

frame and tale fuse⁴⁵. To put this differently, we might say that the values of the frame enter those of the tales and conquer them. The ending, moreover, as we have already noted, signals its metaliterary significance, draws attention to itself as presenting the conclusion to all that has happened. At last, there is a happy ending, as Ljubinka and Velskii are allowed to declare their love for each other. This is a marriage of love, but also one that is arranged, or at least, allowed by Natalia Dmitrievna. At the end of the cycle frame becomes tale, and vice versa. In a structural demonstration of the basic philosophy of the cycle, we move beyond difference, to a utopian world where all differences are dissolved. The ending of the ending manifestly demonstrates that "for this reason the good or the bad ending is so important: it testifies not only to the completion of the plot but also to the *construction of the world as a whole*" Zhukova's ingenious metaliterary conclusion to her *Evenings by the Karpovka* not only provides a synthesis for her own dialectic, but also, *ipso facto*, constructs a "world as a whole". Tellers become listeners, and vice versa, and the old show the young what real love is. "Life" conquers literature; but a new literature is also forged.

For his important discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of frame stories, Charles Iserberg has coined the word "narrutopia", a solecism as he terms it. In view of the underlying meaning of the frame sections of *Vechera*, and, indeed, of the whole work, let me end with a solecism of my own. The "motto" for the whole work, which is also a whole world, might be: "*agape vincit omnia*".

⁴⁵ For discussions of this, see APLIN (1988), p. 104, C.J. AYERS, *The Heroine's Education in the Society Tale*, in: CORNWELL, pp. 153-67 (163), EJKHENBAUM, p. 140, KELLY, p. 90, and, especially, HOOGENBOOM, pp. 93-7.

Hilde Hoogenboom

"Я РАБ ДЕЙСТВИТЕЛЬНОСТИ"

Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaia, Realism, and the Detail¹

In 1860 Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaia (1822-89), already an established, successful author of prose fiction, experienced serious doubts about her writing that, in letters to friends, she articulated as an aesthetic crisis. When we read her letters together with her criticism and fiction at the time, in particular *Temptation* (Iskushenie, 1852), *The Meeting* (Vstrecha, 1860), and *The Boarding-School Girl* (Pansionerka, 1861), it is possible to trace a process of aesthetic experimentation. In particular, in *The Boarding-School Girl*, Khvoshchinskaia demonstrates that she has undergone a significant transformation as a realist. Nowhere does she state explicitly what happened. Yet reading between the lines and "intratextually," or between her fiction and non-fiction, I think this transformation centered on her preoccupation with the use of what she termed "excessive" details.² Over the next couple of years (1860-61), Khvoshchinskaia developed solutions to what she, like others, viewed as a fundamental challenge for realist writing, the relation between details and an idea or ideal. In an ongoing polemic with radical positions against art, she argued for the integration of details and ideals, to create a satisfying artistic whole that was nevertheless still lifelike, with convincing characters.³ Not coincidentally, critics from Belinsky onwards primarily accused women writers of focusing on either details or ideals, at the expense of the whole.⁴ In her letters, Khvoshchinskaia argues for the "golden

¹ The writing of this article was supported by the Social Sciences Research Council's Eurasia Program Postdoctoral Research Grant; the research was supported by the National Humanities Center's Jesse Ball DuPont Fund, and by the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the United States Information Agency, and the US Department of State, which administers the Russian, Eurasian, and East European Research Program (Title VIII).

² N. MILLER coined the term "intratext" in *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing*, New York 1988, 64.

³ E.N. Stroganova concludes that Khvoshchinskaia was against art for art's sake and as a positivist, supported ideological criticism. *Literaturnaia kritika* N.D. Khvoshchinskoi, in: J. ANDREW, H. HOOGENBOOM, A. ROSENHOLM (eds.), *The Sisters Khvoshchinskaia*, (Rodopi, forthcoming).

⁴ For example, in a review of Mariia Zhukova's collection *Evenings on the Karpovka*, Belinsky writes: "... тут нет общего и целого, условливающего необходимость каждой своей частности, каждой своей черты, но многое высказано верно и истинно". V.G. BELINSKII, *Vechera na Karpovke*, *Moskovskii nabliudatel'* 18 (1838); *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 13 vols., Moscow 1953, 2:566. Through the beginning of the next century, critics of women writers repeated terms from his re-

mean" in her writing and aesthetics. This became her *modus vivendi* for negotiating the factions of Russian literary politics, which for her included the additional obstacle of criticism of women writers. The new possibilities and dangers of the brief period of "openness" around 1860 gave Khvoshchinskaia the chance and the challenge to be clearer about her ideas in her fiction, which led to her crisis.

In attempts to explain the relationship between details, realism, and women writers in nineteenth-century French and English literature, feminist scholars have speculated without the benefit of an array of critical material such as Khvoshchinskaia provides. As Naomi Schor maintains, "there exists as yet no clearly constituted and readily available corpus of female-authored aesthetic discourse to read in conjunction with the male"⁵. The recent publication of over one hundred of Khvoshchinskaia's professional and personal letters provides such a corpus, supplemented by an additional four hundred of her unpublished letters to writers, editors, and friends that span her entire career, from 1842 to her death in 1889.⁶ In addition, during nearly five decades of continuous publication, Khvoshchinskaia thought and wrote about writing in various genres, initially as a poet, and after 1850 as a prose writer, essayist, a literary, music, and art critic, dramatist, and translator from French, German, and Italian.⁷ Khvoshchinskaia's wide-ranging, comparative approach supports important new work by feminist literary historians on French and English women writers in relations to each other and the development of the novel in an international context.⁸ Schor protests against the tendency to view English literature as paradigmatic - "What

views of Zhukova and Elena Gan. On Evgeniia Tur's *The Niece* (1851), Turgenev speculates on how she filled up a four-volume novel with nonsense - "ненужными рассуждениями, либо рассказами, не ведущими к делу, либо даже просто болтовней" - that detracts from the whole. It is ironic that while he cannot get over how she dared to write such a long novel, that same year, Annenkov challenged him to write a novel and he responded: "Но вот вопрос: спосовен ли я к чему-нибудь большому, спокойному?" I.S. TURGENEV, *Plemiannitsa*, *Sovremennik* 1 (1852), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh*, Moscow 1980, 5:478; letter to P.V. Annenkov, October 28, 1852, Pssjp. 2:155.

⁵ N. SCHOR, Rereading in Detail: Or, Aesthetics, the Feminine, and Idealism, *Criticism*, 32.3, Summer 1990, 321.

⁶ A. ROSENHOLM, H. HOOGENBOOM (eds.), *La zhivu ot pochty do pochty... Iz perepiski Nadezhdy Dmitrievny Khvoshchinskoi*, *FrauenLiteraturGeschichte*, vol. 14, Fichtenwalde 2001. Further references to this book with date and page in the text.

⁷ There were five editions of collected works (1859/66, 1880, 1892, 1898, and 1912-13). For a bibliography, see S.I. PONOMAREV, *Nashi pisatel'nitsy*, *Bibliograficheskii slovar' russkikh pisatel'nits*, ed. by N. GOLITSYN, SPb. 1891; Leipzig, 1974, 60-71. For an updated bibliography, see: *The Sisters Khvoshchinskaia*.

