THE DIALOGIC IMAGINATION

Four Essays

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FORMS OF TIME AND OF THE CHRONOTOPE IN THE NOVEL

Notes toward a Historical Poetics

The process of assimilating real historical time and space in literature has a complicated and erratic history, as does the articulation of actual historical persons in such a time and space. Isolated aspects of time and space, however—those available in a given historical stage of human development—have been assimilated, and corresponding generic techniques have been devised for reflecting and artistically processing such appropriated aspects of reality.

We will give the name *chronotope* (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The special meaning it has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature; we will not deal with the chronotope in other areas of culture.[1]

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.

The chronotope in literature has an intrinsic *generic* signifi-

1. In the summer of 1925, the author of these lines attended a lecture by A. A. Uxtomskij on the chronotope in biology; in the lecture questions of aesthetics were also touched upon.

cance. It can even be said that it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions, for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time. The chronotope as a formally constitutive category determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature as well. The image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic.[2]

As we have said, the process of assimilating an actual historical chronotope in literature has been complicated and erratic; certain isolated aspects of the chronotope, available in given historical conditions, have been worked out, although only certain specific forms of an actual chronotope were reflected in art. These generic forms, at first productive, were then reinforced by tradition; in their subsequent development they continued stubbornly to exist, up to and beyond the point at which they had lost any meaning that was productive in actuality or adequate to later historical situations. This explains the simultaneous existence in literature of phenomena taken from widely separate periods of time, which greatly complicates the historico-literary process.

In the notes we are offering here toward a historical poetics, we will try to illustrate this process, taking our examples from the various histories of generic heterogeneity in the European novel, beginning with the so-called "Greek romance" and ending with the Rabelaisian novel. The relative typological stability of the novelistic chronotopes that were worked out in these periods permits us to glance ahead as well, at various novel types in succeeding periods.

We do not pretend to completeness or precision in our theoretical formulations and definitions. Here and abroad, serious work on the study of space and time in art and literature has only just begun. Such work will in its further development eventually supplement, and perhaps substantially correct, the characteristics of novelistic chronotopes offered by us here.

2. In his "Transcendental Aesthetics" (one of the main sections of his *Critique of Pure Reason*) Kant defines space and time as indispensable forms of any cognition, beginning with elementary perceptions and representations. Here we employ the Kantian evaluation of the importance of these forms in the cognitive process, but differ from Kant in taking them not as "transcendental" but as forms of the most immediate reality. We shall attempt to show the role these forms play in the process of concrete artistic cognition (artistic visualization) under conditions obtaining in the genre of the novel.

nomena in Renaissance literature are not explained so much by the direct influence of Petronius as by their kinship with general folkloric sources. But the direct influence is nevertheless great. We know that Petronius' story is retold in one of the short stories in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. But the framing story as well, the entire *Decameron* as a whole, also represents a reworking of the folkloric complex in a way that is akin to Petronius. Here there is no symbolism, no sublimation—but no trace of naturalism either. The triumph of life over death, all the joys of life—food, drink, copulation—in direct association with death, at the door of the tomb, the nature of laughter that simultaneously ushers out the old and greets the new era, resurrection out of the gloom of medieval asceticism into a new life through the sacrament of food, drink and sexual life, a sacrament to life's *body*—the *Decameron* gives birth to all this, in Petronian style. Here we have the same outstripping of sociohistorical limits without, however, a breaking-away from them, the same realistic emblematic (on a folkloric base).

As we conclude our analysis of the folkloric bases of the Rabelaisian chronotope we should mention that Rabelais' closest and most direct source was the popular culture of laughter in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance—an analysis of which I have provided in another book.

IX. The Idyllic Chronotope in the Novel

We now move on to another type, one very important in the history of the novel. We have in mind here the idyllic model for restoring the ancient complex and for restoring folkloric time.

Many different kinds of idylls have existed in literature from most ancient times to the present. We may distinguish the following pure types: the love idyll (whose basic form is the pastoral); the idyll with a focus on agricultural labor; the idyll dealing with craft-work; and the family idyll. In addition to these pure types, mixed types are extremely widespread, in which one or another aspect predominates (love, labor or family).

