The Representation of Western European Governesses and Tutors on the Russian Country Estate in Historical Documents and Literary Texts

by Ulrike Lentz

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ABSTRACT

Foreign governesses and tutors were a ubiquitous presence on the Russian country estate. This thesis is an attempt to study their presence in Russian life and culture in two media. Firstly, I have conducted a historical data analysis of memoirs and diaries written by British governesses who worked in Russia and by their employers, members of the Russian nobility, who wrote about their upbringing under foreign tutelage. Secondly, the resulting impression was then compared with the representation of the foreign educator in literature. The aim of this approach is to highlight the noteworthy differences between the way these foreigners are referred to in historical sources and their literary image.

In order to do so, this thesis first establishes the environment in which the presence of Western Europeans in Russian noble households was deemed an indispensable necessity. Owing to Peter the Great’s forcible Westernisation of the country and his insistence on a service nobility, the Russian elite found its class consciousness not in titles and genealogy, but in service rank and “Western” accomplishments, such as the knowledge of foreign languages and genteel behaviour. In its endeavour to “Europeanise” the elite, Russia became a desirable source of employment for governesses and tutors. Especially for British governesses, who were faced with enormous competition and poor working conditions at home, teaching in Russia was both lucrative and an opportunity to live in an unusual, distant and exotic land. In their memoirs about their childhood and upbringing, Russians remember these foreigners with love, loathing or indifference. In literary texts, however, Western educators are portrayed as types rather than as human beings, as minor characters with a literary textual function rather than as individuals. Furthermore, the general tenor of their depiction is mostly negative and their presence is frequently a source of ridicule.

This thesis concludes that the distorted representation of foreigners in Russian literature is owing to the desire in the discourse of prose narratives to improve the image of Russia, to represent aspects of it as civilised and European. In encounters with the Western “other” – most frequently governesses and tutors – the potential to improve the portrayal of the Russian protagonists is enhanced when debunking the representatives of the “superior” West.
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INTRODUCTION

Before starting my PhD thesis, I was aware that the representation of foreign governesses and tutors in Russian literature was predominately a negative one. Some Soviet critics claimed that this literary image was only natural, given that historical memoirs written by members of the Russian nobility painted an equally black picture of their foreign educators. History simply provided the prototype for their literary counterparts. I questioned this statement, assuming it to be an example of that tendency in Russian/Soviet criticism (which had existed in Russia from Belinskii to Lunacharskii and beyond) to treat literary texts as social documents. According to this critical approach, literature reflects reality. Subsequent theoretical work has proved this thinking to be flawed.

The presence of foreign governesses and tutors working on country estates for the Russian nobility is an undisputed historical fact. Personal memoirs and diaries mention them frequently as an established part of the childhood, upbringing and education of children of the Russian upper classes in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are no scholarly work, however, which has actually looked at and analysed a representative selection of them. Herein lies the originality of this project. I posit that the qualitative analysis of historical texts, such as memoirs and diaries written by members of the Russian upper classes as well as by English governesses with work-experience in Russia, provides a balanced image of foreign teachers. These positive, negative and indifferent accounts, however, are at odds with
the almost exclusively unfavourable depiction of Western European governesses and
tutors in Russian literature. My aim is to draw attention to, and explain, the perceived
differences which exist between the two. It is entirely legitimate to study memoirs
and diaries to sharpen one’s interpretative focus on literary fiction: “nonfictional
narrative accounts are world-creating in the same sense as are works of literature”.

Why does Russian classic realist literature tend to be biased in this way, especially
with repeated claims by authors and critics to be a true reflection of real life? To
answer this question, this thesis has been divided into two parts, covering both the
historical and the literary discussion of the representation of the Western European
instructor. Firstly, it is necessary to take into consideration the place of European
instructors in Russia, a country with a delayed social, cultural and economic
development vis-à-vis “the West”, its deliberate and forced Westernisation by
autocratic decree, its small “European” elite surrounded by a vast and backward
Russian peasant population, the limited availability of education and the position
which foreigners occupied in providing it. The first three chapters aim to provide this
necessary background.

CHAPTER 1 discusses why the employment of foreigners, such as French, Swiss, German, Scottish, Irish and English nationals, was of such paramount
importance to the class consciousness of the Russian elite. In order to achieve this, I
will give a brief introduction to the historical development of the Russian upper
classes. This chapter will concentrate on the singular position of the Russian nobility

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1 Mary Louise Pratt, *Towards a speech act theory of literary discourse*, p. 95
and gentry among other European aristocracies, particularly with regard to the Table of Ranks introduced by Peter the Great, which placed service over inherited social position, “Western” accomplishments over genealogy and titles.

CHAPTER 2 provides an introduction to the profession of the English governess, as well as personal accounts written by Englishwomen who lived and worked in Russia. Given that French and German teachers were more common in Russia than their English counterparts, my choice of English sources demands some justification. From an English point of view, the Victorian governess was an institution which did not have its equal in France or Germany, neither in historical nor in literary writings. Although a governess or a tutor may well feature in several literary works, there is, however, no Jane Eyre in German or French literature which could have caused a comparable public discussion about the plight of these “ladies in reduced circumstances” and their position in society. From a Russian point of view, Britain can be seen as the ultimate “other”. The Russian nobility travelled to France and spoke French, but Britain was talked about much more than it was known and understood. While German universities were the almae matres for many members of the Russian intelligentsia, it was Britain which held a special position in the Russian imagination. In social discourse, Britain was least incorporated into the Russian concept of ‘ours’. It was the most modernised and admired country on earth at the time, owing to its unprecedented technological advancement, the independent and powerful position of the English aristocracy, the prosperity of the country, as well as its success as a colonial power. Britain’s imperial and industrial strength lent
considerable international weight to her culture, institutions and manners, as well as to the English language itself.\textsuperscript{2} As a consequence British governesses were much in demand outside Britain for wealthy families who wanted to give their children an understanding of “what was still the world's most prestigious culture”.\textsuperscript{3}

Moreover, one of its representatives, the English governess, came to Russia with the sole intent of being a governess, unlike the majority of French and German women. Maybe as a result of that, there are at least some published records available in England. While no such sources could be found in Germany or France, the English ones provided information about these individuals’ social backgrounds, their qualifications or lack thereof, their motivations for venturing abroad to such a distant and alien country, and their experiences with their Russian families. Few governesses thought their experiences in Russia warranted any interest. Some nineteenth-century documents were produced to serve as a lesson for ladies going out to Russia, as a kind of survival guide. The majority of twentieth-century sources owe their existence to research done by Harvey Pitcher in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{4} He managed to trace a number of English ladies, then in their 80s and 90s, and recorded the experiences of these amazing women who had worked in Russia at the beginning of the century up until and during the Revolution.

\textsuperscript{2} Trev Broughton and Ruth Symes (eds.), \textit{The governess}, p. 154
\textsuperscript{3} Kathryn Hughes, \textit{The Victorian governess}, p. xv
\textsuperscript{4} Harvey Pitcher, \textit{When Miss Emmie was in Russia}.
CHAPTER 3 contains the analysis of memoirs written by members of the Russian elite who were brought up and educated by these foreign governesses and tutors. In order to be able to comment on the literary type of the foreign governess and compare it with its historical counterpart, it was necessary to analyse available historical data. Studying source materials at the Russian State Archive of Early Acts (Российский государственный архив древних актов, РГАДА) in Moscow revealed that very little material, i.e. manuscripts such as letters, personal memoirs and diaries about the childhood and upbringing of upper class Russian families, had been classified. Therefore, an extensive archival study of historical material on foreign instructors would greatly exceed the scope of this dissertation. There is a great deal of unresearched material not only in major archives in Moscow and St Petersburg, but also in provincial towns. For example, the State Archive of Tver Oblast’ (Государственный архив Тверской области, ГАТО) does hold manuscripts from the local nobility, in which among many other issues private education and foreign staff are discussed. The existence of these items in Tver allows the assumption that a great deal of similar material is to be found in other provincial centres with a strong historical presence of country estates and noble families, e.g. Smolensk, Tula, Kaluga, Tambov, Saratov, Chernigov, Simbirsk etc. One such collection of personal letters, written by Ol’ga Aleksandrovna Tolstaia-Voeikova,5 has recently been published.6 It

5 Ol’ga Aleksandrovna was born into a noble family in Simbirsk in the middle of the nineteenth century and writes to her daughter, son and grandchildren who had emigrated to Manchuria after the Civil War. These letters were eventually brought back to Moscow and are now being edited by Ol’ga’s great-granddaughter, Véronique Jobert.

is known by oral communication that Jobert’s next volume of letters will contain repeated references to the family’s Swiss governess.

Considering limitations of time and resources, it seemed prudent to turn to the Russian State Library (Российская Государственная Библиотека им. Ленина, РГБ), the Department of Manuscripts (Научно-исследовательский отдел рукописей, НИО Рук.), and the Department of Rare Books, also known as the Book Museum (Научно-исследовательский отдел редких книг, Музей книги, МК) in my search for already published source texts. The search was facilitated by the use of Zaionchkovskii’s bibliography, История дореволюционной России в дневниках и воспоминаниях под ред. П.А. Зайонchkовский, М.: Изд-во «Книга», 1986, which provided the majority of sources actually used in this study. The bibliography consists of 11 volumes and contains texts from the fifteenth century through to 1917. The following headings were chosen to select source texts:

Европейская Россия, классы, сословия, социальные группы, положение, быт, права, дворянство, семинарии и училища, домашнее воспитание, начальное образование, домашнее образование, подготовка учителей, внешкольное образование и воспитание.

[European Russia, social classes, living conditions, customs and traditions, the nobility, seminary and other schools, upbringing of children, primary education, home education, teachers’ training, upbringing and education outside school].

- 6 -
Only texts from the two hundred years before and leading up to the 1917 Revolutions were of interest for this study. This period covers the rise of the country estate under Peter the Great, its golden age during the reign of Catherine II, its gradual demise in the nineteenth century, to its collapse in 1917, together with the Romanov dynasty and Tsarist Russia. This was the time when country estates were the seats of the Russian nobility, which provided a visible testimony of Russia’s emulation of, fascination and preoccupation with Western influences, ideas and education. As was mentioned before, the education of the landowning nobility would have been unthinkable without Western Europeans. Therefore, the employment of foreign governesses and tutors corresponds to the life span of the Russian estate. The 37 source texts selected provided information on 79 private instructors, of whom 34 (or 43%) were male, and 45 (or 57%) were female. The spread of authors was as follows: 9 (or 24%) were born in the eighteenth century, 19 (or 51.5%) in the nineteenth century, 2 (or 5.5%) in the early twentieth century, and 7 (or 19%) provided no definite information about their date of birth.

Among the authors of these texts are undistinguished members of the Russian nobility who documented their childhood, adult life and careers for their families and descendants. Such a woman, for example, is Natalia Grot (1900), who wrote her Воспоминания для детей и внуков [Memoirs for the children and grandchildren]. However, one also comes across some famous members of Russian society, e.g.

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7 Наталия Петровна Грот. Из семейной хроники. Воспоминания для детей и внуков, Санкт Петербург: Издание семьи, 1900
Tatiana Petrovna Passek née Kuchina (1931), writer and aunt of Alexander Herzen, or Princess Dashkova (1876), the president of St Petersburg Academy of Sciences from 1783-1794. The main focus of my research was directed to the following issues: the family background of those who employed foreign governesses (their genealogy, rank, status and wealth); their upbringing and education (home education, personal tuition, home school, boarding school); the employment of governesses and tutors, both Russian and foreign, and their involvement with the education and Westernisation of the Russian nobility; the representation of these foreigners and attitudes towards them; their position in the household; their financial remuneration; their responsibilities, methods of teaching and supervision. All these issues were helpful in the process of gaining an overall insight into the relationship between Russians and foreigners, and in facilitating a textual analysis.

The second part of the dissertation deals with the representation and the image of the foreign governess and tutor in Russian literature. The Western Europeans as described in personal memoirs and diaries will serve as a reference point. This requires a close reading of novels, short stories and plays to determine how these characters are produced, and what functions they perform, in literary texts. I posit that the foreign governess and tutor are the creation of Russian literary discourse and represent a literary type serving as “the other” to complement the detailed portrayal of the Russian protagonists. In order to support this argument, I have selected 22 literary

8 Т.П. Пассек, Из дальних лет. Воспоминания, Москва-Ленинград: «Академия», 1931
9 Е.Р. Дашкова, Воспоминания княгини Е.Р. Дашковой, писанные ею самой. 3-е издание, Лейпциг: Э.Л. Каспрович, 1876
texts from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. As Claude Lévi-Strauss put it, the two options are “either to study many cases in a superficial and in the end ineffective way; or to limit oneself to a thorough study of a small number of cases, thus proving that in the last analysis one well done experiment is sufficient to make a demonstration”. My choice of data and literary texts are the result of what Suleiman termed as “personal preference, professional intuition, and pure chance” which “presides over any activity that has literature as its object”. It is also a continuation of work begun for my Bachelor and Masters dissertations, which were written on “The country estate as a setting in Turgenev and Chekhov” and “The representation of Germany and the Germans in Turgenev’s novels and short stories”. Unsurprisingly, Turgenev’s and Chekhov’s works again constitute a large part of my primary sources, together with many of Russia’s most established authors. It seems that central issues such as the presence of foreigners on the estate, the education and identity of the landowning gentry are most often addressed in the most prominent texts of the Russian canon. These texts serve as a representative selection with no claim to completeness. While the historical part of my thesis follows the 200-year history of the country estate from the early eighteenth to the early twentieth century, the literary texts concentrate on a shorter time period from works written by Fonvizin to Kuprin.

10 See appendix I for a list of primary literary sources.
11 Claude Lévi-Strauss, “Social structure”, p. 141
12 Susan Rubin Suleiman, Authoritarian fictions, p. 17
The role and influence of literature in Russian society was immense. Russia was a bureaucratic, militaristic, autocratic state, in which the evolution of a civic society did not develop along European patterns, but lagged several centuries behind similar developments in many Western European countries. There was no powerful middle class or bourgeoisie who strove for social, political and economical advancement. The thin layer of the educated upper-classes and the emerging разночинцы (raznochintsy, men of 'various ranks') of the second half of the nineteenth century were vastly counterbalanced by a large, illiterate peasantry. Heavy censorship and policing prevented open discussions of social issues, and few people were allowed to travel abroad, or had the necessary means to do so. Russian literature filled a gap providing a forum for fictional characters to act out problems that could not be discussed elsewhere. Belinskii endorsed and propagated the idea that “the treatment of political themes was a requirement for aspiring novelists”. In particular, he extolled the virtue of «поэзия реальная ... истинная и настоящая поэзия» ['real', true and genuine literature] which reproduced life «во всей наготе» ['in all its nakedness'].

Many Russian authors writing in the classic realist style followed Belinskii's ideal and claimed to present a truthful image of objective reality, with a certain amount of condensation, simplification, and generalisation. Suleiman argues, however, that the classic realist novel is unfaithful to reality. Its omniscient narrator

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13 Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to the classic Russian novel*, p. 69
14 Белинский, В.Г. Полное собрание сочинений, т. 1., с. 267
15 *The Cambridge companion to the classic Russian novel*, p. 193
disguises his (for it is nearly always a ‘he’) own psychological and social position, and its content is linked to an unspecified “thesis”. Instead of aiming to produce an impartial observation, this “roman-à-thèse” presents a distorted image of the world, which has been constructed with a demonstration in mind. “To support the thesis, one must ‘trump up’ characters and situations, and exaggerate, slant one’s observation”. 16 The “thèse” examined in this study is that ‘Russia is European’ which is the literary processing of Catherine II’s famous dictum: «Россия есть европейская держава»17 [Russia is a European state]. The importance of this idea in the Russian consciousness is revealed in the enormous amount of writing it generated which shows the inherent insecurity underpinning this assertion.

Russian authors attempted to define their country’s position among European civilisations by drawing upon the contrast to “the West”. The West in this case constitutes a mental image of what Russians perceived to be Western European characteristics, customs, philosophical ideas, traditions and culture. This imaginary idea was often applied indiscriminately to several Western European countries, without taking into consideration the differences between individual Western European nations and their inhabitants. It is a common literary device of the roman-à-thèse to stress some features of characters in the narrative process, while others are ignored. By juxtaposing Russians and representatives of “the West”, i.e. foreign tutors and governesses, authors aim to secure or define the civilisational status of

16 Susan R. Suleiman, Authoritarian fictions, p. 4
17 Наказ, Гл. I § 6. This dictum was part the ideas for the improvement of the country’s legal system, called “The Instruction”, which Catherine II wrote in 1767.
Russians by virtue of debunking non-Russians. These minor characters are essentialised: they are used as signs, ideas and types, rather than being represented as human beings. Certain aspects of their behaviour get exaggerated or obliterated, highlighted or silenced. In general they are shown to be ridiculous and lacking in psychological depth. This portrait, however, shows only selective facets of Russian literature’s foreigners and is not supported by historical evidence.

CHAPTER 4 discusses the origins and the development of the foreign instructor as a type in modern Russian literature. It identifies the various characteristics which feed into the literary treatment of this profession, and how they change (or in some instances remain the same) in the works of writers from Fonvizin to Kuprin. The discussion will not adhere to a strictly chronological approach. As it is following the construction and the evolution of the type of the foreign governess and tutor, it will focus on the assessment of the components which make up the image that the literary material presents. The elements involved in the typecasting of foreigners include the actual profession (which ties in with chapter 2), the social background of these educators, their methods – or lack of these – in teaching, their nationalities, how these characters acquired a negative image and how such an image was perpetuated throughout the nineteenth century.

One conspicuous element of these stereotypical figures is their marginal nature. As was mentioned before, with the exception of English literature, the profession of the governess or tutor does not appear with great frequency in
prominent texts of the canon. In the works where they do appear, however, they feature as protagonists and are positively depicted as, for example, Luise A. Gottsched’s *Die Hausfranzösin*, Karl T. Koerner’s *Die Gouvernante*, Arthur Schnitzler’s *Therese*, Henri Troyat’s *La gouvernante française*, or Der Hofmeister by Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz. In Russian literature they are generally minor characters, who are rarely allowed to have a personal voice, and whose points of view never get the opportunity to inform or guide the narrative.

CHAPTER 5 investigates the subordinate nature of these characters and the role they fulfil in the text. In her book *Authoritarian Fictions* (1983) Suleiman classifies the functions of minor characters and splits them into four groups: qualifying, syntagmatic, interpretative and actantial. My analysis revealed that three out of Suleiman’s four categories proved to be useful in the study of my literary material. Suleiman’s actantial function deals with the set of actions which determine the general role of a character in a story. This category was not appropriate for my work, owing to the fact that governesses and tutors hardly ever do anything, which corresponds to Mirsky’s claim that Russian literature prefers character development over development of plot, as well as psychological depth and social, political and cultural statements over action. The other three functions and their relevance for the literary texts under examination will be explained and discussed below.

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18 All examples are taken from Irene Herdach-Pinke, *Die Gouvernante, Geschichte eines Frauenberufs*, pp. 11-47
19 Prince D.S. Mirsky, *Modern Russian* literature, p. 14
Throughout the thesis I have quoted any sources in the original Russian, together with an English translation. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own. For the transliteration of names and single words I have adopted the style used in the Slavonic and East European Review.
This thesis is the result of an interdisciplinary project which has drawn upon existing scholarship in the following areas. Firstly, the Russian country estate was a symbol of Westernisation in the Russian interior which was otherwise barely touched by European influences, and a place where Western and Russian culture came together. Moreover, it was also the location where children usually grew up and received their primary education. Secondly, sources on education and academic institutions were investigated in order to be in a position to assess the impact and importance of foreign governesses and tutors on the upbringing of Russian children. Thirdly, it was necessary to research the profession of the British governess in general. This led to the study of English, Irish and Scottish women who ended up teaching in Russia. Texts from these three areas of historical research provided the basis for my analysis of personal memoirs and diaries written by members of the Russian nobility. Finally, I consulted academic writings on foreign characters in Russian literature, concentrating on the pattern of typifying nationalities, such as German, French and English. All four categories will be discussed below.

The most comprehensive work on the country estate in Russia by a Western scholar is undoubtedly Priscilla Roosevelt's Life on the Russian Country Estate. It presents a detailed social and cultural portrait of the houses and their inhabitants and

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deals with the beginnings of estate life in Russia in the eighteenth century until its physical demise in 1917. Roosevelt argues that there was a great rift between the peasants and the gentry. The estate did serve as a meeting point between the two cultures, which came together when celebrating Orthodox ceremonies or hunting, yet they remained clearly distinct, separate entities. The monograph claims that the Russian peasant village was entirely different from its English counterpart. In England, the villages were an integral part of the estate, while in Russia the gulf between the two remained deep. Roosevelt stresses that serfdom, the peasantry and peasant culture were clearly the indigenous “Russian” element on the country estate, while its architecture, appearance and its (to various degrees) culturally Europeanised inhabitants constituted the “Western” element. 21 Thus, it was a world full of contrasts and paradoxes, and the book maintains that “the country estate was a Russian attempt to replicate virtually over night a way of life that elsewhere had developed over centuries”. 22 The author asserts that these contrasts and paradoxes inherent in the country estate were in themselves a reflection of the anomalies of the Russian nobility and the problems it faced in determining its cultural sense of identity.

By comparing Russia and Britain, Roosevelt determines that, while the English aristocracy and its estates served as a model, were widely envied, emulated and aspired to, the highest stratum of the Russian nobility never became entirely natural country dwellers. These rich grandees largely used their houses in the country

21 Apart from the estate’s architecture, Roosevelt lists further externals of Western European culture, such as dress, interior décor, fine and decorative arts.
22 P. Roosevelt, p. 3
as a summer residence, and as a carefree living place for children and women. The ‘real’ life happened in St Petersburg and at court, while “exile to the estate” was considered a punishment.\(^{23}\) Roosevelt elaborates on the great differences between the nobility and the gentry and how both experience country life on their estates. While the poorer landowners had no choice but to reside on their estates all year round, the rich nobility used their estate as a status symbol to display their rank, wealth, and level of cultural sophistication. For the latter, the estate was the setting for a rich cultural life, which provoked and provided material for such diverse cultural phenomena as romantic poetry, Decembrist plans for reform, the debates of Slavophiles and Westerners, and much of Russia’s great art, literature and music.\(^{24}\)

According to O.S. Murav’eva\(^ {25}\) in \textit{Как воспитывали русского дворянина}, the most distinguished representatives of Russian culture were those who were not only at home in St Petersburg salons, but equally comfortable with peasants in the village or on the marketplace. Contrary to Roosevelt she claims that, unlike the intelligentsia, the gentry had no problems in their relationship with “the people”. This was due to the fact that they were part of the same culture, coming into contact with each other in the army, but more often on the country estate. Especially religion and religious festivals served as common ground.

\(^{23}\) The most famous of all Russians ever exiled to his family estate was, of course, Pushkin.
\(^{24}\) P. Roosevelt, p. 318
\(^{25}\) О.С. Муравьева, \textit{Как воспитывали русского дворянина}, Москва: Linka Press, 1995
In *Мир русской усадьбы*¹⁶ Ivanova specifies the many functions of an estate: it acted as a socio-administrative, agricultural-economic and cultural centre. However, she calls it, first and foremost, the happy world of childhood. Ivanova goes on to describe one of the most successful home schools in Russia, organised by Fedor Vasil’evich Samarin for his children. It revolved around the Frenchman Pageau (Пажо), who stayed with the family for seven years. Pageau devised a system of ‘complete education,’ which was based on the classical curriculum, i.e. the study of modern and classical languages, and incorporated the pedagogical ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, focusing on the physical, moral and intellectual development of the children. Other works in Russian, such as G.P. Miller’s *Судьба одного имени*²⁷; N.F. Gulianitskii’s *Архитектура русской усадьбы*²⁸, and N.M. Moleva’s *Усадьбы Москвы*²⁹ tend to focus on the architecture of the buildings, on the gardens and other decorative structures such as pagodas, churches, conservatories, ponds, bridges and windmills etc., as well as on other descriptive facts pertaining to the way of life on the country estates of the rich nobility. These articles and monographs rarely discuss the social, cultural and educational significance which these ‘nests of the gentry’ had on Russian life, society and culture in general.

