The Woman in the Window

Valentino, Russell Scott

Published by The Ohio State University Press

Valentino, Russell Scott. 
The Woman in the Window: Commerce, Consensual Fantasy, and the Quest for Masculine Virtue in the Russian Novel. 
The Ohio State University Press, 2014. 
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/35268.

⇒ For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/35268

⇐ For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=1349454
Introduction

1. By “ornaments of the darkness,” Michelstaedter refers to the rhetorical common-places that allow people to live without understanding, especially as aided by the “god” of phylopsychia, or pleasure, attachment to life, viltà, cowardice. See Michelstaedter 2004, xvi, xvii, 137, 139.

2. For a rich exploration of Hercules as the vir perfectissimus, a symbol of virtue in all its aspects, see Galinsky 1972. On Renaissance virtus, see Skinner 1978: 88–94.


4. Honestas is the other Latin word sometimes used to translate the Greek arete, leading, for instance, to parallel Renaissance Italian usages, Macchiavelli’s virtù, which is invariably masculine, and theonestà of a woman: both derive from a functional or teleo-
logical presumption and implicitly invoke the concept of arete. On the difference between a plural and a singular usage—the virtues as opposed to Virtue—with particular attention to the history of Stoicism, see MacIntyre 1984: 168–70. For a defense of the singularity of virtue, see Becker 1998: 81–137.

5. This functional usage is akin to the “effect” or “force” that survives in the English idiom “by virtue of.”

6. Exactly when this revolution of the term began is unclear, though the suggestion of radical doubt that such a claim entails may ultimately derive from the nominalist position of medieval Scholasticism. I am indebted to David Depew of the University of Iowa for this suggestion, which surely deserves more extensive investigation than I am competent to give it.

7. The notion of virtue as effect or function will be familiar to students of Machiavelli, whose use of virtù emphasizes the effectiveness of a variety of behaviors as “virtuous” without reference to ethical judgment. Thus the cruelty of Hannibal was virtuous (in the sense of being effective) for a military commander. Machiavelli’s remarkable, and nuanced, use of the term is treated extensively in Mansfield 1996: 6–52.
8. This usage likewise allows the still looser synonym with “near” in phrases like “the virtual loss of all subsequent Egyptian manuscripts” or “Cato’s death made suicide into a virtual art form,” where no corporeal claim is apparent and where the speaker does not wish to be taken literally.

9. Hence the frequently encountered modern contrast of virtue and corruption. On the revival of these classical republican notions in the Renaissance, see Skinner 1978: 152–89. For a discussion of the role of virtue in contemporary republican theory, see Dagger 1997: 194–201; on early American reformulations, see Pocock 1975: 506–552.

10. Pocock’s work addresses a set of related problems in the history of ideas, namely, the conceptual linkage between property, military organization, and constitutional theory from Machiavelli to the founders of the American republic, the simultaneous shift from medieval to modern conceptions of time and value, and the role of centrally modern notions such as commerce, corruption, and credit in this overarching process. Pocock’s is of course just one of many works amid the late twentieth-century wealth of modernity studies. Other noteworthy examples that have influenced my thought here include Taylor 1989, Gellner 1989, and Thompson 1996.

11. An example of the former is Montesquieu, who, in a not-so-veiled reference to the practice of national stock in the Bank of England, remarked that the nation in such circumstances “would have a sure credit [un crédit sûr] because it would borrow from its own self and pay back its own self. It might even borrow beyond its natural strength [Il pourrait arriver qu'elle entreprindrait au-dessus de ses forces naturelles] and make valuable [ferait valoir] against its enemies immense fictional riches [d’immenses richesses de fiction], which the confidence and nature of its government would render real” (Montesquieu 1951: 577; translation mine). On the development of the anticorrosive country ideology in England, see Pocock 1975: 401–22 and 423–61.


13. While not a coherent movement per se, this resurgence of interest in virtue theory is often motivated by stated desires to reevaluate, and in some cases resurrect, the classical tradition of virtue as exemplified in the writings of Aristotle, the Ancient Stoics, and their descendants. Prominent examples include MacIntyre 1984; Nussbaum 1986; Sherman 1989, 1997, and 2005; Becker 1998; Peterson and Seligman 2004; McCloskey 2006 and 2010; and Sachs 2011. McCloskey’s work stands out as something of an intervention. While it too draws upon classical thought, her opus on the “bourgeois virtues,” two volumes of which are in print as of this writing, sets out to show how virtue and commerce go together rather than clash; in other words, by contrast to the tradition of thought which sees bourgeois values as ethically and politically pernicious, she wants to show how capitalism makes us not only richer but better.


15. Locke uses “Fansy” and “agreement” in tandem in his Two Treatises of Civil Government, where he suggests that the origins of money may be found in the discovery of “some lasting thing that men might keep without spoiling, and that, by mutual consent, men would take in exchange for the truly useful but perishable supports of life” (Locke 2003: 120; emphasis added). His statement that “gold, silver, and diamonds are things that fancy or agreement hath put the value on” must be modified only slightly to accord with my suggestion: not “fancy or agreement” but “fancy and agreement” should be the operative term, for only together can the two effect the real change I have in mind. We might specify
still further that it is only in agreeing about fancy that gold, silver, and diamonds might be taken “in exchange for the truly useful,” that the fiction might be agreed upon as the real, capable of transforming things as they are into things as they might be, as if those objects of exchange really were valuable in the way that we are pretending they are.

16. In late eighteenth-century American social thought, the position represented by Jefferson’s classical republicanism, where virtue guarantees the uncorrupt foundation of the republic, is tempered by Madisonian federalism, as expressed, for instance, in the Federalist No. 10, which maintains the need for a balance of powers and suggests thereby that either virtue will never be pervasive enough to prevent corruption or virtue alone is not enough to do so.