In addition to the abovementioned typological distinctions, there also exist differences of another sort; differences that exist between different types as well as between differing variants of the same type. Of such a sort are the distinctions in character and

degree in the metaphorical treatment of individual motifs (for example, natural phenomena) as they are incorporated into the totality of the idyll, that is, differences in the extent to which purely realistic or metaphorical links predominate, differences in the degree to which purely narrative aspects are highlighted, in the degree and nature of the sublimation and so forth.

No matter how these types of idylls, and variations within types, may differ from one another, they all have—and this is its relevance to the problem we are pursuing—several features in common, all determined by their general relationship to the immanent unity of folkloric time. This finds expression predominantly in the special relationship that time has to space in the idyll: an organic fastening-down, a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory with all its nooks and crannies, its familiar mountains, valleys, fields, rivers and forests, and one's own home. Idyllic life and its events are inseparable from this concrete, spatial corner of the world where the fathers and grandfathers lived and where one's children and their children will live. This little spatial world is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world. But in this little spatially limited world a sequence of generations is localized that is potentially without limit. The unity of the life of generations (in general, the life of men) in an idyll is in most instances primarily defined by the *unity of place*, by the age-old rooting of the life of generations to a single place, from which this life, in all its events, is inseparable. This unity of place in the life of generations weakens and renders less distinct all the temporal boundaries between individual lives and between various phases of one and the same life. The unity of place brings together and even fuses the cradle and the grave (the same little corner, the same earth), and brings together as well childhood and old age (the same grove, stream, the same lime trees, the same house), the life of the various generations who had also lived in that same place, under the same conditions, and who had seen the same things. This blurring of all the temporal boundaries made possible by a unity of place also contributes in an essential way to the creation of the cyclic rhythmicalness of time so characteristic of the idyll.

Also distinctive for the idyll is the fact that it is severely limited to only a few of life's basic realities. Love, birth, death, marriage, labor, food and drink, stages of growth—these are the basic

realities of idyllic life. They are brought into close proximity in the crowded little world of the idyll, there are no sharp contrasts among them, and they are all equally valid (in any case that is their tendency). Strictly speaking, the idyll does not know the trivial details of everyday life. Anything that has the appearance of common everyday life, when compared with the central unrepeatable events of biography and history, here begins to look precisely like the most important things in life. But all these basic life-realities are present in the idyll not in their naked realistic aspect (as in Petronius) but in a softened and to a certain extent sublimated form. Thus sexuality is almost always incorporated into the idyll only in sublimated form.

There is finally a third distinctive feature of the idyll, closely linked with the first: the conjoining of human life with the life of nature, the unity of their rhythm, the common language used to describe phenomena of nature and the events of human life. Of course in the idyll, this common language has become in large part purely metaphorical and only to an insignificant degree (most of all in the agricultural idyll) retains anything of the actual about it.

In the love idyll, all the aforementioned aspects are present in their weakest expression. The utterly conventional simplicity of life in the bosom of nature is opposed to social conventions, complexity and the disjunctions of everyday private life; life here is abstracted into a love that is completely sublimated. Beneath the conventional, metaphorical, stylized aspects of such a love one can still dimly perceive the immanent unity of time and the ancient matrices. For this reason the love idyll was able to serve as the foundation for various types of novels, and could enter as a component into other novels (for example, those of Rousseau). But the love idyll has proved especially fruitful in the history of the novel not in its pure form, but in conjunction with the family idyll (*Werther*) and with the agricultural idyll (provincial novels).

One rarely encounters the family idyll in its pure form; but in conjunction with the agricultural idyll it is of enormous significance. This form comes closest to achieving folkloric time; here the ancient matrices are revealed most fully and with the greatest possible actuality. This is explained by the fact that this form of the idyll uses as its model not the conventional pastoral life (which, after all, exists nowhere in such a form) but rather draws upon the real life of the agricultural laborer under conditions of feudal or post-feudal society—although this life is to one degree

