Part Three

HERZEN'S *MY PAST AND THOUGHTS* AND HISTORICAL IDENTITY

MY PAST AND THOUGHTS occupies a special place among the great works of world memoir literature. This memoir epic emerged from the same powerful ideological impulses as did the nineteenth-century Russian novel.[1]

Herzen passed through the Russian revolutionary romanticism of the 1830s and the natural school of the 1840s. His youthful autobiographical experiments are remarkable documents of post-Decembrist Russian romanticism, of the romantic mind's gradual mastery of the ideas of utopian socialism. While constructing his new, realistic worldview in the 1840s, Herzen sought objective forms for the expression of his own and his contemporaries' experience of life. Hence his interest in fiction (*Who Is to Blame?*, "The Thieving Magpie," "Doctor Krupov," and so on), which at other stages in his development he did not regard as his true vocation. In the creative work of the Herzen of the 1840s, the autobiographical hero deferred for a time to an authorial identity that embraced the philosophical, publicistic, and artistic works of the period.

Even though Herzen did depart in the 1840s from the directly autobiographical, both an unmediated yet generalized revelation of the self and a direct authorial judgment of life remained inseparable features of his creative thought. At the end of the decade, impelled by the momentous political events of the period, the Herzenian hero was, so to speak, reborn in the authorial image of the last *Letters from France and Italy* and the cycle *From the Other Shore*, which gave personal and passionate voice to the historical drama of the Russian revolutionary shaken by the revolution's collapse in Europe. That authorial image, the immediate antecedent of the autobiographical hero of *My Past and Thoughts*, was already far removed from the subjectivity of the romantic fragments of the 1830s, reflecting as it did a conflation of the earlier lyrical principle with a sharp sense of history.

Herzen brought to the conception of his autobiography philosophical, political, and moral criteria he had worked out in the 1840s. The sources for the method of *My Past and Thoughts*, however, are to be found not only in the early autobiographical sketches and in the lyrical journalism written at the end of that decade and the beginning of the 1850s. Of

considerable importance too was Herzen's experience of the natural school (especially the work on *Who Is to Blame?*), as is apparent in the autobiography's first four parts with their characteristically broad spectrum of Russian life. In *My Past and Thoughts* Herzen returned to the autobiographical principle that had been such an organic part of his artistic thought, although he did so on a new, realistic basis. The autobiographical hero now became the focal point through which the immense, infinitely variegated world of objective reality was refracted. In working on *My Past and Thoughts* after 1852, Herzen was, for all the specificity of his creative method, engaged in the solution of problems that the life of that period had set before all Russian literature. Broached again in his book were numerous themes that had already been touched on by Pushkin and Lermontov in the 1820s and 1830s, and that would later become key issues for the Russian sociopsychological novel in the second half of the 1850s.

My Past and Thoughts is about the place and role of the thinking person in an unjustly organized social reality, about the relationship of the individual personality to society and to shared interests. That theme was prompted by the acute contradictions of Russian life in an era when the issue of the hero, of the Russian ideologue as the bearer of an active social consciousness, had acquired decisive significance for literature. The fate of that hero in the world around him was a theme of the Russian ideological novel, and it became a basic theme of *My Past and Thoughts*.

Herzen invested the central autobiographical hero of his epic with such a conscious relation to historical problems, and with such power of artistic generalization, that we do indeed have the right to speak of the *hero* of *My Past and Thoughts*, thereby linking him to heroes of the nineteenth-century Russian novel from Onegin and Pechorin to Bazarov and [Chernyshevskii's] Rakhmetov. Herzen's generalizing attitude toward himself is clearly stated in a letter he wrote to [his friend] Maria Reikhel' (on November 5, 1852) about the initial plan for *My Past and Thoughts*: "The position of the Russian revolutionary in relation to the European infidels should also be addressed, and nobody has thought about it yet" (24:359).

Herzen was free of the prohibitions of censorship, and in his writing the thinking hero or Russian ideologue appears undisguised as the revolutionary. But the theme of revolution is no less pervasive in censored nineteenth-century Russian literature. Herzen began speaking out loud about issues that the opposing thought of Dostoevskii would also be unwaveringly concerned with, that Turgenev would touch on in most of his novels (*Rudin*, *On the Eve*, *Fathers and Sons*, and *Virgin Soil*), and that Chernyshevskii would approach in *What Is to Be Done?* and "The Prologue"

with all the directness of revolutionary thought breaking through the dissimulation imposed by the censorship. In the process of talking about himself in *My Past and Thoughts*, Herzen created a generalized image of the Russian revolutionary moving from Decembrism toward a revolutionary-democratic worldview. For the mature Herzen, the positive hero was above all an *active participant* (or potential participant) in the liberation movement, someone bent on transforming theory into practice.

The artistic system of *My Past and Thoughts* was the culmination of Herzen's entire previous development. At the same time, it was also conditioned by general historical and literary trends—it responded to the pressing demands of contemporary life.

The first half of the 1850s, the period when the plan for *My Past and Thoughts* had not only taken shape but was also largely realized, was a period of transition, a time when energy and materials were being accumulated for the great novel of the second half of the century. This was true of both Russian and French literature (Herzen was in those years involved in French cultural life in the most direct way).

After the death of Belinskii and the crushing of the Petrashevskii circle in Russia toward the end of the 1840s, the first period in the development of the Gogolian movement (the flowering of the natural school) came to a close. In France the 1840s and 1850s saw the end of the activity of Stendhal and Balzac. The events of 1848 placed a limit on the development of the prose of radical French romantics who had been closely linked to the ideology of utopian socialism. A transitional period followed, which ended in 1856 with the appearance of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, a book that opened the way for the French novel of the second half of the century. In Russian literature a similar role was played by *Rudin*, which appeared in 1856, a year after the completion of the initial version of the first five parts of *My Past and Thoughts*.

The transitional period of the end of the 1840s and the first half of the 1850s saw in both Russia and the West a heightened interest in memoirs, autobiographies, notes, and essays—indeed, in every kind of documentary genre. The historically conditioned and thus quite natural character of that interest is clear enough. After 1848–1849 it had become necessary to summarize what had taken place, to analyze the lessons of the revolution on the basis of prerevolutionary and revolutionary experience. World literature had already entered the age of realism as a theoretically proclaimed movement with its own aesthetic principles. And realism insisted in particular on the cognitive possibilities of literature. The search in the first half of the 1850s for analytical incisiveness and scientific reliability in the comprehension of reality still had not discovered the form of the large-scale sociopsychological novel, and it therefore frequently turned to the distinctive possibilities of the intermediate genres.

