, 1999); S. V. Arzhanukhin, *Filosofskie vzgliady russkogo masonstva po materialam zhurnala "Magazin svobodnokamenshchicheskii"* (Ekaterinburg: UrGU, 1995); Douglas Smith, *Working the Rough Stone: Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999); Raffaella Faggionato, *A Rosicrucian Utopia in Eighteenth-Century Russia: The Masonic Circle of N. I. Novikov* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005)

[97] Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, pp. 91–135.

[98] Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 265–7; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, pp. 24–6.

[99] Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, pp. 44–52.

[100] Ibid., pp. 53–90.

referred to as Novikov's 'circle'[101]—was one of the key factors in the emergence of the infrastructure of Russian sentimentalism.

In 1777, Novikov's literary and Masonic milieu crystallised around the journal *Utrennii svet* (1777–1780). In their foreword, the editors proclaimed 'the hearts and souls of our beloved compatriots (единоземцев)' to be 'the best object of our present labours' and the corresponding 'science of self-knowledge' to be the most important of all human intellectual activities.[102] These notions of introspection and self-discipline—common, as noted above, to both Freemasonry and the reformed imperial state personified by Catherine—were promoted in the journal primarily through the writings of ancient and modern, predominantly German, moralists, as well as such (pre-)sentimentalist authors as Christoph Martin Wieland, Salomon Gessner, Edward Young and Christian Fürchtegott Gellert.[103] Literary works were understood by the journal's contributors primarily as edifying reading intended to promote moral improvement, as exemplified by Young's famous long poem *Night Thoughts* in the translation and interpretation of the Mason Aleksei Kutuzov.[104]

Utrennii svet was also a philanthropic project: all proceeds from its sales were used to support two primary schools founded by the editors in Saint Petersburg. The model proved efficient: the journal attracted numerous subscribers, ranging from courtiers and church hierarchs to provincial merchants and clergy, and enjoyed considerable success.[105] Subscription to the journal was presented as a way of expressing 'patriotic sentiments (чувствования)'.[106]

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[101] N. D. Kochetkova, 'Kruzhok N. I. Novikova kak iavlenie russkoi kul'tury', *Russkaia literatura*, 1 (2008), 170–80.
[102] *Utrennii svet*, 1 (September 1777), pp. ix, xii.
[103] For the sources of the translations published in the journal, see Helmut Keipert, 'Neue Quellen zu Novikovs „Utrennij svet"', *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie*, 44, 2 (1984), 269–302, as well as the works cited there (pp. 271–2).
[104] Helmut Keipert, 'Johann Arnold Ebert in Russland: die Young-Übersetzungen von Aleksej Michajlovič Kutuzov', in *Johann Arnold Ebert. Dichtung, Übersetzung und Kulturtransfer im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, ed. by C.-F. Berghahn, G. Biegel and T. Kinzel (Heidelberg: Winter, 2016), pp. 287–313.
[105] I. F. Martynov, *Knigoizdatel' Nikolai Novikov* (Moscow: Kniga, 1981), pp. 41–6.
[106] *Utrennii svet*, 1 (October 1777), p. ix.

The names of all its benevolent supporters, together with the editors' accounts of the journal's income and expenditure and of the funds devoted to the schools, were published, making the entire enterprise transparent to the wider public.[107] Print thus shaped and rendered visible a collective private initiative directed towards the public good and, as Gareth Jones has shown, approved by the government.[108] This distinctive character of *Utrennii svet*—its constellation of philanthropy, print culture, private initiative, orientation towards the public and association of individual moral improvement with the ideas of fatherland and (translated) literature, including the literature of sensibility—became a constant feature of a series of periodicals published, if not edited, by Novikov in Moscow in the 1780s: *Moskovskoe Ezhemesiachnoe Izdanie* (1781), *Vecherniaia Zaria* (1782), and *Pokoiashchiisia Trudoliubets* (1784–1785). As we shall see, these journals were direct predecessors of the sentimentalist periodicals of the 1790s.

None of this, however, took place before Mikhail Kheraskov, a prominent poet and Mason, was appointed curator of Moscow University in 1779. Once Kheraskov assumed office, Novikov was granted a lease on the university printing house. At this point, he began his collaboration with Johann Georg Schwarz, another no less ambitious and inventive agent in the fields of literature, learning and esoteric knowledge. Their cooperation played a major role in the prehistory of Russian sentimentalism.

3. Johann Georg Schwarz, Moscow University and the Transfer of Educational and Literary Institutions

From 1779 to 1783, Johann Georg Schwarz served as a professor of German language and literature at Moscow University. At the same time, he was pursuing a career in

[107] On subscriber lists in eighteenth-century Russian periodicals, see also A. Iu. Samarin, *Chitatel' v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XVIII veka (po spiskam podpischikov)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo MGUP, 2000).
[108] W. Gareth Jones, 'The *Morning Light* Charity Schools, 1777–80', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 56, 1 (1978), 47–67.

Freemasonry. During his journey to Germany in 1781–1782, he established contact with the secret order of the Rosicrucians and became head of its Russian branch. After leaving the university, he continued to give private lectures until his untimely death on 17 February 1784. These facts are well known to specialists and have been recounted many times.[109] It has also been noted that it was Schwarz who, through his direct involvement in reading and translating modern German literature with students at Moscow University, served as an intermediary between Novikov and his printing house and journals, on the one hand, and the many young translators and authors seeking to publish their works, on the other.[110] However, neither the institutional infrastructure underpinning these connections nor Schwarz's own multifaceted career has received systematic study. In what follows, I focus primarily on these two aspects.

Born in 1751 in Bistriz, Transylvania (modern Bistrița in Romania), into the family of a pastor, Schwarz matriculated at the University of Halle on 8 March 1771 as a student of theology.[111] Nothing more is known about his subsequent educational trajectory or academic achievements, except that, in a certificate issued by Moscow University as well as in several other sources, he is referred to as 'a Candidate of both laws (обоих прав Кандидат)' (in the standard Latin formulation, *Juris utriusque Candidatus*) and as a member of the Latin Society of Jena, suggesting that he also studied at that university.[112] In any case, coming from a provincial clerical background, Schwarz belonged to a distinct social group: the relatively poor

[109] On Schwarz, see, first of all, N. S. Tikhonravov, 'Shvarts, Ivan Grigor'evich', in *Biograficheskii slovar' professorov i prepodavatelei Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta*, 2 vols (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1855), II, pp. 574–99; Longinov, *Novikov*; Georg von Rauch, 'Johann Georg Schwarz und die Freimaurer in Moskau', in *Beförderer der Aufklärung in Mittel- und Osteuropa: Freimaurer, Gesellschaften, Clubs*, ed. by Éva H. Balázs and others (Berlin: Ulrich Camen, 1979), pp. 212–24. For a recent attempt at a comprehensive account, see Iu. E. Kondakov, *Ezotericheskoe dvizhenie v Rossii kontsa XVIII – pervoi poloviny XIX vv.* (Moscow: Klub Kastaliia, 2018), pp. 203–316.

[110] Most importantly, see Keipert, 'Neue Quellen'; Helmut Keipert, 'German Writers in Novikov's Journals *Utrennii Svet* and *Moskovskoe Ezhemesiachnoe Izdanie* (The *Moralische Briefe zur Bildung des Herzens* by Johann Jakob Dusch)', in *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Anthony G. Cross (Newtonville: Oriental Research Partners, 1983), pp. 79–93.

[111] Rauch, 'Schwarz', p. 213.

[112] I. G. Shvarts, *Besedy o vozrozhdenii i molitve. Zapiski. Rechi. Materialy dlia biografii*, ed. by A. D. Tiurikov (Donetsk: Veber, 2010), p. 183.

theology students of German universities, whose current circumstances and prospects for future advancement depended to a considerable degree on the contingencies of philanthropy, which was particularly extensive at Halle at the time, and on informal patron-client relationships. As a result, a number of these students chose not to follow in their fathers' footsteps, turning instead to private tutoring or academia as their principal occupation.[113] It seems that Schwarz himself was, on at least one occasion, the beneficiary of a patron's generosity, since he recalled in a later memoir (to be discussed below) that he 'knows from his own experience how much a fine new book received as a gift affects a young soul (*ich hatte es aus eigener Erfahrung, wie viel ein neues hübsches geschenktes Buch auf eine junge Seele wirkt*)'.[114] Attending a German university such as Halle or Jena also meant exposure to a great variety of practices and forms of sociability, interaction, and communication—public and private, open and secret, ranging from learned societies to the so-called academic lodges, student orders and, last but not least, Freemasonry.[115] In navigating this rich institutional landscape, Schwarz acquired the experience, knowledge and dispositions that shaped his extraordinary career and enabled him to occupy multiple positions in Russian society.

Schwarz dated his arrival in the Russian Empire to June 1776.[116] According to Novikov's testimony, with the help of Prince Ivan Gagarin, he secured a position as tutor in the household of Aleksandr Rakhmanov in Mogilev (annexed by Russia in 1772 following the First Partition of Poland; modern-day Belarus), where he soon founded a Masonic lodge and established contacts with the Masons of Courland.[117] We can already discern here a crucial

[113] Anthony J. La Vopa, 'Vocations, Careers, and Talent: Lutheran Pietism and Sponsored Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 28, 2 (1986), 255–86.
[114] 'Zapiska I. G. Shvartsa ob otnosheniiakh k nemu I. I. Melissino', in *Letopisi russkoi literatury i drevnosti*, 5, 2 (Moscow: Tipografiia Gracheva, 1863), pp. 96–110 (p. 103).
[115] *Zwischen Geheimnis und Öffentlichkeit: Jenaer Freimaurerei und studentische Geheimgesellschaften*, ed. by Joachim Bauer and Jens Riederer (Jena: Erlangen, 1991); *Logenbrüder, Alchemisten und Studenten: Jena und seine geheimen Gesellschaften im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Joachim Bauer, Birgitt Hellmann and Gerhard Müller (Rudolstadt and Jena: Hain, 2002).
[116] 'Zapiska', p. 102.
[117] Longinov, *Novikov*, p. 078. On the lodge in Mogilev, see Pypin, *Russkoe masonstvo*, p. 508.

feature of Schwarz's strategy of social advancement: his ability to operate simultaneously in two different fields of interaction and to invoke distinct sets of meanings, his dual identity as educator and Mason being underpinned by his reliance on patron-client relationships. Moreover, since both Gagarin and Rakhmanov were Masons, there was no conflict between his pedagogical and Masonic activities. On the contrary, from this point onwards the two were in constant interaction.

Schwarz's connections with Courland were of great importance. As Heinz Ischreyt has demonstrated, Freemasonry in Mitau (modern Jelgava, Latvia) consisted mainly of noblemen who participated in publishing and educational projects and were bound together by a complex network of family and friendship ties. A number were graduates of Halle or Jena, including Ernst Johann von Fircks, who around 1775 established in Mitau the Scottish lodge *Ernst zum roten Adler*, with which the Mogilev lodge was associated. On the basis of several pieces of indirect evidence, Ischreyt has suggested that von Fircks may have known and patronised Schwarz as early as 1772.[118] A few years later, in 1781, it was through von Fircks and his lodge that Schwarz, now an emissary of the Moscow Masons, made his fateful connection with the Berlin Rosicrucians, thereby initiating the history of this secret order in Russia.[119] Between these two episodes of interaction with the Courland Masons, Schwarz, drawing on his newly established connections within Russian Masonic circles, succeeded in making his way to Moscow, where he became a lecturer at Moscow University and actively engaged in the learned and literary life of the old Russian capital.

[118] Heinz Ischreyt, 'Streiflichter über die Freimaurerei in Kurland', in *Beförderer der Aufklärung in Mittel- und Osteuropa: Freimaurer, Gesellschaften, Clubs*, ed. by Éva H. Balázs and others (Berlin: Ulrich Camen, 1979), pp. 225–56 (pp. 241–3).
[119] Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 87–8; Iu. E. Kondakov, *Orden zolotogo i rozovogo kresta v Rossii. Teoreticheskii gradus solomonovykh nauk* (Saint Petersburg: Asterion, 2012), pp. 219–21; Kondakov, *Ezotericheskoe dvizhenie*, pp. 245–6.

In 1779, Schwarz became an extraordinary professor of German language at Moscow University.[120] He was apparently invited by Kheraskov, who, drawing on his Masonic connections, undertook a series of reforms and initiatives: he founded the Noble Boarding School (*Universitetskii blagorodnyi pansion*) and leased the university printing house to Novikov.[121] Schwarz assisted his superior in carrying out these projects. As Igor Fedyukin has demonstrated, 'the introduction of new institutions and organizational forms' in the sphere of education in eighteenth-century Russia was 'animated by the efforts of individuals and groups to implement their personal initiatives: projects driven by career, material, or ideational considerations, or, most often, by a mixture of these'.[122] Under Catherine II, educational policy was placed on a more systematic institutional footing. Yet this new administrative approach still left ample room for individual actors and their ambitious projects.[123] In this respect, Kheraskov and Schwarz, as well as Novikov, can be seen as 'entrepreneurs' (or, to use a contemporary term, *projecteurs*) who sought simultaneously to reform the university, accumulate symbolic capital and strengthen their social positions.

What exactly were Schwarz's projects, and how did they contribute to the rise of Russian sentimentalism? Judging from the announcements published in *Moskovskie vedomosti* and *Utrennii svet* between 1779 and 1782, their history unfolded as follows.[124] In the summer of 1779, a generous donation from Prokofii Demidov enabled the university curators Ivan Shuvalov and Kheraskov to provide stipends for six students who were to be trained by Schwarz

[120] On the history of Moscow University in the eighteenth century, see S. P. Shevyrev, *Istoriia Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta. 1755–1855* (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1855); *Universitet dlia Rossii: Vzgliad na istoriiu kul'tury XVIII stoletiia*, ed. by V. V. Ponomareva and L. B. Khoroshilova (Moscow: Russkoe slovo, 1997); A. Iu. Andreev, *Lektsii po istorii Moskovskogo universiteta. 1755–1855* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2001).
[121] Shevyrev, *Istoriia*, pp. 213–22.
[122] Igor Fedyukin, *The Enterprisers: The Politics of School in Early Modern Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 3.
[123] Ibid., pp. 213–7.
[124] The announcements are reprinted in Shvarts, *Besedy*, pp. 172–80. For a brief outline, see also Shevyrev, *Istoriia*, pp. 219–24.

as future educators. In November of the same year, this initiative was institutionalised as the Pedagogical Seminar, with Schwarz as its inspector. In 1782, another charitable initiative was undertaken for the benefit of the university. This time, the wealthy Mason Petr Tatishchev and the 'learned friendly society (ученое дружеское общество)'—the public face of the Moscow Rosicrucians, which was announcing its existence in print for the first time—decided to sponsor the establishment of the Translation, or Philological, Seminar (referred to in the sources as *Perevodcheskaia Seminariia* and *Filologicheskaia Seminariia perevodchikov*).[125] In November 1782, when the Friendly Learned Society was formally established, the Philological Seminar was presented as one of its projects.[126] Given the paucity of evidence, it is difficult to establish the precise relationship between the two seminars. It seems plausible, however, that there was no strict boundary between them and, eventually, perhaps no distinction at all. The students of the Pedagogical Seminar informed the public through *Utrennii svet* that they intended to translate 'poetic and prose works' for the journal:

> взяли на себя переводить с иностранных языков лучшие и с предметом сочинения сего сходнейшие стихотворные и прозаические сочинения для сего Издания.[127]

On the other hand, the Philological Seminar, whose proclaimed aim was the production of translations, trained students who were later expected 'to become teachers':

> Сии семинаристы три года наставляемы будут в предписанных им наука со всяким рачением, дабы по прошествии того времени, возвратясь к своим местам, могли они сами вступить в учительское звание.[128]

[125] Shvarts, *Besedy*, pp. 177–80.
[126] Longinov, *Novikov*, p. 07.
[127] Shvarts, *Besedy*, p. 174.
[128] Longinov, *Novikov*, p. 07.

These students were recruited mainly from diocesan seminaries[129] and lodged in a house owned by the Society, where Schwarz gave some of his lectures. According to a report submitted to the empress in 1786, the students residing in this house were supervised by the professor (and Mason) Andrei Chebotarev, [130] while in a printed announcement of lectures held at Moscow University in 1783–1784, he is referred to as 'Inspector of the Teachers' Seminary (Учительской Семинарии Инспектор)'.[131] Finally, Maksim Nevzorov, one of these students, described the subsidising of students drawn from seminaries and the university as 'the establishment of the Teaching Institute (заведение училищного института)'.[132] We may therefore conclude that the Pedagogical Seminar, initially sponsored by Demidov, was eventually absorbed into the Friendly Learned Society, the public philanthropic institution of the Freemasons, and merged with the Philological Seminar.

What, then, was the precise function of the Pedagogical Seminar? The training of teachers became a subject of debate in late eighteenth-century Russia.[133] This helps explain why Shuvalov and Kheraskov chose to invest Demidov's money in a pedagogical institution. Schwarz, selected to implement their project, must have convinced his patrons that he—a true entrepreneur, to use Fedyukin's terminology—possessed the competence necessary to translate their relatively vague idea into institutional reality. His initiative should be understood as an adaptation of a German educational model with which Schwarz was familiar at first hand from his studies at Halle. As Sergei Rozhdestvenskii noted, at that time 'in some German

[129] A. M. Feofanov, *Studenchestvo Moskovskogo universiteta XVIII – pervoi chetverti XIX veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo PSTGU, 2011), p. 38.
[130] 'Novye svedeniia o N. I. Novikove i chlenakh Kompanii tipograficheskoi', in *Letopisi russkoi literatury i drevnosti*, 5, 2 (Moscow: Tipografiia Gracheva, 1863), pp. 3–96 (p. 5).
[131] *Ob''iavlenie o publichnykh ucheniiakh, v Imperatorskom Moskovskom universitete i obeikh Gimnaziiakh onago prepodavaemykh s 17 Avgusta 1783 po 26 Iiunia 1784 goda* ([Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1783]), p. [5].
[132] 'Otryvok iz poslaniia M. I. Nevzorova k O. A. Pozdeevu', *Bibliograficheskie zapiski*, 1, 21 (1858), 643–59 (p. 648).
[133] S. V. Rozhdestvenskii, *Ocherki po istorii sistem narodnago prosveshcheniia v Rossii v XVIII – XIX vekakh*, vol. 1 (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia Aleksandrova, 1912), pp. 506–18.

universities', including Göttingen and Halle, 'there already existed special seminars for the preparation of teachers', and the Pedagogical Seminar founded by Schwarz represented 'the type of philological seminars in German universities'.[134] The German institutions resembled their Russian counterparts not only in the interchangeable use of the terms 'pedagogical' and 'philological', but also—and much more importantly—in their philanthropic and practical, rather than strictly academic, orientation. According to Anthony La Vopa,

> At Halle and elsewhere seminars for theology students had not enforced stringent admission standards, much less a competitive selection; their raison d'etre was to dispense charity to the needy, and the requirements to attend lectures or to teach were minimal. [...] the mission of the philological seminar was to produce the nucleus of a new teaching corps [...].[135]

In the late 1750s, Johann Salomo Semler, professor of theology at Halle, attempted 'to supplement the theological seminar with a teacher training program', out of which 'the pedagogical institute' emerged.[136] From 1769, its inspector was Christian Gottfried Schütz, who was succeeded by Ernst Christian Trapp in 1779.[137] Schwarz, who, as we have seen, matriculated at Halle as a theology student in 1771, must have been familiar with this institution and may well have had first-hand experience of studying pedagogy—experience on which he could later draw in presenting himself as a suitable executor of Shuvalov and Kheraskov's project. Schütz published two works on the institution, *Nachricht von der bey dem königl. theol. Seminarium zu Halle neuerrichteten Erziehungsanstalt und den dabey zur Bildung geschickter Schullehrer und Hofmeister getroffenen Einrichtungen* (Halle, 1778) and *Geschichte des Erziehungsinstituts bei dem theologischen Seminariums zu Halle* (Jena, 1781). In the passage quoted above, Nevzorov refers to the Friendly Learned Society's 'Teaching Institute (училищный институт)', a direct Russian equivalent of the Halle *Erziehungsinstitut* or

[134] Ibid., pp. 514, 517.
[135] Anthony J. La Vopa, *Grace, Talent, and Merit: Poor Students, Clerical Careers, and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 309.
[136] Ibid., p. 314.
[137] Friedrich Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts auf den deutschen Schulen und Universitäten vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zur Gegenwart*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (Berlin and Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1921), II, pp. 80–2.

Erziehungsanstalt. Moreover, the records of the Moscow Masonic lodge *zu den 3 Fahnen*, of which Schwarz was master, preserve a speech he delivered in 1783 in which, most probably referring to the activities of the Friendly Learned Society, he mentions 'des Erziehungs Institut'.[138] Finally, as part of their pedagogical work, Semler and Schütz edited a series of textbooks entitled *Neues Elementarwerk für die niederen Klassen lateinischer Schulen und Gymnasien* (1780–1792, 14 vols),[139] which Schwarz praised in his memoir to Shuvalov as 'rich to the highest degree (*das höchst reiche*)' and proposed for use at the university.[140] Schwarz's recommendation appears, moreover, to have been acted upon: Johann Heym (Ivan Geim), himself a Freemason and a lecturer in German at Moscow University, reprinted several texts from the *Neues Elementarwerk* in his 1784 educational anthology of German writings, which remained in use for teaching for at least the following decade.[141] Taken together, this evidence points to the enduring importance, throughout Schwarz's subsequent trajectory in the social space of the Russian Empire, of the German institutional and intellectual experience that had shaped his habitus.

The position of the Pedagogical Seminary within the structure of the university remained unstable. During the eighteenth century, Moscow University had no legal framework regulating the conferral of academic degrees.[142] As a result, such appointments followed no strict formal rules and were made only sporadically. Some students of the Pedagogical Seminar were granted the degree of bachelor ('бакалавр'), which recognised their competence as

[138] N. P. Kiselev, *Iz istorii russkogo rozenkreitserstva*, ed. by M. V. Reizin and A. I. Serkov (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo imeni N. I. Novikova, 2005), p. 348.
[139] Paulsen, *Geschichte*, p. 81.
[140] 'Zapiska', p. 101.
[141] *Deutsches Lesebuch zum Gebrauch der obern Deutschen Klassen in den Kaiserlich-Moskowischen Gymnasien*, ed. by Johann Heym (Moscow: Universitäts-Buchdruckerey, 1784). I intend to elaborate this point in a separate study.
[142] A. Iu. Andreev and D. A. Tsygankov, 'Uchenye stepeni i zvaniia', in *Imperatorskii Moskovskii universitet: 1755–1917. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, ed. by V. A. Sadovnichii and others (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2010), pp. 752–3.

prospective teachers.[143] Among these bachelors was Anton Prokopovich-Antonskii, the future head of the Noble Boarding School and rector of the university. The Seminar's students also included Vasilii Podshivalov and Pavel Sokhatskii, who would later teach rhetoric and Russian language and literature at the university, its gymnasium and the Boarding School, as well as edit some of the leading sentimentalist periodicals of the 1790s.

The nature of the literature translated by members of the Seminar requires further study, with attention, insofar as the scant evidence permits, to individual students and their different choices and trajectories. Helmut Keipert has suggested that the translations from Johann Jakob Dusch's *Moralische Briefe zur Bildung des Herzens* published in *Utrennii svet* and *Moskovskoe Ezhemesiachnoe Izdanie* were produced by university students on Schwarz's recommendation.[144] However, since selected letters by Dusch had already been reprinted in an anthology of German writings appended to the 1775 edition of the German Grammar by Franz Hölterhof, Schwarz's predecessor as professor of German at Moscow University,[145] there is no clear indication that Schwarz himself took any particular interest in this author. What we do know is that one member of the Seminar, Nikolai Popov, translated three sermons by Georg Joachim Zollikofer (1720–1788): one was printed in *Utrennii svet*, while the other two were published in a separate edition; in both cases, the translations were dedicated to prominent clergymen.[146] As noted above, members of the Seminar were recruited from diocesan seminaries, and two of them, Stepan Glagolevskii and Matvei Desnitskii, later became the metropolitans Serafim and Mikhail.[147] The ties between Novikov's circle and the clergy had

[143] Feofanov, *Studenchestvo*, pp. 135–7. See also A. Iu. Andreev, 'Bakalavr', in *Imperatorskii Moskovskii universitet: 1755–1917. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, ed. by V. A. Sadovnichii and others (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2010), p. 46.
[144] Keipert, 'German Writers', pp. 85–6.
[145] Peter Drews, *Deutsch-slavische Literaturbeziehungen im 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Otto Sagner, 1996), p. 13.
[146] Vitaliy Simankov, *Originals and Translations: A Study Based on Old Slavic Texts and Russian Eighteenth-Century Journals* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Brown University, 2017), pp. 415–6.
[147] Feofanov, *Studenchestvo*, p. 226.

already been close in Saint Petersburg, and this cooperation continued in Moscow, where Metropolitan Platon Levshin clearly sympathised with some Masonic activities. This helps to explain the prominence of edifying literature, predominantly German and Protestant, among the translated works published by Novikov in his journals and as separate editions.

The Pedagogical Seminar was complemented by another institution whose activities were also devoted to education, moral self-improvement and participation in contemporary literary life—the Assembly of University Pupils (*Sobranie universitetskikh pitomtsev*). Founded by Schwarz on 13 March 1781, it pursued a twofold aim, as one of its members explained in a speech delivered in 1784: first, 'to practise writing in different genres and translations of the best passages from ancient and modern authors, and to publish a journal for a year in support of the poor'; and second, to deliver at every meeting a speech on morality with the aim of self-improvement:

> [Шварц] завел и сие ныне цветущее и никогда неувядаемое общество, предписав ему два главнейшие закона и две спасительнейшие цели: первую, до просвещения разума относящуюся, чтобы упражняться в сочинениях разного рода и переводах наилучших мест из древних и новейших писателей, и издавать в свет годичный журнал в пользу бедных; а вторую, непосредственно исправляющую наши испорченные склонности, чтобы при начатии каждого собрания поочереди говорить членам о какой либо нравственности речь.[148]

A similar account of the Assembly's aims was given by its first head, Mikhail Antonovskii, in his memoirs:

> В тоже время согласил он, Михаил Антоновский, нескольких своих соучеников, студентов Московскаго университета, составить ученое общество для упражнений, во время остающееся от слушания профессорских лекций, в сочинениях и переводах, а после для издания трудов своих в печать, словом для приучения себя разсуждать и чувствовать хорошо.[149]

It was, then, a student literary society with a strong emphasis on moral self-discipline and a direct connection to the periodical press. By institutionalising a network of informal literary

[148] Tikhonravov, 'Shvarts', pp. 588–9.
[149] 'Zapiski Mikhaila Ivanovicha Antonovskogo', *Russkii archiv*, 1(1885), 145–178 (p. 151).

relationships, providing it with a structure and facilitating access to print, Schwarz actively contributed to the formation of the literary field. The Assembly began publishing periodicals commonly referred to as 'Novikov's'—*Vecherniaia zaria* (1782) and *Pokoiashchiisia trudoliubets* (1784–1785), whose direct predecessors were *Utrennii svet* and *Moskovskoe Ezhemesiachnoe Izdanie*. At this point, with Schwarz's assistance, the model of periodical publishing developed by Novikov and his Masonic associates in Saint Petersburg in the late 1770s was transferred to a Moscow student organisation. When presenting the first issue of *Pokoiashchiisia trudoliubets* to Novikov, members of the Assembly, including Antonovskii and Aleksandr Labzin, made an inscription that clearly indicates that Novikov was no longer directly involved in editing the journal and that it had become a student enterprise:

> Собрание университетских питомцев, в знак признательности, яко почтеннейшему члену и благодетелю своему и яко верному сыну Отечества, которым посвящается книга сия, приносит экземпляр трудов своих его благородию Николаю Ивановичу Новикову.[150]

Moreover, the Assembly succeeded in extending its institutionalised literary activity to Saint Petersburg, where a branch, the Society of the Friends of Letters (*Obshchestvo druzei slovesnykh nauk*), was established in 1784. Its members included Aleksandr Radishchev, and the Society later published the journal *Beseduiushchii grazhdanin* (1789).[151] The Assembly's crucial role in periodical publishing is further confirmed by the autobiography of Podshivalov, who records that the Assembly published the first four parts of *Chtenie dlia vkusa, razuma i chuvstvovanii*, a journal that appeared between 1791 and 1793:

> За тем, как член студентскаго Собрания при Университете, я много участвовал в изданиях от онаго: *Покоящемся Трудолюбце*, *Магазине Натуральной Истории, Физики и Химии*, – в *Чтении для сердца, разума и чувствований* […] Но главный труд мой составляет: […] 8 частей *Чтения для вкуса, разума и чувствований* (Первыя четыре выданы от Студентскаго собрания вообще).[152]

[150] Martynov, *Novikov*, pp. 86–7.
[151] D. S. Babkin, *A. N. Radishchev. Literaturno-obshchestvennaia deiatel'nost'* (Moscow and Leningrad: Nauka, 1966), pp. 132–79.
[152] 'Avtobiografiia Vasiliia Sergeevicha Podshivalova', *Moskvitianin*, 1 (1842), 178–80 (pp. 178–9).

The Assembly marked its publications with a publishing stamp,[153] which also appears on the title page of the journal's first volume. Alongside Nikolai Karamzin's *Moskovskii zhurnal* (1791–1792), *Chtenie dlia vkusa* was one of the leading periodicals of Russian sentimentalism. It was followed by *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni* (1794–1798) and *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia* (1799–1801). These periodicals were published as supplements to *Moskovskie vedomosti* and edited by Podshivalov and, later, Sokhatskii, both former members of the Pedagogical Seminar who went on to teach at Moscow University and the Noble Boarding School, headed by Prokopovich-Antonskii. In other words, the connections between educational and literary institutions and the periodical press established by Schwarz survived for at least a decade after the decline and fall of Moscow Freemasonry and provided an infrastructure for the dissemination of translated and original sentimentalist literature. As for the Assembly itself, the last traces of its activity date from 1789.[154] Publishing one of its documents in 1820, Mikhail Makarov characterised the Assembly as follows:

> мне кажется, оно было *родоначальником* всех наших Московских Обществ Словесности[155]

These words were printed in a volume of *Trudy Obshchestva liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti*. The Society that published the journal had been established at Moscow University in 1811, with Prokopovich-Antonskii as its first head. The validity of Makarov's point is self-evident.

Schwarz successfully introduced new educational and literary institutions at Moscow University. The amorphous Pedagogical Seminar was succeeded, following the university reform of 1804, by the far more formalised Pedagogical Institute.[156] Meanwhile, the network of literary institutions and print media created by Novikov and Schwarz, as we have just seen,

[153] See the reproduction in T. I. Kondakova, 'Tipografskie i izdatel'skie marki v russkikh knigakh XVIII veka', in *Kniga. Issledovaniia i materialy*, 39 (Moscow: Kniga, 1979), pp. 73–86 (p. 81).
[154] Tikhonravov, 'Shvarts', p. 588; *Trudy obshchestva liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti*, 20, 5 (1820), 99–103.
[155] *Trudy*, p. 100.
[156] Feofanov, *Studenchestvo*, p. 137; Andreev, *Lektsii*, p. 130.

eventually became an integral part of the literary field, independent from Freemasonry and indispensable for the rise of Russian sentimentalism. It is therefore necessary to examine more closely the relationship between Masonic and sentimentalist literary projects.

4. Late-Eighteenth-Century Russian Literary Public Sphere between Morality and Sensibility

Not only did Schwarz create the institutional infrastructure within which sentimentalism would later flourish, but he also showed an interest in theoretical reflections on human sensibility. In 1782–1783, he delivered a series of 'aesthetic and critical (эстетико-критические)' lectures that encompassed such canonical theorists as Aristotle, Cicero and Boileau, as well as contemporary authors—most importantly, Charles Batteux and Alexander Baumgarten.[157] The latter two were crucial figures in the development of aesthetics, at the time a new discipline that had not yet been taught at Moscow University, where the older traditions of rhetoric and poetics continued to prevail.[158] This discourse of aesthetics was later taken up and further developed by Karamzin and came to inform sentimentalist literature (see Chapter 4). As in the case of the Pedagogical Seminar, Schwarz's innovation was institutionalised only after the university reform of 1804, when aesthetics was formally recognised as an academic discipline and a Department of the Theory of Fine Arts was established.[159]

Apart from that, Schwarz demonstrated his awareness of the emerging culture of sensibility and its influence on contemporary literary taste when, in his textbook on German style, he quoted the French poet Claude Joseph Dorat's praise of German and English authors. Dorat singled out Albrecht Haller, author of the influential long descriptive poem *Die Alpen*,

[157] Tikhonravov, 'Shvarts', pp. 581–2.
[158] On the early history of aesthetics, see Paul O. Kristeller, 'The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (I)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 12, 4 (1951), 495–527; 'The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (II)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 13, 1 (1952), 17–46.
[159] Andreev, *Lektsii*, p. 130.

with its depiction of the sublime Swiss landscape; Christoph Martin Wieland, a poet and novelist who also published one of the leading periodicals of the time, *Der Teutsche Merkur*; and Salomon Gessner, author of immensely popular idylls also set in Switzerland. Dorat claimed that these writers, together with their English counterparts, were characterised by 'tenderness, sweetness and truth' and were 'more voluptuous' than the French:

> Les Allemands, ces esprits tardifs, à qui nous avons appris lentement à devenir nos maitres, les Anglois si sombres et si durs en apparence sont plus voluptueux que nous. Les poesies de Haller, de Wieland, de Gessner, chés les uns, chés les autres celles de Spencer, de Prior, de Pope, respirent ce Caractere de tendresse, de douceur et de Verité, que nous desirons dans les nôtres.[160]

The quotation was taken from Dorat's essay 'Réflexions sur le poëme érotique', in which, drawing on some of the key concepts and ideas of sentimentalism, he associated 'voluptuousness' with the 'naivety of innocence' and the tranquillity of a virtuous heart, and presented the English and German peoples as distinguished by a developed 'sensibility', an inclination towards nature and solitude, 'sweet emotions' and 'a depth of feeling'.[161] Schwarz's familiarity with Dorat's essay demonstrates that, by 1780, not only the works of sentimentalist writers but also critical attempts to conceptualise sensibility as a phenomenon of contemporary literature were known in Moscow.

The works of all three German authors mentioned by Dorat and Schwarz—Haller, Wieland and Gessner—were translated in Moscow during the 1780s within the Masonic and university milieu, including the young Karamzin. As for Gessner, his famous idylls and other writings had already become popular among members of Kheraskov's circle in the early 1770s, while by the end of the decade some of his texts had been reprinted in an anthology of German writings used at Moscow University.[162] It seems plausible to suggest that from this time

[160] Johann Georg Schwarz, *Entwurf der Grundsätze des deutschen Stils* (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1780), [n.p.].
[161] Claude Joseph Dorat, 'Réflexions sur le poëme érotique', in *Collection complete des œuvres de M. Dorat*, 5 (Neuchatel: Imprimerie de la Société Typographique, 1776), pp. 377–88 (pp. 381–3).
[162] Drews, *Literaturbeziehungen*, p. 13.

onwards Gessner was read in German classes at Moscow University, its gymnasiums and the Noble Boarding School. The only direct evidence, however, dates from 1792: a printed announcement of lectures to be held at the university in 1792–1793 states that a tutor in German 'will read' with his students 'some of Gessner's idylls'.[163] In any case, it is telling that the works of one of the most influential sentimentalist writers were studied in a state educational institution at the very moment when Russian sentimentalism was flourishing.

However, the mere fact that sentimentalist literature circulated in the Masonic circles in the 1780s does not in itself allow us to regard the cultivation of a culture of sensibility as an integral part of their activities. We need to distinguish at least three intellectual and literary projects: Masonic, Rosicrucian and sentimentalist. The first began to take shape in the late 1770s in the milieu of *Utrennii svet* and was pursued by figures such as Novikov, Kutuzov and Ivan Turgenev. In the literary public sphere, it manifested itself in translations of a wide variety of fictional and non-fictional texts selected for their presumed moral value and intended for edifying reading. These included Young's *Night Thoughts*, translated by Kutuzov and published first in *Utrennii svet* and later by Novikov as a separate edition; John Mason's *Self-Knowledge*, translated by Turgenev; and essays by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, translated by Kutuzov and Turgenev and published in *Moskovskoe Ezhemesiachnoe Izdanie*. The move to Moscow provided Novikov and his associates with a developed printing infrastructure and opportunities to recruit new authors and disciples from among the students, but it did not significantly alter the character of the works they read, translated and published. Nor is there any indication that Schwarz arrived in Moscow with a clear vision of his future activities: as far as we can tell, his lectures and writings were rather eclectic and by no means formed part of a single coherent

[163] *Ob''iavlenie o publichnykh ucheniiakh, v Imperatorskom Moskovskom universitete i v obeikh Gimnaziiakh onago prepodavaemykh, s 17 Avgusta 1792 goda po 26 Iiunia 1793 goda* (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1792), p. 21.

programme. Moscow Freemasons translated, promoted and disseminated a wide range of works loosely subsumed under the category of useful moral literature: writings by the Church Fathers and Western mystics; predominantly Protestant, but also Catholic, devotional literature; secular moral instructions; and didactic works of fiction. As far as we know, no strict rules governed the selection of materials for publication; what united these activities was a broad commitment to moral discipline and self-improvement.

The situation changed in 1782, when Schwarz introduced Rosicrucianism to Moscow. He apparently returned with books supplied to him by the Order: in his testimony of 1792, Prince Nikolai Trubetskoi stated that the mystical work *Mystère de la croix* by Melchior Douzetemps, translated by Kutuzov and Mikhail Bagrianskii and printed at Ivan Lopukhin's Masonic printing house in 1784, 'was brought by Schwarz from abroad (привезена Шварцом из чужих краев)'.[164] The Rosicrucian Order, a far more strictly organised and unified body than Freemasonry in general, prescribed how its Russian branch was to be structured and how it was to operate, including which books and manuscripts were recommended for reading. This guidance continued after Schwarz's death, as evidenced by a letter Novikov wrote in 1784 to their new leader, Heinrich-Jakob von Schröder:

> Буди препрославлен, милосердый Спаситель наш, за толикое милосердие Его к отечеству нашему, которое явил Он чрез милосердых отцев и высокославимых Начальников наших, дозволением печатать мистические книги.[165]

From this point onwards, the institutional infrastructure of Moscow Freemasonry acquired an additional, highly secret and fundamental layer: the hidden Rosicrucian centre, which exercised authority over the Society's public-facing institutions while remaining inaccessible to outsiders and even to ordinary Freemasons.[166] Similarly, its publishing infrastructure was supplemented

[164] Longinov, *Novikov*, p. 0123.
[165] *Pis'ma Novikova*, p. 36.
[166] In-Ho L. Ryu, 'Moscow Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Order: A Study in Organization and Control', in *The Eighteenth Century in Russia*, ed. by John G. Garrard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 198–232.

by a secret printing house that produced books exclusively for members of the Order.[167] In this multilayered structure of communication, the vague Masonic literary project addressed to the general public was thus supplemented by a far more coherent and deliberate, if no less eclectic in its content, programme for the translation and restricted circulation of Rosicrucian writings (esoteric, theosophical, alchemical etc.).[168]

As for the sentimentalist literary project—that is, the establishment of the language of sensibility as a widely shared idiom transmitted through a network of authors, genres, print media and institutions—it grew out of and in opposition to the Masonic model of literary production and consumption. As we have seen, various sentimentalist texts and concepts circulated within Moscow Freemasonry; in general, however, they remained peripheral to specifically Masonic concerns. The shift that brought the literature of sensibility to the centre of the Moscow literary field occurred in the late 1780s and early 1790s and coincided with the decline of the Moscow Rosicrucians under increasing pressure from the government. At this point, the disciples of the Masons embarked on literary careers of their own that were manifestly non-Masonic. On the one hand, Podshivalov and Sokhatskii began editing journals filled with sentimentalist fiction translated or written, under their guidance, by students of the Noble Boarding School headed by Prokopovich-Antonskii. On the other hand, Karamzin began publishing his own journal. All of them either acquired their professional literary skills through work for Novikov, as Karamzin did, or, like Podshivalov and others, directly inherited the Masonic infrastructure of institutions and print media, which they now reoriented towards different ends. In both cases, sentimentalism provided a shared literary idiom for actors pursuing independent literary careers as well as for those employed in state educational

[167] A. R. Kurilkin, 'Ezotericheskaia kniga v Rossii vtoroi poloviny XVIII – nachala XIX veka. (Predvaritel'nye zamechaniia)', in *Tynianovskii sbornik*, 11 (Moscow: OGI, 2002), pp. 30–50.
[168] For more on Masonic literature, see *Masonstvo i russkaia literatura XVIII–nachala XIX vv.*, ed. by V. I. Sakharov (Moscow: Editorial URSS, 2000).

institutions. The literature of sensibility thus offered a common ground for all those who wanted to survive the collapse of the Rosicrucian project.

5. From Public to Counterpublic: The Rise and Fall of the Moscow Freemasonry

The final section of this chapter returns to the Masons' ultimately unsuccessful attempt to act as an independent public force in the Russian Empire of the 1780s. Recounting the beneficial activities of the Moscow Rosicrucians, their devoted disciple Nevzorov emphasised the public dimension of their undertakings:

> Но мы приведем в пример только общия, публичныя их заведения, которыя публике известны были от имени Дружескаго ученого общества.[169]

At that time Moscow Freemasonry openly addressed the general public both in print and through the organisation of public events. The Friendly Learned Society (*Druzheskoe uchenoe obshchestvo*) was publicly established on 6 November 1782.[170] A printed announcement of its opening, issued in both Latin and Russian, is saturated with markers of Latin learning, including numerous quotations from ancient authors and historical exempla, as well as promises that the Society would pay particular attention to the classical languages and the 'knowledge of *antiquities* (древностей)'.[171] The text can be attributed with a high degree of certainty to Schwarz, a former student at Halle, a member of the Latin Society of Jena and a professor whose position required proficiency in Latin. The entire text was structured around a dichotomy between 'useful' and 'leisure' time—categories rooted in the Latin concepts of *otium* and *negotium* and reflected in the formulations of Horace's *Ars poetica* (*Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae* and *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*)—which, in eighteenth-century

[169] 'Otryvok', p. 648.
[170] On the Society, see B. I. Krasnobaev, 'Eine Gesellschaft gelehrter Freunde am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts. "Druženskoe učenoe obščestvo"', in *Beförderer der Aufklärung in Mittel- und Osteuropa: Freimaurer, Gesellschaften, Clubs*, ed. by Éva H. Balázs and others (Berlin: Ulrich Camen, 1979), pp. 257–70.
[171] Longinov, *Novikov*, p. 07.

Russia, were transformed into fundamental categories of social and individual existence.[172] A disciplined subject of the Russian Empire was expected to transform leisure into another form of useful time, to internalise external didactic impulses and to experience them as pleasurable. The announcement presented the development of this mode of subjectivity as one of the Society's purposes: persons of different ages, occupations and fortunes were 'united together by a precious useful spending of leisure time (драгоценное употребление в пользу празднаго времени), love for sciences and common and private good (общее и частное благо)'.[173] The cultivation of these values was not confined to the Society itself: it also intended to 'enter into a learned correspondence' with foreign men of letters, to print and disseminate books, especially 'educational (учебных)' ones, and to support clerical seminaries and the Philological Seminar.[174] As far as we know, the Society was a relatively well-organised and structured institution, with minutes of its meetings kept by a secretary.[175]

At least in its public self-representation, the Society conformed to a model of Catherine's public sphere sustained through the joint efforts of the government and loyal private individuals and promoted by Novikov throughout the 1770s. We can gain a clearer sense of how Moscow Freemasonry conceptualised its public functions and its relationship with the rest of society from a memoir written by Schwarz around 1782–1783, in the aftermath of his conflict with the university curator Ivan Melissino, and addressed to their superior, Shuvalov.[176] In his conflict with this influential official, Schwarz could rely only on himself and use his apparently exceptional ability to navigate informal patron-client relationships. In this particular instance,

[172] For more on this, see V. M. Zhivov, 'Vremia i ego sobstvennik v Rossii rannego Novogo vremeni', in *Ocherki istoricheskoi semantiki russkogo iazyka rannego Novogo vremeni*, ed. by V. M. Zhivov (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2009), pp. 27–101; Joachim Klein, 'Sluzhba, len' i "sladostnyi dosug" v russkoi dvorianskoi kul'ture XVIII veka', in *XVIII vek*, 29 (Moscow and Saint Petersburg: Al'ians-Arkheo, 2017), pp. 156–75; Ospovat, *Pridvornaia slovesnost'*, pp. 44–107.
[173] Longinov, *Novikov*, p. 06.
[174] Ibid., p. 07.
[175] Ibid., pp. 203, 09.
[176] For a brief outline of the conflict that led to Schwarz's resignation from the university, see Shevyrev, *Istoriia*, pp. 222–4.

he did so through writing by addressing a patron well acquainted with the genre of epistolary self-assertion practised by dependent men of letters, not least from the period when he had patronised Mikhail Lomonosov.[177] It was in this context that Schwarz claimed that 'it is customary and thus permissible to demonstrate one's merits to one's superiors (*es gewöhnlich und also erlaubt ist gegen seine Obern seine Verdienste anzuzeigen*)'.[178] He proceeded carefully to enumerate and emphasise his own achievements. Throughout the text, he constructs his identity as possessing two dimensions and presents his actions as unfolding within two distinct, though interrelated, spheres:

> Die gegen mich ausgeübten Beleidigungen betreffen mich in zwei verschiedenen Verhältnissen, erstlich – als Professor, zweitens als Mitglied der freundschaftlichen gelehrten Gesellschaft. Da die einen in die anderen zusammenflissen und aufklähren, so sehe ich mich genöthigt beyde zu durchgehen.[179]
>
> [The insults levelled against me affect me in two different capacities: first, as a professor, and second, as a member of the friendly learned society. Since the one is intertwined with and sheds light on the other, I feel compelled to discuss both.]