In order to assess the role of governesses and tutors and the extent of their involvement in the upbringing of the Russian upper classes it is necessary to

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²⁷ Г.П. Миллер, «Судьба одного имени», *Исторический вестник*, том 86, №. 12, с. 1072-81. Санкт Петербург, 1901
investigate the forms of education available in Russia. N. D. Chechulin's work on
Воспитание и домашнее обучение в России в XVIII в. focuses especially on the
various types of schools in Russia, starting with the Slav-Greek-Latin Academy and
seminary schools, state schools and private пансионы [pansiony, boarding schools].
The first state schools were гимназии [gimnazii, grammar schools] for the nobility
and cipher or garrison schools for the other ranks. Chechulin highlights to what extent
and why гимназия proved to be so unsuccessful at the beginning of the eighteenth
century, and how private boarding schools attempted to make up for them, to some
extent at least. Although they were quite numerous in St Petersburg and Moscow,
there were no пansiony in the provinces until the late eighteenth century. Furthermore,
the nationalities of the pupils as well as the teachers in these boarding schools were
predominantly non-Russian. Chechulin gives one of the reasons why home education
in Russia was ubiquitous. Young noblemen had to produce some evidence of
schooling upon entering state service, usually the military, which was obligatory.
Their parents could be threatened with exile to Orenburg, while the young men might
be excluded from the officers’ rank, having to spend the rest of their lives as simple
soldiers. They were also denied the right to get married. Given that the failure to
educate their sons could lead to severe punishment for members of the nobility,
combined with the acute shortage of schools and Russian teachers, the employment of
foreigners to educate their children at home was almost inevitable.

30 Н. Д. Чечулин, «Воспитание и домашнее обучение в России в XVIII в.», Дела и дни,
исторический журнал, книга первая, Санкт-Петербург, 1920
31 Chechulin cites figures of student numbers dropping from 112 in 1726 to a mere 14 students in
1730.
32 Н. Д. Чечулин, с. 101
Like Chechulin’s article, Jan Kusber’s *Eliten- und Volksbildung im Zarenreich während des 18. und in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* presents a comprehensive study of education in Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, based on extensive statistical material. Kusber’s data also includes the number of state and private schools and students (male and female) and to which social class they belonged, as well as the costs of various types of education. Kusber, however, takes the subject further. He depicts the typical education of an eighteenth-century young Russian nobleman, which started in the nursery, moved on to the guidance of various foreign tutors on the country estate, was followed by several years in a cadet corps or a *pansion*, and finally led to state service. The quality of private tutors was extremely varied, and Kusber points out that it was a well-known fact that some Parisian coachmen ended up working as French tutors in the Russian provinces. In the second half of the eighteenth century, these people became a recognisable source of sarcasm and ridicule in Russian literature. Attempts were subsequently made to improve home tuition. Already Empress Elizaveta Petrovna passed an *ukaz* [*ukaz*, that is, a decree], in order to scrutinise the teaching of foreign governesses and tutors. This incompetent form of Europeanisation by means of home tuition with unqualified foreign instructors came to be seen as harmful and undesirable. However, her *ukaz* was wholly ineffective, especially in the provinces where there were no means to ensure its implementation.

34 Those so-called tutors, of course, provided the prototype for Fonvizin’s German teacher Vral’man in *Неопоросъ* [*The Minor*].

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The main thrust of Cynthia H. Whittaker’s book, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education: An Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786-1855*, is the educational policy in Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century and, obviously, Uvarov’s involvement therein. Uvarov, who at various times held the positions of Superintendent of the St Petersburg Educational District, President of the Academy of Sciences and Minister of Education, saw education as the means for Russia to reach “maturity”. Whittaker discusses that for Uvarov, “maturity” implied a balance of power between monarchy, nobility and bourgeoisie comparable to that of Western European countries, but – he hoped – with a Russian slant. His intention was to find a Russian system to make European education available to all, avoiding supposedly Western weaknesses such as materialism, scorn for traditions, moral chaos and self-interest. Whittaker analyses Uvarov’s educational policies under Alexander I and Nicholas I and the numerous problems he encountered. Uvarov intended to reform the comprehensive school system in the country by creating primary schools in every small town, gimnazii in every provincial capital and six universities. This was an ambitious scheme which was never fully realised because of lack of resources (money and teachers), and the vehement opposition expressed by the nobility who realised that this egalitarian education would threaten their dominant position in the state service by bringing them into direct competition with the lower classes. With regard to home education, Whittaker focuses on the reign of Nicholas I. His policies were an attempt to counteract the influence of foreign ideas (i.e.

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revolution), by encouraging the employment of Russian rather than foreign domestic tutors, and by curtailing the immigration of foreigners wishing to work in that profession in Russia. Furthermore, non-native governesses and tutors were required to obtain certificates which showed that they had passed the moral, intellectual, religious and social qualifications required.

In Очерки по истории российского образования императорской эпохи, A.I. Liubzhin considers the presence of the foreign governess and tutor most widespread in Russia during the reign of Catherine II. The demand for French tutors had began already under Empress Elizaveta Petrovna, but the later influx of French émigrés after the French Revolution made this type of education more readily available and affordable. Liubzhin claims that many of the arrivals were 'undesirables': not only were they opponents to the new regime, but also petty criminals, who had been swept out of revolutionary France by the upheavals in the 1790s. Consequently, Liubzhin argues that many of these governesses and tutors were unsuitable as teachers. Ignatieff, however, points out in his paper on the French Émigrés in Russia after the French Revolution that the 1790s brought much more educated people into Russia, as a result of which the standard of teaching actually increased. According to Liubzhin, the responsibility for doing a creditable job as teachers lay not so much with the foreigners; Russian parents after all often entrusted foreigners with the education and upbringing of their children, completely failing to

36 A.I. Любжин, Очерки по истории российского образования императорской эпохи, Москва: ученые записки Московского культурологического лицея № 1310, 2000
37 Leonid Ignatieff, "French émigrés in Russia after the French Revolution", in Bromke, A. et al. (eds.) Canadian Slavonic Papers, VIII, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966
question these people and to assess their suitability. The Napoleonic War of 1812 dented the prestige of both foreign instructors and the French language, but only temporarily. The dearth of schools for girls meant that female education remained dependent on governesses even throughout the nineteenth century. Foreign instructors never did go out of fashion until the Revolution in 1917.

In order to discuss the governess in a Russian context, it was necessary to examine the profession in general and the women who chose it. In *Tyrant or victim? A history of the British governess*[^38], Alice Renton starts by illustrating the historical development of the profession of the governess from the fifteenth century onwards. She assesses the social background of women who became governesses and why theirs was the only profession available for a middle-class/lower middle-class woman in need of a salary. The bulk of the book focuses on the nineteenth century, when employing a governess became a widespread phenomenon among the middle classes[^39]. This was the social stratum which both provided the majority of women who worked in this profession, and which increasingly required their services for the upbringing of their children. Renton attributes the rise of the career of the governess to the lack of other available ways to educate girls. An even more important reason was the fact that the employment of a governess in one’s home became a status symbol for the increasingly affluent bourgeoisie. Renton correlates the frequently inadequate qualification of a governess as a teacher with the commonly held notion


[^39]: Formerly, the traditional employer of domestic teachers had always been the aristocracy.
that the edification of girls was a matter of ‘supreme unimportance’ anyway. From that she moves on to elaborate on the awkward position of the governess in the household. She was neither a member of the family, nor part of the domestic staff, and was often unappreciated by parents and children alike. As the title suggests, Renton finally discusses the sufferings of governesses and the conflicting perceptions of the governess as either downtrodden and victimised, brutal, abusive and hated, or loved, respected and appreciated, and how these various images succeeded each other over time.

The editors of *The governess, an anthology*\(^4^0\), Broughton and Symes, go into more detail than Renton in discussing why the profession of the governess saw such a great increase in numbers in the nineteenth century. They focus on several points. Firstly, the position of women in society and in the household had changed. Especially middle class women no longer had to go out to work but could afford to live ‘like a lady’. Secondly, the spheres of men and women had become separated. Men were the sole breadwinners while women strove to make a pleasant home for their husbands and families. Thirdly, female education became more appealing to a wider spectrum of people. The schooling of girls put little or no stress on scholarly achievements. However, it had now become essential to train girls how to behave like ladies and to have the accomplishments deemed necessary to find a suitable husband. Finally, becoming a governess was the only respectable profession available for an educated middle-class woman that did not lead to an immediate loss of caste and

respectability. Broughton and Symes also discuss the position of a governess and her ambiguous relationship with her employers who were wealthier but often less well educated and lower down the social scale than she was. This could cause major problems. The position of the governess in the household could be insecure and open to exploitation while she herself faced prejudice, contempt and ridicule.

Broughton and Symes throw light on the position of the English governess abroad. They argue that Britain’s imperial and industrial strength gave considerable international value to English culture, institutions and, of course, the English language. As native speakers of English, British governesses were therefore all the more sought after. The authors also mention that throughout the nineteenth century Moscow had the reputation of being a glamorous destination for English governesses. They could find employment with the upper nobility and enjoy a rich social life as a result.

The specific conditions in which Western educators found themselves in Russia is the theme of Raeff’s *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*.41 Far from being in a ‘glamorous’ position, tutors were faced with often unruly, lazy and wilful pupils who from early childhood onwards had been left to run wild on the country estate. The task of disciplining them was therefore a difficult one which, according to Raeff, was made even harder by the fact that the children usually had the support and protection of their former nannies and дядьки [diad’ki. male domestic servants,

generally of peasant origin] and sometimes even of their parents. Raeff draws the conclusion that many tutors simply gave up the struggle and chose the path of least resistance in dealing with the children, while others turned into cruel despots. In any case, Raeff points out, tutors were central to a child’s first years of schooling, although they generally taught little more than the basics. Raeff argues that these first years comprised the only westernisation and cultural polish the nobility experienced, as service itself did not sustain the continuation of this process. Hence, at least in the eighteenth century, the limited educational experience remained an “artificial gloss.”

While focusing on The Victorian governess42 in her very comprehensive study Kathryn Hughes elaborates on many of the issues already mentioned above in various other books, e.g. the new middle class, the gradually changing definition of gentility and ladyhood and its status symbols, the working conditions of governesses and the difficulties and hardships they faced. In addition, Hughes also discusses for what purpose and how these women were turned into a literary figure. Between 1814 and 1864 the governess featured in more than 140 literary works in the English language in virtually every category and genre. Her main argument is that the transformation of the humble domestic teacher to major literary character has to be viewed in the wider process of the feminisation of the novel.43 Hughes warns of the difficulty to treat novels as a documentary source of information about the plight of governesses as the reality tended to be far more complex than conventional representation in literature. Therefore, she discusses the governess in English literature merely as an introduction

43 Ibid., p. 3
to her historical study. Her methodology is therefore directly opposite to the one used in this dissertation, which relies on historical data as a reference point for a literary discussion.

There are several works that deal with the image of certain Western nationalities in Russian literature, such as German, French, English, and even American. In those articles and monographs, the foreign governess and tutor generally get a brief mention too. The following ones were particularly useful. Maximiliane Müntjes in her *Beiträge zum Bild des Deutschen in der russischen Literatur von Katharina bis auf Alexander II* focuses on the image of the Germans in Russian literature. She considers the image of foreigners in Russia to be generally negative and attributes this to the fact that before Peter the Great the so-called немцы [*nemtsy*] were likely to be Protestants. Orthodox Russians tended to associate followers of other Christian denominations with ‘unbelievers’, ‘non-Christians’ or simply ‘godless people’. Apart from religion, Müntjes names several factors, among others envy, which led to a critical and unsympathetic attitude towards foreigners. Envy was largely the result of the fact that many men in key positions of authority in Russian society, such as the military, administration and education, were of non-Russian, and in particular, of German origin. Although this was usually the result of superior knowledge on the part of the foreigners at a time when Russia’s academic institutions were not yet fully established, this general preference was nonetheless resented by Russians. According to Müntjes, the interaction of these two ethnic

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groups resulted in distrust, curiosity and suspicion on the part of the Russians, while the Germans generally showed little interest in Russians whom – as Müntjes suggests – they considered to be culturally inferior. The historical relationship between Russians and Germans grew out of trade links and the recruitment of specialists and settlers. However, rather than learn from those foreigners and acquire their knowledge and abilities, Russians would ridicule what they did not understand.

Müntjes points out that this generally negative disposition towards foreigners became a recognisable part of eighteenth-century Russian literature that was still evident well into the next century as witnessed by Gogol’s stories. Furthermore, the literary representation of Germans, although based on actual social phenomena and impressions that existed in Russian society at the time, was influenced by prejudice rather than rational judgement. These cultural images could be very inflexible and selective, based on a few characteristics chosen at random and out of context. Müntjes draws attention to the choice of these characteristics and how they are very telling about the Russian observer rather than the foreign object of observation. Müntjes shows how Russian authors use the representation of Germans either to enhance their own self-value by focusing on issues in which Germans are perceived as inferior, or to criticise Russia’s weaknesses by presenting German characters as role models. Müntjes discussion then turns to the function and the various types of Germans, such as the petty bourgeois, the scientist and scholar, the military man, the professional, the idealist, and the tutor. She mentions Fonvizin’s negative image of foreigners, especially Vral’man in Негорослив [The Minor]. which Fonvizin uses in
order to ridicule the lack of education among the landowning gentry and their absurd preference for everything foreign, and how tutors were generally represented as negative characters while their features were exaggerated, generalised and reduced to a few individual traits.

Another source on Germans in Russian literature is Dieter Boden’s Die Deutschen in der russischen und sowjetischen Literatur. Boden claims that in the eighteenth century, Germans became the foreigners par excellence in Russia, as a result of Peter the Great’s policies, which led to a generally close interaction between the two peoples and to the presence of Germans in prominent positions in Russian society. Like Müntjes, Boden discusses the origin and usage of the word nemets and how it came to be applied to Germans only in the eighteenth century. Before, it had been generally used to encompass all non-Orthodox foreigners, although Boden asserts that the word retained some of its connotations of ‘non-believers’ and ‘barbarians’. Boden states that eighteenth century Russian literature began to engage in a “passionate and intensive discourse” with the “German theme”, which resulted in a multi-faceted and controversial representation of Germans. He also singles out the character of Vral’man in Fonvizin’s The Minor as the first German in modern Russian literature who became the embodiment of everything foreign. Boden then discusses the “insecurity of the representation” of Germans. Russian authors acknowledged Germany as the land of poetry, education and science. Yet, at the same

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45 Dieter Boden, Die Deutschen in der russischen und sowjetischen Literatur. Analysen und Perspektiven, Band 15/16, München: Olzog, 1982
46 Ibid., p. 11
time, Germans were regarded as petty bourgeois, rude and arrogant. Boden cites Gogol' as an example to show how the writer's initial admiration and glorification of Germany and Germans changed to disenchantment, rejection and ridicule, and how this change is reflected in the portrayal of his German characters. Boden mentions that a fixed part in Russian literature was the German tutor, depicted by numerous major and minor writers: as he was foreign and therefore incomprehensible he was generally ridiculed.

Although the presence of French people in Russia and in Russian literature was a very common occurrence, the only article exclusively dealing with this issue that I came across was Leonid Ignatieff's *French émigrés in Russia after the French Revolution*. Ignatieff states that the demand for French tutors was so great by the mid-eighteenth century that a great majority of foreigners employed by the Russian nobility were highly incompetent and unsuitable. It was these people that were then portrayed and ridiculed in contemporary literature. However, Ignatieff points out that even when in actual fact the quality of teachers rose, the literary image remained unchanged. Major writers like Pushkin, Lermontov, Gribedov, Gogol', Turgenev and Tolstoi continued to present their French governesses and tutors with sarcasm and ridicule, while treating them as "aliens". Ignatieff sees a possible reason for this negative image in the differences between Russian and French manners, and in the misinterpretation of national character. Considering themselves more serious and

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47 Leonid Ignatieff, "French émigrés in Russia after the French Revolution", in A. Bromke et al., *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, VIII, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966
48 Ibid., p. 127
sombre in behaviour, thought and demeanour, Russians regarded French lightness, grace and wit with disdain, interpreting it as superficial and frivolous. According to Ignatieff, the disrespectful and sarcastic portrayal of the French governesses and tutors in Russian literature is the direct result of these differences in national character traits. He claims that these instructors had a greater and more positive influence than the Russians gave them credit for. Ignatieff shows in the example of Pushkin how reality and fiction could diverge considerably. He discusses some of Pushkin’s actual French tutors (among them Comte de Montford, a well-educated, musically and artistically refined Frenchman, or another unnamed tutor who had a great talent for poetry), and Pushkin’s treatment of foreigners in his literary work, which presents a consistently negative attitude towards French governesses and tutors. Ignatieff concludes that their teaching abilities were as varied as their social and political backgrounds.

In *English and American Characters in Russian Fiction*49, Valentin Kiparsky draws attention to the fact that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Russians were not very familiar with either Great Britain or The United States. They rarely visited either country, and the presence of British or American nationals in Russia was small. However, the impact of English culture and literature was considerable, and the English way of life was greatly admired. The English aristocracy, according to Kiparsky, was both respected and hated at the same time. Kiparsky sees the reason

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for this paradox in Russia’s inferiority complex, in Russia’s awareness of being regarded as ‘barbaric’ by other, Western European, nations. The English governess as a representative of English culture and manners was generally thought of highly. Even if she personally failed to please, her methodical and systematic ways of teaching usually did not. Based on these assumptions, Kiparsky proceeds to discuss Russian national stereotypes and the English types commonly encountered in Russian literature, e.g. the British lord, the politician, the clergyman, and the governess. His examples of English governesses include Pushkin’s “Madam Miss Jackson” in Барышня-крестьянка [The Squire’s Daughter], the first foreign woman depicted in modern Russian literature, and Chekhov’s Miss Twice in ‘Дочь Альбиона’ [‘A Daughter of Albion’]. Kiparsky comments that while Miss Jackson was depicted as a neutral nonentity (unusual for governesses who more commonly tended to be either positive or negative), Chekhov’s English governess was equally atypical in her grotesque and exaggerated physical description. The more usual characteristics of an English governess included her high moral standards, her cleanliness, and her independent spirit.

There are several monographs and articles that briefly mention and discuss governesses and tutors as part of a study of individual authors,\(^{50}\) or as part of a wider

study of Russian literature. However, these discussions tend to focus on how literature creates and propagates national images, mirages and stereotypes, rather than on the governess or on the tutor. Consequently, they have been of limited use for my study and have therefore not been included in this literature review. To my knowledge there has been no previous study which examines the type of the foreign instructor in Russian literature and tracks its development throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. My contribution to existing research lies in the collation and analysis of historical data and using it as a reference point for an analytic study of Russian literature’s construction of the Western European governess and tutor.

CHAPTER 1: Education of the Russian Nobility

The Russian upper class is in its definition somewhat ambiguous. Many historians and literary critics tend to regard the terms “aristocracy” and “nobility” as synonymous. However, while this is irrelevant for most other European elites, Russia does present a singular case, especially if compared with countries such as Britain, France and Germany. Therefore, this chapter provides some background information on what I mean when I use the term “Russian nobility”, as well as on the historical development of the evolution of this social class, its unusual status and how noblemen educated their children.

The Russian nobility of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries diverged considerably from its Western neighbours. The word ‘aristocracy’ according to the Oxford English Dictionary refers to “the highest class in certain societies, typically comprising people of noble birth holding hereditary titles and offices”.\textsuperscript{52} In some societies, this elite also holds defined political powers. Whereas such historical entities like Great Britain, France, or the Austro-Hungarian Empire the upper classes could rightly be called an ‘Aristocracy’, the same cannot be said for the conditions prevalent in Russia. In Britain, France and Germany, the nobility was a homogeneous body with titles to ensure its status. They acquired special historical rights over centuries, which placed them above all other social classes. Encroachment from the monarchy on the one hand and the growing powers of the bourgeoisie on the other

hand, especially in the wake of industrialisation, had furthered a strong *esprit de corps*.

In Russia, the development of the nobility had taken another path. In can be argued that, by the eighteenth century, the use of the word *aristokratiia* as defined above was no longer appropriate for the Russian upper class. By the mid-tenth century a Kievan upper class had formed a kind of superalliance of Vikings and Slavs with Kiev at its centre and was dominated by the superior wealth and coercive power of its prince. In later centuries (from the twelfth century onwards), the Eastern Slavonic lands were divided into several principalities, which began to resemble feudal landholdings. The power of decision-making and rent collection lay with the Khanate while Muscovy was under Tatar rule; later it passed to the princes and boyar clans. Unlike in France where the old aristocracy, the *noblesse d'armes et de race*, and the newer service nobility, the *noblesse politique et civile*, managed to fuse into one coherent class in the fifteenth century, there was no such transition in Russia.

The Russian nobility was a heterogeneous group: made up of rival boyar clans, *помещики* [*pomeshchiki*, the new service nobility which developed under Ivan III]. members of the Tatar, Polish-Lithuanian and German nobilities, it did not blend together easily, nor did it manage to find a coherent voice to counterbalance the

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53 Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 34
54 The word ‘boyar’ originally meant “great man”, “rich man”, or “warrior.” ibid., p. 92
growing might of the grand prince. On the contrary, its power and traditional rights were increasingly curtailed. The existence of principalities and rival clans gave boyars the freedom to leave their master’s service at any time. With the ascendance and unifying (often repressive) tendencies of Muscovy, this tradition gradually eroded. The boyars were no longer voluntary servitors to a prince of their choice but the subjects of an all-powerful tsar. In order to strengthen and centralise the state, Ivan IV dealt the final blow not only to the boyars but also to the princes. Properties of the most influential members of the aristocracy were confiscated while they themselves were exiled, and the elite itself was turned into a service nobility, i.e. its privileges were only assured as long as they served the tsar. Peter I removed the last traditional links the aristocracy had with its past by changing its legal status and putting an even greater stress on the service aspect of the nobility.

In 1722, Peter I introduced the Table of Ranks which organised the three government services, military, civil and the court, into fourteen ranks, or "чины" ["chiny"]; the first being the highest, the fourteenth the lowest. The military took precedence over the other two, so that a simple ensign or guidon bearer ranked fourteen was considered a hereditary nobleman (see Table of Ranks in appendix). In the civil service, ranks fourteen to nine guaranteed personal nobility, and only from

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56 Ronald Hingley, A Concise History of Russia, p. 50
57 See appendix.
58 It had not been Peter I’s intention to make service to the state the exclusive prerogative of the nobility, but to correlate rank with achievement. Ability not privilege was to ensure that the military and the administration were staffed by the most able and not the richest.
rank eight upwards were civil servants considered hereditary noblemen. These hurdles were later moved upwards in the nineteenth century, so as to give the elite a more exclusive status. The Table of Ranks was not the only official bureaucratic measure which categorised professional seniority and status. There were several stages in every profession which had to be passed before one could even reach a position in the Table of Ranks. Certainly, not everybody employed in these services ever made it as far as rank fourteen. The achievement of each further step along the ascending scale of ranks depended on the length of time a civil servant had spent in the service (anything between four to ten years per rank), as well as on his estate and education. Regardless of social status, everyone was obliged to start at the bottom rung of the ladder.

As a consequence, the Russian elite were no longer free or privileged, and blood and genealogy no longer ensured automatic access to the highest stratum of society or political power. Now the nobility defined itself through its service to the state, which was the only way to move up socially. Failure to serve could even lead to capital punishment, which was simply unthinkable among the aristocracies of Western Europe. Titles without a service rank were virtually meaningless. Foreigners visiting Russia often expressed surprise about this. Romanovich-Slavatsinskii noted:

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59 No doubt Gogol' had the Table of Ranks in mind when he gave the character Akakii Akakevich in *The Overcoat* the rank of titular councillor. If Akakii had managed to move up one more rank, he would have become a hereditary nobleman.

60 Notwithstanding some minor amendments, the Table of Ranks continued to give structure to the state service and to confer noble status for almost 200 years, until its final demise in 1917.


62 Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, *Russia*, p. 310

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«В России благородный ничего не значит без ранга; [...] старшие сыновья важнейших лиц в государстве не имеют никаких прав в силу своего рождения, как пэры Англии и Франции, гранды Испании; [...] значение аристократической фамилии упадает со смертью ей главы; а имущество разделяется между детьми, наследственный титул — князя, графа или барона — ничего не значит без должности, без службы гражданской или военной».63

["In Russia, a nobleman without a rank is nothing. [...] Unlike the Peers in England and France, or the Grandees in Spain, the eldest sons of the most important personalities in the country do not enjoy any privileges as a result of their birth. [...] The magnitude of a noble family is lost together with the death of its head. The property is divided equally between all children and the hereditary title, be it prince, count or baron, is meaningless unless it is accompanied with a position in the civil or military service"].