17. Pipes 2000: 286. Pipes’s account implicitly contrasts Anglo-American and Russian conceptions of private property (it explicitly contrasts English and Russian practice). In this sense, it is unique among discussions of the relationship between property and social personality, which generally focus on Western Europe and North America. For a substantive critique of Pipes’s reading of his sources, see Ryan 1999.


19. Of particular interest is Lindberg 1982.

20. Sunstein 2001 goes so far as to make government policy recommendations that might counteract the socially fragmentary effects of the Internet. His is essentially a variation on the “unleashing” version of the power of consensual fantasy noted above. Turkle’s (1997, 2012) approach is more descriptive and empirical, while her suggestions about the fluidity of current identity formation among young people are less easily contextualized within the extremes of virtue conceptualization noted here.

21. Things are concrete, existent individuals that lack rationality and, as such, have often been opposed to persons, a distinction that appears to have originated with medieval Scholasticism (the suppositum and the persona). See Halfman 2002: vol. 14, 4–5.


26. Schama 1995: 574. Schama shows that Thoreau did not actually maintain this stance in practice, attesting frequently to the manner in which landscape made sense to him through the images and practices of life in other times and places, despite his apparent desire to see it as a historical tabula rasa.

27. For detail and a thorough reading in the context of virtue as a moral concept, see Cafaro 2000.

28. One can find hints and scratches of such notions in the works of Mikhail Shcherbatov and Alexander Radishchev in the late eighteenth century and Nikolai Turgenev in the early nineteenth. The republican impulse in most other cases turned, as with Marx, toward revolutionary and tactical thought, as with Alexander Herzen and Mikhail Bakunin.

29. See, for instance, Poe 2003, which is very good on the historical sources but dates the rise of messianic notions too late, in my opinion; for a comparative turn, see Rowley 1999; what is missing for the Russian case is an equivalent to what Tuveson 1968 accomplished for the American one, that is, tracing the ideas, not just the documents.

30. At least as striking is how thoroughly such parallels were later eclipsed by the apparently opposing approaches to modernization adopted by the United States and USSR in the twentieth century and by the contrasts that the Cold War made most apparent.
35. For general discussion of the concept of pochvennichestvo in Dostoevsky's life and work, see Frank 1986: 34–48 and Dowler 1982. I use the term modern here and elsewhere with care. New Age, eco-friendly conceptions of landed connection are a more recent phenomenon, if not “postmodern,” then at the very least marginal to mainstream social and political thought in the United States for its first hundred fifty years of existence.
36. Rock 2007 offers an intriguing take on the mixing of pagan and Christian beliefs in Russia.
37. It is equivalent to the moment of confusion between Bassanio and Shylock in Act I, Scene 3 of The Merchant of Venice, where Shylock says that Antonio is a “good man” and Bassanio asks whether there has been any imputation to the contrary. Shylock clarifies at length, and with apparent irony, that he merely means his credit is good, that is, he is good for it. For a fine reading of the “political body” of Shylock, see Bassi 2007.
39. For a more detailed reading of this aspect of Crime and Punishment, see chapter 3.
40. For a more detailed reading of this aspect of Anna Karenina, see the second half of chapter 3.
41. This topic is explored in Valentino 2001: 60–65.
42. The richest exploration of the virtue vocabulary associated with the modern European and the modern North American political personality is found in Pocock 1975.
43. The word is thought to have been borrowed from Old Slavic, as dobraia (good) and detel’ (action, deed), which were combined in order to render the Greek concept of arete, or excellence. It is attested in the early eighteenth century and became a commonplace in the writings of Fonvizin, Sumarokov, and Kheraskov. Its usage in contemporary standard Russian is marked as bookish and archaic. See, for instance, Shanskii 1973: 146.
44. Hippisley 1989: 44, plate no. 172. Such books feature multiple small depictions of famous historical scenes on each page with aphorismic captions most often in Latin, English, French, and German. Maksimovich-Amvodik's book enjoyed popularity through the middle of the nineteenth century. It is noted, for instance, as an object of play for young Fedia Lavretsky in chapter 11 of Ivan Turgenev's Nest of the Gentry (1858). Lavretsky is, of course, highly influenced by the republican ideas of his Anglophile father.
45. There are two possible candidates suggested in the book: tsel'nost', which means “wholeness” or “integrity,” is noted by Stiva Oblonsky at the start of the novel; sila zhizni, or “strength of life,” is a quality that Levin muses about when talking with his brother Sergei. Both appear to translate portions of virtue in a combination of its moral-ethical and civic republican guises, though Levin is clearly not reducible to a representative of either strain of thought. A different possibility, muchestvo, which usually translates as “courage,” lingers in the background with its root association with manliness but is not explicitly offered up in the book.
46. Gogol 2009, vol. 7, part 1: 210–11. Subsequent citations from this work are indicated parenthetically in the text. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.
Notes to Chapter One