He then proceeds to reiterate the duality of his identity 'qua Professor' and 'qua Mitglied der (Gelehrten) Gesellschaft'.[180] As a professor at the state university, he was appointed inspector of the Pedagogical Seminar; as a private individual, he was a member of the (Masonic) Friendly Learned Society, which subsidised the Seminar's students and owned the house in which they lived and where he delivered some of his lectures. It was this overlap that led to an open conflict between Schwarz and his colleagues. Professors Andrei Barsov and Johann Schaden accused him of mixing his lectures on the history of philosophy with theology ('mischte Theologie in meine Lectionen') and denounced them as Freemasonry ('diese meine Lectionen für Maçonnerie auszuschreien'). In response, Schwarz insisted that Freemasonry 'is

[177] Kirill Ospovat, 'Mikhail Lomonosov Writes to his Patron: Professional Ethos, Literary Rhetoric and Social Ambition', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 59, 2 (2011), 240–66.
[178] 'Zapiska', p. 109. For a quite unreliable Russian translation of the memoir, see Shvarts, *Besedy*, pp. 134–45.
[179] Ibid., p. 97.
[180] Ibid., p. 101–2.

by no means something that can be taught in public lectures (*gar keine Sache ist, die in öffentliche Lectionen gelehrt werden kann*)'. By describing his lectures to the Seminar students as open/public, Schwarz distinguished them, as a form of social activity open to a wider audience, from Freemasonry. At the same time, however, he also referred to them as 'private lectures' ('Privat-Lection(en)'),[181] distinguishing them from his university teaching and emphasising his own private initiative behind this undertaking. Schwarz condemned his supposedly learned opponents for failing to grasp these distinctions and for still 'believing', 'in the eighteenth century', that Freemasonry was 'a religious society' that 'could be taught from the lectern (*eine religiöse Gesellschaft und könne von der Cathedr gelehrt werden*)'.[182]

At this point, Schwarz appears to contrast the secret and exclusive character of Masonic communities with open, public social activity. In his next move, however, he reverses the argument, emphasising precisely the public character of Freemasonry:

> Sie ist ja fast in allen cultivirten Staaten von Europa beynahe öffentlich, wird von den Kirchen-Vorstehern verschiedener Religionen und selbst von den Monarchen geschützt, nimt in England, daher sie sich in andere Staaten verbreitet, als wie andere Gesellschaften an öffentlichen Angelegenheiten Antheil.[183]
>
> [It [Freemasonry] is almost public in nearly all the civilised states of Europe, is protected by the church leaders of various religions and even by the monarchs; in England, from where it spreads to other states, it participates, like other societies, in public affairs.]

At the risk of paradox, Schwarz claims that in the most enlightened modern polities—the states of Europe—Freemasonry, which he initially characterises as opposed to any form of publicity, becomes an open/public (*öffentlich*) activity. At the same time, continuing his defence, he denies the Masonic character of the Friendly Learned Society. Once again, he emphasises 'a difference between a learned society and a Masonic one (*ein Unterschied zwischen einer gelehrten Gesellschaft und einer maçonischen*)' and states that 'the public foundation (*die*

[181] Ibid., pp. 105, 110.
[182] Ibid., pp. 106–7.
[183] Ibid., p. 106.

öffentliche Stiftung)' of the Society was intended to reaffirm that distinction.[184] We know, however, that the Friendly Learned Society was in fact deeply embedded in the structures of Freemasonry and, more specifically, of the Rosicrucian Order, serving as its public face.[185] Schwarz's memoir was, of course, a carefully calculated act of discursive self-vindication. The two strands of his argument—presenting Freemasonry as alternately secret and public—clearly undermine each other. This contradiction can be understood as arising from a tension between Schwarz's own conviction that Masonic activities served the public good and his need to refute the accusations of his anti-Masonic colleagues. In a strict sense, at least, he was right to claim that the Pedagogical Seminar and the Friendly Learned Society were not Masonic institutions: they provided no space for Masonic rituals and neither replaced Masonic lodges nor performed the work conducted in them. On the contrary, these institutions fostered a range of other, non-Masonic practices—educational, learned, literary and philanthropic. We may therefore conclude that Schwarz and other Moscow Freemasons hoped that their society would transcend the boundaries of secrecy and, through its public institutions (Nevzorov's 'общие, публичные заведения'), enter the sphere of public affairs (Schwarz's *öffentliche Angelegenheiten*) as a recognised and autonomous social force operating under the patronage of the monarchy and the Church.

We know that the hopes of the Moscow Freemasons were not fulfilled. Initially involved in Catherine's cultural projects aimed at reforming the morals and manners of her subjects, Novikov became an object of her growing suspicion from the mid-1780s onwards. The estrangement was mutual: the Moscow Rosicrucians increasingly embraced a conservative critique of modernity and showed little enthusiasm for Catherine's rule, while generally

[184] Ibid., p. 107.
[185] A. I. Serkov, 'Druzheskoe uchenoe obshchestvo, masonskii proekt, "chtob profany i podozrevat' ne mogli"', in *Rossiia i gnozis*, vol. 2, ed. by A. L. Rychkov (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo RKHGA, 2015), pp. 391–402.

remaining her loyal subjects; the empress, for her part, was hostile to their turn towards mysticism and esoteric knowledge, their connections with Prussia and their attempts to win the favour of her heir, Paul. All this resulted in a series of acts of persecution, culminating in the arrest of Novikov and his associates in 1792.[186] This put an end to the Masonic public activities that, only a decade earlier, had flourished within state educational institutions and enjoyed the patronage of the governor-general of Moscow, Zakhar Chernyshev, and Metropolitan Platon. What had begun as an initiative of private individuals pursuing the common good and acting within the boundaries and according to the rules of the public sphere as envisioned by Catherine was eventually denounced by the empress as the harmful activity of charlatans, mystics and schismatics. The history of Moscow Freemasonry in the 1780s can thus be described, in Michael Warner's terms, as a transition from being a recognised part of the general public to becoming a counterpublic, 'defined by [its] tension with a larger public' and maintaining 'at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status'. Its 'participants are marked off from persons or citizens in general', while its mode of discussion 'is understood to contravene the rules obtaining in the world at large, being structured by alternative dispositions or protocols, making different assumptions about what can be said or what goes without saying'.[187] The Masonic claim to public significance failed, and Moscow Freemasonry became increasingly marginalised.

The discrepancy between Masonic and governmental interpretations of the same social reality is particularly evident in the case of Schwarz's reputation, both during his lifetime and

[186] On the evolution of Masonic ideology, including their social and political views, see Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 133–264. On the causes, actors and mechanisms of the persecution of Novikov and his companions, see G. A. Likhotkin, *Oklevetannyi Kolovion* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1972); V. A. Zapadov, 'K istorii pravitel'stvennykh presledovanii N. I. Novikova', in *XVIII vek*, 11 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976), pp. 37–48; K. A. Papmehl, 'The Empress and 'Un Fanatique': A Review of the Circumstances Leading to the Government Action against Novikov in 1792', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 68, 4 (1990), 665–91.
[187] Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), p. 56.

posthumously. Throughout his career, he deliberately operated simultaneously in several distinct social fields. In addition to the cultural capital he had accumulated at German universities, Schwarz apparently possessed considerable personal charisma, and it was this combination of rational expertise and irrational power of persuasion that facilitated his rapid ascent. Already in Mogilev, he combined his occupation as a private tutor with Masonic activities and the patron-client connections associated with them. From that point onwards, his social advancement proceeded through professional, informal and Masonic channels. At the height of his career in Moscow, Schwarz occupied a remarkable range of positions: he was a professor at the university and thus a state servant; a private tutor in several households, including that of Tatishchev, arguably his most important wealthy patron; a prominent public actor who delivered his own private lectures, participated in the open meetings of the Friendly Learned Society, and supported various public initiatives; a prominent Mason; and finally, at the most concealed level, the powerful head of the Russian Rosicrucians. Each of these positions provided opportunities for the accumulation of material or symbolic capital and social authority. Schwarz, like Novikov, had the prospect of becoming a rare example of a public figure in Russian society: a person of unquestionably high status acquired outside the state hierarchies of rank and power and based instead on alternative sources of public recognition.

When Schwarz died, he was commemorated both publicly and secretly. Although by the time of his death he was no longer a professor at the university, the Assembly of University Pupils held a memorial meeting on 26 March 1784, at which speeches and poems were read; moreover, two commemorative odes, in Russian and German, were published.[188] The Freemasons, who had a tradition of funeral lodge meetings,[189] organised at least two such

[188] Tikhonravov, 'Shvarts', pp. 598–9; Longinov, *Novikov*, p. 211.
[189] Pypin, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 129–30, 162–3.

ceremonies on this occasion. One was held by the German lodge *zu den 3 Fahnen*,[190] while Novikov participated in the other. We know of it from the notes of Stepan Sheshkovskii, Novikov's interrogator, who challenged Novikov's claim that he and Schwarz had not been close during the final period of Schwarz's life as follows:

> В ответе [Новиков] говорил, что будтоб между Шварцом у него происходила холодность, и будтоб Шварц многое от него скрывал; но из бумаг его видно первое, говорил он и товарищи его такие похвальные при погребении его речи, кои достойныб были самому великому в государстве мужу, по сделанным заслугам отечеству; второе, подал в сборище предложение о даче жене Шварцовой награждения, а потом и о вечном ей и детям пансионе.[191]

Sheshkovskii's assessment reveals the radical incommensurability between governmental and Masonic evaluations of Schwarz's reputation. The Freemasons' inability to impose their vision of Schwarz on the rest of society and, most importantly, on the government is symptomatic: what had begun as public activity undertaken for the benefit of society at large became confined, particularly after the onset of anti-Masonic persecution, to the closed community of Rosicrucians—a clandestine Masonic counterpublic with its own distinct practices of reading, writing, circulating and evaluating texts. To use a Weberian concept, Schwarz's charisma was akin to that of a prophet: to some extent, he became the spiritual leader of a religious sect, and his authority within this community was inversely proportional to the recognition he enjoyed outside it. His widow and children were supported, his memory was carefully preserved, his lectures circulated in manuscript[192] and his name continued to appear in Masonic documents

[190] Kiselev, *Iz istorii*, pp. 210–1.
[191] 'Novye dokumenty po delu Novikova', in *Sbornik Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva*, 2 (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1868), pp. 96–158 (p. 127).
[192] The manuscripts are listed in Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, pp. 490–1. Some of them were published in I. G. Shvarts, *Lektsii*, ed. by A. D. Tiurikov (Donetsk: Veber, 2008).

well into the nineteenth century—but only within the small Rosicrucian milieu.[193] As Nevzorov claimed in 1817:

> Иван Егорович Шварц, бывший истинным орудием Божиим исправления тогда в России ордена каменщиков и которому российское масонство в особливость за исправление свое и приведение в истинный порядок, а Россия вообще за великие плоды, от исправления сего на благосостояние ея и истинное просвещение истекшие, должны благодарить и ставить внутренние и наружные памятники.[194]

However, despite the enormous authority Schwarz accumulated among his fellow Masons and disciples, this authority could not be converted into state-sanctioned public recognition, glorification and commemoration. Beyond this narrow circle, he was completely forgotten, and his name resurfaced in the Russian public sphere only in the 1850s.

Moscow Freemasonry's ambitious public projects ended in spectacular failure. At the same time, however, it succeeded in creating a network of educational and literary institutions and print media that was taken over by their disciples after the repression of the Rosicrucians and their retreat into a secret, esoteric counterpublic. This infrastructure became pivotal to the emergence and dissemination of Russian sentimentalism. Many of its key actors had been formed in the Masonic milieu and shaped by this experience. Changing political, social and cultural circumstances prompted their rupture with Freemasonry and their pursuit of different career paths. Prokopovich-Antonskii, for example, entered state service and attempted to emulate Schwarz's position as a charismatic mentor, but strictly within the confines of a state educational institution, the Noble Boarding School.[195] Karamzin, by contrast, shared the Masons' aspiration to public recognition outside the structures of the state but pursued it in the sphere of belles-lettres. In any case, sentimentalist literature of the 1790s inherited both the

[193] For Russian Rosicrucians in the nineteenth century, see Raffaella Faggionato, 'From a Society of the Enlightened to the Enlightenment of Society: The Russian Bible Society and Rosicrucianism in the Age of Alexander I', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 79, 3 (2001), 459–87.
[194] 'Otryvok', p. 646.
[195] Noticed by Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo*, p. 280. On Prokopovich-Antonskii and the Noble Boarding School, see N. Sushkov, *Moskovskii Universitetskii Blagorodnyi Pansion* (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1858).

Masonic institutional infrastructure and its claim that private initiative could acquire a public significance.

CHAPTER 2.
Sentimentalist Writing: Genre and Subject

The previous chapter charted the interconnected development of the institutions, practices and language of the public sphere and the emergence of the vogue for literature of sensibility in Russia in the last third of the eighteenth century. It was demonstrated that during the reign of Catherine II, the joint efforts of the empress herself and the ever-expanding number of intellectuals and writers, coupled with the steady rise of the publishing industry and the reading audience, resulted in the partial transfer of cultural agency from the government to members of the public. It was these sites of cultural activity (independent from, though mostly loyal to, the state) that provided the foundation on which an autonomous literary field began to take shape, and where sentimentalist literature started to be read, translated and produced. The aim of the present chapter is to provide a more nuanced and detailed reconstruction of the notable features and tendencies in the development of original Russian sentimentalist literature, as well as to define the cultural context and significance of this kind of writing.

I begin by briefly discussing the main genres of sentimentalist literature, making the case for the importance of the largely overlooked genre of meditative prose which, along with narrative fiction and travelogues, was instrumental in creating and disseminating new sentimentalist models of subjectivity. My argument is that plotless, meditative prose, focused on the subjective experiences and perceptions of a first-person narrator, was especially well suited to the task of representing the inner life. The individual self that emerged in these texts conveys a variety of attitudes and emotional reactions rarely underpinned by psychological coherence or a stable identity. After defining the key parameters of the genre of meditative prose, I address the question of its literary genealogy, tracing the antecedents of original Russian writings to translations of French poetic prose produced in the 1780s. Finally, I move from

literary to cultural history, examining meditative prose and the image of the self it depicts in the context of the practices of self-discipline and self-cultivation that gained traction among educated Russians in the late eighteenth century.

1. The Sentimental Self and the Genre of Meditative Prose

European literature of sensibility is primarily associated with the genres of the novel including the works of Samuel Richardson, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Wolfgang Goethe and the travelogue, epitomised by Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768). The same pattern generally applies to the Russian case. The two most prominent and canonised Russian sentimentalist authors, Aleksandr Radishchev and Nikolai Karamzin, both wrote sentimental journeys, while Karamzin also published a number of extremely popular tales that clearly echoed the plots and motifs of European sentimentalist fiction. Yet alongside the travelogue and narrative prose there was another genre of sentimentalist writing that was particularly popular in late eighteenth-century Russia. When mentioned in passing, it often attracts the label 'lyrical prose', 'prose poems' and other terms, and deserves to be treated as a sub-category that I would propose to refer to as 'meditative prose'. Meditative prose foregrounds what is arguably the fundamental feature of sentimentalist writing: the focus on the representation of the sensitive self, its inner life and experience of the outer world. As Gitta Hammarberg has convincingly demonstrated with reference to Karamzin's works, in the texts of Russian sentimentalism all depicted events are focalised through the perception of the narrator, whose subjective moods and attitudes are conveyed to the reader through expressive, emotive language.[196] Similarly, David Denby argues that in French sentimentalist narrative fiction, stories of misfortune always include an observing

[196] See Gitta Hammarberg, *From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin's Sentimentalist Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

subject whose display of refined feelings at the scene of virtue in distress is the primary object of representation and serves as a model of emotional response for readers.[197] In a certain sense, then, meditative prose may be regarded as a structurally 'original' or 'primitive' form of sentimentalist writing, one that serves as the foundation upon which more sophisticated and complex narrative forms are built.

A case in point is Karamzin's *Bednaia Liza* (1792), arguably the most popular and influential text of Russian sentimentalism. The story of the suicide of a poor peasant girl seduced and abandoned by a nobleman became a model for numerous sentimentalist texts that reproduced its motifs and plot elements in various combinations.[198] Yet the narrative sequence of events is not the sole element of *Bednaia Liza*. The tale is framed by a first-person introduction and conclusion—an example of plotless meditative prose that conveys the subjective experiences of a sensitive individual. The story of Liza and Erast is presented as a memory associated with a particular location, one that resurfaces in the narrator's mind when he visits the site. It is, therefore, derivative of the storyteller's subjectivity and acquires meaning through the emotional response it elicits in him and, by extension, in the reader. The opening of the tale, in which the narrator strolls on the outskirts of Moscow, enjoying picturesque landscapes and indulging in historical reveries and Gothic sensibility, became an object of imitation in its own right, regardless of the subsequent story of Liza's misfortunes.

For example, in 1796, a certain B. B. published a three-page fragment of a first-person narration in which the protagonist, in a mood of introspection, walks outside Moscow and encounters near a monastery a touching scene of a young man's repentant devotion to the

[197] See David J. Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. ch. 2.
[198] Many of these texts are collected in *Russkaia sentimental'naia povest'*, ed. by P. A. Orlov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1979) and *Landshaft moikh voobrazhenii: stranitsy prozy russkogo sentimentalizma*, ed. by V. I. Korovin (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1990).

memory of his father.[199] Only the barest outline of the young man's life is given; the narrative is thoroughly enveloped, and largely dissolved, in the meditative, lyrical self-expression of the narrator, whose voice dominates the text. Ultimately, the meditative framework could dispense with the embedded story entirely and function autonomously. This is the case in a piece published in 1799 by the minor sentimentalist author Prince Fedor Sibirskii.[200] The text is clearly modelled on the opening of *Bednaia Liza*, referencing the Simonov Monastery and paraphrasing Karamzin's formulations, yet the descriptive and meditative elements are not followed by any narrative development. Instead, they exist independently, serving to articulate the reflections, moods, and perceptions of the sentimental authorial self.

Similar interplays of reflective, descriptive, and narrative elements structure sentimentalist travelogues.[201] Individual episodes—such as the traveller's wanderings in the sublime Alpine mountains in Karamzin's *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, or the narrator's ascent of a hill evoking historical and religious associations in Radishchev's *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu*—can be read as relatively independent acts of lyrical self-expression in the manner of fragmentary meditative prose. These episodes are only loosely connected to travel observations, guidebook-like information and embedded stories that together form the texture of the travelogue as a genre. The complex structure of travelogues, woven from the combination of various modes of writing, raises the question of the nature of the self to which this genre gives rise. Andrew Kahn argues that the narrator of *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika* does not constitute a coherent psychological self undergoing any discernible

[199] See B. B., 'Osviashchennaia voda', *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 9 (1796), 253–55.
[200] See F. V. Sibirskii, 'Moi zhelaniia. (Pri nastupaiushchei vesne)', *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia*, 2 (1799), 257–61.
[201] On this genre, see Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790–1840* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000); Andrew Kahn, 'Nikolai Karamzin's Discourses of Enlightenment', in Nikolai Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveller*, transl. by Andrew Kahn (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004), pp. 459–551; Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006).

transformation over the course of the text. Rather, readers encounter multiple authorial selves, a gamut of emotional and intellectual attitudes, states and reactions.[202] Similarly, in *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu*, Radishchev's traveller displays a wide range of contrasting feelings and modes of thought, thereby problematising the nature of the subject and calling into question its stability and uniformity.[203] In this perspective, the representation of subjectivity emerges as a key function of sentimentalist writing in general. The genre of meditative prose may be regarded as the most suitable vehicle for examining the sentimental self, for it presents that self in its purest, most elemental form: namely, as an amalgam of diverse emotional states and intellectual attitudes that together constitute its inner life.

The main features of sentimentalist meditative prose and its model of the self can be identified through a close reading of a particular example of the genre. I will focus on *Utro*, a piece that appeared in *Priatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, one of the leading sentimentalist periodicals of the time, in 1797.[204] Published anonymously, the text is written in the first person and feminine gender, most likely by a woman author. The only discernible plot is the protagonist's shifting inner states, with external events notably absent. The author reserves a prominent place for the experience of reading and absorbing the text of a favourite author. The only significant counterpart to the perceiving mind of the speaking subject is the surrounding natural world, which the narrator observes and interprets because it informs her mood and stimulates her thoughts. The text opens with a reflection which juxtaposes the incomprehensibility of the ways of God with the vain attempts of certain unnamed individuals to uncover them. Their 'speculations' succeed only in leading astray 'weak minds', including

[202] See Kahn, 'Nikolai Karamzin's Discourses of Enlightenment', pp. 461–8.
[203] See Andrew Kahn, 'Self and Sensibility in Radishchev's *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*: Dialogism, Relativism, and the Moral Spectator', in *Self and Story in Russian History*, ed. by Laura Engelstein and Stephanie Sandler (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 280–304.
[204] 'Utro. Otryvok iz zhurnala A…', *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 13 (1797), 353–59.

that of the speaking subject herself. Despite her 'errings', she firmly believes in divine mercy and forgiveness, all the more so because she attributes her delusions and her inability to control her thoughts and feelings directly to her human nature, and more specifically, to her sensibility:

> повелевать мыслями и сердечными движениями, нередко есть свыше сил смертных. – Сердце чувствительное! ты бываешь иногда источник бедствий, но ты же виновник и добродетелей; первое я тобою испытала, но и последним тебе одолжена; и так благодарю Творца, мне сие даровавшаго.[205]

Sensibility is presented here as the most fundamental feature of humanity, the God-given precondition for both 'miseries' and 'virtues' of a person.

The text proceeds to illustrate this general assertion with a particular example. Reflection gives way to narration as the heroine recounts how, 'on one fine May day', she 'woke up very early in the morning' in a distressed state of mind. Abhorring the depravity of the human race, she longs to escape the company of others and seeks solitude. Overcome with 'melancholy (the fruit of a woeful life)', she leaves the house and walks to a 'nearby hill', finding refuge 'under the shade' of 'lofty oaks'. The natural setting deepens her gloomy mood and lends itself to a moralising interpretation:

> Ручей, при скате его протекающий, шумом своим умножал уныние, и тем питал горесть!… Его стремление живо изображало мне суетность жизни нашей! Бездна соседственнаго пруда, поглощающая воды сего источника, показывала образ вечности.[206]

She perceives the sight of a stream flowing into a pond as an allegory of life with its vain pursuits ultimately finding rest and consolation in death. Consumed by a death wish, further reinforced by the book she is reading, which celebrates death, she indulges in a fantasy of traveling abroad, meeting a like-minded author and forming a friendship with him in defiance of gender stereotypes:

[205] Ibid., pp. 353–4.
[206] Ibid., pp. 354–5.

> О! как бы я торжествовала, опровергнув софизмы, утверждающие, будто между двумя людьми различных полов быть не может любви Платонической! Повторяю, что в опровержение ложных мнений, я была бы твоим другом.[207]

Yet that author is dead, and she longs to follow him. She decides to 'enjoy, for the last time and with reverence, the pleasant spectacle of the rising sun'. At this culminating moment, however, the heroine's state of mind begins to change. As her attention shifts to the surrounding natural phenomena, her melancholy 'dissipates' and the power of reason surges:

> Зрелище сие привлекло мое внимание, и нечувствительно разсеяло мрачность, обладающую мною. Некая непонятная сила возвысила дух мой, и я начала разсуждать о предметах меня окружающих.[208]

This is accompanied by an equally intense engagement of the senses: the protagonist observes fields and meadows adorned with flowers and listens to the singing of birds, with the nightingale's song leaving the deepest impression on her. As a result, the contemplation of nature turns into self-examination:

> унылая филомела, вития пернатых, громким ударением песни своей проницала до внутренности души, потрясала ее, и вливала восхищение в изнуренное сердце. Движения его стали сильнее и произвели слезы; чувствуя источники их, обильно текущие по щекам моим, я начала изыскивать причину, и пробужденный разсудок мой сказал мне ее. Он вопервых укорял дерзость мою: нечувствительная тварь! как смеешь ты роптать, и противиться воле Даровавшаго тебе бытие? [...] благость Существа Вышняго все тебе проповедует; самыя слезы твои суть знак Его к тебе милосердия; почувствуй, от чего текут оне; раскаяние причиною их, и вот знак, что небесный Отец печется о душе твоей.[209]

To the figurative meaning of the word *heart* mentioned at the opening here is added the literal one. Initially a conventional metaphor for the inner self ('вливала восхищение в изнуренное сердце'), it later refers to the specific organ of the human body, whose movements and effects are described with almost medical precision ('Движения его стали сильнее и произвели слезы'). The heroine's attention shifts from moral to physical sensibility, to her bodily sensations and fluids. The invocation of somatic symptoms, however, serves to reveal their

[207] Ibid., p. 356.
[208] Ibid., p. 357.
[209] Ibid., pp. 357–8.

moral cause: in the act of introspection, the 'awakened reason' interprets her tears as an expression of repentance for her deep melancholy. Internalising the voice of discipline, she frames her experience in religious terms, regarding her tears as 'signs' of Divine mercy. Her sensibility, which enables her to appreciate the beauty of the natural world, also grants her access to the transcendental. She is already fully immersed in the state of repentance emotionally and physically *before* she grasps its meaning through reason. Through the medium of her reason, God reproaches the heroine for her suicidal despair and urges her to follow the 'divine laws' of 'nature', which are the only path to happiness in both this life and the next:

> Опомнись! вопиет Он: что предпринимаешь?… Покуситься на свою жизнь! – Но кто дал тебе право располагать ею? Правда, заблуждение тебе подобных оправдывает предприятие твое, но естество оспоривает. Следуй божественным законам последняго, то будешь щастлива здесь и в будущем.[210]

Overwhelmed with emotion, she sends fervent prayers to heaven, and the benevolent God grants her hope, consoling her and restoring her peace of mind.

Utro exhibits many of the key features of meditative prose of Russian sentimentalism. The narration is firmly focused on the speaking subject and her thoughts, emotions and perceptions. Aesthetic appreciation of art and nature is balanced by moral and religious didacticism. The text is organised by the interplay of meditative and descriptive elements, filtered through the subjectivity of the sensitive heroine. Finally, the subtitle presents it as an excerpt from the authentic ego-document of a private individual ('Отрывок из журнала А…'). This generalised characterisation may serve as a model for numerous sentimentalist prose pieces published from the early 1790s onwards, particularly in the periodicals *Chtenie dlia vkusa, razuma i chuvstvovanii* (1791–1793; 12 vols), *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni* (1794–1798; 20 vols), and *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia* (1799–1801; 11 vols).

[210] Ibid., p. 358.

The content of the forty-three volumes of these three periodicals was highly diverse, comprising translated fiction, moral essays, materials on literature, history, philosophy and geography, drama, as well as countless occasional poems—odes, epistles, madrigals, fables, songs and epigrams. Meditative sentimental prose therefore constituted only a relatively small proportion of their overall contents. Of the thirty-nine pieces published in the first volume of *Chtenie dlia vkusa* (1791), only three may be said to belong to the genre of plotless descriptive, introspective or meditative fragments.[211] In *Priiatnoe i poleznoe*, volume 3 contains only two such pieces out of forty, volume 4 contains only four out of forty-six, volume 6 six out of sixty four, volume 9 fifteen out of ninety-one, volume 13 seven out of eighty and volume 18 nine out of 110.[212] The picture is quite similar in *Ippokrena*: volume 1 contains four meditative pieces out of a total of fifty-eight, volume 2 five out of eighty-nine, volume 3 eight out of eighty-five, volume 4 four out of eighty-six, volume 5 three out of sixty-one and volume 6 ten out of ninety-six.[213] Overall, this amounts to eighty meditative prose pieces in just thirteen of the forty-three volumes published by these periodicals. Given the overwhelming predominance of translations and poetry noted above, this is a rather impressive figure for original prose, suggesting that meditative prose constituted a major phenomenon in late eighteenth-century Russian literature and was arguably the most widespread prose genre of Russian sentimentalism. Although some travelogues and works of narrative fiction produced by sentimentalist authors proved more influential, they could hardly compete with the sheer number of these shorter texts: in the same thirteen volumes of the periodicals, less than ten original stories and travelogues appeared. For

[211] *Chtenie dlia vkusa, razuma i chuvstvovanii*, 1 (1791), pp. 3–11, 11–22, 396–401.
[212] *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 3 (1794), pp. 3–6, 7–12; 4 (1794), pp. 3–6, 99–106, 309–19, 356–60; 6 (1795), pp. 3–6, 68–77, 81–99, 289–90, 290–1, 385–9; 9 (1796), pp. 4–6, 6–9, 9–11, 11–3, 46–8, 129–41, 145–50, 158–60, 195–200, 202–4, 247–8, 248–9, 250–1, 302–3, 305–15; 13 (1797), pp. 3–9, 33–9, 49–52, 145–50, 185–6, 289–98, 299–303, 353–9; 18 (1798), pp. 14–15, 42–3, 43–4, 91–2, 161–70, 177–87, 225–33, 236–8, 410–2.
[213] *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia*, 1 (1799), pp. 215–9, 247–52, 305–12, 330–3; 2 (1799), pp. 81–101, 257–61, 278–82, 321–8, 329–32; 3 (1799), pp. 87–9, 97–104, 202–6, 206–8, 225–34, 273–85, 298–302, 385–8, 392–3; 4 (1799), pp. 91–5, 123–5, 225–8, 305–9; 5 (1800), pp. 101–5, 161–4, 293–6; 6 (1800), pp. 129–40, 185–9, 209–16, 261–4, 321–35, 337–43, 406–11, 459–62, 545–9, 550–6.

the most part, then, the preoccupation with human sensibility in late eighteenth-century Russian literature was explored through minor genres of plotless prose.[214]

Arguably the earliest, and certainly among the most influential, examples of meditative prose is Karamzin's *Progulka* which appeared in *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma* in 1789. With its extensive discussions of the act of creation of the world, extraterrestrial life, poetry, and many other things, *Progulka* covered a much wider range of topics and motifs than the anonymous *Utro*. Yet, formally and thematically, the bare outlines of the two texts coincide, as both of them are first-person narratives depicting in detail sensations, emotions and ideas invoked in a person by his or her reading and interactions with the natural world. Moreover, both authors represent the contemplation of nature as a healing experience that alleviates melancholy and ultimately directs the subject's thoughts towards God and theodicy. Specifically, the following words from *Progulka* appear to have inspired the above-quoted passage in *Utro*, as in both instances the sight of the sun 'dissipates' melancholy of the viewer ('нечувствительно разсеяло мрачность' and 'разсеялись меланхолическия мысли'):

> Пришедши на берег реки, и обратив на нее глаза свои, увидел я в чистых водах ея образ солнца. Вдруг разсеялись меланхолическия мысли мои, подобно как утренние туманы разсеваются от перваго блеска яснаго дня.[215]

Quotations from and allusions to Karamzin's texts fill the pages of numerous pieces of meditative prose, clearly indicating the model they were imitating and elaborating upon. However, not all of these writings were as resolutely didactic and religious in orientation as *Utro*. Rather, the works of Russian sentimentalist authors combined, to varying degrees, the impulse for rigorous self-discipline (or at least self-introspection) with the pursuit of pleasurable

[214] Apart from periodicals, works in this genre also appeared in separate editions, see e.g. 'Utro', 'Polden'', 'Vecher', 'Polnoch' in Aleksandra Murzina, *Raspuskaiushchaiasia roza ili raznyia sochineniia v proze i stikhakh* (Moscow: v Gubernskoi tipografii u A. Reshetnikova, 1799), pp. 5–23.
[215] N. M. Karamzin, 'Progulka', *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma*, 18 (1789), 161–75 (p. 162).

self-cultivation. Karamzin's *Progulka* masterfully balanced both tendencies, whereas *Utro* firmly chose the path of moral self-examination.

The same model could as well accommodate an emphasis on self-affirmation, as illustrated by *Vesna*, a text by Karamzin's notorious follower Petr Shalikov, published in *Priiatnoe i poleznoe* in 1796.[216] In this work, Shalikov both repeats the commonplaces of sentimentalist writing and accentuates a different approach to Nature, focusing on the subject's affinity with its forces. In many respects, the text follows a familiar pattern: the narrator leaves the city, an embodiment of restless and vain life, and heads 'to a field to welcome spring', where he contemplates natural beauties, reflects and meditates, reads his favourite books (*Nouvelle Héloïse* and *Werther*) and feels a 'vivid gratitude to *the One* who gave me a sensitive heart'. Yet, while the heroine of *Utro* regarded the 'sensitive heart' as the source of both 'miseries' and 'virtues', in Shalikov's text refined sensibility carries no drawbacks and must be embraced with the utmost self-indulgence. This attitude is established from the very beginning of *Vesna*:

> Иду в поле приветствовать весну – Чувства мои настроиваются к сладкому удовольствию. [...] Священная природа! в садах твоих только может человек познать цену бытия своего, и насладиться всею полнотою сердечнаго удовольствия.[217]

Instead of subjecting nature to moralising interpretation and swiftly transitioning from the created world to its Creator, Shalikov's hero focuses on nature's affinity with his own subjectivity. By juxtaposing the literal and figurative meanings of words, he establishes correspondences, equivalences and similarities between the processes of organic growth, development and maturation in nature and in his own mind:

> Тут чувства мои отдыхают от утруждений своих – вместе с землею, отдыхающею после тяжкаго снежнаго бремени; тут согревается душа моя – бывшая в хладе с безчувственными людьми – от испарений ея; тут возникает мысль моя с каждою возникающею травкою; трепещет сердце мое с каждым листочком [...] Прелестная весна! сколько доставляешь ты удовольствий чувствительному сердцу? [...] Ты благотворною

[216] P. I. Shalikov, 'Vesna', *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 10 (1796), 45–7.
[217] Ibid., p. 45.

> теплотою своею, кажется, произраждаешь в нем семена добродетели, так как и зерно растения в утробе земли заключенное – расширяешь воображение подобно ветвям оживляющихся дерев, производишь идеи подобно цветам многоразличным…[218]

This approach to perceiving and understanding nature, which in some respects anticipates the rise of organicist metaphors of mind and creation in Romanticism, differs markedly from *Utro*'s recourse to the design argument in its theodicy. Yet, despite these variations in content, both texts follow the same fundamental model: a first-person account of the self's interactions with nature, in which descriptive and meditative elements seamlessly intertwine and evolve into one another. Dozens of short prose texts written in this manner were published in the 1790s, collectively forming what was arguably the most popular genre of Russian sentimentalism. Given the significance of this mode of writing (largely unacknowledged in existing scholarship), we need to establish the literary context and key antecedents of Russian sentimentalist meditative prose.

2. Meditative Prose: A Genealogy of the Genre

The question of the literary models that meditative prose followed was addressed by Iurii Levin in his study of the reception of English poetry in Russian sentimentalism:

> Совокупное воздействие Карамзина, а также прозаических переводов Томсона, Юнга, Грея и их последователей способствует появлению с конца 1780-х гг. главным образом в сентименталистских журналах множества лирических прозаических отрывков типа стихотворений в прозе, посвященных развитию таких характерных для сентиментализма тем, как времена года и части суток, блаженная сельская жизнь, уединение, смерть и загробная жизнь, оплакивание умерших и т. д.[219]

A similar list of authors and genres was compiled by Vadim Vatsuro, who argued that

> Карамзин [...] создал типологические образцы сентиментальной и преромантической повести, вызвавшие поток подражаний; повести с драматическим сюжетом, в который органически включались и внефабульные элементы, прежде всего психологизированный и даже субъективизированный пейзаж, тяготевший к метафорическому расширению.

[218] Ibid., pp. 45–6.
[219] Iu. D. Levin, *Vospriiatie angliiskoi literatury v Rossii: Issledovaniia i materialy* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1990), p. 190.

> Предпосылки к нему давала оссианическая проза, вариации на темы «Ночей» Юнга, медитации Дж. Харви, «Времена года» Дж. Томсона, французская дескриптивная поэзия. Все это в многочисленных переводах, подражаниях, вариациях уже существовало в русской литературе.[220]

Both scholars identify long descriptive and didactic poems—such as James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726–1730) and Edward Young's *The Complaint: or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality* (1742–1745)—along with Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751) and James Macpherson's texts purportedly authored by the ancient bard Ossian, as the primary models for imitation by Russian sentimentalist authors. The validity of this assertion is confirmed by numerous references to these British authors and works in Russian texts. However, there is a significant difference between long poems and short prose fragments, even when the latter incorporate motifs or quotations from the former. As both Levin and Vatsuro point out, the influence of English texts on Russian sentimentalist literature was mediated through numerous 'translations, imitations and variations'. Building on these observations, this section examines the intermediary texts and genres through which English literary influences were refracted and transmitted into Russian literature. I argue that these obscure writings constituted the most immediate literary context for Russian meditative prose, providing models of short first-person narratives centred on the depiction of subjectivity and its relationship with the external world.

In some cases, sentimentalist meditative prose emerged directly from the long descriptive and didactic poems of Thomson and Young. As Levin has demonstrated extensively, the Russian reception of English poetry was largely filtered through French translations, many of which were abridged, loose, partial and rendered in prose.[221] A similar approach to adapting the English original was taken by Karamzin in his translation of

[220] V. E. Vatsuro, *Goticheskii roman v Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002), p. 105.
[221] See Levin, *Vospriiatie angliiskoi literatury v Rossii*, pp. 134–230.

Thomson's *The Seasons*, published in 1787 in *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma*. By radically condensing the poem and retelling it in prose, he created what Levin described as 'a largely independent work', a series of 'descriptive pieces of prose' that nevertheless preserved the essential features of Thomson's poem.[222] Following this experiment in translation and adaptation, Karamzin went on to compose an original work of meditative prose—the already discussed *Progulka*—which contains explicit references to *The Seasons* and reuses many of Thomson's motifs. Slightly later, in 1792, Karamzin published in his *Moskovskii zhurnal* another highly influential text, *Derevnia*, which also bears a strong debt to the English poet.[223] In other words, some of the most significant examples of meditative prose of Russian sentimentalism originated in translations and reworkings of English long poems which were central to the pan-European fascination with sensibility.

Notwithstanding the direct lineage from long poems to short prose texts, Russian meditative sentimentalist prose had a more complex genealogy. Many of its crucial formal and thematic features were prefigured in a new kind of devotional literature that gained prominence in eighteenth-century Europe. One example is *Der Christ in der Einsamkeit* (1756), a book written by the German clergyman Martin Crugot. The edifying message of this text was conveyed in a highly subjective and emotional style. The work consists of twelve short chapters, in which abstract reflections on traditional Christian themes alternate with attempts to depict a speaking subject in particularised natural settings that shape his mood and direct his meditations. In *Der Christ in der Einsamkeit*, both the inner self and the outer world serve as sources of the knowledge of God. The processes of self-examination and contemplation of nature necessarily involve an emotional response on the part of the speaking subject, making

[222] Ibid., pp. 172–3.
[223] Ibid., pp. 188–9.

the realm of feelings a crucial step on the path to a pious life. Religious experience is distinctly privatised: there is a notable absence of references to church institutions or rituals and devotion is presented as an intimate, personal practice. Revelation is achieved through the exercise of reason and the sensibility of the individual.[224]

Although there is no conclusive evidence that Crugot read Young's *Night-Thoughts* before composing his work, his contemporaries viewed *Der Christ in der Einsamkeit* within the horizon of expectations set by the English poem. Some readers even referred to Crugot as the 'German Young' and highlighted parallels between passages from *Der Christ in der Einsamkeit* and *Night-Thoughts*.[225] The book also sparked controversy due to its perceived unorthodox character, which some critics deemed heretical. It remains unclear to what extent the innovative and contentious aspects of the work were recognized by its Russian translator, Sergei Volchkov, a prominent translator of predominantly didactic works, whose version was first published in 1769.[226] It was republished by Nikolai Novikov in 1781 as part of his broader effort to provide Russian readers with a wide selection of edifying texts. As Michael Schippan has argued, Crugot's book can be considered as one of a number of German Protestant writings that found an audience in Russia, regardless of their denominational origins, as instructive literature of a broadly Christian character.[227]

However, the book is equally remarkable from a literary-historical perspective, because its formal and thematic characteristics—first-person prose narration focused on the subject's

[224] My discussion of the book is based on Katja Battenfeld, *Göttliches Empfinden: Sanfte Melancholie in der englischen und deutschen Literatur der Aufklärung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 124–34.
[225] Ibid., pp. 126–7; cf. also John Louis Kind, *Edward Young in Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1906), pp. 93–4.
[226] On Volchkov, see E. E. Birzhakova, 'Volchkov Sergei Savvich', in *Slovar' russkikh pisatelei XVIII veka*, vol. 1 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988), pp. 173–4.
[227] Michael Schippan, 'Retseptsiia protestantskikh avtorov v Rossii v XVIII veke (Spalding, Crugot, Stender)', in *Eighteenth-Century Russia: Society, Culture, Economy*, ed. by Roger Barlett, Gabriela Lehmann-Carli (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007), pp. 237–49.

perceptions, feelings and thoughts, stimulated by the visible world but extending beyond its surface to encompass moral and religious questions—strongly resemble the didactic strain of Russian sentimentalist meditative prose of the 1790s. While there is no evidence of a direct link between Crugot's work and the anonymous *Utro*, the two texts exhibit striking similarities. Like the heroine of *Utro*, the speaking self in *Der Christ in der Einsamkeit* contemplates the sight of the sunrise—a transformative experience that deeply moves him, fills him with joy and ultimately leads him to thoughts of God:

> Сие приятнейшее позорище, увеселяя, разширяет дух мой; и весь я, власно как вновь оживаю. Неизреченное великолепие сего зрелища, всю душу мою восхищает. Отсюду, что должен я мыслить о *великости* и *силе*, *того*; кто сие светило произвел?[228]

A recognition of God's omnipotence and benevolence, however, is balanced. Just as in *Utro*, there is an equally strong emphasis on the individual and his capacity to attain happiness through the resources of his inner self and the ability to perceive and enjoy the created world and the divine design manifested in it:

> К каким высоким мыслям человек создан; и от *Бога* способным учинен: он в себе, богатейшей источник блаженства имеет. [...] *Бог*, по своему образу, его создавши; весь свет, для человека сотворил. Ослепляющей глаза мои, дневной свет; велит мне на землю, да на дела мои, больше всего смотреть; а вечер, обещает мне; несравненно великолепнейшее зрелище показать.[229]

Once conventional Christian reflections, meditations and instructions were subjectivised, psychologised and retold from a first-person perspective, they were transformed into a discourse centred on the representation and affirmation of the self. This discourse was embraced by the culture of sensibility, playing a significant role in literary genres that sought to imagine and express sentimental subjectivity. We can draw the conclusion that devotional literature

[228] Martin Crugot, *Khristiianin vo uedinenii*, transl. by S. Volchkov, 2nd ed (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia u N. Novikova, 1781), pp. 59–60.
[229] Ibid., pp. 163–5.

must be acknowledged as one of the sources of the sentimental self and the narrative forms through which it was articulated.

Along with Thomson and Young, two other eighteenth-century writers exerted significant influence on Russian sentimentalism, particularly on meditative prose: James Macpherson and Salomon Gessner. These authors, known for their Ossianic poems and idylls, respectively, defied generic expectations by composing their works in prose. In purely formal terms, this made the transition from their writings (which were frequently short and in prose) to meditative prose more natural than the shift from monumental descriptive and didactic poetry of Thomson or Young. However, this relative easiness came with new challenges related to subject matter and genre. Macpherson's works purported to be epic poems written by an ancient Gaelic bard, while Gessner's pastorals, following well-established literary conventions, portrayed the imaginary lives of idealised shepherds. In both cases, Russian authors had to modify these models to adapt them to the task of representing a distinctly modern way of life and experience. With Gessner, the direction of such transformation was already suggested within the texts themselves. A French translator of Gessner's idylls observed:

> On reprochera peut-être à mon Auteur avec plus de justice d'avoir fait quelquefois passer ces personnages de la naïveté pastorale à un enthousiasme philosophique & religieux d'un ton trop élevé pour des bergers.[230]
>
> Может быть с лучшею справедливостию укорят моего Автора в том, что он дозволял иногда своим лицам переходить из простоты пастушей в восторг Философический и Энтусиазм веры с тоном несколько для пастырей возвышенным.[231]

In other words, Gessner's works reveal a tension between their claim to depict the simple virtues of uneducated shepherds living in a blissful state of nature, on the one hand, and the refined moral and aesthetic reflections and emotions of their characters, which mirror the attitudes and

[230] 'Avertissement du traducteur', in *Idylles et poëmes champêtres de M. Gessner* (Lyon: Bruyset, 1762), pp. iii–xxxviii (pp. xiii–xiv).
[231] 'Izvestie', in *Idilii i pastush'i poemy gospodina Gesnera*, transl. by V. Levshin (Moscow: Tipografiia pri teatre u Khr. Klaudiia, 1787), pp. iii–xxii (p. viii).

practices of the educated elites of modern society, on the other. A possible resolution to this contradiction was suggested by Gessner himself in the concluding text of his first collection of idylls, *Der Wunsch*. In this remarkable piece, he decisively abandons the fictitious Arcadian setting of his other works and, speaking in the first person, envisions a dream of a happy rural existence in the manner of Horace. Here, the protagonist is no longer a shepherd but a well-to-do individual who has withdrawn from society to a countryside retreat, where he contemplates nature, admires the peasants, and reads his favourite authors.[232]

Drawing on pastoral commonplaces, tropes and motifs—some of them clearly echoing Virgil and Thomson—Gessner gives his idyllic vision a distinctly modern character, creating an example of short first-person prose narration centred on the self-expression of a sensitive individual.[233] The crucial role of Gessner's idylls, and of the pastoral tradition more broadly, in shaping Karamzin's sentimentalism is well known.[234] However, it has not been previously recognized that *Der Wunsch* served as a direct model for Karamzin's 1792 piece of meditative prose, *Derevnia*. Both texts depict a fantasy of serene and harmonious life in an imagined country house and its picturesque surroundings. By blending Gessner with Thomson, Karamzin transposed techniques and motifs of idyll and descriptive poetry into a short first-person narrative set in a modern context. The result was one of the most influential pieces of Russian sentimentalist meditative prose.

A more radical transformation was required to adapt the Ossianic poems to modern circumstances.[235] The nature of the necessary changes can be illustrated by the example of

[232] For Russian translation, see *Idilii i pastush'i poemy gospodina Gesnera*, pp. 124–44.
[233] See Brigitte Peucker, *Arcadia to Elysium: Preromantic Modes in 18th Century Germany* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1980), pp. 67–9.
[234] See Anthony Cross, 'Karamzin's Versions of the Idyll', in *Essays on Karamzin: Russian Man-of-Letters, Political Thinker, Historian, 1766–1826*, ed. by J. L. Black (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), pp. 75–90; Hammarberg, *From the Idyll to the Novel*.
[235] On Russian reception of Ossian, see Iu. D. Levin, *Ossian v russkoi literature (konets XVIII – pervaia tret' XIX veka)* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980).