or another idealized and sublimated (the degree of this idealization varies widely). The *labor* aspect of this idyll is of special importance (present already in Virgil's *Georgics*); it is the agricultural-labor element that creates a *real* link and common bond between the phenomena of nature and the events of human life (as distinct from the *metaphorical* link in the love idyll). Moreover—and this is especially important—agricultural labor transforms all the events of everyday life, stripping them of that private petty character obtaining when man is nothing but consumer; what happens rather is that they are turned into essential life *events*. Thus people consume the produce of their own labor; the produce is figurally linked with the productive process, in it—in this produce—the sun, the earth and the rain are actually present (not merely in some system of metaphorical links). Wine is likewise immersed in the process of its cultivation and production, and drinking it is inseparable from the holidays that are in turn linked to agricultural cycles. Food and drink in the idyll partake of a nature that is social or, more often, family; all *generations* and *age-groups* come together around the table. For the idyll, the association of *food* and *children* is characteristic (even in *Werther* we have the idyllic picture of Lotte feeding the children); this matrix is shot through with the beginnings of growth and the renewing of life. In the idyll, children often function as a sublimation of the sexual act and of conception; they frequently figure in connection with growth, the renewal of life, death (children and an old man, children playing around the grave, etc.). The significance and role of the image of children in idylls of this type is very great. Children first entered the novel from precisely this setting, still permeated with the atmosphere of the idyll.

As an illustration of our comments on the use of food in idylls, we might point to Hebel's familiar idyll "Das Haber-Musz,"[11] translated by Zhukovsky ("Ovsjanij kisel'")—although its didacticism somewhat weakens the force of the ancient matrices (in particular, the association of children and food).

I repeat: the elements of the ancient matrices most often appear in the idyll in sublimated form; one or another element is partially or entirely omitted; or, common everyday life is not always thoroughly transformed—especially in the realistic idylls of

11. Johann Peter Hebel (1760–1826), German dialect poet. Reference here is to his poem "Das Haber-Musz," from the *Allemanische Gedichte*.

recent times (nineteenth century). It is sufficient to recall an idyll such as Gogol's "Old-World Landowners," where the aspect of labor is altogether absent, although the other elements of the matrix are relatively well represented (several in highly sublimated form)—old age, love, food, death; food occupies here a very large place and is present on the plane of everyday habit (since there is no mention of labor).

The form of the idyll assumed great significance in the eighteenth century, when the problem of time in literature was posed with particular intensity, a period when precisely a new feeling for time was beginning to awake. One is struck by the wealth and variety of types of idylls in the eighteenth century (especially in the German cantons of Switzerland and in Germany itself). A special form of elegy also developed, an elegy of the meditative type with a strong idyllic component (based on ancient tradition); various graveyard meditations incorporating the matrices of the grave, love, new life, spring, children, old age and so forth. As an example we have the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" by Gray (and Zhukovsky's translations), an elegy with very strong idyllic overtones. The Romantics who continued this tradition subjected the abovementioned elegiac matrices (primarily those of love and death) to a severe reinterpretation (as in Novalis).

The problem of time is elevated to the level of philosophy in several eighteenth-century idylls. The real organic time of idyllic life is opposed to the frivolous, fragmented time of city life or even to historical time (Hebel's "Das unverhofftes Wiedersehen,"[mm] and Zhukovsky's translation "Neožidannoe svidanie").[nn]

The significance of the idyll in the development of the novel is, as we have already said, enormous. Its importance as an underlying image has not been understood and appreciated up to this day, and in consequence all perspectives on the history of the novel have been distorted. Here we can only superficially touch on this enormous question.

The influence of the idyll on the development of the novel of modern times has proceed in five basic directions: (1) the influence of the idyll, idyllic time and idyllic matrices on the provincial novel; (2) the destruction of the idyll, as in the *Bildungsroman* of Goethe and in novels of the Sternean type (Hippel, Jean Paul); (3) its influence on the Sentimental novel of the Rousseauan type; (4) its influence on the family novel and the novel of generations; and, finally, (5) its influence on novels belonging to certain other categories (such as novels featuring "a man of the people").

mm. "Das unverhofftes Wiedersehen," from *Das Schatzkästlein des Rheinischen Hausfreundes*.

nn. Bakhtin gives not only the German original but the Russian version as well because Zhukovsky (1787–1852) was a translator of such genius that his reworkings constitute new texts with value in their own right.

