

The Uses of Refinement, Etiquette and Uncertainty in the Autobiographical Writings of Anna Tyutcheva

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For reasons that may ultimately derive from the traditional use of exemplary narratives in the schoolroom, feminist history has had a penchant for rebellious heroines, colourful non-conformists who protest against the roles scripted for them by their culture.¹ Even Marina Warner, whose study of Margaret Thatcher, in *Monuments and Maidens*, emphasises that its subject has “tapped an enormous source of female power: the right of prohibition,” chooses not to dwell on the power of the negative arbitrator, and describes without enthusiasm the substitution, in John Gibson’s monument to Queen Victoria, of the new “womanly” virtue of Clemency for the traditional attribute of Wisdom.² But for all that, it is possible to see the association of women and refinement that was imported to Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century not only as a repressive mechanism (making it more difficult for women than for men to evade behaviour norms, and meaning that they were more virulently condemned, and fiercely punished, when they did), but also as an incentive mechanism, offering women possibilities of power (admittedly of a muted kind), and, more importantly, facilitating particular modes of writing and self-fashioning at different eras of history.

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Historicising refinement is particularly important, in the Russian context, because women's capacity to arbitrate morality has so often been perceived as innate. In his article "The Woman's World," for example, Yury Lotman argues that "women and girls of the 1820s were in significant measure responsible for creating the particular moral atmosphere of Russian society," but relates this to the fact that "as wife and mother, woman is to the highest degree connected with transcendental, supra-historical properties." Lotman's article ignores the role played by new ideologies of wifedom and motherhood that began coming into Russian culture during the eighteenth century, some of them articulated by women writers. In particular, he neglects the relationship between *éducation maternelle* or "pedagogical motherhood" (the notion that women were supposed to be responsible for their children's education, and educated in order to make them fit for this) and issues of women's cultural authority in a wider sense.³

This essay draws on work for a history of behaviour regulation from the late eighteenth to the late twentieth centuries, which is concerned, among other things, with the part played by gender in ideologies of behaviour. The era with which I am particularly concerned here is the mid nineteenth century; the context, the intermediate stages of the Slavophile movement, which I follow Andrzej Walicki in seeing as a variant of "conservative Romanticism."⁴ The democratically-inclined Romantics of the 1810s and early 1820s had sought to liberate themselves from what they saw as the stifling pretensions of polite culture. This was directly associated with a rebellion against the Sentimentalist concept of women as ideal readers, and against the supposed tyranny of the salon hostess (which in Russia, given the merely embryonic development of the salon, was always an imagined tyranny in any case). The perceived opposition between an elite, conservative, aristocratic culture,

supportive of the autocracy and dominated (behind the scenes) by women, and an innovative, egalitarian masculine culture of political opposition persisted into the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s as well. Men and women of radical sympathies tried to distance themselves as far as possible from what were seen as the “medieval Chinese ways” of conventional upper-class society, creating an alternative world that was opposed in every detail to the bon ton of St Petersburg polite culture. In his memoirs, the painter Il’ya Repin recalled visiting, in the 1860s, a radical “anti-salon” held in the house of Valentina Serova, woman composer and mother of the famous painter Valentin Serov. The attire of the female guests included short skirts and heavy knee-boots; the hostess was extremely offended when Repin tried to offer her his chair; and some of the young students attending demonstratively smoked and talked the entire way through the chamber music that was provided as entertainment.⁵

Because the Russian radicals were represented in Soviet historiography as “forward looking” and “progressive” (*peredovye, progressivnye*), their story has been told many times, and often identified with ‘Russian intellectual culture’ per se, which is always assumed to be “progressive” and hostile to convention. Much less attention has been paid to the the crises and agonies that arguments about refinement caused to thinking individuals whose sympathies were conservative, rather than radical. In what follows, I examine the significance of polite culture for one such individual, a woman associated with the ultimate bastion of aristocratic conservatism, the Russian court, but who also had connections with the anti-aristocratic ideologues of the Aksakov circle of Slavophiles. Anna Tyutcheva, (1829-1889), daughter of the poet Fedor Tyutchev and his second wife Eleonore Peterson, and wife of Ivan Sergeevich Aksakov, one of the most prominent Slavo-philes of the mid nineteenth century, was the author of memoirs describing her time

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(1853-1858) as a *freilina*, lady-in-waiting, to Maria Nikolaevna, wife of the heir to the throne Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich (from 1855, Emperor Alexander II). Later, between 1858 and 1865, Tyutcheva was to be employed as governess to Maria Aleksandrovna, the couple's daughter.⁶

My concern here is with refinement and identity: with Tyutcheva's attempt to construct an appropriate autobiographical persona to express her ambiguous attitude to her position as a courtier. A tenet that underpins my interpretation is that the "writing self" of the autobiographer is fundamentally if not finally determined by the conceptions of the society by and for which that "writing self" is constructed. Russian culture is commonly acknowledged to be an area where conceptions of selfhood are problematic. The term *lichnost'*, personality overlaps only imperfectly with the Anglophone term 'identity,' partly because the etymology of the term (from *litso*, 'face,' and connected with *lichina*, 'mask') can suggest the face that one puts out to the world, rather than any more totalizing concept of the self. Furthermore, the individualistic traditions of Western philosophy have been assimilated problematically and haphazardly, in contestation with Slavophile ideologies that represent Russia's true identity (with whatever historical justice or injustice) as based on collectivities such as the *mir* (peasant commune) or *sobor* (cathedral synod).⁷ It is hard to imagine any writer in any culture writing an autobiography without any sense of who is likely to read it, or of the relation between first-person narrator and the other characters in the narrative (parents, siblings, friends, enemies). But in Russia autobiographies have often seemed especially crowded, given the importance of autobiography as a vehicle for apologetics, for justifying life choices before the world, and demonstratively associating them with morally empowering patterns of self-fashioning, as well as a

certain theatrical flourish. All three dynamics can be seen in one of the most powerful models of autobiographical writing, the seventeenth-century *Life by the "Old Believer" Archpriest Avvakum*, in which the autobiographer turns the story of his persecution for refusing to accept the 1640s reforms instituted by Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich and Patriarch Nikon into a first-person hagiography, with many performative asides to the Tsar' as antagonist. Another case in point is Dostoevsky's fictional autobiography *Notes from Underground*, where Underground Man's readers are engaged not only as witnesses of the narrator's many dramatic confrontations, but also as the opponents in his argument against utilitarianism and rational egoism.

The peculiar character of the Russian autobiographical self, its marginality so far as European confessional tradition is concerned, may be one reason why Russian women have made so many distinguished contributions to autobiographical genres — memoirs, life histories, letters.⁸ However, the idio-syncretasies of Russian tradition also raise important questions about the extent to which it is possible to apply to Russian women's autobiography the theories of those commentators who have argued for the necessary difference of 'feminine' autobiography on general and abstract grounds such as the frailty of ego-boundaries, the privileging of the mother-daughter dyad, or the preference of women writers for fragmentary forms.⁹ The combative Russian tradition of auto-biography as apologetics means that many auto-biographers have been precisely concerned with establishing the importance of ego, the exceptionality of the first-person hero in a world of duller and more conventional individuals.¹⁰ Mother-daughter relations have been particularly problematic in this context, since it is often the mother who is seen as the most significant arbiter of convention in the child's world. This is so, for example, in the famous woman mathematician Sof'ya Kova-levskaya's

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"Memoirs of Childhood" (*Vospominaniya detstva*, 1889), and also in a shorter autobiographical piece, "Maman" (1913), by the early twentieth-century feminist, social activist, pamphleteer and novelist Natal'ya Nordman, in which the narrator's realisation that she matters less to her mother than an elegant white-and-pink pot of face powder becomes the central event in the unfolding of childhood identity.¹¹