Aleksandra Khvostova's *Kamin*, a 'fragment' that stands as one of the finest achievements and most popular examples of sentimentalist meditative prose. First published in *Priiatnoe i poleznoe* in 1795, *Kamin* was accompanied by an editor's note explicitly acknowledging its connection to the writings of Ossian:

> Мы поспешаем сообщить нашим читателям сие прекрасное сочинение почтенной и чувствительной Россиянки. Они и без нашего замечания увидят в нем дух Оссианской горести, нежность и глубокость меланхолических чувств, правильность выражений, неизяснимую во всем приятность.[236]

'The spirit of Ossianic grief' is indeed palpable from the very opening of the text. Khvostova took as her model the lyrical monologues of Ossianic heroines, such as Colma's lament in *The Songs of Selma*, which begins as follows:

> It is night;—I am alone, forlorn on the hill of storms. The wind is heard in the mountain. The torrent shrieks down the rock. No hut receives me from the rain; forlorn on the hill of winds.
>
> Rise, moon! from behind thy clouds; stars of the night appear! Lead me, some light, to the place where my love rests from the toil of the chace! his bow near him, unstrung; his dogs panting around him. But here I must sit alone, by the rock of the mossy stream. The stream and the wind roar; nor can I hear the voice of my love.[237]

Borrowing the form of lyrical self-expression, the mood of 'grief', the 'depth of melancholic feelings' and the imagery of a wild and gloomy nature, Khvostova integrates these elements with heightened self-introspection and references to Christianity and shifts the setting from the ancient time to the modern era, ultimately creating a highly original work of sentimentalist meditative prose:

> Вот и полночь! — Ударило двенадцать часов, и сердце томно сказало: "Еще день лишний к прошедшим! Еще днем менее жить, и скитаться в сем мире!" — Все вокруг меня тихо и спокойно; все безмолвствует. — Сижу одна у камина; смотрю на светлые уголья, которые один за другим гаснут; слушаю унылый вой шумящаго ветра; обращаюсь мыслями на прошедшее время жизни своей, и сравниваю горести мои с радостями, печали — с удовольствиями; те минуты, в которыя благодарила Бога за бытие свое, с теми, которыя тяжким бременем угнетали мою душу.[238]

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[236] A. P. Khvostova, 'Kamin. Otryvok', *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 6 (1795), 68–77 (p. 68).
[237] James Macpherson, *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. by Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 166.
[238] Khvostova, 'Kamin. Otryvok', pp. 68–9.

Khvostova's meditations on God, death and the sense of isolation and abandonment, while imitating Ossian, also followed the tradition of Young's *Night-Thoughts*. Similarly, Karamzin's *Derevnia* combined influences from Thomson and Gessner, while in *Progulka*, the predominant orientation towards Thomson was blended with invocations of Young and Ossian. All of this underscores a fundamental characteristic of Russian sentimentalist meditative prose: it absorbed and adapted diverse literary models, frequently combining them within a single text. Are there any precedents for this sentimentalist synthesis and unification of heterogeneous elements? In what follows, I argue that the closest parallels to Russian meditative prose can be found in French literature of the second half of the eighteenth century, particularly in the elusive and hard-to-define tradition of *poèmes en prose* or *prose poétique*.

The initial reception of Ossian and Gessner in France began around the same time and in the same intellectual circles—an overlap that was more than mere coincidence. Despite their differences, both the Ossianic poems and idylls of Gessner consisted of short prose pieces that nonetheless claimed to exhibit 'poetic' qualities, including an elevated, sometimes solemn style and, most importantly, rhythm. In France, both Ossian and Gessner were interpreted, among other things, as examples of 'poetic' (measured, cadenced) prose, focused on the emotional expression of the self and the evocative depiction of nature.[239] Together with prose translations and imitations of Young, as well as other English and German poets, these works gave a significant impetus to the development of an original French tradition of prose poems. This tradition produced dozens of widely read and discussed texts that sought to give the prose form to the 'poetic' style and lyrical self-expression (ranging from apostrophes to natural phenomena

[239] See Paul Van Tieghem, *Ossian en France*, vol. 1 (Paris: Rieder, 1917), pp. 108–12; Fabienne Moore, *Prose Poems of the French Enlightenment: Delimiting Genre* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 137–44.

and religious hymns to celebrations of rural life and meditations on transience of all things).[240] As a result, in the second half of the eighteenth century, French literature saw the emergence of numerous first-person prose fragments, some as independent pieces, others forming cycles or embedded in larger narrative works. These texts wove together diverse literary traditions all mediated and unified by a speaking subject frequently set in an explicitly modern context and articulating thoughts and emotions often inspired by nature.

One of the most renowned French practitioners of 'poetic prose' was François-Philippe de Laurens de Reyrac (1734–1782).[241] In 1777, he published *Hymne au Soleil*, a long prose poem that became an instant success, earning widespread praise from reviewers and going through numerous re-editions.[242] In his apostrophe to and celebration of the sun, Reyrac may have drawn inspiration from Ossian, Milton and the Bible.[243] He later wrote another long prose poem in a similarly solemn style and on a religious theme, *La Création*. Alongside these works, he also produced a series of short pieces of *prose poétique*, explicitly citing Gessner as a model in his defence of this unconventional genre.[244] Yet unlike Gessner's texts, Reyrac's writings were not idylls. Instead, they presented first-person accounts of subjective experiences, depicting a modern individual of refined taste and sensibility, often wandering through the countryside, reflecting on life, mourning lost loved ones or recollecting the past, with the narrator registering emotions and thoughts triggered by the beauty of nature, encounters with peasants or affectively charged objects, such as tombs.[245] Narrating in rhythmic prose the

[240] See Vista Clayton, *The Prose Poem in French Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University, 1936), esp. pp. 53–87; Christian Leroy, *La poésie en prose français du XVIIe siècle à nos jours: Histoire d'un genre* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), pp. 88–124.
[241] On Reyrac and his writings, see the entry in *Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne*, vol. 37 (Paris: Michaud, 1824), pp. 449–52.
[242] See Daniel Mornet, *Le sentiment de la nature en France de J.-J. Rousseau à Bernardin de Saint-Pierre* (Paris: Hachette, 1907), pp. 412–3.
[243] See Clayton, *The Prose Poem in French Literature of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 76–81.
[244] See François-Philippe de Reyrac, *Hymne au Soleil, suivi de plusieurs morceaux du même genre* (Paris: Debure, 1782), pp. 8–9.
[245] Cf. Leroy, *La poésie en prose français*, p. 120.

interactions between a sensitive individual and the natural world, and capturing the subtle interplay of feelings as they are shaped by and projected onto the external environment, Reyrac's texts exhibit some of the closest formal, stylistic and thematic parallels to the meditative fragments of Karamzin and his countless followers.

The relevance of Reyrac for Russian literature is evident from the swift and diverse reception of his works. Within just four years of its publication, *La Création* was translated into Russian by Pavel Divov and released in 1785.[246] Four years later, in 1789, a collection of Reyrac's writings, consisting of *Hymne au Soleil* and six shorter pieces, was translated by Timofei Mozhaiskii.[247] That this translation enjoyed a relatively wide circulation is illustrated by the fact that in 1792, Gavriil Kamenev, a young son of a merchant from Kazan', who would later become an innovative poet of early Russian Romanticism, put into verses Mozhaiskii's translation of Reyrac's *La fin de l'automne*.[248] The resulting text ('Осень, сочинения г. Рейрака, в стихи переложенная') is one of the two earliest known works of Kamenev. Characteristically enough, the second text, also a versified adaptation of a prose original, was based on a fragment from Gessner's *Der Tod Abels*.[249] Mozhaiskii's edition of Reyrac is also listed in the inventory of Kamenev's library compiled after his death in 1803.[250] However, Mozhaiskii did not translate the entire corpus of Reyrac's prose poems, and his work was continued by others. In 1794, Vasilii Polenov published in *Novye ezhemesiachnye sochineniia* his version of the writer's piece *La bienfaisance*, an emotional celebration of this sentimental

[246] François-Philippe de Reyrac, *Poema, na sotvorenie mira* (Saint Petersburg: u Shnora, 1785).
[247] François-Philippe de Reyrac, *Solntse* (Saint Petersburg: Bogdanovich, 1789).
[248] See E. I. Kartasheva and A. N. Pashkurov, 'G. P. Kamenev: novye archivnye dokumenty', *Russkaia literatura*, 2 (2011), 99–106 (pp. 103–6).
[249] See E. A. Bobrov, 'Etiudy po istorii russkoi literatury i prosveshcheniia', in *Sbornik Ucheno-Literaturnogo Obshchestva pri Imperatorskom Iur'evskom universitete* (Iur'ev: Tipografiia K. Mattisena, 1909), pp. 185–264 (pp. 218–60). Cf. also E. A. Bobrov, *K biografii Gavriila Petrovicha Kameneva* (Warsaw: Tipografiia Varshavskogo Uchebnogo Okruga, 1905), pp. 67–70.
[250] See G. I. Zalkind, *G. P. Kamenev (1772–1803). Opyt imushchestvennoi kharakteristiki pervogo russkogo romantika* (Kazan': [n. p.], 1926), p. 79.

virtue.[251] Two years later, in *Priiatnoe i poleznoe* appeared Petr Shalikov's translation of Reyrac's *Chant funèbre sur la mort de M. l'abbé de Condillac*; it was published in the same issue as Shalikov's own meditative fragment *Vesna* discussed above.[252] We can conclude that the writings of Reyrac enjoyed a certain degree of recognition and interest in the very same circles in which Russian meditative prose was produced.

Reyrac was not the only French writer of poetic prose known and read in Russia. In 1790, a year after its first edition, Mozhaiskii's translation of Reyrac's works was reissued under a slightly different title:

> Солнце поэма, с присовокуплением других сочинений во вкусе Сельских ночей, как то: Сетования о смерти брата, Прогулки в поле, Веси опустошенной, Гробницы, Вертограда и проч.[253]

Not only did this alternative title specify the book's content by naming, in addition to *Hymne au Soleil*, other works by Reyrac included in the volume, but it also attempted to characterise the writings of the French author by comparing them to another work ('во вкусе Сельских ночей'). Understanding the meaning of this comparison provides an opportunity to reconstruct how these texts were perceived by Russian readers of the time. The analogy is drawn between the works of Reyrac and *Les nuits champêtres*, a book written by Jean-Charles Thibault de Laveaux (often La Veaux) (1749–1827) and published in 1784.[254] Laveaux was a prolific man of letters who led a turbulent life. In the 1780s, he spent considerable time in Germany, where he became embroiled in literary and political controversies. During the French Revolution, he edited a periodical and was a staunch supporter of the Jacobins; later in life, he gained

[251] 'Blagotvoritel'stvo (Sochineniie abbata Reiraka)', *Novye ezhemesiachnye sochineniia*, 99 (September 1794), 59–63.
[252] 'Nadgrobnaia pesn' Abbata Reiraka na smert' Abbata Kondil'iaka', *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 10 (1796), 33–9.
[253] *Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi pechati XVIII veka, 1725–1800*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Kniga, 1966), p. 25.
[254] Jean-Charles de Laveaux, *Les nuits champêtres* (Lausanne: Heubach & Comp., 1784).

prominence as a grammarian and lexicographer.[255] His political radicalism is already evident in his early work. Clearly inspired by Rousseau, Laveaux advocates the cult of nature and critiques many aspects of modern civilization. He denounces religious fanaticism at length, and as a Protestant, he makes an explicit reference to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. His Enlightenment critique adopts the familiar form of subjective meditations and reflections framed by descriptions of nature. Following the model of Young's *Night-Thoughts* in its French prose translations, Laveaux structures his work into ten 'nights', each dedicated to a particular theme—rural life, society, friendship, God, death, and so on—while drawing on Gessner in his evocations of pastoral imagery.[256]

Les nuits champêtres was translated into Russian in 1786 by the same Timofei Mozhaiskii who later rendered the works of Reyrac.[257] Little is known about Mozhaiskii himself, yet I argue that his role in the cultural transfers that introduced European literature of sensibility to Russia, and thus contributed to the rise of Russian sentimentalism, was highly significant. In the 1780s, Mozhaiskii was a student at Moscow University and served as a secretary to Ivan Shuvalov, the university's trustee.[258] This places him in the same intellectual and social milieu in which many future sentimentalist authors, including Karamzin, were nurtured and from which embarked on their literary careers. The decision to highlight the similarity between Reyrac's writings and Laveaux's work in the title of the collection suggests that Mozhaiskii's translation of *Les nuits champêtres* did not go unnoticed. Ample evidence supports this assumption. First, in 1792, Mozhaiskii's translation was republished in an

[255] See François Labbé, *Jean-Charles Laveaux (1749–1827), un aventurier littéraire* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017).
[256] See Ernest Giddey, 'Un imitateur d'Edward Young: Thibault de Laveaux', *Études de lettres*, 2, 3 (1959), 147–54.
[257] Jean-Charles de Laveaux, *Sel'skiia nochi* (Saint Petersburg: u Geka, 1786). In fact, the book only appeared in February 1787, see *Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi pechati XVIII veka, 1725–1800*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Izdanie GBL SSSR, 1964), p. 110.
[258] See A. S. Antonov, 'Mozhaiskii Timofei Ivanovich', in *Slovar' russkikh pisatelei XVIII veka*, vol. 2 (Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 1999), pp. 295–6.

abridged version by the publisher Petr Bogdanovich.[259] The renowned bibliographer Vasilii Sopikov, a contemporary who actively participated in the literary life of late eighteenth-century Saint Petersburg, commented on this second edition in the following manner:

> Первое издание предпочитается второму, ибо оно исправлено г. Богдановичем неудачно.[260]

Sopikov's remark evidently reflects an oral tradition, suggesting that contemporaries passed the judgements of taste upon Mozhaiskii's translation of Laveaux and reached a certain consensus regarding the merits of the first edition. The book's reputation extended far beyond Saint Petersburg. In December 1793, Evfimii Bolkhovitinov, the future Metropolitan Evgenii and the addressee of Derzhavin's poem *Evgeniiu. Zhizn' zvanskaia*, then residing in Voronezh, wrote a letter to Semen Selivanovskii, a Petersburg publisher and bookseller who often enlisted Bolkhovitinov's assistance in distributing books in Voronezh:

> «Сельских Ночей» не знаю как сбыть. Книгу сию я давно знаю. Спрошу кое у кого и после вас уведомлю.[261]

While expressing scepticism about the likelihood of finding readers in Voronezh interested in Mozhaiskii's translation of Laveaux, Bolkhovitinov—being actively engaged in literary life—acknowledges that he has been familiar with the book 'for a long time' and even has in mind some individuals who might still be willing to purchase it. One of the provincial readers eager to acquire his own copy of the book was Savva Moskotil'nikov, the son of a merchant who was initiated into Freemasonry in Iaroslavl by members of the Novikov circle. He spent most of his life in Kazan, where he was deeply engaged in the literary culture of his time. Moskotil'nikov

[259] Jean-Charles de Laveaux, *Sel'skiia nochi, poema v desiati pesniakh*, 2nd ed (Saint Petersburg: Bogdanovich, 1792).
[260] V. S. Sopikov, *Opyt rossiskoi bibliografii, ili Polnyi slovar' sochinenii i perevodov, napechatannykh na Slovenskom i Rossiiskom iazykakh, ot nachala zavedeniia tipografii, do 1813 goda*, vol. 4 (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo Teatra, 1816), p. 191.
[261] 'Pis'ma E. A. Bolkhovitinova k S. I. Selivanovskomu', *Bibliograficheskie zapiski*, 3 (1859), 66–79 (p. 71).

was also a close friend of Gavriil Kamenev, who wrote to him from Moscow on 22 February 1799:

> Сельския ночи для вас куплены, и отданы в переплет.[262]

Alongside Mozhaiskii's translation of Reyrac, the inventory of Kamenev's library also includes the translation of *Les nuits champêtres*.[263] It is plausible to speculate that Moskotil'nikov became acquainted with Laveaux's work through Kamenev. Perhaps drawn to its indebtedness to Young—an author highly esteemed in Masonic circles—he may have developed a desire to acquire a copy for himself. Conversely, other readers may have been attracted to the radical political aspects of Laveaux's book. At least this seems to be the case with Prince Vasilii Bolkhovskii, who, in June 1799, transcribed almost the entire Mozhaiskii's translation of *Les nuits champêtres* into his manuscript miscellany, which also contained various freethinking and anticlerical writings, including excerpts from Radishchev's *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu*, copied in November 1798.[264] As late as 1850, Ili'a Timkovskii, a former student at Moscow University who had produced several sentimental works in the 1790s, made a passing reference to Mozhaiskii in his memoirs, characterising him as

> переводчика Сельских Ночей[265]

At least in some literary circles, the translation of *Les nuits champêtres* was evidently a well-known book, with Mozhaiskii's recognisability and reputation largely tied to his role as its

[262] 'Pis'ma G. P. Kameneva k S. A. Moskotil'nikovu', in E. A. Bobrov, *Literatura i prosveshchenie v Rossii XIX v. Materialy, issledovaniia i zametki*, vol. 3 (Kazan: Tipo-litografiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta, 1902), pp. 109–70 (p. 115).
[263] See G. I. Zalkind, *G. P. Kamenev (1772–1803)*, p. 78.
[264] See S. N. Travnikov, '"Puteshestvie" A. N. Radishcheva i russkaia rukopisnaia knizhnost' kontsa XVIII–XIX vv.', in *Problemy khudozhestvennogo metoda i zhanra v istorii russkoi literatury XVIII–XIX vekov* (Moscow: MGPI, 1978), pp. 3–16 (pp. 6–8); *Muzeinoe sobranie. F.178/I–russkaia (i slavianskaia) chast'. Opis'*, vol. 5 (Moscow: GBL, 1971), pp. 17–8.
[265] I. F. Timkovskii, 'Moe opredelenie v sluzhbu', *Russkii arkhiv*, 6 (1874), 1377–466 (p. 1452).

translator. The final example illustrating the wide appeal of the work brings us back to the beginning of this chapter. The book enthusiastically read by the heroine of the anonymous *Utro*, published in *Priiatnoe i poleznoe* in 1797, is none other than the Russian translation of Laveaux:

> Размышляя так, перебирала я листы *Сельских Ночей*; дошедши до последней песни, обрадовалась, увидя заглавие: *Смерть*. Любезный Сочинитель*! (*Сочинитель Сельских Ночей есть Г. де ла Во.) воскликнула я, благодарю беглое перо твое.[266]

In the preface (quoted below in Mozhaiskii's translation), Laveaux presented his work as a product of solitude—an attempt to capture and preserve the fleeting emotions and reflections of a sensitive individual:

> Насыщенный прелестями мира сего представлявшегося мне в различных видах, почувствовал я необходимую нужду в уединении. Я упражняюсь иногда в начертании чувствований и размышлений, которыя оно в меня вливает, и из коих лучшия я здесь предлагаю свету. Нестарался я составить из них ни поэмы, ни философскаго сочинения, а хотел единственно изобразить разныя впечатления, кои душа моя ощущала в сии минуты.[267]

These words could just as easily describe *Utro* or countless other examples of Russian sentimentalist meditative prose, which centred on depicting the interiority of the solitary self in its interaction with the exterior natural world. Without doubt, Russian sentimentalist writers and readers first and foremost read and admired the most famous examples of European literature of sensibility—the works of Rousseau, Goethe, Richardson, Gessner, Thomson, Young, Ossian. Yet none of these authors could provide a direct model for what would become the most popular Russian sentimentalist genre, namely for meditative prose. The prose poems of minor French authors of the second half of the eighteenth century demonstrated how various strands of literary traditions can be woven together, differences in individual styles smoothed, genres mixed, emotions balanced, providing a model for Russian authors. Certainly, these were products of mass literature, imitative and built on commonplaces. Yet these very features

[266] 'Utro. Otryvok iz zhurnala A…', p. 355.
[267] Laveaux, *Sel'skiia nochi*, pp. 4–5.

enabled them to fulfil their aims. In these texts, the techniques, stylistic choices and emotional patterns developed by leading European authors were combined, condensed and distilled into forms that were readily reproducible.

Mozhaiskii's translations appeared in the years immediately preceding or overlapping with the first original works of Russian sentimentalist meditative prose, notably those of Karamzin. This suggests that the emergence of this genre was a shared impulse among various figures in the Russian literary field at the time. While Karamzin developed his prose through direct imitation and translation of the most renowned European works of sensibility, French poetic prose was nonetheless part of his and his readers' literary experience, shaping their horizon of expectations. Moreover, we have shown through this reconstruction that the subjectivity central to meditative prose stems from a deep literary genealogy. In the next section, I shall consider how we might better interpret the mechanisms underlying the formation of sentimental subjectivity as a nexus of divergent emotional and intellectual models, reactions and situations. I propose that one way to account for the cultural significance of sentimentalist writing as a vehicle for self-articulation is by turning to the history of the self and the practices through which it was shaped.

3. Meditative Prose and the Practices of the Self

Approaches to studying the history of the self are diverse and inherently multidisciplinary, ranging from the intellectual history of concepts of the self proposed by various thinkers to reconstructions of the cultural practices and social institutions that shaped the subjectivities of specific groups in particular times and places.[268] In the cultural history of

[268] For an overview of some of them, see Elwin Hofman, 'Sources of the Self from the Renaissance to the 20th Century', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*. February 28, 2020 https://oxfordre.com/psychology/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.001.0001/acrefore-9780190236557-e-

the broadly defined West, a key role in shaping the selves of an increasingly educated population has been played by methods of self-examination and self-control developed in classical antiquity. In a series of influential studies, Pierre Hadot uncovered the practical dimension of Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, arguing that it existed not merely as a body of writings but as a 'way of life'—a set of everyday practices or 'spiritual exercises' that governed the thoughts, words, and actions of philosophers and their disciples.[269] These methods of self-discipline and introspection were later appropriated by Christianity, profoundly influencing monastic life and continuing to shape the lives of both clerics and laypersons in Catholic and Protestant cultures alike.[270]

The role and diffusion of spiritual exercises in East Slavic Orthodox cultures remains largely understudied. However, the fact that the prominent Russian bishop Tikhon of Zadonsk authored a work composed of pious reflections inspired by encounters with objects or natural phenomena and modelled on a treatise by the influential seventeenth-century Anglican bishop Joseph Hall, who practiced so-called 'occasional meditations', suggests that by the eighteenth century, such practices of self-discipline had begun to gain prominence among the educated classes of Russian society.[271] In any case, the Orthodox Church was certainly not the primary institution responsible for inculcating models of self-fashioning in eighteenth-century Russia. Beginning with the reign of Peter I, the state emerged as the dominant force in disciplining and shaping the selves of its subjects, using literature and education as tools for moral instruction

685. See also Elwin Hofman, 'How to Do the History of the Self', *History of the Human Sciences*, 29, 3 (2016), 8–24.

[269] See Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. by Arnold I. Davidson, trans. by Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

[270] See e.g. Karl Enenkel and Walter Melion, 'Introduction: Types and Functions of Meditation in the Transition from Late Medieval to Early Modern Intellectual Culture', in *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self: Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, ed. by Karl Enenkel and Walter Melion (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 1–23; Moshe Sluhovsky, 'St. Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises and their Contribution to Modern Introspective Subjectivity', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 99, 4 (2013), 649–74.

[271] See Andrey V. Ivanov, 'The Impact of Pietist and Anglican Spirituality in Catherinian Russia: The Works of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk', *Vivliofika: E-Journal of Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies*, 5 (2017), 40–72 (pp. 52–5).

and the internalisation of self-restraint.[272] This broader context provides the backdrop for reconstructing the more specific practices of self-introspection and self-cultivation and the associated models of subjectivity embraced by adepts of the culture of sensibility and depicted in sentimentalist prose.

A good entry point for reconstructing the practices of the self among the Russian educated elites of the last third of the eighteenth century is the case of the Freemason and translator Aleksei Kutuzov. His personal correspondence offers ample evidence that his efforts at self-discipline were significantly shaped by the classical tradition. In September 1782, writing to his friend and fellow Freemason and translator Ivan Turgenev, Kutuzov, describing in his characteristic confessional mode his troubled state of mind and poor health, mentioned that he was trying to counter his hypochondria ('хандра') by turning to a precept of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus:

> Я хотя и хожу, но чувствую превеликую боль в голове и в груди. Да и хондра моя не мало учавствует. A propos до хондры; скажу тебе, что она начинает уменьшаться. И знаешь, что к сему способствовало? Эпиктетово правило: «*глупо прилепляться к вещам нимало от нас независящим*». Я размышлял и нашел, что огорчение мое, да и самое зло во мне находящееся, причинено другими. Теперь остается мне укрепить себя в положении сем и тогда могу надеяться, что с помощью Божиею истреблю уныние мое и сделаюсь не совсем безполезным для братиев моих.[273]

In a manner entirely consistent with the spiritual exercises of antiquity, Kutuzov seeks to regulate his thoughts and emotions by invoking a memorable moral precept ('правило') that he aims to keep constantly in mind ('укрепить себя в положении сем') in order to overcome melancholy and return to the useful activities demanded by the community to which he belonged. His efforts to monitor and control his inner life were part of a broader set of practices

[272] See Marc Raeff, 'Transfiguration and Modernization: The Paradoxes of Social Disciplining, Paedagogical Leadership, and the Enlightenment in 18th Century Russia', in Raeff, *Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 334–47; Kirill Ospovat, 'Reforming Subjects: Poetics and Politics of Reading in Early Eighteenth-Century Russia', in *Reading Russia. A History of Reading in Modern Russia*, ed. by Damiano Rebecchini and Raffaella Vassena, 3 vols (Milan: Ledizioni, 2020), I, 117–50.
[273] 'Pis'ma Alekseia Mikhailovicha Kutuzova Ivanu Petrovichu Turgenevu', ed. by V. V. Fursenko, *Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii*, 6 (1963), 298–334 (p. 300).

of self-observation and self-discipline popular among Moscow Freemasons in the 1780s.[274] Turgenev, Kutuzov's correspondent, offers a further example: in 1783, he published a Russian translation of John Mason's *Self-Knowledge* (1745), a manual of self-control saturated with quotations from Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, which was recommended as obligatory edifying reading in Masonic circles.[275]

But the habit of self-scrutiny was clearly not confined to members of secret societies. Perhaps the most striking example of the use of spiritual exercises derived from classical antiquity in late eighteenth-century Russia appears in the correspondence between Kutuzov and Anastasiia Pleshcheeva. An intimate friend of both Kutuzov and the young Karamzin, Pleshcheeva occupied a central position in an emotional community deeply permeated by the culture of sensibility with an intensity unparalleled in Russia of the 1780s.[276] In a letter from November 1790, she informed Kutuzov that her attempts to follow his Stoic precept that a person must always be prepared for any possible outcome or life situation ('человеку надлежит всегда готову быть ко всему') were plunging her into melancholy, as she found herself too inclined to vividly imagine the misfortunes that might befall her:

> вы пишете, что человеку надлежит всегда готову быть ко всему, [но] это самое и есть моя ипохондрия. Я никогда щастья себе не воображаю, мучусь заранее и не знаю, что мучительнее: то-ли воображение, или настоящия нещастия; так живо я себе все дурное представляю. Вы и сами себе в конце страницы противоречите, уговаривая меня не воображать дурного. То вы скажите одним словом: что лучше? так-ли мучиться всегда, как я мучусь, или, представляя себе все хорошее, вдруг иметь нещастье, его не ожидая?[277]

[274] See Douglas Smith, *Working the Rough Stone: Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999), pp. 37–52; Andrei Zorin, 'The Emotional Culture of Moscow Rosicrucians: An Experiment in Alternative Europeanization', in *The Europeanized Elite in Russia, 1762–1825: Public Role and Subjective Self*, ed. by Andreas Schönle, Andrei Zorin and Alexei Evstratov (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2016), pp. 201–19.
[275] See G. V. Vernadskii, *Russkoe masonstvo v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II*, ed. by M. V. Reizin and A. I. Serkov (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo imeni N. I. Novikova, 1999), p. 179.
[276] See L. V. Krestova, 'A. I. Pleshcheeva v zhizni i tvorchestve Karamzina', in *XVIII vek*, 10 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1975), pp. 265–70; Iu. M. Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina* (Moscow: Kniga, 1987), pp. 265–71.
[277] Ia. L. Barskov, *Perepiska moskovskikh masonov XVIII-go veka. 1780–1792* (Petrograd: Izdanie Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1915), p. 28.

In his reply, Kutuzov reiterated his firm conviction in the truth of the maxims he was preaching, clarifying at length his understanding of the 'preparation' ('приуготовление') for the upcoming, by which he meant not the surrender of a person to the power of their imagination, but rather a process of self-examination and reflection on possible future fortunes and misfortunes:

> Я твердо остаюся при моем мнении, что человек должен приуготовить себя ко всяким приключиться ему могущим происшествиям. [...] Мне кажется, что различие вашего и моего мнения происходит от несходных понятий, сопрягаемых нами со словом "приуготовление". Я не разумею под сим словом онаго живого воображения о будущем щастии или нещастии, которое, так сказать, делает уже их нам настоящими, так что мы уже предварительно вкушаем, чувствуем и ощущаем их [...]. Приуготовить себя к будущим происшествиям предполагает [...] строгое изследование самаго себя, имеюли я все нужное для безвреднаго пребывания в том или другом состоянии [...]. Одним словом, приуготовленному человеку нет ничего незапнаго, он доволен настоящим и безпечен о будущем [...].[278]

The practice of self-discipline discussed in this letter exchange (and elsewhere referred to by Kutuzov as 'приуготовляться к перенесению грядущаго'[279]) is an ancient spiritual exercise known as *praemeditatio malorum* ('pre-meditation of misfortunes').[280] Pierre Hadot describes the way it was practised in antiquity as follows:

> The exercise of meditation allows us to be ready at the moment when an unexpected – and perhaps dramatic – circumstance occurs. In the exercise called *praemeditatio malorum* we are to represent to ourselves poverty, suffering, and death. We must confront life's difficulties face to face, remembering that they are not evils, since they do not depend on us. This is why we must engrave striking maxims in our memory [...]. What we need are persuasive formulae or arguments (*epilogismoi*), which we can repeat to ourselves in difficult circumstances, so as to check movements of fear, anger, or sadness.[281]

The methods of self-control propagated by Kutuzov in late eighteenth-century Russia are strikingly similar to the prescriptions of ancient philosophers, and the direct continuity between them is confirmed by Kutuzov's explicit reference to Epictetus. The context of spiritual exercises is also relevant for interpreting Kutuzov's translations of contemporary European

[278] Ibid., pp. 55–7.
[279] Ibid., p. 133.
[280] See Paul Rabbow, *Seelenführung: Methodik der Exerzitien in der Antike* (München: Kösel, 1954), pp. 160–79.
[281] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 85.

literature. In 1785, he published a two-volume Russian version of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, based on Johann Arnold Ebert's German translation and accompanied by extensive footnotes, also largely derived from the German edition, which provided numerous parallels to Young drawn from ancient and modern moralists and religious authors, thus framing *Night Thoughts* as an exemplary devotional work.[282] As is evident from his correspondence, Kutuzov regarded Young's poem as edifying reading, using quotations from the English author as moral rules which he sought to apply to the circumstances of his own and his friends' lives.[283] This understanding of *Night Thoughts* was justified: Young's arguments and rhetoric were deeply indebted to the Christian apologetics of his time, and the poem was clearly intended to be read from a moralising perspective.[284] At the same time, even for a pious reader such as Kutuzov, the poem offered more than reflections and moral *sententiae* operating at the level of abstract reasoning and exhorting the audience to model its thinking accordingly; it also occasionally situated the speaking self in a natural setting, describing the thoughts and feelings evoked in the observing subject by the outer world (especially by the sight of the firmament at night).[285]

At this point, it is useful to distinguish between two types of spiritual exercises. While the majority of the 'technologies of the self' practised by ancient philosophers focused on introspection through which the subject's desires, fears, inclinations, and attitudes were examined and controlled, some techniques placed greater emphasis on the natural world as contemplated by the observing subject. In these cases, the practitioner was meant to progress from mere sense perception to admiration of the universe, to the grasp of its hidden laws, and

[282] See Helmut Keipert, 'Johann Arnold Ebert in Russland: die Young-Übersetzungen von Aleksej Michajlovič Kutuzov', in *Johann Arnold Ebert. Dichtung, Übersetzung und Kulturtransfer im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, ed. by C.-F. Berghahn, G. Biegel and T. Kinzel (Heidelberg: Winter, 2016), pp. 287–313.
[283] See Levin, *Vospriiatie*, pp. 150–51. On Kutuzov's practices of edifying reading more broadly, see O. A. Larionov, 'A. M. Kutuzov v 1790 godu: chtenie, avtorstvo, publichnost'', *Slavica Revalensia*, 10 (2023), 11–36.
[284] See Isabel St. John Bliss, 'Young's *Night Thoughts* in Relation to Contemporary Christian Apologetics', *PMLA*, 49, 1 (1934), 37–70.
[285] On the poetic self and nature in Young, see Stephen Cornford, 'Introduction', in Edward Young, *Night Thoughts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 1–32 (pp. 4–6).

ultimately to the recognition of its prime cause, adopting a universalist perspective, whether in religious or philosophical terms.[286] This mode of viewing nature as a manifestation of divine design, widespread across historical periods, found renewed expression in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries under the influence of natural science, shaping the discourse of physico-theology. This discourse had already found a place in mid-eighteenth-century Russian literature in the writings of Mikhail Lomonosov and Vasilii Trediakovskii.[287] It was also strongly present in *Night Thoughts*, especially in the culminating Night IX, where an extended meditation on the cosmic order unfolds from the image of the starry night sky. While Kutuzov chose to overlook the passages of the poem concerned with the visible world, focusing instead on Young's exploration of the moral depths of human subjectivity, other readers were far more eager to combine self-analysis with a receptivity to the beauty of nature. In a letter to Ivan Dmitriev written in 1823, Karamzin recalled how, in their youth, the two writers once read Young on the banks of the Volga River while waiting for the sunrise:

> Последнее твое дружеское письмо, приятно меланхолическое, заставило меня слетать воображением на берег Волги, Симбирский *Венец*, где мы с тобою, геройски отражая сон, ночью читали Юнга в ожидании солнца.[288]

In a similar vein, Il'ia Timkovskii describes in his memoirs his student years in Moscow in the late 1780s as a time when he would often take walks outside the city, sometimes in the evening, practicing self-introspection ('обращения мои на самого себя'), and observing the interplay between mind and body ('то бывал весь телесный, то весь умственный'). Under the influence of Virgil, he developed a deep emotional affinity with nature and read *Night Thoughts* in Kutuzov's translation with great diligence (in his memoirs, he mistakenly attributed

[286] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 87–8, 97–101.
[287] See Marcus C. Levitt, *The Visual Dominant in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), pp. 151–83; Kirill Ospovat, *Pridvornaia slovesnost'. Institut literatury i konstruktsii aboliutizma v Rossii serediny XVIII veka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2020), pp. 247–97.
[288] *Pis'ma N. M. Karamzina k I. I. Dmitrievu*, ed. by Ia. K. Grot and P. P. Pekarskii (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1866), p. 351.

it to Semen Gamaleia, another prominent Moscow Rosicrucian of the time), viewing the work not as a poem, but as a form of devotional literature ('как благовестие, не как поэму'):

> Я любил ходить на Воробьевския горы, проводить там свободные дни, один или с товарищем, с деньгами, книжкой и бумагой; иногда выходил туда с вечера. [...] Там я то с гор задумчиво глядел перед собою на Москву, как белое море, то исходил много и далеко по сторонам; то бывал весь телесный, то весь умственный, и обращения мои на самого себя приносил домой. Не знаю, как я в прогулках моих, от Георгиков [...] до того надумался, что стал щадить жизнь насекомых, одушевлял дерева, растения, листок, и скоро ощутил себя на следах Пифагорейских. Тогда же два раза сряду прочитал я, как благовестие, не как поэму, Юнговы Ночи, перевод Гамалея. Читал, слушал и мыслил много другаго в том роде. Мнения скоплялись, очищались и роднились.[289]

In this account, more rigorous exercises in disciplined reflection and self-scrutiny are accompanied by less methodical practices of aimless strolls, acts of contemplation, and imaginative reverie. The subject not only seeks self-knowledge and attempts to situate himself within a universal order in relation to God, as prescribed by both spiritual exercises and Young's didactic poem, but also engages in forms of self-cultivation that are largely ends in themselves.

A possible way to conceptualise this broader range of practices of the self is by supplementing Hadot's notion of 'spiritual exercises', primarily concerned with self-control and the transcendence of the self to attain a universalist perspective, with Michel Foucault's concept of 'technologies of the self', which focuses on 'the care of the self'.[290] In other words, it is important to emphasise that, alongside the internalisation of strict moral and religious rules through self-discipline and edifying reading, members of the educated classes in eighteenth-century Russia also shaped and cultivated their subjectivities through a variety of more pleasurable and self-indulgent activities, many of which were related to aesthetic experience. This relaxation of discipline is particularly visible in the changing practices of contemplating nature. In Europe, the traditional mode of viewing the world as proof of God's existence through

[289] I. F. Timkovskii, 'Moe opredelenie v sluzhbu', p. 1429.
[290] See especially Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 25–32; *The Care of the Self* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), pp. 37–68.

its beauty and order evolved, already in the early eighteenth century, into a more sensuous approach. Religious emotions became embedded in a broader aesthetic experience of nature, one centred on immersion and feeling, as exemplified in Joseph Addison's essays in the *Spectator* (1711–1712).[291] Strolling through a landscape and admiring natural beauty became a new kind of spiritual exercise, a practice of the self in which pious reverence before the Creator was balanced by more secular emotions and sensations.[292]

Historians of Western Europe have long marked the eighteenth century as a crucial period for the emergence of modern attitudes toward the natural world and the development of a wide range of cultural practices associated with it.[293] While no comparable comprehensive study exists for the Russian case, some evidence suggests that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were seen by certain members of the Russian educated classes as a turning point marked by a new appreciation of nature.[294] This heightened sensitivity to natural beauty, closely linked with the broader culture of sensibility, appears to have permeated wide segments of the Russian elite. Timkovskii, himself a lover of nature, as we have seen, recalled in his memoirs his visits in the late 1790s to the famous grandee Ivan Shuvalov and his relatives. He described Shuvalov's niece, Countess Varvara Golovina, as someone who openly expressed a fondness for 'rustic life' and vividly conveyed her appreciation of her country estate on the shores of the Volga:

> графиня Головина, любила говорить о сельской жизни, и в описаниях своих владений великолепно изобразила мне Воротинец на Волге.[295]

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[291] See Lisa M. Zeitz, 'Addison's "Imagination" Papers and the Design Argument', *English Studies*, 73, 6 (1992), 493–502.
[292] See Endre Szécsényi, 'Landscape and Walking: On Early Aesthetic Experience', *Journal of Scottish Thought*, 9 (2017), 39–74.
[293] See Mornet, *Le sentiment de la nature en France de J.-J. Rousseau à Bernardin de Saint-Pierre*; Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500–1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983).
[294] Some examples are cited and discussed in N. D. Kochetkova, *Literatura russkogo sentimentalizma (Esteticheskie i khudozhestvennye iskaniia)* (Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 1994), pp. 207–20.
[295] Timkovskii, 'Moe opredelenie v sluzhbu', p. 1463.

Golovina was an intimate friend of Elizabeth, the wife of the then Grand Duke and future Emperor Alexander I, and many passages in her memoirs adopt the language of sentimentalism to describe the leisurely practices of the imperial family and courtiers during the final years of Catherine's reign at the Tsarskoe Selo residence:

> La nature était si animée qu'elle ajoutait un charme inexprimable à la douceur du printemps. Cette saison semble réunir les sentiments; les souvenirs arrivent en foule. On ne respire que pour sentir; on aime mieux tout ce qu on doit aimer; on voudrait aimer davantage. [...] On se promenait tous les soirs. Le beau temps invitait à ne pas quitter l'air. L'Impératrice s'arrêtait sur la rampe ou sur la colonnade. Le coucher du soleil, le calme de l'air, le parfum des fleurs flattaient les sens.[296]

The princely couple and their entourage not only enjoyed the parks of Tsarskoe Selo but also took excursions into the surrounding countryside, where they contemplated the beautiful and sublime aspects of wild nature:

> Nous étions, Mme la grande-duchesse et moi, pénétrées des sentiments qui faisaient notre mutuelle jouissance; l'orage, les éclairs, le tonnerre nous présentaient un beau spectacle. Appuyées sur la fenêtre, nous admirions les effets de la nature. [...] La promenade dura longtemps. Nous revînmes en voitures ouvertes, par la plus belle soirée du monde. La nature offrait un spectacle tout différent. La lumière était remplacée par une sombre clarté. Tous les objets, les collines, les arbres, les clochers se dessinaient en noir sur un ciel pur et grisâtre. On parlait peu, mais chacun jouissait à sa manière.[297]

The taste for nature evident in these detailed descriptions and their language of aesthetic contemplation ('un beau spectacle' etc.) was not a perspective imposed retrospectively by a recollecting author. In the mid-1790s, the Grand Duchess had been reading *La Nouvelle Héloïse*,[298] and her letters from that period testify to the same refined sensibility attentive to the beauty of nature:

> Dans ce moment, je jouis d'un spectacle dont on lit bien souvent la description. Vous savez, ma chère Maman, que souvent on dit, pour parler du coucher du soleil, qu'il se plonge dans la mer: eh bien! comme on voit de mes fenêtres jusqu'à la mer, le soleil qui se couche dans ce moment a réellement l'air de tomber dans la mer. [...]
>
> Nous avons à présent ces belles nuits où il ne fait pas nuit: le rossignol avec cela, c'est charmant. [...]

[296] *Souvenirs de la comtesse Golovine, née princesse Galitzine, 1766–1821* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1910), p. 57.
[297] Ibid., pp. 59–60.
[298] Ibid., p. 114.

> le temps était divin, et la lune qui se levait, faisait un charmant effet. Vous savez, chère Maman, que la lune est un personnage important pour moi.[299]

Aristocrats at court and wealthy landowners on their country estates could enjoy nature in specially designed spaces—gardens, which served multiple social and cultural functions at the time.[300] However, the new forms of sensibility to nature were by no means limited to the highest echelons of Russian society. Timkovskii, a provincial Ukrainian nobleman of modest means and one of the numerous clients of the powerful clan to which Countess Golovina belonged, also found pleasure in the captivating sights of nature, though in his case, these were the wild landscapes near Moscow rather than the parks of imperial residences. Moreover, the growing circulation of books and the development of sociability connected to them in the provinces toward the end of the eighteenth century made it possible for even poor and disadvantaged members of the middle ranks of Russian society to encounter and internalise this new culture of sensibility. Ivan Vtorov, to give one example, was a low-ranking civil servant of non-noble origin living in desperate conditions. Yet, as his diaries from the early 1790s reveal, he became deeply engaged with print culture. He was a diligent reader of John Mason's *Self-Knowledge*, practicing daily methods of self-introspection and discipline, while also avidly consuming the writings of Karamzin and becoming an adept of sensibility, with a refined sensitivity to nature as one of its effects.[301]

Even this sketchy discussion of some letters, diaries and memoirs from the last third of the eighteenth century suggests that, during this period, the educated classes of Russian society were exposed to, and actively engaged in, a variety of practices of self-fashioning, ranging from

[299] Nikolai Mikhailovich, *Imperatritsa Elisaveta Alekseevna, supruga Imperatora Aleksandra I*, Vol. 1 (Saint Petersburg: Ekspeditsiia zagotovleniia gosudarstvennykh bumag, 1908), pp. 135, 204, 300.
[300] See Andreas Schönle, *The Ruler in the Garden: Politics and Landscape Design in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).
[301] See M. F. De-Pule, 'Otets i syn. Opyt istoriko-biograficheskoi khroniki', *Russkii vestnik*, 116, 4 (1875), pp. 494–544.

ascetic spiritual exercises of classical and Christian heritage to more modern modes of pleasurable self-cultivation. Returning to the writings of Russian sentimentalist authors, it is possible to identify many of the same technologies of the self in their texts. Radishchev, a close friend of Kutuzov, makes a passing, ironic reference in *Puteshestvie* to the meditative practice of contemplating the infinity of the universe in the manner of the Stoics or *Night Thoughts*, explicitly defining it as an instance of 'spiritual exercises':

> Лежа в кибитке мысли мои обращены были в неизмеримость мира. Отделялся душевно от земли, казалося мне, что удары кибиточные были для меня легче. — Но упражнения духовныя не всегда нас от телесности отвлекают; и для сохранения боков моих пошел я пешком.[302]

A more aestheticised, though still morally disciplined, attitude toward nature is practiced by one of the narrator's friends, who describes an excursion undertaken with the aim of witnessing 'the magnificent spectacle of the sunrise' (cf. the excerpts from Golovina's memoirs and the Grand Duchess's letters quoted above, which employ a similar language of spectatorship and attention to the sun's sight):

> вознамерился в пользу употребить благость природы, и насладиться еще один хотя раз в жизни великолепным зрелищем восхождения солнца, котораго на гладком водяном горизонте мне еще видеть не удавалось.[303]

Similar meditative and aesthetic practices are portrayed by Karamzin in his first original short story:

> Госпожа Л*, пробуждаясь вместе с Природою, нежными ласками прерывала покойный сон Юлии, и призывала ее пользоваться приятностями утра. Обнявшись, выходили оне из дому; дожидались солнца, сидя на высоком холме, и встречали его с благословением. Насладясь сим великолепным зрелищем Природы, возвращались оне домой с чувством веселия, ходили по саду, осматривали цветы, любовались их освеженною красотою и питались амброзическими изпарениями. […] Вечер приносил с собою новыя удовольствия. Смотрели на заходящее солнце […].[304]

[302] A. N. Radishchev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 1 (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1938), p. 232.
[303] Ibid., p. 235.
[304] N. M. Karamzin, 'Evgenii i Iuliia', *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma*, 18 (1789), 177–91 (pp. 178–9).

The overlap between sentimentalist writings and various forms of ego-documents in evoking practices of self-discipline and self-cultivation is not particularly surprising, given the often blurred boundary between fiction and non-fiction in the period. More intriguing is the relationship between the practices of the self popular among the educated classes of Russian society and the genre of sentimentalist meditative prose, which was also produced in the same milieu. Returning to the meditative piece *Utro*, which has appeared throughout this chapter as a representative example of the genre of late eighteenth-century Russian literature, and reexamining it from the perspective of techniques of the self, one cannot help but notice that the movement from melancholic rejection of the world to reconciliation with it and submission to the Divine design, prompted by the experience of walking and admiring nature, and structuring the entire text, constitutes a form of spiritual exercise aimed at transforming the moods and perceptions of the subject. By offering vivid first-person accounts of the flux of thoughts and feelings shaped either by the willing efforts of the self or by external sensations and stimuli, sentimentalist meditative prose represents the inner workings of the self as shaped by methodical, structured practices of self-discipline and self-cultivation. This suggests that the discovery of private, individualised, inner-oriented subjectivity in sentimentalist writings did not amount to its depiction as a realm of absolute spontaneity or independence of emotions and thought. Rather, the sentimental self is represented as a cluster of pre-given, reproducible patterns of thinking and feeling, with meditative prose staging the individualised performance of supra-individual spiritual exercises and emotional attitudes.