In 1857, when the first five parts of *My Past and Thoughts* were nearly finished, Herzen described the decade following 1848 in a survey article called "Western Books" (in the sixth issue of *The Bell*):

> Externally, the willfulness of power, concordats, and executions. Internally, the uncertainty of someone who, having come halfway, begins to suspect that he was mistaken, and as a consequence goes over his past, recent and remote, recollecting how it was, and comparing it to the present.
>
> In literature everything really has been taken over by the history and by the social novel. On the one hand, the life of particular eras, states, and individuals, and on the other, for the sake, so to speak, of comparison with the past, the confessions of contemporary man barely concealed in novelistic guise or directly in the form of memoirs and letters. . . .
>
> Together with an ever more alienated science whose only connection with life is through its applications, another, internal kind of work has been going on, one that we may may call social pathology. Proudhon and Dickens belong to it in equal degree. Proudhon's new vivisection seems to us the most remarkable development of the last two years—no scalpel has ever gone deeper. (13:92–93, 95)

Herzen had already been working on *My Past and Thoughts* for five years when he wrote that contemporary man was "going over his past, . . . recollecting how it was, and comparing it to the present."

However deeply immersed in western European scientific and literary interests Herzen became, Russian life remained a constant source of nourishment for his creative activity. In the 1850s the attention of Russia too was concentrated on memoir literature, as is evidenced by the appearance of such memoiristic works as Konstantin Aksakov's *Family Chronicle* and Dostoevskii's *Notes from the House of the Dead*. There was from the very beginning of the decade a heightened interest in confessions and autobiographies, especially those concerned with the depiction of childhood.[2] It was under these circumstances that Tolstoi's trilogy *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth*, was created.

Tolstoi finished *Childhood* in July 1852, and in October of the same year Herzen set to work on the first part of *My Past and Thoughts*, "Nursery and University." This fact is hardly accidental when regarded in a broad historical context, even though Herzen's memoirs in no way resemble Tolstoi's trilogy. For Tolstoi, *Childhood* was an early effort, whereas *My Past and Thoughts* was one of Herzen's greatest achievements in prose. The young Tolstoi created a tale of the autobiographical type (although its material is rather more autopsychological than autobiographical). Herzen created a work without precedent, one imbued with the same issues that the Russian novel would address in the following

decades, but one that remained a "human document," that still contained unmediated evidence about life.

What is *My Past and Thoughts*—memoirs, an autobiographical novel, a unique historical chronicle? The question of the genre of *My Past and Thoughts* is of the utmost importance, inasmuch as our concern here is the specific cognitive nature of the book, the underlying principles of its reflection or refraction of reality. It is precisely this that the problem of genre pertains to, providing it is not understood in merely formal terms.

On the basis of its external, formal features, one might be inclined to assign *My Past and Thoughts* to the category of the artistic memoir. It is only too obvious, however, that Herzen's work does not fit under that rubric, that it exceeds it both in the reach of its historical conception and in the newness of the artistic problems it addresses.

Herzen's creative thinking about *My Past and Thoughts* began in October 1852, soon after the family drama that ended in the death of his wife. At first he wanted to write an account of the catastrophic events of his private life, a "memoir about my own affairs" (letter to Maria Reikhel' of November 5)—wanted, that is, to discredit [his adversary] Georg Herwegh and to fix the image of the woman he loved. But that initial plan grew irrepressibly under Herzen's pen, drawing in diverse social material and turning into a very complex structure that verged on the history, the memoir, and the novel, but that became neither novel nor historical chronicle.

It is characteristic that Herzen himself avoided precise definitions of *My Past and Thoughts*. In his letters, prefaces, and commentaries, he most often called the book "notes" [*zapiski*], but that was merely a provisional term for him, convenient precisely because of its vagueness, its lack of definite generic content.

One sometimes finds in the literature on Herzen a tendency to interpret *My Past and Thoughts* as a special variety of autobiographical novel. In taking this path, however, the investigator risks losing sight of the essence of Herzen's method, of its particular mode of cognition. Generic nomenclature is not important in itself, after all, but only to the extent that it assists in clarifying, in making more precise for us the underlying principles of a particular creative apprehension of reality.

Herzen's historical, publicistic, philosophical, and memoiristic book belongs within the province of art, inasmuch as it cognizes reality in terms of concrete, individual manifestations that have been symbolically extended to the point of becoming expressions of the general patterns of life.

The material depicted in *My Past and Thoughts* does, however, have a special quality that serves to define the methodology of the work. That

quality is *authenticity*, since Herzen, like a historian, portrays what has actually taken place. The reader of the book is thus simultaneously subject to the influence of two powerful forces—the authenticity of real life and the expressiveness of art.

Generically, *My Past and Thoughts* is not a novel. The reason for this is not, of course, that it is insufficiently artistic but that it is based on a different cognitive principle, on a different kind of relationship between reality and its creative refraction. I have already discussed the cognitive specificity of the documentary genres in the introduction to the present book.

My Past and Thoughts also differs fundamentally from those artistic works that are based on the *material* of actual events. The factual or documentary character of a novel or tale is usually an extra-aesthetic fact (except in the historical novel). The reader may or may not be aware, for example, of the source of what is portayed in the actual personal experience of the author. That source material is vital for an understanding of the psychology of the writer's art, but as far as the work itself is concerned, it is not the origin of a fact that is important but its subsequent function in a specific artistic unity. The "genetic" approach to such questions blurs the difference, say, between *My Past and Thoughts* and the works of Tolstoi. Tolstoi reproduced actual events not only in their general outlines but frequently in their most concrete and insignificant details, whereas Herzen in *My Past and Thoughts* does not particularly excel in factual accuracy. And yet *Anna Karenina* is unquestionably a novel, while *My Past and Thoughts* is not a novel but rather, as Herzen put it, "the reflection of history in someone" (10:9).

The nonfictitiousness of what is depicted in *My Past and Thoughts* is thus not an accidental feature but one that is necessary, even essential to the reader—essential for a proper reading, that is. One may fully understand *Anna Karenina* without, for example, having any idea that the scene in which Levin proposes to Kitty is autobiographical, that Tolstoi in his own proposal to Sophia Andreevna Bers wrote the initials of the appropriate words on a card table with a piece of chalk.[3] It would, however, by no means be unimportant for an understanding or apprehension of *My Past and Thoughts* if it suddenly turned out that Herzen did not in fact elope with his bride, did not come to her in secret from Vladimir, and so on. To be sure, there is a variety of novel in which the issue of factual reliability is important, and that is the historical novel (which may sometimes be based on material that is contemporary or virtually contemporary to the author himself). The historical novel, however, remains open to aesthetic invention—indeed, remains wide open, and does so on principle. It is no accident that invented characters no different from the characters of any other novel usually stand at the center of the nineteenth-century historical novel.