Chapter One

2. In a letter of December 21, 1817, see Wu 2005: 1351.
5. Most trenchant are the remarks in Maclntyre 1984: 115–17, which place Goffman’s views in a series proceeding from Nietzsche to Weber to our own day. There are other reflections of Goffman’s thought current in contemporary therapy circles, most prominently the notion of the self as performed in a variety of contexts. See, for instance, the work of Newman and the East Side Institute for Group and Short Term Psychotherapy (http://www.eastsideinstitute.org). This line of thought parallels the development of American Pragmatism from William James through George Herbert Mead, finding clear elaborations in the sociology of Parsons 1937 and Merton 1951, among others. I am grateful to Professor David Depew of the University of Iowa for helping me understand this genealogy more clearly.
9. The merging becomes especially noteworthy in translations from the above languages into English, where the associations with “character” grow richer with increased polyvalence. For instance, Roland Barthes’s precise distinction between personnage and figure in his S/Z becomes in English “character” and “figure,” suggesting a variety of possible ethical connotations that may or may not be in the French. See Barthes 1970: 74–5.
10. The central locus is Mead 1934.
11. Her suggestion that we “have access—broader and broader access in the modern world—to multiple characters at different times” (McCloskey 2006: 347) restates in a different manner the prevailing postmodern view of the discredited unitary subject noted above.
13. Dostoevsky 1972: 139. Unless otherwise indicated, translations from this text are my own.
14. On Le parfait négoçiant see chapter 2. “Miserable details” is how Clerval characterizes the business of his family in Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (Shelley 2003: 30).
15. Golyadkin, states Dostoevsky, “goes mad out of ambition, while at the same time fully despising ambition and even suffering from the fact that he happens to suffer from such nonsense as ambition” (Frank 1986: 300).
17. Agreeing, in effect, with Charles Davenant’s earlier assessment: “Trade, without doubt, is in its nature a pernicious thing; it brings in that wealth which introduces luxury; it gives rise to fraud and avarice, and extinguishes virtue and simplicity of manners; it depraves a people, and makes way for that corruption which never fails to end in slavery, foreign or domestic.” Davenant 1771: 275.
19. Sleuths are referred to chapter 2. *Dead Souls* carries on where Pushkin left off in “A Queen of Spades,” presenting a politically conservative response to a perceived destabilization of social value as the result of commercial culture’s spread in post-Napoleonic Russian society. But Gogol’s depiction leaves out the psychological implications—evident in the madness of Hermann—that such a transformation of social and political personality represented for Pushkin. *The Double* recreates the psychological dimension Gogol omitted but accompanies it with a characteristically Dostoevskian emphasis on morality and aesthetics.


22. See also chapter 3.

23. The causal connection is shrouded in the mists of nineteenth-century medical understanding. The boy dies of tuberculosis, but the wound he received in the chest by a rock thrown by one of his classmates is suggested to have brought on the final crisis and, indeed, his death.


25. For these forms of property, “the appropriate term in the republican lexicon was corruption.” Pocock 1975: 464.


30. Retarded commercial culture in Russia and its artificial freezing by the Soviets meant in practice a preservation and canonization of certain aristocratic attitudes toward commercial enterprise—Gogol’s narrator refers to this as what “the world dubs as not quite clean.” In the socialization of school-age Russians one finds even today a suspicion of self-interested motives and a tendency to denigrate the individual who puts Ya (I) at the front of the alphabet, instead of at the end, where it belongs. Such suspicion may have been institutionalized in the Soviet period, when the works of “great” Russian authors were canonized, but its roots in Russian culture run far deeper.


35. The turning point comes in chapter 8, when he meets the governor’s daughter again and, dumbstruck, earns the wrath of the ladies through his inattention, fueling the train of speculation and rumor stoked by Nozdryov, which transform him into “Napoleon in disguise” (Gogol 2009, vol. 7, part 1: 156–60).

36. My analysis here converges in some respects with that of Roland Barthes in *S/Z*, where he discusses the replacement of the old indexical order of landed wealth by the arbitrary signifier of Parisien gold as the reigning model of unbacked representation. See “L’indice, le signe, et l’argent” (Barthes 1970: 46–7). Indeed, the aspiring bourgeois artist’s attempt to characterize and “frame” the ideal woman, only to discover that she is not a woman at all, puts the Sarassine narrative in an odd sort of parallel with those under dis-
cussion. I am indebted to Garrett Stewart of the University of Iowa for pointing out this convergence of method and theme.

37. Canto 11. Sincere thanks to Ed Folsom of the University of Iowa for the reference.


39. Schiller 1943: 368–70; Zhukovsky 1959: 137–39. A distinction between Golyadkin's disparaging attitude of the poem and Dostoevsky's lifelong adoration of the poet is in order. For a fine extended treatment of the importance of Schiller in Dostoevsky's oeuvre, see Vil'mont 1984.


43. Bezobrazie, according to its linguistic roots, “without form,” also carries connotations of abomination. It is alternately translated as “ugliness,” “hideousness,” “outrage.” At its root lie the words for form, face, and holy icon. For a full discussion see Jackson 1966.

44. Golyadkin Senior prides himself on this in his letter to Vakhrameev. Dostoevsky 1972: 183.

Chapter Two


7. Thus are fate and chance intimately linked in the depiction of Hermann, whose attempt to control chance is similar to Chichikov's attempt to control his chance encounters—with Korobochka, Nozdryov, and the governor's daughter—those which in the end prove to be his undoing. On the pattern of planned versus unplanned encounters in Dead Souls, see Fusso 1993: 20–51.

8. Part 1 of the book is often thought of as a “gallery of portraits,” with little or no organic unity besides, perhaps, the road itself. See, for instance, Fanger 1979: 164–91; Gippius 1989: 119; and Shevryev 1978: 282–90. The approach I take here presupposes that the landowners are neither “completely unconnected with one another” (Tamarchenko 1959: 18–19), nor occurring “without logical order” (Freeborn 1973: 91). Gogol's own statement to the effect that his sequence is based on an increasing degree of poshlost' (Gogol 1937: vol. 8, 293), while suggestive, is secondary to the evidence of the text itself. In any case, there is little reason to exclude the possibility of an equivalency of sorts, in Gogol's estimation, of poshlost' and the gradually increasing spiritual commodification I am suggesting.

9. Cf. Frank Friederberg Seeley's suggestion that “the new world of Dead Souls is a new psychological world reflecting the transformation of society in the sixty years spanned by [Pushkin's Captain's Daughter, Lermontov's Hero of Our Time, and Gogol's Dead Souls]; the new age is that of incipient capitalism.” While my suggestion of a commercial sequence in Gogol's landowners is, to my knowledge, original, my analysis occasionally converges with Seeley's, especially in his suggestion that “from his school-days onward [Chichikov] has
used his fellow-humans; his life has been organised in terms not of personal feelings but of the cash nexus” (Seeley 1968: 42). I am indebted to Emeritus Professor Ray Parrott of the University of Iowa for bringing Seeley’s article to my attention.