Of course, the examples that I have just cited do anything other than disproving the importance of mother-child dyads in Russian women's autobiographies, but they do indicate that the mother-child relation is at least as often evoked to reinforce ego boundaries as to suggest their dissolution. (It has been Russian male autobiographers or fictional auto-biographers, such as Tolstoy in his *Childhood*, who have been more concerned to idealise the mother-child relationship as harmonious fusion.)¹² Equally, the adduction of fragmentation as a key feature of women's autobiographical writing demands some qualification for various reasons, the most obvious of which is the fact that published memoirs, like all other forms of writing in Russia, have often acquired their fragmentary character as the result of censorship pressures. For example, the memoirs of Vera Panova, a prominent woman writer of the mid-twentieth-century, *On My Life, Books and Readers* (*O moei zhizni, knigakh i chitatelyakh*, 1975) were in their published form the result of intervention by Soviet editors who forced Panova to excise from her text a description of her second husband's arrest during the Stalin purges, and to insert material about the writer's public role ("books and readers") into what had originally been a private memoir composed for her children.¹³ Similarly, Tyutcheva's memoirs have a fragmentary character: a short "Memoir" in continuous prose that, however, gives only an incomplete account of her early life, and a number of diary entries running from 1853-8, plus a small amount of material from the 1870s and 1880s. But

here, too, fragmentation seems partly traceable to censorship. In the 1870s, Tyutcheva began revising her 1853-8 diaries, dealing with the time that she spent as a lady-in-waiting at the Russian court, apparently with a view to publication, and composed the "Memoir" as a preface, but abandoned the plan to publish because her memoirs totally lacked the adulatory tone that was a *sine qua non* in pre-revolutionary Russia when publishing material dealing with the Imperial Family.¹⁴ The memoirs eventually reached print posthumously, and the version that we now have derives at least in part from editorial decisions made when they first appeared in the 1920s.

That said, the argument that fragmentation is a willed characteristic of Russian women's autobiography does carry some weight. Though few writers have composed intergeneric autobiographical fragments of the kind produced by those Anglophone writers who have inserted into texts as diverse as cookbooks or academic essays,¹⁵ the tendency among Russian women autobiographers to compose alternative versions of their lives means that fragmentary autobiographical discourse is far from unknown. One has only to think of the various volumes, overlapping yet separate, of Nadezhda Mandelstam's autobiography.¹⁶ The memoirs of another famous autobiographer, Catherine II, also exist in various versions (in this case, more than a dozen pieces of vastly differing length, from a few pages up to several hundred). In both cases, Catherine's and Mandelstam's, the "theatrical" tradition of Russian autobiography seems to play some part. Catherine's different autobiographies are associated with a sophisticated sense of readership. "Redaction IV," a lengthy account of Catherine's marriage to Peter III, later murdered in order to clear her way to the throne, was intended to legitimate her actions to her descendants, and hence is mostly concerned with Peter's unfitness to rule. "Redaction I" is a more private

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and intimate account of Catherine's life before her marriage, containing many details of her childhood and upbringing, which was written for her woman friend Countess Bruce. Redaction II, written for a male courtier, Aleksandr Cherkassov, is intermediate between the two extremes.¹⁷ In the second volume of her memoirs, Nadezhda Mandelstam likewise provided a second "redaction" of her life, abandoning the representation of herself as devoted widow-curator of her husband's memory that she had espoused in her first book of memoirs, and setting herself up as a defiant critic of her society and her earlier self as representative of that society.¹⁸

Of the two instances, Mandelstam's seems more relevant to Tyutcheva's case, since Tyutcheva's various autobiographical compositions entirely lack Catherine's sense, coquettish or androgynous or both, of suiting autobiographical self to the assumed reader. Like Mandelstam, her return to an earlier self seems to have been at least partly inspired by a need to critique that self. As she commented in 1880:

I filled whole notebooks during the first years of my life at court. In these, alongside heaps of sentimentality, fruitless repetitions, and excessively intimate details, may be found a fairly true picture of court life and the events of the era.

There are many curious details, which have been preserved with extraordinary freshness and vitality below the sur-face of sentimentality and naivety, and which are highly characteristic of that antediluvian stage of my first youth.¹⁹

The combination of critical perspective and retrospectivity is indeed evident in the continuous "Memoir," which makes broad and ambitious judgements on the 1850s in general: St. Petersburg, for instance, is described as a culture producing many clever men and women who somehow got no further

than the salon (Tyutcheva, vol. 1, pp. 72-3). However, any editing done by Tyutcheva on the extant diaries appears, in the event, to have been light, and there was certainly no attempt to "correct" the earlier self in line with the perceptions of the latter.²⁰

In any case, even if the formal characteristics of Tyutcheva's writings do seem to bear some relation to those of 'women's autobiography' in a broader sense, the persona that emerges is intimately related to the immediate historical context. As Beth Holmgren has argued, work such as Mandelstam's came out of a tradition in which women were perceived as fortunate survivors of the Purges whose continuing existence gave them the opportunity, and the duty, of taking up the pen as chroniclers of their age. It might be added that this perception of women autobiographers derived from and consolidated an older view, according to which women's memoirs were valued for the supposed accuracy with which they recorded their times.²¹ The quotation from Tyutcheva's letter above could be taken to suggest that she too shared the opinion that memoirs were above all valuable as historical records. But, unlike some women chroniclers, who contrived to efface the self almost entirely in the attempt to capture the lives of others, Tyutcheva as autobiographer is involved in an interesting and complex struggle to articulate her own identity.

A good deal of the complexity is traceable to Tyutcheva's political background. Both her father and her husband, the author and essayist Ivan Aksakov (whom she married in 1866, leading to her retirement from court life), were conservative supporters of the Russian autocracy and strong Slavophiles, but also well-educated cosmopolitans with a wide knowledge of Western literature and philosophy. Tyutcheva had similar tastes and intellectual interests: half-German, and largely educated in Germany, fluent in French (in which language she wrote her memoirs)

and in German, rather than in Russian, whose grammar and idiom she never fully mastered, she was at the same time Orthodox, a patriot, and a strong believer in Russia's historic destiny. All of this profoundly affected the siting of her autobiographical self.

The preoccupation of Soviet history above all with the Russian radical movement alluded to earlier in this essay has meant that radical autobiographies are much more familiar to most specialists, Western or Eastern, than the life histories of those outside radical circles. Some excellent work has been done on tracing the characteristic forms of radical self-fashioning: one might mention here Yury Lotman's work on the Decembrists, Irina Paperno's study of the radical thinker and author Nikolai Chernyshevsky, Richard Stites' classic history *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*, and Hilde Hoogenboom's reading of the memoirs of the populist Vera Figner.²² These writers have emphasised breach of etiquette and disruption of convention as crucial elements in the radical discovery of identity. This demonstrative violation of accepted standards of behaviour was an effortless way in which the Russian radical intellectual might act out his or her independence of social constraint, demonstrating identity through a straightforward juxtaposition of accepted norms and individual behaviour. Moreover, Hoogenboom traces a specific pattern for the autobiographies of Russian women radicals, in which both childhood and education, especially the influence of books, play a prominent part; these memoirs trace a trajectory of self-improvement that has marked affinities with that of the saint's life.