As Wallace put it, “their dignity [...] rested not on the grace of God, but on the will of the Tsar”.64

63 А.В. Романович-Славатинский, с. 19
64 Sir D.M. Wallace, p. 314
In 1762 Peter III made an unsuccessful attempt to accommodate the country's elite by loosening the link between nobility and state service, therefore reversing Peter I's stringent laws on obligatory service. However, by that time service and nobility had almost become synonymous. Many noblemen felt it was part of their honour to serve (especially in the military), whereas for others financial constraints made service a necessity. The estate of the nobility was consolidated in 1785 when Catherine II created the Charter of Nobility. With its introduction the number of newcomers reaching noble status declined. While the number of nobles in the late seventeenth century had featured about 3000 families, there were about 120,000 hereditary nobles under Catherine II. The census of 1858 gives an approximate number of 610,000 people, men, women and children, as belonging to the hereditary nobility of European Russia, out of a general population of about 40 million. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, the ruling classes made up a mere 1.3% of all Russians.

The introduction of the Table of Ranks did not lead to the creation of a new elite overnight. In fact, at the beginning it favoured the established families who were in a better position to follow the required procedures. However, it did open up the upper class for the sons of priests and petty civil servants, which eventually changed the genealogical make-up of the Russian nobility. It also proved to be one, although

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65 Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*, p. 97
66 Karl-Heiz Ruffmann, *Russischer Adel als Sondertypus der europäischen Adelswelt*, p. 164
67 Terence Emmons, *The Russian landed gentry and the peasant emancipation*, p. 3
68 Pamela M. Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe 1789-1914*, p. 18
69 W.H. Bruford, *Chekhov and his Russia*, p. 76
by far not the only element which discouraged a unified feeling of identity among the
nobility.

Several issues can be held responsible for this lack of class identity. Mobility became one of the nobility’s qualifying features. This was a direct consequence of military changes introduced by Ivan III and Vasilii III in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They had reformed the command structure of the Muscovite army in order to make it more coherent and mobile, but also to counteract any possible opposition by other dominant families. Their aim was achieved by severing existing loyalties between boyar clans and regional localities, as well as by preventing the formation of new such ties. The majority of military commanders were now preferably drawn from junior boyar lineages and courtiers, whereas the members of major boyar clans received secondary appointments (e.g. guarding the frontiers). This removed the most influential boyars and princes away from the centre and their traditional strongholds and created a newer service nobility, more tractable and loyal to the grand prince.

Consequently, unlike in France and Germany, the Russian nobility did not have strong links with a particular locality or family seat, which is illustrated by the absence of Russian equivalents to the French preposition *de* or the German *von* as part of the surname. This is also partly due to the lack of primogeniture. In Great Britain, for example, manor houses or castles tend to be associated with one particular family, with the ownership passing on from father to eldest son, sometimes over a period of centuries. In Russia, estates were traditionally split among all heirs, male
and female.\textsuperscript{70} The resulting estates were soon too small to support a family and needed to be extended through the acquisition of new поместья [pomest'ja\textsuperscript{71}], which often were scattered around several districts. Continuity and the association with one particular piece of land were therefore impossible. Few estates remained in the hands of one family for more than three generations.\textsuperscript{72}

In the eighteenth century it was the service in general which kept noblemen away from their family estates and traditional life in the country. So, unlike in Britain the nobility in Russia could not seek its identity in its ancestral (formerly feudal) lands, nor were they involved in regional assemblies like in France. Catherine II strove to involve the landowning nobility in local decision-making bodies. However, these attempts failed, owing to the fact that such positions were considered burdensome while they offered little in terms of remuneration, real power or status.\textsuperscript{73}

Wealth was another factor which determined social status, shaped the perception of class allegiance and further decreased a feeling of homogeneity among the nobility. The Russian upper or serf-owning class was made up of several well-defined strata, which had little interaction with each other. It was a singularly Russian characteristic to measure wealth in души, 'souls' or male serfs, living on an estate. Unlike in other European countries, there was no 'old' wealth. Once an estate had

\textsuperscript{70} P. Roosevelt, p. 17
\textsuperscript{71} Pomest'ye was the land awarded for services rendered to the State. The value of a pomest'ye was measured in the number of serfs that came with the land.
\textsuperscript{72} A.V. Романович-Славатинский, с. 26
\textsuperscript{73} Daniel Field, The End of Serfdom: Nobility and Bureaucracy in Russia, 1855-1861, p. 19
become unprofitable,\textsuperscript{74} additional income (e.g. in the form of a \textit{pomest’ye} or serfs\textsuperscript{75}) could only be acquired directly as a gift from the tsar or through state service. The third or bottom layer made up 84\% of the total of all serf owners. These poor smallholders owned fewer than 100 male serfs and were ‘gentry’ by official designation only.\textsuperscript{76} They lived in complete isolation in the provinces, far removed from Western influences and technological and social changes. Their “estates” were often mere huts and their lifestyle was not far different from that of their own peasants. The second class or \textit{помещики средней руки} [petty nobility or lower gentry] comprised the landowners who had between 100 and 500 souls. Among this group were several who could trace their names back to Riurik and even bore the title \textit{князь} [\textit{kniaz’}, prince], yet, they had become too impoverished to retain their superior status.\textsuperscript{77} They had close provincial ties as well as service connections in the capitals and constituted the stratum of society that was most commonly featured in nineteenth-century Russian literature. Theirs were the more familiar “houses with a mezzanine” in the provinces. For instance, Pushkin’s family estate \textit{Mikhailovskoe}, a small wooden house “в глухой” [in the depth\textsuperscript{78}] of Pskov Oblast’, consisting of only four rooms, does not compare to the palaces close to Moscow or St Petersburg of the

\textsuperscript{74} This was usually as a consequence of dividing ‘souls’ among all heirs and, as was mentioned above, it generally happened every few generations.

\textsuperscript{75} For example, Boris Sheremetev received a gift of 12,000 serfs for his military victory at Poltava.

\textsuperscript{76} T. Emmons, p. 5. 44\% of serf-owners had estates of less than 21 souls. Ibid., p. 4

\textsuperscript{77} А.В. Романович-Славатинский, с. 26

\textsuperscript{78} «В глухой, во мраке заточенья Тянулись тихо дни мои Без божества, без вдохновенья, Без слез, без жизни, без любви.»

Stanza of Pushkin’s poem “К***”, written in 1825.
upper nobility. The latter group was composed of a mixture of old names and newcomers who had access to the court and the financial means to move in the upper circles. They led a luxurious life, owned thousands of serfs, travelled and lived in Europe, and enjoyed whatever commodities Western Europe and Russia had to offer. Their estates themselves reflected the position of their owners in society; for example, palaces like Sheremétov’s Kuskovo and Ostankino were built to live up to the glory of the court and to create opportunities to entertain members of the imperial family. These upper circles had next to no involvement in the countryside and were mainly “absentee owners” only. Thanks to the flexibility of the Table of Ranks, movement up or down the ladder was fairly easy. With dedication to service and beneficial marriages, it was possible to move into the hereditary nobility and therefore gain greater material wealth within one or two generations. However, a reversal of good fortune could be equally rapid.

Social differences were not only expressed in rank, but also in dress, way of life, polite and refined behaviour, a Western upbringing and the ability to speak foreign languages. Westernisation was a natural consequence of Peter I’s policy to

79 The Pushkin family itself, of course, was of very old boyar stock. The estate originally belonged to Ibrahim Gannibal and was passed down to Pushkin through his mother’s side of the family.
80 For example, Prince Alexander Menshikov left more than 90,000 serfs when he was sent into exile after Peter I’s death (Roosevelt, p. 16), while in the 1790s Nikolai Petrovich Sheremétov inherited 210,000 serfs from his father. Ibid., p. 42f.
81 Travelling in general was a prerogative of the nobility, and even they could not always do as they wanted. Under Nicholas I, especially during the later years of his reign after the 1848 revolutions in France and Germany, even the nobility was restricted from travelling abroad. Amelia Lyons, At home with the gentry, p. 22. Merchants needed special permission to travel within Russia, while the serfs were bound to their landlords completely.
82 Roger Anderson and Paul Debreczeny (eds.), Russian narrative & visual art: varieties of seeing, p. 42
restructure the country’s ruling elite. Most of his actions were aimed at redressing the balance of power between Russia and her enemies in the South (the Ottomans) and West (Sweden), and at transforming Russia into a great European power with her own fleet and ports on the Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas. To reach these goals Peter needed a literate elite, educated to follow the military, technological, administrative, entrepreneurial and cultural examples set by Western European countries. As is common knowledge, this involved the reorganisation of the administration along Swedish and German lines, the creation of a navy using the Dutch and British ones as examples, the introduction of compulsory education for all but the peasantry to ensure the supply of skilled and efficient native Russian servitors. The wearing of “German” dress, the shaving of beards, the appearance of women in society, and the use of French among the nobility became the most visible examples of Westernisation among the Russian upper classes. Unsurprisingly, service to the state and the servitors themselves gradually became synonymous with the culture of Russian westernisation.

Considering the initial resistance of the boyars and the Russian nobility towards Peter’s attempt to westernise the country, the acceptance of Western values was fairly swift (though superficial) among people closest to the tsar. In the provinces, however, among the lower gentry, Westernisation was much slower to follow. In the first half of the eighteenth century, it was enough to act the part of a Western European while under the eyes of the tsar. Once back on his estate, a nobleman often reverted to a more traditional life-style.
An eighteenth-century nobleman differed from the boyar princes of the past and his own lower class contemporaries by his literacy, as well as his higher level of cultural and intellectual achievements. For example, the very rich acquired a taste for dance and theatre ensembles for which they trained their own serfs. They developed an interest in abstract thought, philosophical writings, foreign literatures, and a tendency to see “the West” either as a role model and an inspiration, or as threat to “true” Russianness. Although these developments were the direct consequences of Peter’s reforms, it was the nobility itself which had achieved these transformations and fulfilled the tsar’s expectations by acting as servitors and Kulturträger\(^3\) [upholders and carriers of culture].

«Дворянин сделался человеком служащим, служащий человек должен был сделать образованным, в силу всего этого он становился блаженным.»\(^4\)

[“The nobleman had become a servitor, and a servitor had to be educated. As a result of this he became truly noble”].

The new elite was superior because of its ‘noble’ way of life, its presumption of knowledge of Western culture and its higher level of education. As was discussed above, the Russian nobility was a greatly heterogeneous social class, which had no clear legal or traditional claims to its superior position in the state. Titles, genealogy, historical rights and privileges had all been eliminated or reduced to insignificance. This insecurity inherent in its status forced the elite to look elsewhere for a unifying

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\(^3\) Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian intelligentsia*, p.81

\(^4\) А.В. Романович-Славатинский, с. 118
element, which it found in what came to be known as "Western-style" education. The danger of using education as a distinguishing feature of nobility and class identity became apparent in the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, only upper class families had enough money to pay for this kind of upbringing. A century later, however, more and more commoners were able to afford a "Western-style" education for their children, which undermined the feeling of superiority among the nobility and led to the cultural ascendancy of the raznochintsy.

Education in Russia in general was limited and usually rather shallow. The only schools in Russia before Peter the Great had been seminaries run by the church. There were about ten to fifteen of such religious schools in the whole of Russia in the first half of the eighteenth century, the most prominent of which was the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy in Moscow, \(^{85}\) founded in 1687 and alma mater of Lomonosov. Peter’s reign witnessed the opening of the first completely secular schools in Russia: Школа математических и навигационных наук [the School of Mathematics and Navigation] founded in 1701, Артиллерийская и инженерная школы [the Engineering and Artillery Schools], 1712, Морская академия [the Naval Academy], 1715, and Императорская академия наук и художеств в Санкт-Петербурге [the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences], to name but a few. Furthermore, there appeared so called цифровые школы \(^{86}\) [cipher schools], which were founded exclusively for non-nobles.

\(^{85}\) Н.Д. Чечулин, с. 96

\(^{86}\) Many of those schools founded by Peter did not long survive after his death.
This marked the beginning of a more systematic form of state education in Russia. However, between 1714 and 1722, only 93 of 1389 students managed to complete the course in the School of Mathematics and Navigation. Apparently, an official report claims, the rest of the pupils simply “ran away”.\(^{87}\) This pattern was repeated in 1755 with the foundation of Moscow University and the associated two gimnazii.\(^{88}\) To accommodate the wishes of the elite who did not appreciate having to live and study together with non-nobles, commoners and gentry were separated. Yet, even the state university “failed for decades to furnish the autocracy with an official and professional class freed from the dilettantism of the self-educated gentry”.\(^{89}\) While the children of non-noble families for the most part completed their state education, many children of the nobility did not. Unsurprisingly, this tendency was reflected in the members of staff at the university. In the second half of the eighteenth century, out of 26 professors only three were members of the nobility.\(^{90}\) Noble families were primarily concerned with the social advancement of their sons and less with actual academic achievements.\(^{91}\) Similarly, the Academy of Sciences was staffed almost exclusively by foreigners, and the pupils were for the most part either foreign or from non-privileged backgrounds, i.e. children of petty officials, soldiers and clerical staff.\(^{92}\)

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\(^{87}\) Patrick L. Alston, *Education and the State in Tsarist Russia*, p. 5

\(^{88}\) These gimnazii were intended to provide the university with home-grown students.

\(^{89}\) P.L. Alston, p. 10


\(^{91}\) Whereas for raznochintsi, academic achievement itself could lead to social advancement and was therefore taken more seriously.

\(^{92}\) In 1727, only 2.5% of pupils were members of the nobility. The rest were children of the clerical estate (45%), soldiers (20%), petty officials (18%), artisans (4.5%) and others. Alston, p. 5
Cadet corps or military academies were more popular with the upper classes, although, or maybe because, in most of these institutions military education was merely secondary. They were first introduced during the reign of Empress Anna in 1732 as a direct result of the inadequacy of artillery and engineering schools that had been founded a few decades earlier, but which had failed to give students a comprehensive education, training only non-commissioned officers. Cadet corps were closed institutions, which not only provided a military education, but could also prepare students for a political career in the civil service, depending on the personal inclination and ability of the student. The main stress lay on foreign languages, namely German and French. The curriculum included other subjects such as heraldry, genealogy, dancing, music, history, geography, jurisprudence and philosophy as well as more military subjects such as arithmetic, geometry, drawing, fortification, artillery, sword fighting and riding. The more state education concentrated on the social graces and etiquette, the more acceptable it became to noble families who were primarily concerned with social advancement. Herein lay another reason for their popularity: cadet corps served as stepping stones into the Table of Ranks, conferring the immediate status of officer (or the civil equivalent) on students upon successful completion.

93 The word 'кадэт' was taken from the French 'cadet', meaning younger, junior. This was the name given to young French noblemen serving in the military until they reached officers' ranks. http://www.ruscadet.ru/history/rkk_1701_1918/hist_0.htm (02/02/2005)

94 Geoffrey Hoskins, p. 207


96 In this respect, Russian cadet corps differed from those in other European countries such as Prussia (where cadet corps were first founded in 1659), France or Denmark. Из истории кадетских корпусов России, В.М. Крылов, Е.Н Шевелева. http://www.ruscadet.ru/history/rkk_1701_1918/1701-1730/hist_4.htm (02/02/2005)

97 P.L. Alston, p. 8
During the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, the state issued a number of ukazy on the introduction of a comprehensive school system for all classes. The publications of these statutes marked several attempts to realise Peter the Great’s vision for a state service, in which even the highest positions were reached by merit, rather than money or noble birth. Getting an education in Moscow or St Petersburg had become fairly easy and commonplace for children of the upper classes. The capitals offered a wide choice of state schools, cadet corps and private establishments, yet conditions for the poorer gentry and the lower classes in the provinces were very different. As was the case with her Western neighbour Prussia, systematic schooling had come late to Russia. However, unlike in Prussia where a liberal reform of schools and professional and standardised training for teachers turned out to be very effective, school reforms in Russia were characterised by good intentions but half-hearted implementation. By 1825, there were only 337 state elementary schools, 48 gimnazii or grammar schools, and 6 universities in the whole of Russia for a population of about 40 million people. In 1833, only 0.33 students per 1000 population ever went to secondary schools.

98 Cynthia Whittaker, The origins of modern Russian education, p. 59
99 In 1786, there were about 17 state schools and 18 private ones in Moscow. Н.Д. Чечулин, с. 99
100 By the 1840s, over 80% of Prussian children between six and fourteen were attending primary schools, a figure unmatched anywhere in the contemporary world except for Saxony and New England. As a result, literacy among all strata of the population was equally high. Christopher Clark, Iron kingdom, p. 406f.
101 This figure does not take into account the schools that were under auspices of Tatar, German or Jewish communities, or of the church.
102 There was at least one gimnaziia in each of the 42 provincial capitals, offering four-year courses. The graduates were able to work as merchants or state servants, or go into higher education at one of the universities. Cynthia Whittaker, p. 60
103 St Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Kharkov, Vilna, Dorpat. Ibid.
104 Phillip Santa Maria, The Question of Elementary Education in the Third Russian State Duma 1907-1912, p. xiii
Literacy in Russia, although already much improved, was still extremely low: between 1757 and 1808, the ability to read among Russian males rose from 19.3% to 38.3%. For females, the figures were 5.2% and 18.7% respectively.\textsuperscript{105}

There were several reasons why education in Russia proved to be such a problem. Firstly, there was a distinct lack of enthusiasm for edification. The peasantry and “obligated” classes\textsuperscript{106} were indifferent, the lower gentry in the provinces did not regard education as the key to a civilised and cultured lifestyle until the last two decades of the eighteenth century,\textsuperscript{107} and even the nobility took to education only in as far as it was helpful to further their career, not as an end in itself. They preferred to focus on learning foreign languages as a more visible (or rather audible) proof of their Westernisation, and on acquiring outward signs of “Western European” accomplishments. The neo-classicist M.N. Murav’ev-Apostol, when comparing the typical upbringing of young Englishmen and Russians, gave the following description:

“The Eton/Oxford graduate [is] a young man of refined taste, classical sensibility, disciplined mind, and civic virtue, educated on classical and native traditions”\textsuperscript{108}.

\textsuperscript{105} Jan Kusber, p. 273
\textsuperscript{106} Artisans and merchants of the lower guilds, C. Whittaker, p. 141
\textsuperscript{107} M. Raeff, \emph{Origins of the Russian intelligentsia}, p. 127
\textsuperscript{108} C. Whittaker, p. 65
This image he compared with "the bumpkin Russian, whose great pride was to chatter in French without the slightest foreign accent, fence dashingly, and dance handsomely at balls".  

Secondly, while the education schemes and school curricula, as envisaged during the reign of Alexander I, were admirable, they were also far too ambitious and impracticable. Between 1833 and 1839, only about 1-1.5% of the total budget was spent on education (5,089,000-9,149,000 assignet roubles), yet by 1848, this figure had fallen to less than 1%. Many schools had to rely on foreigners, because indigenous teachers were ill trained and few, and there were no functioning schemes in place that encouraged students to become teachers. Pay and prestige for the profession were low, and the upper classes opposed teacher-training institutes, because trainees tended to be drawn from the lower classes. Their main opposition was directed to the fact that graduates acquired rank fourteen, and thus they obtained the opportunity to move up the social scale.

Thirdly, the nobility not only blocked the training of new teachers, but also the creation of a systematic education system as a whole for anyone other than themselves. In 1809, the state secretary Count Mikhail Mikhailovich Speranskii had introduced the Examination Act. This act was meant to increase university learning

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109 Ibid.
110 Ibid., p. 134
111 To compare figures, in 1838 there were 2,500 students enrolled in teacher-training courses in France. There were a mere 200 in Russia. Ibid.
112 Uvarov, minister of education, had introduced this scheme to encourage more students into becoming teachers.
among the upper ranks (the hereditary nobility). Civil servants looking for promotion to ranks eight\textsuperscript{113} and five of the Table of Ranks now had to pass a university certificate which tested their knowledge in fifteen different subjects.\textsuperscript{114} The nobility was thus forced to take higher education more seriously than had hitherto been the case if they wanted to advance further through the ranks. A general, egalitarian education system would have threatened their privileged position within the state service, because it would have allowed anyone to receive a university education, and therefore to achieve a position in the Table of Ranks, thus challenging the existing social order. As a consequence, the nobility began to regard education as their own prerogative and used their political clout to obstruct general school reforms.

The shortage of state schools was partly alleviated by the presence of private boarding schools, or \textit{pansiony}.\textsuperscript{115} These \textit{pansiony} offered schooling of very uneven quality to the sons and daughters of the nobility. They were usually aimed at children from less privileged backgrounds, such as the lower gentry and families where the children were orphaned. It was not uncommon, however, for the nobility to send their children there as well, as the teaching was deemed to be less demanding than at state \textit{gimnazii}. The majority of them were situated in Moscow and St Petersburg, and were primarily run by foreigners, such as French émigrés or Germans.\textsuperscript{116} For example, Philippe Auguste Delesalle arrived in Russia in 1765 under Catherine the Great's

\textsuperscript{113} Upon reaching rank 8 a civil servant became a hereditary nobleman.
\textsuperscript{114} C. Whittaker, p. 63
\textsuperscript{115} Е.Д. Чечулин, с. 98
\textsuperscript{116} Of those 80 teachers working in private boarding schools in St Petersburg in 1781, 50 were German and 20 were French. Ibid., с. 99
immigration policy and was the founder of a dynasty. His descendants continued to be involved in the running of boarding schools even a century later. In provincial centres, *pansiony* appeared only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when regional reforms led to an increased presence of those types of families for whom education had become desirable.

In 1842, 65% of the 4,812 pupils attending private schools in Moscow and St Petersburg were female and 54% were of non-noble origins. For a long time, private schools or home schooling provided the only available sources for girls to get an education. The first state-sponsored school for girls in Russia was the Smolny Institute for young ladies of noble birth, founded by Catherine the Great in 1764. It was modelled on the monastery St Cyr in France, an institution for girls of impoverished noble families founded in 1686 by Madame de Maintenon, mistress of Louis XIV. The idea was to give these children an education in order to prevent them from falling into destitution and dropping out of the upper class. This would also allow some genealogical continuation within the nobility. Under Catherine, the Smolny Institute not only trained girls to become good wives and mothers, but it also sought to challenge their intellectual capacities. It lost this progressive stance under Maria Fiodorovna, wife of tsar Pavel I, who focused the main goal of the school on

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118 Н. Д. Чечулин, с. 98
119 С. Whittaker, p. 137
121 Barbara Alpern Engel, *Mothers and Daughters, Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, p. 23
preparing girls for domestic life. It was not until 1858 that girls were allowed to visit state-controlled secondary schools.\textsuperscript{122}

The preparation and schooling of boys for their future careers was generally taken more seriously than that of girls who achieved their status through the ranks of their fathers and later their husbands. Until the liberation of the serfs in 1861, children of the nobility were regarded merely as “inferior adults”.\textsuperscript{123} ‘Service’, which comprised such a major part in the mentality and lives of the nobility, was even part of childhood and began as soon as the children were deemed old enough to leave the care of their nannies.\textsuperscript{124} In this context, service meant the preparation for adulthood spent working for the state and acquiring a respectable status or rank within the system. The liberation of the serfs not only led to the peasants being “free” and to the landowners being deprived of their free agricultural labourers and economic livelihood. It also brought to an end the traditional obligations of working for the state, the balance that had existed between tsar, serf-owners and peasants, as well as the “legitimacy” for the institution of serfdom in general. The serfs worked the land. They were overseen by the landowner, who, for the privilege of earning an income from his estate and serf labour, was in turn obliged to render his own services to the state as a soldier or a civil servant. From 1861 onwards, the education of children was no longer a matter of importance to state service, but became a private matter for the

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 71
\textsuperscript{123} Jessica Tovrov, \textit{The Russian Noble Family}, p. 179
\textsuperscript{124} Nannies, although sometimes of French, German or British origin, were usually of peasant stock. They were a common part of children’s first years in Russian upper class families. Employing a serf to look after very young children does not seem to have had any connection with the position of the family in society: even very rich parents used peasant nannies.
parents. Judging by O.P. Verkhovskaya’s memoirs (1913), it also seems to have improved parent-child relationships:

«Нет больше и того страха и трепета перед родителями [...] , дети теперь ближе к своим родителям, больше живут одной общей жизнью с ними. [...] Очевидно, крепостная реформа оказала свое влияние и на воспитание детей».

[“Parents no longer engender the same fear and trepidation, [...] children are now closer to their parents and share their lives with them. [...] Apparently, the liberation of the serfs also had an influence on the upbringing of children”].

In general, the upbringing of upper-class Russian children was generally highly individualistic, depending on the financial status of the family, the location of the family estate, and the attitudes of parents towards their children. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify certain trends. For example, the first years in the lives of both boys and girls were commonly spent on the family estate under the eyes of a serf wet-nurse and nanny. Growing up in the countryside was regarded as much more suitable for children, and discipline was extremely lax or non-existent. This carefree existence usually ended at the age of around seven, and for boys, this also involved the transition from female to male supervision. Foreign instructors were employed to oversee every aspect of the upbringing and education of the children. This could often

125 О.П. Верховская, Картины прошлого, из воспоминаний детства, с. 280
126 Ю. Торов, с. 296
be a traumatic experience for the child whose life changed from relative freedom to constant supervision and a highly timetabled regime of lessons and exercises.