12. As Pushkin makes clear in chapter 1, stanza 7 of Eugene Onegin, his hero is a “profound economist” (glubokii ekonom) and reader of Adam Smith.

13. Following Napoleon’s invasion, the government was forced to issue large amounts of paper money; the assignat was made legal tender for all transactions, and taxes were thenceforth set and collected in assignats only, measures that effectively created two currencies—paper and metal—with fluctuating relative values, making currency problems the most widely discussed economic issue of Nicholas’s reign and leading eventually to the reforms of 1839–40. See Pintner 1967: 5, 184–85.

14. I am indebted to an anonymous Slavic Review reader for this succinct phrasing.

15. Heroes from Nikolai Karamzin’s “Poor Liza” (1792) and “Yuliya” (1801), respectively. Robert Maguire suggests these Gogolian names “serve the double purpose of mocking the recent vogue for things classical and establishing a decidedly non-Russian presence in this estate.” See Maguire 1994: 30. Such a vogue was characteristic of Russian culture from the age of Catherine II into the nineteenth century.

16. Gogol’s narrator relates that Chichikov “added that the treasury will even benefit, for it will receive legal duties,” but he does not specify from whom or on what (35). There is additional irony here in the fact that the soul-tax or podushnaia podat’, upon which Chichikov’s transactions rely, was instituted, under Peter I, precisely as a means of generating much-needed revenue for the state. See, for instance, Lewitter 1987: 103–6. The issue of the soul tax is treated at length by Ivan Pososhkov, whose 1724 Kniga o skudosti i bogatsve (Book of Poverty and Wealth) was first printed only in 1842, the same year as Gogol’s Dead Souls. It was brought to light and published by Mikhail Pogodin, professor of history at Moscow State University and Gogol’s friend and correspondent of many years. I am indebted to Professor David Herman of the University of Virginia for bringing this important text to my attention.


18. From his “Six Ways to Make People Like You,” widely used by salespeople as a basic technique for increasing effective selling.


20. Fusso 1993: 45–47 discusses Nozdryov’s lying as a spontaneous and creative phenomenon, linked to the health and vitality of his character and contrasted to the carefully planned fabrications of Chichikov.

21. Cf. Sobakevich’s consistency in assigning a labor function to each of the serf-names he is preparing to sell, noted by Zeldin 1978: 100.

22. Mavrokordato (1791–1835), Kolokotronis (1770–1843), Miaoulis (1768–1835), and Kana-ris (1790–1877) were all participants in the Greek struggle for independence from Ottoman Turkey.

23. Laskarina Bouboulina (1771–1825), Greek heroine of Greece’s independence movement, known to Russians of Gogol’s day especially because of her family’s support of Russia in the Russo-Turkish wars of the early nineteenth century, and because after her murder in 1825, she was awarded the rank of admiral by the Russian navy.
24. Cf. Gavriel Shapiro’s discussion of the accuracy of Gogol’s portraits vis-à-vis luboks of the time in Shapiro 1993: 71–73. Michael Holquist proposes an interpretation of “Diary of a Madman” along similar lines to that which I have suggested here: Peter I’s willful changing of the calendar (from the Orthodox to the Julian) in order to bring it into keeping with European temporality is seen as analogous to the madman’s arbitrary diary datings, not to mention his delusions of grandeur. See Holquist 1977: 3–27.

25. Bagration died in the battle of Borodino, which slowed but did not halt Napoleon’s advance on Moscow.


27. For a contrasting reading of the conception of value in Dead Souls, especially as relates to questions of meaning and interpretation, see Morson 1992: 206–15.

28. This line, “Pravo, u vas dusha chelovecheskaia vsë ravno, chto parenaia repa,” has been rendered as “Your soul is like a boiled turnip” in the translations of Garnett, Magarshak, and Reavey, who adds the word “human” before “soul.” There is ambiguity in the Russian sentence because of the peculiar combination of u vas (chez vous), which suggests the personal, and chelovecheskaia (human), which suggests the general. The immediately following phrase, “Give me at least three rubles each,” creates two possibilities: if Sobakevich’s comment is directed at Chichikov’s person, it implies the latter is too cheap to offer a fair price; if it is directed at Chichikov’s notions of the world (as in pravo, u vas liudi—drian; “in truth, you think people are garbage”), the comment accords with Sobakevich’s attempts to increase the market value of his wares and might be paraphrased as “Do you really think the human soul is worth so little?” The latter appears to me more accurate; or, as Bernard Guerney’s translation has it: “Really, you hold a human soul at the same value as a boiled turnip.”

29. See Fusso’s fascinating speculation on Nozdryov’s “figurative androgyny,” the sexual connotations of his name, and its apparent connection to the vulgar woman’s synecdoche nozdria, in Fusso 1993: 160–61 n.; the original suggestion, that of an early listener to Gogol’s text, was partly corroborated by Gogol himself, who responded, “If such an idea occurred to one person, that means it could occur to many. It must be corrected.” See Annenkov 1952: 244.

30. It is significant that the last object noted on Plyushkin’s table is the completely yellowed toothbrush, with which “the master, perhaps, picked his teeth back before the French invasion of Moscow” (108; emphasis added). This is the only item located historically in all Plyushkin’s collection.