The question of the relationship between individuality and universality in sentimentalist constructions of subjectivity deserves some attention here. On the one hand, the eighteenth century is often regarded as a pivotal period in the history of the formation of the modern (Western) notion of the self. For instance, in his magisterial account of ‘the making of the

modern identity', Charles Taylor identifies 'inwardness', 'the affirmation of ordinary life' and the cult of nature as crucial elements that constitute modern selfhood, invoking eighteenth-century sentimentalist literature and the culture of sensibility as expressions of these emerging values.[305] Fully in line with this view, the first articulations of the new sense of individual selfhood in Russian culture are found in sentimentalist writings.[306] In Karamzin's earliest example of meditative prose, *Progulka*, one can encounter a radical assertion of the uniqueness, autonomy and perfection of the individual self:

> Да пробудятся все духовныя силы мои, и да чувствую во глубине души своей, что я существую!... И се разтекается сие животворное чувство по всей внутренности моей! Ощущаю живо, что я живу, и есмь нечто отделенное от прочаго, есмь совершенное целое. – Чувство существования, в едином человеке на земле сей обитающее! колико ты для меня драгоценно! сколь возхитительно для меня думать, что я вечно буду тобою наслаждаться![307]

In his letters to Johann Kaspar Lavater in 1787–1788, Karamzin discussed means 'for us to be more aware of, and to take more joy in, our being (*uns unsers Daseyns gewisser und froher zu machen*)' as well as the necessity 'to reflect about my being (*über mein Daseyn reflektieren*)' and to take 'pleasure in oneself (*Selbstgenuß*)'.[308] The practices of self-cultivation discussed in this correspondence found their way into Karamzin's meditative prose, shaping the actions, thoughts and feelings of the speaking self and becoming essentially the main object of representation in the text. The promotion of this modern understanding of the self in late eighteenth-century Russia was not limited to Karamzin alone. Andrei Zorin shows that Andrei Turgenev, son of the Freemason and translator Ivan Turgenev and an aspiring young author

[305] See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), esp. pp. 285–302.
[306] On the history of the concepts of the self in Russia, see Nikolai Plotnikov, 'Ot "individual'nosti" k "identichnosti". (Istoriia poniatii personal'nosti v russkoi kul'ture)', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 91 (2008), 64–83. Plotnikov makes a passing reference to Karamzin's early usage of the word *lichnost'* as a Russian version of *personalité* in his translation from Charles Bonnet published in *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma* in 1789 (p. 73).
[307] Karamzin, 'Progulka', pp. 165–6.
[308] N. M. Karamzin, *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, ed. by Iu. M. Lotman and others (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), pp. 490–1.

influenced by sentimentalist writings, boldly articulated in his diary a new idea of what he called *Selbstheit*, meaning 'selfhood, personal distinctness, dissimilarity to others'.[309] All this suggests that the modern sense of the self, emphasising the subject's uniqueness, investing it with aesthetic value (Karamzin's 'perfect whole'), and encouraging the individual to take pleasure in the awareness of their own existence, was gaining ground in Russia among the adepts of the culture of sensibility.

On the other hand, as Grigorii Gukovskii observed as early as 1938 in his discussion of the poetic language of Mikhail Murav'ev, the selves represented in Russian sentimentalism are, in fact, devoid of any discernible individuality:

> сама психологическая среда, сфера эмоций, выражаемая этим словарем, субъективна, но не индивидуальна. [...] Человеческая психика, даже в ультрасубъективном ее истолковании, мыслится Муравьевым, как отчасти и Жуковским, — как единая и сама себе всегда равная. У Муравьева, стремящегося передать свое *переживание*, а не внешний мир, самое *я* — «общечеловечно», устойчиво в своих функциях, не отличается от других *я*.[310]

He argued that this lack of specificity in the depiction of the self accounts for the highly formulaic language employed by Russian sentimentalist authors:

> Отсюда повторяемость формулы, выражающая повторяемость общечеловеческого *я*.[311]

There appears to be a direct correlation between the standardised models of subjectivity reproduced in sentimentalist writings and the highly conventional repertoire of descriptive, narrative, and meditative commonplaces that constitute their textual fabric. These are, in effect, two sides of the same coin. Sentimentalist literature, particularly the genre of meditative prose, is ostensibly preoccupied with articulating a sense of individual selfhood, giving voice to the subjective experiences, perceptions, and sensations of a private person. Yet this very sense of

[309] Andrei Zorin, *The Emergence of a Hero: A Tale of Romantic Love in Russia around 1800*, transl. by Leo Shtutin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), p. 288.
[310] G. A. Gukovskii, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi literatury i obshchestvennoi mysli XVIII veka* (Leningrad: GIKHL, 1938), p. 284.
[311] Ibid.

selfhood, this illusion of interiority and identity, is constructed through a combination of typified textual elements (such as the invocation of melancholy, landscape description, contemplation of the rising sun, physico-theological reflections, etc.), unified by the use of first-person narration. It is this narrative framing that attributes these conventional tropes to a singular speaking subject, thereby producing an impression of emotional depth and authenticity.

In this perspective, the function and significance of sentimentalist meditative prose lie in its ability to accumulate a wide range of practices of self-discipline and self-cultivation prevalent among the educated elites of late eighteenth-century Russian society and reframe them as seemingly spontaneous responses and attitudes of the private self. In doing so, it internalises and naturalises normative social prescriptions, translating them into individual moods and feelings. Curiously, this dramatisation of spiritual exercises through first-person sentimentalist narration finds a parallel in other literary phenomena of the eighteenth century. For instance, the renowned French author Antoine Léonard Thomas included in his *Éloge de Marc Aurèle* (1775), translated into Russian by Denis Fonvizin in 1777, a fragment ostensibly written by Marcus Aurelius himself. Based on the emperor's *Meditations*, it condensed the essence of that work into a fictional monologue. Through the use of the present tense and by situating the speaker in a specific landscape, the passage closely resembles the affective style and structure of sentimentalist lyrical prose:

> Я размышлял нощию. Искал я, в чем состоит благо, на чем истина основана. [...] место и время способствовали моим размышлениям. Нощь была глубокая и тихая, все окрест меня наслаждалося покоем. Я слышал токмо близ моих чертогов несколько движущиеся Тибровы воды; но сей непрерывный и глухой шум сам способствовал мысли, и я следующим рассуждениям предался. Дабы познать, что есть добродетель, надлежит прежде познать, что есть человек. [...] Тогда продолжал я мои изыскания и, примечая на все, рассматривал течение вселенной. Удивился я согласию, зримому повсюду.[312]

[312] 'Slovo pokhval'noe Marku Avreliiu, sochinennoe g. Tomasom, chlenom Frantsuzskoi akademii', in D. I. Fonvizin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 2 (Moscow and Leningrad: GIKHL, 1959), pp. 194–230 (p. 201).

This mode of writing offered considerable space for the articulation of the individual self and its engagement with the external world, while simultaneously preserving a strong orientation towards self-discipline and moral instruction. The resulting synthesis of aesthetic sensibility and didactic purpose, a hallmark of eighteenth-century literature more broadly, is quite pronounced in sentimentalist meditative prose. This dual function is essential for understanding both the literary-historical significance of the genre and its wider socio-cultural role.

Andrei Zorin has argued that, in late eighteenth-century Russia, sentimentalist literature emerged as a key source of 'emotional matrices'—patterns of feeling, thought and behaviour—that shaped the subjectivities of the educated classes.[313] By depicting what Zorin and Andreas Schönle describe as 'small ritualized scenes of interiority',[314] sentimentalist fiction offered its readers what Clifford Geertz would call 'symbolic models of emotion' or 'public images of sentiment':[315] culturally sanctioned templates that structured perception and guided emotional response. My addition to this argument is to suggest that these symbolic models did not originate in sentimentalist literature itself. Rather than marking a radical break with earlier traditions and heralding the advent of a wholly novel modernity, the literature of sensibility reconfigured and adapted long-established intellectual patterns and literary structures, concealing under the appearance of authentic feeling and spontaneous expression deeply rooted meditative and rhetorical conventions. The frequent formal and thematic resemblance among sentimentalist texts, often dismissed as evidence of their unoriginality or literary dullness, should instead be seen as an indicator of their normative and prescriptive character. On the level of individual experience, as Zorin's reconstruction of Andrei Turgenev's emotional life through ego-documents shows, one can indeed observe tensions between competing emotional

[313] See Zorin, *The Emergence of a Hero*, esp. pp. 14–21.
[314] Andreas Schönle and Andrei Zorin, *On the Periphery of Europe, 1762–1825: The Self-Invention of the Russian Elite* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018), p. 201.
[315] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 82.

standards and behavioural codes.[316] The sense of individuality itself may be seen to arise from these conflicts among internalised symbolic models, while in itself the 'public images of sentiment' transmitted by literature rarely convey a sense of psychological depth.

That does not mean, however, that such texts are not valuable sources for the history of emotions or historical anthropology. Sentimentalist literature, and meditative prose in particular, is saturated with first-person utterances referring to the speaker's mental states and feelings. William Reddy has argued that such statements, which he terms 'emotives', 'are themselves instruments for directly changing, building, hiding, intensifying emotions'.[317] In other words, while no text can provide unmediated access to its author's subjective experiences or life practices, the meditative prose of Russian sentimentalism may be regarded as a practice in its own right: an attempt at self-fashioning, a performance of the sentimental self. Even if few individuals modelled their entire personality on the ideals promoted in sentimentalist fiction, the sheer number and uniformity of these texts allows us to interpret them as an influential, if not the only available, discourse of subjectivity at the time, as well as a symptom and manifestation of a broader transformation in attitudes, modes of thought and practices of the self that began to take hold among the Russian elites by the end of the eighteenth century.

But Russian sentimentalist literature, its significance as a separate cultural episode notwithstanding, was also seminal in terms of literary history. It not only contributed decisively to the development of original Russian narrative fiction and played a key role in the reformation of the Russian literary language. According to Vadim Vatsuro's authoritative study of Russian elegiac poetry of the early nineteenth century, many of its defining features, including the character of the speaking self, the depiction of interactions between subject and natural

[316] See Zorin, *The Emergence of a Hero*, passim.
[317] William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 105.

landscape and suggestive evocations of moods and feelings, were prefigured in the sentimentalist meditative prose of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[318] As the scholar put it,

> В 1790–1800-е годы лирическая стихия буквально захлестывает русские прозаические жанры; сюжетные, повествовательные элементы все более растворяются в субъективно-лирической медитации. [...] Вслед за европейской преромантической прозой русская литература начинает культивировать жанр «отрывка», лирического фрагмента, содержанием которого оказываются субъективно окрашенный пейзаж или монолог чувствительного героя, потерявшего друга или утратившего любовь, а задачей – создание атмосферы, меланхолической или таинственной. [...] Лирический фрагмент сближался с элегией и в выборе тем, и в самих своих структурных основах.[319]

To take the most obvious example, Andrei Turgenev's *Elegiia* (1802), which, together with Vasilii Zhukovskii's famous translation of Gray's *Elegy*, signalled the rise of modern Russian lyric poetry, exhibits many similarities with sentimentalist meditative prose of the 1790s. It begins with a description of an autumn landscape, soon followed by the explicit thematisation of the speaking subject, whose moods and perceptions shape the depiction of nature. This is succeeded by a series of moralising meditations on life and death, culminating in a firm declaration of belief in consolation through eternal afterlife, with religious emotion presented as a resolution to the melancholy and anxiety expressed in the poem's opening.[320] Many sentimentalist prose fragments, including *Utro*, follow this very pattern, representing emotions and reflections arising from the perception of landscape and self-introspection of an individual subject. As I have argued throughout this section, this pattern appears to be informed by meditative practices rooted in classical and Christian traditions.

A remarkable parallel to the proposed interpretation of the genealogy of Russian (pre-)Romantic lyric poetry can be found in the history of English poetry. In his well-known essay,

[318] See V. E. Vatsuro, *Lirika pushkinskoi pory: "Elegicheskaia shkola"* (Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 1994), pp. 13–5.
[319] Ibid., p. 14.
[320] See A. I. Turgenev, 'Elegiia', in *Poety 1790–1810-kh godov*, ed. by Iu. M. Lotman and M. G. Al'tshuller (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1971), pp. 241–4. On this poem, see Vatsuro, *Lirika pushkinskoi pory*, pp. 37–47.

M. H. Abrams explored the connections between what he terms 'the greater Romantic lyric'—poems combining descriptive and meditative elements that depict the transformation of the self through introspection intertwined with perception of and interaction with nature—and various forms of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century religious and descriptive poetry, as well as the tradition of meditations.[321] While the evolution of Russian literature obviously did not follow the exact same trajectory, the relationship between sentimentalist meditative prose and the longstanding traditions that informed it, on the one hand, and modern lyric forms, on the other, suggests that in the Russian case, as in the English, new modes of writing and representations of subjectivity and nature partly relied on and reworked much older patterns and models. In this sense, some of the greatest achievements of Russian Romanticism, such as the poems of Evgenii Baratynskii and Aleksandr Pushkin, can be seen as developing, complicating and elaborating on the image of the self, defined by the dual impulse of self-introspection and contemplation of nature, first articulated, if only in its barest outlines, in the writings of Russian sentimentalist authors of the 1790s.[322]

[321] See M. H. Abrams, 'Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric', in *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle*, ed. by Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 527–60.

[322] On 'nature and Romantic subjectivity' in Pushkin's poems, see Andrew Kahn, *Pushkin's Lyric Intelligence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 117–57. See also Nataliia Mazur's readings of some of Pushkin's most celebrated poems in the context of the Stoic spiritual exercises: Nataliia Mazur, 'O myshinoi begotne, Pushkine, Marke Avrelii i ob uslovno-funktsional'nykh kontekstakh', in *Shipovnik. K 60-letiiu Romana Davidovicha Timenchika* (Moscow: Vodolei, 2005), pp. 250–60; '"Brozhu li ia vdol' ulits shumnykh…" i stoicheskaia filosofiia smerti', in *Stikh, iazyk, poeziia. Pamiati Mikhaila Leonovicha Gasparova* (Moscow: RGGU, 2006), pp. 343–72.

CHAPTER 3.
Sentimental Education: Institutions of Learning, Forms of Knowledge and the Shaping of Russian Sentimentalism

The preceding two chapters traced the emergence and consolidation of Russian sentimentalist literature and the network of institutions in which it was produced and circulated. Chapter 1 demonstrated that the rise of Russian sentimentalism depended to a significant degree on the development of the infrastructure of literary associations and print media created by Moscow Freemasons in the 1780s on the basis of Moscow University. Chapter 2 argued that the key genre of Russian sentimentalism was first-person short meditative prose, and that it was a vehicle for practices of self-discipline and self-cultivation popular among the educated elites of the Russian Empire at the time. The present chapter continues to situate Russian sentimentalism within contemporary institutional and intellectual contexts by exploring its multiple relationships with the sphere of education.

The first section addresses the growing presence of sentimentalist literature in the teaching of languages and rhetoric, arguing that in the late eighteenth-century Russian Empire the system of education became a vehicle for disseminating and producing literature of sensibility. The second section reconstructs the epistemological foundations on which the study of languages, literature and rhetoric in late eighteenth-century Russia was based. It argues that Russian thought of the time was heavily dominated by sensualist philosophy and was especially attracted to John Locke's account of the origin of cognition in sensation and his discussion of errors arising from the incorrect combination of ideas. The section demonstrates that, drawing on the sensualist conception of the self, Russian authors propagated self-examination as a means of setting one's ideas in proper order. In so doing, it develops the argument of Chapter 2 on the role of spiritual exercises in shaping the educated self imagined in sentimentalist literature.

The third section focuses on the theoretical premises and practical implications of the discipline of pedagogy transferred from Germany to Russia by Masonic circles in 1780s Moscow. The new pedagogy, also rooted in sensualist philosophy, shifted the focus from the development of the faculty of reason to the cultivation of feelings, placing greater emphasis on sense perception and the aesthetic experience of nature as a way of inculcating proper moral and religious notions in a child's mind. The section explores the affinities between this pedagogical vision, which enjoyed recognition in Russian educational institutions of the time, and sentimentalist prose exemplified by Nikolai Karamzin's first original work, the meditative piece 'Progulka', published in a literary magazine for children.

The overall argument of the chapter is that in late eighteenth-century Russia sentimentalist literature was linked by numerous threads to a nexus of contemporary educational institutions, practices and theories; that this infrastructure of learning facilitated the spread of a literature and culture of sensibility across Russian society; and that this pedagogical background, which combined sensualism with advice on self-discipline and self-cultivation, shared many concerns and approaches with the sentimentalist project of imagining and propagating a model of the educated self endowed with refined moral sensibility, thus shaping the didactic strain of Russian sentimentalism.

1. Entering the Curriculum: Sentimentalist Literature and Educational Institutions

Since Antiquity, the study of literature as a school subject has been a hallmark of European culture. For centuries, Greek and Roman authors, and later canonical figures of respective national literary traditions, were read, analysed, memorised, translated and imitated

by pupils as part of their instruction in languages, rhetoric, history and moral philosophy.[323] In the eighteenth century, once Russian society and culture had begun to be reshaped according to Western models, these educational practices started to take root in Russia as well. As early as 1739, the first attempt to introduce the study of a 'Russian author' as part of the school curriculum was made in the gymnasium of the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences.[324] In the second half of the century, when a body of original Russian works and authors considered exemplary and suitable for study and imitation had already been formed, links between contemporary or recent Russian literature and educational institutions acquired a surer footing.

Moscow University provides one of the clearest examples of the entanglement of the academic and literary fields in the eighteenth-century Russian Empire. Anton Barsov, who occupied the position of professor of eloquence from 1761 until his death in 1791, while firmly focusing in his lectures on rhetoric and poetics on the Latin language and authors, also from an early moment devoted some time to discussing questions of Russian grammar and style, using as examples odes and orations by Mikhail Lomonosov as well as works by several other Russian poets.[325] His successor, Professor Khariton Chebotarev (a Freemason and Rosicrucian closely associated with Novikov's and Schwarz's milieu discussed in Chapter 1), continued to pay attention to Russian literature in his teaching of rhetoric and probably accorded even more space to discussions of contemporary Russian writings than Barsov. According to Il'ia Timkovskii, who attended Moscow University between 1789 and 1797, the flourishing period of Russian sentimentalism, Chebotarev's lectures, while offering no systematic treatment of literature,

[323] A classic statement on the relationship between literature and education in Europe is Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), pp. 36–61.
[324] A. A. Kostin and T. V. Kostina, '"Russkii avtor" v 1739 godu: G. Z. Baier, I. I. Taubert i formirovanie russkogo shkol'nogo kanona', *Slověne*, 8, 2 (2019), 163–97.
[325] M. I. Sukhomlinov, *Istoriia Rossiiskoi akademii*, vol. 4 (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1878), pp. 193–206, 482–92.

often focused on recently published works, especially those of Derzhavin, inviting students to analyse them and to participate in literary criticism, while also introducing them to elements of the history of language and literature:

> В Словесности оне [Chebotarev's lectures] не составляли никакого связнаго курса и были чисто практическия. Предлагая избранныя места из писателей в разных родах, или нововышедшия известных лиц сочинения, в прозе и стихах, как все что являлось Державина, с разбором и критикою, он объяснял свойства слога и языка, или слушателей заставлял попеременно делать тоже, с своими замечаниями, давал цену как тому, что называем numerus, так и всей гармонии. Тоже происходило с заданными на месяц сочинениями и сделанными на месте переводами. Тут он помещал отрывками историю языка и Словесности. В сочинениях иногда возражениями и вопросами вызывал на споры с доводами.[326]

It was only in the nineteenth century that Moscow University fully introduced the study of the Russian language and literature, recognising them as a separate subject independent of the framework of rhetoric; yet already in the last decades of the preceding century the institution had clearly begun to engage deeply with modern belles-lettres in the vernacular. As Freemasons sought to turn Moscow University into the intellectual centre of Russian literary life (as discussed in Chapter 1), individuals with ties to this milieu acted as mediators, influencing educated circles outside Moscow and involving them in university print culture. In this respect, the memoirs of Sergei Tuchkov are particularly revealing, demonstrating how, in the last third of the eighteenth century, a boy of noble origin receiving a private education could come into contact with Russian literature and become involved in literary life informed, at least in part, by the culture of sensibility. The son of a high-ranking army officer and himself a future general, Tuchkov was raised in a military milieu, and it was there that he first encountered poetry in Russian, at the age of twelve. He was particularly impressed by Lomonosov's poems and by Masonic songs that circulated orally and in manuscript. After studying Lomonosov's textbooks on grammar and rhetoric—the most popular Russian works on the subject at the time—he began composing poems himself:

[326] I. F. Timkovskii, 'Pamiatnik Ivanu Ivanovichu Shuvalovu', *Moskvitianin*, 3 (1851), 3–49 (p. 14).

> Некоторые из молодых офицеров, составлявших его [Tuchkov's father] чертежную канцелярию, в которой получал я уроки поименованных мною математических наук, любили стихотворство. Они приносили с собою разныя сочинения и читали оныя вслух один другому. Более всего понравились мне сочинения Ломоносова и масонския песни, сочиненныя на русском языке. Я не только их читал по нескольку раз, но даже многое списывал своею рукою, так что и теперь помню наизусть. Сии сочинения родили во мне охоту к стихотворству; не взирая на то, что я совсем не учился сей науке и только несколько раз прочитал Ломоносова грамматику и риторику, я начал сочинять стихи по слуху. Мне было тогда лет 12 от роду, – стихотворец ребенок.[327]

At that time (the early 1780s), Tuchkov lived in Kyiv, and his poems became known to a certain 'monk'—very convincingly identified by Vitaliy Simankov as Viktor Prokopovich-Antonskii[328]—whose brothers, Anton and Mikhail, after being educated at the Kyiv Academy, joined Moscow University on Masonic stipends as members of the Pedagogical Seminary, with Anton eventually becoming the long-time head of the university's famous Noble Boarding School. Viktor sent the texts of the aspiring poet for publication in the university's periodical and offered to teach Tuchkov rhetoric, poetry and Latin:

> Один монах, ректор академии, с давних времен учрежденной при одном монастыре в Киеве, известном под названием братского, посещал иногда дом отца моего. Прочитав некоторые из моих стихов, он поправил их и отослал в Москву для напечатания в издаваемом тогда при московском университете журнале, и сверх того, просил меня, чтоб я бывал у него и брал уроки в риторике, поэзии и в началах латинского языка, чем и пользовался я всегда, когда он и я имели свободное время.[329]

When moving from Kyiv to Moscow, Tuchkov received a letter of recommendation to Moscow University from the Kyivan monk, and on his arrival he was welcomed by members of the Assembly of the University Pupils, joined this literary society and later published several poems in the society's periodical *Pokoiashchiisia trudoliubets* in 1785 and in the journal *Beseduiushchii grazhdanin*, published by the society's Petersburg branch, in 1789. These included a translation of Ewald Christian von Kleist's poem celebrating God as revealed in Creation—a pious descriptive poem typical of the tastes of Masonic and sentimentalist circles

[327] S. A. Tuchkov, *Zapiski. 1766–1808*, ed. by K. A. Voenskii (Saint Petersburg: Svet, 1908), pp. 6–7.
[328] Vitaliy Simankov, 'Originals and Translations: A Study Based on Old Slavic Texts and Russian Eighteenth-Century Journals' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Brown University, 2017), pp. 347–9.
[329] Tuchkov, *Zapiski*, p. 7.

of the time.[330] Reading Lomonosov and attempts at writing poetry, shaped by educational practices, thus led Tuchkov into the centre of contemporary literary life and exposed him to the literature of sensibility.

Quite similar was the story of Il'ia Timkovskii, who studied at the Kyiv Academy in the late 1780s. Coming from the Ukrainian nobility, Timkovskii had from his earliest years been raised surrounded by the culture of Latinity, and his exposure to contemporary Russian literature and print culture in childhood had been minimal. Yet while studying at the Academy, he also became acquainted with Viktor Prokopovich-Antonskii, who provided a link between Kyivian youth and the Masonic-driven literary developments in Moscow. Timkovskii attended the informal literary gatherings organised by Viktor, at which the latest publications from Novikov's printing press were read and discussed, including the supplements to the newspaper *Moskovskie vedomosti*—most probably the journal *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma* (1785–1789), one of the key periodicals in the history of Russian sentimentalism, to be discussed in detail later in this chapter:

> Виктор имел в Москве двух братьев, перешедших университет, Михайла секретарем у генерал-губернатора Еропкина, и Антона секретарем у куратора университета Мелиссино; там же третьяго брата Ивана студентом. От них получал он издаваемыя новости и завел у себя маленькое собрание в воскресные дни по утрам для чтения, выбором четырех подростков, куда принят и я на последние три года. Рано мы сходились к нему в братскую обитель, пили чай и поочередно читали то лучшия статьи периодических изданий листами при Московских Ведомостях, то переводы Фенелонова Телемака, Мармонтелевых Инков, и другое, где он вмешивал свои замечания.[331]

As we have seen, Timkovskii later went to Moscow University and continued his immersion in contemporary Russian literature under Professor Chebotarev; later, he published several sentimentalist poems and prose fragments in the literary supplements to *Moskovskie vedomosti*, thus himself becoming a kind of author he had read in Kyiv. His career illustrates both the

[330] Ibid., pp. 19–20; Simankov, 'Originals and Translations', pp. 385, 390–1.
[331] I. F. Timkovskii, 'Moe opredelenie v sluzhbu', *Russkii arkhiv*, 6 (1874), 1377–466 (p. 1414).

growing attraction of Russian literature for the educated classes and the mechanisms of social and cultural integration of the Ukrainian nobility into the ruling elites of the Russian Empire following the liquidation of the Hetmanate under Catherine II.[332]

In this perspective, it is interesting to compare the memoirs of Il'ia (born in 1773) and his brother Egor (born in 1790). Unlike his older brother, who mostly read Latin authors, Egor, while studying in Ukraine in the late 1790s and early 1800s, before coming to Moscow University, had already been fully absorbed into Russian print culture, in which recently published works by sentimentalist writers such as Nikolai Karamzin and Ivan Dmitriev, as well as iconic preromantic texts such as the poems of Ossian, occupied a central position:

> И на берегах Днепровских начали уже раздаваться славныя имена первостепенных литераторов наших: Дмитриева, Карамзина, Кострова, главнейше же в челе их появлялся на горизонте нашего образования безсмертный Державин. [...] В числе немногих книг русских и латинских были и поэмы шотландскаго барда Оссиана, переведенныя или, справедливее сказать, созданныя в гомерическом вкусе Костровым; ибо, как учители наши утверждали, перевод лучше самаго оригинала Макферсонова. Превосходное творение сие брат мой часто с восторгом читывал при мне в Киеве [...]. Безподобные отрывки произносились на память, и мы с братом знали наизусть почти всего Оссиана. [...] В Переяславе сведения мои развивались более и более. Там читал я с искренним благоговением «Письма русскаго путешественника», «Аониды», «Мои безделки», «И мои безделки» и разныя другия произведения славнейших авторов.[333]

The difference in the experiences of the two members of the same family testifies to the rapid changes in the structure and expansion of the Russian literary field. Regional specificity notwithstanding, the spread of contemporary literature and print culture across the provinces of the empire had certainly accelerated by the very end of the century, and children attending schools and learning languages and rhetoric were exposed to sentimentalist literature to a degree unthinkable for previous generations.

[332] For more on this, see Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s–1830s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
[333] 'Vospominaniia Egora Fedorovicha Timkovskogo', *Kievskaia starina*, 44 (1894), 359–81 (pp. 376–8).

If Russian sentimentalists had to wait until the turn of the nineteenth century for their works to enter school curricula across the empire, European literature of sensibility entered Russian classrooms a couple of decades earlier. This point may be illustrated by the history of the inclusion of Salomon Gessner among the authors taught in Russian educational institutions in the last third of the eighteenth century. The importance of Gessner's prose idylls, translated from the early 1770s onwards, for Russian sentimentalism has already been discussed in the preceding chapters. What is remarkable is that, parallel to the growing interest in Gessner among Petersburg and Moscow men and women of letters, the works of the Swiss author began to be used for teaching purposes. As early as 1775, three of Gessner's idylls were reprinted as part of an anthology accompanying a German textbook prepared by Franz Hölterhof, professor at Moscow University.[334] In 1780, the university's tutor in German, Fedor Sapozhnikov, edited, at the request of the new professor of German, Johann Georg Schwarz, a book-length collection of German texts entitled *Auserlesenen Stellen aus den besten deutschen Schriftstellern*, which also included several idylls by Gessner.[335] In 1792, the printed catalogue of classes at Moscow University—as a rule quite reluctant to provide detailed lists of authors and works studied—announced the reading of Gessner's idylls as part of German language classes at the university gymnasium ('читать некоторыя Геснеровы *идилии*').[336] This indicates that from this time onwards students at Moscow University and its gymnasiums encountered Gessner's texts—and thus familiarised themselves with the literature and culture of sensibility—simply through learning German and reading and translating exemplary authors in that language.

[334] Peter Drews, *Deutsch-slavische Literaturbeziehungen im 18. Jahrhundert* (München: Otto Sagner, 1996), p. 13.
[335] Ibid., p. 12.
[336] *Ob''iavlenie o publichnykh ucheniiakh, v Imperatorskom Moskovskom universitete i v obeikh Gimnaziiakh onago prepodavaemykh, s 17 Avgusta 1792 goda po 26 Iiunia 1793 goda* (Moscow: V Universitetskoi Tipografii, 1792), p. 21.

The same was equally true of Moscow University's Noble Boarding School. The importance attributed to the study of languages, rhetoric and literature in this elite educational institution in the late eighteenth century may be gauged by examining two collections of translations and original compositions produced by its students that appeared in print in the late 1780s.[337] The contents of these two books reflect far more fully than the evidence of published curricula and lecture announcements the range and character of European literary works read by Russian students in the course of their studies. The translations include many writings by the prominent French sentimentalist author François-Thomas-Marie de Baculard d'Arnaud, essays by François-Joachim de Pierre de Bernis—including the very popular 'Réflexions sur le goût de la campagne', an important manifestation of the new taste for natural beauty prevalent among eighteenth-century educated classes—as well as a number of pastoral texts clearly inspired by Gessner.[338] Even the anthology of French writings attached to a textbook published for use in classes at the Noble Boarding School in 1794 contained several translations and imitations of Gessner's idylls in prose and verse.[339] All these diverse examples suggest that in the last third of the eighteenth century the promotion of sentimentalist texts and the inculcation of the values of privacy and domesticity associated with them were often carried out in the Russian Empire through the practices and institutions of learning, including state-run ones. This

[337] *Raspuskaiushchiisia tsvetok, ili Sobranie raznykh sochinenii i perevodov, izdavaemykh pitomtsami uchrezhdennago pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom Universitete Vol'nago Blagorodnago Pansiona* (Moscow: V Universitetskoi Tipografii, u N. Novikova, 1787); *Poleznoe uprazhnenie iunoshestva, sostoiashchee v raznykh sochineniiakh i perevodakh, izdavannykh Pitomtsami vol'nago blagorodnago Pansiona, uchrezhdennago pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom Universitete* (Moscow: V Universitetskoi Tipografii, u N. Novikova, 1789).

[338] The originals of some of the translations published in these two volumes are indicated in V. D. Rak, *Russkie literaturnye sborniki i periodicheskie izdaniia vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka. Inostrannye istochniki, sostav, tekhnika kompiliatsii* (Saint Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1998), p. 218. On Baculard d'Arnaud, see David J. Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 8–25. On the essay of cardinal de Bernis, see Édouard Guitton, *Jacques Delille (1738–1813) et le poème de la nature en France de 1750 à 1820* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974), p. 217.

[339] *Uchebnaia kniga v pol'zu srednikh Frantsuzskikh klassov blagorodnago pansiona, pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom Universitete* (Moscow: V Universitetskoi Tipografii, 1794).

educational infrastructure provides an important context for understanding what may be called the sentimentalist moment of Russian literature and culture.

2. *The Discipline of the Self: Sensualism, Logic and Rhetoric in Educational Theory and Practice*

Behind the reading of sentimentalist authors as part of school curricula lies a much more fundamental relationship between the literature of sensibility and education in eighteenth-century Russia. At that time, Russian culture was being profoundly shaped by institutions, practices and ideas transferred from Western Europe. The recently adopted discourses with their distinctive sets of concepts combined to form a peculiar mixture of idioms and vocabularies that constituted the language used by the educated classes of society—a language that has only recently begun to be reconstructed in scholarship. In his study of the concept of *poniatie* in eighteenth-century Russia, Dmitrii Kalugin shows that this word was used to designate a range of philosophical terms, including 'understanding', 'idea', 'notion' and 'concept'. Although rooted primarily in traditions of logic and epistemology, it was also invested with a practical ethical meaning. An educated person in eighteenth-century Russia was expected to work with his or her *poniatiia*: to clarify, elucidate, organise and systematise them, and thus to improve oneself. This turned *poniatie* into one of the concepts aligned with the tasks of moral philosophy.[340] Another important notion of this kind was that of *spokoistvie*, which, as Andrew Kahn has shown, belonged to a vocabulary informed by numerous ancient and modern sources and a range of disciplines and genres, and was used to conceptualise the enlightened self.[341]

[340] D. Ia. Kalugin, 'Vospitanie Prosta: transfer zapadnoevropeiskogo filosofskogo iazyka i praktiki "zaboty o sebe" v Rossii vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka', in *Poniatiia, idei, konstruktsii: Ocherki sravnitel'noi istoricheskoi semantiki* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2019), pp. 225–93.
[341] Andrew Kahn, '"Blazhenstvo ne v luchakh porfira": histoire et fonction de la tranquillité (*spokojstvie*) dans la pensée et la poésie russes du XVIIIe siècle, de Kantemir au sentimentalisme', *Revue des études slaves*, 74, 4 (2002), 669–88.

In other words, in eighteenth-century Russia philosophical vocabulary was closely linked to practices of self-discipline and self-fashioning (explored in Chapter 2). Both were transferred to Russia from Europe and became integral components of elite education. In this section, I argue that these didactic modes of thought and the philosophical language in which they were expressed formed a framework that shaped—or at least had the potential to shape—the production and reception of Russian literature of the time. This framework consisted of widely shared assumptions about the workings of the human mind and its faculties, the processes of cognition, the relationships between sensation, emotion and thought, the interplay between ideas and words, and so on. In relation to literature, these questions were addressed primarily by the discipline of rhetoric, which governed the rules of conceiving and writing texts across genres and thus played a fundamental and highly practical role in the education of every literate person[342]. In what follows, I attempt to reconstruct the outlines of the philosophical, logical and rhetorical frames of reference dominant in Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century and to demonstrate their bearing on the sentimentalist literature of the time.

The examples cited earlier in this chapter testify to the great importance of Mikhail Lomonosov, both as a poet and as a theorist, for literary education in eighteenth-century Russia. His *Kratkoe rukovodstvo k krasnorechiiu* (1748) remained the single most important rhetoric textbook in Russia throughout the period. In this seminal work, the theory of eloquence was coupled with a particular understanding of human psychology, offering an account of the inner workings of the human mind and of creativity. A particularly revealing passage in this respect is the one in which Lomonosov discusses the 'invention of simple ideas (изобретении простых идей)':

[342] A detailed study of rhetoric in eighteenth-century Russia is long overdue. For an overview, see V. I. Annushkin, *Russkaia retorika: istoricheskii aspekt* (Moscow: Vysshaia shkola, 2003), pp. 196–311. See also Andrew Kahn, 'Introduction', in M. N. Murav'ev, *Institutiones rhetoricæ: A Treatise of a Russian Sentimentalist*, ed. by Andrew Kahn (Oxford: Meeuws, 1995), pp. xiii–lxix (pp. xxxi–l).

> Сочинитель слова тем обильнейшими изобретениями оное обогатить может, чем быстрейшую имеет силу совображения, которая есть душевное дарование с одною вещию, в уме представленною, купно воображать другие, как-нибудь с нею сопряженные, например: когда, представив в уме корабль, с ним воображаем купно и море, по которому он плавает, с морем – бурю, с бурею – волны, с волнами – шум в берегах, с берегами – камни и так далее.[343]

Here, Lomonosov identifies the work of the imagination, based on the law of the association of ideas ('с одною вещию, в уме представленною, купно воображать другие, как-нибудь с нею сопряженные'), as a key principle underlying the act of literary creation. This firmly situates him within the pan-European history of evolving conceptions of the creative imagination and its place among the faculties of the human mind.[344] Mikhail Sukhomlinov noted parallels between the vocabulary of this passage and the writings of Christian Wolff.[345] Lomonosov was Wolff's disciple, and in any case the renowned German philosopher exerted considerable influence in Russia.[346] In 1764, a Russian translation of Friedrich Christian Baumeister's Wolffian textbook *Institutiones metaphysicae* (1738) was published and subsequently used at Moscow University as a basic philosophy manual throughout the remainder of the century.[347] Wolff's psychology, which distinguished between lower and higher faculties of the soul and the corresponding obscure and clear ideas, was essentially rationalist and placed abstract reasoning above sensory experience.[348]

In the second half of the century, however, discussions of similar questions concerning the self and the ideas acquired and processed by the human mind increasingly drew on

[343] M. V. Lomonosov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 7 (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1952), p. 109.
[344] James Engell, *The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1981). See also Jean Starobinski, 'Jalons pour une histoire du concept d'imagination', in Starobinski, *La relation critique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), pp. 174–95; Jochen Schulte-Sasse, 'Einbildungskraft/Imagination', in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, ed. by Karlheinz Barck, Martin Fontius, Dieter Schlenstedt and others, vol. 2 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2010), pp. 88–120.
[345] M. V. Lomonosov, *Sochineniia*, vol. 3 (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1895), p. 304.
[346] T. V. Artem'eva, *Istoriia metafiziki v Rossii XVIII veka* (Saint Petersburg: Aleteiia, 1996).
[347] Christian Baumeister, *Metafizika* (Moscow: pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom Universitete, 1764).
[348] Fernando Vidal, *The Sciences of the Soul: The Early Modern Origins of Psychology*, trans. Saskia Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 89–97.

empiricist rather than rationalist philosophy. A major factor in this shift was the enormous influence of John Locke. In France, the reception of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) gave rise to a body of thought known as sensualist philosophy. John O'Neal describes French sensualism (which he prefers to translate as 'sensationism') as a broad paradigm encompassing such diverse figures as Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, Charles Bonnet and Claude-Adrien Helvétius, and shaping not only epistemology but also aesthetics and educational theory.[349] The prominence of sensualist philosophy in late eighteenth-century Russia has yet to be fully acknowledged, and this section seeks to demonstrate the wide acceptance in the period of the Lockean account of the origin of knowledge in sensory experience, as well as his explanation of errors and prejudices as deriving from the incorrect association of ideas.

In 1759, a short summary of Locke's views on the origin of ideas appeared in the journal *Trudoliubivaia pchela*, published by Aleksandr Sumarokov. Sometimes taken as proof of the prominent Russian author's adherence to sensualist philosophy, this essay, as Marcus Levitt has argued, in fact testifies only to a very limited and superficial engagement with Locke.[350] At the very end of his discussion, Levitt briefly mentions what he calls 'the only other translation from the *Essay* to appear in Russian before 1898'—namely, a 'chapter proving God's existence from Book IV of the *Essay*', published in the journal *Vecherniaia zaria* in 1782.[351] Yet, in fact, as Vitaliy Simankov has shown, Russian translations of four excerpts from Locke's *Essay* appeared in 1782 and 1785 in the journals *Vecherniaia zaria* and *Pokoiashchiisia*

[349] John C. O'Neal, *The Authority of Experience: Sensationist Theory in the French Enlightenment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).
[350] Marcus Levitt, 'Was Sumarokov a Lockean Sensualist? On Locke's Reception in Eighteenth-Century Russia', in Levitt, *Early Modern Russian Letters: Texts and Contexts* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009), pp. 158–72.
[351] Ibid., pp. 171–2.

trudoliubets.[352] As demonstrated in Chapter 1, these two journals, published by Novikov, were edited by Moscow University students closely associated with Masonic circles and committed to translating didactic literature. The appearance of translations from Locke in print was evidently part of this group's efforts to introduce the Russian public to contemporary European thought relevant to the aims of education and self-improvement. In July 1782, *Vecherniaia zaria* published a translation of the entry on conscience from the so-called Yverdon *Encyclopédie*, in which it was presented as an obvious fact that modern philosophy denies the existence of innate ideas: 'уже многими ясно доказано, что бытие сих врожденных понятий было только мнимое'.[353] A footnote added by the journal's editors announced the forthcoming publication of an essay on innate ideas in one of the future issues: 'О врожденных понятиях разсуждение будет сообщено в продолжении наших изданий'.[354]

In September 1782, the translation of the chapter from Locke's *Essay* mentioned by Levitt appeared; it addressed the question of proving God's existence without recourse to the rejected notion of innate ideas:

> Хотя Бог никаких понятий, или первобытных начертывающих его свойств, в душах наших и не впечатлел; однако он открыл себя чрез то, что дал нам силы душевныя и способность ума, в нас находящиеся; что мы имеем чувства и разум, и что носим на себе образ его.[355]

Unusually for a journal that mostly consisted of anonymous works, a footnote to the text announced that it was written by Locke, emphasising the renown and high reputation of the English author: 'Разсуждение г. Локка, известнаго славнаго Аглинскаго Писателя'.[356] In a further departure from the practices prevalent in the journal, the name of the translator was also

[352] Simankov, 'Originals and Translations', pp. 324–5, 334–5, 372, 383.
[353] 'Filosoficheskoe razsuzhdenie o sovesti voobshche', *Vecherniaia zaria*, 2 (1782), 163–94 (p. 171). On the source of this translation, see Simankov, 'Originals and Translations', pp. 314–5.
[354] 'Filosoficheskoe razsuzhdenie o sovesti voobshche', p. 171.
[355] 'O poznanii Bozhiia bytiia', *Vecherniaia zaria*, 3 (1782), 18–42 (pp. 18–9).
[356] Ibid., p. 18.

indicated: ‘Перевел с Латинскаго Филологической при Императорском Московском Университете Семинарии Студент Михайло Антонский’.[357] The mention of the Philological Seminary, whose self-proclaimed aim, as shown in Chapter 1, was to translate edifying writings into Russian, lent the translation an almost programmatic character, foregrounding a concerted effort to make Locke’s ideas available to Russian readers. The promise to publish a text specifically on innate ideas was fulfilled in December 1782 with the appearance of the translation of Chapter 1 from Book II of the *Essay*, which contained Locke’s seminal analysis of the origin of ideas in sensation and reflection. The editor’s footnote stressed that Locke’s argument against innate ideas was accepted by all of the most recent philosophers:

> Как мы уже обещались [...] сообщить о врожденных понятиях: то в следствие того и сообщаем здесь об оных, следуя славному знатоку человеческаго разума, Г. Локку, который, как и все новейшие Философы, совсем отвергает то, что понятия врожденны человеку.[358]

The publication of translations from Locke continued three years later in *Pokoiashchiisia trudoliubets*, the next periodical published by the same Moscow Masonic and university milieu in 1785. The third volume of the journal featured a translation of Chapter 19 from Book IV of the *Essay*, in which Locke offered a critique of ‘enthusiasm’, arguing for the primacy of reason over revelation in everyday religious experience.[359] In the following volume, a translation of Chapter 33, ‘Of the Association of Ideas’, from Book II appeared, which focused primarily on explaining how the wrong connection of ideas in the human mind leads to errors and prejudices.[360] Taken together, the four excerpts from Locke’s *Essay* published in Moscow periodicals of the 1780s both advanced a theory of the origin of ideas and the workings of the human mind and sought to ground discussions of God and religion in these new principles. As shown in Chapter 1, the intellectual activities of Moscow Freemasons in the 1780s did not

[357] Ibid., p. 42.
[358] ‘O poniatiiakh i istochnike onykh’, *Vecherniaia zaria*, 3 (1782), 313–9 (p. 313).
[359] ‘O entuziazme’, *Pokoiashchiisia trudoliubets*, 3 (1785), 68–84.
[360] ‘O prichine zabluzhdenii, ili smeshenii poniatii’, *Pokoiashchiisia trudoliubets*, 4 (1785), 106–18.

amount to a coherent project; their engagement with Locke did not sit easily with the esoteric and mystical character of their Rosicrucian interests, but it did correspond to their commitment to publishing educational works aimed at moral instruction. In a textbook on the history of philosophy translated in 1785 by Vasilii Kolokol'nikov, a Moscow University student belonging to the Masonic milieu, Locke's *Essay* was praised as a work offering an account of the development of the faculty of reason and providing advice on the means of improving it:

> [Locke's] *опыт* [..] о *разуме* есть самое глубочайшее разсуждение о душе и ея действиях, где купно содержится самая исправнейшая история о мыслящем в нас начале и самыя поспешнейшия средства к познанию и приведению в совершенство употребления способностей онаго.[361]

Apparently, Locke's *Essay* was similarly perceived in Russia both as a work of epistemology deriving cognition from sensory experience and as a work of moral philosophy highlighting the ethical imperative of controlling, clarifying and organising one's ideas. It is telling that among the writings of Mikhail Murav'ev—who was influenced by European literature of sensibility but did not belong to Moscow Masonic circles—there are two short essays, 'Внутреннее сознание, второй источник понятий' and 'О совокуплении идей', which discuss the origin of ideas in reflection and the association of ideas and are based on the very same two chapters of Locke's *Essay* that were translated and published in the Moscow periodicals of the 1780s.[362] As Natal'ia Kochetkova has shown, Murav'ev's interest in Locke is further evidenced in his unpublished manuscripts.[363]

As an example of the adaptation of a sensualist philosophical framework for the purposes of self-improvement, the letters of the Moscow Freemason and translator Aleksei

[361] *Sokrashchennaia istoriia filosofii ot nachala mira do nyneshnikh vremen* (Moscow: V vol'noi Tipografii I. Lopukhina, 1785), p. 416.
[362] Mikhail Murav'ev, *Sochineniia*, vol. 2 (Saint Petersburg: V tipografii Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1847), pp. 221–6.
[363] N. D. Kochetkova, *Literatura russkogo sentimentalizma (Esteticheskie i khudozhestvennye iskaniia)* (Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 1994), pp. 33–4.