In the provincial novel we witness directly the progress of a family-labor, agricultural or craft-work idyll moving into the major form of the novel. The basic significance of provinciality [*oblastničestvo*] in literature—the uninterrupted, age-old link between the life of generations and a strictly delimited locale—replicates the purely idyllic relationship of time to space, the idyllic unity of the place as locus for the entire life process. In the provincial novel the life process itself is broadened and made more detailed (which is necessary under conditions of the novel), and the ideological aspect—language, belief systems, ethics, mores—begins to assume a greater prominence, yet this aspect of life is nevertheless shown as inextricably bound up with a strictly delimited locale. In the provincial novel, as in the idyll, all temporal boundaries are blurred and the rhythm of human life is in harmony with the rhythm of nature. At the heart of this idyllic resolution of the problem of time in the novel (it is, in the final analysis, a folkloric core), common everyday life is transformed in the provincial novel: the events of everyday life takes on an importance and acquire thematic significance. All the folkloric matrices typical of the idyll and encountered by us in the provincial novel are built around this core. Here as in the idyll, stages of growth and the cyclical repetition of the life process are of crucial importance. The provincial novel has the same heroes as does the idyll—peasants, craftsmen, rural clergy, rural schoolteachers.

While those individual motifs available to the provincial novel were profoundly reworked (especially in such representative writers as Jeremias Gotthelf,[oo] Immermann,[pp] and Gottfried Keller),[qq]

oo. Jeremias Gotthelf (pen name of Albert Bitzius, 1797–1854), didactic regional novelist.

pp. Karl Immermann (1796–1839), a novelist who introduced a good deal of actual social detail into traditional German forms such as the *Bildungsroman* [*Die Epigonen* (1836)].

qq. Gottfried Keller (1819–1890), great Swiss humorist, especially dear to Bakhtin not only for his *Grüne Heinrich* (1854, rev. 1876), but for the cycle *Die Leute von Seldwyla* (1856).

this type of novel nevertheless exhibits the most limited novelistic use of folkloric time. Here there is no broad or deep realistic emblematic; meaning does not exceed the sociohistorical limitations inherent in the images. Cyclicity makes itself felt with particular force, therefore the beginnings of growth and the perpetual renewal of life are weakened, separated from the progressive forces of history and even opposed to them; thus growth, in this context, makes life a senseless running-in-place at one historical point, at one level of historical development.

There is a considerably more incisive reworking of idyllic time and idyllic matrices in Rousseau, and in subsequent texts influenced by him. This reworking proceeds in two directions: first, the basic elements of the ancient complex—nature, love, the family and childbearing, death—are isolated and undergo sublimation at a higher philosophical level, where they are treated more or less as forms of the great, eternal, wise force of earthly life. Second, these elements provide material for constituting an isolated individual consciousness, and from the point of view of such a consciousness these elements act as forces that can heal, purify and reassure it, forces that solicit its surrender, its submission, requiring that it fuse with them.

Thus it is that folkloric time and the ancient matrices are perceived here as stages in the development of society and consciousness from a point of view that was contemporary to Rousseau and others working in his spirit, a point of view in which such time and such matrices had become the lost ideal of human life. It was necessary once again to make contact with that lost ideal, but this time at a new stage of development. What precisely should be retained from this more recent stage of development is decided by different authors in a variety of ways (even Rousseau himself had no single point of view on this), but in any case the interior aspect of life is retained, and, in the majority of cases, individuality is preserved as well (although it is transformed).

The outward appearance of the elements of the complex is greatly altered as a result of their philosophical sublimation. Love becomes an elemental, mysterious and—more often than not—fatal force for those who love, and all this is interiorized. It comes to us associated with nature and death. Together with this new vision of love, the more familiar and purely idyllic aspect of love is retained, the one that is associated with the family, with children, with food (thus we have in Rousseau the love between

Saint-Preux and Julie on the one hand, and the love and family life of Julie and Wolmar on the other). The aspect of nature changes as well, depending upon the matrix in which it occurs: either combined with tempestuous love, or with labor.

Narrative undergoes corresponding changes. In the idyll, as a rule, there were no heroes alien to the idyllic world. In the provincial novel, in contrast, one occasionally finds a hero who has broken away from the wholeness of his locale, who has set off for the city and either perishes there or returns, like a prodigal son, to the bosom of his family. In novels of the Rousseauan type, the major protagonists are the author's contemporaries, people who had already succeeded in isolating individual life-sequences, people with an interior perspective. They heal themselves through contact with nature and the life of simple people, learning from them the wisdom to deal with life and death; or they go outside the boundaries of culture altogether, in an attempt to utterly immerse themselves in the wholeness of the primitive collective (as René does in Chateaubriand, and Olenin in Tolstoy).