The responsibilities of these teachers varied, but they usually involved looking after the physical and mental well being of the child, and teaching modern languages and a whole range of other subjects. These could include the four r’s, ancient and Russian history, geography, mythology, music and dancing. In addition, girls might learn

«как женщине нужно кланяться, подавать руку, отпускать человека или, наоборот, принимать. Как себя вести, если на улице спустится чулок или что-нибудь развязется»\textsuperscript{127}

["how to curtsey, shake hands, welcome or say goodbye to guests, and what to do when their hair or some piece of clothing came undone in the streets"].

Girls were generally looked after by governesses who, in most cases, provided the only schooling these girls were ever likely to get. For boys receiving a pre-school education was a necessity. Enrolment age at cadet corps, for example, varied between ten and twelve, or sometimes it occurred even later.\textsuperscript{128} Yet, to be accepted at such a boarding school, the boys not only had to be of noble origin, but they also had to prove their ability to read and write. The overwhelming majority of these tutors and

\textsuperscript{127} О.С. Муравьева, Как воспитывали русского дворянин, с. 218
\textsuperscript{128} А.Н. Любкин, Очерки по истории российского образования императорской эпохи, с. 55
governesses who lived and studied with their charge in the family home or on the
country estate hailed from Western Europe. The only exception were lessons in
catechism or Russian grammar (if indeed these subjects were taught at all), which
were often given by Russian clergymen or students. Sometimes, tutors and
governesses remained in the same household for only a few weeks or months, and
sometimes for many years until the children were grown up. In some families,
additional teachers (Russian and foreign) came on a daily basis to study with their
charge.

These foreign instructors started to appear in Russia in the first half of the
eighteenth century and became increasingly popular, at least among the nobility. The
gentry were generally too poor to be able to afford this type of education for their
children. The first known foreign governess in Russia was looking after Natalia
Borisovna Dolgorukaia, who was born in 1714 as the daughter of a well-known and
well-respected grandee, general field marshal Count Boris Petrovich Sheremetev.129
During Peter the Great’s reign the number of foreign tutors and governesses was still
very limited. Yet, after his death, and particularly during the reign of Catherine II (r.
1762-1796), the presence of foreign teachers quickly became accepted as the norm.
This was hardly surprising, given the fact that the knowledge of French and German
(and to a lesser extent English) divided the upper nobility from the lower gentry in
Russia,130 which made the teaching of foreign languages such a matter of priority.
Empress Elizaveta Petrovna, reigning between 1741-1761, had been an ardent

129 J. Tovtro, p. 179
130 А.В. Романович-Славатинский, c. 80
Francophile and started a vogue for everything French. However, French tutors were hard to find in Russia and unattainable for all but the very richest members of the Russian nobility. This changed during the reign of Catherine II, thanks to the French Revolution:

«Распространенным явлением эти воспитатели (гувернеры-иностранны) становятся в екатерининскую эпоху, страшный революционный разгром делает такое воспитание доступным по цене для дворян небольшого достатка».131

[“The presence of these teachers, or foreign tutors, became much more common during the reign of Catherine II. The terrible chaos which followed the revolution made such an education far more affordable, even for members of the lesser gentry”].

The lack of schools and the absence of an educated middle class in Russia (which provided the majority of teachers in countries like Great Britain, France and Germany) further necessitated the employment of foreigners.

131 А.И. Любжин, с. 55
CHAPTER 2: The Profession of the Governess

This chapter gives a brief overview about the historical development of the profession of the governess in Britain. It discusses issues such as their class background, status, qualifications and remunerations, before analysing why and how these women ended up working for the Russian elite. The second half of this chapter is dedicated to personal accounts by British governesses who experienced and wrote about living and working in Russia.

The appearance of the profession of the governess corresponded with the rise of the European nobility. According to Alice Renton (1991), the actual term "governess" came into use in Britain in the fifteenth century and was comparable to the French *gouvernante*, meaning a woman who looked after the mental and physical well-being of royal and noble children, as well as their upbringing and education. As a consequence, while the employment of a governess remained the prerogative of the rich aristocracy and royalty, the number of these private instructors was fairly limited. In the nineteenth century, with the rise of the middle class, which itself was a product of the Industrial Revolution, the status of governesses changed and their number greatly increased.

"The practices of the court were slavishly followed by aspiring middle class families; a governess was a status symbol within

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132 Alice Renton, p. 7
133 In literature, the rise of the middle class was accompanied by the growing importance, if not predominance, of the genre of the novel.
the financial reach of a substantial section of society. So, like coachman, footman, and boot-boy, the governess would soon become an essential member of the household of every family of a certain income level and social status”.134

This was assisted by several social changes that took place at the same time: Firstly, the growing bourgeoisie acquired an increasing but unstable wealth: fortunes were easily made and lost. Secondly, it also changed the role of the wife and mother and the nature of the education of children.

The Industrial Revolution, with its rise of mechanised manufacturing, banking, business, commerce and science gave an enormous boost to the entrepreneurial middle classes, industrialists, bankers and businessmen. With the increase in wealth came the desire and the financial possibility to emulate the upper classes. While at the end of the eighteenth century, the newly rich who had acquired their wealth through trade, were excluded from the gentility, they themselves felt that their refined lifestyle entitled them to the status of ‘gentleman’. In the nineteenth century, the definition of gentility was expanded to include these men. As a consequence, it became possible to reach the status of gentleman if business success was paired with a display of proper dress, speech and behaviour.135 Thus, the rise of the middle class required the systematic education of the young in order to ennoble them, as well as to increase and retain the family wealth accumulated by their fathers.

134 Alice Renton, p. 35
135 Kathryn Hughes, p. 12
At the same time, gender roles were redefined. Men who could afford to be the sole breadwinners of the family needed their wives to look after the children and the house. While the men began to dress and acquire the habits and tastes of gentlemen, the women turned themselves into ladies and came to be associated entirely with wife- and motherhood and ladylike accomplishments. This in turn required a new type of upbringing for girls.\(^{136}\) The Enlightenment and the humanitarian spirit, which emanated from eighteenth-century France, had generated an interest in child welfare and produced philosophical writings on the upbringing and education of children. An excellent example of this kind of thinking is Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *Émile: ou de l’éducation* which proved to be extremely influential. The thought to provide children, including girls, with a proper, “ladylike” education was increasingly adopted even among middle class families.\(^{137}\) When educating the daughters of the family began to be seen as a means to confer gentility and status,\(^{138}\) the governess was firmly established as a phenomenon typifying the life of the middle classes. Western European women no longer taught their children themselves. Any semblance of work was frowned upon, because it endangered their newly acquired status as a “lady”. Instead, children were left in the nursery in the care of nannies and governesses, while the mother focused her attention on the well-being

\(^{136}\) The pattern for boys changed less, only that it became more widely accessible: boarding schools, where useful friendships and contacts could be made, followed by an apprenticeship in the father’s business, or, on rarer occasions, university.

\(^{137}\) For example, clergymen, manufacturers, professionals etc.

of her husband, making a proper home for him, and on entertaining in a fitting manner.

Employing a resident teacher was now considered to be the rule, as opposed to what had formerly been the privilege for the select few. Status and status symbols were vital and dictated the perseverance of the middle classes in their upward struggle. The governess was responsible for the moral, social and intellectual education of her charge, although the main prerequisite for her position was not her teaching abilities (which more often than not were pretty negligible), but her ability to transfer the qualities of a lady.¹³⁹

Despite the prevailing image of governesses as poor gentlewomen, most of them did in fact belong by birth to the middle class, although some were born into the lower middle class and saw this profession as a chance to work their way up to becoming a lady. These women, daughters of merchants, surgeons, military or naval officers, civil and governmental servants, solicitors and clergymen, had been brought up for a life of leisure and refinement.¹⁴⁰ For several reasons, many of them were forced to go and work for a living, contrary to their expectation and upbringing. Firstly, their dependency on men as bread-winners meant that a father's (in some cases a brother's or a husband's) financial ruin or sudden death could leave the women of the house bereft of their livelihood, sometimes even of their place of living.

¹³⁹ Kathryn Hughes, p. 40
¹⁴⁰ The 1848 Report of the Board of Management of the Governesses Benevolent Institution mentions these occupations most frequently. Many governesses were also either orphans or widows. Ellen Jordan, p. 66
For example, a Miss Ash from Ireland decided to become a governess in Russia when the family lost all its money. Her widowed mother had been persuaded to take out an endowment policy. However, when she too died shortly afterwards, the capital was all lost. The two daughters had to start working for a living, Miss Ash as a governess, her sister as a nurse. As women like the Ashes had been brought up too high for manual labour and wholly unprepared to go into service (for example as a maid, cook or housekeeper), “the only suitable profession for women was marriage”. As was commonly known, the only other option acceptable for a lady which would not automatically lead to a loss of caste was that of the governess.

Secondly, in the early nineteenth century few of those women could expect a way out of their misery and poverty through marriage, as women tended to outnumber men. The Napoleonic Wars, military and civil service overseas and emigration to the colonies all proved to be a drain on the number of eligible young men in England. However, even more important than the resulting gender imbalance in the population was the fact that many men decided to marry late in life, or not at all. In 1851, a quarter of all men aged thirty were still unmarried. Among the 35-year-olds, 18% remained bachelors, while the corresponding figure for 50-year-old men was 11%. A possible explanation for this delay in getting married can be found in the financial uncertainty of the time. The Napoleonic Wars led to financial confusion, and trade with the United States had become more competitive since England had lost

141 Harvey Pitcher, *When Miss Emmie was in Russia*, p. 58
142 Wanda F. Neff, *Victorian Working Women*, p. 12
143 All figures taken from Wanda F. Neff, p. 12
its monopoly.\textsuperscript{144} Before they could think of matrimony, men first had to establish themselves. Hence, not only did they tend to marry later in life, but also few of them could afford to propose to a woman who did not promise to bring a considerable dowry into the union. Those middle-class girls who had been brought up in a ladylike manner, but whose family turned out to be unable to keep them in a life of leisure, had very poor prospects of ever finding a husband. Governesses did not take up their profession out of choice, but out of necessity and as a last resort.

The governess's heyday was in the middle of the nineteenth century, when according to census figures over 21,000 women in England worked in such a capacity.\textsuperscript{145} Compared to other domestic staff employed in England at the time, this number is fairly small, but governesses tended to be somewhat of an anomaly.\textsuperscript{146} This was owing to the notion that 'ladyhood' was not wholly restricted to the nobility, but that it was a quality that could be learned. For that, children needed to be educated in accordance with the desired social status. Whatever the actual social background of a governess, by definition she was a lady, merely of "reduced circumstances". She was therefore capable of training girls how to behave in a ladylike manner. However, the very definition of a lady was based on the fact that she did not have to work for a living. Consequently, it was paradoxical that while employers were looking for 'ladies' to bring up their children, by actually employing them and paying them a

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., p. 13
\textsuperscript{145} Alice Renton, p. 86. The exact figure given here is 21,373 women employed as governesses in England and Wales in 1851. 10 years later, that figure had risen to 24,770. Kathryn Hughes, p. 22
\textsuperscript{146} In 1851, about 750,000 women were employed as domestic servants in England in a wide range of occupations. Karen Seabrook, \textit{Image and Reality: The Plight of the English Governess 1830-1860}, dissertation abstract.
salary, they lowered their status. A governess was by necessity forced to work and earn a salary, whereas her profession made it essential for her to be a lady who had no such need, unless she wanted to jeopardise her social position. Paid employment generated feelings of awkwardness and embarrassment on both sides. A governess’s work itself was not unladylike. Teaching was regarded as a natural occupation for women, and as most governesses lived in the homes of their charges, they could at least theoretically be viewed as a member of the family. In actual fact, they did not fit into the hierarchy of the household at all; the governess was neither a member of the family nor a servant.147

For the children, the governess personified discipline, constant supervision and the schoolroom; for the nanny she often was a rival, and for the middle class parents she could potentially seem to be a threat to their social status. In the households of the rich and old aristocracy, the position of the governess was easier. For these families, the governess was an old and familiar phenomenon. They had the necessary money to pay for highly capable women and make them feel comfortable in their working environment, as well as enough living space to supply them with adequate living quarters. Moreover, the upper classes could afford to treat a governess kindly. Her status as a lady did not threaten their own social standing.148 The nouveau riche, the middle classes, however, with no previous experience of live-in instructors were more likely to feel embarrassment by the presence of a governess in the house.

By definition, the governess might actually be socially superior to their own newly

147 Trev Broughton, Ruth Symes (eds.), p.79, 107
148 K. Seabrook, p. 42
acquired and still uncertain social position.\textsuperscript{149} In fact, she was usually of exactly the same class, albeit less fortunate and therefore a constant and awkward reminder of what might happen if business failed. The living and working conditions of a governess \textit{per se} did not worry anyone, but the marked contrast existing between her and other more fortunate women of her class gave rise to concern and unease.\textsuperscript{150}

The image of the governess in Victorian Britain ranged somewhere between "tyrant and victim".\textsuperscript{151} On the one hand, the governess was an ill-treated, exploited figure of ridicule, unable to induce either respect or affection in her charge; on the other hand, the totally defenceless children were left in the hands of these powerless and derided women.\textsuperscript{152} Commonly held opinions of governesses as cruel, cold-hearted and snobbish coincided with the notion that employers could be heartless, exacting and unsympathetic. However, the picture of the loved and loving, respectable and respected governess who cared greatly about her charge and retained an interest in "her" family long after she had left it is surely no less genuine.

According to Kathryn Hughes (1993),

\begin{quote}
"to try and generalise about the nature of the bond between governess and pupil is, ultimately, an impossible task."
\end{quote}

Contained within memoirs of the period can be found

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p. 43
\textsuperscript{150} Kathryn Hughes, p. 148. A more constructive result of this concern was the foundation of the Governesses Benevolent Institution in 1841, which provided: some financial securities through annuities; temporary accommodation for governesses in between situations; an opportunity to advertise for both governesses and employers, which – unlike other job agencies – was free of charge.
\textsuperscript{151} This is part of the title of Alice Renton’s book on the history of the British governesses.
\textsuperscript{152} A. Renton, p. 121
relationships characterised by every nuance of emotion from fierce love to passionate hatred, with a fair amount of indifference in between. Some autobiographies spend pages on glowing testimonials to their teachers, while others dismissed theirs in a couple of lines”.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, teacher training colleges for women were scarce. The most reputable ones to open were the following: Brighton Boarding School founded by the Reverend Henry Venn Elliot in 1836, the Governesses Benevolent Institution founded in 1841, and Queen’s College, established in 1847. Until such institutions became more common in the mid-nineteenth century, most governesses were woefully unprepared for their profession. Governesses working in Britain were expected to teach modern languages (especially French, and sometimes Italian as well), singing, music, etiquette, fancy needlework, geography, history and arithmetic, while English was obviously the governesses' greatest asset when working abroad. As they themselves were generally poorly educated, and few, if any, had had any teacher’s training or formal qualifications, it is not surprising that their pupils learned very little and retained bad memories of their days in the schoolroom. It has to be pointed out, though, that even boarding schools and ladies’ seminaries often gave an equally inadequate education. But the causes for these shortcomings should not be sought solely in the individual teachers, but in the

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153 Kathryn Hughes, p. 59  
154 A. Renton, p. 65  
155 Bea Howe, *A galaxy of governesses*, p. 11  
156 Kathryn Hughes, p. 18
generally accepted methods of teaching at the time, and the contemporary understanding of female education. Teaching, be it in a school or in a private home, consisted mainly in the learning of facts in a question and answer form, which did not encourage analytical or constructive thinking. The lack of qualifications of a governess did not matter greatly to most parents, as a girl’s scholarly education was considered to be of little consequence until well into the twentieth century. In fact, in his “Advice to Young Ladies on the Improvement of the Mind and the Conduct of Life”, the Unitarian Minister of Bath, Thomas Broadhurst, actively discourages the display of literary attainments in women. According to his notion (and, it can be inferred that this was an opinion commonly held by many men at the time), a pedantic female was very disagreeable to the opposite sex. Consequently, although governesses were often expected to teach a great many subjects, they were not supposed to turn their charges into scholars.

Most governesses were very poorly paid. Charlotte Brontë, for example, received only £20 per annum in her last employment, with another £4 being

157 A. Renton, p. 50
158 Ibid, p. 1. Parents who did care could, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, ask for a certified governess. In 1847, Queen’s College was formally opened, where governesses could gain certified qualifications for their work (W. F. Neff, p. 177). However, the teaching diploma for governesses offered by the Governesses Benevolent Institute was unsuccessful. It attracted too many women of extremely low quality, A. Renton, p. 86
159 Thomas Broadhurst, Advice to Young Ladies on the Improvement of the Mind and the Conduct of Life, London: Longman & Co., 1808
160 T. Broadhurst, p. 6
161 According to the Economic History Services, the average nominal earnings in Britain in 1850 stood at £48.74. An average yearly income of £16 in 1840 would correspond to about £11,400 in 2006. Available at: www.measuringworth.com
deducted out of that meagre sum for her laundry. In some desperate cases, governesses offered their services for nothing but bed and board, while governesses working for the nobility could earn up to £100 or more per year. More commonly though, in the mid-nineteenth century, a governess could expect a salary of about £20-40 pounds for being on permanent duty in a stranger's house. By comparison, at the same time a male tutor could earn about £84 a year, teaching one hour per day in the comfort of his own home. With their lowly earnings, governesses were often unable to save any money. Their salaries were comparable with those of other lower servants, though generally less than that of the butler, the lady's maid and the cook whose specialised talents were generally well remunerated. However, unlike other domestic staff, governesses had virtually no spare time, regular days or half-days off, no holidays, and out of their pitiful wages they had to maintain a lady-like toilette and appearance. If they were not teaching or supervising their charge, they were usually responsible for their pupil's wardrobe (cleaning, mending, even dress-making), and any other sewing that the lady of the house might pass on to them. A governess was often entirely isolated and friendless. Other servants rejected her claim to be a lady (when she had to work for money just as they did); receiving visitors or friends was not encouraged, nor were meetings with other colleagues outside the house. Regardless of these unattractive working conditions, however, the number of women looking for a situation as governess continued to rise. As their number by far

162 W.F. Neff, p. 158  
163 E. Jordan, p. 67  
164 A. Renton, p. 78  
165 Kathryn Hughes, p. 158  
166 Harvey Pitcher, When Miss Emmie was in Russia, p. 31
exceeded that of available positions, ever more desperate women were prepared to work for even less. 167

From the previous discussion of the general situation of female private teachers in England, there are several reasons that can be highlighted which encouraged a governess’s decision to look for a position abroad, including in Russia. Firstly, in nineteenth-century Britain, as was established before, the market for governesses was saturated to the full as supply outstripped demand. A governess’s chances of procuring any position, let alone a good one, were very slim, especially for a young woman with no prior experience as a governess. Whether she was looking for her first situation or was in-between employments, any period of idleness could be painful financially. Most of these women did not have any home of their own. While looking for a suitable family, they had to live in boarding houses, cheap lodgings or with relatives (if they were lucky enough to have any). As most governesses earned too little to put any money aside for these occasions, some ended up destitute, in almshouses, asylums, even in prostitution. 168 With such possible prospects to look forward to, any position, even in a country as far away and alien as Russia, would seem like an attractive opportunity.

Furthermore, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the governesses who had the greatest problems in finding a situation were those who were either totally unqualified and uncertified, or those young women who had as yet no teaching

167 Wanda F. Neff, p. 175
168 Ibid., p. 174
experience. Both could find positions in Russia: unlike in England where teaching certificates were becoming a more common requirement, in Russia official qualifications were often deemed unnecessary for foreigners.\textsuperscript{169} As early as 1757, an \textit{ukaz}, was passed to counteract the general trend by ignorant landowners to employ highly incompetent foreign teachers for the upbringing of their children. It stated that foreign teachers were required to pass an exam to prove their teaching qualities and qualifications:

«Все иностранцы, занимающиеся в России учением и воспитанием юношества, обязаны явиться на испытание в Санкт Петербурге – в Академию Наук и в Москве – в Университет'. Никто из них не имел права заниматься частным домашним обучением и воспитанием без аттестата, удостоверяющего действительность их знаний. Нарушители закона, принимающие на службу губернёр без аттестата, обязаны были платить штраф в размере 100 рублей, а сам наставник подвергался высылке за границу».\textsuperscript{170}

\textquote[""All foreigners involved in the upbringing and teaching of children in Russia are required to take an examination either in the Academy of Science in St Peters burg, or at the University in Moscow'. No one had the right to work as private tutors

\textsuperscript{169} It is noteworthy, though, that under Nicholas I., the Russian state tried to curb the influx of foreigners marketing themselves as teachers. C. Whittaker, p. 135

\textsuperscript{170} Светлана Васильевна Трошина, \textit{Губернство в домашнем образовании России первой половины ХIX века}, с. 19
without a certificate which proved that they had the necessary qualifications. Any employer who broke this law and took on a tutor without certificate was required to pay a fine of 100 roubles. The actual tutor was subjected to deportation”].

The impracticality of enforcing this decree, however, meant that it was virtually useless. The only prerequisite expected of a governess was her ability to speak her own native language. In 1912, Emma Dashwood, for example, was only twenty-two, calling herself “still quite a child”, when she started working for Boris Vasil'evich Rahl, Marshall of the Nobility and son of a general. Although she was planning to become a teacher, when she first travelled to Russia she had, in fact, no experience and qualifications at all. Indeed, many of the young women who went to Russia were encouraged by the sense of adventure the trip promised. When Emma had carefully weighed the benefits and disadvantages of working in Russia, there remained “the simple fact that she wanted to go, and was thrilled by the idea of this exciting new adventure”.

Apart from those reasons which could push a governess to leave England, there were several pull factors which made Russia a rather attractive destination. Russia was sometimes considered to be an El Dorado for foreign teachers. Salaries

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171 H. Pitcher, *When Miss Emmie was in Russia*, p. 59
172 Ibid., p. 58f.
173 Ibid., p. 3
for governesses in Russia were among the highest in the whole of Europe, which allowed these women a fair degree of financial independence and the opportunity to save enough money for their retirement; this was simply not possible in Britain. As the salary offered to her in Russia was so large, E.H. Hamilton (1861) remarks: “I intend to become rich myself, and then, oh! how gladly should I return when it was no longer as a burden”. Amelia Lyons, who writes about her experience with the Russian gentry, calls the governess “the most despised profession in Victorian England, and also, in the late 1840s, an overcrowded and ill-paid one”. While they were “underpaid and held in little esteem” in Victorian society, in Russia they could hope for a much better reception and higher status.

“Although England was regarded by Russians with suspicion and often hostility during the nineteenth century, her personal representatives were always treated with respect and even deference. Russians never entirely forgot that the English governess was a representative of one of the older European cultures and of a nation whose star was shining very brightly in the half-century up to 1917”.