31. On the importance of the word as Romantic medium in Gogol’s oeuvre see Maguire 1994: part 3.

32. Cf. also Fanger 1979: 188–89.

33. For a discussion of the distinctive disintegration of Plyushkin see, for instance, Woodward 1978: chapter 5.


35. The runaways are a marginal case, neither strictly dead nor provably living. Their place between living and dead may be part of a general tendency in the novel for the qualities of the serfs being purchased to become more lifelike while the landowners more and more resemble death—for example, the absence of soul in Sobakevich, the death imagery surrounding Plyushkin. Thus, Chichikov is struck by several of the names and nicknames among the peasants he acquires at Korobochka’s; Sobakevich then insists on the living nature of the serfs he is selling, on their very real qualities and works; finally, Chichikov
assigns not only qualities but also dialogue to his serf purchases when reviewing the lists in his hotel room. What were before merely names and, in Chichikov’s words, “but a dream,” become very real indeed, as Chichikov portrays them to himself in imagined living situations.

36. As noted above, an equivalent subjection of the sacred or divine to a commercial relation is evident in “The Portrait,” where moneylending begins the chain of worldly evil. In this connection, it is important to realize that, in the absence of a regularized and widely accessible system of credit, Chichikov is, in effect, in pursuit of a loan.

37. The phrase, which is introduced by the conjunction “but,” suggests it indeed marks the turning point, but no further reason for Plyushkin’s transformation is offered, except perhaps the suggestion in the next line that, “like all widows, Plyushkin became more suspicious and stingier.”

38. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the state held in mortgage two-thirds of all serfs. Riasanovsky 1984: 341.

39. See the earlier treatment of Montesquieu’s usage in my introduction and n. 11. It is tempting to think of Chichikov’s dead serfs as something like the “immenses richesses de fiction” that the Russian state counted on to support its military and economic system.

40. “C’est presque une règle générale, que partout où il y a des moeurs douces, il y a du commerce; et que partout où il y a du commerce, il y a des moeurs douces.”

41. For definitions and for examples of Gogol’s use, see Shapiro 1993: 194–99. Asyndeton usually refers to parts of a sentence, not to sequences of scenes or chapters.

42. Skillful as the interpretation suggested in Morson 1992 may be, I disagree with its starting point. Arguably, no amount of historicization will explain all aspects of Gogol’s idiosyncratic book. But raising Gogolian senselessness to heuristic heights risks blocking the exploration of the myriad ways the book may in fact make sense, leaving it in an ahistorical limbo of sorts, far from its literary, cultural, and historical roots.

43. Hirschman makes the notion of reconstruction explicit when he writes, “By drawing on a wide range of sources I have attempted to show that the [interests-versus-passions] thesis was part of what Michael Polanyi has called the ‘tacit dimension,’ that is, propositions and opinions shared by a group and so obvious to it that they are never fully or systematically articulated.” Hirschman: 1977: 69. The overview provided here draws on the treatments provided in Pocock 1975; Pocock 1985; Hirschman 1977; Holmes 1995: 42–68; and, more broadly, Skinner 1978.

46. Ibid.: 41 (emphasis in original).
47. Holmes 1995: 61 so designates the entry under “self-interest” in Diderot’s Encyclopédie.
49. Hirschman 1977: 42.
51. The words are those of the lady Pekuah relating the story of her captivity at the hands of the Arab, chapter 39. Johnson 2009: 328.
52. Hume 1760: 125.
Notes to Chapter Three

59. Gogol’s well-known secrecy about his reading habits has prompted speculation ever since his creative years. Fanger has addressed what he calls the “vexed question of [Gogol’s] literary filiations,” noting that “he is no Flaubert with respect to the articulations of his reading, knowledge, tastes, or even specific awareness of literature in the forms he himself cultivated.” Fanger 1979: 12–13; see also Chudakov 1908 and Annenkov 1928.
61. The classic statement is that of John Locke in his Second Treatise on Civil Government. For a suggestive reading of Chichikov’s scheme as akin to a contemporary hedge fund, see Crossen 2008.
62. On Chichikov as catalyst, and for a series of insightful character readings, some of which touch on my own, see Zeldin 1978: 95–104.
63. Pletnev 1885: 491.
64. Pocock 1975: 464.

Chapter Three

1. Dostoevsky 1973: 5. Subsequent citations from this work are indicated parenthetically in the text. Unless otherwise indicated, translations from the Russian are my own.
2. The words are those of the student that Raskolnikov overhears by chance on Hay Market Square, but the thoughts, as the narrator makes clear on the following page, are also Raskolnikov’s.
4. Raskolnikov lays out his theory to Porfiry Petrovich in chapter 5 of part 3 (199–204). The suggestion that he might think of himself as a new Napoleon is made explicit by Zametov, who remarks, “Wasn’t it some kind of new Napoleon who bumped off our Alyona Ivanovich with an axe last week?” (204).
5. The treatment of Dunya and especially Sonya as commercial commodities is, of course, obvious throughout the work. Svidrigailov alludes to such a treatment when, upon introducing himself to Raskolnikov in the opening lines of part 4, he states, “I’m dreaming [mechtauiu] that you perhaps will not afford me assistance in a certain undertaking [predpriiatie] directly concerning the interest [interes] of your little sister” (214). Here as in Raskolnikov’s opening thoughts, the combined lexicon of fantasy and enterprise is striking.
6. On the distinction between literary signification and symbolic or sacramental signification, see Lewis 1958. On this distinction in Dostoevsky, see Valentino 2001: 112–18.
7. See chapter 1, pp. 30–32.
8. See chapter 1, pp. 37–38.
12. Frank dismisses the passage and the reference as providing “a touch of grotesquerie to Svidrigailov’s sinister end” (Frank 2002: 302). In a more recent work (Fleishman, Safran,
and Wachtel 2005: 440–41), he is still less interested in unraveling the scene. But in both cases, he appears to be reacting to those who have found an explicit and rather simple anti-Semitic symbolism in the scene. Goldstein, by contrast, calls the symbolism “unquestionable but inscrutable” (1981: 14–15). Rice treats it similarly but within the context of Freud’s interaction with Russian literature and thought (1993: 138). These and other sources explain that the crested helmet of Russian firemen in the nineteenth century was thought to resemble, and to be derived from, the helmet worn by Ancient Greek warriors. None of these sources comments on whether the service of a Jew as fireman would have been an unusual occurrence; nor does the academic edition’s extensive commentary, from which I assume that it would not have been.