This line of development, which began with Rousseau, proved to be highly progressive. It succeeded in avoiding the limitations of provincial forms. In it there is no doomed attempt to preserve the dying remnants of little patriarchal (provincial) worlds (which had been, moreover, highly idealized)—on the contrary, the Rousseauan line of development, by sublimating in philosophical terms the ancient sense of the whole, makes of it an ideal for the future and sees in it above all the basis, a norm, for criticizing the current state of society. In the majority of cases this critique is two-pronged: it is directed against feudal hierarchy, against inequality and absolutism, against the false arbitrariness of society (conventionality); but it is directed as well against the anarchy of greed and against the isolated, egoistic bourgeois *individuum*.

In the family novel and the novel of generations, the idyllic element undergoes a radical reworking and as a result perceptibly pales. Of folkloric time and the ancient matrices only those elements remain that can be reinterpreted and that can survive on the soil of the bourgeois family and family-as-genealogy. Nevertheless the connection between the family novel and the idyll is manifested in a whole series of significant aspects, and that connection is precisely what determines the basic—family—nucleus of this type of novel.

The family of the family novel is, of course, no longer the fam-

ily of the idyll. It has been torn out of its narrow feudal locale, out of its unchanging natural surroundings—the native mountains, fields, rivers, forest—that had nourished it in the idyll. At best the idyllic unity of place is limited to the ancestral family *town* house, to the immovable part (the real estate) of capitalist property. But this unity of place in the family novel is by no means a necessity. What is more, there is a break-off in the course of a character's life from a well-defined and limited spatial locale, a period of wandering in the life of the heroes, before they acquire family and material possessions. Such then are the distinctive features of the classic family novel. What is important here is precisely the stable family and material goods belonging to the heroes, how they overcome the element of chance (random meetings with random people, random situations and occurrences) in which they had initially found themselves; how they create fundamental, that is, *family* connections with people, how they limit their world to a well-defined place and a well-defined narrow circle of relatives, that is, to the family circle. It often happens that in the beginning the hero is homeless, without relatives, without means of support; he wanders through an alien world among alien people; random misfortunes and successes happen to him; he encounters random people who turn out to be—for unknown reasons at this early point in the novel—his enemies or his benefactors (all this is later decoded along family or kinship lines). The novel's movement takes the main hero (or heroes) out of the great but alien world of random occurrence into the small but secure and stable little world of the family, where nothing is foreign, or accidental or incomprehensible, where authentically human relationships are re-established, where the ancient matrices are re-established on a family base: love, marriage, childbearing, a peaceful old age for the in-laws, shared meals around the family table. This narrow and reduced idyllic little world is the red thread running throughout the novel, as well as its resolving chord. Such is the schema for the classic family novel, which opened with Fielding's *Tom Jones* (with certain adjustments, the same schema underlies Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle*). But there is another schema as well (whose foundations were laid by Richardson): an alien force intrudes into the cozy little world of the family, threatening it with destruction. Dickens' variations on the first classic scheme (Fielding and Smollett) make his novels the highest achievement of the European family novel.

Idyllic elements are scattered sporadically throughout the family novel. A constant struggle is waged here between depersonalized alienation in relations between people and human relationships built either on a patriarchal or an abstractly humanist foundation. Scattered throughout the great, cold, alien world there are warm little corners of human feeling and kindness.

The idyllic aspect is the decisive one in the novel of generations (Thackeray, Freytag,[rr] Galsworthy, Thomas Mann). But more often than not, the dominant theme in such novels is the destruction of the idyll, and of the idyllic-type family or patriarchal relationships.

The destruction of the idyll (understood in its widest sense) becomes one of the fundamental themes of literature toward the end of the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth. The destruction of the craft-work idyll is carried over even into the second half of the nineteenth century (Kretzer's *Meister Timpe*).[ss] In Russian literature, of course, the chronological boundaries of this movement are shifted to the second half of the nineteenth century.

The destruction of the idyll may be treated, of course, in a multitude of ways. The differences are determined by differing conceptions and evaluations of the idyllic world rapidly approaching its end, as well as differing evaluations of the forces that are destroying it—that is, the new capitalist world.