For Russians, it did not matter that those “representatives” of English culture were more often than not of middle and lower middle class origin with limited education and no qualifications. For example, Emma Dashwood, who worked for various

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174 Alain Maeder, Gouvernantes et précepteurs neuchâtelois dans l’empire Russe 1800-1890, p. 83
175 E.H. Hamilton, The English Governess in Russia, p. 13
176 Amelia Lyons, p. xi
177 Alice Renton, p. 38
178 H. Pitcher, When Miss Emmie was in Russia, p. 35

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Russian families for a total of seven years, was the daughter of a Norwich baker and confectioner. Hannah Tracey, who was employed by Lev Tolstoi in 1866 for three of his children, was the daughter of a gardener, albeit a gardener working at Windsor Castle. Edith Kerby had never even been to England. She was born into the English community in St Petersburg as the daughter of Henry William Kerby, employee of the British-owned company City of St Petersburg New Waterworks Co. Ltd.\textsuperscript{179} Quite often these governesses were not actually English: a large number of "English" governesses working in Russia were in fact Irish and Scottish. Therefore, the young pupils of these "Englishwomen" often ended up with strong accents that were markedly different from the socially desirable pronunciation of English. Prince Serge Obolensky, an Oxford-educated businessman, born in Russia in 1890, remembered his Scottish governess, Lizzie Arthur:

"Her English accent could hardly have been surpassed by Robert Burns himself. The result was that I learned to speak English like some Russian branch of a Highland clan, which highly amused my English friends later at Oxford".\textsuperscript{180}

There were other factors, which were unique to the situation in Russia and made the country an advantageous destination for foreign teachers. For example, the size and life-style of the Russian nobility could strongly appeal to foreigners looking for a situation. The group of people holding hereditary noble status in Russia was much larger than in most other European countries, and therefore the number of

\textsuperscript{179} All three examples are in taken from H. Pitcher's \textit{When Miss Emmie was in Russia.}

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid, p. 96
potential upper-class employers was also greater. This was combined with the fact that the nobility required what Russian society construed as a 'Western education' in order to qualify for membership among the cultured elite. It made the employment of a large number of tutors and governesses inevitable. As there were few educated women in Russia until well into the second half of the nineteenth century, foreign governesses had little competition. As a rule, working conditions were also better than in England. It was not unusual to find several governesses, French, German and English, residing simultaneously in a noble family. 181 While a governess in a typical middle-class English home was alone, isolated and always on duty, with wages that were too little to provide for old age, governesses in Russian upper-class households could often share the duties of teaching and looking after the children. As was said before, they were also much better paid. The probability of finding a situation in a well-off upper class family was good, and there was even a chance of working in a family of the high nobility, whose luxurious and extravagant life-style was well known outside Russia. Adelaide, the English governess described by E.H. Hamilton, had a Swiss maid to look after her. 182 Marguerite Bennet, generally called Scottie because of her nationality, worked for the family of a wealthy railway entrepreneur, Nikolai Karlovich von Meck. 183 Scottie herself was the daughter of a lawyer and had had a number of professional experiences before she came to Russia. For example, she worked in her father's office, became the secretary to a stockbroker, started a

181 Amelia Lyons, p. 9
182 E.H. Hamilton, p. 28
183 The family was descendent from a Teutonic Knight Templar. Nikolai Karlovich's father, an engineer and builder of railways, was the first one of the family to settle permanently in Russia. His mother was the Madame von Meck who kept up a close friendship by correspondence for many years with the composer Tchaikovsky. H. Pitcher, When Miss Emmie was in Russia, p. 63
university degree in French and History in Edinburgh and worked at the Oceanographical Laboratory with Dr William Speirs Bruce, the Scottish Arctic explorer.\textsuperscript{184} By comparison, her life with the von Mecks was easier and more glamorous. There were a German and a French tutor, as well as another French governess working alongside her. The consideration and care her Russian employer took with her is expressed in the following incident. Scottie was invited to accompany the von Mecks to the high-profile Court Ball at the Nobles’ Club in Moscow. When Madame von Meck felt unwell on the very night of the ball, which Scottie had been looking forward to for weeks, Nikolai Karlovich exclaimed: “Scottie's not to be cheated of her ball. I shall take her myself”.\textsuperscript{185} The contrast to an overworked, overlooked and lowly paid governess working in an English middle class home was stark.

English governesses were also fortunate that nineteenth-century Russia had an increasingly growing demand for English-speaking teachers. In the eighteenth century, Empress Elizaveta Petrovna’s Francophilia had encouraged the employment of French tutors,\textsuperscript{186} although they only began to be widespread during the reign of Catherine the Great, when the ability to speak French became \textit{de rigueur}. To a large extent, this was the result of the French Revolution. As was noted before, many refugees, among them educated laymen and priests, came into the country in the wake

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., p. 61f.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., p. 66
\textsuperscript{186} The quality of these French (and to a lesser extent German) teachers was often appalling. The demand to learn French was great, so that many wholly unsuitable people were employed to teach Russian children. Their only necessary qualification was to be able to speak French, but even that most Russians were unable to verify, not knowing anything about the language themselves.
of upheavals in France. To hire a Frenchman or woman became affordable even for families of the lesser nobility and the landowning gentry. French was the language of the salon and the ball-room, while German tended to be regarded as the language of commerce. The presence of foreign tutors and governesses in Russian upper class households reached its peak in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They did not tend to work for the bourgeoisie and the professional classes, however, until the last few decades of the nineteenth century. The importance of French-speaking governesses began to wane after the Napoleonic war in 1812, when emerging nationalism was paired with anti-French feelings. This development accelerated even more with the decline of the country estate, the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, the growing impoverishment of the nobility, the emergence of the nouveau riche, and the spread of public education. The knowledge of French which had been so exclusive and such a sure sign of noble status in the eighteenth century suddenly became more common. “English, being less widely spoken, was in a good position to take over as the fashionable, exclusive language” of the upper class. Not surprisingly, English governess gradually became very sought after in Russia by members of the elite, including the Royal Family. For example, a Scotswoman, Helen Pinkerton, was governess to Nicholas I’s third son, the Grand Duke Nicholas, while Miss Eager, an Irish nanny and governess, looked after the four Grand Duchesses, daughters of Nicholas II.

187 А.И. Любжин, с. 55
188 H. Pitcher, When Miss Emmie was in Russia, p. 33
189 Ibid., p. 8
190 Ibid., p. 51
Many women did not set off without having some idea of their destination. There seem to have been several ways in which governesses were “recruited” from England. At times, English people who were already living in Russia acted as mediators and agencies. In the case of a Miss Handcock, a 24-year-old who probably left for Russia in 1849, the transfer was arranged by Dr Edward Law, chaplain to the English Church in St Petersburg and acting Member of an absent committee for a girls' school there. The school seems to have been designed for the children of Englishmen living and working in the Russian capital.

“The duties of Miss H. would be to assist Mrs W. [Watkins] during the School Hours, a part of which is employed in needle work, & taking Lessons in Russ & German in an adjoining room – to walk out with the Girls, to exercise such general superintendence as may be deemed necessary”. [...] “The fixed salary is £50 pr an: but it is not impossible that an addition may be made hereafter should we find our School prosper, & Miss H. a thoroughly competent person; but her friends may rest assured that she will find herself associated with those who will be disposed to act kindly & liberally towards her”.191

The reliability of Dr Law's letter may be questioned, however, when seen in the light of his next statements:

“Though a resident in a foreign country Miss H. will find herself so completely surrounded with her own countrymen that

191 Liverpool Governesses Benevolent Institution, letter to the Reverend O. Fielden, Weston Rectory, Shifnal, Shropshire, July 14, 1849. MLA/4459/K/02/003, pp. 435-437
she will scarcely be aware of the change. The Climate, with common prudence, I have found remarkably healthy, & I speak from the experience of 29 years".  

It is rather doubtful that Miss Hancock would have failed to notice a difference between England and Russia; besides, St Petersburg is hardly famous for its healthy winters. Miss Hancock seems to have taken on the position, but what became of her is not known.

Another example would be the case of Edith Kovalsky (née Sinclair) from Norwich. She was the eldest of nine children, and when she did not get on with her new step-mother, she ran away from home. In the late 1890s, she finally ended up working as a nanny in an English family, and when her employer decided to move to Russia, she accompanied them. There, she fell in love and married a Russian naval officer and began to act as an unofficial employment agency for relatives and friends. For example, she made arrangements for three of her sisters to come out to Russia to work; and Emma Dashwood (mentioned above) was one of several family friends who also found a position as a governess in Moscow after first having worked for Edith herself. This type of arrangement does not seem to have been an exceptional one either. In the 1830s, a Mrs Scott ran a 'clearing house' for English Quaker and Methodist girls in Moscow. Her son Alexander married the aunt of Nikolai Leskov.

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192 Ibid.
193 H. Pitcher, *When Miss Emmie was in Russia*, p. 1f.
194 Ibid., p. 7
It is noticeable that many of the girls who came to Russia to work already had some sort of connection to the country. In some cases like the Kovalskys/Sinclairs, an older sister had been abroad before and could therefore recommend a Russian family with which introductions had already been made. In other cases, it was a brother or an aunt who had previous personal experience in Russia, for example, Rosamond Dawe. In the early 1900s, her aunt Margaret had worked in St Petersburg, first as a governess, then at the Smolny Institute. When this aunt heard of a position in Simbirsk with an impoverished noble family, she asked her 20-year-old nephew Tom, Rosamond's brother, if he would like to come. Tom took up this position in Simbirsk in 1913 for the summer vacations, and then stayed on with another family, the Naoumovs, in Samara during the winter. While he was tutoring their elder son, Madame Naoumov enquired whether he knew of an English girl who would be willing to teach her eldest three daughters. They had already had French and German governesses, but she wanted them to learn English as well. Rosamond stayed with them for the next two years. Unlike most other young English girls, Rosamond had previous teaching experience from working at her parents’ private school.

Then of course there were chance recruitments where Russians travelling in England were looking for a governess. In some cases, these women were willing to go back with “their” families to Russia, as happened to a Miss Judge in 1905. However, this probably did not occur very frequently. Many governesses were

195 Rosamond Dawe, *A memoir of an English governess in Russia, 1914-1917*, pp. ix-x
196 Ibid., p. x
197 H. Pitcher, *When Miss Emmie was in Russia*, p. 59
recruited from the English population already resident in the country, especially in St Petersburg and Moscow. Contacts and recommendations seemed to have centred on the English Church in St Petersburg, which had an English Governesses’ Club Room attached to it, as well as on the British & American Chapel, which tended to be more middle-class in character than the English Church. There were, for example, the five Kerby sisters, who had spent most of their adult lives in Russia, were fluent in Russian, and had many useful contacts among the Russian nobility and innumerable friends among the English community. Another, more informal, “recruitment office” seems to have existed in Moscow:

«В Москве, в Охотном ряду, был большой трактир, известный под именем "Цареградский". Это было, по нынешним понятиям, род кофейной, куда стекались иностранцы, в особенности учителя, род биржи, рынка, куда приходили нанимать домашних учителей».

["There was a public house in Okhotnii riad, Moscow, which was known under the name of “Tsaregradskii”. In today's understanding, it was a kind of Café, where foreigners (especially teachers) would flock together, as well as a kind of stock exchange or market, where Russians would go if they were looking for private instructors"].

198 Ibid. p. 25
199 А.И. Любжин, с. 58
While this Tsaregradskii Café probably provided no guarantee at all for the foreign instructors as to the nature of the employer, the approach to recruitment through personal recommendations by women like Edith Kovalsky or the Kerby sisters seems to have led to satisfactory arrangements in the majority of recorded cases. May Sinclair, one of Edith Kovalsky's younger sisters, ended up working on an estate in the North-East of European Russia, a two-day train journey away from St. Petersburg. This isolated location, however, does not seem to have deterred her. One can only assume that she rather enjoyed her stay, because although she was engaged to a man from her hometown in England by the time she went out to Russia some time in 1904/5, she only returned to England in 1907, after her fiancé finally expressed determined objection to a further delay in her return home.\footnote{H. Pitcher, \textit{When Miss Emmie was in Russia}, p. 2}

Foreign governesses were certainly advised against taking up employment with unknown Russians, even more so when their residence was in the interior of the country and far away from any friends and colleagues. English ladies were also warned against “forming an opinion of those [Russians] who usually reside there [in the country] by their behaviour in the capitals, as the tyranny of their conduct in their homes is often quite apposed to that appearance of politeness which the customs of society oblige them to assume whilst they inhabit the great cities.”\footnote{Amelia Lyons, p. 3} It is impossible to say to what extent this warning was justified, or whether it was merely erring on the side of excessive caution. E.H. Hamilton does mention a case where a governess was “snared [...] into the interior”, although there were neither wife nor children on
the estate, only the landowner himself, but no other governess mentions any similar occurrences.

In the memoirs available, many English governesses remember their Russian experience with warmth and pride, for example, in having mastered the language (like Florence Farmborough who passed all of her Red Cross Nursing exams in Russian), Russian social etiquette, or how to work the samovar. As Amelia Lyons put it:

"Strangers are faced with many inconveniences, but also with much that is very desirable and enjoyable." [...] "Every effort is made on the part of the Russians to render the sojourn of foreigners amongst them as agreeable as possible. Peculiarities and caprices of strangers are regarded not only with patience, but with respect and indulgence, and they are on all occasions treated with such consideration and kindness as cannot fail to make a deep impression".

Clearly, not every experience in Russia was a happy one. As has been mentioned before, isolation could be a problem for any governess, not least for those living on country estates in the interior of Russia. Rosamond Dawe mentions the

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202 E.H. Hamilton, p. 197
203 Florence Farmborough, *Russian Album 1908-1918*, p. 267
204 Rosamond Dawe, p. 12
205 H. Pitcher, *When Miss Emmie was in Russia*, p. 16
206 Amelia Lyons, p. 10f.
207 Ibid., p. 11
“monotony” she feels while living in the village during the winter. Life in the city had more excitement and variation to offer:

“After Christmas we returned to Petrograd and life was more interesting as I often went to see Aunt Margaret and went to the Anglo-American Church with her. I also met other governesses and Norland nurses”.

Less monotony was experienced by Amelia Lyons who describes her first summer in the Russian interior as “a constant succession of driving, riding, boating, galas and every amusement calculated to render the country agreeable”. The location of the estate, the workload, her relationship with the family and her individual personality would obviously have a large effect on how a governess would evaluate her stay in the country and would render it favourable or unfavourable accordingly.

Some comments smack of prejudice and contempt, rather than objective observation: “a lady”, who seems to have worked as a governess in Russia in the 1850s, calls Russians “a miserable race”, whose language she “thoroughly dislike[s]”. Once, she travelled from Moscow to St Petersburg:

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208 Rosamond Dawe, p. 28
209 Ibid., p. 33
210 Amelia Lyons, p. 111
211 Russian chit-chat or sketches of a residence in Russia, by a lady, p. 8
212 Ibid., p. 4
“In paying for our provisions on the way we were obliged to hold out a handful of silver and let the people take what they would, and I believe they were honest, though they were Russians.”

Other governesses mention grievances that are more readily acceptable as justified. Scottie, for example, had been terribly plagued by bedbugs. A change of rooms brought no relief, so her concerned employers, “the von Mecks got hold of some powerful preparation that was supposed to kill the bugs right off, but [...] it almost killed [her] off instead!”

In Katie Sinclair’s case, her unhappiness about her lodgings was caused by the presence of rats (although she never mentioned them in any of her letters home at the time of her actual stay in Russia, only many years later). Some English women left their Russian families because “they were so mean about food”, or had disgusting “Asiatic eating habits”.

Religious differences could also prove to be a complicating factor in Russian-English relations. A governess comments: “It is sad to think that a whole nation should be brought up without any right conception as to the nature of God”.

The prejudice was by no means only on the side of the English; many Russians were equally biased. E.H. Hamilton, for example, records the words of a Russian child in conversation with its English governess:

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213 Ibid., p. 28
214 H. Pitcher, *When Miss Emmie was in Russia*, p. 64
215 Ibid., p. 2
216 Ibid., p. 54
217 *Russian Chit-Chat*, p. 17
“I always fancied English people were very bad, and that they had no religion [...], but I could not understand how you and some others that we know were such kind and good people if you had no religion”.\textsuperscript{218}

These two references are recorded in sources that were written in the middle of the nineteenth century. However, even in the early twentieth century, different religious practices and traditions could still cause some embarrassment and lead to misunderstanding:

“After lunch on Sunday, Edith [Kovalsky, née Sinclair] took Emmie [Dashwood] outside to have a good look round the Kovalskys’ house and garden – and it was here that she had her first real shock in Russia. As they were returning to the house, she caught sight of Mme Kovalsky sitting by a window – and she was knitting, knitting on a Sunday! Emmie was flabbergasted, and said so. Edith, who must have been taken aback by this reaction, explained that such behaviour was quite acceptable in Russia and that on \textit{no} account was she to let the Kovalskys see that she found it shocking”.\textsuperscript{219}

There seem to have been two common “flaws” in Russian upper class society, which could have very trying consequences for governesses. The first concerned the

\textsuperscript{218} E.H. Hamilton, p. 40
\textsuperscript{219} H. Pitcher, \textit{When Miss Emmie was in Russia}, p. 13f.
generally indulgent and lax upbringing of children. Some governesses had very quiet, diligent and well-behaved pupils (e.g. Emma Dashwood at the Rahls), yet the general consensus seems to have been that Russian nannies usually spoiled their charges and allowed them to run wild. This often caused great problems when they finally exchanged the nursery for the schoolroom. Marie Russell Brown from Scotland came to Russia in 1902 to work for the family of a doctor holding the official rank of a general at the Emperor’s Court. She had to look after the two youngest children out of six.

“Life was just tolerable when the older children were at school all day; but six healthy children, in 'a country where children were disobedient and undisciplined', shut up on holiday in a St Petersburg flat during the winter, were bound to find some outlet for their overflowing energy”.220

The older four took no notice of her and played their pranks on each other in front of her or, in fact, on her directly. Miss Mary decided that if she could not discipline them, she would join in the fun: “I could never have existed in that wild family if I had held back from anything it was humanly possible to do”.221 This led her to go horse-riding for the very first time. The children coaxed her into it, assuring her that her horse was “very quiet”.222

“Presently I found myself tearing along at full speed on the road, through ditches, and brushing through gaps in hedges. I held on

220 Ibid., p. 55
221 Ibid., p. 56
222 Ibid.
with all my strength as the horse raced on, but found time to wonder what energetic horses were like if this was a quiet one, and to picture myself falling off and having my collar-bone broken [...].”

The reaction of the father to his children's pranks was to laugh.

The second “flaw” refers to the apparent split among upper class Russian society with regard to their behaviour towards servants:

“When they were good, like the Rahls [Russian family of Emma Dashwood] and the Obolenskys [Lizzie Arthur’s employers], the Russian aristocracy could be very very good, with a kind of instinctive flair for human relationships; and when they were bad ... they were like the family of Miss Brown’s second job in 1912-13”.224

Marie Brown had the deplorable misfortune to be unlucky twice in her choice of Russian families. The second time, the children she was looking after were peaceful enough, but the parents were inconsiderate, suspicious and preoccupied with their position in society. Marie did not get a single day off when the family was on holiday at St Jean de Luz near Biarritz: “I never did have a chance to see Biarritz during the whole time we were there”.225 Instead, she had to sit with the children by the tent just

223 Ibid., p. 57
224 Ibid., p. 112
225 Ibid., p. 113
below the hotel all day long, not being allowed to mix with any of the other families and their governesses further down the beach:

“Just above the tent was the road, and people would come and lean on the railing and look down on us as if we were a show. We must have been a curious sight with three of us attending to two small children. We were not allowed to sit inside the tent, but only in the shade of it, so that we were always on view. But one becomes used to anything in time I suppose, even to ten hours daily on the sands in view of the multitude”.226

What infuriated Marie the most, however, was that the family apparently did not trust her. Once they came back prematurely from an alleged trip, expecting to catch her neglecting her duties. Another servant informed her:

“They do that with all the nurses [...]. That is why Grafinushka (little Countess) has so many. They never believe anybody can tell the truth, because they never tell it themselves perhaps”.227

This sample of historical research regarding governesses suggests that some English teachers had a very high opinion of their employers and thoroughly enjoyed their Russian experience. As can only be expected, there were certainly numerous problems between Russian employers and English teachers too, arising from differences in life-style, class, culture and traditions, as well as individual character

226 Ibid., p. 115
227 Ibid., p. 114
traits and personal likes and dislikes. In the aftermath of the October Revolution, many English governesses found themselves caught up in the upheaval, enduring hardship and even risking their lives to help “their” families. Nathalie Majolier (1940), for example, was the stepdaughter of the Grand Duke Michael, brother of Tsar Nicholas II. She mentions how her “despised” governess Miss X (more of her in the next chapter) risked her own life by travelling on a false passport through Germany and Denmark, pretending that the Grand Duke Michael’s son in her care was her own baby boy, thus getting him to safety.\(^{228}\) The Governesses Benevolent Institution holds a Chairman’s letter which talks about a 75-year-old English governess, who came to the Institution just after 1945. She was still giving lessons then, but during the Russian Revolution she had been working on an estate in the Crimea. When the parents went “missing” (most likely, they were dead), she took sole charge of the children, and “with practically no money, she brought them right across Europe to the South of France”.\(^{229}\) Unfortunately, no further details of her fate are known. It can, therefore, be concluded that the overriding image of the English governess, as it arises from her own writings and tales, was one of sturdy dependability, common sense and, especially towards the end of their presence in Russia, one of loyalty.

\(^{228}\) Nathalie Majolier, *Stepdaughter of Imperial Russia*, p. 122

\(^{229}\) *GBI Chairman’s letter, 13th July, 1956, LMA/4459/K/01/036 (2 of 2)*
CHAPTER 3: Memoirs and Diaries written by Members of the Russian Nobility; Historical Data Analysis

In the previous chapter we considered documentary evidence relating to the experiences of British governesses in Russia. The main research question in this dissertation posits that the attitudes towards foreign governesses and tutors expressed in personal memoirs and diaries (written by members of the Russian nobility) are equally varied. This chapter examines these accounts in the light of several questions: Who employed foreign governesses and tutors and in how far was this determined by the rank of the employer? In how far did the location of the country estate, the family’s wealth and the parents’ attitudes determine the quality of a child’s primary education? My data was split into the following groups: a) diaries of the lower gentry and poor landowners, written by individuals who either held ranks nine to fourteen in the Table of Ranks\textsuperscript{230} or no service rank at all; b) the upper gentry and hereditary nobility, holding ranks one to eight. As a rule, families at the bottom end of the ranks’ table were unable to afford a good education for their children. M.V. Danilov (1842),\textsuperscript{231} whose father owned thirty serfs and could therefore be counted among the great majority of very poor landowners, never even had a wet-nurse, let alone a tutor:

\textsuperscript{230} For more detailed information on the Table of Ranks, see Chapter 1 and appendix.

\textsuperscript{231} Михаи́ль Васи́льевич Дани́лов, Записки артиле́рии ма́йора Михаи́ла Васи́льевича Даны́лова, написанные им в 1771 году, Издатель Павел Стре́вь. Москва, 1842
«Мать наша кормила всех детей своих своей грудью, воспитывала нас с беспримерною материнскою горячностью и любовью».[232]

[“Our mother breast-fed all her children herself, and brought us up with incomparable motherly fervour and love”].

Danilov eventually went to an artillery school, but his education can hardly have been extensive. In his introduction to Danilov’s memoirs, Stroev comments on the author’s handwriting: «рукопись принадлежала самому автору, но очень дурного почерка, едва ли не детского»[233] [“the author’s own manuscript was written in an awkward, almost childlike hand”]. A.E. Labzina (1903), another eighteenth century example, was the daughter of a man who slowly worked his way up through the ranks and finished his career at rank 8.: «Ее отец почти всю жизнь свою провел на разных горных заводах. Он вступил в службу в 1721 г. [...], был подканцеляристом и канцеляристом, [...], в 1733 г. был назначен «засекретарем», в 1739 г. [...] занял место секретаря в канцелярии Главного Правления Сибирских и Казанских заводов, в 1754 г. был произведен в обер-цегенереры, а затем состоял в чине ассессора».[234]

[“Her father spent almost all his life working for various mining companies. He entered the civil service in 1721, [...] worked as

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[232] Ibid., c. 22
[233] Даниловъ, introduction by Pavel Stroev.
[234] А.Е. Лабзина, Воспоминания Анны Евдокимовны Лабзиной (1758-1828), p. 4
sub-clerk and clerk,\textsuperscript{235} [...], was appointed under-secretary in 1733, [...] became a secretary in the Head Office of Siberian and Kazan factories in 1739, was promoted in 1754, and finally reached the rank of assessor”].

However, he died soon afterwards, and the Labzins never left their small village, situated on the boarder of Perm and Ufa provinces. The three children grew up \textit{«в глухой деревне, в полном незнании жизни, под надзором любящей, но строгой матери»}\textsuperscript{236} [“in the remote village under the loving but strict supervision of their mother, not knowing life at all”]. It can be assumed that the children were brought up without any outside help.

There were three linked issues, which were of importance in the education of children of the Russian nobility: the location of the family estate, money, and, the most important one to which I will return at the end of the chapter, the parents’ attitudes towards their children’s upbringing and future careers. The more remote the location of a family estate, the more difficult it proved to give children a good education. This applied to the landowning nobility as a whole. Even if the estate of a rich landowner should have happened to be located in a distant province, he faced the same limitations as members of the lower gentry. M.A. Dmitriev (1998), for example, grew up on the estate of his grandfather who owned some 1500 serfs and belonged

\textsuperscript{235} These positions in the civil service were not part of the Table of Ranks and had to be passed through in order to reach the first rung of the ladder, rank 14.

\textsuperscript{236} А. Е. Лабзина, с. 7
therefore to the top level of affluent landowners in the country.\textsuperscript{237} His first French governess turned out to be unsuitable.

«В 1806г. [...] была привезена из Москвы для двоюродной сестры моей и для меня мадам француженка, Елизавета Ивановна Джисберти. [...] У неё начали мы учиться французскому языку. [...] Учение шло без методы и без толку. Она заставляла нас переводить, когда мы еще не знали ни слов, ни спряжений. [...] У меня остались еще написанные ею протопи [...] из них увидел я впоследствии, что она не знала даже правописания».\textsuperscript{238}

["In 1806, Elizabeth Ivanovna Giberti, a French governess from Moscow was employed for my cousin and for myself. She started to teach us French. Her teaching had neither method nor sense. She made us translate when we had learned neither vocabulary nor conjugations yet. I still have some of her written notes in my possession. From them I later realised that she could not even spell properly"].