For Russian conservatives, however, who have generally been more respectful of the mechanisms of social regulation, discarding convention was not so straightforward. Among Russian Slavophiles of the mid-nineteenth-century, one possibility was the repudiation of Western manners as "false," and the espousal of supposedly

more “sincere” and “spontaneous” native models. But most of the Slavophiles (unlike their *raznochinet*s, or *déclassé*, radical opponents) were Russian aristocrats, to whom gentlemanly status was very important; and this status could only be demonstrated by the adoption of Western behaviour patterns. Hence, as Lyubov’ Kiseleva has argued in the case of the Slavophiles’ predecessors, the Archaists, there was an explosion of forms of doublethink according to which Western behaviour was attacked in print, but adopted in private. Admiral Shishkov, leading Archaist and patriot, lambasted French culture in his essays, but had Western furniture, wore Western clothes, and employed French tutors to teach his children, for example. In his letters to her before their marriage, Tyutcheva’s future husband Ivan Aksakov was later to articulate a description of the predicament of “ordinary” Russian people, stranded between the new culture and the old; the description fits aristocrats like him just as well as more “ordinary” citizens. Referring to the distressingly bad condition of churches along the Volga, he comments:

We have not cut ourselves off from life, we want to live and prosper as everyone else does, but we do not know how to deal with our heritage, we reject it, and now we appear *comme des bâtards* among civilised humanity [...] One thing is clear: in Russia, modern education is open to the ordinary man only at the cost of his moral decline, i.e. he has to deny in his heart all his spiritual traditions and make his acquiescence in advance with everything that runs contrary to those traditions.²³

In practice, it was no easier for those who came from less “ordinary” backgrounds to combine entry into “civilisation” with a full sense of morality, and “contradictions” between heritage and Western manners were just as vexed. The tensions were particularly painful for those Slavophiles who, unlike the Aksakov circle, accepted autocratic rule in its

contemporary manifestation (the court of Nicholas I) as an appropriate expression of a uniquely Russian national identity.²⁴

Anna Tyutcheva was one of these, and hence her memoirs of the Russian court depict an agonised voyage of self-discovery, rather than a triumphant progress of liberation. Since she was frustrated by the palpable insincerity of court life, but also committed, both by her profession as lady-in-waiting, and her own conservative political beliefs, to the support of autocratic rule and the institutions associated with it, there could be no moment of enlightenment in which she suddenly found herself unshackled from the conditions that constrained her behaviour. Her autobiography could not, in other words, follow the radical "master-plot" of liberation and enlightenment. Indeed, in her description of the short time that she spent at Smol'nyi Institute for the Daughters of the Nobility, the prestigious boarding-school for aristocratic girls founded by Catherine II, Tyutcheva specifically excluded the possibility of identifying with the Russian radicals: the clinching point that she used to illustrate the perniciousness of the education offered at Smol'nyi is that so many graduates had become involved with the Nihilist movement:

The absence of moral or religious education [at Smol'nyi] flung wide the doors to the propaganda of nihilistic doctrines, which are nowhere so widespread nowadays as in the state educational institutions. (Tyutcheva, vol. 1, p. 62).

Rather than a Damascene conversion to radical righteousness, then, Tyutcheva's diaries depict a process of constant and painful renegotiation of identity in terms of her relationship with court practices and with her employer, Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna.

As mentioned earlier, Tyutcheva's autobiographical per-sona has little in common with that adopted by court memoirists in general. The latter sought to efface the self entirely in hagiographical adulation of the royal personages that they served. One of them, Baroness Mariya Frederiks, for example, declares at the outset that the most significant prompting of her autobiography is to defend Nicholas I against the supposed besmirching of his memory by later commentators:

At the moment (1883), I am sitting before the portrait of our still unforgotten Emperor, Nicholas I, and many thoughts swarm inside my head as I study it. How much injustice and falsehood has been bruited about since the death of this giant of power and glory, who loved Russia with such a great love! (Frederiks, part 1, p. 54).

Frederiks actually refers to Alexander II as "our kind, gentle martyred tsar" ("nash dobryi, krotkii tsar'-muchenik," part 1, p. 54). In Tyutcheva's memoirs, on the other hand, the members of the royal family appear as all too fallible human beings, perhaps most grotesquely in the passage where she narrates how Nicholas I had ordered himself embalmed according to the Ganolo system (where an electric charge was run into the corpse's neck). The embalming was duly carried out, but Nicholas' body was neither electrically nor miraculously preserved, and soon began to putrefy noticeably (vol. 1, p. 188, entries of 20 and 21 February 1855). No saint in terms of the after-life (non-corruption of the body is traditionally accepted as a mark of sainthood in the Orthodox church), Nicholas is also seen with an increasingly cynical eye as the memoirs progress: described by Tyutcheva as a fine figure of a man in her first entries, he is dismissed in the early months of 1856 as 'someone who sacrificed everything to outward appearances, a man who was mentally limited and intoxicated by flattery' (vol. 2, p. 99, 11

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January 1856). There are still less adulatory portraits of some of the younger members of the royal family: for example, the pretty but silly Grand Duchess Alexandra Iosifovna, with her vain habit of playing up her resemblance to Mary Stuart, and her spoilt child's tactlessness and impertinence (vol. 1, p. 165, 8 November 1854), or Grand Duke Constantine, with his impudent habit of quizzing everyone in sight through an eye-glass (vol. 1, p. 150, 14 July 1854).

There is one point, though, upon which Tyutcheva's memoirs do observe conventional pieties. She expresses as great a conviction as any other royal memoirist of the necessity of court etiquette. Frederiks, for instance, had characterised Nicholas I's court as follows:

The whole of their way of life [i.e. that of Nicholas I, and Alexandra, his Empress] was imperial, majestic: they understood that prestige was essential to their high status (Frederiks, part 1, p. 76.)

A very similar passage was set down by Tyutcheva in 1854, this time criticising the simplification of court ceremonial that Nicholas had ordered for his own funeral:

He has directed that the hall where he was to lie in state should not be swathed in black, nor the chapel in Peter and Paul Fortress, and has ordered that his body should be exposed for the people to take their leave only three weeks, instead of the six weeks that had been customary in earlier days, and which allowed those living far away to come and pay their respects to the remains of the dead sovereign. He also ordered that the period of full mourning should last only six weeks.

All this is a terrible mistake. The prestige of authority is to a high extent ensured by the etiquette and ceremonial that surround it, and which have a strong influence on the imagination of the masses. It is dangerous to strip authority of this mystique (Tyutcheva, vol. 1, p. 188: Feb. 20 1854)

Even with the wisdom of hindsight, when writing the preface to her diaries, Tyutcheva remained convinced that strict protocol was vital to autocracy. She places an unfavourable gloss on the changes in court ritual that set in after Nicholas I's death, when the late monarch's obsession with correct time-keeping and punctilious ceremonial was replaced by a laxer attitude — Alexander II did not subject those late for church to public reprimands:

I cannot say that this laxity caused life at court to become more relaxed or pleasant. Court life is in its essence a conventional form of life and etiquette is essential in order to maintain its prestige. It is not only a barrier dividing the sovereign from his subjects but also a defence of those subjects from the caprice of the sovereign. Etiquette creates an atmosphere of general respect, in which each person purchases dignity at the cost of freedom and comfort. Where etiquette reigns, courtiers are grantees and ladies of society, where it is absent, they are reduced to the level of lackeys and maids, for intimacy without closeness and without equality is always humiliating, both for those who impose it on others and for those who have it imposed upon them. Diderot put it very wittily when speaking of the duc d'Orléans: "That grandee plays the coquette with me by pretending we are equals, but I distance myself from him with politeness." (Tyutcheva, vol. 1, p. 101).²⁵

Yet, though her later "Memoir" recognises 'etiquette' and 'intimacy' as opposites, and sees a court life ruled by impersonality, with courtiers faceless symbols of royal status, as the ideal, both here and in her diary Tyutcheva constantly chafes against the impersonality of court life, attempting to create the intimacy within its spaces that she herself saw as dangerous. She vividly evokes how bleak she found the bare quarters allocated to ladies-in-waiting when she first arrived:

How hastily the poor ladies-in-waiting fled from their lonely rooms, which could never be a home for them [the

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word 'home' is used in English in Tyutcheva's original text], having neither the comfort of the domestic hearth, nor the solitude of a monastic cell. Amid the noisy and luxurious life surrounding them, they found only loneliness and a painful sense of desertion (Tyutcheva, vol. 1, p. 91).

I cannot conceal that the first time when I drank tea in my new quarters, I felt so sad and lonely that I began to weep bitterly (Tyutcheva, vol. 1 p. 107: entry of 13 January 1853).