The main classic line of development of this theme—that taken by Goethe, Goldsmith, Jean Paul—does not perceive the destroyed idyllic world as a naked fact of the fleeting feudal world, with all the historical limitations that implies—but rather treats the theme with a considerable degree of philosophical sublimation (à la Rousseau): the deep *humanity* of idyllic man himself and the humanity of his human relationships are foregrounded, as is the *wholeness* of idyllic life, its organic link with nature, with special emphasis on the unmechanized nature of idyllic labor; and finally, there is a highlighting of *idyllic objects*

rr. Gustav Freytag (1816–1895), *Die Ahnen* (1873–1881), in six long volumes, which tells the story of a German family from the fourth to the nineteenth century.

ss. Max Kretzer (1854–1941), *Meister Timpe* (1888), one of thirty novels by this author, which describes the passing of the independent artisan and rise of the factory worker in nineteenth-century Germany.

as objects not severed from the labor that produced them, objects indissolubly linked with this labor in the experience of everyday idyllic life. At the same time, the narrowness and isolation of the little idyllic world is emphasized.

Opposed to this little world, a world fated to perish, there is a great but abstract world, where people are out of contact with each other, egoistically sealed-off from each other, greedily practical; where labor is differentiated and mechanized, where objects are alienated from the labor that produced them. It is necessary to constitute this great world on a new basis, to render it familiar, to humanize it. It is necessary to find a new relationship to nature, not to the little nature of one's own corner of the world but to the big nature of the great world, to all the phenomena of the solar system, to the wealth excavated from the earth's core, to a variety of geographical locations and continents. In place of the limited idyllic collective, a new collective must be established capable of embracing all humanity. In crude outline this became the problem posed by Goethe's work (with special forcefulness in *Faust*, part 2, and in *Wanderjahre*) and by other representative writers in this vein. A man must educate or re-educate himself for life in a world that is, from his point of view, enormous and foreign; he must make it his own, domesticate it. In Hegel's definition, the novel must educate man for life in bourgeois society. This educative process is connected with a severing of all previous ties with the idyllic, that is, it has to do with man's *expatriation*. Here the process of a man's re-education is interwoven with the process of society's breakdown and reconstruction, that is, with historical process.

The same problem is posed somewhat differently in *Bildungsromane* of a different line of development, represented this time by Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert (and in Russia, Goncharov). Here the issue is primarily one of overturning and demolishing the world view and psychology of the idyll, which proved increasingly inadequate to the new capitalist world. In most such cases there is no philosophical sublimation of the idyll. We get a picture of the breakdown of provincial idealism under forces emanating from the capitalist center. We see the breakdown, the heroes' provincial romanticism, which is in no way idealized; the capitalist world is also not idealized, its inhumanity is laid bare, the destruction within it of all ethical systems (which had been formed at earlier stages of development), the disintegration of all

previous human relationships (under the influence of money), love, the family, friendship, the deforming of the scholar's and the artist's creative work and so forth—all of these are emphasized. The positive hero of the idyllic world becomes ridiculous, pitiful and unnecessary; he either perishes or is re-educated and becomes an egoistic predator.

Goncharov's novels occupy a peculiar place, associating themselves by and large with the Stendhal-Flaubert line of development (especially *A Common Story*). The theme is developed with exemplary clarity and precision in *Oblomov*. The idyll of Oblomovka and later the idyll in the Vyborg Quarter of Petersburg (along with the idyllic death of Oblomov) are portrayed completely realistically. At the same time we are shown the extraordinary humanity of the idyllic man, Oblomov, with his "dovelike purity." In the idyll itself (especially in the Vyborg Quarter) all the fundamental idyllic matrices come to light—the cult of food and drink, children, the sexual act, death and so forth (a realistic emblematic). What is emphasized is Oblomov's desire for stasis, for an unchanging environment, his fear of moving to a new house, his relationship to time.

The Rabelaisian-idyllic line of development, represented by Sterne, Hippel and Jean Paul, deserves special attention. After all we have said, it should not appear strange to find this coupling of the idyllic (even sentimentally idyllic) aspect with the Rabelaisian element (in Sterne and in those influenced by him). There is an obvious kinship that can be traced back to folklore, although these two schools represent different branches of the folkloric complex's literary development.