Dmitriev blames the isolated location of his grandfather’s estate for her inadequacy.

«Но какая же порядочная женщина поехала бы в такую даль, за несколько сот рублей ассигнациями и в такой

\textsuperscript{237} See chapter 1, p. 40-41
\textsuperscript{238} М.А. Дмитриев, Главы из воспоминаний моей жизни, с. 40
SEMЕЙСТВO, ГДЕ НИ ОДИН ЧЕЛОВЕК НЕ ГОВОРИЛ ПО-ФРАНЦУЗСКИ? 239

["But what respectable woman would have travelled such a distance, for a few hundred paper roubles, and stay in a family, where not a single person was able to speak French?"]

She was finally discharged because «она оказалась не совсем благонадежного поведения» 240 ["she turned out to be not quite trustworthy"], the exact nature of which Dmitriev leaves unsaid.

In another example, E.N. Moller (1890), 241 daughter of Nikolai Nazar’evich Murav’ev, the governor of Novgorod, describes how during the summer months she used to live in her father’s village together with her father’s sister, Olga Nazar’evna Nabokova: «Помню, как она нас берегла, сама учила нас читать, писать и постепенно всем другим наукам» 242 ["I remember how she looked after us. She herself taught us reading, writing, and gradually all the sciences as well"]: Governors were generally prosperous and well-connected: «Звание губернатора всегда почиталось самым важным в государстве» 243 ["the position of the governor was always considered to be the most important in the state"], yet, there is no mention of any governess or teacher on the Murav’ev estate. When, however, the family resided

239 Ibid.
240 Ibid.
241 Е.Н. Моллер, «Памятни замътки Е.Н. Моллеръ, рож. Муравьевой, 1820-1872», Русская старина, т. 66, №. 5, Спб., 1890, с. 325-342
242 Ibid., c. 327
243 И.М. Долгоруков, Записки князя И.М. Долgorукова. Повесть о рождении моем, происхождении и всей жизни, с. 3
in St Petersburg, they employed a French governess for her: «нам взяли новую гуvernантку француженку, очень добрую, и разных учителей. Мы стали гораздо больше учиться»[244] [“We got a new, very kind French governess and various other teachers. We began to study a lot more”]. It could be difficult for a family to find suitable governesses or tutors who were prepared to spend many months on an estate.

«В начале текущего столетия многие и состоятельные помещики не получали достаточного образования, иные по нерадению, другие по невозможности достать хороших преподавателей и учебников».245

[“At the beginning of this century (the nineteenth century), even many prosperous landowners did not receive an adequate education. In some cases, this was caused by negligence, in others by the difficulty to find good teachers and textbooks”].

The further away the estate from Moscow or St Petersburg was, the smaller was the choice of governesses and tutors or educational institutions for concerned parents, and the less likely it was to find good staff willing to live in exile-like conditions for long periods of time. Many French, German or English governesses and companions used to take part in their employers’ social activities: «обыкновенно гуvernантки любят принимать участие в светской и суетной жизни своих патронов»[246] [“in general, governesses love to take part in their employers’ busy social lives”]. In his

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244 Е.Н. Моллеръ, с. 329
245 М.С. Николева, Черты старинного дворянского быта, с. 118
246 Е.А. Сабанеева, Воспоминания о быломъ, с. 431
memoirs, B.B. Glinskii (1894) shows a slight irritation with one German companion who - at the expense of her actual obligations - was rather too keen on partaking in the estate's social functions:

«Из посторонних в доме жила еще молоденькая немочка из Либавы, приглашенная в качестве компаньонки к сестре для практики в немецком языке; на самом же деле она сама скорее практиковалась в русском, а также в польках и вальсах с наезжавшими в торжественные дни в усадьбу кавалерами из соседей».

[“There was another young German girl from Libau among the foreigners in the house who had been employed as a companion to my sister, in order to practise German with her. In actual fact, the girl was far more interested in practising her Russian, as well as in dancing polkas and waltzes with the neighbouring gentlemen who came to the estate for the festivities”].

However, the majority of smaller estates were not only situated at a great distance from Moscow and St Petersburg, but even their nearest neighbours and provincial centres were too far away for easy visiting. The position of a governess or tutor on these estates could be very isolated, and many rejected the life in such a backward and provincial ‘nest’ within a short space of time. As an anonymous diarist puts it:

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247 Б.Б. Глинский. Из воспоминаний усадьбы Серебря, с. 69

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The location of the family estate is closely linked to the issue of wealth. The wealthiest families and greatest serf-holders in the country were more likely to own houses and *dachas* in the close vicinity of Moscow or St Petersburg. Wealth was also at the centre of the decision whether to employ a Russian governess and tutor or a foreign one. The income of families in the bottom half of, or outside, the Table of Ranks was usually insufficient to hire good governesses and tutors, let alone foreign instructors. For parents in this category sending their children to boarding schools or employing Russian staff were the only available options. O.P. Verkhovskaia (1913), for example, who was born in 1847, mentions that a boarding school would have cost some 400 roubles per year, while her Russian governess was paid only 360 roubles. In 1865, a foreign governess working on a country estate in the provinces could earn between 1000 and 1500 roubles. Verkhovskaia grew up at a time when the primary education of girls had become the norm, and when an increasing number of Russian women were seeking employment as teachers or governesses. As was previously discussed in chapter 1, the increase in state education both prepared more women for that role and created the need for more women to choose that profession. Verkhovskaia, the daughter of an engineer working on the construction of the railway under Nicolas I, never had a foreign governess, only Russian ones, and she speaks

248 Ibid., c. 262
249 О.П. Верховская, *Картинки прошлого, изъ воспоминаний детства*, с. 246
250 Alain Maeder, p. 83
with varying degrees of derision about all of them. Verkhovskaia mentions five governesses by name and speaks of several more who kept changing continually. Her main grievances against them are threefold. Firstly, she remarks on their ignorance: «Но кто мог удовлетворить моей жажды знания? […] Не Авдотья ли Макаровна, которая сама ничего не знала?» 251 ["But who could satisfy my thirst for knowledge? Surely not Avdot'ia Makarova, who did not know anything herself?"] Secondly, she points out their incompetence: «Очевидно, она училась французскому языку на медные деньги, как и всему остальному». 252 ["Her knowledge of French was merely second rate, as was everything else about her"]. And thirdly, she accuses them of cruelty:

«Когда я вспоминаю об этой особе, то даже теперь, спустя 50 слишком лет, мне трудно подавить в себе тяжелое, неприятное чувство. Это не было воспитательница, не наставница, а какой-то систематический тиран. Казалось, она жила для того, чтобы придумывать нам наказания». 253

["When I remember this person, even now, after more than 50 years, I can hardly suppress a strong, unpleasant feeling. This was not an instructor or a governess, but a systematic tyrant. It seemed she only lived for thinking up new ways of how to punish us"].

251 О. П. Верховская, с. 245-246
252 Ibid., с. 30
253 Ibid., с. 40
However, in many slightly more affluent households there were at least some foreigners, mostly elderly German or French men and women, who were allowed to live on the estate together with the family. They sometimes acted as nannies, housekeepers or companions, but the work they did for the family was not regarded as a professional service, e.g.: «старая няня, немка, которая понемногу обратилась в ключницу и вела внутреннее хозяйство» ["our old German nanny who had gradually turned into our housekeeper ruled the household"]. Their presence on the estate was part of the Russian phenomenon, which made many country estates the refuge for a great variety of hangers-on. One such example is described by S.V. Skalon (1891):

«Жил, правда, до самой своей смерти один француз, м-р Asselin, которого отец очень любил, поместив его в нашем бывшем детском домике. Старичек жил там как какой-нибудь антикварий, никуда не показываясь».

["There was one old Frenchman, Monsieur Asselin, who did live with us till the end of his life. My father loved him very much and let him stay in our former play-house. The old man, who never showed himself anywhere, lived there like an old relic"].

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254 For a discussion about the spread of wealth among the upper classes in Russia see chapter 1.
255 Изъ недавнего прошлаго, бытовые очерки, с. 258
256 С.В. Скалоно. Воспоминания, с. 347-348
S.V. Skalon was of the lower gentry. She describes her childhood home as a «маленький домик в три комнаты, с мезонином, с небольшими колонками» [small, three-bedroom house with a mezzanine and small columns]. Her mother did try to employ first a French governess and then a French tutor for her children, but both turned out to be too fond of the bottle:

«По чьей-то рекомендации, мать решилась взять для меня старушку француженку, горбатенькую m-te du Faye; чтобы я более упражнялась в французском языке, меня поместили с ней в одной комнате. Сначала француженкой были довольны. […] Но время показало, что она любила выпить, и что штойфик с водочной стоял всегда под ее кроватью. […] Такая неудача была и с дядькой-французом. m-r Coguet, которого наняли для братьев и тоже очень скоро должны были отказать.»

["Upon somebody's recommendation my mother decided to employ Madame du Faye, a slightly hunchbacked old Frenchwoman, to enable me to practise my French with her. I had to share a room with her. At the beginning, the Frenchwoman proved satisfactory. […] But time showed that she liked to drink and that she always kept a bottle of vodka under her bed. Monsieur Coguet who was employed as a French

\[257\] Ibid., c. 339
tutor to my brothers had the same weakness. He had to be dismissed soon afterwards].

As a result, Skalon’s mother taught her six surviving children (out of fifteen) herself. «После двух таких неудач, в доме у нас никогда не было ни гувернера, ни гувернантки» [“After two such disastrous attempts, we never had another tutor or governess in the house”].

M.S. Nikoleva (1893) remarks that her family was rich until 1812. «До 1812-го года жили мы почти роскошно, воспитание всех нас стоила немало. После 1812-го года мы уже не были в состоянии часто ездить в Москву». [“Until 1812, our life was almost luxurious; the education of all of us was not cheap. After 1812 we were no longer able to travel to Moscow very often”].

Her older brother and sisters who had been born in the late eighteenth century, long before the Napoleonic invasion of Russia, were brought up and educated by the 40-year-old Ripomonty, an émigré from France. He is described as a «прекраснейший и почтеннейший человек» [“a most wonderful and most honourable person”], who

258 Ibid., c. 347
259 M.C. Nikoleva, «Черты старинного дворянского быта. Воспоминания М.С. Николевой», Русский архив, кн.3, № 9, М., 1893, с. 107-120
260 Ibid., c. 141
261 There were twelve children in the family. The author who was born at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the ninth. Her oldest brother was 23 years her senior.
262 M.C. Николева, с. 116
seemed to have loved “his” Russian family dearly and was, in return, much loved and respected by them. The younger brother who came of school age after the impoverishment of the family was no longer educated by foreigners but by his own elder sister. In a similar but reversed situation, the Zagoskins (1900)\textsuperscript{263} were too poor to employ foreign staff for their children until 1829 when the father reached rank seven: “в 1829 г. отец получил чины коллежского асессора и надворного советника. С начала 30-го года настало полное материальное довольство”\textsuperscript{264} [“in 1829, my father reached the ranks of Collegiate Assessor and Court Counsellor. In the early 1830s, the family gained full material independence”]. The Frenchman Poulain was first employed by the family at the same time, around 1832.

Money could certainly buy the best education available at the time, be it in the eighteenth or in the nineteenth century. For example, Ekaterina Dashkova (1876), godchild of Peter III, belonged to the very highest stratum of society. Her uncle, who held the first rank in the Table of Ranks, had her educated together with his only daughter.

«Мой дядя ничего не щадил, чтоб дать нам лучших учителей; и, согласно с тем временем, мы были воспитаны превосходно. Нас учили четырем языкам. [...] В танцах мы оказали большие успехи, и несколько умели рисовать. С

\textsuperscript{263} С.М. Загоскин, «Воспоминания С.М. Загоскина», Исторический вестник, т.79, № 1, Пг., 1900, с. 41-78
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., с. 52, с. 56
"My uncle did not spare any expenses to find us the best teachers. By the standards of that time we were extremely well educated. We learned four languages. [...] Our dancing made great progress and we were able to draw a little. With such pretensions and exterior worldly glitter, who could accuse us of being insufficiently educated".  

However, this upbringing certainly did not prepare her for her role as president of the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences as the first woman in history to hold such a position. Her uncle’s money only paid for what was then considered to be the best education for a girl, which was heavily biased towards foreign languages, dancing and other “accomplishments”. Dashkova certainly did not learn from her various teachers how to think and how to converse easily with contemporary philosophers and thinkers, such as Voltaire. She did not attribute these abilities to her formal education but to her own, self-imposed and extensive reading.

Some members of the lower gentry managed to overcome their financial shortcomings with greater or lesser success, in order for their children to have access to tuition by foreign teachers. T.P. Passek’s (1931) family serves as a representative example. Her mother came from a rich family, but her father was a poor landowner

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265 Е. Р. Дашкова, с. 21
whose property consisted of no more than 200 serfs. No money was spent on employing teachers, instead, their children were sent to a neighbouring family who did have a French tutor.

«Родители мои услыхали, что помещики Рудаковы [соседи] взяли к своим детям учителя, старого француза, Оливье. [...] Родители условились, чтобы я жила у них и вместе с их детьми, больше или меньше подходившими к моему возрасту, учились у Оливье». 266

["My parents heard that our neighbours, the Rudakovs, had taken an old Frenchman named Olivier to teach their children. My parents came to an agreement with them. I would go and live with them, and study under Olivier together with their children who were roughly of the same age as I"].

This seemed to have been a fairly common occurrence: children of the lower gentry were sent to charitable institutions (e.g. the Smolny Institute) or given away to wealthier relatives or neighbours to be brought up and educated together with their more affluent peers. In several memoirs, this seems to have been accepted as a matter of course. M.V. Danilov (1842), whose father owned a mere 30 serfs, explains how he, his two sisters and his brother were distributed among various relatives and acquaintances:

266 Т.П. Пассек, с. 95-97
Anna was brought up by one of our in-laws of the same name, Antip Evdokimovich Danilov. [...] Matrena was educated by our relative Matrena Petrovna, a widow, with whom I also used to live for a while and learn how to read and write. Egor first learned to read and write from our father who was responsible for most of his education. He was then sent to a sexton in Tula to learn Russian, and when he had completed his studies he went to live with a landowner in Tula until he came of age”].

E.A. Sabaneeva (1900), born in 1829 into a landowning family, comments on this phenomenon:

267 М.В. Даниловъ, с. 23
268 Ibid., c. 25
269 Ibid., c. 26
«Хорошо, если судьба сталкивала этих бедняков с соседними зажиточными помещиками; иной раз притягивали их участие, рассуют детей по училищам, или определят сына в полк на свой счет, или дочери сошьют придание».270

["How fortunate when fate happened to bring these poor people together with their rich neighbouring landowners. Sometimes, these rich neighbours would get involved. They might send the children to schools, pay for the son to serve in a regiment, or provide the daughter with a dowry"].

The author’s family itself accommodated such a ward from a poor gentry family. The girl was brought up together with the daughters of the house.

Sometimes, children were even taken into the family by complete strangers. For example, the following author writes what happened to him when his parents and most of his closest relatives died in a cholera epidemic:

«Я был воспитан в зажиточной семье помещика Т. губернии. Судя привезли меня годовым ребенком из негостеприимно встретившей мое появление на свет северной столицы. [...] Холодо, замученного и приговоренного к смерти мальчика чужие добрые люди

270 Е.А. Сабанева, «Воспоминания о былом» (1770-1833) из семейной хроники, с. 419-420

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“I was brought up in a prosperous landowning family in T. province. Aged one I was taken there from the northern capital, which had greeted my entrance into this world with very little hospitality. These completely unrelated and kind people took me into their family, a boy who had been weak, greatly distressed and condemned to death, until they accepted me as their own, warmed me and helped me back onto my feet”.

While money and the location of an estate were very significant factors in the upbringing of children and their education by governesses and tutors, they were both eclipsed by the importance of the parents’ attitude. Money could pay for good staff to live on a country estate. In Moscow or St Petersburg it could ensure an even better education, because the choice of instructors, schools and universities, and therefore the chance of a successful career, was wider. As the following examples will show, however, high rank and wealth did not always translate to a good education or to high quality teachers. There are several memoirs in which the distinctly upper-class authors write with contempt and derision about their foreign teachers. Lev Liubimov (1963), whose father was governor of Vilnius and a leading civil servant, says about his English tutor’s linguistic abilities: «По-русски – ни слова! Да и по-английски

271 Изъ якости усадьбы Сергеевки Б.Б. Глинского, с. 59
“He didn’t speak a word of Russian. But even in English he wasn’t able to explain any better”. Nathalie Majolier (1940), stepdaughter of Grand Duke Micheal Romanov, describes her relationship with one of her English governesses as follows:

“Even as a child I could never bear a sycophant, nor is the refined class of Englishwoman particularly endearing. Miss X combined the two traits. My crime was to see through her and, since I have never been a hypocrite, to show it. I was made to suffer”.

Unless the parents were really interested in their children’s upbringing and education, money could be of no benefit whatsoever. Natalia Grot (1900) describes how many families nearly ruined themselves by living beyond their means in order to give their children a good education.

«Родители же бросали свои поместья, чтобы следовать за детьми и, живя в столице выше своих средств, предавали свои именния в руки алчных и невежественных управляющих, закладывая и перезакладывая их в новоизобретенных земельных банках, пока окончательно не разстраивали свои состояния».

272 Лев Д. Любимов, На чужбине, с. 51
273 Nathalie Majolier, p. 251
274 Наталья Петровна Гроt, Из семейной хроники. Воспоминания для детей и внуков.
275 Ibid., с. 24
["Many parents abandoned their estates in order to look after their children. By staying in the capital they were living beyond their means. Ignorant and greedy stewards were left in charge of their estates, which were mortgaged and re-mortgaged in the recently-founded land banks, until they were utterly destroyed"].

In addition to the loss of income incurred through mismanagement and neglect of estate business, life in the city meant higher living expenses. This combination could easily have as a consequence the impoverishment of a family. Grot’s father himself, holding rank nine in the table of ranks, could ill afford the double burden, but the Grots were prepared to accept financial hardship in exchange for their children’s future careers.

Nathalie Majolier was less fortunate. Her experience serves as an example as to what can happen when the parents do not get involved. Although her parents were affluent indeed, she was left entirely to the care of various governesses. Neither mother nor stepfather bothered to check on her progress:

"At that time my education was superficial. I could read in three languages and write after a fashion, but of history, beyond the dates of the kings of both England and France, I knew very little; geography was limited to the countries where I had been and their capitals; I couldn't do the simplest sums".  

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276 N. Majolier, p. 54
Nathalie suffered greatly from the unconstrained rule of some of her private instructors, especially the Englishwoman whom she calls Miss X: "with the departure of Miss X, my life immediately took on a rosy hue."\textsuperscript{277} [... I had been used to a flow of abuse from Miss X].\textsuperscript{278} Indeed, she writes that the only benefit she had from growing up under the auspices of various foreign governesses was that it had trained her to develop an independent and rebellious spirit to such an extent as to be perfectly capable of dealing with the interrogations of the Cheka in 1917.

"I personally considered my treatment by them [interrogators of the Cheka] as considerate and humane, compared to what I suffered at the hand of governesses. At any rate they did not frighten me at all, so perhaps I have something for which I must reluctantly thank Miss X. Reflecting on her ministration, I often wonder why I was not left a nervous wreck. I imagine it was because she managed to raise all the fighting spirit in me."\textsuperscript{279}

Yet, the Samarins are an example of another well-to-do family of nobles, who achieved enormous success with their home school. The father, Fedor Vasil’evich, provided an excellent education for his six sons, the eldest of whom was the famous publicist, Slavophile and active supporter for the emancipation of the serfs, Iurii Fedorovich. On the one hand, Samarin used his wealth to good advantage for paying for highly qualified staff, but – more importantly – on the other hand, he dedicated his

\textsuperscript{277} Ibid., p. 123  
\textsuperscript{278} Ibid., p. 135  
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid., p. 122
whole attention to the establishment of his private school. He himself drew up
individual lesson plans for his sons, chose teachers and controlled his sons’ progress
with great care and attention, which won the admiration of many of his
contemporaries, including one Graf Mikhail Vladimirovich Tolstoi (1870):

«Такая домашняя школа, примирная и образцовая, проживала в Москве более 25 лет в семействе Федора Васильевича Самарина, начиная с детства Юрия Фёдоровича и потом по мере возраста и его пять братьев. Это домашнее учебное заведение оставило по себе самыми святыми из моих воспоминаний о старинной Москве, потому что я сам лично принимал в нём участіе много лет сряду, в качествѣ наставника и экзаменатора, и могъ вполнѣ оцѣнить высокія достоинства отца семейства, когда онъ съ сердечнымъ рвениемъ, а вмѣстѣ и съ неукоснительной точностью и примирнымъ благоразуміемъ исполнялъ обязанности директора и инспектора своей родной школы».  

[“For more than 25 years, such an exemplary and model home school flourished in Moscow in the family of Fedor Vasil'evich

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280 During the summer months, the home school moved to the family estate Izmalkovo, some 20 verst to the west of Moscow, and continued without a break. The teachers were taken there every day by carriage. Толстой, граф Михаил Владимирович, «Самаринъ — Воспоминанія о домашней школѣ Ф. В. Самарина 1870 (НИО Рук.)

281 Ibid.
Samarin. It was first started during the childhood of Iurii Fedorovich and was continued as his five younger brothers grew up. My fondest memories of old Moscow are linked to this home school, because for many years I myself was involved in its running as a teacher and examiner. As such, I am in a position to evaluate the enormous achievements of the father, as he fulfilled his responsibilities as director and inspector of his own school, displaying great enthusiasm, strict organisation and exemplary discernment”]

Tolstoi also draws particular attention to the care chosen in employing teachers.

«Чтобы дать вам понятие о предусмотрительности и благоразумной смелости Федора Васильевича в выбор наставников для Юрия Федоровича, достаточно будет сказать, что эта домашняя школа при самом начале своем дала Московскому университету двух преподавателей, из которых один был гувернером Юрия Федоровича». 282

[“In order to give you some idea of just how carefully and intelligently Fedor Vasil’evich chose instructors for Iurii Fedorovich, it is enough to say that from the very beginning of

282 Ibid.

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its existence, this home school provided Moscow University
with two teachers, one of whom was Iurii Fedorovich’s tutor”].

This tutor, the Frenchman Monsieur Paqueau (Пако), was greatly loved and respected by the whole family, and stayed with them for almost a decade before becoming a lecturer of French at Moscow University.283 Unsurprisingly, in this environment home tuition proved to be very effective and the children remember their teachers with great warmth and fondness.

Some families chose not to involve foreigners in the upbringing of their children altogether, although they could have afforded the extra expense. One example is the Bakunin family, who famously brought up their ten children on their estate Premukhino in Tver province without the employment of any foreign staff.284

«Благодаря стараниям отца, Александра Михайловича Бакунина, человека европейски образованного, испытавшего влияние идей Русо, личности детей формировались в атмосфере утонченных вкусов, искусства, литературы, любви, в общении с природой».285

[“Thanks to the endeavours of the father Aleksandr Mikhailovich Bakunin, who had received a Western education and was influenced by the ideas of Rousseau, the personalities of

283 Nikolai Ivanovich Nadezhdin, teacher of Russian and Latin, Logic and Philology at the Samarin’s was the second person to end up working at Moscow University as professor of Aesthetics. ibid.
284 Their eleventh child, the youngest daughter Sophia had died in early childhood.
285 www.hrono.ru/biograf/bakunin.html (30/05/2007)
the children were formed in an atmosphere of refined tastes, the arts, literature, love, and in harmony with nature”].

Most members of the Russian nobility, however, did not question the trend to entrust their children into the care of unknown foreign personnel. It was a commonly accepted practice: foreign languages were of such a great importance among the upper classes that employing native speakers proved to be the easiest way to teach children from a very early age. Few people seemed to have realised or cared that many of those so-called teachers were not necessarily trained to teach. The more common attitude of parents was not to question the quality and qualifications of a governess or a tutor; his or her nationality was sufficient. Sabaneeva comments on this trend and how unusual her aunt’s family, the Leont’evs, were in their careful choice of foreign governesses and tutors for their children.