⁸ M. COHEN, C. DEVER (eds.), *The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel*, Princeton 2002. Two decades earlier, Nancy Miller already wrote, "I long to see a more international geo-graphics in feminist writing" (Subject, 17-18).

ever happened to French, not to mention Russian, nineteenth-century fiction?"⁹ Like that of many of her Russian colleagues, Khvoshchinskaia's aesthetic thinking on the fundamental issues of realism took in Russian, French, and English literatures, men and women writers.

In tracing Khvoshchinskaia's aesthetic ideas, it makes sense to distinguish between what she thought she was doing, what she said she was doing, and what she did. Though it is not always possible to distinguish between what she said and thought, nevertheless, this distinction serves as a cautionary note that polemics in essays and letters may be less revealing than one would like. Moreover, though relatively unguarded statements to friends give us an idea of what she thought, this is less "the truth" than something to weigh against the other parts of this triad. Finally, though these distinctions apply to all writers, nineteenth-century Russian women writers have rarely been treated by critics as possessing sufficient aesthetic sophistication to do more than express themselves transparently, simply, as a "woman". Khvoshchinskaia self-consciously disrupted this simplistic relationship between text and signature at a number of levels, for example through her use of multiple male and gender-neutral pseudonyms, and her refusal to allow the publication of biographical information about herself (or her sisters, also writers).¹⁰ In letters, she defended herself and other women writers against critics. She wrote about heroes as well as heroines, she chose plots that were not always about romantic love, and she steadfastly maintained the importance of her politics, her participation in literary politics and journals, and the subject of this article, her realist aesthetics. When in a letter she wrote, "я раб действительности," she not only declared that like the writers she admired, she was a committed realist, but she invoked the great Belinsky, who built his aesthetic ideas around this central concept of "действительность" and became the touchstone for aesthetic theorizing by the radical critics and their opponents. What Khvoshchinskaia, like Pavlova, Dostoevsky, Rostopchina, Turgenev, Tur, Sokhanskaia, Tolstoy, and other writers really meant, said, and did aesthetically will remain complex questions for scholars, but at a minimum, Khvoshchinskaia's letters, criticism, and fiction testify to a passionate, self-conscious engagement with aesthetic issues.

Yet the terms that Khvoshchinskaia, like others, used to describe her aesthetics were paradoxically both clichéd and continually changing in meaning as writers negotiating shifting political and literary contexts. In Russia, to a large extent thick journals shaped literary politics. For example, at the journal *The Contemporary* (*Sovremennik*), Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov claimed to be

⁹ N. SCHOR, *George Sand and Idealism*, New York 1993, 119.

¹⁰ The strategic reasons women writers used pseudonyms vary in time and place. See C. HESSE, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern*, Princeton 2001, 74-8. Russian women writers often took female pseudonyms; Khvoshchinskaia is unusual because she had approximately ten signatures, and only ever signed her poetry as "Nadezhda."

Belinsky's heirs to justify their positions against art except as a means to a social end.¹¹ Khvoshchinskaiia also took Belinsky's social ideals as her model, but to argue against the new radical critics, and for a moderate position of both art and social goals.¹² To complicate matters, this struggle between critical camps of the 1860s to present themselves as the true heirs to Belinsky had to be conducted in a kind of code, since the censorship had forbidden his name to be mentioned in print. Khvoshchinskaiia, who read avidly and published in many journals and papers, complained to Novikova that for some reason she received only *The Messenger of Europe* (*Vestnik Evropy*) and therefore could not figure out what anything in it meant: "чтение одного журнала – только томительное дерганье к чему-то, чего смысл для нас затерян; за одним словом мерещится столько незнакомого, неизвестного, живого, что движется и шумит где-то, а где" (Feb. 13, 1869, 203)? Clearly, the meaning of much of Russian literary culture existed not in isolated positions, but as arguments that staked out ideas in response to the dynamics between different positions. Since all writers published in journals, and some like Evgeniia Tur and Dostoevsky even published their own, women, far from being out of the fray, of necessity participated in their politics simply by the very act of publication. Critics of women writers need to be understood as part of this dynamic too, as writing about women in a literary political context and not only as "women."

Aside from the problem of what words meant, a good deal of nineteenth-century aesthetic theorizing about realism was, to quote Christopher Prendergast, "in exceptional naive terms."¹³ In Russia, realists aspired to "reproduce" reality (воспроизводить действительность), and reserved their criticism for

¹¹ A. POGRELSKIN, *The Messenger of Europe, Literary Journals in Imperial Russia*. New York 1997, 133-4.

¹² For example, she articulates this problem in "Provincial Letters" several times, attacking the radicals' key term for literature as just "facts." "В последнее время наша критика стала довольно часто повторять, что (...) идея произведения является сама-собою из верно-изложенных фактов.[...] Талант выбирает лица, группирует факты, а целое составляется у него не как-нибудь, идея целого является не случайно, а потому, что существовала одновременно с творчеством, руководила им, сливалась с ним, пряталась в него и овещала его". V. PORECHNIKOV [N.D. KHVOSSHCHINSKAIIA], *Provincial'nye pis'ma o nashei literature, pis'mo vtoroie: Vizantitskii rafos ili povest' g-zhi Kokhanovskoi* "Kirilla Petrov i Nastas'ia Dmitrova," *Otechestvennye zapiski* 140.1(1862):374. In the next essay, she returned to the problem: "...не одни факты составляют жизнь, что важно всего смысле фактов, их причины, их нравственные последствия." *Provincial'nye pis'ma o nashei literature, pis'mo tret'e: Chuzhoe imia*, roman g. Akhshtarumova: "Iz nauki semejino go schast'ia, rasskaz g. Volgon'skogo," *Otechestvennye zapiski* 142.5 (1862), s. 24-5

¹³ Chr. PRENDERGAST, *Introduction, Realism, God's Secret, and the Body*, M. COHEN and Chr. PRENDERGAST (eds.), *Spectacles of Realism: Gender, Body, Genre*, Minneapolis 1995, 2.

those who merely "copied" (списывать) reality. Belinsky's terms from the 1830s, they remained current throughout the century as critics and writers quarreled in his name. One reason for the naive terminology of literary realism was that much of it was drawn from painting, a medium in which the reproduction of reality was possible in a more direct sense than it was in any verbal medium.¹⁴ Sophisticated critics ranging from Roman Jakobson in 1921, to more recently, Yuri Lotman, Boris Gasparov, Lydia Ginzburg, Schor, Prendergast, and Margaret Cohen have sought to complicate theoretical approaches to realism to counter the tendency of critical schools to flatten realism into a monolith, rendering it an unfashionable theoretical topic. In different ways, they underscore the reliance of nineteenth-century realism on conventions, and as Cohen puts it, the operation of "realism as a relation."¹⁵ They define realism to include the use of details, historical concreteness, omniscient narration, a plot of conflict and suspense, and characterization in a causal context (historical and psychological).¹⁶ These literary conventions of realism function relationally, in varied political, literary, and historical contexts, and therefore any list of definitions must be dynamic.

In his provocative essay, *On Realism in Art* (1921), Jakobson makes precisely this point when he argues that discourses about details reveal an aesthetic dynamic, in which each aesthetic school claims to be more realistic than the previous school, as indeed nineteenth-century realism did. According to Jakobson, writers constantly innovate through deformations of previous rules: "He is fond of dwelling on unessential details' is the classic judgment passed on the innovator by conservative critics of every era.... To the followers of a new movement, a description based on unessential details seems more real than the petrified tradition of their predecessors."¹⁷ Thus the seemingly superficial distinction between reproducing and merely copying the details of reality, so essential to Khvoshchinskaiia's ideas, reflects important aesthetic differences between varieties of realism. Like Jakobson, recent Russian theorists have focused on the formal aspects of realism, as an antidote to political fights and marxist models that reduced a literary system to liberal or conservative politics and historical progress.