Kutuzov may be cited. As argued in Chapter 2, they offer evidence of the use of the tradition of spiritual exercises among late eighteenth-century educated Russians. Building on this argument, it may now be added that Kutuzov combined these practices of self-introspection, rooted as they were in ancient philosophical and Christian traditions, with a sensualist account of the workings of the human mind. In August 1788, he wrote a letter to his close friend and fellow Freemason Ivan Turgenev in which he discussed at length his understanding of the nature of thoughts, their combinations and their relationship to sensations and feelings, focusing on distinctions that, according to him, had escaped Turgenev's attention:

> Говоря, любезный мой друг, о мыслях или сцеплении их относительно ко мне во многом согласен с тобою. Кажется мне, однакоже, что ты не делаешь довольно различия между чувствованиями, ощущениями и мыслями; по моим же понятиям находится между ними важное различие, хотя и связаны они весьма тесно. *Чувствования* суть, так сказать, действия внешней осязаемости, *ощущения* суть или осязаемость, причиняемая предметами, коих образа, пройдя уже сквозь *чувствования*, коснулись нашей души, или суть действия самой души, возбуждаемой духом и действующей из нутрь на наше тело, *мысли* суть действия мыслящей нашей силы, приемлющей единые токмо *отвлечения* от первого или второго рода ощущений, и составляющей из сих отвлечений нечто новое, которое бывает, и весма нередко, совсем не похоже на полученое сею нашей силою, и вот для чего мысли не могут никогда произвести *чувствования* а производят единые токмо *ощущения*.[364]

Drawing on a clearly sensualist, ultimately Lockean, frame of reference, Kutuzov differentiates between 'чувствования', understood as bodily sensations caused by external objects; 'ощущения', which are feelings resulting from the interaction between external sensory input and the inner activity of the soul; and 'мысли', abstract ideas derived from 'ощущения' but belonging to the realm of the intellect rather than sense perception. The meanings Kutuzov attributes to the terms 'чувствования' and 'ощущения' may strike one as a rather peculiar choice; they reflect the unstable nature of Russian philosophical vocabulary at the time and the propensity of authors to determine contextually what a particular concept would signify (Kutuzov may just as well use 'ощущения' when speaking about purely bodily sensations and

[364] 'Pis'ma Alekseia Mikhailovicha Kutuzova Ivanu Petrovichu Turgenevu', ed. by V. V. Fursenko, *Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii*, 6 (1963), 298–334 (p. 315)).

reserve ‘чувствования’ for those kinds of feelings that move from the body to the soul and hence are more conceptual). Kutuzov’s passage may be compared with a fragment from Denis Fonvizin’s essay on synonyms, published five years earlier in 1783, which attempted to establish clear-cut distinctions between concepts belonging to the same semantic fields:

> *Чувства* суть способности, коими животное приемлет впечатления внешних вещей; *чувствованиями* называются душевные движения и страсти; *чувственность* есть прилепление к удовольствиям чувств своих; *чувствительность* есть качество, коим тело или душа стремительно проницаются; *ощущение* есть то самое впечатление, которое душа от внешних вещей приемлет.
>
> Счастлив, кто в старости сохраняет все свои *чувства*. Благороден, кто имеет великодушные *чувствования*. Благоразумный всего своего удовольствия в одной *чувственности* не полагает; честный человек принимает с особливою *чувствительностию* все, что честь его трогает; дурная музыка и всякое дурное действие производят в нас неприятное *ощущение*.[365]

Like Kutuzov, Fonvizin regards ‘ощущения’ as intermediaries between the body affected by external objects and the soul reacting to these impressions (‘впечатление, которое душа от внешних вещей приемлет’); yet for him ‘чувствования’ are not bodily sensations but rather emotions and passions (‘душевные движения и страсти’). He accordingly understands the concept of ‘чувствительность’—so crucial for sentimentalist literature—as encompassing both physical and moral sensibility (‘качество, коим тело или душа стремительно проницаются’), effectively merging two different meanings into a single term. While Fonvizin’s definition of ‘чувствительность’ depends on the notion of bodily sensitivity, his example of the use of this word focuses exclusively on moral sentiments (‘честный человек принимает с особливою *чувствительностию* все, что честь его трогает’). As Kochetkova has pointed out, the double meaning of the concept of ‘чувствительность’, referring both to sense perception and to the emotional reactions of the individual, is characteristic of the way it was employed in late eighteenth-century Russian literature.[366]

[365] D. I. Fonvizin, ‘Opyt rossiiskogo soslovnika’, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (Moscow and Leningrad: GIKhL, 1959), pp. 223–36 (p. 224).
[366] Kochetkova, *Literatura russkogo sentimentalizma*, pp. 17–20.

Kutuzov likewise does not limit himself to discussions of physical sensibility alone. While acknowledging the dependence of cognition on sensation, Kutuzov is at pains to stress the autonomy of the soul, capable of producing something new by processing received ideas ('действия мыслящей нашей силы […] составляющей из сих отвлечений нечто новое, которое бывает, и весьма нередко, совсем не похоже на полученное сею нашей силою'). Alongside the causal link whereby external objects affect the body and thus contribute to the development of the mind, he also imagines a movement in the opposite direction, with the soul and the faculty of reason—our innermost self—acting by their own volition and influencing the body and its sensibility ('действия самой души, возбуждаемой духом и действующей изнутри на наше тело'). In this respect, Kutuzov's engagement with sensualist arguments resembles the approach of the philosopher Charles Bonnet, who could not help but uphold the notion of an active soul even while fully embracing sensation as the basis of cognition and offering a detailed physiological explanation of the interactions between body and mind.[367] Kutuzov's emphasis on the soul as an independent active force evidently stemmed from his adherence to Rosicrucian mysticism, and later in the same letter he makes it clear that his account of the nature and workings of the human self is only partial, accepting but not dwelling on the possibility of direct divine inspiration of the individual: 'NB говорю о человеке не имеющем еще внушений и вдохновений свыше'.[368]

Drawing a sharp distinction between the origin of ideas in sense perception and their independent existence as abstractions belonging to the sphere of the intellect, Kutuzov turns from questions of epistemology to the tasks of self-discipline and self-cultivation. He imagines

[367] O'Neal, *The Authority of Experience*, pp. 61–82.
[368] 'Pis'ma Alekseia Mikhailovicha Kutuzova Ivanu Petrovichu Turgenevu', p. 315.

the human mind as a space in which ideas are stored and used as building materials by the faculty of reason:

> *Отвлечения* оставленные в мыслящей моей силе, *ощущениями* отрезываются от внешних предметов и не зависят от них более, ибо гдеб ни были сии предметы, отдалены или близки от меня, но отвлечения суть уже во мне, и суть те материалы, из которых мой разум зиждет различные здания.[369]

What this means for the individual is that everyone bears a responsibility to look after their ideas by building them into a well-structured, harmonious whole. Otherwise, the self loses its coherence, being unable to coordinate and weave together the various threads of ideas:

> Здесь то начинается то между человеками различие, о котором я говорил тебе. Один занимается безпрестанно сравнением, распоряжением и обработыванием упоминаемых материалов, и приводит их в такой порядок, что из всех отвлечений составляет единое связанное; другой составляет из них несколько цепочек, не сцепленных однакоже между собою, ибо не умеет располагать гармонически единородные с разнородными, а третий полагает все материалы без разбору в одну безпорядочную груду, так что они лежат без всякой между собою связи [...].[370]

Given that the wrong combination of ideas produces errors, confusion and a fragmented self, it becomes necessary for every person to derive and associate their ideas properly, engaging in constant self-introspection, as Kutuzov himself strove to do. The acquisition of knowledge thus turned into a form of self-cultivation intertwined with other practices of the care of the self (explored in Chapter 2).

It is remarkable that a similar set of assumptions about the workings of the human mind and the necessity of cultivating ideas is also to be found in the writings of Aleksandr Radishchev. Scholars have long recognised the importance of sensualist philosophy for the Russian author, arguing that the movement from sensation to cognition informs his prose in which the narrator proceeds from observations of the particularities of the external world to

[369] Ibid.
[370] Ibid.

reflections on general questions, as if deriving ideas from sense perceptions.[371] Although a close friend of Kutuzov—the two studied together at Leipzig University—Radishchev embraced a very different version of sensualism. Deeply influenced by the writings of Helvétius, with their emphasis on physical sensibility and the role of passions in human life,[372] he could not simply take for granted the existence of an independent active soul. As a result, he was preoccupied with the relationship between mind and body, a concern that led him to write a lengthy treatise on the immortality of the soul. Yet this departure from Christian orthodoxy and the allure of irrational mysticism, in which Kutuzov found his solace, did not prevent Radishchev from converging with his friend in the realm of ethics. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, both men practised and promoted spiritual exercises as a necessary way of being for the enlightened self. It may now be argued that their engagement with epistemological questions raised by modern European philosophy also served the distinctly practical ends of self-discipline and self-cultivation.

In *Zhitie Fedora Vasil'evicha Ushakova*, published in 1789 and dedicated to Kutuzov, Radishchev invokes a sensualist framework when discussing the education of his late friend and the protagonist of the text:

> Но не гадательным предположением назвать можно, если скажу, что воспитанием своим в сухопутном Кадетском Корпусе положил он основательное образование прекрасныя своея души. Ибо в душе своей более предуспеть мог, нежели в разуме, скончав жизнь свою тогда, когда юношескою крепостию мозга представления, воображения и мысли, проницая друг друга, первыя полагают украшения верховнаго нашего члена главы; когда разум, хотя собрав посредством чувств много понятий, не имел еще довольнаго времени устроить их в порядок, дабы и последнее возбуждало первое, преходя все между стоящее.[373]

[371] The point was made early on in G. P. Makogonenko, 'O kompozitsii "Puteshestviia iz Peterburga v Moskvu" A. N. Radishcheva', in *XVIII vek*, vol. 2 (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1940), pp. 25–53 (pp. 31–2).
[372] O'Neal, *The Authority of Experience*, pp. 83–101.
[373] A. N. Radishchev, 'Zhytie Fedora Vasil'evicha Ushakova', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1938), pp. 155–212 (p. 156).

In this passage, Radishchev argues that in an individual's life youth is a period during which the soul, rather than reason, is formed; it serves as a preliminary stage in the process of acquiring knowledge and fashioning the self. The discussion is clearly couched in the language of sensualism: reason is said to derive ideas through sense perception ('разум, хотя собрав посредством чувств много понятий'). What should follow next—and in the case of Fedor Ushakov did not occur because of his premature death—is an attempt to bring order and logic to the mass of acquired notions, structuring them in such a way that the recollection of one idea would call to mind a chain of other ideas associated with it ('устроить их в порядок, дабы и последнее возбуждало первое, преходя все между стояще'). Similar to the translator of the chapter from Locke's *Essay* published in *Vecherniaia zaria* and *Pokoiashchiisia trudoliubets*, as well as to Murav'ev and Kutuzov, Radishchev is particularly drawn to two aspects of sensualist philosophy: the epistemological account of the origin of ideas in sensation and the moral imperative to take care of the ideas thus acquired, preventing the incorrect combination of ideas that leads to errors and instead seeking to arrange and associate them properly.

It is hardly surprising that the writings of Nikolai Karamzin also bear evidence of a sustained interest in sensualism. It has just been demonstrated that Locke was well known in the Masonic milieu in which the young writer began his career. Moreover, Karamzin corresponded with Johann Kaspar Lavater about the mind–body problem and was an avid reader of Bonnet. His essay 'Nechto o naukakh, iskusstvakh i prosveshchenii', published in 1794, offers a detailed discussion of the origins of human knowledge and science:

> Таким образом собирает он [a person] безчисленныя идеи или чувственныя понятия, которыя суть ничто иное, как непосредственное отражение предметов, и которыя носятся сначала в душе его без всякаго порядка; но скоро пробуждается в ней оная удивительная сила или способность, которую называем мы *разумом* и которая ждала только чувственных впечатлений, чтобы начать свои действия. Подобно лучезарному солнцу освещает она Хаос идей, разделяет и совокупляет их, находит между ими различия и сходства, отношения, частное и общее, и производит идеи особливаго рода, идеи отвлеченныя, которыя собственно составляют *знание*, составляют уже *науку* — сперва Науку Природы, внешности, предметов; а по том, через разныя отвлечения, достигает

> человек и до понятия о самом себе, обращается от чувствований к чувствующему и, не будучи Декартом, говорит: cogito, ergo sum — *мышлю, следственно существую*: *чтож я*?.. Вся наша Антропология есть ничто иное, как ответ на сей вопрос – –[374]

According to Karamzin, the starting point in the acquisition of ideas is sense perception of the objects of the external world; only after this initial stage can the perceiving subject turn to itself, moving from sensation to reflection and self-knowledge ('достигает человек и до понятия о самом себе, обращается от чувствований к чувствующему'). Once again, we encounter the sensualist model which assigns to reason the task of processing sense perceptions by transforming them into abstract notions. The 'sun' of reason illuminates the primordial 'chaos of ideas' with the help of the categories of logic and the order they impose ('Подобно лучезарному солнцу освещает она Хаос идей, разделяет и совокупляет их, находит между ими различия и сходства, отношения, частное и общее, и производит идеи особливаго рода, идеи отвлеченныя'). Karamzin is quite explicit about the tradition of thought informing his text. Elsewhere in the essay, he mentions Locke, Condillac and Bonnet, and adds a footnote referring to two crucial works of sensualist philosophy: 'См. Essai analytique sur l'Ame, par Bonnet, и Traité des Sensations, par Condillac'.[375]

Furthermore, sensualist epistemology frames Karamzin's discussion of language. Arguing that the drive to knowledge and the progressive development of the mental faculties are inherent to humanity, he claims that language testifies to the existence of abstract reasoning even among 'wild' peoples:

> и Готтентоты любопытны; и Кафры стараются умножать свои понятия; и Караибы имеют отвлеченныя идеи, ибо у них есть уже язык, следствие многих умствований и соображений.[376]

To which an explanatory footnote is added:

[374] N. M. Karamzin, 'Nechto o naukakh, iskusstvakh i prosveshchenii', in *Aglaia*, vol. 1 (Moscow: V Universitetskoi Tipografii, 1794), pp. 33–76 (pp. 39–40).
[375] Ibid., p. 47.
[376] Ibid., p. 42.

> Наприм. всякое прилагательное имя есть абстракция. Времена глаголов, местоимения — все сие требует утонченных действий разума.[377]

The view that posited a close interrelation between the workings of the human mind and the structure of language was consistently advanced by Condillac as part of his sensualist philosophy.[378] As Jean Breuillard demonstrated, the entire edifice of Karamzin's epochal 'language reform' was based on Condillac's sensualist theory of language: the aim of the sentimentalist 'новый слог' promoted by Karamzin and his numerous imitators was to reshape the syntax of the Russian literary language in such a way that the 'natural word order' of each sentence would correspond to the equally natural *liaison des idées* and to the 'movements of the soul', capturing and mirroring the flux of thoughts and emotions in the human mind.[379] Independently of Breuillard, and without invoking the sensualist premises of this understanding of language, Viktor Zhivov, in his monumental history of the Russian literary language, reaches similar conclusions about the aims of Karamzin's literary activities. He argues that Karamzin's 'project' was a social one, aimed at 'creating an enlightened and sensitive society', for which the genres of sentimentalist literature offered means of 'expressing feelings, experiences and moral considerations'.[380] The enlightened selves who derived their ideas from sense perceptions and sought to enrich them through reflection and to structure them by means of practices of self-introspection could find in the literature of sensibility—with its displays of compassionate fellow-feeling, sensitivity to natural beauty and other virtuous sentiments—examples of those 'beautiful souls' who excelled in bringing their notions into the harmonious order prescribed by the moral philosophy of the time. While Lockean sensualism, as has been shown, was

[377] Ibid.
[378] For more on this, see Ulrich Ricken, *Linguistics, Anthropology and Philosophy in the French Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1994).
[379] Jean Breuillard, 'Nikolaj Karamzin et la pensée linguistique de son temps', *Revue des études slaves*, 74, 4 (2002), 759–76. See also Jean Breuillard, 'N. M. Karamzin et la formation de la langue littéraire russe', *Revue des études slaves*, 66, 4 (1994), 833–7.
[380] V. M. Zhivov, *Istoriia iazyka russkoi pis'mennosti*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Universitet Dmitriia Pozharskogo, 2017), pp. 1104–6.

primarily concerned with the development of the faculty of reason, its prescriptions for self-discipline could be equally applied, as will be seen, to the sphere of emotions.

The interconnected cultivation of thought *and* feeling became a major concern for educational institutions in late eighteenth-century Russia. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, the Assembly of the University Pupils ('Собрание университетских питомцев'), a student organisation created by Johann Georg Schwarz that was effectively in charge of editing the periodicals in which translations from Locke's *Essay* appeared, sought to combine literary activity with moral self-edification. As Mikhail Antonovskii, the first head of the association, emphasised in his memoirs, the efforts of its members were directed towards learning to reason and feel 'well'—that is, in a good and correct manner:

> В тоже время согласил он, Михаил Антоновский, нескольких своих соучеников, студентов Московского университета, составить ученое общество для упражнений, во время остающееся от слушания профессорских лекций, в сочинениях и переводах, а после для издания трудов своих в печать, словом для приучения себя рассуждать и чувствовать хорошо.[381]

The commitment to instil proper ways of thinking and standards of emotion ('для приучения себя рассуждать и чувствовать хорошо') in students' minds found its institutional expression in the joint teaching of rhetoric, logic and moral philosophy in gymnasiums and in the Noble Boarding School of Moscow University. It follows from the printed announcement of lectures held at the University in 1783 that by this time rhetoric-based language and literature classes included elements of instruction in logic and moral philosophy, these disciplines being considered indispensable for students learning to compose letters:

> Евгений Сырейщиков […] не только читать будет в своем классе лучших Российских писателей с разбиранием их по правилам хорошаго слога, но також для подражания оным показывать и задавать своим ученикам различныя сочинения, и особенно упражнять их

[381] 'Zapiski Mikhaila Ivanovicha Antonovskogo', *Russkii archiv*, 2 (1885), 145–78 (p. 151).

> будет в *сочинении писем* всякаго рода, и сверьх того кратко проходить с ними нужныя для сего главы из *Логики* и *Морали*.[382]

A detailed articulation of the same pedagogical approach was provided in the announcement of the Noble Boarding School published in 1795:

> Павел Сохацкий [...], сообщив предварительно своим слушателям *познания Логическия* по книге нарочно им для того изданной, сколько сие нужно для приобретения ясных и основательных мыслей, и присоединя к тому существенныя правила *Нравоучения*, которыя могли бы возвышать благородныя в них чувствования, главною целию поставит себе то, чтоб руководствовать их к *изящному вкусу в отечественном языке*. В сем намерении покажет им свойства *слога*, разные роды *Стихотворства*, их красоты *и проч*. Будет критически разбирать с ними *сочинения лучших Российских Писателей*; а дабы обратить знание в практику, почасту задавать станет *материи для сочинения*, особливож упражняться с ними *в письмах*, так же *в переводах с Французскаго и Немецкаго языка на природной*.[383]

The study of rhetoric and poetics, critical discussions of contemporary Russian authors, translations from French and German, as well as exercises in producing texts by students themselves, were all grounded in logic, which was intended to help acquire clear and solid ideas (‘для приобретения ясных и основательных мыслей’), and in moral philosophy, which contributed to the development of noble sentiments (‘возвышать благородныя […] чувствования’).

The textbook of logic mentioned in the announcement (‘*познания Логическия* по книге нарочно им для того изданной’) was published by Pavel Sokhatskii in the early 1790s.[384] Sokhatskii was a student of the Pedagogical Seminary and a member of the Assembly of the University Pupils in the 1780s, and later a university professor, head of the Pedagogical Institute and editor of key sentimentalist periodicals in the 1790s. His textbook fits very well in the intellectual trends traced throughout this chapter and the thesis as a whole. The book is an

[382] *Ob’’iavlenie o publichnykh ucheniiakh, v Imperatorskom Moskovskom universitete i obeikh Gimnaziiakh onago prepodavaemykh s 17 Avgusta 1783 po 26 Iiunia 1784 goda* ([Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1783]), [n.p.].
[383] *Ob’’iavlenie o uchenii i soderzhanii v Dvorianskom pensione, pri Imperatorskom Moskovskom universitete* (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1795), p. 13.
[384] *Umstvennaia nauka, ili Priamoe upotreblenie razuma v izsledovanii istinny* (Moscow: V Universitetskoi Tipografii, [n.d.]). The book must have appeared between 1789 and 1793, see *Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi pechati XVIII veka, 1725–1800*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Kniga, 1966), p. 269.

abridged translation from German of *Logick: Or, The Right Use of Reason in the Enquiry after Truth* (1725) by Isaac Watts, an extremely popular work that went through numerous editions throughout the eighteenth century and is discussed by Wilbur Samuel Howell as belonging to the so-called 'new logic', of which Locke was the key representative.[385]

In a recent essay, Sorana Corneanu argues that Watts, like many of his contemporaries, conceived of logic as a discipline focused on the regulation and improvement of the faculties of the human mind.[386] This emphasis is duly preserved in the Russian translation. In his preface, Sokhatskii establishes a direct causal link between thinking, speaking and writing well and introduces logic as a science that liberates our mental capacities from the constraints of error, prejudice and ignorance, adding that 'in our refined and enlightened age' logic may be of use to every educated person as a guide not only in academic pursuits but also in everyday life:

> Хотите ли правильно, порядочно, вразумительно и прекрасно *изъясняться изустно, или письменно*? [...] Научитесь же сперва ясно, основательно, и здраво *мыслить*. [...] Великое намерение сей благородной науки состоит в освобождении мыслящих наших сил от нещастнаго рабства под игом заблуждений и предразсудков, и от слепоты невежества. [...] В нынешнем тонком и просвещенном веке всякой благовоспитанной человек захочет иметь некоторое знакомство с Логикою , тем паче, что она отменныя представляет услуги как для успеха в науках, так для благоразумия и основательности поступков в общей жизни.[387]

Throughout the book, readers were offered counsel on how to acquire various ideas and cultivate them through self-introspection, and were advised always to maintain control of their thoughts, passions, movements of the soul and the imagination.[388] Corneanu links this preoccupation with self-discipline to a tradition of Protestant literature on the 'government of thoughts', citing, among other examples, John Mason's *Treatise of Self-Knowledge* (1745) and

[385] Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 331–45.
[386] Sorana Corneanu, 'Isaac Watts (1674–1748): Logic and the 'Moral Discipline of the Mind' in the Early Enlightenment', *Intellectual History Review*, 35, 1 (2025), 23–45.
[387] *Umstvennaia nauka, ili Priamoe upotreblenie razuma v izsledovanii istinny*, pp. 3–6.
[388] Ibid., pp. 59–61, 105–6, and others.

arguing for an affinity between eighteenth-century logic and edifying devotional literature.[389] As noted in Chapter 2, Mason's book was translated into Russian by Ivan Turgenev in 1783 and enjoyed considerable popularity in Masonic circles and beyond. Its precepts of self-scrutiny, rooted alike in Christian asceticism and Stoicism, appealed to Russian readers committed to improving themselves through reading and meditation. Watts's book likewise provided a theoretical background for practices of self-examination and self-control, serving as yet another example of continuity between the Masonic intellectual pursuits of the 1780s and the educational institutions and methods of the 1790s in Moscow.

The students of the Noble Boarding School were well aware of the principles informing the instruction they received. As Mikhail Dmitriev recalled:

> С самых средних классов мы привыкали уже к именам и произведениям лучших писателей. Мы учили их наизусть и изучали и дух и красоты их в подробностях. Нам преподавали теорию словесности постепенно, начиная с логики, как формы мышления, и переходя к риторике, как к внешней форме речи. В высшем классе преподавалась пиитика и эстетика.[390]

Dmitriev studied at the Boarding School in the early 1810s, yet the foundations of the educational approach dominant in that institution had already been laid in the 1780s. Contemporary literature, including sentimentalism, which was becoming increasingly prominent in the school curriculum, was juxtaposed with a range of theoretical disciplines, foremost among them logic. The inculcation of proper ways of thinking ('формы мышления') opened the way to mastering the proper kinds of writing ('внешней форме речи'). Coupled with sensualist epistemology, the framework of logic and rhetoric offered the means to integrate sentimentalist literature into broader efforts to conceptualise the self that were shaping the subjectivities of the educated classes of Russian society at the time. Yet there was one further

[389] Corneanu, 'Isaac Watts', pp. 34–7.
[390] Mikhail Dmitriev, *Glavy iz vospominanii moei zhizni* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1998), pp. 65–6.

discipline whose development in Russia was closely tied to the spread of the literature of sensibility. That discipline was pedagogy, and its relationship with sentimentalism will be explored in the following section.

3. Pedagogy, the Cultivation of Feelings and Didactic Sentimentalism

The prominence of educational projects and theories—many of which influenced educational reforms and the emergence of new institutions of learning—is a well-known hallmark of eighteenth-century Russian history.[391] In the European context, the eighteenth century is likewise usually regarded as a watershed moment in the history of pedagogical thought and practice. Under the defining influence of Locke and, later, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, educational thinkers of the period sought to introduce new teaching methods based on sensualist philosophy, emphasising the importance of sense perception, physical activity, emotional appeal and play in the upbringing of children.[392] In their focus on the feelings aroused and cultivated in a child, such theories complemented the approaches dedicated to disciplining reason discussed in the previous section. In this regard, educational thought stood very close to the literature of sensibility. By the second half of the eighteenth century, pedagogy in Germany began to take shape as an autonomous form of knowledge. As Christa Kersting has shown, the consolidation of pedagogy into a distinct academic discipline was the result of the combined efforts of numerous educators, many of them associated with the so-called Philanthropinist movement, who wrote extensively on educational questions, founded their own schools, conducted teaching experiments, reported on their findings and debated their ideas in print.[393]

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[391] For an overview, see J. L. Black, *Citizens for the Fatherland: Education, Educators, and Pedagogical Ideals in Eighteenth Century Russia* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1979).
[392] For more on this, see Gilbert Py, *Rousseau et les éducateurs: Étude sur la fortune des idées pédagogiques de Jean-Jacques Rousseau en France et en Europe au XVIIIe siècle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1997).
[393] Christa Kersting, *Die Genese der Pädagogik im 18. Jahrhundert. Campes "Allgemeine Revision" im Kontext neuzeitlicher Wissenschaft* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1992).

Together, they produced an enormous and ever-expanding body of books and periodicals on education. When designing their teaching programmes, German educators advanced the sensualist principle of *Anschaulichkeit*—'clearness' or 'vividness'.[394] To shape the hearts and minds of children, it was deemed necessary to engage them fully: to stimulate their senses with vivid impressions, to involve them in play, to influence them through aesthetic experience and to stir their emotions—all ultimately aimed at instilling proper opinions and attitudes and redirecting their drives and aspirations in ways considered beneficial both to themselves and to society.[395]

It was this German pedagogical discourse that was embraced and transferred to Russia by the Masonic milieu centred around Novikov, Schwarz and Moscow University. Institutionally, as discussed in Chapter 1, the preoccupation of Moscow Freemasonry with questions of education found expression in the creation of the Pedagogical Seminary for the training of teachers, modelled on a similar establishment at Halle, as well as in the generous sponsorship of poor students at the University. These initiatives were accompanied by sustained efforts to translate and publish edifying and pedagogical literature. Alongside various works appearing in a rather random order in periodicals (including translations from Locke), two concerted attempts to introduce the Russian public to innovative German pedagogy must be singled out. The first was a series of essays on education published in the periodical *Pribavlenie k Moskovskim vedomostiam* (1783–1784). Long regarded as original works by Novikov and as examples of 'progressive' Russian educational thought, they were in fact, as Vitaliy Simankov has demonstrated, largely translations from recent German pedagogical literature.[396] The second project was the publication of the journal for children *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i*

[394] Ibid., pp. 243–60.
[395] Heikki Lempa, *Bildung der Triebe. Der deutsche Philanthropismus (1768–1788)* (Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 1993).
[396] Simankov, 'Originals and Translations', pp. 392–472.

razuma, which appeared as a supplement to *Moskovskie vedomosti* between 1785 and 1789. Among its editors were members of the Pedagogical Seminary and the Assembly of the University Pupils, including Anton Prokopovich-Antonskii and Vasilii Podshivalov, as well as Aleksandr Petrov and Karamzin.[397] The vast majority of the texts published in the journal were translations of contemporary German literature for children—writings by pedagogues, moralists and preachers, many of them taken from the popular collection *Kleine Kinderbibliothek* (12 vols, 1779–1784), edited by Joachim Heinrich Campe, and from the periodical *Der Kinderfreund* (24 vols, 1775–1782) by Christian Felix Weiße.[398] Whereas the essays published in *Pribavlenie k Moskovskim vedomostiam* offered theoretical arguments in support of an emphasis on sensory experience and emotional reactions in education, *Detskoe chtenie* contained instructive works of fiction in which these precepts were put into practice.

In the preface addressed 'to the noble Russian youth', the editors outlined the programme of the journal as follows:

> Вопервых будем мы помещать в нем моральныя, или нравоучительныя пиэсы, то есть такия, из которых вы можете научиться должностям вашим к БОГУ [...]; должностям к Государю, Родителям и Наставникам вашим [...]; должностям вашим ко всем людям и к самим себе. Чтение таких пиэс послужит к рождению во младых сердцах ваших таких чувствований, без которых человек в жизни благополучен и доволен быть не может. Оне помогут вам некогда сделаться угодными вашему Творцу и добрыми гражданами вашего Отечества. Вовторых, для обогащения ума вашего, журнал наш будет содержать в себе пиэсы из Физики, Натуральной истории, Географии и некоторых других наук [...]. И так главным предметом сих листов будет польза ваша; но при том постараемся мы делать их вам приятными, для того, чтоб вы полюбили свою пользу.[399]

Reading the journal is envisaged as an edifying practice that shapes moral and political subjectivity and is grounded equally in a child's sensibility and in their reason. It is directly connected with the cultivation of proper feelings and the inculcation of useful knowledge—a theme familiar from the discussion in the previous section of the present chapter. Finally, by

[397] E. P. Privalova, 'O sotrudnikakh zhurnala "Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma"', in *XVIII vek*, vol. 6 (Moscow and Leningrad: Nauka, 1964), pp. 258–68.
[398] Simankov, 'Originals and Translations', pp. 473–543.
[399] 'Blagorodnomu Rossiiskomu iunoshestvu', *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma*, 1 (1785), 3–8 (pp. 5–6).

virtue of its aesthetic appeal (‘делать их вам приятными’), it contributes to a crucial educational task: the internalisation of social norms and prescriptions by fostering affective investment in them (‘чтоб вы полюбили свою пользу’). The majority of the texts published in the journal promoted self-discipline, depicted subjectivised aesthetic and religious experiences and displayed a developed moral sensibility. In fictionalised form, they offered accounts of the interplay between the self and the social and natural world, between visible natural objects and their hidden moral meanings, and between interiority and the external—the stuff sentimentalist literature was later made of. A particularly striking example of the edifying text for children as a prefiguration of sentimentalist prose is provided by the fictional correspondence between a father and a son written by the prominent German educator Christian Gotthilf Salzmann and published in translation in the second and third volumes of *Detskoe chtenie*. Salzmann was not only one of the most vocal advocates of the new pedagogical approach, which emphasised the playful, interactive and affective character of the teaching process and stressed the particular importance of spatial experience within it; he was also an active practitioner who founded his own school and sought to apply his methods in practice, taking his pupils on numerous excursions and strolls intended to provide children with knowledge derived from the direct observation of nature and to affect them emotionally.[400] His text translated into Russian appears to be firmly rooted in these theoretical premises: the aim of education is achieved through a highly aestheticised perception of nature, with moral and religious sentiments cultivated and internalised through the joyful contemplation of the beauty of the world.

[400] Hanno Schmitt, ‘Zur Pädagogisierung des Raumes im Philanthropismus: Das Beispiel der Salzmannschule Schnepfenthal’, in Schmitt, *Vernunft und Menschlichkeit: Studien zur philanthropischen Erziehungsbewegung* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2007), pp. 195–206.

The text tells the story of a boy corrupted by the luxury and idleness of city life, who is sent by his busy father to the countryside, where his uncle lives and raises his children. The city boy's depraved ways are illustrated by the fact that he lacks any knowledge of nature and is incapable of appreciating its beauty. His concerned father tries to persuade him to change his attitude, arguing that the contemplation of nature not only gives aesthetic pleasure but also opens a path to the knowledge of God:

> Дела Божии велики, и кто разсматривает их, тот всегда находит в них радость. Пусть тогда другие будут ходить в пышных нарядах [...]! Какая тебе до того нужда? Не завидуя им и не стараясь подражать, возмешь ты свою палку, выйдешь за город со спокойным духом, и с удивлением будешь смотреть на безчисленное множество прекрасных творений всемогущаго Бога. Иногда пойдешь ты к пруду – какое великолепное зрелище представится тебе! ты увидишь ясное небо, изображающееся в нем, как в зеркале. Также увидишь ты там нырка, выводящаго своих птенцов из тростника [...]. В другом месте безчисленныя стада гусей и уток плавают по воде с различными оборотами. Между сим множеством величавой лебедь плавает тихо, подняв гордо свою шею [...]. – Или сядешь ты на берег и будешь радоваться, смотря на великолепной ковер, на котором ты сидишь. Он изукрашен многоразличными цветами [...]. Оттуда увидишь ты земледельца [...]. Или будешь ты смотреть на пчелку, как она из мелких цветочков высасывает сладкой сок; либо на маленьких птичек, которыя прыгая с одной ветви на другую, прославляют своим пением Создателя своего.
>
> Какую легкость почувствует тогда сердце твое! Сколько соберешь ты радостных мыслей! Сердце твое наполнится благодарностию к милосердому Творцу, пекущемуся везде о тварях своих. Ты пойдешь домой с твердым упованием, что Бог, призирающий все свои творения, и тебя не оставит.[401]

This long passage anticipates some of the most crucial features of sentimentalist meditative prose (as discussed in Chapter 2). On the one hand, the landscape, animals, birds and flowers, as well as a peasant—hardly distinguishable here from nature—are all depicted in detail as self-sufficient objects of observation and description. At the same time, nature is construed as a manifestation of a benevolent God, so that every single part of it is not autonomous and requires interpretation that links it to a higher, transcendental meaning (for example, the commonplace notion that birds 'praise their Creator with their singing'). The beholder himself is affected by the process of contemplation. In the course of the stroll, he gathers joyful thoughts ('Сколько

[401] 'Perepiska ottsa s synom o derevenskoi zhizni', *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma*, 2 (1785), 113–25, 129–42, 145–70 (pp. 140–42). The source of the translation is indicated in Simankov, 'Originals and Translations', p. 504.

соберешь ты радостных мыслей!') and, as a result, is filled with a feeling of trust in God. This experience reaffirms his confidence in the order of the world and its social structure (the pleasures of natural beauty are additionally opposed to the luxuries of city life). Just as in many sentimentalist meditative fragments, pious contemplation of nature during a stroll functions as a spiritual exercise—an edifying practice in which aesthetic experience in its full intensity serves moral ends.

This imaginary stroll is invoked by the father in order to influence his son's moral and aesthetic sensibility. Later in the text, the boy participates in a real walk in the countryside with the aim of watching the sunrise. The scene is depicted by Salzmann in minute detail:

> Мы пошли чрез сад и чрез поле на гору, с которой могли смотреть прямо на то место, где солнце всходило.
>
> Ах! естьли б мог я вам описать, как прекрасно было все то, что мы видели! Но я не умею еще порядочно этова сделать. Когда мы вышли на поле, тогда еще разсветало. Все было тихо и как бы мертво. Дядюшка указал нам белое пятно на небе и велел на него смотреть. Это пятно час от часу становилось больше и прекраснее. Сперва было оно желто, по том серо – синевато – и наконец красно. Красной цвет распространялся мало по малу, и все облака на небе покраснели. Наконец показались лучи, и то пятно, которое дядюшка нам указал, почти в один миг сделалось пламенным, так, что мы не могли на него смотреть. Тогда казалось, что все ожило. Птицы начали летать; жаворонки взвивались вверьх и пели; соловей также пел изо всей силы; появились черви; пастухи погнали из деревни овец и коров в поле. Деревенские мужики и бабы, все пошли на работу. Я сидел будучи вне себя; мысли за мыслями входили мне в голову.
>
> Дядюшка снял с головы колпак, и мы сделали то же. Он начал молиться.[402]

The sight of the sun and the act of prayer affect the boy, causing him to feel repentance, which sets him on the path to moral rebirth. Once again, nature is grasped on two levels: as a variety of patiently described objects and as a range of outward forms in which God reveals himself to human beings. The act of perception unfolds as a movement from the visible manifold surface to its hidden single cause; from aesthetic to religious experience; and from sense perception to rational conclusions drawn from it.

[402] 'Perepiska ottsa s synom', pp. 148–9.

As argued in Chapter 2, very similar patterns inform the sentimentalist meditative prose that flourished in the 1790s and whose influential precursor was Karamzin's piece 'Progulka', published in 1789 in *Detskoe chtenie*. It is worth comparing the translation of Salzmann's educational text with one of the earliest examples of original Russian sentimentalist prose. 'Progulka' depicts the experiences of a young man who wanders outside the city with James Thomson's *The Seasons* in hand and reacts to the natural world, where he senses God's presence and a creative force identical to the one he finds in poets and recognises in himself.[403] While viewing a sunset, he imagines the ancient sages praising the Creator in their hymns; as darkness falls, the narrator turns inward, vividly experiencing a sense of his own existence, and then associates the night with the chaos preceding the act of creation and with a future death. The moon brings to his mind Edward Young's *Night-Thoughts* and the idea of inspiration; the starry sky leads him to sense the presence of invisible angels and to reflect on the vastness of the universe and the possibility of extraterrestrial life, a process that culminates in an ecstatic prayer followed by sleep. The next morning, the narrator encounters the dawn and returns to the city.[404] It is possible to situate 'Progulka' within the immediate context of the documented reading of the young Karamzin and to demonstrate how the text draws on the writings of Thomson, Joseph Addison, Christoph Martin Wieland, Johann Gottfried Herder and others.[405] Yet it seems that Salzmann's text served as an equally important model for Karamzin. What the narrator of 'Progulka' is doing is precisely the kind of edifying stroll outside the city that was propagated and depicted by the German pedagogue. The scene of the sunrise is particularly striking in the

[403] Gitta Hammarberg, 'Karamzin's "Progulka" as Sentimentalist Manifesto', *Russian Literature*, 26, 3 (1989), 249–65; Hammarberg, *From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin's Sentimentalist Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 65–76.
[404] N. M. Karamzin, 'Progulka', *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma*, 18 (1789), 161–75.
[405] O. A. Larionov, '"Progulka" N. M. Karamzina: istochniki i konteksty', in *Russkaia filologiia*, vol. 32 (Tartu: [Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus], 2022), pp. 35–44.

closeness with which it corresponds to a similar scene in Salzmann's text quoted and discussed above. Karamzin depicts it in the following way:

> Показывалась заря, и предмет за предметом открывался взору моему. Земля снова творилася, быв дотоле во мраке, в смерти. Свет утренний, разливаяся повсюду, разливал жизнь – все пробуждалося, все оживало! Но все было тихо. Обновленная Натура в торжественном молчании готовилась принять огненнаго Царя своего, паки на наш горизонт шедшаго. Все пернатыя были в движении, порхали с куста на куст, и приготовлялись к пению утренней песни. Между тем с удовольствием смотрел я на множество белых паров, в виде столпов поднимавшихся от реки и ручьев; извиваясь и тончая, возносились они к облакам, и наконец изчезали. Скоро показалось на возтоке белое пятно – знак приближения солнца. Я встал и возшел на самую вершину холма, чтобы взором своим скорее встретить пышное светило. Вдруг блеснул яркий лучь света, и начало показываться солнце, лучами увенчанное. В самое сие мгновение возгласили птицы громкую песнь; я с благоговением пал на колени, и по сердечному движению запел:
>
> Се паки, Боже! Посылаешь
> К нам вестника щедрот Своих,
> И снова блага изливаешь
> На тварей и сынов Твоих![406]

Salzmann and Karamzin both employ a descriptive style that captures in minute detail movements and aspects of nature (cf. in particular the shared image of a 'white spot' before sunrise: Salzmann: 'Дядюшка указал нам белое пятно на небе и велел на него смотреть'; Karamzin: 'Скоро показалось на возтоке белое пятно – знак приближения солнца'). Both associate night with death and sunrise with a return to life (Salzmann: 'Все было тихо и как бы мертво. [...] Тогда казалось, что все ожило'; Karamzin: 'Земля снова творилася, быв дотоле во мраке, в смерти. Свет утренний, разливаяся повсюду, разливал жизнь – все пробуждалося, все оживало!'). Both mention birds beginning to sing at dawn (Salzmann: 'Птицы начали летать; жаворонки взвивались вверьх и пели; соловей также пел изо всей силы'; Karamzin: 'В самое сие мгновение возгласили птицы громкую песнь'). Both conclude the scenes with a prayer in which the sun is regarded as a sign of God's benevolence. In both texts, attentive contemplation of nature is coupled with heightened introspection. The boy who watches the dawn in Salzmann's text is filled with thoughts: 'Я сидел будучи вне себя; мысли за мыслями входили мне в голову'; a very similar state of mind is experienced

[406] Karamzin, 'Progulka', pp. 174–5.

by the narrator of Karamzin's 'Progulka': 'Я размышлял и чувствовал. Мысль сцеплялась с мыслию, чувство сливалось с чувством'. Karamzin clearly drew on Salzmann's text (which may have been translated by him or by his close friend Aleksandr Petrov) when composing his first original piece of sentimentalist prose, and this specific connection is indicative of a broader continuity between didactic literature rooted in pedagogical theory and the literature of sensibility in late eighteenth-century Russia.

Yet there is one feature that makes 'Progulka' stand out from the rest of the writings that appeared in *Detskoe chtenie*: Karamzin's seemingly unrestrained embrace of the creative imagination as the cornerstone of the self. The gradual reinterpretation of imagination as the supreme faculty of the human mind and the defining quality of genius was a major trend in European intellectual history in the eighteenth century.[407] At the beginning of his literary career, Karamzin was outspoken in his radical rejection of dominant French neoclassical literary tastes in favour of German and English authors, a shift that included the promotion of Shakespeare and the new theories of creative genius that celebrated him.[408] In 1787, Karamzin published his translation of *Julius Caesar* with a foreword, partly based on an essay by Wieland, in which he characterised Shakespeare as a genius endowed with an ardent imagination ('пылкое его воображение').[409] It may be argued that in 'Progulka', where imagination figures prominently as an intermediary between the speaking self, the natural world it perceives and the presence of God it feels, Karamzin drew on Joseph Addison's influential essay *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1712).[410] Like Addison, Karamzin promoted a highly affective, 'aesthetic' version

[407] Engell, *The Creative Imagination*.
[408] N. I. Mordovchenko, *Russkaia kritika pervoi chetverti XIX veka* (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1959), pp. 17–56; Andrew Kahn, 'Russian Literature between Classicism and Romanticism: Poetry, Feeling, Subjectivity', in *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism*, ed. by Paul Hamilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 493–511 (pp. 503–6).
[409] O. B. Kafanova, '"Iulii Tsezar'" Shekspira v perevode N. M. Karamzina', *Russkaia literatura*, 2 (1983), 158–63.
[410] Larionov, '"Progulka" N. M. Karamzina', pp. 37–9.

of natural theology, one that focused on the subject's sensibility and its emotional responses to nature and to God, responses secured by the work of the imagination.[411] Karamzin also recognises the value of the creative imagination not only as a means of approaching God, but also as the force that makes poetry possible:

> О дабы мечты мои уподобились некогда мечтам Омировым и Оссияновым (ибо ряд образов, зеркалу воображения их представлявшийся, называли они сим именем), которых Песни поныне суть источники пользы и удовольствия для смертных, посвященных в Мистерии Поэзии![412]

This passage presents the state of reverie as a necessary—and crucial—experience for a creative person and, by invoking the metaphor of initiation 'into the Mysteries of Poetry', contributes to the sacralisation of art (a process already underway in Karamzin's writings since 1787, when he devoted the poem 'Poeziia' to an enthusiastic glorification of 'holy poetry').[413] Overall, in addition to established patterns of interaction between subjectivity and nature, Karamzin structures his text around more innovative notions of imagination, genius and the sacrality of poetry.

When juxtaposed with the moralistic prescriptions examined in the preceding section, which called for strict control over the faculty of imagination, the seemingly unrestrained enjoyment of this faculty in 'Progulka' may appear to constitute a radical departure from the didacticism of Masonic circles and educational institutions. But was the imagination of the speaking self in 'Progulka' truly as free and unregulated as it appears? After all, nowhere in the text does the protagonist, in his fantasies, cross the boundaries of decency, modesty or propriety. On the contrary, he displays deep piety, sensitivity to the beauties of nature and good taste in

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[411] Cf. Lisa M. Zeitz, 'Addison's "Imagination" Papers and the Design Argument', *English Studies*, 73, 6 (1992), 493–502.
[412] Karamzin, 'Progulka', pp. 167–8.
[413] Cf. Joachim Klein, 'Poet-samokhval: "Pamiatnik" Derzhavina i status poeta v russkoi kul'ture XVIII veka', in Klein, *Puti kul'turnogo importa. Trudy po russkoi literature XVIII veka* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2005), pp. 498–520 (pp. 503–4); V. M. Zhivov, 'Koshchunstvennaia poeziia v sisteme russkoi kul'tury kontsa XVIII – nachala XIX veka', in Zhivov, *Razyskaniia v oblasti istorii i predystorii russkoi kul'tury* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2002), pp. 638–81 (pp. 661–3).

literature. His moral sensibility is refined, and he is clearly capable of processing his sense perceptions in a reasonable manner, keeping the ideas thus acquired in good order. In 'Progulka', the work of self-discipline remains hidden, and the reader is presented with a finished result: a morally and aesthetically refined individual who is unafraid to surrender to the spontaneous flow of the images of his imagination. In 1785, Petrov argued in a letter to Karamzin that it takes special efforts of self-coercion for the pleasures of poetry and imagination to be truly felt:

> к работе и к ученью всякой молодой человек немножко только попринудить себя должен, после чего и Шакеспер и фантазия удовольствия приносить будут.[414]

The protagonist of 'Progulka' is precisely the kind of person behind whose seemingly natural and unforced ability to indulge in the pleasures of art and the imagination lies the hidden work of self-discipline, his freedom being the result of self-restraint ('немножко только попринудить себя должен'). A similar vision was articulated by Anton Prokopovich-Antonskii—who was also involved in editing *Detskoe chtenie* and later became the head of the Noble Boarding School—in his public oration on education delivered in 1798:

> Наставникам при воспитании детей предназначены два весьма важные предмета: первой, чтобы как можно более распространять в них круг истинных понятий; второй, чтобы осторожным быть во всех впечатлениях, действующих в молодости на воображение и разливающихся по том на целую жизнь. […] Умеряй стремление воображения, когда можно, в юных еще летах; оно неукротимо, как воздействует во всей силе; да будут всегда вождем ему правила здраваго разсудка и законы природы. Сколько правильное и очищенное воображение доставляет выгод и удовольствий, столько необузданное и развращенное причиняет вреда человеку [...].[415]

The familiar call to develop ideas ('распространять в них круг истинных понятий') is coupled here with advice to tame the imagination with the help of reason ('Умеряй стремление воображения, […] да будут всегда вождем ему правила здраваго разсудка и законы природы'). The desired result of this educational programme is a proper and purified

[414] 'Pis'ma A. A. Petrova k Karamzinu. 1785–1792', in N. M. Karamzin, *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, ed. by Iu. M. Lotman and others (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), pp. 499–512 (p. 500).
[415] A. A. Prokopovich-Antonskii, *Slovo o vospitanii* (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1798), p. 28.

imagination that is useful and brings pleasure ('Сколько правильное и очищенное воображение доставляет выгод и удовольствий'). As Heikki Lempa has argued, late eighteenth-century German pedagogy sought to produce not the ascetic Stoic but rather the moderate Epicurean subject.[416] The same was true of the form of selfhood that was taking shape in Russian educational thought and sentimentalist literature. With the growth of institutions and practices of the public sphere and the first signs of a consumer culture emerging among the elites, a more relaxed and self-indulgent type of person came to be imagined. The emphasis on self-restraint and self-examination was counterbalanced by the promotion of self-cultivation and sensory perception as a direct—and pleasurable—route to the true, the beautiful and the good. As a result, a model of the self predicated on strict coercion was expanded and modified to include one grounded in developed self-control and the deep internalisation of prescribed social and cultural norms. The outlines of this model of subjectivity are perceptible in many protagonists of the sentimentalist literature of the period.