Tyutcheva attempted to escape the gloomy, institutional atmosphere of her quarters not only by taking carriage rides, as the other ladies did, but also by turning her relationship with her royal employer into more than a formal connection. The condition of intimacy between them is constantly examined and found wanting:

Truly, had she not been the Grand Duchess, I would have loved her sincerely, but at present I try to preserve the requisite polite indifference in myself. That is the reason for the falsity in our relations. We live in unnatural intimacy with people far superior to us, we see them constantly and see only them, and quite involuntarily associate our interests with theirs, while they, on the other hand, can only be interested in us so far as we come into contact with them, and they remain, and ought to remain, indifferent towards us and more or less alien to us. This is what makes life at court so empty for anyone who is not plunged completely into frivolity: one searches out emotional or intellectual interest, and finds nothing to satisfy one.

(Tyutcheva, vol. 1, p. 120: entry of 12 July 1854: cf. vol. 1, p. 9, 1 March 1854.)

Tyutcheva relentlessly delineates the moments of crisis — painful but inconclusive — that beset the relationship. A fit

of bad temper on the part of the Empress, for example, produces emotional agony on Tyutcheva's part:

On account of trifles of various kinds she was extremely sharp and spoke more harshly than ever before. I could hardly hold back my tears in her presence, and when I got to my room, I broke down completely. In fact, it tormented me so much that I could not restrain myself from going to the Empress and asking whether she were annoyed with me in some way. She replied that she was seriously preoccupied and that she was faced with taking a very painful decision, and sent me away (Tyutcheva, vol. 2, p. 75, 18 October 1855).

Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, highly intelligent liberal salon hostess, frankly disliked the Empress, finding her "intellectually mediocre" and "inconsistent" (see note by S. V. Bakhrushin to Tyutcheva, vol. 2, pp. 108-9). Tyutcheva's devotion to autocracy did not leave her with that possibility. Rather than tracing her unhappiness to the Empress's personal character, she explained it by the division between external observances and internal feelings felt by women of the royal court.

Much the same explanation is offered for Tyutcheva's frustrations with religious worship at the court: condemned on state occasions to the restrained outward observance demanded by etiquette, she laments the impossibility of giving vent to her intense inward religiosity:

The service provoked a feeling of sadness in me. It was all so magnificent, so opulent, so grand. You aren't allowed to kneel down, that would be a breach of etiquette, and you stand before God in full court regalia. I felt like a child who had been commanded to curtsy to her mother rather than kissing her. But in order to reward myself, I will go to a service tomorrow and pray quietly in a corner. (Tyutcheva, vol. 1, pp. 109-110: 25 January 1854).

Here, Tyutcheva's attitudes again came into conflict with court etiquette, which accorded a purely functionalist role to religious ceremony: services were seen as part of court ritual generally, and the religious observance of courtiers regulated accordingly. Attendance at "major court ceremonies" (les grandes cérémonies) was obligatory; at other occasions, "les petites fêtes", attendance was an entitlement rather than an obligation.²⁶ In other words, presence at the mass was associated above all with status, rather than with piety, and expressed service to the royal house rather than devotion to the deity.

More sanguine memoirists than Tyutcheva recall a degree of flexibility in court etiquette that allowed an expression of personal relations at the interstices of protocol. The rigid rules might be relaxed, by common consent, during certain ceremonies: in her history of court etiquette under the French ancien régime, Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis (Madame Genlis), describes how "a lady of title" might renounce her right to sit in the presence of the Queen if she were presenting a lady without title who was compelled to stand:

Here, social politeness took precedence over the observation of etiquette: in respect for blood relationship or friendship, one refused an honour offered to one by a royal personage, and refused it in their very presence, and they approved this arrangement.²⁷

That personal relations could also impinge on the rules at the Russian court is indicated by an anecdote of Frederiks, the daughter of a close friend of Alexandra Feodorovna who had been more or less brought up with the royal children. At Frederiks' presentation, the Empress behaved at first with the dignified impersonality required by the ceremony ('qui est cette demoiselle?') before relaxing and allowing everyone to enjoy the joke, and, "though she herself was frightfully

amused by my confusion, she immediately embraced me and comforted me by treating me as she always did, with never-failing kindness." (Frederiks, part 2, pp. 463-4). Such choreographed spontaneity was not enough for Tyutcheva: she sought for an emotional expression that was attractive, though also dangerous, because it was forbidden.

Tyutcheva's attachment to qualities such as sincerity and candour often has pietistic overtones: as she put it herself, her early education in a German Catholic convent had given her "a saving horror of vanity, frivolity, worldly pleasures, spectacles, fine clothes, and silly books" (vol. 1, p. 62). She was, accordingly, peculiarly ill-equipped to make a success of her career at the court of Nicholas I, where the values of Smol'nyi, rather than of a German convent, were in general sway.

Though Tyutcheva herself emphasised the fact that court etiquette could protect courtiers from a sovereign's despotism (see above), other sources suggest that the taste of individual monarchs was fundamental in setting the tone of court life. After the accession of Paul I in 1796, the studiedly informal atmosphere of Catherine's court, with its intimate suppers for the Empress and her chosen circle, sometimes held in a pavilion at Tsarskoe Selo which had been equipped with lifts and a revolving table so that servants did not have to be present, was driven away by Paul I's "Prussian" and militaristic taste for elaborate ceremony. Softened during the reign of Alexander I, court ceremonial again became stiffer under Nicholas I; the monarch's sergent-majorish bearing was the subject of frequent comment, by no means all of it approbatory, from foreign visitors to the court.²⁸

The personal preferences of sovereigns also had a marked effect on the role of women at court. Though Catherine II was herself no feminist, regarding her own tough intellect as "a man's mind in a woman's body," and seeking the company of men for games of cards, intimate

suppers, and other still more private pleasures, she did have a number of close women friends whom she raised to prominent positions, most notably Princess Ekaterina Dashkova, first (and indeed only) woman president of the Russian Academy of Sciences. With the accession of Paul I, on the other hand, had come a systematic downgrading of the role of the tsaritsa, whose significance as consort and ancillary was now underlined in court ceremonial. The firm establishment of a "separate sphere" for the tsaritsa, a glorification of her significance as the perfect wife and mother also went, predictably enough, with the creation of a marital double standard, according to which the husband's infidelity was taken for granted, but the wife's was subject to total prohibition.²⁹ From the reign of Paul, the 'royal mistress' became an institution, and though Nicholas I was not as blatant in his attentions to royal favourites as Paul or indeed Alexander, his attachment to various women, latterly Varvara Nelidova, was very well known among courtiers. The royal women, on the other hand, were subject to a strict code that did not necessarily prevent infidelity, but certainly prohibited its open expression. The prevailing morality was well reflected in the case of Tsaritsa Elizabeth, wife of Alexander I, who had a passionate affair with an officer of the guards in the 1810s, and who was roundly and bitterly condemned by other women of the royal house, such as her sister-in-law, Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, who wrote in her diary on 15 May 1826:

Although for a long time now I have been well acquainted with the Empress Elizabeth's conduct, although I have known all this for certain, it still struck me as impossible -- I could have believed this only of her! And now imagine what have I heard today: she told Karamzin everything! that is what K[aramzin] himself told A. N. Golitsyn when on his deathbed.

Yes, she even went so far as to write her memoirs, the description of all her wanderings from the path of

virtue, which she read out to him complete, barring only a few details that she herself admitted were too stark for any woman to be able to read them aloud. Not only that: she also intended to give these memoirs to Karamzin so that he could keep them for her! Why on earth was that necessary, and why did she display such trust in Karamzin? I shuddered when Niki told me all this today, he himself was chilled to the bone by the thought of it all, for although there is nothing new in this, nothing we did not know before, the confession lays bare such incompassable impudence that one can understand nothing.

My God! And that woman has always been regarded by the whole of Russia and Europe as a pure martyr, a victim! Even now you always hear people say, 'L'ange Elisabeth est allée rejoindre l'autre ange!' Will posterity never judge more justly? Numbers of people do know the truth, such as A. N. Golitsyn, Karamzin, and the whole Imperial Family, apart from Helene [Elena Pavlovna], whose eyes have never been opened and who is now weeping for a being she considers spotless. To forget oneself twice, to fall, in her exalted position, as the wife of such a young and lovable man, with the example of the Queen Mother before one's eyes, who came so pure through the corrupt, immoral days of Catherine; this makes [Elizabeth] culpable, and especially since she was the first to be unfaithful!