The dynamic nature of realism has been particularly important for feminist critics because it reveals what Cohen calls the "historical unevenness" and "aetiology of realism," which provide sites to examine the relationship between

¹⁴ On the development of a critical language for realism in literature and painting, with many examples, see B. WEINBERG, *French Realism: The Critical Reaction*, 1830-1870, Chicago 1937.

¹⁵ M. COHEN, *Preface: Reconfiguring Realism*, in: *Spectacles of Realism*, xi.

¹⁶ M. COHEN, *In Lieu of a Chapter on French Women Realists*, in: *Spectacles of Realism*, 91; *The Sentimental Education of the Novel*, Princeton 1999, 32; L. GINZBURG, *Literatura v poiskakh real'nosti*, L. 1987, 7, 10-11.

¹⁷ R. JAKOBSON, *On Realism in Art*, in: L. МАТЕЙКА and K. ПОМОРСКА (eds.), *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, Cambridge 1971, 41.

realism and gender.¹⁸ The titles of Cohen's work, "In Lieu of a Chapter on French Women Realists," and the draft title *Why Were There No French Women Realists?* of her recent book *The Sentimental Education of the Novel* state the problem for feminist literary historians of nineteenth-century French women's literature. In *George Sand and Idealism*, Schor has combined literary history and deconstruction to argue that at the time, idealism reigned and realism functioned as the opposite of idealism, thus depending on it as "other," in a binary opposition with constantly fluctuating meanings: "(realism) was in fact subordinate" (11). Schor concludes that the dominance of realism in the nineteenth century did not in fact exist. Rather, later literary historians made realism the dominant aesthetic, in the process erasing nineteenth-century French women writers because they happened to write as idealists. This either/or debate was then really about a continuum from realism to idealism.¹⁹ Schor's approach, expanded by Cohen, thus requires the reconsideration of realism more generally as by definition impure, containing admixtures of sentimentalism and idealism, styles associated with individual writers and women writers more generally.²⁰

At the very least, from Jakobson's and Schor's theories, one can conclude that what writers said they were doing reflected coded discourses about aesthetics that served various functions, making them an unreliable guide to the artistic process and the actual creative problems of the representation of reality. But in *The Sentimental Education of the Novel*, Cohen argues that discourse and practice are intertwined, because literary politics, the places, institutions, and persons that generate discourses of literary history, all affected women's perceptions of what they might gain and lose as writers in choosing between idealism and realism (14). In particular, under attack, realism made itself masculine and made idealism feminine. How might a woman writer negotiate a realist position without losing whatever benefits her gender might confer (195)? The relation between what Khvoshchinskaiia did, said and perhaps thought she was doing suggests that she could learn to write and speak as a realist because she had found a way as a woman to negotiate the particular nature of the Russian literary political scene.

* * *

Khvoshchinskaiia's aesthetic crisis of 1860 was precipitated by several factors that happened to converge. That spring she finished the novel *The Meeting* and, in a

¹⁸ COHEN, Preface, viii, ix.

¹⁹ Schor notes that thinking in terms of oppositions constituted the "epistemological horizon" for nineteenth-century writers and theoreticians (*Idealism*, 12).

²⁰ On the specifically moral and spiritual nature of Russian realism, which rendered it unlike French or English realism, see R. POGGIOLI, *Realism in Russia*, *Comparative Literature* 3(1951): 253-67. Since then, scholars have complicated the realism of Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Leskov.

departure from her usual workmanlike attitude to her fiction, she was genuinely pleased with it.²¹ The reviewers were not however, and in a letter to Shcherbina, she agonized over their attacks on her politics in the treatment of her heroine (July 11, 1860, 21-22). Turgenev, whom she admired for his *Huntsman's Sketches* (Zapiski okhotnika, 1852), had just published *On the Eve* (Nakanune, 1860), which she praised highly. She was also rereading Belinsky, whom she called "my Teacher."²² To her friend Ol'ga Novikova, she expresses her doubts:

Знаете ли, что толки о "Накануне" сводят меня с ума и вместе с статьями Белинского доводят до таких сомнений, что всех и не перескажешь? Кратко: я убеждаюсь, что во всем, написанном мною доньине (исключая "Встречу", и вот почему я еще прилепляюсь к ней) - что во всем, написанном мною доньине, я шла уже [и] не кривым путем, а вовсе без пути; что я сочиняла ходячие сентенции вместо людей, что у меня, как в дурном шитье, везде видны живые нитки. [...] Надо покаяться и совершить больше дела, пока есть время, - да в том беда, как совершить их, я не [знаю]. (June 17, 1860, 110)

She next finished *The Expectation of Something Better* (Ozhidanie luchshego, 1857-60) and *The Boarding School Girl*, both well received by critics, with offers to translate the former into German and French.²³ Though concerned about its reception because of her critical position on the woman question, Khvoshchinskaiia was pleased with *The Boarding School Girl*. What had she achieved in this novella?

The Boarding School Girl represents an important transition in Khvoshchinskaiia's technique as a realist, from a limited use of details to an extensive, integrated palette. Spurred on by Belinsky and learning from Turgenev, she had found a way to use them fluently in the service of her ideas. In the process, Khvoshchinskaiia left behind the sentimental aesthetics that informed what Cohen calls the sentimental social novel and crossed the boundary that French women writers would or could not, into realism.

²¹ "Скажу вам по секрету: со мной чудо. Я люблю этот свой роман." (To Novikova, Feb. 20, 1860, 100.) "Как писалась, я была к ней привязана и теперь еще думаю о ней с привязанностью...." (To Novikova, April 12, 1860, RGALI, f. 345, op. 1, d. 850, l. 47 ob.) "В нем есть многое близкое мне по душе, что я выражаю очень редко." (To Nikolai Fedorovich Shcherbina, April 12, 1860, 21.)

²² On the publication of Rypin's biography of Belinsky in *The Messenger of Europe* (March 1874), Khvoshchinskaiia wrote, "Если хочешь следить шаг за шагом за нравственной жизнью человека в высочайшем смысле этого слова; если хочешь видеть борьбу и с людьми, и с судьбой, и с самим собой, и затем - честную победу, то почитай. [...] Он, Белинский, мне Учитель (с прописной буквой). Свят с детства, с моих 15 лет.[...]" (To Novikova, December 12, 1874, 235). On Rypin's article, which argued that Belinsky was a social critic and thus that the critics of the 1860s really were his heirs, see POGORELSKIN, 133-4.

²³ Letter to Novikova, March 12, 1861, RGALI, f. 345, op. 1, d. 850, l. 95.