Let us briefly draw some conclusions. Throughout the last third of the eighteenth century, sentimentalist literature increasingly began to be studied in Russian educational institutions, especially in the Noble Boarding School of Moscow University. Sentimentalist authors were read, translated, and imitated as part of training in Russian and foreign languages. In this context, the perception of sentimentalist literature was shaped by the frameworks of logic, rhetoric and moral philosophy, which were closely intertwined in contemporary teaching practices. In the second half of the eighteenth century, these disciplines were grounded in Lockean sensualism, which offered an account of the origin of cognition in sensation and insisted on the importance of self-examination and self-discipline as means of arranging and

[416] Heikki Lempa, 'Techniques of Epicurean Masculinity: The Playing Method in German Education, 1774–1820', in *Masculinity, Senses, Spirit*, ed. by Katharine Faull (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2011), pp. 81–105.

clarifying one's ideas. As a result, the cultivation of both reason and emotion became a major concern in Russian educational thought and practice of the period. Pedagogy based on sensualist assumptions privileged emotional impact and aesthetic experience as means of instruction. This nexus of educational institutions, theories, and approaches was an important factor in the formation of Russian sentimentalism. It also endowed literary works with a didactic dimension, even when they were not overtly moralising in tone. It is impossible to reduce Russian sentimentalist literature to edifying reading alone; yet the tension between didactic impulses and the striving for autonomy from strict moral considerations was one of the defining features of Russian literature of sensibility. The discussion of this question will be continued in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4.
The Pleasures of Sensibility: Aesthetic Experience, Self-Cultivation and the Figures of the Author in Russian Sentimentalism

The preceding chapter reconstructed the interplay between emerging Russian sentimentalist literature and a range of disciplines—including logic, rhetoric, moral philosophy and pedagogy—that were aimed at shaping the selves of the educated classes of the late eighteenth-century Russian Empire. It argued that the literature of sensibility and the forms of knowledge that sustained it both drew upon sensualist philosophy in assigning sensory experience a central place in their accounts of the workings of the human self. The didactic sentimentalism that developed in Russia in close connection with educational institutions foregrounded the perceptions and emotions of the individual, but only insofar as they served the edifying purpose of inculcating, in the most efficient and immediate way possible, notions of morality and religion.

The present chapter traces the subsequent development and transformation of this model in the works of Nikolai Karamzin, the most influential Russian sentimentalist author and a foundational figure in the new literary tradition, whose example was followed by numerous imitators. It argues that, in rejecting didacticism and moral rigorism, Karamzin articulated a new attitude to the self by valorising physical and moral sensibility, blurring the boundary between the pursuit of spiritual and sensuous pleasures and advocating a more lenient assessment of moral failures and transgressive behaviour. This approach informed Karamzin's understanding of what it meant to be both a sensitive individual in general and a writer in particular. At the same time, the professionalisation of the literary field required Karamzin to recognise the specificity of the author's position. As a result, two contradictory logics operated across his writings: one insisting on the intrinsic value of art and the professional status of the writer, the other reducing sentimentalist literature to its emotional origins and effects. The

former contributed to the formation of modern Russian literature as a social institution, while the latter corresponded to the dilettantism of most minor Russian sentimentalists, whose texts were wholly absorbed into the everyday cultural practices of their readers. In what follows, I reconstruct how Karamzin conceptualised and depicted the sensitive self by reading his texts alongside German, English and French works that he himself translated or cited, thereby situating him within the broader European context of reflections on art, subjectivity and sensibility.

The first section examines the efforts, initiated by Johann Georg Schwarz and continued by his disciples at Moscow University as well as by Karamzin, to transfer to Russia the newly formed discipline of aesthetics. It argues that with the help of aesthetics Karamzin offered a theory of the self and of art rooted in sensation and prioritised the agreeable rather than the instructive in aesthetic experience. The second section demonstrates how this theoretical vision found expression in a number of Karamzin's fictional works, describing a shift from strict self-discipline to pleasurable self-cultivation as the self's dominant attitude to life. It also distinguishes between the moderate and the radical embrace of sensuous pleasures in various texts by Karamzin and reconstructs how this provocative celebration of seemingly unchecked sensibility was perceived by his enthusiastic followers and his harsh critics, both responses testifying to the momentous influence of his writings on his contemporaries. The third section returns to the theory of art and addresses the question of how Karamzin imagined the figure of the author. It argues that his self-contradictory position was shaped by unresolved tensions between the influence of the literary market, including the rise of copyright, the striving towards aesthetic autonomy, older moral considerations and the sentimentalist emphasis on both author and reader as sensitive individuals. These tensions ultimately resulted in his failure to articulate a coherent and unambiguous understanding of modern authorship.

1. Aesthetics in Late Eighteenth-Century Russia: Theorising Art and Sensibility

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, late eighteenth-century Russian thought became increasingly interested in sense perception as a means of acquiring knowledge of the external world and of shaping the self. Alongside moral philosophy and pedagogy, sensation also came to be scrutinised by the discipline of aesthetics. The emergence of this new form of knowledge in the course of the eighteenth century went hand in hand with the establishment of the modern system of the fine arts, as literature, music, painting, sculpture and architecture began to be grouped together and regarded as belonging to a single phenomenon, that of 'art'.[417] The argument that all the fine arts are based on the same principle and should be studied together was first advanced by Charles Batteux in his seminal work *Les beaux-arts réduits à un même principe* (1746). Important contributions to the nascent field were also made in England, including Joseph Addison's series of essays on the *Pleasures of the Imagination* (1712) and Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Yet it was in Germany that the new theory of art took shape under the name of aesthetics. This academic discipline, developed by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in the mid eighteenth century, gradually absorbed and eventually superseded the traditions of rhetoric and poetics, which had previously formed the principal framework for thinking about literature. In the longer term, speculative philosophical aesthetics and more practical literary criticism emerged as the two main discourses for conceptualising literature. This shift in ways of thinking was already perceptible in eighteenth-century Russia, where, as Pavel Berkov argued, two theoretical idioms for discussing verbal art coexisted: one 'rhetorical', the other 'philosophical

[417] Paul O. Kristeller, 'The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (I)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 12, 4 (1951), 495–527; 'The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (II)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 13, 1 (1952), 17–46.

and aesthetic'.[418] This section traces the beginnings of the transfer of the discourse of aesthetics to Russia and explores its affinity with the heightened interest in human sensibility characteristic of the late eighteenth century.

It is telling that the teaching of aesthetics in Russia was initiated by Johann Georg Schwarz, professor of German language and literature at Moscow University who stood at the centre of the Masonic milieu that played such a significant role in the reception of sensualist philosophy, its adaptation to didactic aims and the rise of sentimentalist literature. In 1782–1783, Schwarz delivered a series of 'aesthetic and critical (эстетико-критическия)' lectures which combined discussion of such traditional authorities as Aristotle, Cicero and Boileau with an innovative exposition of the ideas of Batteux and Baumgarten.[419] Aesthetics provided the disciplinary framework on which these lectures were based. As the printed announcement of the course declared, clearly echoing Batteux, the various fine arts possess a 'mutual connection' and are to be compared and studied together:

> Сравниваны будут художническия произведения и работы, как то статуи, живопись, и древния здания с произведениями ума, с показанием их взаимной между собою связи.[420]

A window onto the ways in which Schwarz conceived of the function of art and aesthetic experience is offered by the lecture notes taken by one of his students. In theorising aesthetic experience, Schwarz took account of human sensibility and regarded its refinement as a precondition for the discovery of moral and religious truths:

> [Так как мысли] суть источник всех совершенств и несовершенств наших; то для приведения их помощию воображения в порядок и гармонию нужно, кажется, молодых людей упражнять в словесных науках, в музыке, в живописи и занимать их гармониею природы, которая, красотами своими привлекая чувства человеческия, делает их нежнейшими и удобнейшими к чистой любви, и приводя в приятное восхищение,

[418] P. N. Berkov, 'Ocherk razvitiia russkoi literaturovedcheskoi terminologii do nachala XIX v.', *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR. Seriia literatury i iazyka*, 23, 3 (1964), 238–47 (p. 246).
[419] N. S. Tikhonravov, 'Shvarts, Ivan Grigor'evich', in *Biograficheskii slovar' professorov i prepodavatelei Imperatorskago Moskovskago Universiteta*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1855), pp. 574–99 (pp. 581–2).
[420] Tikhonravov, 'Shvarts', p. 582.

> заставляет примечать действия природы, приводит их в удивление порядку оной, возвышает их мысли до источника природы и наконец воспламеняет в них чистую любовь к Богу.[421]

The entire argument is shaped by sensualist epistemology, with the self conceptualised as possessing 'senses', 'thoughts' and 'imagination' and as being altered through the reception of impressions from the external world. Literature, music, painting and nature are brought together as objects of aesthetic contemplation resulting in a beneficial effect: the perceiving subject's 'thoughts' acquire 'order and harmony' through the work of 'imagination' ('для приведения их помощию воображения в порядок и гармонию'), while its 'senses' become 'more tender' ('красотами своими привлекая чувства человеческия, делает их нежнейшими').

This understanding of aesthetic experience as a means of inculcating notions of morality and religion through pleasurable feeling ('приводя в приятное восхищение') corresponded closely to the attempts of the Moscow Freemasons to apply sensualist philosophy to the tasks of self-discipline and edification discussed in Chapter 3. Among the works translated from German and published in 1784 in *Pribavlenie k Moskovskim vedomostiam* was an essay on 'aesthetic education' that explicitly addressed the interrelation of aesthetics, moral philosophy and pedagogy.[422] After Schwarz's death in the same year, the teaching of aesthetics at Moscow University was interrupted and did not resume until the university reform of 1804, when it was fully recognised as an academic discipline and the Department of the Theory of Fine Arts was established.[423] The first lecturer in aesthetics was Pavel Sokhatskii, a disciple of Schwarz, editor of important sentimentalist periodicals of the 1790s, tutor in Russian language and literature at

[421] Ibid., p. 597.
[422] 'O esteticheskom vozpitanii', *Pribavlenie k Moskovskim vedomostiam* (1784), pp. 466–82. The source is indicated in Vitaliy Simankov, 'Originals and Translations: A Study Based on Old Slavic Texts and Russian Eighteenth-Century Journals' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brown University, 2017), pp. 448–9.
[423] A. Iu. Andreev, *Lektsii po istorii Moskovskogo universiteta. 1755–1855* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2001), p. 130.

the Noble Boarding School and translator of Isaac Watts's textbook on logic (see Chapter 3).[424] These continuities suggest that, even though the teaching of aesthetics was not institutionalised as part of the university curriculum between 1784 and 1804, aesthetic thought continued to be disseminated through the networks of individuals, literary circles and educational organisations established by the Moscow Freemasons and in which sentimentalist literature was read and produced.[425]

The interaction between the literature of sensibility and aesthetics is perceptible in the writings of Nikolai Karamzin. In 1787, when he and his friend Aleksandr Petrov were disciples of the Moscow Freemasons and editors of the journal *Detskoe chtenie*, they read, discussed and held in high regard the works of Batteux.[426] In 1791, when Karamzin began his independent literary career by launching *Moskovskii zhurnal*, he made a systematic effort to introduce the Russian reading public to the discipline of aesthetics by raising questions of art theory in a number of original and translated publications. As I argue, taken together these texts constitute an attempt to ground the processes of creation and reception of art in human sensibility, thereby promoting aesthetic experience as a means of achieving sensuous pleasures only indirectly linked to moral instruction. In doing so, Karamzin followed the logic of the development of aesthetics, which ultimately led to the affirmation of the autonomy of art. Yet he himself never reached such radical conclusions, foregrounding the agreeable at the expense of the useful, but never fully overcoming the instrumentalist view of art that regarded it as a means to something else rather than as an end in itself.

[424] For more on the early history of aesthetics in Russia, see P. N. Berkov, 'Aus der Geschichte der Ästhetik in Rußland an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Ernst Moritz Arndt-Universität Greifswald. Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe*, 8, 5–6 (1958–1959), 435–42.
[425] On the reception of aesthetics in Russian sentimentalism, see N. D. Kochetkova, *Literatura russkogo sentimentalizma (Esteticheskie i khudozhestvennye iskaniia)* (Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 1994), pp. 75–154.
[426] Kochetkova, *Literatura russkogo sentimentalizma*, pp. 82–4.

In *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, published serially in his journal, Karamzin offered an account of a lecture on aesthetics at Leipzig University and provided a definition of the discipline:

> Ныне поутру слушал я Эстетическую лекцию Доктора Платнера.
>
> Эстетика есть *наука вкуса*. Она трактует о чувственном познании вообще. Баумгартен первой предложил ее как особливую, отделенную от других науку, которая – оставляя Логике образование вышших способностей души нашей, т. е. разума и разсудка – занимается исправлением чувств и всего чувственнаго, т. е. воображения с его действиями. Одним словом, Эстетика учит чувствовать изящное и наслаждаться им.[427]

In this passage, Karamzin largely follows the understanding of aesthetics advanced by Baumgarten, who coined the term itself, and further developed by his follower Georg Friedrich Meier.[428] In his early *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (1735), Baumgarten, drawing on Christian Wolff's distinction between rational 'clear' representations grasped by a 'higher' faculty of the soul and sensitive 'obscure' representations processed by a 'lower' faculty of the soul, argued that philosophers should

> inquire also into those devices by which they might improve the lower faculties of knowing, and sharpen them, and apply them more happily for the benefit of the whole world.[429]

For this aim, he introduced

> a science which might direct the lower cognitive faculty in knowing things sensately. [...] *things known* are to be known by the superior faculty as the object of logic; *things perceived* [are to be known by the inferior faculty, as the object] of the science of perception, or aesthetic.[430]

In *Metaphysica* (first published in 1739), Baumgarten offered a detailed account of 'the inferior cognitive faculty', through which the 'soul represents sensitive perceptions', including the faculties of imagination, invention and judgement (or taste).[431] Aesthetics was defined here (in

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[427] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 2, 3 (June 1791), p. 311. Cf. N. M. Karamzin, *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, ed. by Iu. M. Lotman and others (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), p. 63.
[428] For more on this, see Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics. Volume 1: The Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 318–40.
[429] Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Reflections on Poetry*, transl. by Karl Aschenbrenner and William B. Holther (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1954), p. 78.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Alexander Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, transl. and ed. by Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 202, 211–5, 219–20, 223–4.

Meier's formulation) as 'the science of the beautiful', '[t]he science of the rules of the perfection of sense knowledge and of the meaning of it', which 'deals with the improvement of all the lower powers of knowledge'.[432]

Karamzin translated Baumgarten's concepts into Russian with remarkable precision. He retained the basic Wolffian distinction between the higher and the lower faculties of the soul (respectively, between logic and aesthetics), demonstrated a broad understanding of aesthetics as the science of 'sensitive cognition' (Karamzin's 'Она трактует о чувственном познании вообще' closely echoes Baumgarten's definition in *Aesthetica* (1750): 'Aesthetica [...] est scientia cognitionis sensitivae'[433]) and emphasised the improvement of the senses as one of the aims of this form of knowledge ('занимается исправлением чувств и всего чувственнаго'). At the same time, Karamzin's account involved significant shifts of emphasis. Baumgarten considered the faculty of judgement (*Iudicium*) to be one of the lower faculties of the soul studied by aesthetics. However, he could by no means define this discipline as the 'science of taste'. Karamzin's definition, 'Эстетика есть *наука вкуса*', finds its closest parallels in contemporary German writings that defined aesthetics as the 'Wissenschaft des Geschmacks'.[434]

Similarly, although the concept of imagination was present in Baumgarten's system, it did not occupy a central position among the lower faculties, whereas in Karamzin the 'senses and all the sensual' were directly identified with the 'imagination and its effects'. In other words, Karamzin foregrounded 'taste (вкус)' and 'imagination (воображение)' as crucial

[432] Ibid., p. 205.
[433] Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Texte zur Grundlegung der Ästhetik*, transl. and ed. by Hans Rudolf Schweizer (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983), p. 79.
[434] Christian Wilhelm Snell, *Ueber frühe Bildung des Geschmacks für Eltern, Schullehrer und Hofmeister* (Giesen: Krieger, 1782), p. 67; Gotthilf Samuel Steinbart, *Grundbegriffe zur Philosophie über den Geschmack*, vol. 1 (Züllichau: Waysenhaus, 1785), p. 19.

categories of art theory and presented aesthetics (and, implicitly, art) as a project aimed at refining human sensibility. This recognition of the edifying effect of aesthetic experience was shared by Karamzin and Schwarz; both also adhered to an approach—termed by Ernst Stöckmann 'anthropological aesthetics'—that grounded the theory of art in a theory of man conceived as a unity of mind and body.[435] Yet Karamzin's concluding summary of the role of aesthetics, which defined aesthetic experience solely in terms of the pleasurable enjoyment of the beautiful ('Одним словом, Эстетика учит чувствовать изящное и наслаждаться им'), marked a noticeable departure from Masonic didacticism.

A further step in this direction was taken by Karamzin in June 1792, when in *Moskovskii zhurnal* appeared his translation of the first chapter of Karl Philipp Moritz's *Götterlehre oder mythologische Dichtungen der Alten* (1791). A prominent German writer and journalist, Moritz is often regarded as the first to articulate the idea of the autonomy of art, soon taken up in Immanuel Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790) and decisive for the subsequent development of aesthetics.[436] In the fragment from *Götterlehre* translated by Karamzin, Moritz argued for an understanding of mythology as a 'language of fantasy', a product of the independent creative activity of the human mind. From this premise he derived a conception of the work of art as a self-sufficient, perfect whole to be contemplated on its own terms:

> Всякое истинное творение искусства, всякой изящный вымысл есть сам по себе нечто совершенное, собственно для себя существующее, и прекрасное от гармоническаго расположения частей своих [...].[437]

[435] Ernst Stöckmann, *Anthropologische Ästhetik. Philosophie, Psychologie und ästhetische Theorie der Emotionen im Diskurs der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009). See also O. A. Larionov, '"Chuvstvo iziashchnogo": antropologicheskaia estetika N. M. Karamzina', *Letniaia shkola po russkoi literature*, 17, 1 (2021), 57–82.
[436] For more on this, see Jonathan M. Hess, *Reconstituting the Body Politic: Enlightenment, Public Culture and the Invention of Aesthetic Autonomy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999); Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, pp. 410–8.
[437] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 6, 3 (June 1792), p. 281.

This focus on the work of art itself, rather than on the mind of its author or its impact on the audience, was accompanied by the paradoxical conclusion that any instruction it may nevertheless offer is not the result of didactic intention but rather a side effect of the beautiful and attractive form it assumes:

> Прекрасная Поэма изображает в большом или малом пространстве своем отношения вещей, жизнь и судьбу человеков [...]; но все сие подчинено пиитическим красотам и не есть главная цель Поэзии: ибо от того она и лучше всего учит, что учение не есть мета ея, и что оно, будучи подчинено изящному, делается прелестно и привлекательно.[438]

These ideas were certainly novel to a majority of the Russian reading public at the time, and Karamzin himself was by no means an advocate of art for art's sake. As Martha Woodmansee has argued, an important factor in the emergence of the idea of aesthetic autonomy in Germany was the division between 'high' and 'low' culture, brought about by rising literacy rates, the expansion of the book trade and the consequent fragmentation of the reading public.[439] It was against the backdrop of the commercialisation of the literary field and the development of mass literature that authors such as Goethe and Schiller began to advocate the autonomy of 'pure' art, intended for a small circle of true connoisseurs with refined taste rather than for the general public.[440]

While Karamzin, sometimes drawing on the writings of Goethe and Schiller, occasionally celebrated creative imagination and the independence and intrinsic value of art in opposition to politics and society,[441] it was impossible for him, given the social and cultural

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[438] Ibid., p. 282.
[439] Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 11–33.
[440] Klaus L. Berghahn, 'From Classicist to Classical Literary Criticism, 1730–1806', in *A History of German Literary Criticism, 1730–1980*, ed. by Peter Uwe Hohendahl (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 13–98 (pp. 78–98); Renata Schellenberg, 'Print and Preserve: Periodicals in Late Eighteenth-Century Germany', in *(Re-)Writing the Radical: Enlightenment, Revolution and Cultural Transfer in 1790s Germany, Britain and France*, ed. by Maike Oergel (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 88–101.
[441] For more on this, see Gerhard Dudek, 'Das Problem der "zwei Welten" in Karamzins Ästhetik', *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie*, 36, 4 (1991), 475–82; N. D. Kochetkova, 'Rol' vymysla v estetike N. M. Karamzina', in *Epochenumbruch? Literatur um 1800 im Russischen Reich*, ed. by Petr Bukharkin and Ulrike Jekutsch (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021), pp. 15–21.

conditions in Russia and his own priorities, to fully adopt the position of the Weimar Classicists. On the contrary, in his 1802 essay on the book trade and reading in Russia, he expressed the optimistic view that the ever-growing number of consumers of popular literature would eventually refine their taste and progress to more demanding works.[442] Conceiving of art as a semi-autonomous human activity not reducible to, yet not wholly independent of, moral, political and pedagogical considerations, Karamzin remained deeply concerned with the task of pleasing, expanding and shaping his reading audience. He continued to believe in the possibility of a single reading public governed by universal standards of taste and in the necessity for authors to move and to educate it. By contrast, the tensions between 'high' and 'low' culture and the related question of aesthetic autonomy, already relevant in Germany and touched upon in some of Karamzin's writings of the 1790s, were only fully articulated in Russia in the 1820s and 1830s. In other words, Karamzin never entirely transcended the boundaries of an instrumentalist aesthetics focused on the effects of art on its audience. The difference from the didacticism of Russian neoclassicists and Freemasons lay in his strong emphasis on pleasure in aesthetic experience and its grounding in physical sensibility.

A prime example of such an approach to art is Karamzin's translation of the 1790 essay 'Apollo. Eine Deutung' by the German philosopher Friedrich Bouterwek, which appeared in the penultimate issue of *Moskovskii zhurnal* in the autumn of 1792 under the title 'Apollon. Iz''iasnenie drevnei allegorii'. Through this translation, Karamzin outlined in his journal several key concepts and ideas of contemporary aesthetics. Bouterwek maintains that the nature of beauty cannot be defined; its existence is attested only indirectly through its influence on human sensibility in the act of aesthetic contemplation. He interprets modes of engagement

[442] N. M. Karamzin, 'O knizhnoi torgovle i liubvi ko chteniiu v Rossii', in Karamzin, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, vol. 2, ed. by P. N. Berkov and G. P. Makogonenko (Moscow and Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1964), pp. 176–80.

with the different fine arts as variations of a single universal experience grounded in the human self. Aesthetic experience, in his account, is founded on everyday sense perception and cognition common to all human beings, and consists of a range of specific pleasurable acts of seeing, hearing and thinking:

> Но что есть красота? [...] Кто, чувствуя красоту, дерзнул определить ея свойство? – Но она *есть*, и хотя различна по образу, но в действиях одинакова –
>
> Око видит всегда формы, ухо слышит всегда звуки, душа связывает всегда идеи или понятия; но для чего сердце наше только при некоторых формах, только при некоторых звуках, только при некоторой связи идей чувствует в себе приятной жар и сладкое удовольствие?[443]

Remarkably, in his translation Karamzin further emphasised the pleasurable and sensory character of aesthetic experience. Whereas in Bouterwek 'the heart', affected by 'specific forms', 'sounds' and 'combinations of ideas', simply becomes 'warm' and feels 'well (*warm und wohl*)', in Karamzin's version it '*feels within itself* an *agreeable* warmth and *sweet* pleasure (*чувствует в себе приятной* жар и *сладкое* удовольствие)'.[444]

According to Bouterwek, feelings constituted both the source and the aim of poetry: '*Выражение чувства* (или ощущения) *посредством изящных мыслей* есть цель Поэзии'.[445] While the notion of 'beautiful thoughts' stemmed from Baumgarten—one of whose definitions of aesthetics was 'the art of thinking beautifully (*ars pulchre cogitandi*)'—the emphasis on the representation of feelings reflected the rise of the 'expressive' theory of poetry, which prioritised lyrics and subjectivity.[446] Shifting his attention from reception to the creation of the work of art, Bouterwek remained within the framework of 'anthropological aesthetics' and continued to develop a theory of art as a theory of man. Just as the experience of art is

[443] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 8 (October-November 1792), p. 120.
[444] For German original, see Friedrich Bouterwek, 'Apollo. Eine Deutung', *Akademie der schönen Redekünste*, 1, 1 (1790), 7–22 (pp. 10–1). Emphasis added.
[445] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 8, p. 120.
[446] Baumgarten, *Texte zur Grundlegung der Ästhetik*, p. 79. 'The development of the expressive theory of poetry and art' is traced in Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 70–99.

construed as a specific form of sense perception and cognition, so the artist is regarded as a person endowed with a peculiarly developed sensibility. Creativity is shaped by the artist's capacity to feel more deeply and more intensely, and a work of art mirrors the 'organisation' of the soul and body of its author:

> Кто имеет способность и творческой дух, тот употребляет их на выражение своих ощущений – сие делается для него необходимостию. В чьей душе небо и земля, и все великое и прекрасное впечатлевается глубже; в ком все потрясения бывают сильнее и долее продолжаются: тот почти всегда имеет способность и творческой дух; только род или образ выражения зависит от особливой организации человека. [...] сочинение творческаго духа (Genies), и важное и шуточное, есть образ нежно-организованной души, и возбуждает в читателе новыя приятныя чувства; истина и красота есть основание онаго.[447]

Here, art is effectively naturalised and presented as the outward expression of the inner structure of human subjectivity. It serves as a vehicle for a pleasurable form of rational and emotional communication between individuals, a continuation of the processes of thinking and feeling by other means. Karamzin further underscored the intersubjective character of aesthetic experience by slightly amending Bouterwek's text. The German original of the quoted passage concludes as follows:

> Das Werk des Genies ist Abdruck der feiner organisirten Seele seines Meisters. Ernstlich oder spaslich lebt es immer von Wahrheit, Schönheit und Gefühl [The work of the genius is an imprint of the finely organised soul of its author. Serious or playful, it always lives by truth, beauty and feeling].[448]

Karamzin rendered these words into Russian with considerable accuracy, with one exception: while 'truth' and 'beauty' continued to be presented as inherent qualities of the work of art, 'feeling' was transformed into 'new agreeable feelings (новыя приятныя чувства)' which the work 'arouses (возбуждает) in the reader'. Karamzin thus appears to have considered it necessary, at this point, to shift the focus from creation back to reception, taking into account the audience and once again reaffirming the emotional and pleasurable character of aesthetic

[447] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 8, pp. 121, 123.
[448] Bouterwek, 'Apollo', pp. 13–4.

experience. As Bouterwek argued, the fullest form of this experience was provided by poetry, which, unlike the sciences and the other fine arts, was capable of combining the 'light' of reason with the 'warmth' of sensibility and thus engaging the whole human being:

> Философия и науки действуют только на разум, чувственныя искусства на одно сердце, а Поэзия на всю душу. В ней свет с теплотою соединяется.[449]

Without doubt, this 'anthropological' justification of the primacy of literature among other intellectual and artistic practices appealed to Karamzin. Overall, the concepts and arguments of aesthetics enabled him to theorise art as a legitimate and indispensable activity, anchored in and shaped by the intrinsic features, innate drives and aspirations of human beings. This claim, in turn, elevated the status of literature and of writers, and legitimised the sentimentalist focus on human sensibility.

Let us now draw some preliminary conclusions. The final decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the introduction of aesthetics in Russia. Its dominant form was anthropological aesthetics, in which art was considered within the broader theorisation of human psychology and sensibility. This approach prioritised a sensualist understanding of the formation and nature of the self, closely resembling the model of subjectivity advanced in sentimentalist literature (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). In both cases, the subject was effectively constituted by perceptions of the external world and by inner experiences triggered by them. Sensibility was regarded as a key register of the self, through which sensory data were transformed into meaningful thoughts and feelings. In aesthetics, this model of the interaction between the self and the world explained how art was created and perceived. In sentimentalist fiction, the same model underpinned depictions of protagonists' inner lives and of their experiences of nature, art and other people. A self-conscious writer such as Karamzin could

[449] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 8, p. 129.

hardly have failed to recognise the correlation between aesthetic theory and literary practice. The next section examines how his foregrounding of the sensory and the agreeable was equally manifest in his works of fiction.

2. *The 'Right' and 'Wrong' Pleasures of Russian Sentimentalism: Between Self-Discipline and Self-Indulgence*

In his definition of aesthetics, Karamzin claimed that it teaches one 'to feel and enjoy (наслаждаться) the beautiful', presenting aesthetic experience as a pleasurable and almost sensual activity. In this section, I argue that one of Karamzin's crucial aims in the 1790s was to elaborate and promote a model of subjectivity centred on the idea of pleasure and the associated semantic field (including such terms as 'удовольствие', 'наслаждение', 'приятное' and others). He strategically employed the multilayered and ambiguous concept of pleasure to legitimise his provocative attempt to broaden significantly the range of morally and socially acceptable ways of thinking, feeling and acting available to the Russian educated classes. The result was the dissemination, in his own writings and in those of his numerous followers, of a model of the sensitive individual who seamlessly combined elevated religious and aesthetic sentiments with erotic affects and practices of fashionable consumption—and that was a very appealing and potent constellation.

As argued in Chapter 3, Karamzin's first original prose work, the meditative piece 'Progulka', published in the journal *Detskoe chtenie* in 1789, was informed by the pedagogical programme of the Moscow Freemasons, in which sense perception in general, and aesthetic contemplation of nature in particular, were instrumentalised as means of attaining moral and religious truth. The principal innovations Karamzin introduced into this model were a more emotional and subjective mode of narration and an extensive celebration of art, imagination and creativity. Another notable feature of the text is that, in depicting the narrator's walks,

meditations and reveries, the young writer accentuated the pleasurable emotions associated with them. Agreeable feelings are evoked by the season of the year: 'Никакое годовое время не бывает для меня так *приятно*, как весна'; by the contemplation of nature: 'с *удовольствием* смотрел я на множество белых паров, в виде столпов поднимавшихся от реки и ручьев'; by self-awareness: 'Чувство существования, в едином человеке на земле сей обитающее! [...] сколь возхитительно для меня думать, что я вечно буду тобою *наслаждаться*!'; and by the exercise of reason and imagination in contemplating the starry sky:

> Так мечтает распаленное воображение. Но сколько же и существенных *удовольствий* может влить в сердце картина нощнаго неба! Какое пространное поле открывается для действий моего разума![450]

Overall, the world depicted in 'Progulka' is filled with pleasures to be experienced by the protagonist, who ultimately arrives at their supreme cause, namely God. In this early text, Karamzin remains within a framework, also shared by Schwarz, in which sensory data from the external world processed by the self are endowed with an overarching moral and religious meaning. What became of this model during the years of *Moskovskii zhurnal*, when Karamzin began to give priority to sensuous pleasure over didacticism in his accounts of aesthetic experience? To answer this question, we must examine how he framed his literary project at that time and which concepts he chose to lend an appearance of coherence to the heterogeneous content of the journal in the eyes of its readers.

The first four parts of *Moskovskii zhurnal*—that is, half of all its issues—were published with an epigraph from Alexander Pope: 'Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes'.[451] The line is taken from Epistle II of *An Essay on Man*. In the immediately preceding verses, Pope argues that life consists of a mixture of pleasurable and painful emotions:

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[450] *Detskoe chtenie dlia serdtsa i razuma*, 18 (1789), pp. 161, 166, 168–9, 174. Emphasis added.
[451] A. N. Neustroev, *Istoricheskoe razyskanie o russkikh povremennykh izdaniiakh i sbornikakh za 1703–1802 gg.* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia tovarishchestva "Obshchestvennaia pol'za", 1874), p. 699.

> Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train,
> Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain;
> These mixed with art, and to due bounds confined,
> Make and maintain the balance of the mind.[452]

By quoting Pope, Karamzin reaffirmed the irreducible presence and accessibility of pleasures in a world designed by Providence. After publishing four parts of the journal with this epigraph, he issued the fifth with an engraved frontispiece, an allegorical composition featuring another quotation from the same Epistle: 'Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood, / Our greatest evil, or our greatest good'.[453] In the explication of the allegory published in the journal, these words were described as 'Надпись, Издателем Московскаго Журнала исповедуемая' and glossed as follows:

> Сия надпись взята из Попова Essay on Man, Ep. II. и значит: *Удовольствие, ложно или справедливо понимаемое, есть величайшее зло, или величайшее благо наше*.[454]

The fact that Karamzin framed his journal twice with quotations from *Essay on Man*, both referring to the notion of pleasure, underscores the significance of both the text and the concept for his strategy of self-representation.

What, then, was the meaning of the maxim 'professed by the publisher of *Moskovskii zhurnal*'? According to Pope, the human self is driven by two competing yet complementary forces—reason and self-love (with the passions as its modifications). Both seek to attain pleasure and are ultimately directed towards the same end; this alignment, in turn, derives from the harmony and order of the world created by a benevolent God:

> Two principles in human nature reign;
> Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain;
> Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,
> Each works its end, to move or govern all:

[452] Alexander Pope, *The Major Works*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 284.
[453] Apparently, the frontispiece is absent in many of the surviving copies of the journal, which is why it has been almost entirely ignored in scholarship. For its reproduction, see *Ispolin russkoi slovesnosti. K 250-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia Nikolaia Mikhailovicha Karamzina. Katalog vystavki* (Moscow: Pashkov dom, 2016), p. 12, as well as A. Iu. Samarin, 'N. M. Karamzin i chitatel'skaia auditoriia: kazus "Moskovskogo zhurnala"', *Bibliotekovedenie*, 66, 3 (2017), 323–33 (p. 327).
[454] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 5, 1 (January 1792), p. 149.

> And to their proper operation still,
> Ascribe all good; to their improper, ill.
> [...]
> Self-love and reason to one end aspire,
> Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire;
> But greedy that, its object would devour,
> This taste the honey, and not wound the flower:
> Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,
> Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.[455]

The natural consequence of this optimistic philosophy is the promotion of moderation: the rational must be counterbalanced by the emotional, while asceticism and licentiousness are to be avoided as extreme forms of behaviour.[456] Taken as a general principle, this view was fully in line with Masonic pedagogy and with Karamzin's 'Progulka', where, although he devoted ample space to pleasures derived from sensory experience, he was careful to emphasise their 'purity' and compatibility with higher moral and religious ends. The emphasis on the agreeable in aesthetic experience, however, suggested a new understanding of pleasure—not as an element in a larger scheme of things leading from earth to heaven, but as a distinct and self-sufficient feeling, highly valuable and attractive in itself. Almost an empty signifier, the word 'pleasure' was susceptible to redefinition, dependent, as Pope put it, on 'wrong' or 'right' interpretations; Karamzin exploited this semantic ambiguity to tacitly broaden the range of experiences regarded as reasonable and moderate pleasures.

To illustrate this point, let us turn to a piece of meditative prose entitled 'Derevnia. *Otryvok*', published in *Moskovskii zhurnal* in July 1792.[457] At first glance, this text—a first-person account of introspections, reveries and perceptions of the physical world—appears simply to follow the model of the earlier 'Progulka'. The narrator of 'Derevnia' wanders through nature and imagines a summer day spent on a fictitious country estate. As he enjoys

[455] Pope, *The Major Works*, pp. 282–3.
[456] On Pope's ambiguous attitude to pleasure, see David B. Morris, 'Pope and the Arts of Pleasure', in *The Enduring Legacy: Alexander Pope Tercentenary Essays*, ed. by G. S. Rousseau and Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 95–117.
[457] For its detailed analysis, see Gitta Hammarberg, *From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin's Sentimentalist Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 76–87.

the natural scenery, the narrator recalls his childhood in the countryside, invoking the edifying effect of a thunderstorm that instilled in him a sense of religion:

> Там воспитывался дух мой в простоте естественной; великие феномены Натуры были первым предметом его внимания. Удар грома, скатившийся над моею головою с небеснаго свода, сообщил мне первое понятие о величестве Мироправителя; и сей удар был основанием моей Религии.[458]

In this passage, the narrator emerges as the ideal child familiar from the pages of *Detskoe chtenie*: he adopts a mode of viewing nature that discerns, behind the veil of the physical world, the presence of its invisible Creator. As an adult, he continues to practise this way of seeing and interpreting the natural world. He imagines beginning a summer day with the contemplation of the rising sun, understood as a manifestation of God: 'Оно [the sun] есть покров и одежда невидимаго Божества'.[459] In a similar manner, at the end of the day, the narrator would watch the sunset, reflect on a virtuous life and address the Almighty.[460]

However, 'Derevnia' is not merely an exercise in natural theology. In this text, the self is not framed solely in religious and moral terms; alongside the contemplation of nature and of God, the narrator enjoys far more mundane activities. He attentively monitors his feelings and sensations and indulges in pleasurable practices of self-cultivation. One such practice is the consumption of agreeable ('приятны', 'приятен') products such as cream, raspberries and tea:

> Стакан густых, желтых сливок ожидает меня: как они *приятны* после утренней прогулки! [...]
>
> пробуждаюсь, и чувствую легкой жар в моей внутренности – услужливой садовник приносит мне корзинку с благовонною малиною – как *приятны*, освежительны сии сочные плоды щедрой Натуры! Ах! можно ли не любить ее за все то, чем она тешит и нежит человека! [...]
>
> Как *приятен* чай на чистом воздухе! вечерние ароматы льются ко мне в чашку.[461]

The narrator reacts even more enthusiastically to swimming and to the scent of flowers:

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[458] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 7, 1 (July 1792), p. 58.
[459] Ibid., p. 61.
[460] See Ibid., pp. 66–7.
[461] Ibid., pp. 62, 64, 66. Emphasis added.

> Ах! тот не знает одного из живейших чувственных удовольствий, кто в жаркое время никогда в реке не купался! [...]
>
> Когда сокроется дневное светило и вечерний мрак сгустится в пространстве воздуха, поди в оную темную рощу: там нервы твои затрепещут от небеснаго благоухания, и ты в сладостном упоении чувств воскликнешь: *Ангел на крылах ночи спустился в рощу!* Нет! сие благоухание изливается из оных колокольчиков, которые белеются в густой траве [...].[462]

Karamzin provides a detailed account of very ordinary yet agreeable actions, emphasising their sensuous character (cf., in particular, 'одного из живейших чувственных удовольствий' and 'нервы твои затрепещут'). These bodily pleasures are effectively equated with spiritual ones. The narrator is not portrayed as acting transgressively or as 'wrongly' interpreting the pleasures granted by a benevolent Providence. Rather, what is striking is the very triviality of the activities described. Karamzin expands the scope of the concept of pleasure by including in it practices that are morally unproblematic and harmless yet absolutely insignificant. The result is that Pope's theodicy, with its identification of the morally good with the reasonable and the pleasurable, is mobilised to promote a self-indulgent cultivation of sensibility. The leisurely pursuits of the refined landowner are thus presented as fully consonant with, and directly derived from, the immutable natural order of things.

A more radical expansion of the notion of sensuous pleasures was attempted by Karamzin in the prose piece 'Noch'', which appeared in *Moskovskii zhurnal* in February 1792. Written from a first-person perspective, it depicts a man awaiting the arrival of his beloved, Khloia, and their subsequent meeting. Formally, 'Noch'' resembles 'Progulka' and 'Derevnia': all three texts centre on the self and its sensations and sentiments prompted by the external world. Yet 'Noch'' is couched in the language of the idyll: it abounds in references to classical deities and purports to depict a distant and/or imaginary pastoral life. These literary conventions allow Karamzin to address openly the controversial subject of erotic experience and physical

[462] Ibid., pp. 63, 65.

sensibility. The text as a whole celebrates love as a universal life force, an abstract idea embodied in the particular example of a meeting between two lovers. By the standards of the time, the culminating scene offered an exceptionally explicit representation of sexual intercourse:

> Сердце мое бьется; я смотрю и слушаю – шорох приближается – разделяются ветьви – вечерняя роса обливает меня – и Хлоя в моих объятиях.
>
> Радость, восхищение, сладостное безмолвие – руки наши сплелися – уста трепещут, слипаются – я прижимаю Хлою к горячей груди моей – она меня к своей прижимает – густой мрак покрывает мои глаза – тонкое пламя обнимает все существо мое, переливается из нервы в нерву – ноги мои подгибаются – я плаваю, утопаю в сладостях – забываю самого себя – душа моя соединяется с душею Хлои – замирает – и мы лишаемся чувства…. Но бог любви, которой невидимо носился над нами, ниспустился, и светильником своим возжег во внутренности нашей потухший огонь жизни – тяжелый вздох вылетел из моего сердца, и мы пришли в себя – Купидон улыбнулся, и воспарил на вершину Олимпа.
>
> Хлоя устремляет на меня томный взор свой; две слезы катятся из глаз ея – она опускает голову на грудь мою – легкой ветерок провевает ея русые волосы – мирты осыпают нас млечным цветом своим – душа моя освежается – утихает волнение в крови моей – сердце мое покойно и весело – я обнимаю Хлою, питаю взоры свои открытыми ея прелестями, и благословляю Любовь всемогущую.[463]

In this passage, Karamzin depicts an overwhelming enjoyment (‘я плаваю, утопаю в сладостях’) grounded in bodily reactions (‘тонкое пламя обнимает все существо мое, переливается из нервы в нерву’, ‘тяжелый вздох вылетел из моего сердца’, ‘утихает волнение в крови моей’) and accompanied by sensual details (‘питаю взоры свои открытыми ея прелестями’). Were these the pleasures that, according to the journal’s epigraph, ‘are ever in our hands or eyes’? Given the idyllic mode of ‘Noch’’, it was always possible to dismiss the celebration and meticulous description—extending even to rhythmic and syntactic imitation—of premarital sex as a mere poetic licence devoid of transgressive intent. Such a reading would confine the imaginary world of shepherds to a separate realm, distinct from the real world to which Pope’s precepts apply. At the same time, Karamzin’s idyllic piece

[463] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 5, 2 (February 1792), pp. 275–7.

contains within it a vision of virtuous life embodied in the figure of a venerable and pious old man:

> Там, на отдаленном холмике, за пальмовой рощей, чернеется хижина добраго Акаста, в которой странники находят отдохновение, бедные помощь, печальные отраду. Там седой старец, Небу любезный, провождает щастливые дни свои среди детей, в добродетели ему подобных.[464]

In the fictional world of 'Noch'', virtue, blessed by Heaven, and eroticism, blessed by Cupid, coexist peacefully, and there is no suggestion that the one excludes the other. In miniature, Karamzin depicts a harmonious universe in which even the most sensual pleasures are not incompatible with morality and religion.

A similar, if slightly more modest, invocation of erotic pleasure appears in the story 'Natal'ia, boiarskaia doch'', published in the final volume of *Moskovskii zhurnal* in late 1792. Here Karamzin depicts in detail the development of erotic longing in a young woman, whose moods, dreams and even physical well-being are affected by what the narrator enthusiastically describes as '*потребность любить, любить, любить!!!*'.[465] The void is soon filled by Natal'ia's feelings for Aleksei, with mutual love emerging between them—somewhat irreverently—during their attendance at church services. Their elopement and marriage soon follow. Having reached their wedding night, the narrator pauses suspensefully, hinting at the physical excitement of the newlyweds while withholding a description of the scene itself, addressing instead the protagonists directly and imploring them to combine 'the highest pleasures of desire' with 'chastity':

> Молодой супруг возвратился к своей любезной — помог ей раздеться — сердца их бились — он взял ее за белую руку... Но скромная Муза моя закрывает белым платком лице свое

[464] Ibid., p. 273.
[465] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 8, 1–2 (October-November 1792), p. 35.

— ни слова!.. Священный занавес опускается, священный и непроницаемый для глаз любопытных!

А вы, щастливые супруги, блаженствуйте в сердечных восторгах под влиянием звезд небесных; но будьте целомудренны в самых высочайших наслаждениях страсти своей![466]

In all these texts, the concept of pleasure becomes far more expansive and diversified than in 'Progulka'. The conceptual framework of *Moskovskii zhurnal*, rather than fulfilling Pope's aim to 'vindicate the ways of God to Man',[467] ultimately serves to advance a case for secular values centred on self-serving leisure, consumption and sexuality.