There are two features linked to the "orientation toward authenticity" in *My Past and Thoughts* that ultimately determine the book's artistic system: the paramount importance of theoretical, generalizing thought, and the depiction of reality in terms that remain unmediated by the invented world of the artist. In creating a reflected, "second reality," the artist in the novel or tale reveals within it and through it his own conception of actual reality. The narrative of *My Past and Thoughts* is characterized by vast, epical sweep, but there is no plot in the work that stands like a partition between authorial consciousness and objective reality. Instead of a "second reality" with the author concealed at its heart, there is a direct discussion of life, with frank authorial judgments applied directly to real-life material.

The nineteenth-century novel is obviously no stranger to direct authorial commentary (one need only recall *War and Peace*, where the author's reflections take up whole chapters). This is a phenomenon of a different order, however. Authorial reflections in the classic sociopsychological novel are digressive, and authorial analysis is always accompanied by a figurative recreation of reality. Such is not the case with the documentary genres. Analytical thought in *My Past and Thoughts* is the living tissue of the artistic work, the medium that sustains the real-life material encompassed within it. A theoretical element may of course remain unassimilated in the literary work, sometimes exposing thereby the author's artistic impotence. But the theoretical element woven into the artistic unity of Herzen's autobiography acquires a special aesthetic quality. His thought is not a scientific syllogism, valuable only for its final result or its conclusion. What is important in Herzen is rather the very movement of his thought processes, the very fabric of his conceptual combinations and unique associations securing a new vision of reality. The "thoughts" in *My Past and Thoughts* have as much aesthetic import as do the scenes, dialogue, and portrait sketches.

Herzen maintains a continual awareness in the reader of the authenticity of what is being depicted. But the authentic reality of *My Past and Thoughts* is nonetheless a reality that has been purposefully organized both in its most general outlines and in its concrete details. Herzen examines that reality from a definite point of view, interpreting everything that reflects the general patterns that interest him. From the infinite multiplicity of the facts provided by life itself, he selects those that are best able to express the philosophical, historical, and moral significance of what has actually taken place. It is in this way that artistic symbolism comes into being in *My Past and Thoughts*.

The reader's certainty that the concrete details of *My Past and Thoughts* are not invented imparts a special quality to them. At the same time, the structural organization of the book is so important to Herzen that it gives him the right to rework creatively the factual material that has been included in it. He not only depicts scenes and recreates dialogue that he could not have witnessed; he also polishes, arranges, and edits for style the authentic documents (letters and diaries) that he has introduced into the text of his book, as a result not infrequently giving the events of the past a new valuation or emotional tonality, and sometimes even deviating when necessary from accurate communication of the facts. It is for these reasons that *My Past and Thoughts*, though it is an exceedingly important document in the history of Russian social thought and of the European liberation movement, cannot be used as a primary documentary source in the strict sense of the word. It would be a mistake to accept the book uncritically as factual material, or to use it without scrupulous verification. Yet even when Herzen does intentionally reshape reality, he still does not, even for a moment, break loose from it. He may alter a document, but that document is still necessary to him. In his system, the writer's choice between fact and fiction is not arbitrary.

Herzen was intensely interested in contemporary historiography, particularly in those representatives of the new historical school who were attempting to combine scientific research with artistic representation of the past. Herzen had great admiration for Thierry, Carlyle, and Michelet. In regard to Michelet's *Histoire de France au seizième siècle: La Renaissance*, Herzen wrote to him, "It is a poem; it is history turned into art and philosophy" (25:241), a formulation that was no less programmatic for Herzen himself. Michelet's *Renaissance* appeared in 1855, after Herzen had already written the first version of the first five chapters of *My Past and Thoughts*. Herzen responded with such interest to Michelet's artistic historicism precisely because it was in harmony with his own just-completed creative experiment.

Boris Reizov, in characterizing the method of French historians of the 1810s and 1820s in his book *French Romantic Historiography*, speaks of Michelet's characteristic mastery of the "two-dimensional" portrait:

> Michelet's whole intellectual development, as well as the tendencies of the science and literature of his day, impelled him toward a method that might, with a certain approximateness, be termed "symbolical." And Michelet himself in a letter to Charles Manion defined his method in this way: "The pictorialist school (and the materialist school: Barante et al.) was concerned with form; the analytical school (Mignet et al.) wanted to capture the spirit. It was left to the translator of Vico [that is, Michelet] to found the symbolical school, which tried to reveal the idea behind the transparent form."[4]

The purposeful selection of what is to be portrayed, the organization of actual events in a structural unity, the constructing of personalities, individual and yet at the same time historically generalized, the historical symbolism of expressive details—all this brought the author of *My Past and Thoughts* closer to his older contemporaries, the representatives of the new historical school.

Comparison of *My Past and Thoughts* with the works of historians is obviously possible only on the level of a few general tendencies, since Herzen's book takes a different cross section of reality than histories do, and it draws its material from a different kind of human experience than they do. Herzen himself put it very clearly in the 1866 preface to part 5: "*My Past and Thoughts* is not a historical monograph but the reflection of history in someone who *accidentally* got in its way." This formulation defines *My Past and Thoughts* as a distinctive amalgam of historiography and autobiography and memoir, but to the extent that one regards the book as a special form of the "reflection of history," it also sets it apart from the memoir. Indeed, it is unlikely that there is another memoir so imbued with *conscious historicism* or so governed by the conception of the clash and struggle of different historical stages, a conception that Herzen took from the Russian Hegelianism of the 1840s and reworked in terms of his own revolutionary dialectic. It is in the first five parts of *My Past and Thoughts* that that conception finds its most cogent and finished expression.

The first five parts of *My Past and Thoughts* and the three subsequent parts (which survive in fragmentary or unfinished form) reflect different phases in the development of Herzen's worldview, and therefore different ways of embodying authorial consciousness. The last three parts have neither the precise construction, the distinctive "unity of action," of the first five, nor their markedly lyrical authorial stance. The episodically essayistic form of the last three parts and the completely purposeful and systematic arrangement of the first five are methodologically heterogeneous phenomena. When Herzen set about publishing the first five parts of *My Past and Thoughts* in London in 1860, he regarded them as a finished work (despite the fact that he had already been working on part 6 for a long time), as the culmination of a plan that had first taken shape during the political and personal catastrophes of 1852. Herzen is quite explicit about this in his preface to the London edition of *My Past and Thoughts*: "Many of my friends advised me to begin complete publication of *My Past and Thoughts*. . . . Rereading my last notebooks to an old friend of my youth last summer, I myself *recognized familiar* features and stopped. My work was done!" (8:9–11).