In her letters to Novikova, Khvoshchinskaia specifically worries about the two main components of being a realist as she understands it, details and ideals. On the one hand, details come too easily to her, and she is afraid to overuse them: "не владаю ли я в недостаток излишних подробностей и кропотливых описаний. В последних вещах, что я писала, я заметила за собой наклонность к мелькой работе...." (January 13, 1859, 79) Her favorite work is one of her first, *Temptation* (Iskushenie, 1852), because it is tightly written: "в то время, когда его писала, положила в него много своего душевного жара, и считаю его лучше других; меньше лишнего; меньше длинноты. У меня бывают длинноты нестерпимые: не умею охватывать предмет сразу и сразу начертить его, я рисую мелькими чертами." (November 19, 1859, 91)

On the other hand, she claims that she finds it difficult to create ideals, which she requires, but that critics praise her for this, an indication that in their opinion, women tend to idealize: "у меня нет воображения.... Меня хвалят за то, что я не идеализирую; но я не умею создать идеала" (August 24, 1859, 81). Careful to distinguish between idealization and ideal, she explains that Oblovov is an ideal because his character, though not a model of goodness, is "fully developed." In addition to lacking imagination to create ideals, she claims that she subordinates characters to their actions and not preconceived ideas: "Вот чего мне никак не сделать: я раб действительности и не умею продолжить ее далее условной минуты, которую я описываю; я беру всякий характер в середине его деятельности, да тут же и обрываю; еще ни одного я не проследила, не довела до конца, и никогда этого не сделаю." (September 25, 1860, 83). With details, as with ideals, she is damned if she does, and damned if she does not use them.

Khvoshchinskaia was not a "slave to reality," but she became one. She said she was one to counter Belinsky, who complained that women "idealized" on the one hand, and merely "copied" reality on the other (with the help of their "imagination"), defects that limited them to "belles-lettres" at best.²⁴ They are also contradictory defects. The extent to which Belinsky's terms are Khvoshchinskaia's is uncanny, especially his insistence on "ideas," the one thing that made Elena Gan a good writer. Like Zhukova and Nadezhda Sokhanskaia before her, Khvoshchinskaia mentions the touchstone for criticism of women writers, Nikolai Verevkin's tale, "The Woman Writer," in which the author proclaims

²⁴ In his major review of women writers, Belinsky accused Zhukova of "idealization" and Elena Gan of "idealism à la Marlinsky." Sochineniia Zeneidy R-voi, (1843) Pss, 7:656, 670. He limits Zhukova to belles-lettres (4:112, 116), copying reality (4: 111, 115), and imagination (4:111) in the other important review for later critics, Povesi Marii Zhukovoi, (1840) Pss, vol. 4. If Khvoshchinskaia indeed began reading Belinsky at age 15 as she claims, she might have read these reviews when they first appeared, before she began publishing herself.

that "a woman should not write!"²⁵ Her comment is a wry response to critics of women as poor realists: "Если бы теперь историю сочинила женщина, предоставляю вам вообразить, что бы сказали о ее правдоподобию; но господин Веревкин - писатель, а не писательница" (October 7, 1859, 85). In print, Khvoshchinskaia never mentioned being a woman writer, but in several long letters and in her aesthetic terms and priorities, there is the worm of hostile criticism of women writers.

Khvoshchinskaia's aesthetic journey from *Temptation*, to *The Meeting*, and finally *The Boarding-School Girl* can be traced through the increasingly complex way that she employs details. The relative absence of detail in *Temptation* serves the function of not distracting the reader from the plot, the education of a young man at the hands of his mother, sister, friend, and godfather. A sentimental social novel, it follows the rule that Cohen calls the "light touch," or sparing use of details, to better focus the reader on the characters' inner conflicts.²⁶ Details here serve to sketch the settings, occupations, and relative status of characters, as in the sentimental social novel. Vanya agonizes over whether to accept an offer to take over his godfather's successful estate, or return to Moscow, frugal pleasures, and a modest career in the civil service. Vanya is not tempted to accept; rather, it is his mother and sister who are tempted as they yearn for wealth to flaunt their noble birth and arrange an advantageous marriage for the latter. Vanya suffers for five days while deciding and then two months on the job until he quits; it is "a whole Iliad" (65), the narrator says, indicating the duration and intensity of his emotional conflict between two duties, to himself and to his family. As Cohen argues, the essence of sentimentalism lies in the conflict between two right duties, to self and society (the elite), which was recast in the sentimental social and realist novels as right duty to the self versus an oppressive society of all people divided into classes.²⁷ Khvoshchinskaia retains the shadow of sen-

²⁵ RAKHMANNYI [N.N. VEREVKIN], Zhenshchina Pisatel'nitsa, Biblioteka dlia chteniia 23(1837):17-131. Mariia Zhukova, Moi kurskie znakomsty, Povesi, 2 vols, St.P., 1840, 2:181-283. Nadezhda Sokhanskaia, Avtobiografiia, M. 1896, 34.

²⁶ COHEN, Sentimental Education, 48-52. Cohen's excellent explanation of the conventions of sentimental novels - the light touch, socially homogenous characters (usually minor aristocracy, especially women), a setting in the recent past or present, restrained vocabulary and syntax (parodied by hypocrites), extensive description of natural beauty, sentimental blazon (description of character that values inner beauty over outside appearance), in the plot "all should be clear" from the outset (to emphasize conflict and the repeated performance of virtue, not discovery), and the tableau (to visually set the conflict) - and the larger political questions they address, represents a significant recovery of a large body of work that has become hard to appreciate. This typology also makes sense of criticism of those women's texts that follow sentimental (social) conventions while critics follow realist conventions.

²⁷ COHEN, Sentimental Education, 124-9.

timentalism when she has Vanya slowly realize that much as he loves his family, their concern for him is vulgarly materialistic, a discovery that, of course, does not make it easier for Vanya to disappoint them. The main details are feelings, which the narrator says are as real, plentiful, and boring as physical details, as if to forestall criticism by defining the language of sentiment in terms of realist descriptiveness.²⁸

In *The Meeting*, eight years later, Khvoshchinskaia continues to integrate more details and more realist details into a sentimental social novel. While still using the light touch, she arranges detailed descriptions of nature and characters in separate paragraphs as set pieces that now serve a function in the plot. Descriptions create suspense by breaking the narrative at points where things move forward, a technique the formalists called "zatormozhenie," and which, Cohen notes, heightens the intensity of the scene.²⁹ The opening, by contrast, plays with the scientific code of realist descriptiveness: the narrator sketches the locale, a remote village, using ethnographic and statistical analyses of the area to note the absence of roads and railroads. Yet, as in *Temptation*, the focus is on the characters' feelings, now measured in the leisurely time of summer. In *Temptation*, the hero suffers day by day, while in *The Meeting*, the usual constraints of time vanish, demonstrating the aimless existence of the hero and heroine. Tarnееv, a civil servant and writer, returns to his family estate in the country for the summer, where he falls in love with Akhtarovskaia, a society woman who lives apart from her dreadful husband, while Liudmila, a young, despotic poet falls in love with him. Liudmila gets her comeuppance, Tarnееv fails to convince Akhtarovskaia that she should try again with him, he leaves, she leaves, he writes no more and dies. Society briefly interferes, but more important, Tarnееv often languishes, ill or tired, and is somehow too ineffectual a partner for Akhtarovskaia, who lives decisively. In this tragic-comic novel, Khvoshchinskaia weaves together elements of different aesthetics, sentimental, sentimental social, and realist.