«И как мало были сходны понятия Леонтевых о воспитании детей с понятиями, преобладающими тогда в дворянских семьях. Двадцатые годы ознаменовались у нас поездками наших дворян за границу, увлечением французскими модами и гуverнерским воспитанием, которое нанесло столько вреда. Мало было тогда удивляться слепоте родителей, должно было негодовать за
The final example illustrates the extent to which the quality of a child’s upbringing could vary, depending on the parents’ involvement. An anonymous author (1910)\textsuperscript{287} writes about her mother’s childhood and upbringing and the importance of the grandmother in this process. The grandmother, a highly educated woman for her time, cared greatly about her children and took considerable pains in choosing suitable governesses and tutors. Her death caused her children considerable grief, because their stepmother neglected their education and took little interest in choosing a suitable governess:

\begin{quotation}
And how different was the Leon’evs’ notion of education for their children from the one commonly held among families of the nobility. The 1820s were renowned as the time when our nobility journeyed abroad, grew pre-occupied with French fashion and with the notion of having their children brought up by tutors. It was this notion, which caused so much harm. The blindness of parents at the time was astonishing, when they should have been incensed about this terrible development. Whoever did the Russian nobility not entrust with the care of their children, as long as they were foreign!”\end{quotation}

\textsuperscript{286} Е.А. Сабанеева, с. 435
\textsuperscript{287} "Изъ недавняго прошлаго, бытовые очерки", \textit{Русская старина}, т. 143, №. 8, 1910, с. 246-266.
«Умерла заботливая, высокообразованная мать, отец женился на другой, и началось сиротское существование детей под властью француженки, m-elle de Burenne, которая тирианила их, наказывала сурово и ничему не могла обучить, кроме французского языка».

[“The highly-educated and caring mother died and the father remarried. This began the children’s life as orphans under the rule of the Frenchwoman Mademoiselle de Burenne who tyrannised and punished them severely. She wasn’t capable of teaching them anything but French”].

When the father died as well, the stepmother no longer saw any need in keeping her stepchildren in the house at all: «Когда матери моей минуло 11 лет, умер ее отец, и мачеха раздала детей, кого по пансионам, кого по институтам». [“My mother’s father died when she was eleven years old. Her stepmother sent the children off to various boarding schools and institutions”].

The 37 sources examined in this study contain accounts of 79 Western European governesses and tutors. 28 of those (or 35.44%) were positive, 25 (or 31.65%) were negative, and 26 (or 32.91%) voiced neither affection nor resentment or hostility towards their foreign instructors. The discrepancy of numbers between sources and instructors is owing to the fact that it was common for families to have...
more than one governess or tutor. As a point of comparison, the figures for Russian instructors working on country estates are very similar. Out of a total of 23 teachers mentioned in the memoirs and diaries investigated, 10 sources (or 43%) had positive experiences, 11 (or 48%) had negative experiences, and 2 (or 9%) did not offer any qualitative assessment of their instructors. These results show that – as indeed had been expected – it was common to have both positive and negative experiences, often even within one family. The pattern applies to the experiences of upper-class authors as well as to those at the bottom end of the Table of Ranks. While among the upper gentry negative accounts of tutors and governesses occurred in 30.44% of the cases, among the lower gentry the corresponding figure is 33.33%. The lesser income of the lower gentry did not disadvantage their children in terms of satisfaction with foreign staff, and the upper gentry did not necessarily afford more highly qualified teachers for their children.

The attitude of Russian children towards their foreign governesses and tutors was greatly coloured by the specific role the governess or tutor played (as was discussed in the previous chapter). Most pleasant childhood memories are linked to growing up in the care of an indulgent, forgiving Russian nanny, who spoilt her charge, was full of fairy tales and superstition and can almost be seen as the personification of the carefree nature of early childhood. Nathalie Majolier calls her old peasant nanny her “chief slave” 290 whose “devotion was limitless”. 291 The transition from childhood to school-going age was often traumatic. A strict timetable

290 N. Majolier, p. 14
291 Ibid., p. 15
regulated the previously unrestricted day. Whereas the nanny was associated with freedom, carefree indulgence and emotional well-being, the governess and tutor stood for strict supervision, obligations, and a regimented day in which even leisure time was carefully monitored. Unsurprisingly, whereas most accounts of childhood memories and nannies tend to be positive and idyllic, recollections of governesses and tutors tend to be more ambiguous and coloured by the first experiences of duty. as, for example, in the case of N.I. Shatilov (1916):

«Вскоре после нашего переселения в тульское имение началось для меня и время серьезного учения и переход из-под ведения няни и Анны Карловны, моей воспитательницы, добрейшей и милейшей немки, в руки гувернеров и учителей, что далеко не было мне приятно».

[“Soon after we had moved to our estate in Tula, it was time for me to start my serious education and leave the care of my nanny and Anna Karlovna, my dearest and kindest German nursery governess, to be placed into the hands of tutors and teachers, which didn't suit me at all”].

I.A. Salov (1897) describes his relationship with the German Andreas Trumheller, who first acted as his childminder before turning into his tutor. While still in the nursery, Salov adored Trumheller:

292 Н.И. Шатилов, Из недавнего прошлого, с. 168
The move from nursery to schoolroom proved to be very upsetting. Where before he had been looked after by his old nanny, Salov now had to share his room with Andreas Trumheller. This was common enough practice; governesses and tutors usually slept in the same room with their charge, or at least in adjacent rooms, to be able to supervise them at all times. Salov resented this change, which temporarily clouded his love for Trumheller:

«Он даже противился мне в эту ночь. А когда послышалось его храпение, я готов был спрыгнуть со своей кровати и бежать в детскую к своей няне». 294

[“I even felt disgusted by him this night. And when he started to snore, I was ready to jump out of my bed and run back into the nursery to my nanny”].

As the nineteenth century progressed, foreign governesses and tutors were hardly ever regarded as the sole instructors in the education of children of the Russian nobility. Instead, their main function was to look after the children

293 И.А. Салов, Умчавшиеся годы, с. 2
294 Ibid., c. 10
(comparable to modern day au-pairs) before they entered school and university, and provide them with the highly priced language skills that were such an important element in a nobleman/noblewoman's identity. As was to be expected, personal accounts of childhood memories about governesses and tutors written by members of the Russian nobility provided both positive and negative images of those foreign instructors. The data confirms that although some foreigners contracted by uneducated or uninterested parents were clearly unsuitable for the job and indifferent or even cruel to children, the majority appear to have striven to look after their charge to the best of their ability.
CHAPTER 4: The Typification of the Foreign Instructor in Russian Literature

This chapter is an attempt to trace how these diverse people, established in the previous chapters with their widely varying experiences in Russia, came to be turned into a literary ‘type’; thus, it examines the image of Western European governesses and tutors in Russian literature. Firstly, it discusses the characteristic features of the profession and how these foreigners were typified at the end of the eighteenth/beginning of the nineteenth century. Secondly, I will analyse how various authors used this type and how it developed throughout the century. The creation of foreign governesses and tutors in literature drew on the existence of several preconceptions prevalent among the contemporary readership. The actual profession, as well as the individual's position as a foreigner all helped to shape their image. Although Russians tended to see Europeans as indistinct “representatives” of “the West” each instructor also had a distinct nationality and the characteristics generally associated with it. So, thirdly, I will give a brief description of how authors use Russian stereotypes of the French, the British and the Germans to complement the characterisation of their governesses and tutors.

A stereotype is “a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing”.295 While there is no unanimous definition of ‘stereotype’, it is generally believed to encompass the attribution of “typical”

295 The definition is taken from the New Oxford Dictionary of English.
characteristics to particular groups of people.296 Through prejudice, ignorance and biased observations, such groups might be defined and set apart from the observer on account of their nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, customs, traditions and supposedly separate cultural experiences. This branding of other nationalities is common throughout Europe and can be traced back to antiquity: the concept of the savage/ civilised dichotomy was already in place in Homer’s The Odyssey.297 Every ethnic group or tribe was thought to have its own specific characteristics, merits and, more often, deficiencies.298 These images were and still are kept alive through the repetitive use of popular sayings, proverbs, jokes, and literature. From the beginning of academic research into stereotyping it was noted that individual differences within groupings disregard, or even negate, any personal variations or diversity.299 A national type associates particular distinctive character traits with all representatives of one foreign country, thus, perceiving ‘foreigners’ as a homogenous entity, regardless of personality and individuality.

In literature the typification (or stereotyping) of certain professions, salient members of society or different nationalities is a frequently used tool. A literary type can be seen as a construction of a subject, which contains easily identifiable and recognisable characteristics. When portrayed in a literary text, these protagonists evoke a number of preconceived expectations and implicit associations, which, in correspondence with (or opposition to) existing and commonly accepted stereotypes,

297 Bill Ashcroft, Key concepts in post-colonial studies, p. 209
298 Сергей Николаев, «Прича о немцах, французах и русских у Н. Лескова», с. 17
299 E.g. Walter Lippmann’s Public Opinion, 1922
complete their characterisation. Thus, typification is generated by political, social, cultural and ideological views of the actual readers as well as by personal impressions, emotions and intentions of the author. Many authors consciously use individual characters to represent, reinforce, sustain or denigrate specific social types, for example, the superfluous man, the new man, the strong heroine, or even whole generations. They rely on already existing, discursively constituted, popular images in the social consciousness of their readership, while they in turn help to shape public imagination. Literary types by nature fail to present a complete picture of individuals, but instead focus on a few, isolated characteristics. They are by no means always consistent and can easily have mutually contradictory elements existing next to one another.

Once established, a literary type can survive virtually unchanged for decades (if not centuries), disregarding political or social developments. In Russian literature, there is not only a strong dialogue between author and reader, but also an even stronger connection between authors, themes, ideas and characters in different texts. The mainly unconscious process of intertextuality is matched by a strong tradition of literary allusions and references. Types are copied, developed, referred to, hinted at, implicitly or explicitly, on a regular basis, taking into consideration, and relying on, the literary consciousness of the educated Russian reader. Moreover, Russian literature was an important tool for influencing and chronicling the formation of national identity; hence the frequent use of types as a means to explain and classify

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300 The Cambridge companion to the classic Russian novel, p. 133f.
301 Neil Cornwell (ed.), The Routledge companion to Russian literature, p. 23
Russian society. This idea can be traced back to Belinskii who stressed that literary images were necessary to educate the readership and create a strong social consciousness. Thus, while representative of some historical or cultural facts, types are first and foremost the result of literary traditions and social discourse. Nevertheless, although based on emotionally charged prejudice rather than objective and dispassionate judgement, typification can gain the appearance of absolute truth.

As was mentioned in the introduction the representations of Western European governesses and tutors conform to (and further develop) a literary type, which came into being in Russia in the late eighteenth century and progressed throughout the nineteenth century. This type is one-sided and simplifies the complex relationship between Western European educators and Russian families as expressed in historical accounts (such as memoirs and diaries), written by governesses/tutors and their Russian employers.

The typification of the foreign governess and tutor in Russian literature is composed of two elements; firstly, the associations linked to the profession itself, and secondly, the stereotypes linked to the nationality of the instructors. As a common historical figure throughout Europe among the upper classes and increasingly so in Russia from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, the governess and the tutor began to make a regular appearance in literature. Issues linked to this profession are comparable to those expressed by English novelists such as, for example, the Brontë sisters, Jane Austen or William Thackeray. While English novels almost

302 Nicholas Rzhevsky (ed.), The Cambridge companion to modern Russian culture, p. 96
exclusively deal with the fate of English governesses in English families, the majority of tutors and governesses in Russian literature are, in fact, French, German or British. Foreigners and, in particular, Western Europeans were typecast early on by Russian authors. They found their way into modern Russian literature and, throughout the nineteenth century, became a nearly ubiquitous presence in it. In fact, a German or French character in Russian literature is about as common as a Russian character in Western European literature is rare.\textsuperscript{303} Any Russian reference to Western Europeans automatically raised the issue of Russia’s position vis-à-vis the West, and with it Russia’s perceived inferiority. In this antagonistic view the foreign governesses and tutors in Russian literature acquired a predominantly negative image.

As is known from history, the situation of governesses and tutors in general was not enviable. The discussion in chapter 2 showed how their work restricted them to the nursery or classroom, and how their education proved to be a barrier between them and the servants, while their social class removed them from their socially and economically more empowered employers. Their education, however, did not necessarily prevent them from being treated like mere servants themselves on occasion. Having an awkward status between the ‘domestics’ and the ‘master’, they were outsiders with no ties to the family or the servants, and were in no position to command respect. The misery of these teachers informs many representations in literature, British and Russian. The position of an Agnes Grey or a Jane Eyre in the novels of the same titles by the Brontë sisters is in many respects comparable to that

\textsuperscript{303} Valentin Kiparsky, p. 11
of an English Miss described by Pushkin or Chekhov. As Pushkin put it in his novel
Дубровский [Dubrovskii]: the tutor’s profession was an “unfortunate” one («в
нечастном звании учителя» ³⁰⁴ [“in the unfortunate capacity as teacher”]).

Alienation, isolation and loneliness were common grievances. Nobody expresses this
more poignantly than Nikolenka, the first person narrator of Tolstoi’s Детство
[Childhood], commenting on his German tutor Karl Ivanych:

«Бедный, бедный старик! Нас много, мы играем, нам
весело, а он — один одинешенек, и никто-то его не
приласкает. Правду он говорит, что он сирота».³⁰⁵

[“Poor, poor old man. We are many, we can play together, and
we are happy, but he – he is completely alone. There is nobody
to caress him on occasion. He is right when he says that he is an
orphan”].

The children have each other to play with, the grown up members of the family have
their own interests, and the servants direct their own sphere of influence ‘downstairs’.
Only the tutor stands alone, isolated by the circumstances of his profession, social
status and, in the case of Russia, frequently by his nationality.

The position of a governess and a tutor is that of an outsider who remains a
stranger, however much he or she loves, or is loved, by the children. The greatest
disadvantage of their position was their dependency on the goodwill of their

³⁰⁴ А.С. Пушкин, Полное собрание сочинений в десяти томах, т. VI, с. 260
³⁰⁵ Л.Н. Толстой, Детство, Отрочество, Юность, с. 10
employer. In Chekhov’s short story ‘Переполох’ [‘An Upheaval’], the governess suffers the indignity of having her room searched in her absence, because her landlady misses a piece of jewellery. Obviously, the first suspicion falls upon the household staff, as well as on the hapless and innocent governess. The lady shrugs off complaints with a “я плохо верю этим ученым беднячкам” [“I don’t trust these educated poor wretches”], when in fact, the brooch was taken by her own husband. She obviously sees no difference between her servants and the governess. Equally, in another example, a whim of the landlord could mean unemployment, as Karl Ivanych in Childhood has to experience. After years of faithful work for the family, his employer suddenly no longer deems his services as necessary.

«Я двенадцать лет живу в этом доме и могу сказать перед богом, ... что я их [детей] любил и занимался ими больше, чем ежели бы это были мои собственные дети. ... Да, теперь я не нужен стал. меня и надо прогнать; а где обещания? где благодарность?»

[“I have been living in this house for twelve years. and before God I can say ... that I have loved them, and worked for them, even more than if they had been my own children. And now that I am no longer needed they drive me away. And what about their promises? Where is their gratitude?”].

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306 А.П. Чехов, Полное Собрание Сочинений и Писем в 30 томах, т. IV, с. 334
307 Л.Н. Толстой, Детство, отрочество, юность, с. 19
A teacher's position could even lead to bodily harm. Kirila Petrovich Troekurov, a landowner of the old type in Pushkin's *Dubrovskii*, is reported to be violent:

«Я слыхал о нем мало доброго. Сказывают, ... что с учителями (avec les outchitels) он не церемонится и уже двух засек до смерти».  

["I've heard very little good about him. ... They say he doesn’t stand on ceremony with his tutors (avec les outchitels), and that he has already flogged two of them to death"].

Nor does Troekurov hesitate to 'play a joke' at the expense of his French tutor by locking him into a room together with a hungry bear.

These fictional teachers were powerless, financially dependent, and had no rights against their employers other than leaving their position, and even that was denied them sometimes. In Chekhov’s *На чужбине* ['In a Foreign Land'], the former tutor Monsieur Champougne, degraded to serve as «вроде бонны мужского пола»  

["a kind of male bonne"] after the children had grown up, is forced to endure his employer's sneering and snide remarks about the French, their poor taste and bad habits. When Champougne decides to leave his tormentor, Kamyshev, the employer, with obvious enjoyment reminds him that he has accidentally lost the Frenchman's passport. Unable to leave without a passport, Monsieur Champougne has no choice but to continue listening to Kamyshev's derisive philosophising about why Russians

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308 А.С. Пушкин, т. VI, с. 279  
309 А.П. Чехов, т. IV, с. 163
are so much superior to the French and what makes France such an abominable place.

«Таким образом страдания Шампуня не имеют конца». 310 ["And thus Champougne’s sufferings are everlasting"]. The female heroine of Pushkin’s Dubrovskii perceives the French tutor as follows:

«Маша не обратила никакого внимания на молодого француза, воспитанная в аристократических предрассудках, учитель был для нее род слуги или мастерового, а слуга или мастеровой не казался ей мужчиной». 311

["Masha paid not the least attention to the young Frenchman: having been brought up with aristocratic prejudices, she regarded a tutor as a kind of servant or artisan; and servants or artisans were not men in her eyes”].

Russian authors miss few chances to show Western Europeans in an inferior position to their Russian employers. Very rarely this evokes pity; more often it leads the narrative to denigrate the foreigners themselves.

The typification of governesses in Western European literature tends to invite a sympathetic interpretation. They are usually stereotyped as genuinely good, cultivated, intelligent and long-suffering individuals. Jane Eyre struggles with her solitude and the limiting, stagnating and restrained existence to which women of her

310 Ibid., c. 166
311 A.С. Пушкин, т. VI, c. 261
time and in her position (educated but poor) were condemned. Her two cousins. Diana and Mary Rivers, are forced to toil among strangers who regard them “only as humble dependants, and who neither knew nor sought out their innate excellences, and appreciated only their acquired accomplishments as they appreciated the skill of their cook or the taste of their waiting-woman”.

The governess in Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* is described as “a most charming person” and “the most agreeable woman I’ve ever known in her position”. Jane Fairfax in Jane Austen’s *Emma* talks about the “evil day”, when she will “retire from all the pleasures of life, of rational intercourse, equal society, peace and hope, to penance and mortification for ever”, i.e. when she will have to start working as a governess. The women working in this profession are portrayed as pleasant, good and hardworking; their difficulties arise from their profession and their employers.

While English governesses were trying to fight against these two odds, their counterparts in Russian literature are depicted in almost exclusively negative terms. The foundation for this trend was laid in the late eighteenth century. The foreign tutor was among the first types that were developed in modern Russian literature, together with such characters as the civil servant, courtiers, landowners and military personnel, and he was invariably a figure of ridicule and disrepute. A look at the historical underpinnings of this stereotype show that in the mid-eighteenth century.

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312 Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 110
313 Ibid., p. 357
314 Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, p. 2
315 Jane Austen, *Emma*, p. 164
316 Ibid., p. 165
and in particular after the French Revolution, a great number of fortune seekers found their way into Russia. Many of them, “ex-tailors, cooks and soldiers”, 317 exploited their native language for a livelihood, as their arrival coincided with ‘Gallomania’ among many members of the gentry. It was in this context that the typification of their profession in literature commenced. As was discussed in chapter 1, the knowledge of French (and to a lesser extent German and English), refined manners and Western-style dress had become obligatory for ambitious Russian noblemen to such an extent as to require the presence of at least one foreign instructor. French and German tutors quickly became a recognisable figure in Russian journals.

One of those was the Живописец [The Painter], for example, which came out in 1772, 318 and began a «борьба с бюрократией, паразитирующим дворянством и галломанией» 319 [“a struggle with the bureaucracy, the parasitizing nobility and Gallomania”]. For those writers who rejected Gallomania, the image of ‘stupid Frenchman’ was an easy literary tool, a ready-made type, which needed no thorough explanation on the part of the author. These tutors are roughly sketched, underdeveloped, negligible, and conspicuous for displaying only a minimum of personal features. They were characterised by their complete incompetence as teachers, their fraudulent nature and the failure of their employers to recognise them

317 Maximiliane Müntjes, p. 78
318 Edited by N.I. Novikov
319 Денис Фонвизин, Собрание Сочинений, т. 1, вступительная статья и комментарии Г.П. Макогоненко, с. xx
as impostors. The portrayal of these Frenchmen is hardly ever completely hostile; more often they are simply depicted as objects of ridicule.\textsuperscript{320}

Early examples of this can be found in Fonvizin's plays \textit{Недоросль} [The Minor] (1781) and \textit{Выбор гувернера} [Choosing a Tutor] (1792), which helped to shape the type of the foreign tutor and served as a reference point for subsequent authors. Both plays are set on a country estate and deal with the lack of education among the landowning gentry. Equally, both foreigners turn out to be frauds of low origin, and completely incompetent as teachers. The name of the German Adam Adamych Vral'man in \textit{The Minor} already reveals his character\textsuperscript{321}: it comes from the Russian verb «врать», meaning 'to lie'. He is employed to teach his pupil «по-французски и всем наукам»\textsuperscript{322} ["French and all the sciences"], although he actually seems to be singularly opposed to education. «Умерит хатят репенка!»\textsuperscript{323} ["Zey vont to kill ze poy!"] and «капы не самарии ефо на ушенье!»\textsuperscript{324} ["if only zey don't ofervork him too mutch"] are his exclamations when he finds his pupil at work studying with the other two tutors, Kuteikin and Tsyfirkin. According to Vral'man's viewpoint, his 16-year-old charge Mitrofan should learn «как ишь ф сфети»\textsuperscript{325} ["how to lif in ze forld"], which includes, for example, avoiding the company of

\textsuperscript{320} Maximiliane Münjtes, p. 124
\textsuperscript{321} These 'telling names' are very common in eighteenth-century Russian literature. Not only Vral'man and Pelikan from \textit{Choosing a Tutor} are characterised by their names; nearly all the other characters in the two plays are equally earmarked.
\textsuperscript{322} Денис Фонвизин, с. 114
\textsuperscript{323} Ibid., с. 145
\textsuperscript{324} Ibid., с. 146
\textsuperscript{325} Ibid.
intelligent people, and watching «пользой сфер с косел»\(^{326}\) ["ze bik forld from ze coach pox"]\(^{326}\). Vral’man’s approach to ‘all the sciences’ in his teaching of Mitrofan is highlighted when a more learned visitor, Pravdin, arrives from Moscow and begins examining the boy to see what exactly he has been learning under Vral’man’s tutelage.

Правдин. Что же вы в ней [грамматике] знаете?

Митрофан. Много. Существительна да прилагательна...

Правдин. Дверь, например, какое имя: существительное

или  прилагательное?

Митрофан. Дверь, которая дверь?

Правдин. Котора дверь! Вот эта.

Митрофан. Эта? Прилагательна.

Правдин. Почему же?

Митрофан. Потому что она приложена к своему месту.

Вон у чулана шеста неделя дверь стоит еще не

навешена: так та покамест существительна.

[...]

Правдин. А далеко ли вы в истории?

Митрофан. Далеко ль? Какова история. В иной залетишь

за тридевять земель, за тридевято царство.

Правдин. А! Так этой-то истории учит вас Вральман?

[...]

\(^{326}\) Ibid.
Митрофан. Нет, наш Адам Адамыч истории не рассказывает; он, что я же, сам охотник слушать.

[Правдин. So, what do you know about grammar?

Митрофан. A lot. I know nouns and adjectives…

Правдин. What is “the door”, for example, a noun or an adjective?

Митрофан. The door? Which one?

Правдин. What do you mean, which one! That one.

Митрофан. That one? That’s an adjective.

Правдин. But why?

Митрофан. Because it has formed a junction with its place. There is a door next to the larder that has been standing there for six weeks, and which hasn’t been fitted yet. For the time being, that door is a noun.

…

Правдин. And how far have you got in history?

Митрофан. How far? That depends on the history. In some you fly across three times nine countries to the thirtieth Tsardom.

Правдин. I see. That’s the kind of history Vral’man teaches you, is it?
Mitrofan. No, our Adam Adamych doesn’t tell me histories. He
is like me, he prefers to listen to them himself].

So, according to what Mitrofan has learned from Vral’man’s teaching, whether or not
the word “door” is an adjective or a noun depends on its permanent or temporary
position. By history Mitrofan understands stories, i.e. fairy-tales. That the
representation of Vral’man acted as a kind of model for subsequent writers is
revealed by the fact that Pushkin uses exactly the same words (and stresses them in
italics) to describe his French tutor in Капитанская дочь [The Captain’s
Daughter]. Like Vral’man, M. Beaupré has been employed to teach his pupil «по-
французски, по-немецки и всем наукам» 327 [“French, German, and all the
sciences”].