The first five parts of *My Past and Thoughts* recount the story of the maturation of an ideologue of the Russian revolutionary movement in the

light of Herzen's favorite idea of a clash between two worlds—the old and the new. The theme of two worlds is pervasive in Herzen's writing (beginning with the romantic sketches of the 1830s). In *My Past and Thoughts* it receives a realistic and dialectical treatment.

Part 1, "Nursery and University," involves the hero's "learning years." He spares no effort to find a way out of the old world of gentry life into a world of new human relationships. Part 2, "Prison and Exile," describes his confrontation with cruel reality (the old world of serfdom and Nicholas's bureaucracy). Part 3, "Vladimir-on-the-Kliaz'ma," concerns the maturation of the heroine, of the new woman, as well as the hero's development under the salutary influence of a great love and the reality of family life. The main theme of part 4, "Moscow, Petersburg, and Novgorod," is the formation of a new worldview (Herzen himself called it "realistic") and, from its perspective, a structured history of Russian social thought in the 1840s. Part 5, "Paris—Italy—Paris," reengages the themes of the *Letters from France and Italy* and *From the Other Shore*: the bourgeois revolution, the capitalist system, and Western philistinism. Presented in the first half of part 5 is the sociopolitical dimension of the clash between the Russian revolutionary and the old world of the bourgeois West. In the second half, that political theme is combined with the story of Herzen's family drama.

The most recent attempt (in 1848) to change the world had come to nought, as had the hero's own efforts to base his personal happiness on the principles of a morality that was both rational and free. But neither the first failure nor the second altered the meaning of the struggle or Herzen's conviction that the old would ultimately give way to the new. Such is the subject matter of the first five parts of *My Past and Thoughts*.

In order to portray someone in a novel, tale, memoir, or *portrait*, it is necessary not merely to identify certain elements of his spiritual life, but also to establish the correlation among those elements, to find the structural principle of their interrelation. For a writer this also means finding an *object of depiction* [*predmet izobrazheniia*]. For Herzen, that structural principle was the individual's historical identity.

The origins of *My Past and Thoughts* go back to the 1840s, an era that was fascinated with historicism and imbued with philosophical dialectics. Herzen sought to understand not so much the individual's psychological features as he did his historical ones. This did not mean that sociohistorical and psychological analysis were opposed to each other. On the contrary, they were part of a continuum in which individual sociohistorical conditionality was perceived as essential to psychological analysis and as the basis of the psychological novel. In delineating cause-and-effect relationships, nineteenth-century realism moved beyond the general understanding of the conditioning of human beings by epoch, milieu, and circumstance toward an understanding that was ever more detailed and

precise, even to the point of apprehending the complex determinations of individual spiritual impulses.

The plan for *My Past and Thoughts* took shape in the early 1850s, when the sociopsychological novel of the second half of the nineteenth century was still in a nascent stage. As a consequence, there is nothing in *My Past and Thoughts* like the psychologism that eventually found realization in the novel, nor could there be. Every original artistic system comes into being by way of a *selection* of the means that are most necessary to the author's cognitive purposes. Herzen, in portraying those people who were characteristic of the Russian reality of his day, called them "filament conductors of historical currents."

Although an older contemporary of the great novelists of the second half of the century and a witness of their quests (Tolstoi's *War and Peace*, Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and *L'Éducation sentimentale*, and all of Turgenev's novels except for *Virgin Soil* were published during his lifetime), Herzen continued to follow his own path. Neither Turgenev's detailed examination of inner life, nor Tolstoi's dialectic of the soul, nor Dostoevskii's psychological "abysses" affected his own treatment of the individual human being.

Heightened interest in the contradictions of spiritual life and concern with the details of psychic processes were two essential features of nineteenth-century realism. In *My Past and Thoughts*, however, experiences are related directly, in very clear and rather traditional outlines, without any attempt to reveal either the contradictoriness or the multidimensionality of spiritual life. And this is true in the book's depiction of even the sharpest conflicts and spiritual traumas.

Portrayed in the chapter "A Year Later (1851)" in part 5 is Herzen's decisive and catastrophic final confrontation with his wife. There is nothing unforeseen, paradoxical, or contradictory about the hero's behavior. All his reactions follow each other in a predictable sequence and are fully in keeping with the psychological norm. At first there are "impulses of vengefulness, jealousy, and outraged pride." Even their external expression remains traditional: "I stood in front of the large table in the living room with my arms folded—my face, very likely, was completely distorted." Then, upon seeing his wife's suffering, the hero is overcome with pity and remorse, and the external expression of these feelings too is of the most straightforward and ordinary kind: "That look of infinite suffering, of mute anguish, at once stilled the ferment of my passion. I began to pity her, tears ran down my cheeks, and I was ready to throw myself at her feet and beg her forgiveness" (10: 261).

At the end of the 1830s in his portrait of the spiritual life of Pechorin, Lermontov had introduced into Russian literature an element of psychological contradiction. Herzen therefore contented himself with summary depictions of spiritual states not because he neither knew nor understood

the possibilities of their detailed elaboration and complication, but because they were not what he required. The nineteeenth-century psychological novel showed the individual as historically and socially conditioned. His particular cast of mind was regarded as a product of that conditionality. Herzen, however, was primarily interested in analyzing the nature of historical conditionality itself and in its spontaneous manifestation in human material.

The novelist usually presents his characters in terms of their actions, reflections, and conversations, and it is only in passing that he explains from his own vantage what is being portrayed. But a generalized unity of character, event, and subject may be constructed not only by means of figurative synthesis; explanation and analysis may also be employed. This is possible because elements that have been analytically separated in an artistic context at once reassemble themselves in a new structural unity. It is this path, the opposite as it were, that Herzen takes in his autobiography, a work in which things that have actually happened are recounted by a biographically concrete author who remains unmediated in a conventional narrator or storyteller and whose own voice is therefore necessarily audible. Dialogue, scenes, and the concrete depiction of feelings and events are used by Herzen to *reinforce* his conception of the individual personalities that he has already subjected to explicit authorial judgment, and whose historical and social essence he has already explained theoretically. He may also project his own historically generalized personality into this context.