The presence of two writers allows Khvoshchinskaia to engage in some metaliterary fun that also touches on the proper balance between ideals and details. Carried away by ideals, Liudmila writes bad poetry, revises it badly too, proclaims a hypocritical civic-minded agenda, ridiculously plays the "poetessa" in her study, and publishes an unsuccessful edition of poems.³⁰ By contrast, Khvoshchinskaia makes Tarnееv a serious lightweight, who publishes some fiction in journals, speculates on the meaning of writing, and reads Dante (as she does). The literary relationship between them is telling: at the moment Liudmila

²⁸ V. KRESTOVSKII [N.D. KHVOSHCHINSKAIA], *Iskushenie, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 6 vols., M. 1912-13, 5:129.

²⁹ COHEN, in Lieu, 113.

³⁰ This detail from Khvoshchinskaia's recent life refers to her collected works, which sold poorly. "Я даже сделала намек на свое положение (нерасходящееся издание творений) в Встрече." (To Novikova, Feb. 20, 1860, 100.)

asks Tarnееv for help finding a publisher, he stops himself from making a joke about women poets: "извините, шутка над женщинами – дурная привычка ремесла" (207). The narrator describes the creative process to the reader to explain why Tarnееv is second-rate; the description echoes her concerns about balancing the details of life and ideals.

Это были не свободные создания, для которых действительная будничная жизнь – натура, поставленная для соображения в углу мастерской между тем как художник, полный своего идеала, творчески облекает его силой и красотой, счастлив и наслаждается своим трудом. Тarnеев не творил, а только стискивал действительную жизнь, как она есть, под влиянием того впечатления, которое она производила.³¹

Khvoshchinskaia uses terms that recall Belinsky's distinction between the reproduction and copying of reality, and one cannot help but think that she emphasizes the powerful ideal because in his review of Gan, Belinsky made "такая сила мысли" the Holy Grail for women writers (657). Moreover, Belinsky and later critics argued from nature and woman's nature to dismiss women writers, terms that Khvoshchinskaia recasts here as, average writing is natural, good writing is hard work. As in the novel as a whole, in this passage she also interpolates elements of sentimentalism (emotions and a speaking narrator), romanticism (the ideal), and realism (nature and daily life) to explain the artistic process.

By contrast with these earlier works, *The Boarding-School Girl* immediately announces that it exists in a different aesthetic universe. Dispensing with the usual introductory description of the town and its location, she begins in *medias res*: "Часу в шестом вечера, в начале мая, двое молодых людей бродили по саду, окружавшему один из домов города Энска."³² This novella is permeated by the constant passage of time, from the first words stating the time to the ticking clock at the end. These and other details of marking time articulate and make time dense. The scene of two men walking contains the kind of "unnecessary" detail that Khvoshchinskaia deploys throughout this work: "Прители долго шагали все по одной дорожке, часто цепляясь головами за нависшие ветки сирени" (745). The lilac bush, or the fact that their heads brush past it, does not explain anything immediately about the place, their difficult relationship, their conversation, or the mood, like the purposeful details that Khvoshchinskaia favors in *The Temptation* and *The Meeting*.

As Khvoshchinskaia's great interest in *On the Eve* suggests, she learned from Turgenev. There are real thematic connections between the two works. At the end of *The Boarding-School Girl*, Khvoshchinskaia reveals the full name of the heroine Lelenka, Elena Vasil'evna, making her a successor to Turgenev's fa-

³¹ V. KRESTOVSKII [N.D. KHVOSHCHINSKAIA], *Vstrecha*, Pss, 2:76. My emphasis.

³² V. KRESTOVSKII [N.D. KHVOSHCHINSKAIA], *Pansionetka*, Pss, 5:745.

mous Elena Nikolaevna in *On the Eve*. Both are coming-of-age stories of young women who reach radical, though very different, conclusions. The opening of both novels involves two men, friendly, yet tense, talking outdoors, under linden trees by water for Turgenev, and in a garden with lilacs for Khvoshchinskaia. The different subjects of conversation distinguish these writers: Turgenev has them discuss art and women, while Khvoshchinskaia creates an awkward scene between Veretitsyn, a political exile to Ensk because of his poems, and Ibraev, a successful bureaucrat.³³

Khvoshchinskaia seems to have learned from Turgenev how to integrate details with characterization. We should recall that she expresses her main concern as creating living characters and not "walking maxims." If we compare her characterization of the heroes of *Temptation* and *The Meeting*, with that in *The Boarding-School Girl*, the change is obvious, from sentimentalism to realism. In *Temptation*, the hero is bathed in candlelight, like a painting by Georges de la Tour, as he is reunited with his mother after several years: "Он стоял пред нею; свеча освещала его неправильные, но милые черты; в его темных глазах набежали слезы" (46). There is even less detail in *The Meeting*, where we accompany Tameev remembering his entire past, and first see him ten pages into the novel, when he enters society: "стал бывать в обществе, которое приняло его хорошо; он был образован, недурен собою, нравился; для него как будто делали исключение и забывали, что он небогат" (72). This kind of characterization, Cohen argues, distinguishes between inner and outer qualities, where the latter are meant to be more important.³⁴ By contrast, in *The Boarding-School Girl*, as in *On the Eve*, we learn the appearance of the heroes in the first few paragraphs in much detail: how they look, dress, carry themselves, talk, and how they contrast with each other. Turgenev indulges in more detail than Khvoshchinskaia, but in comparison with her earlier works, she is positively laconic. Nevertheless, Khvoshchinskaia omits entirely any description of the two heroines, Lelen'ka and Sof'ia, other than that the latter is beautiful. This use of the anti-device (минус приём) indicates her awareness of any description as convention. In addition, for the first time, Khvoshchinskaia also creates an ideal in Sof'ia, thus fully testing out her aesthetic theories.³⁵

In her newly self-conscious approach to characterization, Khvoshchinskaia increases physical descriptiveness and completely eliminates the long passages about emotions that characterize sentimental novels. Khvoshchinskaia defuses much of the emotion in the work by placing it onto a secondary character,

³³ "...первые главы 'торьмы и ссылки'..." (to Novikova, July 27, 1861, RGALI f. 345, op. 1, d. 850, l. 103ob.)

³⁴ СОЕНЕ, Sentimental Education, 54-6.

³⁵ "...Веретицына в рассказе совсем не надо, что он лицо второстепенное, что все дело в женщине новосоздающейся и в Софье, как в идеале, почему она и поставлена дальше" (to Novikova, July 27, 1861, RGALI, f. 345, op. 1, d. 850, l. 103).

Veretitsyn, who combines unrequited love for Sof'ia with a Dostoevskian irritation, anger, jealousy, and neediness.³⁶ The ending suggests that the inaccessibility of feelings for Lelen'ka and Veretitsyn has harmed them. Veretitsyn blusters: "чувствовать некогда" (850), and Lelen'ka proclaims: "Живите один; вот жизнь - работа, знание и свобода..." (849). These statements indicate that Khvoshchinskaia felt she had to motivate thematically the disappearance of emotions. By contrast, in *On the Eve*, Turgenev indulges himself in a chapter devoted to Elena's diary, a genre, along with the letter, long associated with sentimentalism and women's feelings, though of course also used by realists.