This is not to suggest that Karamzin saw no tensions between the virtuous and the pleasurable. Indeed, his most famous work published in *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 'Bednaia Liza' (1792), may be read as a meditation on 'pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood'. In this text, Erast, influenced by his reading of fiction ('Он читывал романы, идиллии'), perceives Liza through the lens of the pastoral imagination and hopes to find in his relationship with the peasant girl the 'pure joys' of nature: 'Натура призывает меня в свои объятия, к чистым своим радостям'.[468] What he fails to recognise is the difference between the idyllic fictions of texts such as 'Noch'' and the actual morals and manners of the modern society in which he lives. Initially, he discovers 'pleasures' in his pure yet 'passionate friendship' with 'his shepherdess' Liza, opposing them to the 'high society' and the sensual 'voluptuousness' he had previously enjoyed:

Эраст восхищался своей пастушкой – так называл он Лизу – и видя, сколь она любит его, казался сам себе любезнее. Все блестящия забавы большаго света представлялись ему ничтожными в сравнении с теми удовольствиями, которыми *страстная дружба* невинной души питала сердце его. С отвращением помышлял он о презрительном сладострастии, которым прежде упивались его чувства.[469]

[466] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 8, 3 (December 1792), pp. 252–3.
[467] Pope, *The Major Works*, p. 272.
[468] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 6, 3 (June 1792), pp. 251–2.
[469] Ibid., p. 260.

Commenting on Erast's new attitude, the sceptical narrator adopts a moralising tone and invokes the Stoic (or Masonic) ideal of constant self-discipline and the complete subordination of the senses to the authority of reason:

> Безрасудной, молодой человек! знаешь ли ты свое сердце? Всегда ли можешь отвечать за свои движения? Всегда ли разсудок есть царь чувств твоих?[470]

This foreshadows Erast's inability to live up to his own fantasy, which ultimately leads him to seduce Liza. The passage depicting their sexual encounter closely resembles the analogous scene in 'Noch'':

> Эраст чувствовал необыкновенное волнение в крови своей – никогда Лиза не казалась ему столь прелестною – никогда ласки ея не трогали его так сильно – никогда ея поцелуи не были столь пламенны – она ничего не знала, ничего не подозревала, ничего не боялась – мрак вечера питал желания – ни одной звездочки не сияло на небе – никакой луч не мог осветить заблуждения – Эраст чувствует в себе трепет – Лиза также, не зная, от чего – не зная, что с нею делается… Ах Лиза, Лиза! где мать твоя? Где Ангел хранитель твой? Где – твоя невинность?[471]

Both passages are structured as evocative rhythmic sequences of sentences punctuated by dashes, and both attend closely to the physical manifestations of sexual arousal ('чувствовал необыкновенное волнение в крови своей', 'никогда ласки ея не трогали его так сильно', 'чувствует в себе трепет'). However, what in the idyllic setting appears as a mutual passion blessed by a classical deity of love is transformed, in the context of modern society, into a loss of 'innocence' unprevented by a Christian guardian angel. Subsequent events demonstrate that Erast, to invoke once again Pope's formulation, has indeed wrongly 'understood' the idea of 'pleasure', and it therefore becomes his 'greatest evil'.

Yet at the end of the story, Erast is not unequivocally condemned; the power of sympathy leads the narrator, as well as the implied and actual readers, to forgive both the depraved young man and the girl who commits suicide. As Iurii Lotman has argued, a departure

[470] Ibid., p. 261.
[471] Ibid., pp. 263–4.

from rigid moralism and a preference for leniency in judging human actions characterise Karamzin's literary works, in which he attributes human failings to an inherent 'weakness' that no one has the right to censure.[472] This mild attitude towards human behaviour accorded well with his rejection of overt didacticism in art. In this respect, the essay by Bouterwek translated by Karamzin is particularly illuminating, as it defends, against the attacks of 'moralists and critics', the representation of love as one of the chief aims of poetry and sharply condemns the 'moralistic pedantry (нравоучительное педантство)' that demands that poets invariably praise virtue:

> А ты, благочестивой моралист, перестань шуметь без пользы, и с сея минут откажись от смешнаго требования, чтобы Поэты не воспевали ничего, кроме добродетели![473]

After asserting the autonomy of literature from moral considerations, Bouterwek proceeds to define the specific nature of the pleasure derived from aesthetic contemplation, which in his account emerges as a distinctive form of experience that 'pleasantly' engages the human mental 'powers' while remaining 'innocent'. The purity of aesthetic experience, he argues, 'elevates the spirit' and draws human beings away from the 'low vices' associated with bestial sensuality:

> Поэзия есть роскошь сердца. Роскошь может быть вредна; но без нее человек беден. Что может быть невиннее, как наслаждаться изящным? Сие наслаждение возбуждает в нас чувство внутренняго благородства – чувство, которое удаляет нас от низких пороков. Благодарите, смертные, благодарите Поэзию, за то, что она возвышает дух и приятным образом напрягает силы ваши! Или – я буду жалеть о грубых тварях, хотящих быть наровне с зверями![474]

In this account, art is regarded as a readily accessible and harmless pleasure which, by serving as a medium for the representation of other, more sensuous pleasures, can also function as a powerful substitute for them. In this sense, Karamzin—who, it may be assumed, shared this

[472] Iu. M. Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina* (Moscow: Kniga, 1987), pp. 221–7.
[473] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 8 (October-November 1792), pp. 126, 130.
[474] Ibid., pp. 130–1.

view—primarily invited his audience to read about pleasurable activities rather than to actually practise them.

The question of art, pleasure and morality also had a social and economic dimension, as suggested by Bouterwek's metaphor of poetry as a 'luxury of the heart (*Poesie ist Luxus des Herzens*)'.[475] In eighteenth-century Europe, the concept of luxury stood at the centre of fierce debates about the nascent commercial economy and its beneficial or harmful effects on the morals and manners of modern societies.[476] Bouterwek clearly sided with the defenders of luxury, acknowledging its potential drawbacks but preferring it to poverty ('Роскошь может быть вредна; но без нее человек беден'). In doing so, he implicitly aligned himself with proponents of the civilising process, of which poetry was both a product and a driving force, contributing to the transformation of human beings from wild creatures into virtuous moral agents. In many of his original writings from the early 1790s, Karamzin similarly appears as an adherent of the idea of the mutual interdependence of material and moral progress in which art plays a significant role.[477] In *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, the traveller delights in the benefits of European commercial societies, exemplifying, as Joachim Klein has recently argued, an art of living devoted to the pursuit of refined pleasures.[478] Karamzin's case is representative of a broader trend. Although the Russian Empire did not undergo commercialisation on the scale witnessed in Western Europe, the eighteenth century nonetheless saw a significant exposure of the upper strata of society to fashionable material culture and the adoption of new social practices of leisure and consumption.[479] In the second half of the century, rising living

[475] Bouterwek, 'Apollo', p. 22.
[476] The literature on the question is vast. The Russian reception of the luxury debate is discussed in K. D. Bugrov and M. A. Kiselev, *Estestvennoe pravo i dobrodetel'. Integratsiia evropeiskogo vliianiia v rossiiskuiu politicheskuiu kul'turu XVIII veka* (Ekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo universiteta, 2016), pp. 207–70.
[477] Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina*, pp. 201–2.
[478] Joachim Klein, '"Iskusstvo zhit'" u Karamzina (*Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*)', in Klein, *Pri Ekaterine. Trudy po russkoi literature XVIII veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii Dom IASK, 2021), pp. 37–53.
[479] For a synthetic overview, see e.g. Andreas Schönle and Andrei Zorin, *On the Periphery of Europe, 1762–1825: The Self-Invention of the Russian Elite* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018), pp. 53–62.

standards among the higher nobility were combined with the right to withdraw from state service, resulting in the gradual emergence of a more autonomous sphere of culture and self-cultivation.[480] Fully embracing and contributing to this development, Karamzin, it may be argued, sought in his writings to articulate a model of subjectivity responsive to the new circumstances in which the affluent educated classes of Russian society found themselves.

Karamzin's approval of the ways of modern commercial societies, in which elites could enjoy prosperity and indulge in self-cultivation unconstrained by the asceticism of an unenlightened past, was articulated in both radical and moderate forms. As Lotman has demonstrated, in the early 1790s Karamzin at times deliberately described himself and behaved as a fop ('щеголь')—a freethinking, fashionable young man with an air of mild licentiousness in manners and judgement—and was indeed often perceived as such by his contemporaries.[481] In eighteenth-century Russian satire, the figure of the fop embodied the supposed vices of the new luxury lifestyle adopted by the Europeanised elite: irreligiosity, sexual promiscuity, extravagance, vanity.[482] By fashioning himself as a fop, Karamzin sought provocatively to normalise and legitimise at least some of the attitudes and practices condemned by more rigorous discourses prevalent among the Russian educated classes of the time, including traditional Orthodoxy, Rosicrucian Freemasonry, Neo-Stoic ethics of state service and republican critique of moral corruption. At the same time, as noted above, a movement away from moral rigorism and towards a more self-oriented and relaxed way of life was characteristic of the broader development of noble culture under Catherine II and was in part encouraged by

[480] Apart from Schönle and Zorin, *On the Periphery of Europe*, see V. M. Zhivov, 'Vremia i ego sobstvennik v Rossii rannego Novogo vremeni', in *Ocherki istoricheskoi semantiki russkogo iazyka rannego Novogo vremeni*, ed. by V. M. Zhivov (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2009), pp. 27–101; Joachim Klein, 'Sluzhba, len' i "sladostnyi dosug" v russkoi dvorianskoi kul'ture XVIII veka', in Klein, *Pri Ekaterine. Trudy po russkoi literature XVIII veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii Dom IASK, 2021), pp. 243–62.
[481] Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina*, pp. 202–9.
[482] V. I. Pokrovskii, *Shchegoli v satiricheskoi literature XVIII veka* (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1903).

the empress herself. In this context, Karamzin's evocative endorsement of moderate pleasures as a middle ground between the excesses of self-discipline and self-indulgence proved particularly appealing. In his writings, conspicuous consumption and light eroticism were reframed in such a way that the mundane pleasures arising from them were presented as compatible with the pure spiritual joys of aesthetic and religious contemplation of nature or with virtuous acts of charity, thereby bridging the gap between the secular everyday practices and experiences of the educated elite and their idealised self-perceptions and predominantly Christian moral codes.

Karamzin's attempt to reconcile Christian morality with the moderate pleasures of modern life found its fullest expression in his dialogue 'Razgovor o shchastii', published separately in 1797. In this text, he reiterated the principal arguments of Pope's *Essay on Man*, including the advice to seek a balance between reason and the passions and to avoid both the severe asceticism of the Stoics and the sensual hedonism of modern high society.[483] Karamzin argues that, in this divinely ordained world, everyone is capable of attaining happiness by following the 'precept' of Nature 'to work, live and enjoy': '*Трудись, живи и наслаждайся*, есть ея предписание'.[484] However, certain social 'stations' are more conducive to a blissful existence; if given the choice, the speaker in this dialogue would prefer to be either an independent farmer or a member of the middle classes:

> Самое ближайшее к Природе: состояние независимаго земледельца, которой умеренным трудом мог бы доставлять себе не только нужное для пропитания, но и некоторыя удобности в жизни; мог бы иметь светлую хиженку, маленькой садик, ум для внимания к премудрым действиям Натуры и чувствительное сердце для любви к милой подруге. Но как, по теперешнему учреждению гражданских обществ, едва ли не напрасно будем искать таких земледельцев: то самое лучшее есть для меня среднее состояние, между изобилием и недостатком, между знатностию и унижением – твое, мое. Смотря на великолепныя палаты, думаю: "здесь чувство слишком изнежено для сильнаго наслаждения!" Глядя на крестьянскую хижину, говорю себе: "здесь чувство слишком грубо для нежных наслаждений!" Но красивой, чистенькой домик всегда представляет моему воображению картину возможнаго щастия, особливо, когда вижу на окне цветы, а

[483] A. D. Galakhov, 'Karamzin, kak optimist', *Otechestvennye zapiski*, 116, 1, 1 (1858), 107–46.
[484] N. M. Karamzin, *Razgovor o shchastii* (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografiia, 1797), p. 64.

> под окном… миловидную женщину за рукодельем, за книгою, за арфою. Там, кажется мне, живет любовь и дружба, спокойствие и душевная веселость; там умеют наслаждаться Природою, Искусством и всеми истинными земными благами.[485]

This passage brings together several of the key themes and concepts discussed in this chapter. Karamzin reaffirms his conviction that a happy life entails love and the aesthetic appreciation of nature and art. He also acknowledges that this vision finds its fullest embodiment in the pastoral image of the independent farmer. At the same time, he soberly admits the impossibility of such a way of life in the 'present constitution of civil societies'. The idyllic imagination thus emerges as a projection of the idealised self-perception of members of the 'middling sort' of modern society. Karamzin's protagonist extols the opportunities for a happy life available to people of that class, among whom he includes himself and his interlocutor. In the European context, this apology for domesticity, conjugal love, friendship and the enjoyment of art and nature could be characterised as 'bourgeois'. Yet this was not so much a class-based ideology as, according to Sarah Maza, a response of the educated groups of society to the growth of social and economic inequality—widely associated with the moral corruption produced by 'luxury'—through the promotion of ideals of virtuous life, intimacy and compassion for the suffering of others.[486] Addressing the Russian audience, Karamzin rather referred to the landowning gentry as opposed to the aristocratic courtly elites. He offered them ways of thinking and patterns of feeling that enabled them to reconcile their leisurely lifestyle with internalised notions of duty and virtue. Through the concept of pleasure, their practices of self-cultivation were reinterpreted as the realisation of the precepts of nature and Providence.

[485] Ibid., pp. 68–70.
[486] Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 59–68. Cf. the promotion of conjugal happiness in Karamzin's *Pis'ma* as discussed in Andrew Kahn, 'Nikolai Karamzin's Discourses of Enlightenment', in Nikolai Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveller*, transl. by Andrew Kahn (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2004), pp. 459–551 (pp. 498–500, 511–3).

Karamzin's promotion of pleasures rooted in sensation, evident both in his occasional provocative eroticism and in his consistent celebration of the moderate enjoyments of earthly life, was quickly noticed and adopted by his contemporaries. As early as 1793, an anonymous contributor to the sentimentalist journal *Chtenie dlia vkusa, razuma i chuvstvovanii*, who published a translation of a French story containing a highly explicit depiction of sexual intercourse, clearly regarded Karamzin as his predecessor in erotic writing. In a footnote, the translator laments that he is unable fully to do justice to the original, which contains 'a lot of luxury, a lot of tender simplicity (много роскоши, много нежной простоты)', because he can 'express sensibility'—closely related here to sensuality—in life but not in writing, invoking Karamzin as the more accomplished author:

> Я могу иметь довольно чувствительности: но выражать чувствительность предоставляю своему сердцу в излиянии с другим, а не перу. Я держу перо слабо; держу как ученик. О! когда бы я имел дарования прекраснаго певца Аглаи (Аглая играет интереснейшую ролю в Московском Журнале) [...].[487]

In 1794, Vladimir Izmailov, a young author who would soon establish himself as one of the leading voices of Russian sentimentalism, published in the journal *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni* two prose pieces which, if combined, offered an account of the workings of both physical and moral sensibility. The first was a moving story of the death of a peasant girl with a 'sensitive heart (чувствительное сердце)', whose sudden passing profoundly affects the narrator, a young man of feeling ('чувствительным молодым человеком'), who is attentive enough to register in detail his bodily reactions at her funeral: 'Чувства мои ноют… трепет разливается по моим жилам… холодный пот покрывает меня…'.[488] In this case, human sensibility, though rooted in the body, is largely spiritualised as compassion in the face of death. Yet the second text, published shortly afterwards, playfully

[487] *Chtenie dlia vkusa, razuma i chuvstvovanii*, 12 (1793), p. 233.
[488] *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 2 (1794), pp. 103, 105, 109.

presents a very different aspect of sensibility, focusing on a handkerchief given to the narrator by his beloved. An encounter with her leaves the protagonist in a state of mental agitation and bodily excitement:

> от внутренней радости жилки во мне забились, затрепетало сердце: какая-то неизъяснимая сладость разлилась по всему составу.[489]

The gifted handkerchief becomes for him an object of fetishistic attachment which entertains his body and his imagination and which he—in a quite irreverent way—hopes to keep by his side even after the resurrection of the dead:

> Сей безыскуственной, но любовию электризованной платок, будет всегда носиться на груди, на шее, или — на душе моей. Белым полотном, огнем сердечнаго чувства согретым, буду я осушать мокрые от слез глаза мои; его буду прикладывать к болезненному моему сердцу, и лечить растравленныя в нем раны; им буду оживлять умирающую во мне надежду, утешение и чувство. [...] С ним буду засыпать, и просыпаться; здороваться, и прощаться. Им буду жить, дышать и питать себя; с ним, наконец, лягу я во гроб, и — может быть — возстану в вечности![490]

Taken together, the two texts encompass both the moralising and the hedonistic poles of sentimentalism. Numerous other adherents of Karamzin, among whom the most notorious was arguably Prince Petr Shalikov, soon followed with writings in which these two strands were combined, effectively blurring the boundary between displays of virtuous fellow feeling, piety and refined aesthetic sensibility, on the one hand, and the self-centred pursuit of trivial and often sensuous pleasures, on the other.

The provocative character of Karamzin's early writings, which decisively contributed to this shift in conceptions of the self, did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries. Many of his works—especially the short story 'Ostrov Borngol'm' (1793) with its depiction of incestuous love between siblings—scandalised the public.[491] Even a sympathetic reader such as Andrei

[489] Ibid., p. 127.
[490] Ibid., pp. 128–9.
[491] For recent discussions of the transgressive character of Karamzin's texts, see N. D. Kočetkova, 'Unausgesprochenes und Tabubrüche in Erzähltexten N. M. Karamzins', in *Empathie und Tabu(bruch) in Kultur, Literatur und Medizin*, ed. by Gabriela Lehmann-Carli (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2013), pp. 233–46; Andrew Kahn, 'Russian Literature between Classicism and Romanticism: Poetry, Feeling, Subjectivity', in *The Oxford Handbook*

Bolotov, writing about Karamzin in February 1795, reproached him for violating 'strict decency' in his erotic scenes:

> молодой и милой сей сочинитель, при всех совершенствах слога своего, имел за собою тот порок, что делал иногда излишние шаги за пределы строгой благопристойности, и особливо в сценах, до любострастия относящихся.[492]

In conservative circles dominated by Freemasons, Karamzin was openly accused of obscenity, as well as of liberalism, atheism and support for the French Revolution.[493] The fiercest attack of this kind was a poem published in 1799 by the influential Freemason and high-ranking state official Pavel Golenishchev-Kutuzov. It was written as an address to a friend whose virtuous qualities are defined negatively through the description and rejection of the views expressed by Karamzin (numerous quotations from his works are italicised in the text). The poem criticises Karamzin's re-evaluation of sensuous pleasures, accuses him of corrupting youth and undermining the institution of marriage through 'voluptuous' writings ('Картин не пишешь сладострастных') and instead upholds traditional Stoic and Christian precepts advocating the strict subjugation of the passions as the key to happiness ('Твердишь, что страсти побеждая, / К блаженству путь легко найти').[494] Remarkably, in his denunciations Golenishchev-Kutuzov ignores the gap between the celebration of moderation and domesticity in Karamzin's 'Razgovor o shchastii' and the transgressive eroticism of the idyllic 'Noch'', as the poem condemns both texts in a single breath:

> Не мнишь, что там сие блаженство,
> *Где на окне горшок цветов*;
> Не мнишь, что мир и совершенство

of European Romanticism, ed. by Paul Hamilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 493–511 (pp. 496–8).

[492] N. V. Guberti, *Istoriko-literaturnye i bibliograficheskie materialy* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia Iu. N. Erlich, 1887), p. 23.

[493] For an overview of the documented reactions of contemporaries to Karamzin's writings, see N. D. Kochetkova, 'Chitatel'skie otkliki na publikatsii Karamzina v Rossii XVIII veka', in *«A Century Mad and Wise»: Russia in the Age of the Enlightenment*, ed. by Emmanuel Waegemans and others (Groningen: Netherlands Russia Center, 2015), pp. 11–20.

[494] *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia*, 4 (1799), pp. 22–3, 27.

Найдешь ты с Хлоей меж кустов.[495]

In any case, Karamzin is portrayed as a libertine who threatens the moral foundations of society.

Even if Golenishchev-Kutuzov's animosity towards Karamzin was personal and atypical, many of his arguments were echoed by other conservative critics of modernity. Arguably the most perceptive among them was another prominent Freemason and state official, Dmitrii Runich, who had known Karamzin personally in the 1790s and admired him as a writer. In memoirs written in the 1840s, however, he discusses Karamzin in terms strikingly similar to those of Golenishchev-Kutuzov, claiming that the writer morally and politically corrupted the younger generation through the combined allure of debauchery and freethinking:

> Он превозносил в своих стихах наслаждения, доставляемые Вакхом и Венерою, в слишком восторженных красках для молодежи, которая уже стремилась свергнуть иго строгого религиозного воспитания. [...] Он писал о том, чего никто не говорил до него. Новизна и увлекательность его слога доставили ему многочисленных читателей. Молодежь, всегда пылкая и увлекающаяся, стала под его эротическое, вакхическое и либеральное знамя.[496]

Whatever the validity of this assertion, it is indicative of the contemporary perception of a link between the moral laxity of Karamzin's sentimentalism and the waning of 'strict religious education', both seen as signs of a broader transformation in the practices, beliefs and attitudes of the educated Russian elites, driven by processes of modernisation and the rise of the commercial economy with its fashions and luxuries. Russian literature of sensibility responded and contributed to these shifts by disseminating models of subjectivity that legitimised the pleasurable lives of the beneficiaries of this social order.

3. Inventing the Sentimental Author: Professional Identity and Private Sensibility

[495] Ibid., p. 23.
[496] 'Iz zapisok D. P. Runicha', transl. by V. V. Timoshchuk, *Russkaia starina*, 105, 1 (January 1901), 47–77 (pp. 50–1). The French original of the memoirs was never published.

In addition to showing how an exemplary sensitive individual feels and acts, Karamzin was concerned with giving his readers a more precise understanding of what it means to be an author and of the roles writers play in modern societies. As Joachim Klein has argued, Karamzin carefully and consistently crafted an image of himself as a professional writer, independent of the obligations of state service and committed to promoting the common good.[497] More recently, Andrei Zorin and Elena Korchmina have demonstrated that he was indeed a commercially successful author (a great rarity in Russia at the time) whose remuneration from his writings at the height of his literary career far exceeded his other sources of income.[498] At the same time, as Iurii Lotman insightfully observed, a fundamental discrepancy existed between the fact that Karamzin 'turned literature into a profession' and his self-declared 'dilettantism'.[499] To this tension between the perception of writing as a pastime and the formation of a professional literary field was added a related one between the steady commercialisation of literature and the simultaneous rise of aesthetics with its insistence on the autonomy of art.

In all these developments, the figure of the author assumed crucial importance. Following the lead of Michel Foucault's seminal essay, scholars have linked the emergence, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, of modern notions of authorship and copyright to developments in publishing and bookselling practices.[500] It has been argued that in late eighteenth-century Germany the spread of the concepts of genius and originality as attributes of the author corresponded to the dramatic expansion of the literary market and the

[497] Joachim Klein, 'Mezhdu Apollonom i Fortunoi: Karamzin-pisatel' v sotsiologicheskoi perspektive', in Klein, *Pri Ekaterine. Trudy po russkoi literature XVIII veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom IASK, 2021), pp. 17–36.
[498] Elena Korchmina and Andrei Zorin, 'Karamzin and Money', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 59, 1 (2018), 117–40.
[499] Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina*, p. 200.
[500] Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', transl. by Josué V. Harari, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 101–20; Roger Chartier, 'Figures of the Author', in Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, transl. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 25–59 (p. 32).

reading public.[501] The sharp rise in demand for books and the proliferation of pirated editions made it necessary to introduce a new legal framework to regulate the nascent industry and to ground it in a new theory of artistic creativity, which ultimately led to the emergence of copyright law. As Roger Chartier puts it,

> in the latter half of the eighteenth century a somewhat paradoxical connection was made between a desired professionalization of literary activity (which should provide remuneration in order for writers to live from their writings) and the authors' representation of themselves in an ideology of literature founded on the radical autonomy of the work of art and the disinterestedness of the creative act.[502]

In this context, as John McCarthy has argued, many authors sought to find a middle ground between the constraints of the old patronage system and the demands of the literary market. They were reluctant to become either 'the court poet' or 'the literary day labourer' and instead upheld 'intellectual independence', 'a sense of self worth and dignity of purpose' and 'a desire to advance human perfection through critical thought and refined sentiment'.[503] This section argues that a similar set of contradictory aspirations shaped Karamzin's attempts to imagine a model of the sentimentalist author. Such a figure could be conceived either as a professional seeking to live by his pen, as an exceptional creative personality shunning the world of rank and wealth, or simply as a sensitive individual just like any of his readers.

The vision of the writer as a professional comes to the fore in *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, where, as Andrew Kahn has argued, Karamzin offers a detailed account of European social and cultural practices and institutions, including the new position occupied by writers dependent on commercial success and favourable public opinion.[504] *Pis'ma* are replete with visits to the great authors of the age, scenes of literary tourism and informed discussions

[501] Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*, pp. 35–55.
[502] Chartier, 'Figures of the Author', p. 37.
[503] John A. McCarthy, 'Rewriting the Role of the Writer: On the 18th Century as the Age of the Author', *Leipziger Jahrbuch zur Buchgeschichte*, 5 (1995), 13–37 (p. 19).
[504] Kahn, 'Nikolai Karamzin's Discourses of Enlightenment', pp. 510–1.

of books, periodicals and the conditions of their production, dissemination and reception. In a letter published in July 1791, Karamzin commented on the emergence of copyright in the German publishing industry. According to him, a writer's ownership of his work is recognised only through a contract which, at the same time, transfers that right from the author to the publisher. The importance of such agreements, and of the acts of buying and selling manuscripts, is so great for the German economy that the book trade requires a 'specific and strict' law to regulate its functioning. At present, however, the literary field operates not on the basis of legal obligations but according to implicitly accepted rules and norms of conduct: pirated publishers are regarded as 'dishonoured' rather than as criminals:

> Книгопродавцы изо всей Германии съезжаются в Лейпциг на ярманки [...] и меняются между собою новыми книгами. Безчестными почитаются из них те, которые перепечатывают в своих типографиях чужия книги, и делают через то подрыв тем, которые купили манускрипты у Авторов. Германия, где книжная торговля есть едва ли не самая важнейшая, имеет нужду в особливом и строгом для сего законе.[505]

By offering a detailed account of the German situation, Karamzin tacitly invited his readers to reflect on the Russian one. In fact, the gradual formation of copyright as an institution in Russia was already under way at that time. Although the first official recognition of authorial ownership of literary works did not occur until 1828, and even then constituted only a preliminary step towards the elaboration of a legal framework for intellectual property, established protocols for the transfer of rights from author to publisher were already in place in the final decades of the eighteenth century.[506] In other words, in Russia, as in Germany, notions of authorship and copyright were at least partly derived from the practices of buying, selling and printing manuscripts. In the absence of relevant state legislation, agents of the literary field

[505] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 3, 1 (July 1791), pp. 44–5. Cf. Karamzin, *Pis'ma*, p. 65.
[506] A. I. Reitblat, 'Stanovlenie avtorskogo prava', in Reitblat, *Kak Pushkin vyshel v genii. Istoriko-sotsiologicheskie ocherki o knizhnoi kul'ture Pushkinskoi epokhi* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), pp. 108–16 (esp. pp. 109–10). On the development of the professional literary field in Russia, see also William Mills Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin: Ideology, Institutions, and Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); Irina Reyfman, *How Russia Learned to Write: Literature and the Imperial Table of Ranks* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2016), ch. 1.

entered into numerous contractual agreements, collectively generating the rules and norms essential to the functioning of that very field. Karamzin's discussion of copyright rooted in the book trade represented for the Russian public less the presentation of radically new information than the explication and rationalisation of already existing practices. It was an act of making visible the professional and commercial foundations of the literary public sphere.

Yet in *Pis'ma*, writers' rights to their texts were not merely asserted in theory but also enacted in practice. A letter published in December 1791 recounts Karamzin's conversation with the renowned Swiss author Johann Kaspar Lavater, who expressed an interest in publishing his works in Russia. Acting in accordance with the very norms of literary conduct discussed a few issues of *Moskovskii zhurnal* earlier, Karamzin's semi-fictional alter ego enters, in his capacity as publisher, into an agreement with the Swiss pastor, as author. Although this arrangement was hardly legally binding, it is couched in the language of a business agreement: 'я принял Лафатерово предложение, и мы ударили с ним по рукам'.[507] The surviving correspondence between Karamzin and Lavater testifies that the former did indeed explore various possibilities for the dissemination of the latter's writings in Russia.[508] More important, however, is Karamzin's decision to represent these professional interactions on the pages of his journal, thereby rendering the inner workings of the modern institution of literature transparent to a broader reading public.

Even more telling in this respect is another episode from *Pis'ma*. When meeting the philosopher Charles Bonnet, the traveller discusses with him the prospect of publishing his work in Russian translation. Bonnet seizes the opportunity to advance an expansive understanding of copyright that encompasses not only the original text and the right to transform

[507] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 4, 3 (December 1791), pp. 291–2. Cf. Karamzin, *Pis'ma*, pp. 115–6.
[508] See Karamzin, *Pis'ma*, pp. 495–8.

it from manuscript into printed edition but also its translation into other languages. By seeking the author's permission for the Russian translation, the traveller accepts these norms of literary commerce, distinguishing himself favourably from his English and German counterparts:

> Боннет позволил мне переводить его сочинения на Руской язык. [...] Ему неприятно, что на Английской и Немецкой язык переведено *Разсматривание Натуры* без его ведома. *Когда Автор еще жив*, сказал он, *то надлежало бы у него спроситься*.[509]

Following the meeting, both parties confirmed their intentions in an exchange of letters, which was reproduced in full in *Pis'ma* both in the French original and in Russian translation. The publication of these letters enabled Karamzin to further illuminate negotiations and agreements as the hidden foundation of the modern literary field. In his account, the institution of copyright appears as an unstable set of norms and practices reproduced, so to speak, manually, through the face-to-face interactions of private individuals. The appearance of the works of Lavater or Bonnet in Russia requires personal contact with the authors, and the translation is legitimised by the sheer fact of acquaintance between author and translator. As Karamzin wrote to Bonnet: 'Предлагая публике перевод мой, скажу: *я видел его самого*, и читатель позавидует мне в сердце своем'.[510] At the same time, the account of the negotiations with Bonnet foregrounds the materiality of print culture as the indispensable basis of the entire edifice of the literary public sphere. Intellectual property, ostensibly the product of creative genius bearing the mark of its author's subjectivity, is shown to depend on the design and manufacture of books, the labour of proofreading and the transportation of physical copies from printing houses to libraries:

> Он хотел знать, во сколько времени могу перевести Contemplation, в какой формат буду печатать сию книгу, и сам ли стану читать корректуру? [...] Он хочет, чтобы я прислал к нему два экземпляра перевода моего: один для его собственной, а другой для Женевской публичной библиотеки.[511]

[509] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 6, 3 (June 1792), pp. 342–3. Cf. Karamzin, *Pis'ma*, pp. 168–9.
[510] Ibid.
[511] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 7, 1 (July 1792), pp. 16–7. Cf. Karamzin, *Pis'ma*, p. 173.

On the other hand, in depicting his interactions with Bonnet, Karamzin contributed to his own self-fashioning. One strategy he employed to this end was the creation of striking discrepancies between the French originals and the Russian translations of their exchange of letters. While dismissing as mere politeness and declining to translate the opening of Bonnet's reply, in which Bonnet praised the French of the Russian traveller ('Начало письма есть ничто иное, как одна Французская учтивость'), he did not omit it entirely; indeed, his comment may well have drawn the readers' attention to it.[512] This is characteristic of Karamzin's strategy of self-representation with its interplay between false modesty and outright self-promotion. More revealing still is his translation of another passage from Bonnet's letter: 'Автор будет вам весьма благодарен за то, что вы познакомите с его сочинениями такую нацию, которую он уважает'.[513] In the French original, however, Bonnet does not express his 'respect' for the Russians, but characterises them as a nation 'very susceptible to instruction' and adds—evidently on the basis of what Karamzin himself had told him—that Karamzin 'desires to enlighten' it out of 'patriotism':

> un honneur auquel l'Auteur sera extrêmement sensible, celui d'être connus d'une Nation que votre patriotisme désire d'éclairer, et qui est très susceptible d'instruction.[514]

Only those readers of *Moskovskii zhurnal* who knew French were able to appreciate the extent of Karamzin's half-veiled ambitions—which amounted to nothing less than a top-down enlightenment of the entire nation, with the young writer assuming a role comparable to that of Peter the Great or Catherine II and instructing the people in the name of the patriotic common good—while less educated readers were spared this provocation. In any case, though, the figure of the author engaged in such distinctive professional activities was clearly set apart from that of the ordinary individual.

[512] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 6, 3, p. 353. Cf. Karamzin, *Pis'ma*, p. 172.
[513] *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 6, 3, p. 354.
[514] Ibid., p. 352.

All this would seem to suggest that the main thrust of Karamzin's reflections on the figure of the author lay in the unambiguous recognition and articulation of the writer's professional identity. Yet the epigraph to the sixth volume of *Moskovskii zhurnal*, in which Karamzin's account of his interactions with Bonnet was published, complicates the matter by introducing another perspective on modern authorship. Taken from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, it asserts that 'the status of an author' can be 'illustrious and respectable' only if it is not a profession: 'J'ai toujours senti que l'état d'auteur n'était, ne pouvait être illustre & respectable qu'autant qu'il n'était pas un métier'.[515] At first glance, this statement appears to undermine Karamzin's efforts to professionalise literature. A closer examination, however, reveals a more nuanced position. The quotation is drawn from a passage in Rousseau's *Les Confessions* where he reflects on his decision not to rely on remuneration for his writings but instead to earn his living as a copyist. As Geoffrey Turnovsky has argued, Rousseau simultaneously embraced the new opportunities offered by the expanding book trade and was anxious about the negative effects of the commercialisation of culture.[516] According to Rousseau, authorial independence is achieved by distancing oneself from the demands of the literary market. Such independence enables the writer to avoid catering to the corrupted tastes of the general public and instead to promote the common good. In a final and characteristic paradox, however, the rejection of market imperatives results in the creation of authentic and unalienated works that, by virtue of their disinterestedness, become bestsellers:

> Non, non, j'ai toujours senti que l'état d'auteur n'étoit, ne pouvoit être illustre & respectable qu'autant qu'il n'étoit pas un métier. Il est trop difficile de penser noblement quand on ne pense que pour vivre. Pour pouvoir, pour oser dire de grandes vérités, il ne faut pas dépendre de son succès. Je jetois mes livres dans le public avec la certitude d'avoir parlé pour le bien commun, sans aucun souci du reste. [...] Mon métier pouvoit me nourrir si mes livres ne se vendoient pas, & voilà précisément ce qui les faisoit vendre.[517]

[515] Neustroev, *Istoricheskoe razyskanie*, p. 699.
[516] Geoffrey Turnovsky, 'The Enlightenment Literary Market: Rousseau, Authorship, and the Book Trade', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 36, 3 (2003), 387–410.
[517] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Collection des oeuvres*, vol. 16 (Geneva: [n.p.], 1789), pp. 186–7.

This model of authorship, in which commercial success is acknowledged yet the writer's works and strategies are not subordinated to a narrow economic rationality aimed at profit maximisation, appears crucial for interpreting Karamzin's literary career and, more broadly, for understanding the development of the Russian literary field, which cannot be reduced to a unidirectional transition from patronage to market.[518]

The aspiration to become a professional writer should not be conflated with either the desire or the necessity to live solely by the pen. On the contrary, the idea of the author as an exceptional, naturally gifted and highly moral individual advancing the common good through writings that reveal his tender heart and noble soul to a sympathetic readership rejects the unreserved pursuit of self-interest at the expense of dignity and good taste. At the same time, however, it relies on the commercial book trade to disseminate such writings to a broad, anonymous public. This conception of authorship informs Karamzin's essay 'Chto nuzhno avtoru?' (1794), which explores the relationship between the writer's self and his works. According to Karamzin, a reader deduces the personal qualities of an author—his moral attitudes, emotions and reactions—from the text. The author must be sensitive, compassionate and committed to the common good ('неограниченное *желание всеобщаго блага*'); in that case, his moral sensibility, mediated through his texts, will suffice to ensure that his writings gain the recognition of the reading public and are therefore deemed good: 'дурной человек не может быть хорошим Автором'.[519] The essay foregrounds morality and sensibility at the expense of attention to the writer's social status and to the intrinsic qualities of the work of art. Instead, Karamzin reiterates his emphasis on agreeable sensations as the hallmark of aesthetic experience:

[518] For a classic later articulation of the same tension between artistic autonomy and the commercial treatment of the work of art as a commodity, see Aleksandr Pushkin's poem 'Razgovor knigoprodavtsa s poetom' (1824).
[519] *Aglaia*, vol. 1 (Moscow: v Universitetskoi Tipografii, 1794), pp. 29, 31.

> искусства, которое должно заниматься одним *изящным*, изображать красоту, гармонию, и распространять в *области чувствительнаго* приятныя впечатления.[520]

Karamzin returned to the question of the economic pressures faced by writers, while continuing to promote refined sensibility as the essential attribute of the author, in several lengthy poems published between 1797 and 1799 in the almanac *Aonidy*. The editing of the three volumes of this almanac marked a turning point in Karamzin's literary career, as he shifted the orientation of his poetry from German and English models to predominantly French ones.[521] He now sought to transfer to Russia the tradition of French *poésie fugitive*, which was closely intertwined with practices of mondaine sociability and for which the almanac, with its culture of intimacy and portable format, provided a perfect medium.[522] As Walter Moser has argued, French *poésie fugitive* was grounded in a sensualist epistemology that conceived of the human subject as shaped by sensory experience of the external world.[523] The sensualist framework, which prioritised sensibility as the defining attribute of humanity and regarded the perpetual flux and variety of sense perceptions as the dominant mode of the self's existence, was a feature shared by *poésie fugitive* and sentimentalism. Building on this elective affinity, Karamzin reformulated many of his earlier concerns, including his preoccupation with the figure of the author, in the idiom of witty and worldly salon poetry. All three volumes of *Aonidy*, published between 1796 and 1799, appeared with the same epigraph: 'Chérissons le rival qui peut nous surpasser; / Montrez moi mon vainqueur, & je cours l'embrasser'.[524] The lines were taken from Nicolas Chamfort's poem 'L'Homme de lettres. Discours philosophique en vers' (1765), a

[520] Ibid., p. 28.
[521] For more on this shift, see Anthony Cross, 'Problems of Form and Literary Influence in the Poetry of Karamzin', *Slavic Review*, 27, 1 (1968), 39–48.
[522] For more on this, see A. L. Zorin, '"Vsled shestvuia Anakreonu…"', in *Tsvetnik. Russkaia legkaia poeziia kontsa XVIII – nachala XIX veka* (Moscow: Kniga, 1987), pp. 5–53.
[523] Walter Moser, 'De la signification d'une poésie insignifiante: examen de la poésie fugitive au XVIIIe siècle et de ses rapports avec la pensée sensualiste en France', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 94 (1972), 277–415.
[524] Neustroev, *Istoricheskoe razyskanie*, pp. 801–2.

lengthy reflection on writers and on the opportunities and challenges of their role in society.[525] In what follows, I offer a reading of Karamzin's two metaliterary poems from *Aonidy* through the lens of this French text, which the Russian writer himself chose as a framework for his new publishing project.

The poem 'K bednomu poetu', published in 1797 in the second volume of *Aonidy*, takes for granted that the poet is invariably deprived of substantial wealth or power and argues that nature compensates for this deficiency by endowing the creative mind with intellect, refined sensibility and talent:

> Природа, любит награждать
> Нещастных пасынков Фортуны:
> Дает им ум, сердечный жар,
> Искусство петь, чудесный дар
> Вливать огонь в златыя струны,
> Сердца гармонией пленять.
> Ты сей безценный дар имеешь [...].[526]

Endowed with such a disposition, the poet may find solace in the contemplation of natural beauty, with aesthetic experience emerging as a form of imaginative possession of the perceived objects:

> Взгляни на солнце, свод небесный,
> На свежий луг, для глаз прелестный;
> [...]
> Поэт! Натура вся твоя.
> В ея любезном сердцу лоне
> Ты царь на велелепном троне.[527]

On the other hand, the poet may also derive enjoyment from the play of his own imagination:

> Мой друг! существенность бедна:
> Играй в душе своей мечтами,
> Иначе будет жизнь скучна.[528]

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[525] *Oeuvres de Chamfort*, vol. 3 (Paris: l'Imprimerie des Sciences et Arts, L'an 3 de la République [1795]), pp. 356–69 (p. 369).
[526] *Aonidy, ili Sobranie raznykh, novykh stikhotvorenii*, vol. 2 (Moscow: V Universitetskoi Tipografii, 1797), pp. 35–6.
[527] Ibid., p. 36.
[528] Ibid., p. 38.

Karamzin even claims that these modest pleasures of the imagination are in fact more enduring than the sensuous pleasures pursued by the wealthy, whose sensibility is exhausted by excessive luxury:

> Душа их в роскоши истлела,
> Подобно камню онемела
> Для чувства радостей земных.
> Избыток благ и наслажденья
> Есть хладный гроб воображенья.[529]

In many respects, the consolation offered to poor poets by Karamzin follows the line of argument advanced in Chamfort's poem. The French author similarly regards wealth as a threat to the writer's 'sensibility':

> Fuyez: qu'attendez-vous? une vaine richesse?
> Ce vil présent du sort serait trop acheté;
> Vos cœurs perdraient, hélas! leur sensibilité [...].[530]

Happiness is to be sought in the depths of the writer's self, whose soul is the source of its own pleasures:

> [...] cette ame immense
> Qui sait trouver en soi sa plus vive existence,
> [...]
> De ses propres plaisirs n'est-elle pas la mère?[531]

Just as in Karamzin's poem, sensibility and imagination enable the self to engage deeply with the natural world and even to become the possessor of the entire universe:

> Tout n'appartient-il pas au mortel né sensible?
> Il est de l'Univers possesseur invisible:
> [...]
> Tout est vivant pour lui: son ame active et pure
> Existe dans chaque être, et remplit la nature,
> [...]
> Un autre don du Ciel ornera votre vie.
> Imagination, compagne du Génie [...]![532]

[529] Ibid., p. 39.
[530] *Oeuvres de Chamfort*, vol. 3, p. 358.
[531] Ibid., p. 366.
[532] Ibid., p. 367.

In short, both Chamfort and Karamzin imagine the poet as a gifted man of feeling and, in response to social inequalities, promote aesthetic engagement with nature and the enjoyment of the self as means of achieving happiness available to every sensitive individual.

A similar understanding of the poet's creative self as rooted in sensory experience is articulated in Karamzin's poem 'Protei, ili Nesoglasiia stikhotvortsa' (1798), published in the third volume of *Aonidy*. The text seeks to explain the ever-changing and self-contradictory nature of the attitudes and opinions expressed by an author. According to Karamzin, the reason lies in the sensory origin of our ideas. Shaped by the perception of variegated Nature, the mind cannot but register and reflect—for Karamzin compares it to the Lockean blank slate and to a mirror—the multitude of impressions received from the external world:

> Чувствительной душе не сродно ль изменяться?
> Она мягка как воск, как зеркало ясна,
> И вся Природа в ней с оттенками видна.
> Не льзя ей для тебя *единою* казаться
> В *разнообразии* естественных чудес.[533]

Once again, the sensualist conception of the self and its interaction with nature recalls Chamfort's poem, which offers a description of how the variety of natural marvels is apprehended by poetic genius:

> Le Génie [...]
> Parcourt avidemment [...]
> La nature et ses jeux, ses travaux, ses caprices,
> Miracles échappés à ses mains créatrices [...].[534]

Yet Karamzin is far more radical in his conclusions. By the end of the poem, he arrives at the view that, in this world, we have no access to absolute truth; that the ideas and emotions derived from sensory perception of external objects are inconsistent and do not convey any substantial

[533] *Aonidy, ili Sobranie raznykh, novykh stikhotvorenii*, vol. 3 (Moscow: V Universitetskoi Tipografii, 1798–1799), pp. 325–6.
[534] *Oeuvres de Chamfort*, vol. 3, pp. 367–8.

knowledge of things in themselves; and that, in such a situation, art is left with the task of simply expressing these contradictory feelings in a manner that is pleasant, moving and entertaining:

> Противоречий сих в порок не должно ставить
> Любимцам нежных Муз; их дело выражать
> Оттенки разных чувств, не мысли соглашать;
> Их дело не решить, но трогать и забавить.
> Здесь сердце говорит, но истина нема;
> Поэты делают язык его нам внятным —
> И сердцу одному он должен быть приятным.
> [...]
> Предметы разный вид имеют здесь для нас:
> С которой стороны они явятся взору,
> И чувству таковы.[535]

As for Chamfort, his sensualism did not evolve into relativism. Instead, he encouraged writers to disseminate examples of virtue for the benefit of humanity: 'L'exemple des vertus est la dette du Sage: / Ses écrits sont un don fait à l'humanité'.[536] But even if Karamzin's poems of the late 1790s are marked by irony and scepticism, in many of his other works he likewise insists on the link between authorship and morality.

The single most important feature of Karamzin's stance on the role of art and the nature of the artist is its profound ambiguity. His depictions of the exemplary sensitive self and of the model author are marked by (self-acknowledged) contradictions. In both cases, he is not entirely free from the constraints of religion and morality, as he does not lose sight of the higher ends of human life and activities. At the same time, Karamzin places the pursuit of predominantly moderate, though occasionally transgressive, pleasures in which the body plays no less significant a role than the mind at the centre of his accounts of aesthetic experience and everyday life in modern society. He stages his authorial persona as a professional writer, yet resists the total subordination of literature to the demands of the literary market, balancing his

[535] *Aonidy, ili Sobranie raznykh, novykh stikhotvorenii*, vol. 3, pp. 354–6.
[536] *Oeuvres de Chamfort*, vol. 3, p. 361.

engagement with questions of copyright and the book trade against a sustained emphasis on the writer's creative personality.

Karamzin's equation of the good author with the sensitive person opened the way for the celebration of the unique individuality of the artist's self, anticipating Romanticism and the eventual recognition of aesthetic autonomy. On the other hand, it implied that anyone possessed of refined sensibility might become a writer. Russian sentimentalist literature produced in imitation of Karamzin was largely amateur in character, treating art as a means rather than as an end. As Andrei Zorin has observed, the understanding of literature as 'a school of sensibility', in which 'patterns of feeling and behaviour' are inculcated, downplays the autonomy of the literary work: sentimentalism 'regards the author and the reader as joined together by an emotional union established by and through the text that, in its turn, plays only this auxiliary mediating role'.[537] Notwithstanding the efforts of a few professional authors who contributed to the emergence of the Russian literary field, in the majority of cases the literature of sensibility functioned as a self-effacing vehicle for shaping imagined communities of sympathetic readers with shared attitudes and collective identities. It is this cultural function of Russian sentimentalism that will be the subject of the next chapter.