A number of monumental characters embodying Herzen's understanding of historical processes are constructed in this analytical fashion in *My Past and Thoughts*. Such, for example, is his image of Vladimir Engel'son. Herzen revealed in Engel'son, whom he had known for a long time, the same psychic type to which Dostoevskii was to give his attention. In Herzen's view, his own and Engel'son's generations belonged to two different psychological stages—before the reign of Nikolai I and during it (even though Engel'son and his contemporaries had as children been exposed to Decembrism). Herzen's image of Engel'son is derived deductively from this premise:

> In Engel'son I studied the difference between that generation and our own. Later on I met many people who were not so talented, not so developed, but who had the *species' same morbid flaw* in all their parts. A terrible sin lies upon the reign of Nikolai for that moral destruction of a generation, for that wrecking of the souls of its children. . . . They were all infected with a passion for introspection, self-analysis, and self-criticism; they scrupulously confided their psychic phenomena and were fond of endless confessions and accounts of the nervous events of their lives. (10:344–345)

This characterization reminds one of Dostoevskii's theory of the "hysterical display" [*nadryv*] as it is expounded in his *Notes from Underground*. Herzen's essay on the "Engel'son" type, however, was written in 1858 for the most part, whereas *Notes from Underground* was not published until 1864. Herzen reached an understanding of that new variety of egocentric person on the basis of his own experience and independently of Dostoevskii.

One of the most remarkable pieces of writing in *My Past and Thoughts* is the image of Herzen's father, Ivan Alekseevich Iakovlev. The monumental image of the Russian Voltairean rotting away in isolation from the life of the people at once takes on vast historical significance. The features of his father's personality were for Herzen the "consequence of the encounter of two things so opposed to each other as the eighteenth century and Russian life through the agency of a third that was highly conducive to the development of capricious behavior: the idleness of the manor" (8:86). The key to this formulation is Herzen's conception of the eighteenth century as an age of enlightenment and revolution. Eighteenth-century Russian aristocratic freethinking was a combination of skepticism, gentry arrogance, feudal habits, and a disdain for Russian culture. Here the mechanism of the theoretical explanation of personality is not kept outside the confines of the text as it usually is in the mid-nineteenth-century novel but is frankly and directly introduced into it. The depiction of Ivan Alekseevich Iakovlev's peculiar spiritual stamp is preceded by an analysis of the conditions that engendered it. The most basic of those conditions was his irreparable social isolation, which led to his contempt for others, his cult of superficial decorum, his bitterness and suspiciousness, and even his miserliness as a manifestation of his fear of life, of his distrust of the external world.

The theoretical explanation of personality in *My Past and Thoughts* is, however, always surrounded by a living tissue of concrete, uniquely individual details: "The old man read the *Moscow Gazette* and the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* over his coffee; it would not hurt to note that he gave orders for the *Moscow Gazette* to be warmed so that his hands would not be chilled by the dampness of the pages, and that he read the political news in the French text, finding the Russian obscure" (8:93).

Squeezed into this close-up is a wealth of social content. The old man's suspiciousness has reached the point it reaches only in the misanthrope, and his misanthropy is intimately linked to the isolation of his circle from Russian culture and from the Russian people. There is therefore an internal connection between the warmed pages of the *Moscow Gazette* and the fact that Iakovlev read the political news in French.

Annenkov praised Turgenev in 1854 for the fact that in his writing "the idea . . . is always concealed deep inside the work": "the work must

carry everything that is required within itself and not permit the author's interference. The latter's observations always make an unpleasant impression, recalling to mind the sign with the pointing finger."[5] The pointing finger of the writer's thought is met with at every step in *My Past and Thoughts*. Herzen takes someone who actually existed as his character, depicts him in the circumstances in which he actually lived, and then theoretically explains the general patterns that governed the acts, gestures, and words of that character, whom he regards as a concretely individual representative of a particular social stratum.

The Tolstoi and Volkonskii family chronicles were used extensively in *War and Peace*, where among others Tolstoi's own grandfather, Nikolai Sergeevich Volkonskii, is portrayed—in the guise of the old Prince Bolkonskii, an artistic symbol of the old-fashioned Russian aristocracy.[6] Herzen in *My Past and Thoughts* also needed to generalize about the historical fate of the eighteenth-century Russian aristocracy. His own father served him as a living resource for that purpose. But in Herzen's system, the original real-life experience has not been left outside the text, nor is there in the text any "second reality" or any mediating link of invented character. Rather it is the original real-life experience itself that has become the object of analysis and that directly embodies the artist's idea. Herzen's act is a fully creative one, inasmuch as it involves drawing the disparate empirical manifestations of personality together into a system, identifying what is dominant in those manifestations, correlating what until then has been left uncorrelated, and generalizing the particular. It involves, in other words, cognizing the interconnections of individual spiritual life. As applied to the characters of *My Past and Thoughts*, the author's analytical investigations are also in every instance acts that serve to create aesthetic unity and concrete artistic form.

All this pertains not merely to those people who have taken their place in history (of whom there are so many in *My Past and Thoughts*), or to those who have been clearly shaped by historical events and circumstances, but also to personalities of the most private kind. There is, for example, the story of the intimacy of Herzen's and Ogarev's friend [the translator] Nikolai Ketscher with the poor orphan Serafima. Ketscher was about to leave Serafima, but then, moved by her devotion to him, he married her.

> She completely ruined Ketscher's life. . . . Between Ketscher and Serafima, and between Serafima and our circle, there was a vast and terrible chasm. . . . We belonged to different ages of man, to different geological formations, to different volumes in the history of the world. We were the children of the new Russia educated at the university and the academy; we were fascinated then by the political brilliance of the West, and we adhered religiously to our lack of faith, . . . while she, having been brought up in a schismatic monastery, still belonged to the world of pre-Petrine Russia and possessed all the prejudices of esoteric religion and all the fantastic notions of old Russian society. (9:236–37)

The conflict between Ketscher and Serafima is not the psychological conflict of two lovers from different social backgrounds but the clash of two different cultural stages, of two different "ages of man."

Serafima's whole psyche with its "stuck understanding" and its backwardness is derived from its connection to the pre-Petrine stage of Russian life. Ketscher's circle accepted Serafima wholeheartedly and utterly destroyed her, turning her backwardness into a pose by suggesting to her that it was "a good thing": "But she herself did not want to remain *merely* what she had been. What then was the result? We—revolutionaries, socialists, and champions of the emancipation of women—turned that naive, devoted, simple creature into a Muscovite petite bourgoise! And did not the Convention, the Jacobins, and the Commune itself turn France into a petit bourgeois and Paris into an *épicier*?" (9:242). The shift from the socially displaced and disoriented Serafima to the Western petty bourgeoisie, which Herzen saw as the historical consequence of "unsuccessful revolution," is in the system of his thought a perfectly natural one, however abrupt it may be.

In the memoiristic and autobiographical genres the principle of authorial self-expression has special importance, although the absence of an explicit authorial personality may also be just as fundamental.