[...] But I must not let my anger rise any more; that, too, is a sin. However, Helene must hear of all this sometime.³⁰

For Empress Maria Feodorovna, as expressed in her 1820s correspondence with her daughter the Princess of Orange (the former Grand Duchess Anna Pavlovna), the ultimate virtues in women of the court were stoicism and modesty (a term embracing sexual self-control, social self-effacement, and resigned acceptance of the biological roles that she insistently urged on women as sacred duties):

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I implore you therefore my darling Annette, to be brave and to seek in reflection, occupation, exercise, and a little amusement the remedy for the ills inseparable from your state [i.e. pregnancy].

Charlotte Karlovna [Lieven, confidante of Maria Feodorovna], was angry at his tears [of a Prince de Croquebourg, rejected by the lady-in-waiting he wished to marry], but the countess expects a perfection from us that is more than men are capable of. We must demand it of women, but men don't follow the same strict rules.

In practice, such moral perfection of course meant surrendering control of areas beyond the purview of refined discourse, such as sexual relations, as the Empress makes clear in her discussion of the health of Grand Duchess Alexandra (the future Empress Alexandra), who was spared the sexual attentions of her husband only when this is ordered by the court doctors:

The Grand Duchess will need time and medical resources to strengthen her health and her nerves. Nicholas is already distracted at the abstinence he must observe, but all the doctors say that the constitution of the Grand Duchess demands some rest after those close pregnancies. She didn't even have one period between Marie's birth and the pregnancy with the dead baby, and that's why she lost so much blood which has weakened her and caused the poor tone of her skin. She was terribly swollen but thank God that has passed.³¹

Such attitudes had an inevitable impact on the status of women at court more generally. Though the tsaritsa and tsarevna still retained their separate suite of retainers, with its own series of ranks running from unmarried ladies-in-waiting (freiliny) at the bottom via married ladies-in-waiting (shtats-damy) to 'mistresses of the court' (gofmeisteriny) at the top, with especially favoured women granted admission to the Order of St. Catherine, the decline in the tsaritsa's role

also curtailed the authority that might be acquired through allegiance with her. The possibility of acquiring real political power (as Ekaterina Dashkova had through her friendship with Catherine when the latter became an autocratic ruler in her own right) had ended. Even the Order of St. Catherine, all-female in Catherine's day, acquired male officials in the early nineteenth century.³² Hence, backstairs manipulation of prominent men (members of the royal house, powerful courtiers) had become the most important route to influence for women. As Alfred Rieber puts it (writing in Tyutcheva, vol. 1, p. iv): "In this unequal combat [court ladies'] weapons were limited to the meager arsenal of character traits legitimized by their stereotype. Of these the most dynamic — mysticism and sex — could be exploited most effectively to transform their subservient position into a dominant one, though at great cost to the stability of court life."

Tyutcheva had herself internalised the double-standard:

Perhaps because I am a woman, I have always found men much less imposing and frightening than women -- they are more benevolent. In relation to women, I feel the difference in my status, in relation to men, only the difference in my sex, and with the Emperor, I feel almost as free as with any man from society.
(Tyutcheva, vol. 1, p. 109, 25 Jan. 1854)

Yet she also had a strong grasp of the restrictions that Nicholas I's court placed on women, powerfully evoking the decorative infantilism of Alexandra Feodorovna's life in her prefatory memoir; what is more, she repeatedly rejected the methods of self-advancement identified by Rieber, mysticism and sex. Having first of all been unsettled by the fashion for séances because of the possibility of corruption by demonic forces (Tyutcheva, vol. 2, p. 149, p. 174), she later dismissed them with dry irony. She relates that, after an encounter with an etiquette-obsessed spirit who communicated through a ouija board that he did not want to be addressed by the

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familiar second person singular ("you can only say tu to God"), she felt her mind set at rest by the mediocrity of the information purveyed: "If the devil is involved in all this, you'd think he'd be cleverer" (vol. 2, p. 188). The sexual intrigues of the Russian court are dealt with more obliquely, but the disapproval with which Tyutcheva refers to the "sinful" behaviour of Nicholas I's mistress, Varvara Nelidova (vol. 1, p. 88), is an eloquent indication of her underlying attitudes.

Mysticism and sex, then, offered no temptations. A more serious threat to Tyutcheva's calm, since it brought into question her whole notion of etiquette as the root of moral relations, is recorded when she discusses the manipulation of court protocol by able careerists. Aleksandra Dolgorukova, another lady-in-waiting to Maria Nikolaevna, was able to use Tyutcheva's emotional scenes to her own advantage:

In such situations, Aleksandra is silent. Her current role is to be so overcome by reverential awe that she is no longer able to chatter and joke as before. It is a very skilful performance of respect and timidity; she acts it out with great elegance and delicacy, and I sometimes feel that her ceremonious manner of behaviour is much more appropriate than my tears and meaningless reproaches, or than the insouciant delight that I feel when I spend time [with the Royal Family] and which allows me to forget that they are such elevated persons. I love them as though they were not our rulers at all. (Tyutcheva, vol. 2, p. 15-16: entry of 14 March 1855).

Tyutcheva's dilemma is painfully obvious here in her use of the terms "ceremonious" and "appropriate," both of which carry positive connotations in her writings. The stereotype of the carefully correct and unimpassioned courtier, like a well-trained servant, was worrying because of its close connection with the crucial role of etiquette in regulating court power. Taking the religious role of royal ceremonial and tsarist

authority seriously, Tyutcheva could not do what most courtiers did -- observe the outward forms only.³³ Hence, the moral deficiencies of the court, rather than being the basis for censure of autocracy as such, were the cause of sharp personal pain.

Alfred Rieber has interpreted Tyutcheva's memoirs as a study of how "Tyutcheva's education helped free her from the dominant stereotypes at court" (vol. 1, p. iv), but this interpretation is, I think, something of a sentimental oversimplification. By contrast with her more radically inclined contemporaries, Tyutcheva was not directly concerned with women's liberation, still less with education as a part of this. Her observations on the unsuitability of Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovich's English governess indicate that the primary purpose of education was for her *vospitanie* (moral indoctrination) rather than *obrazovanie* (intellectual training):

The Empress spent quite a long time discussing her children with me. I said to her that I had been shocked by the bad manners of Grand Duke Alexis' governess, a certain Englishwoman called Isherwood, an appallingly vulgar red-haired creature who can only have a pernicious influence on his development. I believe that sovereigns should be surrounded from their earliest years by an atmosphere of politeness and bon ton, by which means respect for themselves and others would be instilled in them, so that it would be possible, in later years, to demand that others respected them in the same way. The Empress is generally in agreement with me, but I have the feeling that she does not pay sufficient attention to the upbringing of her sons, and that they are not being given that polish of cultivation that is more necessary to sovereigns than to anyone else.
(vol. 2 p. 62, entry of 3 October 1855).

Once she had taken over as royal governess, Tyutcheva saw her task as requiring that she should educate her charge, the young Maria Aleksandrovna, into a proper sense of etiquette

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and rank. In a manuscript treatise dedicated to the Grand Duchess's schooling, Tyutcheva dwelt on the need to educate the child into a sense of her own rank, and of her place at court. On the first page of the treatise, she places this purpose second only to the religious end of education:

Education has two ends to fulfil.

The first is to make a person into a good Christian and to prepare him for eternal life.

The second is to make a person capable of filling the place that God has assigned him in this earthly life.

She then goes on to underline the point: "The earthy end of education is to teach a person to carry out the duties of the social position to which he has been called in this world."