15. I hesitate to state that the juxtaposition of categories that Dostoevsky highlights in his character was a commonplace of European representation and thought because I have not explored the sources thoroughly enough to be certain. But Arnold is suggestive when he notes that “the two [notions] very often are confronted” in his references to a sermon on Hellenism by Frederick Robertson, and to Heinrich Heine “and other writers of his sort” who engage in similar confrontations (Arnold 1949: 559). Dostoevsky may have been anti-Semitic, of course. Others have done far more research into the question, which is really tangential to this study. But this scene does not provide evidence one way or the other about Dostoevsky’s personal beliefs or attitudes. See, for instance, Goldstein 1981, Morson 1983, Dreizin 1990, Rice 1993.
18. Tolstoy, vol. 8: 291. Subsequent references to this work are provided parenthetically in the text. Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.
19. Levin is not alone in facing the question of public versus private good as a problem in the novel. The proper public display of private life is central to the depiction of the Karenin household, suggesting at least a genre distinction (the boundaries of the society novel) and perhaps a gender distinction as well, as the depictions of women in social space assume greater importance with modernization. The question is clearly related to changing notions of the categories of public and private themselves and deserves a fuller treatment than I am able to provide here. For background on the notion of “the public” in much the sense that Tolstoy appears to be operating with in Anna Karenina, see Auerbach 1984; on Levin is not alone in facing the question of public versus private good as a problem in the novel. The proper public display of private life is central to the depiction of the Karenin household, suggesting at least a genre distinction (the boundaries of the society novel) and perhaps a gender distinction as well, as the depictions of women in social space assume greater importance with modernization. The question is clearly related to changing notions of the categories of public and private themselves and deserves a fuller treatment than I am able to provide here. For background on the notion of “the public” in much the sense that Tolstoy appears to be operating with in Anna Karenina, see Auerbach 1984; on changes in the depiction of the individual in public space, see Sennett 1974.
23. Ibid. 115.
24. Ibid. 110.
25. I have two instances in mind: his diatribe on the impoverishment of the nobility (vol 8: 202) and his criticism of the up-start Vronsky-like families of the upper class (vol 8: 204).
26. The rational egoism preached in the Chernyshevskian self-interest camp is evident in the instruction of Mr. Nosovich, the high school literature teacher of the narrator-hero in Gnilye bolota (Putrid Swamps), Aleksandr Sheller-Mikhailov’s 1864 novel serialized in...
The Contemporary: “Egoism is the main motor of all that is accomplished on the earth. . . . [One must cultivate] love of one’s I [and] always and in all cases strictly observe one’s actions with the necessities of one’s self-interest, one’s personal well-being. . . . The rational egoist [blagorazumnyi egoist], acting in his own interest, always acts also in the interests of all” (Sheller-Mikhailov 1904: 171).

"[Tolstoy] was considered the representative and even the ideologue of ‘the nobility, the Russian estate-owning nobility, inscribed in the genealogical registers by guberniya.’ He is the heir of that old, waning, oppositionist nobility that long before (even as early as the reign of Alexander I) had withdrawn from state service and settled on the land. He is an aristocrat-agrarian rejecting urban civilization and despising the serving nobility and the liberal bourgeois nobility of the zemstvo.” Eikhenbaum 1982: 32.

Pocock 1985: 41.

Pocock 1975: 37. See also Semmel 1984: 6–8. On the literary historical front, my analysis here and elsewhere parallels that of McKeon 1987, especially in his overall claim that the novel as a genre arises in the dialectic between worth and birth, value and inherited wealth. I am indebted to Garrett Stewart of the University of Iowa for pointing out how well Pocock’s distinction between virtue and fortune maps onto McKeon’s argument.

Anna critiques Lydia Ivanovna’s character: “Indeed it was funny: her goal was virtue [dobrodetel’], she was a Christian, but she was always angry, she had enemies everywhere, and they were all enemies for the sake of virtue and Christianity” (vol 8: 131); Madame Stahl is depicted through Kitty’s eyes: “Some said Madame Stahl had created for herself the position of a virtuous, highly religious woman” (vol. 8: 259).

Kitty subsequently repeats her idea of Varenka as a “whole” or “perfection” (sovershenstvo) about which she could only dream (vol 8: 265), and later says to her friend, partly trying to soothe her feelings after implying that all such virtuousness amounts to pretense, “You are perfection; yes, yes, you are perfection” (278).

On such linkages see Stenbock-Fermor 1975.

Gustafson 1986 notes the spiritual force (sila) within Levin (142) and the “force of life” (sila zhizni) Pierre Bezukhov comes to learn from the example of Platon Karataev (79), suggesting a uniquely Tolstoyan approach to self-interested behavior as “what shuts off the living water of divine life within us” (178). While taking nothing from Gustafson’s achievement, I am interested in the broader European discursive context within which Tolstoy’s thought resonates.

For a contemporary take, see Mansfield 2006.

See especially Morson’s discussion of Dolly’s attention to prosaic detail in Morson 2007: 33–54.

See chapters 1–3 of part 3.

For a recent alternative that contrasts the forms of illumination surrounding and penetrating Levin and Anna, see Kaufman 2011.