The tasks and methods of the merely factual memoir were alien to Herzen, but so too was its contrary, the psychological memoir, whose eternal model and prototype is Rousseau's *Confessions*. *My Past and Thoughts*, after all, is concerned less with psychological self-revelation than with the historical self-definition of an individual human being. The autobiographical hero of *My Past and Thoughts* is, like the whole structure of the work as a whole, fundamentally defined by a conscious historicism. In this sense, the basic orientations of *My Past and Thoughts* are even opposed to those of the *Confessions*. Rousseau was to the highest degree a product of his time, although subjectively he conceived of himself as an unprecedented and unique phenomenon. Herzen, however, for all the intensity of his self-consciousness, always viewed himself as the representative of a generation, of a particular historical stratum. And it is this that conditions both the scope and the selection of the elements that constitute the personality of the central hero of *My Past and Thoughts*.

The Rousseauean tradition had extraordinary significance for the formation of the psychological method in nineteenth-century literature. It

was combined in a distinctive way with an interest in physiology and biology, and with efforts to use them as the basis of psychological analysis. Ogarev, the person closest to Herzen, was especially active in efforts of this kind. Fragments of Ogarev's *My Confession,* a work intended as an answer to *My Past and Thoughts,* have survived (Militsa Nechkina dates the beginning of Ogarev's work on this project from 1856). Addressing Herzen in the very first lines of his *Confession,* Ogarev emphasizes the nature of his own orientation, deliberately contrasting it with Herzen's:

> Confessing merely for the sake of repentance is hard for us to comprehend; to do that you need a genuine feeling of repentance and of responsibility to some higher judge. Our repentance is understanding. And understanding is both our delight and our punishment. I want to look at myself and my story, which is after all better known to me than it is to anyone else, from the point of view of a naturalist. I want to see how this animal called N[ikolai] Ogarev turned out the way he did and not otherwise; I want to see what his physiopathological development consists of, from what kind of features, both internal and external, it has been shaped and will continue to be shaped for a certain time. You realize that great candor is needed for this, certainly no less than is required by repentance? Nowhere may one ascribe an effect to some other, inauthentic cause; nowhere may one be intimidated by the word "shame"! Thought and passion, health and sickness—all must be readily apparent, all must point to a logic, not *my own* but the *logic* of nature, of necessity, the one that the ancients called *fatum,* and that for him who observes and understands is the process of life. My confession must be a fragment of the physiological pathology of a human personality.[7]

Ogarev's letters, especially those written to Herzen, are consistent with *My Confession.* They contain authentic nineteenth-century psychological analysis; they are tortuous and precise, but by no means are they always prepared to explain spiritual life completely or to break it down into its simpler elements. In an 1861 letter to Herzen, Ogarev examines in merciless detail the story of his break with Natal'ia Ogareva:

> Well then, what if my consent and my blessing at that time merely crowned a growing indifference and weariness? That is frightening! And what if my enthusiasm, self-analysis, and confused egoism had all got so mixed up together that they were the cause of an irrational act that one moment seemed elegant and the next made one ask oneself: did I not put up with it all out of indifference, did I not have in myself a dark craving for personal freedom? And suddenly I am overcome with horror. Am I delirious now, am I losing my mind, or was I an unconscious mixture of elegance and meanness? . . . It is obvious that I still have not got over the vile habit of doing to myself what Ketscher does to everybody else—root around, that is, until one digs up either an imaginary or a genuine meanness. . . . A human being, if he is not merely something unknown, is a machine so complicated that all its wheels are suspect to me, yet not to know how to take an objective view of oneself would also be cowardice and blind man's buff. . . . And what if there is a literary requirement in all this agitation—that I say how agitated I am and that it be well written too.[8]

The accomplishments of contemporary natural science, the philosophical problem of the relationship between nature and history, and the physiologically conditioned nature of human behavior were all important to Herzen. Nevertheless, the strongest element in his creative thought remained the historicism that he had mastered so thoroughly in the 1840s. It was not at all his intention in constructing his autobiographical image in *My Past and Thoughts* to unveil every secret. On the contrary, he was convinced that there were facts concerning a person's internal and external life that there was no reason to expose to the light of analysis and artistic depiction. He *omitted* those facts, as may easily be demonstrated by comparing the autobiography with the available documentary and biographical materials.

The family drama presented in part 5 of *My Past and Thoughts* had an ideological and consequently a historical meaning for Herzen. But in none of his works did he ever refer to the painful situation that developed between him and Natal'ia Ogareva in the 1860s (although it found extensive reflection in his letters). From Herzen's point of view, that situation lacked general significance and interest. Moreover, he saw himself as a champion of enlightenment, and a pathology humiliating to the rational person therefore had no place in his approach to the examination of spiritual life.

Yet another example is chapter 21 of part 3. After recounting the denouement of his affair with Praskov'ia Medvedeva in Viatka, Herzen concludes: "Sobbing, I read her letter over and over. *Qual cuor tradisti*! Later on I saw her again; she gave me her hand amicably, but it was awkward for both of us; each left something unsaid, each avoided referring to something" (8:350). This contains no misrepresentation of the facts, but much has been suppressed. Herzen had found Medvedeva a position in Vladimir as governess in the family of Governor Kuruta. In 1840 he wrote from Vladimir to [the architect and his fellow exile] Aleksandr Vitberg that she had moved to Moscow with the children:

> I know about her bad luck, and I have long known about her complaints against me. Here are the facts from the beginning. . . . Kuruta decided not to keep her on since Prask[ov'ia] Petr[ovna] had turned up knowing no French or German whatsoever and had not the slightest inkling of what her duties

were. . . . Nikolen'ka had been placed, Soniuta had applied to school . . . , Liudin'ka was already in a pension, and payment for six months had already been made, and *not by Praskov'ia Petrovna*. . . . Until last month she lived in her apartment free of charge, her firewood was given to her, and now she has just been offered a well-paying position. What is she complaining about? . . . She is upset because I did not visit her very much. . . . Except for losing her subsidy, which of course was not my fault, her affairs are in fact in very good shape. (22:75)

It is not difficult to imagine a nineteenth-century psychological novel in which the whole banal cruelty of this conflict would have been fully exploited. For Herzen, however, it was merely a lamentable but marginal episode in his private life, the sort of thing, in fact, that ought to be *omitted*. The *limits of the depictable* in Herzen's writing were in part established by the aesthetic habits of the romantic era that had formed him and by the cult of the beautiful and the harmonious that had been combined as early as the 1830s with utopian dreams of a harmonious social order. In *My Past and Thoughts*, however, those limits were above all determined by the book's historical task—its portrayal of the maturation of a positive hero, of a Russian ideologue and revolutionary activist.