[537] Andrei Zorin, 'A Reading Revolution? The Concept of the Reader in the Russian Literature of Sensibility', in *Reading Russia. A History of Reading in Modern Russia*, ed. by Damiano Rebecchini and Rafaella Vassena, vol. 3 (Milan: Ledizioni, 2020), pp. 219–33 (p. 220).

Chapter 5.
Memory, Space and the Imagined Communities of Russian Sentimentalism

Some of the preceding chapters of this thesis focused on the ways in which the individual self came to be imagined in Russian sentimentalist literature. Detailed depictions of interiority became a key preoccupation of the genre of sentimentalist meditative prose, and I discussed how the human subject in these texts was defined and shaped through its interaction with the natural and social world encountered and interpreted mostly in solitude. Yet despite the focus on individual consciousness, the culture of sensibility was always a collective one, exploring the various ties that bound human beings together and ultimately concerned with human sociability.[538] It may be argued with some justification that the single most important concept of sentimentalism is the notion of 'sympathy' as elaborated by Adam Smith, who regarded the capacity to put oneself in the place of others and to imagine one's own reaction to similar misfortunes as a crucial force that organises society into a coherent, interdependent whole.[539] Like its European counterparts, Russian sentimentalism also developed visions of communities held together by a uniformity of feeling and mutual compassion. In other words, it was never limited to a single human being but always sought to link individual subjects to one another.

This chapter examines the kinds of communities and collective identities envisioned in sentimentalist fiction. By addressing this question, I also aim to reconstruct the cultural functions and uses of sentimentalism in Russia. I focus on two distinct spheres in which the literature of sensibility played a significant role. First, it influenced the emergence of new

[538] For more on this, see John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). See also the works cited in the Introduction.
[539] For more on Smith's understanding of the workings of sympathy, see James R. Otteson, *Adam Smith's Marketplace of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

attitudes towards the space of the Russian Empire. Second, it helped shape certain forms of historical and national imagination of the period. I argue that, following developments in the Russian geographical imagination, especially the rising interest in regional topography, sentimentalist fiction became closely involved in representing actual locations, which were then transformed in these texts into sites of memory. This language of memory is not imposed from outside but was employed by sentimentalists themselves. These sites were associated with particular stories, situations or emotions, often private in scope yet charged with public significance. At the centre of many sentimentalist works lies the act of sharing a story with others and thereby creating a community of those familiar with it. This community was essentially an imagined one, whose members did not meet face to face but were unified through print culture.[540] As I argue, the same interplay between natural sites, places of memory and shared stories and emotions was used to represent and disseminate a new national identity rooted in historical imagination. The chapter consists of three sections. The first studies the role of friendship in shaping the imagined communities of Russian sentimentalism. The second examines the geographical imagination of sentimentalist literature. The third turns to historical and national imagination, arguing that sentimentalist fiction was an important factor in the emerging nationalism and new historical culture of the era.

1. Imagining Friendship in Russian Sentimentalist Literature

Dmitrii Kalugin and Victoria Frede have already initiated a discussion of the place occupied by ideas of friends and friendship in eighteenth-century Russian culture, regarding the proliferation of the language of friendship in the age of sensibility both as a development of centuries-old traditions going back to ancient Rome and Greece and as a sign of the advancing

[540] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

modern age, with its new significance attached to the personal relationships of private individuals independent of the state.[541] This is not to suggest that the cult of friendship at the time was always egalitarian or emancipatory; the language of affectionate friendship—and the language of sentimentalism more broadly—could also serve as a form of social etiquette, a polite idiom that facilitated communication across hierarchical relationships, including those between patrons and clients.[542] Nevertheless, the last decades of the eighteenth century in Russia witnessed intense efforts to reimagine the meaning and prominence of intimate friendship in a range of literary texts. Both Radishchev and Karamzin addressed key works to their friends, investing their published texts with private associations and connotations.[543]

In 1794 Karamzin published 'Tsvetok na grob moego Agatona', a prose piece in which he lamented the death of his friend Aleksandr Petrov, narrated his life, exalted the bliss of their friendship and subtly questioned the justice of the divine order while also hinting at a critique of the Russian political system.[544] This model of public mourning for a private individual proved highly influential, contributing to a broader transformation in the culture of grief and commemoration. This period was marked by an ever-expanding number of people, often lacking prominence in state service, wealth or rank, being mourned publicly through print.[545] An extreme case may be Vladimir Izmailov's 'Chuvstva moi nad grobom dobroi Marii' (1794),

[541] D. Ia. Kalugin, 'Istoriia poniatiia "druzhba" – ot Drevnei Rusi do XVIII veka', in *Druzhba. Ocherki po teorii praktik* (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo Universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2009), pp. 187–289; Victoria Frede, 'Vernost', izmena i predatel'stvo v druzheskoi srede: 1790-e gg.', *Trudy Instituta russkogo iazyka im. V. V. Vinogradova*, 9 (2016), 323–39.

[542] See the articles published in the special issue of the journal *AvtobiografiЯ*, 10 (2021), 'Epistolary Emotions in Early Imperial Russia (1770–1830)'.

[543] On Radishchev's provocative publication of an account of his friend's private life, see A. A. Kostin, '"Zhytie Fedora Vasil'evicha Ushakova" A. N. Radishcheva v vospriiatii pervykh chitatelei', in *«A Century Mad and Wise»: Russia in the Age of the Enlightenment*, ed. by Emmanuel Waegemans and others (Groningen: Netherlands Russia Center, 2015), pp. 21–36.

[544] For more on this, see Joachim Klein, 'Smert' i druzhba u Karamzina ("Tsvetok na grob moego Agatona")', in Klein, *Pri Ekaterine. Trudy po russkoi literature XVIII veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii Dom IASK, 2021), pp. 79–90.

[545] For more on this, see Joachim Klein, '"Stikhi na konchinu…": russkaia pogrebal'naia poeziia v XVIII veke', in Klein, *Pri Ekaterine. Trudy po russkoi literature XVIII veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii Dom IASK, 2021), pp. 339–79.

which, in a manner inspired by Karamzin's newly published text, lamented the death of a serf girl from Izmailov's village.[546] The key feature of these works was not simply their depiction of the life and death of a private person or their recognition of the validity of intimate relationships of friendship or kinship. Rather, it was the fact that this intimate sphere was brought into the public domain, shared with unknown readers, invoking their compassion and thereby forming a virtual emotional community centred around the loss of a private individual—or around any other kind of touching story.

Intriguing examples of the exploration of friendship in conjunction with the commemoration of the dead may be found in Mariia Pospelova's collection *Luchshie chasy zhizni moei* (1798). In a piece titled 'Stenanie pri grobe druga', she depicts a man who visits the marble tomb of his friend and, in a lengthy monologue, tries to come to terms with his loss while recalling scenes from the time when his friend was alive.[547] He describes their friendship as a perfect union of two souls, a meaning-giving relationship of utmost importance for his inner self: 'Ты был душа жизни моей, и без тебя она не есть уже жизнь [...]. О милой! сколь много ты любил меня! сколь много любила тебя душа моя!'.[548] Near the end of the text, a third person appears, the fiancée of the deceased friend, and the grieving mourner recalls his friend's hope that, after marriage, he would live happily in unity with both his wife and his friend:

> Милая любовница! – милой друг! – о какое щастие любить и быть любимым нежно любезными существами! – Три сердца составляют одно, и движение радости или горести в одно мгновение будет по всем трем разливаться.[549]

[546] V. V. Izmailov, 'Chuvstva moi nad grobom dobroi Marii', *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 2 (1794), 101–10.
[547] M. A. Pospelova, *Luchshie chasy zhizni moei* (Vladimir: Tipografiia Gubernskogo Pravleniia, 1798), pp. 120–8.
[548] Ibid., p. 122.
[549] Ibid., p. 127.

Yet this fantasy is shattered at its foundations when the friend dies, leaving the mourner with nothing but a monument at which to lament his lost happiness. By depicting his visit to the tomb, Pospelova transforms a scene of private grief into a public event and invites her audience to share in his sorrow. At the end of the text, the narrator models the appropriate response for her readers by presenting her own sympathetic reaction to the situation and by offering a moralising interpretation of it:

> Так стенал нещастной. Увы! я проливаю слезы, воображая непостоянство щастия в жизни нашей, к которому по безразсудности мы столь бываем привязаны.[550]

Another text from the same collection, 'Zhaloba neshchastnogo liubovnika', stages the monologue of a man who has lost his beloved and now wishes to join her in death. He imagines his own tomb and hopes that it will become an object of sentimental tourism, enabling his soul to find consolation for all its sorrows in the sympathy aroused among the emotional community of sensitive individuals gathered around the site of his burial:

> мимоходящие [...] посетят гробницу мою. Нежныя чувствительныя сердца! Ваших слез я требую. Они награда за все мои мучения. Душа моя и в вечности почувствует всю цену вашего сожаления, после толиких страданий почувствует сладость небесную.[551]

The texts of Pospelova draw attention to the importance of space in preserving the memory of private persons and experiences and in making these memories accessible to others. Andrew Kahn discusses the role of various sites, including tombs, in articulating private and public selves in Karamzin's *Pis'ma*.[552] The same holds true for Russian sentimentalist literature more broadly. Touching stories about love and death are very often anchored in particular locations, and the existence of such a location—whether a natural landscape, a ruin, a cemetery or something else—is imagined in sentimentalist fiction as a necessary precondition for remembering and narrating the story. In the literature of sensibility, memories are rooted in

[550] Ibid., p. 128.
[551] Ibid., p. 109.
[552] Kahn, 'Nikolai Karamzin's Discourses of Enlightenment', esp. pp. 533–4.

places and arise from them. This literature imagines a kind of oral public sphere in which private individuals form communities around specific sites and the stories associated with them, sharing these stories with one another. Yet this fictive orality is, of course, entirely dependent on print culture. In their published works, Russian sentimentalist authors offered their readers a vision of Russia and the wider world as composed of numerous sites of individual and collective memory; these texts circulated information about such places, and the stories and emotions associated with them, among the broader public, thereby creating virtual communities around ostensibly real physical sites. How these interplays contributed to the development of new attitudes towards geographical space and informed emerging forms of national and historical imagination is the subject of the remaining sections of this chapter.

2. Geographical Imagination of Russian Sentimentalist Prose

One of the striking features of Russian sentimentalist prose of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is its tendency towards precise geographical localisation of the events it describes. This is most obviously manifest in such major texts of Russian sentimentalism as Radishchev's *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu* and Karamzin's *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, where the narrative's attachment to specific places was dictated by the very genre of the travelogue.[553] Yet a similar tendency can be observed in sentimental novellas as well. In Karamzin's *Bednaia Liza* (1792), the heroine's tragic story unfolds near the Simonov Monastery on the outskirts of Moscow. Following the example of this immensely popular text, numerous epigones of Karamzin likewise begin to situate their characters in the carefully delineated natural and urban landscapes: the shores of Lake Rostov in Izmailov's novella of the same name (1795); the confluence of the Vorskla River with the Dnepr in Ivan Martynov's

[553] For more on this genre, see Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790–1840* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000); Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006).

Paramon i Varen'ka (1796); the outskirts of St Petersburg in Vasilii Popugaev's *Aptekarskii ostrov, ili Bedstviia liubvi* (1800); and the Makaryev Monastery together with the merchant Nizhny Novgorod in the anonymous 'true Russian tale' *Neshchastnaia Margarita* (1803).[554]

A similar striving for topographical precision may have been nourished by several influential literary models. By populating a real locale with fictional characters, Karamzin reproduced a device already employed in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761).[555] Yet from the standpoint of composition and narrative structure, *Bednaia Liza* bears a far greater resemblance to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788)—a work that appeared on the eve of Karamzin's European journey and achieved instant popularity. Both texts open with a description of a real landscape—Mauritius in one case and the environs of Moscow in the other—seen through the eyes of an anonymous narrator, a sensitive person and lover of solitary walks; in both cases, a crucial element of this landscape is the ruins of a hut where the heroes of the touching story that is then related to the reader once lived. Bernardin's novella grew out of the pastoral tradition, another product of whose evolution was Jean-Pierre Florian's *Estelle* (1787), published a year before *Paul et Virginie* and transferring the action from a conventional Arcadia to the author's native region in southern France, depicted with elements of local colour.[556] It is noteworthy that the works of both authors were translated into Russian almost immediately.[557] An important predecessor of Florian and Bernardin on the path towards renewing the pastoral was Salomon Gessner, among whose prose idylls *Die hölzerne Bein*

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[554] These texts are available in *Russkaia sentimental'naia povest'*, ed. by P. A. Orlov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1979) and *Landshaft moikh voobrazhenii: stranitsy prozy russkogo sentimentalizma*, ed. by V. I. Korovin (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1990).

[555] See Andrei Zorin, *The Emergence of a Hero: A Tale of Romantic Love in Russia Around 1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), pp. 83–90.

[556] Jean Fabre, 'Une question de terminologie littéraire: *Paul et Virginie*, pastorale', *Annales publiées par la Faculté des Lettres de Toulouse. Littératures*, 2 (1953), 167–200 (pp. 188–91).

[557] See *Istoriia russkoi perevodnoi khudozhestvennoi literatury. Drevniaia Rus'. XVIII vek*, vol. 1, ed. by Iu. D. Levin (Saint Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1995), pp. 275–6; *Russko-evropeiskie literaturnye sviazi. XVIII vek. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, ed. by P. E. Bukharkin (Saint Petersburg: Fakul'tet filologii i iskusstv SPbGU, 2008), pp. 231–2.

(1772) deserves mention for its localisation in a specific Swiss setting. The translation of this text became Karamzin's first publication.[558] The turn towards the depiction of real landscapes was further encouraged by the tradition of descriptive poetry, whose vogue in Russia at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries expressed itself not only in the intensive reading and translation of European authors (James Thomson, Ewald Kleist, Jacques Delille and others), but also in the appearance of Semen Bobrov's original poem *Tavrida, ili Moi letnii den' v Tavricheskom Khersonise* (1798).[559] It was under the influence of all these interrelated impulses that Russian sentimental prose took shape.

The interest of sentimentalists in local geography can also be considered in a broader social and cultural context. In Russia, the second half of the eighteenth century was a time of heightened attention to the country's internal space—an era of scientific expeditions and of a state program for compiling topographical descriptions of the provinces, within whose framework the mapping of imperial lands and the collection of information on the natural resources, human populations and economic conditions of the territories under imperial control were undertaken.[560] The proximity of these practices and forms of knowledge to travel literature is especially evident in the case of Radishchev, whose concerns lay with questions of economics, social structure and state administration.[561] Yet the same affinity can be observed even among Karamzin's followers, for all their emphasis on the private and the subjective: it is no coincidence that in *Puteshestvie v poludennuiu Rossiiu* (1800–1802), Izmailov travels

[558] Salomon Gesner, *Dereviannaia noga. Shveitsarskaia idiliia* (Saint Petersburg: v vol'noi tipografii Breitkopfa, 1783).
[559] Iu. D. Levin, *Vospriiatie angliiskoi literatury v Rossii* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1990), pp. 166–7, 194–201; Iu. M. Lotman, '"Sady" Delilia v perevode Voeikova i ikh mesto v russkoi literature', in Delil', *Sady* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987), pp. 191–209.
[560] N. L. Rubinshtein, 'Topograficheskie opisaniia namestnichestv i gubernii XVIII v. – pamiatniki geograficheskogo i ekonomicheskogo izucheniia Rossii', *Voprosy geografii*, vol. 31 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo geograficheskoi literatury, 1953), pp. 39–89; Denis J. B. Shaw, *Reconnoitering Russia: Mapping, Exploring and Describing Early Modern Russia, 1613–1825* (London: UCL Press, 2024), pp. 117–74.
[561] E. Pogosian, 'Nenapisannoe "Puteshestvie" Radishcheva', *Tynianovskii sbornik*, vol. 11 (Moscow: OGI, 2002), pp. 67–78.

through Ukraine, Crimea and the Caucasus, observing colonised peoples and symbolically appropriating the lands only recently incorporated into the empire (the same may be said of Bobrov's poem, of Pavel Sumarokov's *Puteshestvie po vsemu Krymu i Bessarabii v 1799 godu* (1800) and of other works from the turn of the century).

Susan Smith-Peter has argued that the scientific expeditions and topographical descriptions of the period were governed by a logic of state universalism: new rational knowledge displaced traditional sacred geography, and the region lost its local identity, ceasing to be understood as a constellation of holy places and instead being construed as a wild space in need of enlightenment and suitable only for the extraction of resources.[562] This conclusion, however, seems too radical and one-sided. Parallel to the centre-to-periphery process of unification, one can also observe a countervailing tendency: at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the printing houses of Moscow and St Petersburg published journals and books filled with descriptions or at least mentions of provincial geographical sites. As if complementing the scientific genres, sentimental prose often chose the same local landmarks—monasteries, fairs, lakes, rivers—that were recorded during survey-based investigations of the terrain and incorporated into topographical descriptions,[563] and filtered them through the narrator's subjective perception, aestheticising them, associating them with a private story, bringing them to life. Literary descriptions could, in turn, stimulate the emergence of new practices of interacting with actual locations. Thanks to *Bednaia Liza*, the environs of the Simonov Monastery were transformed into a site of secular pilgrimage for sentimental tourists who sought to visit a space whose perception was shaped for them by Karamzin's tale.[564]

[562] Susan Smith-Peter, 'Making Empty Provinces: Eighteenth-Century Enlightenment Regionalism in Russian Provincial Journals', *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia*, 4, 1 (2015), 7–29.
[563] Cf. Rubinshtein, 'Topograficheskie opisaniia namestnichestv i gubernii XVIII v.', pp. 48, 62–3.
[564] Zorin, *The Emergence of a Hero*, pp. 83–90.

Striking examples of the complex reciprocal exchanges between text and place may be found in the writings of Ivan Vtorov. A provincial low-ranking civil servant, he could hardly have perceived the regions as meaningless wild territories, if only because he was born and raised in them and did not see the capitals until he was nearly thirty. At the same time, he was profoundly influenced by Karamzin's work and published exclusively in Moscow periodicals. Thus, in 1800 his prose pieces 'Moia progulka' and 'Zdravstvui mai!' appeared in the journal *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia*.[565] In the former, the narrator, addressing a young woman from whom he is separated, describes in detail his wanderings through an unnamed town 'on the bank of the River S*'.[566] The spot where the lovers had once often sat and 'admired the beautiful site (любовались прекрасным местоположением)' now is perceived by him as 'the sacred monument of your presence with me (священной памятник твоего присутствия со мною)', 'my altar (мой олтарь)', which he will 'often visit' with 'the offering of my heartfelt sensations (с жертвою моих сердечных ощущений)'.[567] The level of detail with which the path to this memorial locus is depicted (the town wall, a ravine overgrown with burrs, graves with wooden cross-markers, several turns to the left, an aspen, finally the place itself 'between two willow trees', the vistas opening from there, and so on) suggests that Vtorov is describing an entirely real landscape (possibly one in Samara). The reality effect is further enhanced by the date placed beneath the text: 'On the 5th of September, 179..'.[568] Like the abbreviated name of the river, this indication at once lends the text an aura of authenticity and veils the place and time of the action from uninitiated readers, maintaining a delicate balance between the public and the private dimensions of the author's emotional life.

[565] On the attribution of these texts to Vtorov, see M. F. De-Pule, 'Otets i syn. Opyt istoriko-biograficheskoi khroniki', *Russkii vestnik*, 116, 4 (1875), pp. 483–4.
[566] I. A. Vtorov, 'Moia progulka', *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia*, 6 (1800), p. 545.
[567] Ibid., p. 546.
[568] Ibid., p. 549.

Vtorov accompanied his second text with a more precise indication: 'The morning of May 1, 1800. — On the bank of the Volga, in Simbirsk Province'.[569] Much like Saint-Preux, who in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (part 4, letter XVII) brings Julie to a natural spot meaningful to him in order to 'show her the former monuments of passionate love', and above all 'her monogram (*chiffre*), carved in many places',[570] in this text the narrator chooses 'as the sole aim of his solitary walks'

> [л]юбезной памятник Майской прогулки моей прошлаго года; ветвистой вяз, где вырезана мною таинственная шифра предмета, составляющаго все блаженство и тартар жизни моей![571]

By publishing his detailed descriptions of provincial natural places of individual memory in a Moscow journal, Vtorov inscribed himself into an imagined community of sensitive persons sympathetic to one another. In 'Moia progulka' he makes use of the 'sacred place' not only to lament his separation from his beloved, but also to read the ninth volume of the journal *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni* (the predecessor of *Ippokrena*):

> Заочной знакомец мой *Номохон* прощальною слезою на гробе друга, и другие подобные мне меланхолики, своими мрачными произведениями питали мое уныние.[572]

The author of the text that attracted Vtorov's attention was Nikolai Smirnov, who concealed himself under the pseudonym 'Daurets Nomokhon'—an educated serf who, for attempting to flee to Europe, had been sent as a soldier to Siberia.[573] Following Karamzin's example, Smirnov publicly mourns his deceased friend: 'sitting on the stony bank of the Irtysh under dense bushes of willows and honeysuckle' (as indicated in a footnote, the text was 'written on June 15, 1795, in the Ust'-Kamenogorsk fortress'), he revives in memory their walks together, their readings

[569] I. A. Vtorov, 'Zdravstvui mai!', *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia*, 6 (1800), p. 556.
[570] For more on this episode, see Christophe Martin, '"Les monumens des anciennes amours": lieux de mémoire et art de l'oubli dans *La Nouvelle Héloïse*', *Eidôlon*, 72 (2006), 333–47.
[571] Vtorov, 'Zdravstvui mai!', pp. 550–1.
[572] Vtorov, 'Moia progulka', p. 549.
[573] For more on Smirnov, see A. A. Kostin and V. A. Pavlov, 'Smirnov, Nikolai Semenovich', in *Slovar' russkikh pisatelei XVIII veka*, vol. 3 (Saint Petersburg: Nauka, 2010), pp. 139–40.

of Thomson and Gessner and so on, saturating the text with descriptions of nature and with references to the everyday and geographical realities of Transbaikal region.[574]

Karamzinian sentimentalism thus becomes a shared language for Smirnov and Vtorov, while the Moscow journal functions as the intermediary that brings them into contact with one another in the space of print. A former serf serving on the remote eastern peripheries of the empire becomes the 'long-distance acquaintance (заочной знакомец)' of a minor provincial official from the Volga region, and their membership in the same imagined community is determined by the fact that both share descriptions of their inner life and of the regional nature surrounding them on the pages of the metropolitan press.

Further proof that sentimental literature could shape the subjective experience of space can be found in Vtorov's notes on his journey from Moscow to Petersburg in the spring of 1802.[575] Planning his route, he purchases the newly published *Ruchnoi dorozhnik dlia upotrebleniia na puti mezhdu Imperatorskimi Vserossiiskimi Stolitsami*,[576] traces of his attentive reading of which, as Andrei Solov'ev shows, can later be discerned in his travel diary.[577] The author of this first guidebook of its kind was Ivan Glushkov, a young official from a Tver merchant family who would later, like Vtorov, earn hereditary nobility through service. In his book, information on the history, geography, economy and ethnography of the settlements and regions lying between Petersburg and Moscow alternates with lyrical landscape sketches

[574] N. S. Smirnov, 'Proshchal'naia sleza na grobe druga', *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprevozhdenie vremeni*, 9 (1796), 195–200.
[575] A. Iu. Solov'ev, 'Putevye zapiski I. A. Vtorova (Moskva–Peterburg)', in *XVIII vek*, vol. 28 (Moscow and Saint Petersburg: Al'ians-Arkheo, 2015), pp. 428–72.
[576] I. F. Glushkov, *Ruchnoi dorozhnik dlia upotrebleniia na puti mezhdu Imperatorskimi Vserossiiskimi Stolitsami, daiushchii o gorodakh po onomu lezhashchikh izvestiia istoricheskie, geograficheskie i politicheskie; s opisaniem obyvatel'skikh obriadov, odezhd, narechii i vidov luchshikh mest. Izdanie vtoroe ispravlennoe i umnozhennoe* (Saint Petersburg: v Imperatorskoi Tipografii, 1802).
[577] Solov'ev, 'Putevye zapiski I. A. Vtorova', pp. 432–3, 467–72.

and scenes from popular life rendered in the Karamzinian sentimental manner.[578] The *Ruchnoi dorozhnik* enacts the model of an educated subject who carries facts about the past and present of his native country in mind, observes the social lower classes with condescending interest and, when occasion permits, delights in beautiful landscapes. This clearly appealed to the public, and the book enjoyed considerable popularity in its day. For Vtorov, inclined as he was towards the aesthetic perception of nature, the guidebook became a source of information about vantage points from which he could enjoy picturesque views of the places he passed through.

Particularly interesting in this respect is his visit to Tver. Glushkov allotted disproportionately many pages of his book to his native city, inserting, among other things, a 'letter of a certain young woman', dated 1795 and devoted to a detailed description of the town and its surroundings, as well as to the leisure practices of the local high society.[579] Among other features, the letter mentions the so-called Voksal, 'a public garden situated on the steep bank of the Volga', a favourite promenade for the residents of the city.[580] Vtorov goes to this park and there gladly indulges in the cultural practices of consuming nature. Sitting 'in a pavilion on the bank of the Volga', he reads 'the letter of the charming young lady from Tver', and later copies into his diary the passage describing the Voksal together with the accompanying reflections.[581] Enchanted by the image of a delicately perceptive, prudent young woman who quotes Karamzin and possesses a taste for natural beauty, Vtorov addresses himself to his (to use his own expression from 'Moia progulka') 'long-distance acquaintance':

> Чувствительный, нежный автор! Может быть, несколько раз ты сиживала на сем месте, где я сижу теперь. Наслаждайся, милая, всегда достойным тебя благополучием здесь, на

[578] For more on Glushkov and his guidebook, see P. G. Liubomirov, 'Blagonamerennoe "Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu". (Glushkov i Radishchev)', *Uchenye zapiski Saratovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 6, 3 (1927), 317–30; L. V. Milov, '"Dorozhnik" Ivana Glushkova (k voprosu o prizhiznennom otklike na "Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu" A. N. Radishcheva)', *Russkaia literatura*, 3 (1980), 150–60.
[579] Glushkov, *Ruchnoi dorozhnik*, pp. 136–49.
[580] Ibid., p. 146.
[581] Solov'ev, 'Putevye zapiski', pp. 446–7.

> прекрасных берегах Волги, в приятном тверском обществе, не завидуй шумным московским собраниям![582]

Not content with merely enjoying the imaginary company of the absent author, the sentimental traveller materially records his connection to the Tver park:

> Возле беседки сей рассматривал я надписи, вырезанные на березах французскими и русскими литерами, взошел на самый верх другой беседки по худой лестнице и обломком стекла написал над разбитым окном: «Я здесь был апреля 29 1802 года». Сошел вниз, гулял по берегу, смотрел по течению Волги, послал несколько вздохов на свою сторону, в те места, где питал я лютый яд в моем сердце и где наслаждался небесными восторгами.[583]

The inscription certifying the fact and date of one's personal presence in a specific place is an analogue of the printed works of Vtorov and other sentimentalist authors: such markings simultaneously indicate the authenticity and the typicality of subjective experience, its insertion into a frame of reference shared with other sensitive individuals.

No better demonstration can be found of the conclusion that sentimentalist culture is a culture of *common places* in the double sense of real locations and predetermined, reproducible models for experiencing and describing them. Vtorov concludes the account of his walk with the words: 'I shall never forget the beautiful Tver Voksal on the bank of the Volga'.[584] Having read the park's description in the guidebook, gone there, reread the description, felt an emotional kinship with its author and recorded all these actions and impressions both in an inscription on the pavilion and in a diary entry, Vtorov single-handedly performed with the Voksal the same operation that the many admirers of Karamzin performed with the environs of the Simonov Monastery in *Bednaia Liza*: he saturated this geographical point with meaning and affect and transformed it into a place of memory around which an imagined emotional community could coalesce (even if consisting of only two people). In the following section, I

[582] Ibid., p. 447.
[583] Ibid.
[584] Ibid.

argue that precisely the same mechanisms of associating real places and shared feelings could not only secure touching stories of love and friendship or individual experiences of interacting with nature in collective memory, but also awaken the historical imagination, thereby contributing to the formation of the imagined community of the nation.

3. Russian Sentimentalism in Search of the Places of National Memory

The second half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century are often regarded as the period in which modern conceptions of the nation took shape—conceptions grounded to a great extent in a new relation to history and in a reinterpreted idea of 'the people' (including in its relation to language and literature). Sentimental culture played no small role in these processes. As Viktor Zhivov argued, the paradigmatic example of the fusion of the cult of sensibility and nationalism was Rousseau, and in Russia—Karamzin, whose transition from belles lettres to historiography and to a philosophy of history that anticipated the theory of 'official nationality' of the Nikolas I era was entirely consistent.[585] Yet what deserves attention is not only the theoretical reflections on the national past and present offered by individual authors, but also the far more widespread representations of patriotic emotions and meditations on historical themes in the typical sentimental literary production of the time.[586] These texts promulgated a model of the subject who moves effortlessly, in thought and feeling, from the individual to the collective; they provided patterns for private, personal experience of one's connection to the fatherland, its history and its geography.

[585] V. M. Zhivov, 'Chuvstvitel'nyi natsionalizm: Karamzin, Rostopchin, natsional'nyi suverenitet i poiski natsional'noi identichnosti', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 91 (3) (2008), 114–140.
[586] On the culture of patriotism in late-eighteenth-century Russia, see Ingrid Schierle, 'Patriotism and Emotions: Love of the Fatherland in Catherinian Russia', *Ab Imperio*, 3 (2009), pp. 65–93.

It was Karamzin who was among the first to embark on this path. Already in *Bednaia Liza*, before turning to the story of the titular heroine, the narrator, contemplating Moscow and the ruins of the monastery, gives himself over to reflections and reveries on Russia's past misfortunes and present prosperity.[587] In a similar fashion, in the poem *Volga* (1794), this 'sacred river' appears, on the one hand, as the lyrical subject's homeland, where he first 'enjoyed the feeling of life (чувством жизни насладился)' and 'came to love Nature (Природу полюбил)' and on the other—as a place imbued with historical memory, 'where *the Golden Horde* once dwelt (где прежде обитали / *Орды златыя* племена)' and 'where now the peoples of a single realm live in quiet / And all revere one Goddess, / The Goddess of happiness and glory'.[588] In the second half of the eighteenth century, the accumulation of knowledge about the internal geography of the Russian Empire went hand in hand with the development of regional historiography.[589] In Karamzin's poetic description, a rational statist perspective situating the Volga in a contemporary politico-economic context (the poet underscores the river's significance for trade and adds a separate footnote about 'ships with grain and other products of the earth'[590]) is combined with attention to the national past, while at the same time leaving room for the expression of purely personal experience. National and historical sensibility, localised in a concrete place, became one of the important attributes of the modern educated person. The voice of the sensitive person, the man of feeling focused on his private experiences and memories, merges here with the voice of a loyal imperial subject who imagines past struggles and celebrates the contemporary glory of his fatherland.

[587] Andreas Schönle, *Architecture of Oblivion: Ruins and Historical Consciousness in Modern Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), pp. 36–8.
[588] N. M. Karamzin, 'Volga', in *Aglaia*, vol. 1 (Moscow: v Universitetskoi Tipografii, 1794), pp. 23–24.
[589] A. A. Sevast'ianova, 'Istoriografiia russkoi provintsii vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka (k postanovke problemy)', *Istoriia SSSR*, 1 (1991), pp. 134–42.
[590] Karamzin, 'Volga', p. 24.

Karamzin's model was quickly adopted and developed by other writers. In 1795, just a year later, a piece titled 'Pereslavskoe ozero' appeared. Written by Katerina Svin'ina, it presents a first-person account of a walk taken by the protagonist at the lakeside location referenced in the title. The text opens in a manner typical of sentimentalist prose, with the description of the natural landscape and picturesque views as perceived and enjoyed by the narrator:

> [...] я вспомнила, что на пути в милое уединение, прогуливалась по берегам Переславскаго озера. Видела, как солнце в уклоняющемся великолепии сияло на са[п]фирном небе, и кажется любовалось еще своею красотою в зеркале струящихся вод. На каждом шагу встречала как бы новые для души моей предметы: пред собой обширную поверхность струй, горевших в лучах солнечных, вдали луга, испещренные разными цветами, леса и горы; на другой стороне башни и стены монастырей, возвышающихся кругом города.[591]

But aesthetic pleasures very soon give way to feelings of a quite different kind: the heroine visits the village where Peter I's *botik*, a scaled-down warship, is preserved, and she is quickly overcome with patriotic sentiments stirred by this evocative historical relic:

> Там видела я и село Веськово, где хранится ботик, строенный Императором ПЕТРОМ I. Какой патриот может без умиления помыслить о делах сего безсмертнаго Героя? Какой Россиянин позабыть сей ботик, основание нашего флота, начало нашей коммерции и нашего просвещения?[592]

Once again, sentimentalist self-cultivation proves inseparable from self-identification with a particular nation and the commemoration of its history. What these examples seem to suggest is that the discovery, or rather invention, of the modern private self in sentimentalist literature went hand in hand with the shaping of modern forms of identity in which national self-consciousness and interest in the national past were woven into the very fabric of individual subjectivity, its experiences and perceptions. The late eighteenth century marks the moment when this modern sensibility, and the specific forms of its expression, began to emerge, making possible not only the articulation of a taste for nature and national history, but also their

[591] K[aterina] S[vin'in]a, 'Pereslavskoe ozero', *Priiatnoe i poleznoe preprovozhdenie vremeni*, 7 (1795), 385–91 (p. 385).
[592] Ibid., p. 386.

internalisation, their presentation as spontaneous reactions and attitudes of a private individual making his or her inner self public through print or other media.

An awareness of the possibility (and, to some extent, the inevitability) of national and historical imagination in accounts of the interaction between subject and outer world can be found even among sentimentalist authors who chose not to focus on such themes in their own writings. In 1799, for instance, Vtorov published a piece titled 'Tsarev kurgan', in which he described his experience of climbing the hill of that name on the banks of the Volga. He felt it necessary to comment on the historical questions the hill's name might provoke, while simultaneously emphasising the primacy of aesthetic considerations in his excursion:

> Может быть прежде называли сию громаду Царь курганов или холмов; по отличной высоте от прочих; но когда и для чего назвали *Царев курган* – я не знаю. Исследовать о том, углубляться в седую древность – не мое дело. Я желал только посмотреть его, и наслаждаться зрелищем с его вершины.[593]

However, the boundary between aesthetic experience and national-historical sensibility is always very porous. While strolling near the hill, Vtorov's narrator recalls the poems of Ossian—works written by the Scottish author James Macpherson and presented as the creations of a Gaelic bard from the second century:

> Резкой осенний ветр дует с Заволгских гор, и унылый вой его раздается в каменных утесах кургана. – Дикость и темнота, умножая меланхолию, оживляют в моем воображении мрачныя песни Шотландскаго Барда.[594]

The Ossianic poems captivated several generations of European readers with their expressive style and vivid images of sombre and sublime mountain landscapes haunted by memories of military heroes resurrected in the imagination and poetry of the ancient bard. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the works of Ossian not only catered to the fashionable cult of melancholy but also provided a highly influential, universalising symbolic

[593] I. A. Vtorov, 'Tsarev kurgan', *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia*, 3 (1799), p. 97.
[594] Ibid., p. 103.

language for imagining and representing the history and military glory of modern nations.[595] That the *kurgan* (that is, burial mound) prompts Vtorov to recall Ossian is highly symptomatic, and while Vtorov himself chose not to pursue this line of associations, others did.

In his 1801 prose piece 'Volga', Petr Slovtsov, later renowned for his regional writings on Siberia, clearly follows Karamzin's eponymous poem, adopting its apostrophe to the river, its contrast between a blood-soaked medieval past and a prosperous present, and even its motif of future natural cataclysms. At the same time, he saturates his text with Ossianic imagery, treating the Volga's landscapes as potential sites of national memory. For him, the reliance on Ossian is certainly associated with an attempt to recapture Russia's own national past reflected stylistically in inversions and discernible rhythm that replicate in his diction a folkloric idiom that he evidently regarded as national and authentic. Apostrophising the river and urging it to reveal knowledge of the historical events that once unfolded on its shores, Slovtsov's narrator imagines history above all as military history. His historical reveries culminate in the fictional image of an unknown Russian *bogatyr'* of the past who died defending his fatherland and is supposedly buried somewhere along the Volga's banks:

> долговечная Волга! поведай мне дела времен прошедших; приведи меня на поле ратное к тем высоким насыпям, где поросли уже частыя деревья и трава густая, под коими кроется прах бывших врагов отечества моего; покажи мне на том поле ратном камень мшистый и до половины в землю вросший, под коим в печальной безизвестности почиет могучий Руской богатырь, проливший кровь свою за веру Христианскую и за святую Русь; поведай мне имя и подвиги его![596]

To quote Benedict Anderson, '[n]o more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers'.[597] Slovtsov's narrator clearly longs for the existence of a real, tangible tomb of the Unknown Russian Soldier, a monument to the military heroes of the past. Yet at the time this text emerged, Russian

[595] Iu. D. Levin, *Ossian v russkoi literature (konets XVIII – pervaia tret' XIX veka)* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980).
[596] Petr Sl[o]vts[o]v, 'Volga', *Ippokrena, ili Utekhi liubosloviia*, 10 (1801), 209–16 (p. 210–1).
[597] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 9.

archaeology was still in its infancy: virtually no systematic excavations of burial mounds had been undertaken, and Slovtsov therefore lacked any firm evidence on which to base his speculations. As a result, he can only conjure a figment of his own imagination, a purely fictional image of a buried hero. Indulging in these fantasies, Slovtsov describes a full range of practices and emotions associated with this imaginary tomb: it could become a site of national memory; the fallen hero could be commemorated by a grateful posterity; his name might attain a second life in the writings of a patriotic poet (or, in the distinctly Ossianic language of the text, a patriotic bard):

> С сердечным умилением на хладный камень сей пролил бы я слезу соболезнования, и на малостройной лире своей воспел бы я его просто, так как сердце бы мне говорило. … И тогда житель ближних мест, проходя мимо с странником, указывал бы ему на сей камень и со вздохом сказал бы ему: тут зарыто тело сильнаго Рускаго богатыря! лишился он жизни за отечество свое, желая спасти его от ига иноплеменнаго, от ига кровожаждущаго Ординца. Да почиет прах его с покоем! сказал бы чувствительной странник, и возвестил бы о том в стране породившей его. … Может быть и сладкоречивый Бард, вдохновенный патриотизмом, воспел бы его некогда на стройной лире своей — воспел… и имя его возсияло бы во всем бывшем его величии и протекшей славе. Но теперь где кроется прах твой, Герой протекшаго времени?[598]

All the attitudes and ways of thinking that inform modern national and historical imagination are already present, but the real, factual stuff that patriotic dreams are usually made of is conspicuously absent. The site of national memory visited by the ‘sensitive wanderer (чувствительной странник)’ is clearly related to the sentimentalist tourist destinations discussed earlier. In both cases, literature assigns to a specific locality a particular set of associations, whose seemingly spontaneous activation in a person’s soul signals his or her belonging to an imagined community of sympathisers marked by a shared collective identity. To be sure, interest in the national and the historical at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Russia was characteristic of many writers, regardless of their literary preferences or orientations. Yet the role of mass sentimentalism in disseminating among educated Russians

[598] Sl[o]vts[o]v, ‘Volga’, pp. 211–2.

new forms of perceiving the geographical and historical landscapes of their native country was, in all likelihood, quite significant. The involvement of sentimentalism in promoting a new culture of friendship, new ways of perceiving local geography and new forms of historical imagination and national identity underscores the importance of this late-eighteenth-century literary movement for the literary, cultural and social history of the nineteenth century. It may be said to have paved the way for the emergence of national and historical self-awareness during the Napoleonic Wars and for the parallel development of Romanticism, with its sustained engagement with questions of nation, history, nature, love and, above all, the individual self.

CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to demonstrate that late-eighteenth-century Russian literature of sensibility was a product of complex interactions between the developing public sphere, evolving literary forms and the ideas and cultural practices circulating among the educated elites of the Russian Empire. The expansion of the book industry and the rise of the reading public led to the emergence of a number of periodicals ready to publish the works of aspiring authors. The close relationship established between educational institutions and print culture ensured that students engaged in literary activities as part of their studies had easy access to publishing venues. Literary associations further encouraged the appearance of an ever-increasing number of works in print. In the last decade and a half of the eighteenth century, an increasing number of these works took the form of short, first-person prose accounts of the thoughts and feelings of private individuals. This meditative prose became a major genre of Russian sentimentalism. The interest in the inner self and private emotions promoted by this literature was driven by the diversification of the cultural sphere, as alternatives to the representational culture of the imperial court began to emerge and educated Russians found new means to cultivate their intellectual and aesthetic autonomy.

The conception of the self articulated in sentimentalist literature drew on a range of models of diverse origin, including the ancient tradition of spiritual exercises, as well as contemporary sensualist philosophy, medical theories of the body and practices of aesthetic contemplation of nature. Sentimentalist authors continued to be influenced by the culture of self-discipline and piety inculcated by the state and the Church throughout the eighteenth century, but they were also open to more relaxed attitudes towards questions of morality. The self imagined in sentimentalist literature therefore shifted constantly between these two poles. Most importantly, sentimentalism was never confined solely to the realm of the individual and

the private: it used interiority as a vehicle for shaping collective identities, investing matters of public concern with subjective attitudes and attachments. This made sentimentalism an important factor in the social and cultural transformations that occurred among the Russian upper classes at the turn of the nineteenth century.

In conclusion, let us reiterate the central argument of this thesis with the help of a telling example. In 1807, Gavriil Derzhavin published the poem 'Evgeniiu. Zhizn' Zvanskaia', often considered one of his greatest achievements and a crowning work in the history of eighteenth-century Russian poetry. This majestic text celebrates life on the poet's country estate at Zvanka. Derzhavin describes in detail a summer day filled with a rich variety of pastimes, impressions and moods. Some of these are concerned with everyday trivialities, while others rise to more serious subjects. The explicitly autobiographical speaking self of the poem begins his day with a morning prayer, deriving a sense of reverence from the view of the sky and expressing gratitude to God for the beauties of the universe:

> Восстав от сна, взвожу на небо скромный взор;
> Мой утреннюет дух правителю вселенной;
> Благодарю, что вновь чудес, красот позор
> Открыл мне в жизни толь блаженной.

Very soon, however, he shifts from piety to a purely aesthetic appreciation of the sunrise and the flowers, accompanied by the sensuous experience of the morning:

> Дыша невинностью, пью воздух, влагу рос,
> Зрю на багрянец зарь, на солнце восходяще,
> Ищу красивых мест между лилей и роз,
> Средь сада храм жезлом чертяще.

When meditations on human vanity plunge him into melancholy, the sight of the sun immediately raises his spirits, reminding him of the beauty of the world created by God:

> Всё суета сует! я, воздыхая, мню,
> Но, бросив взор на блеск светила полудневна,
> О, коль прекрасен мир! Что ж дух мой бременю?
> Творцом содержится вселенна.

In the evening, he and his household take a stroll to observe the sunset or drink tea on the banks of the Volkhov River:

> Иль смотрим, как бежит под черной тучей тень
> По копнам, по снопам, коврам желто-зеленым,
> И сходит солнышко на нижнюю степень
> К холмам и рощам сине-темным.
>
> Иль, утомясь, идем скирдов, дубов под сень;
> На бреге Волхова разводим огнь дымистый;
> Глядим, как на воду ложится красный день,
> И пьем под небом чай душистый.[599]

The practices and feelings described in these fragments immediately bring to mind the works of Russian sentimentalism, especially Karamzin's 'Derevnia' (1792), which also offers an account of a summer day in the life of a landowner, framed by the pious contemplation of the rising and setting sun and featuring a scene of drinking fragrant tea (see the discussion in Chapter 4). Many other characteristics of Derzhavin's poem likewise display affinities with the sentimentalist writings of the preceding decade. Among them are the specification of a particular location and the description of a real natural landscape, together with historical fantasies associated with this place, as well as the enthusiastic expression of patriotic sentiments—all of which, as discussed in Chapter 5, may be found in Russian literature of sensibility. This is not to suggest that Derzhavin necessarily depended on sentimentalist texts when composing his poem. After all, it was rooted in the Horatian tradition and may also have been influenced by his favourite German poets.[600] What Derzhavin and the sentimentalist authors shared was a common culture of countryside leisure, self-cultivation, landscape design, architecture and scientific observation, among other pursuits.[601] Yet it seems important to remember that, in the fifteen years preceding the publication of 'Evgeniiu. Zhizn' Zvanskaia',

[599] G. R. Derzhavin, 'Evgeniiu. Zhizn' Zvanskaia', in Derzhavin, *Stikhotvoreniia* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1957), pp. 326–34 (pp. 327, 329, 331).
[600] See Joachim Klein, 'Stikhotvorenie Derzhavina "Evgeniiu. Zhizn' Zvanskaia"', *Slověne*, 11, 1 (2022), 192–203 (pp. 200–1).
[601] These contexts are reconstructed in Tatiana Smoliarova, *Three Metaphors for Life: Derzhavin's Late Poetry* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018), pp. 107–231.

many Russian periodicals, including those published as supplements to *Moskovskie vedomosti*, the leading newspaper of the time, filled their pages with numerous texts that, however faintly, anticipated the themes and structure of Derzhavin's masterpiece.

Russian sentimentalism captured and articulated some of the most important social and cultural shifts of its time. So accustomed have we become, since the nineteenth century, to long detailed descriptions of the subjective experiences and perceptions of private individuals with their changing moods, shifts from aesthetic appreciation of nature to self-introspection and back, attention to bodily sensations and the steady work of consciousness, that it is rarely emphasised that this modern configuration of the discourse of the self first emerged in Russian culture with the development of sentimentalism. It also proved to be a powerful means of depicting the interactions of the self with nature, history and the nation, thereby paving the way for the rise of Romanticism and much of nineteenth-century culture. The fact that the individual self represented in sentimentalist literature is in reality a composite of shared standards, patterns, models and commonplaces of thought, emotion and action reminds us that modern subjectivity is not a product of nature but rather an artefact of culture.

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