Perhaps because of the shift from mainly emotional to more physical details, Khvoshchinskaia's style of narration has changed fundamentally to become less subjective, and more objective, terms that Turgenev used in his review of Tur's *The Niece*. Whereas, in *Temptation* and *The Meeting*, the narrator behaves somewhat like a sentimental narrator, addressing the reader about feelings and, in the above quotation, about the true artist, in *The Boarding-School Girl*, the narrative voice remains omniscient, neutral, and unintrusive. Readers responded positively to Lelen'ka, as they did to Turgenev's Elena, as representative of the new woman, although Khvoshchinskaia herself was critical of her.³⁷ This kind of misreading of the work as feminist, still prevalent, was in fact a tribute to Khvoshchinskaia's new narrative distance from her characters.³⁸ In fact, she seems to have attacked the problem of characters as walking maxims directly with Lelen'ka, who speaks the maxims of feminism, but apparently, like her readers, is unaware of it. In this current, politically engaged work, Khvoshchinskaia paradoxically juxtaposes the rhetoric of social art with poetics: "Леленька опускала взор в книгу и старалась взять в толк объяснение метафоры, метонимии, синекдохи и иронии, но это ей никак не удавалось" (3:771). The image of the ideologically committed individual, who says what she means

³⁶ In her letters, Khvoshchinskaia professes great admiration for Crime and Punishment: "я всей моей душой кланяюсь хорошему, или такому высоко человеку, как Достоевского 'Преступление и наказание'" (to Novikova, October 12/September 30, 1869, RGALI, f. 345, op. 1, d. 852, l. 27ob.). Although they had met once and she liked him tremendously, he had what she called a "program" and she did not like *The Insulted and Injured* (1861) ("Ложно в основании и взбито до мелодрамы, - а право, в жизни человеческой довольно драмы и без мелодрамы.... Мало он вынес в жизни, что ли, чтобы брать из нее только ее ликости?") (to Novikova, July 27, 1861, RGALI, f. 345, op. 1, d. 850, l. 102ob-103).

³⁷ "За идею боюсь до смерти: при нынешней войне за женщин, при почти всеобщем ожидании наших эмансипаторов и криках сестер наших за свою свободу и против своего воспитания - боюсь, у меня не достранет моей благообразной середины, не захотят расстаться, что их крайность имсет тоже свой вред и свою суть..." (to Novikova, February 25, 1861, 117). On the novel's reception, see K. ROSNECK, Translator's Introduction, in: N. KHVOSHCHINSKAIA, *The Boarding School Girl*, Evanston 2000, xii-xiii.

³⁸ See for example STITES 1978 and ENGEL 1983.

and means what she says, is at odds with the literary ambiguities these figures produce.

Thus, while the combined transformation of details, characterization, and narration ultimately makes *The Boarding-School Girl* much more realist than Khvoshchinskaia's earlier work, it also retained her usual thematic and aesthetic preoccupations. She continued to write as a realist, but much like Turgenev, also continued to experiment with sentimental details and narrative voice.

* * *

Despite the clear transition in her work from a sentimental to a realist aesthetic, and combinations of different aesthetic conventions, Khvoshchinskaia, like Turgenev, had always considered herself a realist.³⁹ All writers did. In Russia, arguments ostensibly about realism were usually in fact about politics; the topic offered a rare opportunity to criticize Russian life under oppressive regimes and political censorship. In particular, details were associated with the Russian nationalist school's penchant for critical descriptions of low life. Khvoshchinskaia called herself a partial member of the naturalist school: "натуральная школа (к которой отчасти принадлежу и я)" (to Novikova, Oct. 19, 1859, 88). In effect, this was a statement for and against certain kinds of details. In particular, in Russia, the use of details for their own sake was viewed not only as inferior and like the new technique of photography (as opposed to the art of painting), but as French, like Balzac, and more important, as immoral.⁴⁰ In an essay in 1862, Khvoshchinskaia called them "писатели-дагерротиписты", also alluding to the French origins of the daguerreotype.⁴¹ Thus, Jakobson's argument about details as primarily aesthetic in fact represents an attempt to put politics to the side and return to aesthetic issues, a tension that informs much of Russian writing and criticism, and was central to Khvoshchinskaia's work.

In recent works on nineteenth-century French literature, Schor and Cohen argue that details were an especially contested device where French women writers were concerned. In "Rereading in Detail", her coda to *Reading in Detail*, Schor argues against her earlier view that women are somehow inclined to or inevitably linked with detailism. Instead, her work on George Sand and idealism led Schor to conclude that Sand's artistic decisions, like those of her female contemporaries, are specific to time and place, and "operate within the limits of the idealism-realism debate [and] negotiate between the competing claims of these two representational modes" (321). In *The Sentimental Education of the Novel*,

³⁹ See COSTLOW 1990, 1991 and ALLEN 1992 for excellent discussions of the complex nature of Turgenev's aesthetics, which were at odds with what he said and perhaps thought he did.

⁴⁰ This idea has been used to explain the contested argument about Russian writers' "relative neglect of the claims of structure and form." POGGIOLI, 259-60.

⁴¹ ПОРЕЧНИКОВ, Провинциал'nye pis'ma, pis'mo vtoroe, 374.

on the basis of novels, prefaces, and reviews, Cohen similarly posits that women responded to the ways in which literary politics situated women writers and their works (20). She argues that French women writers in large numbers rejected realist aesthetics, in part because of the debates over details. Balzac and Stendhal created a hostile literary atmosphere for women writers and helped make novels and their tradition masculine (81). In particular, they associated the necessary details for realist descriptions with such male scientific professions as history, geography, medicine, and sociology (113), while the absence of detail in women's sentimental novels was feminized. By contrast, in England, detailed descriptions grew out of the voice of the sentimental narrator, reflecting the sensibility of "the keen amateur observer who can be either female or male" (195).

As in France, with Belinsky, the debate over details in Russia carried over into discourses about women writers. Keenly aware of criticism of women writers, in some letters and a handful of essays, published under pseudonyms, Khvoshchinskaia wrote specifically, and often critically, about women writers and their aesthetic issues, especially her main competitor, Nadezhda Sokhanskaia. In 1880, in a series of three feuilletons, Khvoshchinskaia examines Russian women's literary history as part of a novelistic tradition divided by gender. She notes that in the 1850s, there were many women writers. However, in the 1860s, they disappeared, only to reappear in the 1870s writing novels, a genre that men seem to have dropped. Women, she argues, prefer to write philosophical novels: "Писателей, говорят, привлекают более житейские, реальные вопросы. Писательницы разрабатывают внутреннюю, философскую сторону жизни. Для этого, конечно, самая удобная форма - роман."⁴² Despite women's shift from high society (the "balls, dresses, love" for which critics denigrated women's writing) to the "prose of life", Khvoshchinskaia nevertheless admonishes women to be more real, more historically specific or less "indefinite" about place and time: "реальное как то все еще висит на воздухе" (1). In other words, in the last decade of her career, she still considered the integration of details and ideals essential to realist novels, *especially for women*. Moreover, the ambiguities of Khvoshchinskaia's position as a woman posing as a man criticizing women writers expose her attempts to negotiate for herself what Schor calls the "idealism-realism debate" in a Russian context.

However, like most Russian writers and critics, Khvoshchinskaia conceived of her identity only partly through gender and aesthetics. More central to the identity of nineteenth-century Russian realists was the tension between their aesthetics and political orientation, which they expressed through publishing in certain thick journals, which attacked and supported the right authors, and by writing on such hot social topics as peasants, nihilists, women, and politics. Politically, albeit with some significant reservations, she sided with the Slavophile publisher Ivan Aksakov: "Некоторое Византийство и Чехию в сторону - я

⁴² N. [Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaia], *Memuary odnogo chitatelia*, III. Russkie vedomosti. No. 307. 28 November 1880. 1.