In the case of the Grand Duchess, social station dictates, on the one hand, that she be protected from the morally questionable influences of the court ("at court [...] everyone has only one concern, one ambition, one over-riding end in view, and that end is not God or goodness in the sight of God; it is power in all its forms, honours, riches, and pleasures"), but also brought to a sense of her unusual social status, and allowed to benefit by this in an intellectual sense:

A young Grand Duchess, child as she may be, is obliged to converse with large numbers of people who surround her with tokens of esteem and lend to her words an interest rarely given to [what] young children [say]. Let us make use of this in order to put the Grand Duchess in contact with distinguished, intelligent and cultivated persons of all kinds who can impart taste and familiarity with good conversation to her.

Though Tyutcheva gestures towards a liberal understanding of education, which "is supposed to develop all an individual's faculties — physical, moral, intellectual — to the maximum possible degree of perfection, and to make him

useful to himself and his neighbour," education is for her primarily a means of maintaining the status quo.³⁴

Nor was education accredited a liberating role in Tyutcheva's account of her own biography. The move from lady-in-waiting to royal governess, which in the hands of another narrator might have marked a joyous liberation from the lady-in-waiting stereotype, is passed over by her altogether in her prefatory memoir, and seen in the diary as representing a loss of freedom rather than a moment of unbinding:

Although I myself wished to have duties more serious than those allocated to a lady-in-waiting, and had myself been looking for a job of some kind, for particular duties, all the same, it is impossible to be stripped of one's freedom without regrets. [...] From now on, I shall belong to myself no longer, I shall give up all my life and strength to others, who, let alone giving me anything in return, will probably not even know that I am making any kind of sacrifice.
(vol. 2, p. 150, entry of 10 August 1858).

Rieber's description of Tyutcheva as "rejecting" all stereotypes also oversimplifies, given the appeal of the "devoted servant" figure to the writer, and the fact that her central dilemma, both upholding and assaulting etiquette, leads her to construct a stereotype just as powerful as those invoked in radical autobiography. If the liberation narratives of radical memoirists, such as Figner, can be related to the "provincial tale," a narrative of women's liberation depicting how a woman of the country gentry manages to free herself from the stifling constraints of the life conventionally considered appropriate to well-bred young women, Tyutcheva's memoir has strong parallels with the "society tale," a genre hinging on a clash between the protagonist's inner experience and the possibilities of its representation in the *uslovnyi* (artificial/conventional) world

of high society. Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, herself the author of many society tales, elegantly summarised the starting point for the genre in her history of court etiquette:

People of fashion have made a code of love and friendship, whose rules are easy to follow. This code, distinguished by an abundance of artificiality and taste, forbids nothing that is not overt, and condemns nothing but noise [éclat] and scandal; it permits deception and infidelity, so long as these have appropriate [adroites], noble and decent forms.³⁵

The opposition between “deception” and “scandal” that Genlis draws here is absolutely fundamental to the society tale, whose stereotypical plot shows how, in high society, an affair that is not based on deception leads to scandal, because concealment of true feeling is impossible, leading to a breach of etiquette’s *omertà*, law of silence.

From Tsaritsa Alexandra’s account, it appears that the memoirs which Empress Elizabeth read aloud to Karamzin were a shaping of a real episode, a genuine love affair, in terms of the classic type of society tale (love taken to the point of scandal), though with the added frisson that the confessional nature of the account breached the convention that the society tale’s narrator should only hint at the improprieties threatening the tasteful artificiality of polite society. Less innovative in terms of their narrative manner (they don’t lay bare any misdemeanours on the part of their author), Tyutcheva’s memoirs are, however, also an original and powerful reworking of the “society tale” because they indicate that friendship, which had been considered by the sentimentalist tradition that shaped the society tale to be a more powerful and reliable emotion than love, could be nearly as “scandalous” to the conventions of *bon ton* as romantic love. Yet, at the same time, the very existence of “sincerity” depends, in the society tale, on its breaching of the

borders of etiquette; the term can only apply to moments that assault generally accepted rules. Tyutcheva's desire for friendship with the Tsarevna Maria Nikolaevna was based, more strongly than on anything else, on the sense that they would be close if it were not for the rules (desire is powerful because it is deferred). The conventions of court society might be bewailed, but they were also accepted and celebrated by her (as is the case also in such "society tales" by Russian women writers as Mariya Zhukova's *Baron Reikhman*, 1837).³⁶ Finally, no gesture is possible that is not anticipated by social constraint.

Russian radicals of the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s regarded women's moral superiority (which they took for granted) as innate, an exemplification of how "with the most extraordinary ease, [a girl] shakes off the dirt that mires her, overcomes external circumstances by dint of her inner nobility, attains an understanding of life by some process of revelation," to quote Herzen's "Who is to Blame"?³⁷ Conservatives such as Tyutcheva, on the other hand, belonged to a tradition which saw women's morality as actively acquired through moral indoctrination (on the part of mothers and governesses), and actively exercised (by observation of morality's dictates). The fact that she viewed etiquette not only as a manifestation of charismatic royal authority, but also as an arena of serious, one might even say professional, endeavour by women was the reason why straightforward liberation was impossible for Tyutcheva, torn as she was by the conflict between feeling and propriety, morality and *bon ton*. Yet at the same time, she shared the post-Sentimentalist conviction, held also by the radicals, that "sincerity" depended above all on the open expression of emotion — a conviction that placed her, like the Empress Elizabeth, in direct conflict with the emphasis on stoicism and self-command that was a vital part of the behaviour code for women in the male-dominated courts of Alexander I and

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Nicholas I. The sharpness of the dilemma is perhaps the reason why, despite the censoriousness that the later Tyutcheva felt towards her earlier self, her years at the Russian court were by far the most important experience of her life, so far as her writing existence was concerned. After her marriage to Aksakov, she played a prominent role as a hostess and political activist, but the “autobiographical” element disappeared from her diary. Surviving entries from the 1870s are a dull chronicle of events at the Duma and of contacts with fellow Slavophiles, while her published letters, such as those addressed to the woman writer Nadezhda Sokhanskaya, are a heartfelt but banal celebration of domestic bliss: “How unusually joyful a feeling it is for me to feel myself at home, to feel myself the mistress of a house! [...] We had to unpack everything and organise it all [...] but now everything is tidy and in its place.”³⁸ Her Russian court diaries, on the other hand, offer fascinating glimpses of a predicament that continues to haunt some royal courts even now; they illuminate the threats to a woman wanting to transgress the boundaries between official and private roles, to be “queen of hearts” as well as arbiter of the very limited area of social power allocated to her by court convention.³⁹

NOTES

The larger project upon which this paper is based, *Refining Russia: Gender and the Regulation of Behaviour from Catherine to Yeltsin*, has been generously supported by the Humanities Research Board of the British Academy through Personal Research Grants, and by the International Exchange Scheme between the British Academy and the Russian Academy of Sciences. I would like to thank these institutions, and I am also grateful to members of the audience at the ‘All By Myself’

conference on autobiography held at the University of Groningen, November 1996, and at the workshop on Russian literature and gender at the University of Tromsø in June, 1998, for stimulating questions, and helpful comments on the material presented in this paper.

1. A recent example is Natalie Zemon Davies' delightful triple biography, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995.
2. Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*, London, 1985/1996, p. 52, p. 209.
3. Yu. Lotman, "Zhenskii mir," *Besedy o russkoi kul'ture: Byt i traditsii russkogo dvoryanstva XVIII-nachalo XIX veka*, St Petersburg, 1994, p. 57, p. 46. Lotman assumes throughout *Besedy* that the two sources for educational ideology were Locke and Rousseau, ignoring the huge influence exercised by women writing on the subject, in particular Madame de Lambert, Madame Leprince de Beaumont, and Madame Genlis. See C. Kelly, "Educating Tatiana" in L. Edmondson (ed.), *Gender and Russian History, 1800-1990*, London, 1999.
4. See Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, Oxford, 1975, especially pp. 8-9.
5. On salons and Romantic "anti-behaviour," see chapter 1 of my *Refining Russia*. I. Repin, "Valentin Aleksandrovich Serov," *Dalekoe blizkoe*, Leningrad, 1982, Section 1, p. 352.
6. The best general account of Tyutcheva's biography is A. L. Ospovat and N. V. Kotrelev's article "A. F. Aksakova" in the authoritative *Russkie pisateli 1800-1917: biograficheskii slovar'*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1987, pp. 39-40. She does not appear in M. Ledkovsky, C. Rosenthal and M. Zirin (eds.), *Dictionary of Russian Women Writers*, Westport, Connecticut, 1994, though coverage of memoirists is generally good.
7. On *lichnost'*, see Derek Offord, "Lichnost'," in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (eds.), *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution*, Oxford, 1998, 13-25.