The most recent influence of the idyll on the novel has been limited to a fragmentary penetration of isolated elements of the idyllic complex. A "man of the people" in the novel is very often of idyllic descent. Of just such a sort is the servant in Walter Scott (Savelich in Pushkin), in Dickens, in the French novel (from Maupassant's *Une Vie* to Françoise in Proust)—all those figures from the Auvergne and Brittany, bearers of the wisdom of the common folk and of their idyllic locale. A "man of the people" appears in the novel as the one who holds the correct attitude toward life and death, an attitude lost by the ruling classes (Platon Karataev in Tolstoy). More often than not, his teaching is concerned precisely with dying well (Tolstoy's "Three Deaths"). Often connected with this figure is a particular way of treating

food, drink, love, childbirth. He is, after all, the representative of eternal productive labor. There is an emphasis on the healthy failure of such a man to understand accepted falsehoods and conventions (which then exposes these for what they are).

Such are the basic directions in which the idyllic complex has influenced the modern novel. With this we will close our brief survey of folkloric time and the ancient matrices in artistic literature. This survey provides an indispensable background for the correct understanding of the peculiarities of the Rabelaisian world (and of other items as well, which we will not deal with here).

* * *

In the world of Rabelais, more decisively significant than any other way of reworking the ancient complex we have considered (with the exception of the Aristophanic and Lucianic types) is *laughter*.

Of all aspects of the ancient complex, only laughter never underwent sublimation of any sort—neither religious, mystical nor philosophical. It never took on an official character, and even in literature the comic genres were the most free, the least regimented.

After the decline of the ancient world, Europe did not know a single cult, a single ritual, a single state or civil ceremony, a single official genre or style serving either the church or the state (hymn, prayer, sacral formulas, declarations, manifestos, etc.) where laughter was sanctioned (in tone, style or language)—even in its most watered-down forms of humor and irony.

Europe knew neither the mysticism nor the magic of laughter; laughter was never infected, even slightly, by the "red tape" of moribund officialdom. Therefore, laughter could not be deformed or falsified as could every other form of seriousness, in particular the pathetic. Laughter remained outside official falsifications, which were coated with a layer of pathetic seriousness. Therefore all high and serious genres, all high forms of language and style, all mere set phrases and all linguistic norms were drenched in conventionality, hypocrisy and falsification. Laughter alone remained uninfected by lies.

We have in mind here laughter not as a biological or psychophysiological act, but rather laughter conceived as an objectivized, sociohistorical cultural phenomenon, which is most often present in verbal expression. For it is in the word that laughter manifests itself most variously (although this has yet to be sufficiently studied in a historically systematic, categorical manner). Alongside the poetic use of a word "not in its primary sense" [*ne v sobstvennom značenii*], that is, alongside tropes, there exists in addition a multiplicity of forms for the various indirect linguistic expression of laughter: irony, parody, humor, the joke, various types of the comic and so forth (as yet no systematic classification of these exists). There is no aspect of language that cannot be used in a figurative sense [*v nesobstvennom značenii*]. In all these approaches, the *point of view* contained within the word is subject to a reinterpretation, as is the modality of language and the very *relationship of language to the object* and *to the speaker*. A relocation of the levels of language occurs—the making contiguous of what is normally not associated and the distancing of what normally is, a destruction of the familiar and the creation of new matrices, a destruction of linguistic norms for language and thought. In addition we get here a constant exceeding of the limits fixed in relationships internal to language. And what is more, there is a continual passing beyond the boundaries of the given, sealed-off verbal whole (one cannot understand parody without reference to the parodied material, that is, without exceeding the boundaries of the given context). All these above features for expressing laughter in the word contribute to that special force and capability to strip, as it were, the object of the false verbal and ideological husk that encloses it. Rabelais takes this capability of language as far as it will go.

The extraordinary force of laughter in Rabelais, its radicalism, is explained predominantly by its deep-rooted folkloric base, by its link with the elements of the ancient complex—with death, the birth of new life, fertility and growth. This is real world-embracing laughter, one that can play with all the things of this world—from the most insignificant to the greatest, from distant things to those close at hand. This connection on the one hand with fundamental realities of life, and on the other with the most radical destruction of all false verbal and ideological shells that had distorted and kept separate these realities, is what so sharply distinguishes Rabelaisian laughter from the laughter of other practitioners of the grotesque, humor, satire and irony. Subsequently we see in Swift, Sterne, Voltaire and Dickens a relative softening of Rabelaisian laughter, a weakening of its ties with folklore (although they are still strong in Sterne, even more so in Gogol) and a rupture with the gross realities of life.