совсем мыслю по Аксакову" (May 10, 1865, 154).⁴³ However, Aksakov became more extreme over time and after 1865, Khvoshchinskaia never mentions him again in her writing. In fact, despite her strong sympathy for Aksakov's cause, she nevertheless avoided both the far left and right, and mainly published in the two leading left-of-center journals, with Andrei Kraevsky (1810-89) at *Notes of the Fatherland* (1850-84) and with Mikhail Stasiulevich (1826-1911) at *The Messenger of Europe* (1870-88). She recounts a conversation with M.A. Novosil'tseva about where she publishes and Novosil'tseva says, "Ah! POLITICS!!" (направление).⁴⁴

In the 1860s, as journals and critics forced writers to choose sides, Khvoshchinskaia tried to stake out a middle ground. To Novikova, she explains her philosophy of "moderation":

Прежде, мне бывало и совестно и горестно не принадлежать, по убеждениям, ни к какому кружку.... Из этого бышло мое разединенное положение в литературе, где у меня нет ни брагов, ни клакеров.... Писала резко против провинции и семьи, и между тем, сильно стою за ту и другую. Своей жизнью доказываю протест множеству светских условий и приличий - и ненавижу распущенность, в воде которой, в нынешнее время, является этот протест. И многое, все так. Я убедилась, что я - хорошая середина.... эта посредственность - есть также мнение, как и другие, е его даже труднее и, пожалуй, опаснее держаться, нежели крайних, потому что рискуешь быть бита с двух сторон.... (May 10, 1865, 154-5)

In a letter to Novikova, Khvoshchinskaia advocates moderation on the subject of French and English realism: "Если я пристрастна к французскому, то вы, друзья, слишком зачитались реального, английского, - а надо все в меру: излишняя положительность вредна, как излишняя идеальность; если от идеальничанья человек уподобляется пробке, от позитивности он заскритит на винтах" (May 18, 1862, 122).⁴⁵ Finally, moderation in her stance on art for art's sake versus ideologically committed art is also evident in the surprising group of writers that she considers her peers and generation (to Novikova, April 11, 1867, 169). They include the poets Nikolai Shcherbina (1821-69), who moved from a liberal to strong Slavophile position in 1861, Yakov Polon-

⁴³ Of those reservations, she writes: "Ты знаешь, что я его [Аксакова] ужасно люблю и почти все его мнения, кроме славянских крайностей и изучения о брадах клоном и идеале." (to Novikova, July 6, 1865, RGALI, f. 345, op. 1, d. 851, l. 87ob.) Though Turgenev, who translated Marko Vovchok into Russian and friends with George Sand, and whose heroines were popular, has been associated with Russian women writers, the influence of the Aksakov circle on Nadezhda Sokhanskaia and Khvoshchinskaia has been overlooked.

⁴⁴ To Novikova, August 22, 1874, RGALI, f. 345, op. 1, d. 852, l. 128.

⁴⁵ This is the correct date, not the date given in the text.

sky (1819-98), criticized for being apolitical and aesthetic in his lyrics, and Apollon Maikov (1821-97), similar to Polonsky in his aesthetic tendencies, and Turgenev, who confounded supporters and critics alike with *Fathers and Sons* (1862) and also began his career as a poet.

Khvoshchinskaia consistently opposed many things, taking finely nuanced, centrist positions in her aesthetics and politics that did not speak to a fraught era. She stood apart in her art too, reading widely in European literatures and combining the subjects and conventions of sentimental, sentimental social, and realist writings. In 1863, Saltykov-Shchedrin wrote that, "basing her works on psychological fine points, [Khvoshchinskaia] never enjoyed the success in Russia that she should have by virtue of her talent and won only honorary fame", and suggested that England might have been a better home for her style.⁴⁶ Thus Khvoshchinskaia used details in a way that marked her art as English women's writing (although she claimed to love French literature more), an observation that confirms that, like English women realists, she had succeeded. But even with only honorary fame, she had also done well at home, and that was because of what she, like her male colleagues, had learned from French sentimental social novels, the literature of ideas, and her self filled with Sand's novels.⁴⁷

In Russia, women writers came of age and flourished as realists because politics, ideas, and aesthetics were as, or more important than gender. Like their male colleagues, they were steeped in the languages and literatures of Europe. In addition to a shared culture, many Russian writers saw a common enemy in the state, which united them politically even as it divided them. In 1876, now as her editor as *Notes of the Fatherland*, Saltykov-Shchedrin wrote Khvoshchinskaia, alluding to the political situation for journals in the hope of extracting more work from her: "Нынешнее время для больших журналов не весьма благоприятное, и тольк при содействии ярких дарований можно рассчитывать на успех. Поэтому Вы окажете журналу существенную услугу при- слав обещанный роман."⁴⁸ By casting her lot with politics, writing under pseudonyms, and practicing political and aesthetic moderation, Khvoshchinskaia tried to sidestep the issue of gender and simply work as a writer. Her approach is particularly evident in her response to Nikolai Shelgunov's assertion, in "Female Heartlessness", that a woman writer should write progressively about women.⁴⁹ In her scathing review of Sokhanskaia, Khvoshchinskaia had written much the same thing, except that she accused Sokhanskaia of being a Slavophile, not a woman.⁵⁰ Khvoshchinskaia saw Shelgunov's article as an attack on her politics

⁴⁶ M.E. SALTUKOV-SHCHEDRIN, *Moia sud'ba*, в. М. Камской (ред.), *Sobranie sochinenii*, 20 vols., М. 1966, 5:441.

⁴⁷ "Это будет à la George Sand - оттого, что у меня ее полна полка." (to Novikova, April 14, 1862, RGALI f. 345, op. 1, d. 850, l. 139.)

⁴⁸ SALTUKOV-SHCHEDRIN, letter October 5, 1876, Ss. 19:25.

⁴⁹ N. SHELGUNOV, *Zhenskoe bezduшие*, Delo 9 (1870): 1-34.

⁵⁰ PORECHNIKOV, *Provintsial'nye pis'ma*, pis'mo второе, 369.

and that of her journal, *Notes of the Fatherland*, which was a pawn in the ideological battles between radicals at *Russian Word* and *The Cause*. Nowhere does she acknowledge that this is an attack on her as a woman writer, although Shelgunov made his point clear. In letters, she explains that her journal should have defended her and did not; Shelgunov later agreed that he had been forced to take an extreme position ideologically.⁵¹

A decade earlier, in an angry letter to Shcherbina, Khvoshchinskaia similarly negotiates attacks on her as a woman writer, again turning to politics instead. Though she claims not to be offended by his criticism of women writers because, as she writes, he is clearly behind the times and she ridicules the "rights" people want for women, she defends herself anyway. She refutes his claim that women writers judge literature capriciously and exaggerate, using her writing as an example (November 20, 1860, 25-6). In the same letter she upbraids him for his public attacks on writers and publishers, who have taken real political risks. Writers should support literature in Russia, which is still young: "Все мы, литераторы, люди одного дела, дети одного духа" (September 21, 1860, 25). In other words, like him, she is a professional "man of letters", prepared to defend her aesthetics, politics, and profession against the state. Thus, through her aesthetics, which were bound up with her politics and her gender, Khvoshchinskaia created a professional identity that gave her other possible profiles besides that of woman writer.