The criteria of judgment used in *My Past and Thoughts* were derived from the ethics of revolutionary activism (I shall look at this in more detail later on). Herzen's political and moral views and their mutual influence on each other conditioned both the underlying principle governing the expression of authorial personality in his works and the evolution of that principle from the romantic hero in the 1830s, through the search for objective knowledge in the 1840s, to the realistic autobiography of *My Past and Thoughts*, in which the hero is regarded as a phenomenon of the objective world, and finally to the departure from autobiography in the book's final sections, which were written at a time when populist criteria were assuming crucial significance for Herzen.

The positive hero of *My Past and Thoughts* is by no means an "elect personality" in the old romantic sense. Instead, he is conceived as a *representative*, as the best representative, of the "educated minority" that has been called upon to lead the Russian liberation movement. The life of this representative of the best forces in Russian society must therefore be exemplary, since the individual whose life it is bears a responsibility for it to the people of the new world.

If in part 1 of *My Past and Thoughts* the hero enters the life of a circle of excellent young people very much like himself, then in part 2 he stands opposed to the terrible and immoral world of serfdom and the tsarist bureaucracy. Depicted in part 3 is his triumphant struggle for a great love. In part 4 he is a member of a Moscow circle of advanced Russians

of the 1840s, where he is portrayed as the most sober-minded and right-thinking among them, the one who has reached the highest level of inner freedom, since that is in fact how Herzen's relationship with Granovskii and the other Moscow liberals is interpreted. In part 5, as the representative of young Russia, the hero comes into conflict with Western philistinism and bourgeois corruption, and as the rigorously consistent revolutionary he clashes with "incomplete revolutionaries" and ultimately with Herwegh.

The elements constituting the autobiographical hero's image in *My Past and Thoughts* are almost entirely devoid of individual psychological coloration, especially in the first chapters. Instead, they are qualities that by their very nature are measured quantitatively, that express the intensity of the individual's inner sense of the world around him, his energy, and the degree of his enthusiasm and vigor. Somehow we imagine Herzen's creative work, ultimate destiny, and individual identity for ourselves, and it is on this basis that we project his personality as we read *My Past and Thoughts*. Yet what do we actually know about that personality from the text itself (irrespective of our preconceived ideas)? A characterization frequently encountered in part 1 is "lively boy." Associated with it are such qualities as "playfulness," "impulsiveness," "enthusiasm," and even "impressionability" and "responsiveness" [*udobodvizhimost'*] (in part 3). These attributes, which are indicative of the intensity of the hero's apprehension of life, would be almost physiological were they not subsumed in a kind of historical and ideological system—were they not imbued, that is, with the values characteristic of that system. The criteria for these values have been derived from the ideal of the Russian revolutionary activist and, more broadly, from the harmonious man of utopian socialism who is receptive both to a higher spiritual life and to more mundane pleasures and passions. Sometimes explicit moral values are applied to the hero of *My Past and Thoughts*—sincerity, truthfulness, and hatred of falsehood and duplicity. The criteria for these values may be found in the same ideal of the struggling, life-affirming, and self-affirming personality, since falsehood and duplicity degrade and diminish that personality and cause it to shrivel up.

"The new world was knocking at the door, and our hearts and souls opened themselves to it. . . . Impressionable, sincerely youthful, we were easily carried away by its powerful current" (8:162). Taken by itself, the phrase "sincerely youthful" is an odd collocation, but in the light of the historical meaning that Herzen ascribed to all phenomena, including the biological, it is completely predictable. The contrast between old age and youth, or rather between senescence and youth, in part 1 of *My Past and Thoughts* is neither biological nor based on signs of age. The point is not that Ivan Alekseevich Iakovlev is old, but that he embodies the idea of

decrepitude, obsolescence, and death. He is old and infirm as a matter of principle. Health is offensive to him. Youthfulness, on the other hand, is a forward movement; it is love and revolution. Beginning with chapter 6 ("Moscow University"), Herzen's autobiography is inseparably linked with the history of Russian culture and Russian social thought. The maturation of the hero merges with the political education of Russian youth. Youthfulness becomes the youthfulness of a generation. And it is quite clear here that Herzen is interpreting youthfulness as the historically formed mode of behavior of definite social groups at a definite period of time. "I regard as a great misfortune the situation of a people whose younger generation has no youthfulness. . . ; mere youngness is not enough." "Youngness" in this context is a physiological concept, whereas "youthfulness" is a historical or even political concept. That this is so is fully apparent in Herzen's discussion of the fact that the French Revolution "was made by young people," but that "the last youth in France were the Saint-Simonists and the phalanstery" (8:151). There thus emerges a historical and even an ideological meaning for such apparently ahistorical qualities as "vitality," "playfulness," "impulsiveness," "impressionability," and so on.

The contrasting in part 5 of *My Past and Thoughts* of the positive hero with a negative one (Herwegh) also finds expression in the contrasting of psychic perversity and hysterical display with spiritual health and the ideal of "simple" behavior: "It may be that the uninhibited truthfulness, inordinate self-confidence, and rich simplicity of my behavior—its *laisser aller*—came from vanity too; it may be that I brought down misfortune on myself because of it, but so be it. . . . With strong muscles and nerves I stood independent and unique, passionately ready to offer my hand to another, but for myself accepting, like alms, neither help nor support" (10:251).

The hero of *My Past and Thoughts* bears a responsibility for Russian culture and the Russian revolutionary movement; it is for this reason that everything dubious, everything casting a shadow, must be stripped from him. He must be neither guilty nor degraded.

When touching, in the Viatka letters to his betrothed, on his relations with Medvedeva, Herzen was repentant and judged himself harshly. In *My Past and Thoughts* he speaks merely in passing of the "pitiful weakness" with which he "prolonged the half-truth" that he had "ruined" the existence of R. (the initial by which Medvedeva is referred to in the book). And behind all this is the certainty that in making the choice between a great love and a momentary attraction, it would not have been possible to act otherwise than he did.

In chapter 28, where the family conflict of 1842–1843 is recounted, there is a similar relationship between the text of *My Past and Thoughts*

and a document contemporary to the events it describes. In his journal for 1843 Herzen reproached himself with extraordinary severity for a casual infatuation that resulted in his wife's humiliation. In *My Past and Thoughts* the same episode is turned against the hypocrisy of conventional morality and those religio-ascetic views that brought about a woman's mental breakdown.

It would be naive to suppose that Herzen's moral sense was less rigorous in the 1850s than it had been in the 1840s and 1830s. He did in fact continue to take full responsibility for the conduct of his life. But as the author of *My Past and Thoughts*, he was faced with a special task. He was less interested in delving into the details of his own and others' spiritual life than in showing the maturation of a man of the new world. The valuational accent in *My Past and Thoughts* is different than in Herzen's journal because in the former the family conflict of 1843 has been transferred from the psychological plane to the historical and the philosophical—to that of the struggle against the "Christian phantoms" of the old world. The moral-psychological problem of guilt has accordingly been pushed into the background.