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8. Another reason for Russian women's notable success in the genre of autobiography may be the fact that it allowed them to give vent to the private considerations that were difficult to express in the Russian novel, which was conventionally perceived as a vehicle for political ideas. On this see B. Heldt, *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature*, Bloomington, Indiana, 1987, and C. Kelly, "Introduction to the Pandora Edition," in Anna Larina, *This I Cannot Forget*, London, 1995. An instance of the importance of theatrical imagery in autobiography is Mikhail Zoshchenko's fictionalised autobiography, *Pered voskhod-om solntsa* (1943). For some brief observations on the genre traditions of Russian autobiography, see my article, "The First-Person 'Other': Sof'ya Soboleva's 1863 Story 'Pros and Cons' (I pro, i contra)," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 1995, issue 1.
9. See e.g. Estelle C. Jelinek, *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism*, Bloomington, 1980, and Celeste Schenk, "All of a Piece: Women's Poetry and Autobiography," in eadem and Bella Brodzski (eds.), *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women's Autobiography*, Ithaca, NJ, 1988, pp. 281-305.
10. There are, of course, counter-examples: in her excellent Introduction to *The Memoirs of Princess Dashkova*, trans. K. Fitzlyon, pp. 1-26, Jehanne Gheith addresses the paradox according to which Dashkova "describes her achievements in a language of self-effacement" (p. 5). But Dashkova came from a generation where modesty was the ideal of behaviour for aristocratic women, an ideal which radical memoirists held in contempt.
11. Sof'ya Kovalevskaya, "Vospominaniya detstva," in her *Vospominaniya. Povesti*, ed. P. Ya. Polubarinova-Kochina, Moscow, 1974; Natal'ya Nordman, "Maman," *Intimnye stranitsy*, St. Petersburg, 1910, pp. 187-92.
12. On Tolstoy's *Childhood* and the tradition that it initiated, see Andrew Wachtel, *The Battle for Childhood: Creation of a Russian Myth*, Stanford, 1992.
13. Vera Panova, *O moei zhizni, knigakh i chitatel'yakh*, Leningrad, 1975; on the composition and censorship of the text, see Serafima Yur'eva, *Vera Panova: stranitsy zhizni: k biografii pisatel'nitsy*, Tenafly, NJ, 1993.

14. A. F. Tyutcheva, *Pri dvore dvukh imperatorov: vospominaniya, dnevnik 1853-1855*, ed. S. Bakhrushin and M. Tsyavlovsky, 2 vols., Moscow 1928-9. (References to this publication henceforth parenthesised in text as "Tyutcheva, vol. o, p. oo".) A typical court memoir is Baroness M. F. Frederiks, "Iz vospominanii," *Istoricheskii vestnik* vol. 71 (1898), 52-87, 454-84 [part 1]; vol. 72 (1898), 49-79, 396-413 [part 2]. (References to this publication henceforth parenthesised in text as "Frederiks, part o, p. ooo".)
15. I'm thinking here of Patience Gray's *Honey from a Weed: Fasting and Feasting in Tuscany, Catalonia, the Cyclades and Apulia*, London, 1986, or Elizabeth David's *French Provincial Cooking*, London, 1960, or Claudia Roden, *A Book of Jewish Food*, London, 1997, or the culinary writings of M. F. K. Fisher. Western practitioners of academic autobiography include a number of men, such as Simon Schama (*Landscape and Memory*, London, 1995, but the genre has perhaps had particular appeal for women: see e.g. Liz Stanley, *The Auto/biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography*, Manchester, 1992. In Russia, cookbooks have remained humdrum "how to" manuals (albeit sometimes with a nationalist slant), and academic discourse is still characterised by studied impersonality; the few instances of "academic autobiography" that have come to light so far were composed in unusual circumstances (e.g. Lidiya Ginzburg's *Chelovek za pis'mennym stolom*, Leningrad, 1989, which was legitimated by its imitation of a famous nineteenth-century commonplace book, P. D. Vyazemsky's *Staraya zapisnaya knizhka*, or Svetlana Boym's *Common Places: Mythologies of Every Day Life in Russia*, Cambridge, MA, 1994, the work of a Russian writer living in the USA).
16. Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, *Vospominaniya*, New York, 1970 (translated by Max Hayward as *Hope against Hope*, London, 1971; *Vtoraya kniga*, Paris, 1972, trans. Hayward as *Hope Abandoned*, London, 1974; *Tret'ya kniga*, Paris, 1987).
17. The fullest edition of Catherine's memoirs is *Sochineniya Imperatritsy Ekateriny Vtoroi na osnovanii podlinnykh rukopisei s ob"yasnitel'nymi primechaniyami A. N. Pypina*, vol. 12: *Avtobiograficheskie zapiski*, St. Petersburg, 1907, from which the redaction nos. here are taken.

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18. The composition of "alternative autobiographies" is far from unknown among Russian men, but seems to have had a rather different significance. For instance, Tolstoy's "Memoirs" ("Vospominaniya"), a recollection of the writer's childhood written in the 1900s, was intended to repudiate and efface, rather than stand alongside, the fictionalised autobiography composed by Tolstoy in the 1850s, *Detstvo*. See Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Moscow 1928-1958, vol. 34. pp. 343-95.
19. Quoted by S. Bakhrushin in his introduction to Tyutcheva, vol. 1, p. 25.
20. My examination of Tyutcheva's manuscript diaries from 1847-1860 and her annotated engagement books from 1856 in RGALI, fond 10, Aksakovy S. T., K. S., I. S., op. 1, ed. khr. 212-4, suggests that her editing did indeed pare down allusions to family relationships (e.g. on 18 September 1852, ed. khr. 212, l. 147 verso, Tyutcheva remarks that she would rather her sisters had been placed at Court than she), and abridged emotional passages in general (for example, the entry describing the personality of the Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna, 21 January 1853, *ibid.*, ll. 171 verso-177 recto, is trimmed to a few sentences), rather than changing the nature of the essential conflict between etiquette and emotion.
21. Beth Holmgren, *Women's Works in Stalin's Time: On Lidiya Chukovskaya and Nadezhda Mandelstam* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1993). From the late 1850s, when *istoriya byta* (roughly speaking, "the history of everyday life") became popular in Russia, journals such as *Russkii arkhiv*, *Istoricheskii vestnik* and *Russkaya starina* regularly published domestic chronicles by women: see e.g. M. F. Kamenskaya, "Vospominaniya," serialised in *Istoricheskii vestnik* in 1894.
22. Irina Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior*, Stanford, 1988; Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism and Bolshevism*, Princeton, NJ, 1978, pp. 103-5; Hilde Hoogenboom, "Vera Figner and Revolutionary Autobiographies: the Influence of Gender on Genre," in Rosalind Marsh (ed.), *Women in Russia and Ukraine*, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 78-93.