Khvoshchinskaia interpreted the issues of realism broadly, in a comparative context throughout her career both because she was a serious, professional writer, and because as a Russian, and a woman, writer, they were essential to, and even helped her unify, these complex aspects of her identity. As with a novel, Khvoshchinskaia wondered about the shape of her life and work. In 1862, when the government had begun to retrench after reforms and relative freedom from censorship, in a letter to Novikova, she wryly comments: "не придумаешь ни формы жизни, ни образа своих действий. Доживать видно так: 'талантливым беллетристом' [...] Но и ему так из константы пора бы уняться и на покой: двенадцать лет - это уж почетно, это в литературе то же, что велье-фильство... Нравится словечко?"⁵² She puts her professional identity in quotation marks (it is Belinsky's word for Zhukova's and Gan's second-rate talent), and invents a Russian word from French, as if resigning herself

to the inevitable business of literary rankings. The terms are humorous, ironic, and cruel, but also honorific. She found a form for her life and work in the dynamic of her aesthetics with her politics, in an ornery steadfastness as she held down the fort for writers - already an old timer during an era of tremendous changes, political, social, and aesthetic.

⁵¹ See my article, *Gender and Literary Biography: Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaia, A Reluctant Subject*, in: *The Sisters Khvoshchinskaia*.

⁵² November 14, 1862, RGALI, f. 345, op. 1, d. 850, l. 168. The "little word" - велье-фильство - is from "viele fille".

VIELDEUTIGES
NICHT-ZU-ENDE-SPRECHEN

Thesen und Momentaufnahmen
aus der Geschichte russischer Dichterinnen

Herausgegeben von
Arja Rosenholm und Frank Göpfert

Verlag F. K. Göpfert - Fichtenwalde

2002

Inhalt

Arja Rosenholm „Vieldeutiges Nicht-zu-Ende-Sprechen“: Einführende Worte	9
Frank Göpfert Russische Dichterinnen des 18. Jahrhunderts im Selbst- und Fremd- verständnis klassizistischer Dichtung. Elizaveta Cherskova und Ekaterina Urusova	21
Wendy Rosslyn Zwischen Öffentlichkeit und Privatleben. Frauen und ihre Schriften im achtzehnten und frühen neunzehnten Jahrhundert in Russland	41
Gitta Hammarberg Women, Wit, and Wordplay. Bouts-rimés and the Subversive Feminization of Culture	61
Carolin Heyder Exotismus der Nähe. Zwei Prosaerzählungen Zinaida Volkonskajas	79
Ирина Савкина Может ли женщина быть романтическим поэтом?	97
Joe Andrew Telling Tales. Zhukova as a Metaliterary Author	113
Hilde Hoogenboom „Я раб действительности“. Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaia, Realism, and the Detail	129
Christa Binswanger Autorenbild mit „Gender trouble“: Poliksena Solov'eva's männliche Maskerade vor dem Hintergrund des russischen Symbolismus	149
Charlotte Rosenthal Having it Both Ways. Verbitskaia as Autobiographer	163

Das Buch oder Teile davon dürfen weder photomechanisch,
elektronisch noch in irgendeiner anderen Form ohne schriftliche
Genehmigung des Verlages wiedergegeben werden.

© Verlag F. K. Göpfert, Fichtenwalde, 2002

Verlag F. K. Göpfert,
D - 14547 Fichtenwalde
Pappelweg 1

ISBN 3-932254-06-6

Eva Hausbacher	
Hybride: Zur Poetik des Übergangs in Leben und Werk Elena Guros (1877-1917)	175
Olga Hasty	
Valerii Briusov as Maria Tsvetaeva's Anti-Muse.....	191
Marja Rytkönen	
Своими глазами - чужими словами? К современной женской автобиографии	205
Angela Huber	
„Adoption der ganzen Welt“ vs. Kindesmord und Rebellion. Der Medea-Stoff in Ljudmila Ulitskajas Roman <i>Medeja i ee deti</i>	225
Katrin Lange	
„Я хожу как бы кругами“. Der Chronotopos der Liebe in Valerija Narbikovas Prosa.....	237
Christina Parnell	
Ein russisches Jerusalem. Postsowjetische Identitätsmuster in der Prosa Dina Rubinas	247

Arja Rosenholm

„VIELDEUTIGES NICHT-ZU-ENDE-SPRECHEN“¹

Einführende Worte

Den Ausgangspunkt für dieses Buch bildet das Motiv unseres deutsch-finnischen Gemeinschaftsprojekts von KollegInnen aus den Universitäten Potsdam und Tampere². Wir gehen davon aus, dass die literarische Tradition russischer Frauen nicht in erster Linie eine Frage von „Fakten“ ist, in dem Sinne, ob es diese Tradition gibt; wie auch das Schweigen darüber nicht von deren Nicht-Existenz zeugt. Vielmehr folgen wir einem Gedanken von Virginia Woolf³, demzufolge die Tradition eher eine Aufgabe ist; sie muss geschaffen werden. Ein zentrales Motiv für die Artikelsammlung hängt mit der Frage zusammen, ob es gemeinsame Traditionslinien von russischen Frauen gibt, die sich aus literarischen und ästhetischen Konzepten de- und rekonstruieren ließen. Zu diesem Zweck haben wir exemplarische Untersuchungen aus unterschiedlichen Zeiten zusammengestellt, wobei wir die kritische Diskussion um eine gender-markierte russische Literaturgeschichte mit folgenden Fragen konfrontieren. Beziehen sich jüngere Texte von Frauen auf ältere; und wenn ja, auf welche Weise? Verstärken sie eine Traditionslinie, setzen sie sich damit auseinander, verändern sie diese oder übernehmen sie sie, um sie weiterzuführen? Derartige Praktiken knüpfen ein literarisches Netz aus intertextuellen Verbindungen und binden damit Einzelwerke in eine Serie von Analogien ein, die eine Tradition ausmachen können.

Die Artikel dieses Bandes behandeln Fragen nach der Art und Weise, wie sich Texte von russischen Frauen in eine literarische Tradition einschreiben. Sie fragen, ob es sich dabei um eine weibliche Tradition handeln kann. Wo ist der Ort von Schriftstellerinnen wie Elizaveta Cherskova, Ekaterina Urusova, Elena Gan, Marija Žukova, Nadežda Dmitrievna Chvoščinskaja, Anastasija Verbitskaja Elena Guro, Poliksena Solov'eva, Marina Cvetaeva, Ljudmila Ulitskaja, Valerija Narbikova oder Dina Rubina in der russischen Literaturgeschichte und in der zeitgenössischen Kritik? Warum sind viele aus dem literarischen Kanon heraus-

¹ „Vieldeutiges Nicht-zu-Ende-Sprechen“ - „Многосмысленная недосказанность“. В. АФАНАСЬЕВ, „Да, женская душа в тени светится...“, Евдокия Петровна Ростопчина, 1811-1858. Литературный портрет. Е.П. РОСТОПЧИНА. Москва 1987, с. 3-18.

² Die Arbeit wurde finanziell ermöglicht durch das bilaterale Abkommen von DAAD und Finnischer Akademie der Wissenschaften, die unser deutsch-finnisches Gemeinschaftsprojekt in den Jahren 2000-2003 unterstützt haben.

³ V. WOOLF, Ein Zimmer für sich allein, Frankfurt am Main 1978.

⁴ S. HEINÄMÄÄ, Jalkisanat naisten kirjallista perinteistä, in: P. TAPOLA, Äitini puutarhassa, Helsinki 2002, s. 254-262.