In his judgment in *My Past and Thoughts* of the episodes concerning Medvedeva and the servant girl Katerina, Herzen remains true to himself. As a utopian socialist who in his youth had espoused Saint-Simon's "rehabilitation of the flesh" and Fourier's doctrine of the passions, he is unable to regard either passion or pleasure as evil. That evil is rather to be found in falsehood, which degrades and circumscribes the individual, and in the suffering and wrong that are inflicted on or that bring harm to others. Such is the historical logic of Herzen's moral judgments and self-judgments in the book.

Without the historical conception from which *My Past and Thoughts* takes its departure, neither the juxtaposition of Herzen and Herwegh that constitutes the basis of part 5 and its family drama nor the moral judgment of Herwegh that was so essential to Herzen would have been possible. What was it that Herwegh was actually guilty of? Egoism? But Herzen, like every other revolutionary democrat of the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s was steadfast in defending "lofty" egoism from conventional and religio-ascetic morality. Was it Herwegh's unrestrained passion and desire for pleasure? But Herzen himself acknowledged the human right to pleasure. Was it his deception of a friend? But Natal'ia Aleksandrovna, the model heroine of *My Past and Thoughts*, was just as guilty of deception and falsehood as Herwegh himself. Nevertheless, in his account of the family drama Herzen still draws a clear line between good and evil, turning that line into the historical boundary between the old world and the new. He remembers a French novel called *Arminius* that he had read in his youth:

> We all know from the history of the first centuries of the encounter and collision of two different worlds: the old one—classical, educated, but corrupt and obsolete, and the new one—savage as a forest animal, but full of slumbering strength and chaotic striving; we know, that is, the *official*, journalistic side of the collision, but not the side that resides in insignificant details and in the mute life of the hearth. We know the events in their large-scale aspect, but nothing of the fates of those who were directly dependent on those events, and whose lives were broken and quietly destroyed by them. Here blood is replaced by tears, ravaged cities by devastated families, and battlefields by forgotten tombs. The author of *Arminius* . . . tried to reproduce the clash of the two worlds in the family hearth—one world entering history from the forest, and the other departing it for the grave.
>
> . . . It never occurred to me that I too would fall victim to the same kind of collision, that my own hearth would be devastated and crushed in the meeting of two different tracks of world history. (10:238)

Self-affirmation in *My Past and Thoughts* never becomes self-admiration, since it is oriented not toward an individual as a particular, self-contained entity, but rather to that individual's historical function—his political and social activism. Herzen transforms those involved in the family drama into the representatives of two different historical formations—young Russia and the bourgeois West. It is on this basis, rather than on that of proscriptions and prohibitions derived from prevailing standards of morality, that the guilt of the one and the righteousness of the other are determined. The page devoted to the novel *Arminius* is a splendid example of Herzen's historicism. The individual human being is answerable to history not only for his participation in "large-scale" events, but also for his "domestic life" and for the life of his soul. As Herzen puts it, "Whoever could survive had to have the strength to remember."

There is a concealed, barely perceptible theme of remorse in part 5 of *My Past and Thoughts* (a section that had particular importance for its author). Herzen was tormented until the end of his life by the knowledge that he had been unable to shield his sick wife from the shocks that were destroying her, and that he himself had been unpitying. In his journal for 1866 he wrote of his relations with Natal'ia Ogareva, "*Then* I wanted to save a woman and murdered her. *Now* I want to save another one, and shall not do so" (20, 2:608).

Herzen's depiction of his wife's death in the last chapter of part 5 is a kind of self-torment by delayed memory. Herzen forces himself to take a close look at a continually shifting sequence of painful details, so that their reconstruction and reexperiencing becomes a kind of moral duty, a creative expiation of guilt. "Strewn on the floor and stairs were a great

many reddish-yellow geraniums. Even now their fragrance hits me like an electric shock . . . , and I remember all the details, moment by moment, and I see the room draped in white and the veiled mirrors; and beside *her*, covered in flowers too, is the yellow body of the infant who fell asleep and never woke up; and her cold, terribly cold forehead" (10:302).

The theme of remorse remains outside the text of *My Past and Thoughts* (since self-recrimination would have weakened the blow against the enemy). Indeed, it is not even so much a theme as a psychological impulse, and the compulsion to remember that is engendered by it is not presented as such but is generalized in the idea of creative memory. "The past . . . remains as though cast in metal, detailed, unchanged, as dark as bronze. . . . One does not need to be a Macbeth in order to see the ghost of Banquo. Ghosts are neither criminal judges nor the gnawings of conscience, but the *ineradicable events of memory*" (10:274, "Oceano Nox").

It is through knowledge and action that suffering, guilt, and failure are expiated. It was from this conviction that the initial plan for *My Past and Thoughts* emerged (subsequently evolving into the book's enormous canvas of social life). The book as planned was not, however, intended merely as vengeance and atonement, but also as an act of artistic cognition that would recover the past for the future, that would transform that past into history and art. That sense of the past as something the creative person *does not have the right* to allow to disappear without a trace, that historicism in its most particular and personal manifestation, is correlated in *My Past and Thoughts* with Herzen's sense of history as the shared awareness of a common past.

PART THREE
HERZEN'S *MY PAST AND THOUGHTS* AND HISTORICAL IDENTITY

1. *My Past and Thoughts* is examined here mainly in terms of the problems that are the subject of the present book. Some of the questions touched on in this section are treated in more detail in my *Byloe i dumy Gertsena.*

2. See B. M. Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoi,* 2 vols. (Moscow and Leningrad, 1928–1931), 1:80–96.

3. See *Dnevniki S. A Tolstoi, 1860–1891* (Moscow, 1928), 8–29; and P. Biriukov, *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi: Biografiia,* 3d ed., 2 vols. (Moscow and Petrograd, 1923), 1:232–235.

4. B. G. Reizov, *Frantsuzskaia romanticheskaia istoriografiia (1815–1830)* (Leningrad, 1965), 367.

5. Annenkov, *Vospominaniia*, 91.

6. Eikhenbaum regarded as convincing Bartenev's argument that the prototype of old Prince Bolkonskii was in large measure Count M. F. Kamenskii (*Lev Tolstoi*, 2:263).

7. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 61 (Moscow, 1953), 674. *My Confession* remained unfinished. The surviving text covers only Ogarev's childhood and adolescence.

8. M. O. Gershenzon, ed., *Russkie propilei*, 6 vols. (Moscow, 1915–1919), 4:263–266. (Tr.)