23. *Ivan Sergeevich Aksakov v ego pis'makh*, part 2 vol. 4, St. Petersburg, 1896, p. 107. On Shishkov, see Lyubov Kiseleva, "The Archaistic Model of Behaviour as a Semiotic Object," in J. Andrew (ed.), *Poetics of the Text: Essays to Celebrate Twenty Years of the Neo-Formalist Circle*, Amsterdam, 1992, pp. 28-34.
24. On the Aksakov view of the Russian court as the haunt of insincerity, see Vera Aksakova, *Dnevnik Very Sergeevnoi Aksakovoi 1854-1855*, ed. N. V. Golitsyn and P. E. Shchegolev, St. Petersburg, 1913, p. 33: commenting on an insulting letter sent by her brother to Countess Bludova and refusing her offer of patronage to secure a place at court, Aksakova expresses surprise that Bludova had taken umbrage: "but court people always remain court people," that is, subject to the prevailing mood around them.
25. Frederiks uses the identical term, *raspushchennost'* (laxity) in her critique of court manners under Alexander II: 'When, after the death of our wise tsar [Nicholas I], an atmosphere of spinelessness and laxity crept into court life, everyone heaved a sigh of relief and pleasure [...] but what came of all this? The pride of morally crippled degenerates, who set themselves the task of betraying Russia's whole political structure under the mask of fidelity to the fatherland' (Frederiks, part 1, p. 55).
26. *Almanach de la Cour pour l'année bissextile 1860*, St. Petersburg, 1860: p. 135.
27. Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, *De l'esprit des étiquettes de l'ancienne cour et des usages du monde de ce temps*, ed. E. Quesnet, Rennes, 1885, pp. 16-17.
28. On Paul's court see S. Kaznakov, "Pavlovskaya Gatchina," *Starye gody*, 7-8 (1914), 101-88. Nicholas I's bullying behaviour in church is disapprovingly described, for example, in the Marquis de Custine's famous denunciation of Nikolaevan Russia, *Lettres de la Russie en 1839*, Brussels, 1843, vol. 1, p. 184 (letter 11): "the emperor, before prostrating himself like everyone else, scrutinised the congregation in a rather graceless manner."
29. See Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, vol.1, Princeton, NJ, 1995, especially pp. 250-1.

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30. The diary of Empress Alexandra Feodorovna is quoted in S.-N. Iskjul', "Neopublikovannyi ocherk Velikogo knyazya Nikolaya Mikhailovicha 'Imperatritsa Elisaveta Alekseevna,'" *Cahiers du monde russe*, vol. XXXVI (3) (1995), pp. 361-2 (full page spread for publication, pp. 345-76). The irony is that there is good reason to suppose that "the Queen Mother," Maria Feodorovna, here commended for her "purity'," in fact responded to Paul I's numerous infidelities by a liaison with Klinger, the tutor of her son.
31. S. W. Jackman (trans. and ed.), *Chère Annette: Letters from Russian 1820-1828: The Correspondence of the Empress Maria Feodorovna of Russia to her Daughter the Grand Duchess Anna Pavlovna, the Princess of Orange*, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1994, p. 15, p. 66, p. 27: cf. p. 25, p. 45, p. 67, p. 69, p. 74, p. 100, p. 115; on p. 83 the Dowager Empress admires Elena Pavlovna's self-command during the trying and lengthy betrothal ceremony.
32. Compare lists in *Pridvornyi mesyatsoslov na leto ot Rodzhdestva Khristova 1774*, St. Petersburg, 1774, and *Pridvornyi mesyatsoslov na leto ot Rozhdestva Khristova 1808*, St. Petersburg, 1808: in the former, the women officials had the same titles as in the male orders, "Grossmeister" and "Kavalery"; in the latter, the head of the order, Maria Feodorovna, still bore the "masculine" title "Ordenmeister," but the other women officials had been retitled "Diakonissa" and "Damy Bol'shogo kresta," and the "Tseremonimeister" and "Sekretar" were both men, as were the two "Gerol'dy."
33. On the private contempt for etiquette expressed by many courtiers, see Custine, *Lettres de la Russie*, letter 1 (p. 17 of the 1843 edition): "once the Grand Duke has disappeared, they adopt a dégagé tone, confident manners and a haughty air that contrasts, in a not very agreeable manner, with the complete self-abnegation that they were affecting a moment previously." There is an intriguing resemblance between the way in which Tyutcheva attempts to rationalise her position and the contortions of that ideal lady's maid and Sentimentalist heroine, Richardson's Pamela: cf. Janet Todd, "Pamela, or the Bliss of Servitude," in her *Gender, Art and Death*, London, 1993, pp. 63-80: however, "passionate intensity" would be

a more accurate phrase for Tyutcheva's experience of servitude than "bliss."

34. "L'éducation à un double but à remplir.//Le premier est de faire de l'homme un bon chrétien et de le préparer à la vie éternelle.// Le second est de rendre l'homme capable de remplir dignement la destination d'état auquel Dieu l'a appelé en cette vie terrestre." (A. Tyutcheva, ['Zametki o vospitaniï'], RGALI f. 10, op. 1, ed. khr. 218, l. 1 recto.)

"Le but terrestre de l'éducation est d'enseigner à l'homme à accomplir les devoirs de la position sociale à laquelle il est appelé en ce monde." (ibid., l. 2 recto.)

"à la cour, [...] tout le monde n'a qu'un intérêt, une ambition, un but suprême, et ce but n'est pas Dieu ni le bien en vue de Dieu, ce but est le pouvoir dans toutes ses formes, honneurs, richesses, plaisirs" (ibid., l. 6 verso).

"Une jeune Grande Duchesse [~~princesse has been crossed out~~], tout enfant qu'elle soit est obligée de voir et de parler à beaucoup de personnes, qui l'entourent de réverances [sic.] et prêtent à ses paroles un intérêt qu'on n'accord pas généralement aux enfan[t]s. Profitez en pour mettre la Grande Duchesse en contact avec des personnes distinguées, intelligentes et qui puissent leur donner le goût et l'habitude de la conversation." (ibid., l. 6, l. 12 verso.)

"[l'éducation] doit développer [sic.] toutes les facultés physiques, morales et intellectuelles de l'individu dans le degré de perfection dont il est capable, afin de le rendre utile à lui même et à son prochain" (ibid., l. 2 recto.)

35. Genlis, *De l'esprit des étiquettes de l'ancienne cour*, p. 118. Given the connection of "society tales" and some court memoirs, it's an intriguing detail that one of the most famous "society tales," Julie Krüdener's *Valérie*, was performed at the court theatre in December 1823: see Jackman, *Chère Annette*, p. 83.

36. Zhukova's Baron Reikhman is one of the stories from her cycle *Vechera na Karpovke* (1837-8), reprinted Moscow, 1986. An English version of the story is available in Joe Andrew (ed.), *Russian Women's Shorter Fiction, 1837-1863*, Oxford, 1996, and contrasting interpretations of it are given in Andrew's 'Maria Zhukova and

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- Patriarchal Power', in *Narrative and Desire: Masculine and Feminine in Russian Literature, 1822-1849*, London, 1993, and in Catriona Kelly, *A History of Russian Women's Writing, 1820-1992*, Oxford, 1994, ch. 2.
37. A. Herzen, *Kto vinovat?, Sochineniya v 9 tomakh* (Moscow, 1955), vol. 1, p. 154.
38. "Perepiska Aksakovykh s N. S. Sokhanskoi (Kokhano-vskoi)," *Russkoe obozrenie* 1897, nos. 10-12. The quotations here come from no. 10, p. 410.
39. The phrase "queen of hearts" was made famous in the interview given by Diana, Princess of Wales to the BBC Television programme *Panorama* in 1995. The text of the interview indicated that the stereotypes of romantic fiction hold their appeal for disaffected women at royal courts to this day, and laid bare the continuing problems of constructing a textual self: in the interview, the princess hardly ever referred to herself as "I," but often as "Diana" (when describing other people's reactions to her, e.g. "Diana's mad"), as "you" (when generalising from personal experience), and as "we" (not the royal "we," but in referring to her problems with bulimia, when "we" was used to mean "my body and I"). A rather similar experience to Tyutcheva's (and one more comparable in terms of historical setting) was endured by Fanny Burney during her time as lady-in-waiting to Queen Charlotte, wife of George III: see M. A. Doody, *Fanny Burney: The Life in the Works*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 168-98, and Burney, *Diaries and Letters* (London, 1847), ii, passim.