Chapter Four


3. As indicated earlier in this study, I understand McCloskey’s body of work within the resurgence of virtue talk of the past several decades. For a brief characterization and context, see note 13 of the introduction.
4. McCloskey 2006: 243–44. Study has perhaps worn my skin thin here, but surely, in her scathing profile of Gerschenkron’s masculine heroism, McCloskey does not want to claim he was not really learned or eloquent or any of the rest. Indeed, his neo-aristocratism, myth or not, was likely a fundamental source of his strength as a person and scholar. An aristocratic self-mythos might look a lot like an anachronism, indeed might be one, and she does ridicule it as such (a circular argument, and actually not an argument), but it can also be one of the more motivating self-mythoi behind the accomplishments of men and women both.

5. Gorky is a counter example to what McCloskey advances as an early twentieth-century rule. Literary man of action par excellence, Maxim Gorky was one of the leading public intellectuals of his day on both sides of the Atlantic. His Mother, moreover, was first published in English in New York in 1906. The Russian work would not be published until 1918.

6. To be fair, McCloskey states, “There is a time for aristocratic courage. Courage, not prudence or love or faith, is sometimes what is called for” (2006: 211). But it is difficult to reconcile such a concession with her claim that “the old tales of Western courage . . . that throng our Western culture are phony from the start” (212).


9. See chapter 3, pp. 81–82.


11. Lolita’s succès de scandale propelled Nabokov to international notoriety and gave him the financial independence to resign his teaching position at Cornell and move back to Europe. Zhivago made the retiring poet into an international cause célèbre, endangering his longtime mistress and the model for Zhivago’s Lara, Olga Ivinskaya. Pasternak won the 1958 Nobel Prize for literature largely on the basis of the novel, but he was pressured to refuse the award by the Soviet authorities. For examples of their tactics, see the appendices to Conquest 1961: 131–89. Ivinskaya and her daughter were arrested six weeks after the author’s death. They were tried and sentenced to prison terms in Siberia of eight and three years, respectively.

12. The sexlessness of Yura’s trauma is reinforced by the setting of the subsequent scene: the dark cell of a monastery on the eve of the Feast of the Intercession of the Virgin.

13. Nabokov 1970: 309. Subsequent references to this work are included in the text with page references indicated parenthetically.

14. The setting is not in Nabokov’s screenplay, which stipulates “a photograph of Duk-Duk ranch which Lolita had visited.” Nabokov 1974: 2.

15. The film announces Harris and Kubrick first, then moves to Nabokov’s novel and screenplay. On Nabokov’s judgment that he might have easily been removed from the credits based on the amount of material from his screenplay included in the film, see his foreword to Nabokov 1974: xii–xiii.

16. Humbert notes on the final page that he started writing fifty-six days earlier. He died, according to Ray’s foreword, on November 16, 1952, fifty-six days before which was September 22, the day he received Lolita’s letter. Boyd 1995 has argued against such a reading, suggesting instead that the inconsistency was a mistake of the author. For arguments in favor of it, see Bruss 1976: 145–45; Tekiner 1979: 463–69; Toker 1989: 198–227; Dolinin 1995: 3–40
Notes to Chapter Four

145

(esp. n. 1); and Connolly 1995: 41–61. It is hard to resist the thought that Nabokov would have savored creating such a “controversy” among his most careful readers.

17. I have heard the passage quoted as an example of empathy, as fine an instance of wishful reading as ever there was.

18. Its implicit reliance on Pushkin, especially his quintessentially sublime Tatiana, from Eugene Onegin, is treated by Meyer 1984. It is also worth recalling that Nabokov dedicated every book he ever published “To Vera.”

19. “It has often been remarked that all Pasternak’s own work can be read as being in some sense about the way art originates, especially the way it originates in the course of something very ordinary and day-to-day.” Livingstone 1985: 13–14.


22. From an entry in Zhivago’s diary (Pasternak 1958: 281). Other references to this work are provided parenthetically in the text.

23. More precisely, the name is the genitive case of the Church Slavonic adjective zhivyi, which may be translated as “alive” or “living.” As I. A. Esaulov has indicated, the name has a Biblical source in Luke 24:5—"Why seek ye the living among the dead?” where “the living” of the Slavonic and Greek texts is genitive singular and male: in other words, “Why do you seek one living man among the (many) dead?” Zhivago may thus indicate a name for Jesus Christ (Esaulov 2006: 67). Susanna Witt has also made a case for Zhivago as a translation (to Church Slavonic) of the Greek zosimos, or “living,” thereby connecting Pasternak’s hero to the Elder Zosima in Dostoevsky’s Brothers Karamazov. See Witt 2000: 80.

24. For the conventional wisdom on how to construct a plot, see, for instance, Dibell 1999. Some naïve readers have assumed that Pasternak must have thought such triteness was effective storytelling. This is a poor reading that does not accord with his intellectual milieu, his poetic oeuvre, and his other, highly sophisticated and complex prose fiction.


27. There may also be a distant reference here to Pushkin’s ode to the female instep in Eugene Onegin, chapter 1. See, for instance, Nabokov’s discussion of what he refers to as the “pedal digression” in Pushkin 1964: vol. 2, 115–17.

28. The translation from the Russian is my own.

29. The term is Bakhtin’s, in Morson and Emerson’s English. Morson and Emerson 1990: 275–277.

30. The disembodied and nearly abstract quality of the afterimage is inherent in the conception of inspiration itself. The image of the beloved reflected upon afterward for the poet is akin to the “glowing coal” from Shelley’s defense of poetry, with which both Pasternak and Nabokov agreed. Cf. Nabokov’s commentary on Pushkin’s line (used in my epigraph) “Love passed, the Muse appeared,” which specifies four stages of artistic inspiration: (1) Direct perception of a ‘dear object’ or event. (2) The hot, silent shock of irrational rapture accompanying the evocation of that impression in one’s fancies or actual dreams. (3) The preservation of the image. (4) The later, cooler touch of creative art, as identified with rationally controlled inspiration, verbal transmutation, and a new harmony.” See Pushkin 1964: vol. 2, 211.
31. See chapter 1.

32. For a compelling comparative treatment of the manner in which memory is imbedded in the images of sunsets in Doctor Zhivago and Dostoevsky’s Brothers Karamazov, see Witt 2000: 72–94. Witt refrains from placing these scenes in their proper intellectual historical context, namely, the Platonic doctrine of recollection or anamnesis, as developed in the dialogues Meno and Phaedo; in this context, the Eucharistic themes in each of the two books resonate more fully.

33. Devochka iz drugogo kruga (A Girl from Another Circle) is the title of part 2.

34. He is no less willing to allow himself to assume the symbolic value. The basically Platonic conception of character that Pasternak accords his main figures is suggested in the “nearly Platonic dialogues” that Yury and Lara engage in during their time at Varykino (Pasternak 1958: 395).

Conclusion

3. He is quoting Ivan Bunin’s journal from the period when he was composing Well of Days (1933). Sinyavsky 1990: 259. Joseph Conrad implicitly agrees with such an assessment when he depicts the only European character apparently unaffected by the raw savagery of the jungle in Heart of Darkness as a Russian.
4. Turkle 1997: 263–64. See also my earlier treatment in chapter 1.
5. Bely 1978: 64.
6. The reconstruction of the ancient Menippean satire as a form-shaping impulse in modern fiction is laid out in Bakhtin 1984: 114–18. For additional discussion of the ways that menippea may combine with other textual constituents (e.g., polyphony, carnivalesque laughter) in order to question ethical grounds and facilitate the exploration of ultimate questions, see Morson and Emerson 1990: 465–69, 490–91.
8. For a treatment of confidence men (and painted ladies) as an aspect of American middle-class culture of the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, see Halftunen 1982.
9. See also the earlier discussion of Montesquieu’s usage in my introduction.
10. Franscell 2003 compares Cosmopolis, unfavorably, with Ulysses, and expresses hope that “DeLillo wrote it as a comedy, too” (par. 8); Kakutani 2003 refers to it as “a major dud, as lugubrious and heavy-handed as a bad Wim Wenders film, as dated as an old issue of Interview magazine” (par. 2); Kipen 2003 offers a more positive assessment, calling the work an “odd, bottomless book” that “refuses to go away” (par. 12).
11. I have in mind the approach to generic allusion and family resemblance in Fowler 1982. On generic allusion, see pp. 88–92; on family resemblance, see pp. 40–44 and 58.
12. I am indebted to an anonymous reader of Modern Fiction Studies for this succinct overview of constructional and thematic patterns in DeLillo’s opus. Win Everett ruminates on the “deathward logic of . . . plot” in Libra (221). Jack Gladney repeats the notion almost verbatim in White Noise when he declares, “All plots tend to move deathward” (26). The “knotted twine” linking characters and concerns in these passages is unraveled in Cowart 2002: 75. There is a considerable body of literature exploring DeLillo’s complex treatment
of signs and mediation throughout his opus, particularly in the context of the postmodern theoretical frameworks of Jean Beaudrillard and Jean-Francois Lyotard. Cowart 2002: 1–13 provides a most helpful overview and excellent starting point.

13. For the suggestion that virtue might be a central concern in DeLillo’s work, I am indebted to a presentation by Mark Osteen of Loyola College, at the May 7–8, 2004, Critical Exchanges conference at Northwestern University. For a coherent vision of DeLillo’s pre-Cosmopolis opus through Underground, see Osteen 2000, which shares several points of contact with the trajectory I follow in these pages, in particular DeLillo’s intense intertextuality.

14. Fear of death is a central theme in nearly all DeLillo’s works. The acceleration of time that allows Packer’s mind to race ahead of his body is prepared earlier in the book: 52, 93–94.


16. As Walker 2003 makes clear, a “haircut” is also a slang term for losing a lot of money in an investment.

17. The encounter eerily recapitulates the end of DeLillo’s 1985 White Noise, a subject that must be left to another study. The fact that a credible threat is a threat likely to make good on its promise of being a threat is just one of the many darkly humorous word games DeLillo plays in the book.

18. Bakunin’s phrase in context: “Let us put our trust in the eternal spirit which destroys and annihilates only because it is the unsearchable and eternally creative source of all life. The urge to destroy is also a creative urge.” In “Reaction in Germany—A Fragment by a Frenchman,” published under the pseudonym of Jules Elysard in Arnold Ruge’s Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst (1842).


22. The threat of social corruption is extensively treated by Pocock. For a discussion of the rise of self-interested acquisition and the attendant “decline of glory,” see Hirschman 1977: 9–12.


26. E.g., Aristotle’s Politics, book I, chapter 9, which focuses on the “limitless” and “unnatural” character of trading in exchange value (as opposed to “use value”). It should be noted that Kinski’s predicted cure for the contemporary pandemonium is to “bring nature back to normal, more or less” (79): an Aristotelian cure?

27. “Psychomachia” is the title of Prudentius’s fifth-century allegory that pits the Christian virtues against the pagan vices in a battle for the psyche of man.
28. She echoes Pocock when she maintains that “property is no longer about power, personality and command. It’s not about vulgar display or tasteful display. Because it no longer has weight or shape” (78).

29. “The idea of the world citizen . . . requires us to place justice above political expediency, and to understand that we form part of a universal community of humanity whose ends are the moral ends of justice and human well-being.” Nussbaum 1997: 58. This, indeed, is the argument of the Cosmopolitan, the central character of Melville’s *The Confidence-Man*.

31. Žižek 1989: 68.
33. See chapter 1 for an analysis of Golyadkin’s attempt to manipulate the icons of consensual fantasy in his creation of a public persona. For speculations on another set of DeLillo doppelgangers, the multiple Edgars of *Underworld*, see Dewey, Kellman, and Malin 2002.
35. See chapter 1. The quote is from Hirschman 1977: 132–33.