Although Vral’man comes across as a thoroughly ignorant person and a bully
(especially at the expense of the other two instructors, whom he calls «прекламные
сламеи» [“curst fillains”]), and despite his parasitical and fruitless existence, it is the
Prostakovs who are at fault. They heed his every word, which becomes even more
ridiculous when Vral’man’s true profession is revealed in the end: he used to be a
cabby-driver. He explains the reason for his deception as follows:

327 А.С. Пушкин. Проза, драматические произведения, с. 68
He deceived not so much out of choice, but because the opportunity was presented to him. Vral’man is not represented as a calculating confidence trickster. The visiting Starodum turns out to have been his former employer, when Vral’man was still working as a cabby-driver. Starodum remembers the German as a kind man who would not take anything that was not his. Vral’man did not lie to the Prostakovs out of malice, although while the deception lasted he was quick to make the most of it.

The same attitude can be found in Pelikan, a French ‘tutor’ who is looking for employment with Prince Slaboumov and his wife in Choosing a Tutor. While Vral’man is given the opportunity to speak and reveal his motives and some aspects of his personality, Pelikan is entirely depicted through the comments of his past and prospective employers. The Slaboumovs are not endowed with any more intelligence than the Prostakovs, and while Mrs Prostakova, out of devotion and love, was aiming to give her son the best education possible, Princess Slaboumova is only concerned about her status and the issue of what is becoming to the son of a prince. The qualities

328 Денис Фонвизин, с. 174
of the Russian officer Nel'stetsov, another possible tutor, are brushed aside. His high qualifications are not good enough, simply because he refuses to give the ten-year-old Vasilii the title «ваши светельство» [“Your Excellency”]. Pelikan’s qualities, on the other hand, include a slavish demeanour and a readiness to call Vasilii and the parents ‘votre altesse’. Even when Seum, the marshal of the nobility, reveals Pelikan’s real origin and profession, Princess Slaboumova is not convinced:

С е у м. «Сей пустоголовый француз был во Франции в какой-нибудь богадельне подле каем; умеет рвать зубы и вырезывать мозоли,- но больше ничего. Он приехал в Россию, и я в другом наместничестве, где у меня есть деревня, увидел его в учителях у детей благородных, за долг считал доложить о том наместнику, который, считая таких побродяг зловредными отечеству, выгнал его вон по моему представлению, и для того он, увидев меня, от сюда выбежал, видно боюсь, чтоб я его в другой раз не погнал по шее».329

К и я г и и я (про себя). «Думала ль я, чтоб мы, призвав предводителя для ссыкания сыну нашему наставника, лишились чрез него достойного гувернера, который, вступив в комнату, начал тем, что отдал нам должное, именовав меня и мужа моего: votre altesse».330

329 Денис Фонвизин, Собрание Сочинений в двух томах, т. 1. с. 202
330 Ibid.
“This empty-headed Frenchman used to be a quack in some poor-house. He knows how to pull teeth and cut corns—and that’s it. He came to Russia, and in a different part of the country where I’ve got a village I saw him teaching children of noblemen. I considered it my duty to report him to the authorities. The governor considered these tramps to be harmful to our country. Therefore, upon my recommendation, he chased him away. That’s why, when he saw me, he ran off. He was obviously afraid that he might be thrown out yet again.”

Princess (aside). “It didn’t occur to me that in appealing to the marshal to help us find an instructor for our son he would deprive us of a worthy tutor. A tutor, who, when he entered the room, began by addressing us properly and called myself and my husband votre altesse.”

Pelikan, true to type, is depicted as ignorant and dishonest. In *The Minor*, the revelation of Vral’man’s true profession as cab driver failed to get any comment from his employers. In the play *Choosing a Tutor*, Fonvizin goes one step further to enhance the comedy and social criticism of the provincial nobility. Princess Slaboumova remains convinced that Pelikan would have been the perfect tutor, even when his fraudulent nature is revealed.
This type was not only used as a literary device in the eighteenth century, but found its way into nineteenth-century Russian literature as well. Pushkin continues the tradition of placing the French and German tutor of questionable credentials into his plots. All of his French tutors, for example, have changed little since their first appearance in eighteenth-century Russian journals (like the Живописец [The Painter]. Monsieur Beaurpe in The Captain’s Daughter is a former barber and soldier. Monsieur Desforges in Dubrovskii a confectioner, and both have come to Russia “pour être outchitel, ne очень понимаю значение этого слова” [“pour être outchitel, in order to become teachers, without properly understanding the meaning of the word”]. Both are given very little to say and play minor roles. After the first few paragraphs, which describe the ‘education’ of the main protagonist and first person narrator Petr Andreevich Grinev in The Captain’s Daughter, Monsieur Beaurpe gets no further mention. And the process of ‘education’ is only noteworthy for its complete absence:

«Он предпочел наскоро выучиться от меня кое-как болтать по-русски,- и потом каждый из нас занимался уже своим делом».333

[“He preferred to learn a smattering of Russian from me. From then on, we both minded our own business”].

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331 Cf. p. 132
332 А.С. Пушкин. Проза, драматические произведения, c. 68
333 Ibid.
It is curious to note that up until Pushkin, particular stress was placed on the inferior social status of tutors, (so prevalent in Fonvizin’s work, for example). Subsequent writers, however, did not develop this characteristic any further, but instead, simply avoided giving any background information on their foreign instructors at all. There are two possible reasons why Russian authors in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century tended to focus on the unsophisticated nature of their foreign instructors. Firstly, this image is partly representative of actual conditions existing in Russia at the time. And secondly, it criticises and ridicules the the backward provincial nobility who, through ignorance, lack of money, and unquestioning adoration of everything French or Western, entrusted their children to highly unsuitable teachers. To stress this point, writers focused on the tutor’s or governess’s inferior status and created a one-sided image, which totally ignored not only the positive experiences which many Russians had with their foreign instructors, but also presented these foreign characters as masks rather than individuals.

The more the Russian upper classes moved away from their excessive emulation of Western Europeans and began to question their own position vis-à-vis the West, the less important the lowly origins of their Western European governesses and tutors seems to have become in literature. Whereas before in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the narratives stressed the fact that foreign tutors were cab-drivers, quacks, barbers, soldiers and confectioners, authors like Turgenev and Tolstoi no longer point out the previous occupations of their instructors. Other issues
moved to the foreground and found expression in literature. The Gallomania, which had shaped the nobility of the eighteenth century under the Empresses Elizaveta Petrovna and Catherine II, decreased considerably during the Napoleonic Wars, and new trends began to appeal to the Russian nobility. Anglomania, for example, attracted a small following among a limited section of St Petersburg society, although it was generally restricted to the very affluent who could afford to import English landscape gardeners, English horses, trainers, jockeys and so on. More universally, Russia’s fascination with the West finally turned into the well-known debate between the Slavophiles and Westernisers.

Literature’s stereotypical feature of incompetence and the insufficient level of education among tutors and governesses, however, had become part of how Russians perceived this particular profession and is hardly ever questioned or developed. The stereotype can be found in the writings of Fonvizin through to Kuprin. In many novels, short stories and plays from Pushkin onwards the focus on foreigners shifts to the professional activity itself, i.e. teaching, for which they were employed, or, more accurately, its absence. Foreigners are hardly ever shown to be actually doing any teaching. This portrayal is essentially and elaboration of the theme of incompetence.

This seems to be the case especially with the governesses who came to feature more prominently in fiction. The first foreign woman depicted in modern Russian

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334 For the discussion of how the role of governesses and tutors in Russian literature changed, see chapter 5.
literature was Miss Jackson,\textsuperscript{335} introduced by Pushkin in his "Барышня-крестьянка" ['The Squire's Daughter']\textsuperscript{336}, the last of the five stories in Повести покойного Ивана Петровича Белкина [The Tales of the Late Ivan Petrovich Belkin]. Unsurprisingly, she is of British origin. In the late eighteenth century, an English education came to epitomise 'a good education'. This belief was strengthened by a common admiration of the British aristocracy, its way of life, and Britain's imperial and industrial clout, which made English culture, manners and the language even more desirable for members of the ambitious, Westernising, Russian elite.\textsuperscript{337} Unlike most of their French or German counterparts, English governesses were seen as highly qualified,\textsuperscript{338} and the fact that there were fewer of them working in Russia increased their 'snob appeal' in the eyes of Russian society.\textsuperscript{339} Despite the respect, which the Russians usually reserved for the British at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the literary representation of English governesses does not deviate from the fairly negative depiction established for the French and the German representatives of the profession. This pattern, originally established for the type of the tutor, was transferred onto the governess.

In this aspect the foreign governess in Russia differs from her counterpart in English literature. A Jane Eyre might talk to her Rochester in the evenings, but during the day she teaches her pupil. She might be getting married in a month's time, but in

\textsuperscript{335} Valentin Kiparsky, p. 83
\textsuperscript{336} Alternatively, the title of this short story has been translated as 'Mistress into Maid'
\textsuperscript{337} Broughton, Trev, and Ruth Symes (eds.), p. 154
\textsuperscript{338} Bea Howe, p. 15. English governesses are described as part of Britain's 'top-grade export' to the world.
\textsuperscript{339} Ibid., p. 130
the meanwhile she continues to work with Adèle. In Pushkin and subsequent writers, governesses are depicted as idle and this hardly changes throughout the century.\textsuperscript{340} It even features in Chekhov’s play \textit{Вишневый сад} [\textit{The Cherry Orchard}] of 1904, although the governess here is endowed with a more complex profile. From a quiet mentor, invisible and unimportant, the governess Charlotta Ivanovna has been transformed into a highly eccentric character who entertains the adults rather than teaches the children.

The literary representation of the governess begins to draw more upon the literary imagination than on historically credible representation, especially when the reputation of English women who were coming to Russia is taken into consideration. In his \textit{When Miss Emmie was in Russia} (1977), personal interviews with English ladies who had worked as governesses in Russia in the early 1900s led Harvey Pitcher to the following conclusion:

“The English governess in Russia was well treated because she did provide an excellent service, thereby acquiring a high professional reputation and coming to be keenly sought after […]. She was valued for the quiet yet determined way in which she introduced some order and system into the otherwise haphazard Russian approach to bringing up children”.\textsuperscript{341}

\textsuperscript{340} Further examples would be Turgenev’s Mademoiselle Boncourt in \textit{Rudin}, Herr Schimmel in ‘Faust’, the English governesses in Tolstoi’s \textit{Anna Karenina}, Miss Jenners in Kuprin’s ‘The Poor Prince’, and Chekhov’s ‘A Daughter of Albion’.

\textsuperscript{341} Harvey Pitcher, \textit{When Miss Emmie was in Russia}, p. 35, 36
In Pitcher's experience, English teachers were good instructors and were chosen by their Russian employers for that very reason.

In literature, on the other hand, teaching does not even get a mention as, for example, in Pushkin's 'The Squire's Daughter'. Pushkin's unusual choice of an English governess, (French and German ones were, after all, much more numerous), highlights the fact that the landowner Muromskii is an eccentric and an extreme Anglophile. His daughter's governess is a further addition to his English garden, his English agricultural methods and his grooms dressed like English jockeys. Pushkin has his skaz narrator endow Miss Jackson with many of the characteristics that had become typical for the foreign tutor. Although there is no information as to her background, there is the suggestion that she does take advantage of her employer financially. She might not have lied or kept quiet about her qualifications like Adam Adamych Vral'man, but the 'exertions' she has to go through in order to earn a large amount of money are also minimal. Pushkin's Miss Jackson receives the stately sum of 2000 roubles per year. Some fifty years earlier, Fonvizin's Vral'man had to settle for 300 roubles. Yet, she is never actually seen to be teaching her pupil (or doing anything else for that matter!).

«Мисс Джаксон, сорокалетнюю чопорную девицу, которая белилась и сурымила себе брови, два раза в год

\[34\] Her earnings are comparable with Dubrovskii's (in the disguise of Desforges) who earns 3000Rb/year.
Miss Jackson was a prim, forty-year-old maiden who powdered her face, pencilled her eyebrows, re-read Pamela twice a year, and received two thousand roubles for it"].

In the short story 'In a Foreign Land', Chekhov summarises the tutor’s task like this:

«Он должен прилично одеваться, пахнуть духами,
выслушивать праздную болтовню Камышева, есть, пить, спать — и больше, кажется, ничего».344

["He should be appropriately dressed, smell of perfume, listen to the idle chatter of Kamyshev, eat, drink and sleep. That was all"].

As we have seen, foreign governesses and tutors always tended to have an element of the ridiculous about them. Here too, having her read and re-read345 the novel Pamela,346 Pushkin’s narrator seems to suggest that Miss Jackson is a middle-aged, lonely unmarried woman who can only dream about marriage and sentimental love. The implication is clearly that romance will not be available to her ever. While

343 А.С. Пушкин, Проза, драматические произведения, с. 52
344 А.П. Чехов, т. IV, с. 163
345 This is echoed in Tolstoi’s Childhood, where the tutor Karl Ivanych only ever consults three books: «немецкую брошюру об укавоживании огородов под капусту [..], один том истории Семистелей войн [..], полный курс гидростатики» [a German pamphlet about the fertilisation of cabbages grown in kitchen gardens ..., one volume about the history of the Seven Years’ War ..., and a complete guide to hydrostatics].
346 Pamela or Virtue Rewarded by Samuel Richardson was first published in 1740. It is written in epistolary form had a profound influence on the development of the modern novel. It deals with issues such as female honour, morality, virtue, social status and the constraints put on women by society.
Fonvizin ridiculed the Russian provincial nobility by letting them employ the likes of Vral’man and Pelikan, Miss Jackson herself has become a figure of ridicule.

Moreover, Miss Jackson is the first in a line of women whose representation completely avoided the inclusion of individual character traits. She is introduced as a mere complement to her charge, the 17-year old Liza Muromskaia, and the reader learns nothing about her background, emotions and personality. There are no Russian equivalents of governesses like Jane Fairfax in Jane Austen’s *Emma*, or Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, who speak up for those thousands of women who are condemned to a life of isolation and inactivity, and deprived of an essential part of their personal freedom because of their sex. This voicelessness and insignificance is standard in the depiction of foreign teachers by Russian authors.\(^{347}\) Considering the historical fact that foreigners were responsible for the upbringing and education of generations of Russian upper-class children, their representation in Russian literature is entirely marginal. Their personal experiences are of very little importance and few are given a personal voice, even though it was their job to teach Russians how to be ‘European’. Yet the issue of the acquisition of French, German or English does not tend to be problematised in literary narratives at all.

Instead, Russian texts are much more concerned with the external appearance of foreign governesses and tutors than with their thoughts, feelings, intellect.

\(^{347}\) Two very rare exceptions are Karl Ivanych Mauer in Tolstoi’s *Childhood* who is given the opportunity to speak about his former life (although its veracity is questioned by the narrator), and the music teacher Lemm in Turgenev’s *A Nest of the Gentry*, who gets a whole chapter.
knowledge, experiences or personal opinions. Miss Jackson’s representation focuses almost exclusively on her appearance which is ‘typically’ British, i.e. prim, stiff, unsmiling and rather ugly (good looks are the exclusive attribute of French governesses). In the description of foreigners, Russian writers often refer to animals. It is worth considering examples taken from different texts: «длгоносого журавля» [long-nosed crane], describes Schaaf in Turgenev’s Месяц в деревне [A Month in the Country], whose name itself means ‘sheep’; рыбы глаза [the fish eyes] serves Miss Jenners in Kuprin’s ‘Бедный принц’ [‘The Poor Prince’]; «выражение в глазах [как] у старых, очень умных левьев собак» [“an expression in her eyes like that of an old, intelligent setter”] characterises Mademoiselle Boncourt in Turgenev’s Рудин [Rudin]; the Swedish governess in Turgenev’s Дворянское гнездо [A Nest of the Gentry] has «заячие глаза» [“eyes like a rabbit”]; Mauer in Tolstoi’s Childhood has a «орлинный нос» [“nose like an eagle”]; and Lemm in A Nest of the Gentry is described as follows: «его движения напоминали неуклюжее охраняние совы в клетке» [“his movements reminded one of an owl in a cage, awkwardly preening its feathers”]. Chekhov’s description of Miss Twice in ‘Дочь Альбиона’ [‘A Daughter of Albion’] is by far the most grotesque:

«Высокая, тонкая англичанка с выпуклыми рачьими глазами и большим птичьим носом, похожим скорей на крючок, чем на нос».

[“A tall, thin Englishwoman with bulging crab-like eyes and a big bird-like nose, which looked more like a hook than a nose.”].

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In other places throughout the story, her Russian employer Griabov calls her by the following names: стерлядь; чучело; чертова кукла; кикимора; тритона [a sterling, a stuffed animal or scarecrow, a bloody puppet, a monster, and a newt]. When it comes to Russian characters, though, references to animals or even inanimate objects are not common. Such similes and metaphors emphasise the teachers' foreignness and, more importantly, their otherness from Russian normativity. This otherness is not accidentally likened to that of inferior beings, animals. The thinly-veiled message that arises from such depiction is that although these Misses and Monsieurs might have come to Russia from countries of the 'superior' West, they are not better than their Russian counterparts when it comes to looks and behaviour, quite the opposite.

Some Russian authors share a tendency to stress the arrogance and the outward show of cultural superiority in the representation of their Western European characters. Either the foreigners themselves articulate this feeling, or they are suspected by Russians to harbour them. Miss Jackson, for example, «умирала со скуки в этой варварской России»348 ["was dying of boredom in this barbarian Russia"]). As was pointed out in chapter 2, there were certainly foreigners in Russia who perceived the country and its inhabitants as backward and inferior to their country of origin. However, in Russian literature, this tendency seems to be

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348 А.С. Пушкин, Проза, драматические произведения, с. 52
greatly exaggerated. In Chekhov’s ‘In a Foreign Land’ it is the Russian landowner who is convinced that his French tutor has the worst possible opinion of Russia.

«По-вашему, все русское скверно, а французское — о, сэ трэ жоли!»349

[“You think that everything Russian is foul, but everything French, oh, say tray zholee”350].

«По-вашему, лучше французов и людей нет. Ученый, умный народ. Цивилизация!»351

[“You think there are no better people than the French. An educated and clever nation. Civilisation!”].

Monsieur Champougne’s assurances that he had never said anything to that effect are brushed aside. Kamyshev wants to believe that the Frenchman looks down on Russia and the Russians. Incidentally, it transpires from their conversation that, unable to bear Kamyshev’s taunting and offensive remarks any longer, Champougne would very much like to leave his position. Yet, the landowner enjoys having an audience too much to let his tutor go. This insensitive and selfish exploitation of the Frenchman implies that Kamyshev is indeed neither well educated nor sophisticated. This short-story voices yet again the stereotypical perception of the foreign other. Furthermore, Chekhov’s narrative uses the Frenchman to hold up a mirror to those Russians who, because they feel inferior, lash out against the West.

349 А.П. Чехов, т. IV, с. 163
350 Fr. “C’est très joli”.
351 А.П. Чехов, т. IV, с. 164
Xenophobia in Russia, especially among the peasants and uneducated country folk, was widespread. The historical memoirs and diaries examined in chapter 3 do sometimes record opinions voiced by peasant nannies about the resident governess or tutor. This, for example, is what I.A. Salov’s nanny said about his German tutor, Andreas Trumheller:

«Что уж это, - ворчала она, - нагнали каких-то колбасников и отдали им барское дитё. Вот как из барского дитё немец-то сделает какого-нибудь сапожника, в те поры и спохватитесь».

["What is this, - she grumbled, - they found some sausage-eater and handed over the master's boy to him. Later they'll notice how that German will turn the master's boy into some cobbler."]

The recording of their foreignness and unfamiliar ways, and the portrayal of Russians' reactions and innate suspicion towards them was part of the representation of foreign instructors in Russian literature from the very beginning of their appearance. In Fonvizin’s The Minor, the two Russian tutors, Kuteikin and Tsyfirkin, and many other secondary characters such as servants, stationmasters or peasants by subsequent writers demonstrate this pattern. In Pushkin’s The Captain’s Daughter, for example, the groom Savel’ich grumbles about the arrival of the new French tutor who is about to replace him as teacher to the boy Grinev.

352 И.А. Салов, «Умчавшиеся годы. Из моих воспоминаний», с. 10
353 A.S. Pushkin, The Captain’s Daughter
354 A.S. Pushkin, Dubrovskii; N.S. Leskov, ‘Железная воля’ ['An Iron Will']
355 L.N. Tolstoi, Anna Karenina
Savel’ich really disapproved of his coming. “Thank God” – he mumbled to himself. “The child is clean, combed and well-fed. Why would they want to waste good money on hiring this Frenchman, as if there weren’t enough of us around!”

In Pushkin’s Dubrovskii, the stationmaster does not give the required horses to a waiting Frenchman.

“Just give him those horses and let him go to hell. – He can wait, Pakhomovna. There are only three troikas ready to go, the fourth one is resting. Good travellers could turn up any minute. I don’t want to risk my neck for a Frenchman”.

Surprisingly, few of the fictional foreign tutors or governesses flaunt this notion of superiority. Miss Jackson in ‘The Squire’s Daughter’ does believe that Russia is ‘barbaric’, but the majority are too insignificant and minor to act anywhere
but in the background. Their essentially unfavourable description in the narrative is enough to make an ideological point, therefore making it unnecessary to give them an actual voice. In fact, doing so would be counterproductive, as it might invite the reader to consider these men and women as individuals, rather than types. Chekhov’s short story ‘A Daughter of Albion’ is conspicuous though in that it gives a portrait of an English governess who seems to be the personification of arrogance and condescension. The landowner Griabov dislikes his children’s English governess as a person, but moreover, he also seems to loathe her for being a representative of Western Europe. If she were ‘only’ the governess, an appendage to the family, employed to bring up the children in a socially desirable manner, she would probably be too unimportant to hold his attention. He cannot, however, ignore the presence of an Englishwoman. He concludes: «с презрением на все смотрит»;\(^{356}\) ... «выше толпы стоит!» ... И за людей нас не считает!\(^{357}\) ["She holds everything here in contempt"; ... “She thinks she is something better!” ... “She doesn’t regard us as human!”].

Griabov’s hatred of Miss Twice is based on more than pure xenophobia. His greatest objection seems to be to her inability to communicate. Even after ten years in Russia, she is still unable to speak or even understand a single word of Russian. The narrative stresses her supposed inability to acquire conversational skills in Russian, thus allowing Griabov to vent his fury at her unchallenged. For him the

\(^{356}\) А.П. Чехов, Рассказы, с. 4
\(^{357}\) Ibid., с. 6
Englishwoman is like a red rag to a bull. Griabov (like Kamyshev in ‘In a Foreign Land’) assumes that the foreigner surely must feel condescending, patronising and haughty disrespect for all Russians, and the absence of a common language thwarts any rational dialogue. In this Miss Twice resembles other foreign characters (such as, for example, Champougne), who tend to exhibit incomprehension rather than arrogance about Russians and their country. This is partly explained by their inability to speak Russian, and partly by their lack of interest in their host country. Here, the type again deviates from historical governesses and tutors. Obviously, some never managed to or even strove to reach a high level of proficiency in Russian. One Henry William Kerby, who lived and worked in Russia from 1875 to 1911, never learned the language properly, “as if fearing that to do so would be to compromise his identity as an Englishman”. Yet, his five sisters who also spent most of their adult life living and teaching in Russia, “all spoke English and Russian with equal facility”.

There is a clear development in the type of the foreign governesses and tutors, and the knowledge of Russian seems to be one indication of it. In eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century works (from Fonvizin to Pushkin), when authors tended to stress the humble origin and incompetence of their foreign teachers, the likes of Vral’man spoke flawed and comical, but comprehensible and articulate Russian. Pushkin’s Monsieur Beaupré in The Captain’s Daughter quickly learned enough

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358 Harvey Pitcher, When Miss Emmie was in Russia, p. 18
359 Ibid., p. 23f.
Russian from his pupil to be able to pursue his interest in the fair sex. Many governesses and tutors in Turgenev, Tolstoi and Chekhov, however, are depicted as lacking the ability to communicate in Russian at all. Their inferred refusal to learn Russian and their inability to speak it even after years of residence in Russia becomes a new element in the representation of this type. Foreign instructors who had been employed to teach French, German and English were now reproached and debunked for failing to learn Russian. In literary representation, Russians, even among the intelligentsia, were convinced that foreigners were simply incapable of speaking Russian properly\(^{360}\), whereas Russians were proud of their own abilities in learning foreign languages. As Griabov, the landowner in Chekhov’s ‘A Daughter of Albion’, exclaims:

\[\text{«Наш какой-нибудь аристократишку поедет к ним и живо по-ихнему брехать научится, а о н и... черт уж знает!»}\^{361}\]

[“Even the least of our noblemen, when he goes to them he quickly learns to prattle in their lingo, while they... what the hell can you say about them!”].

Not only does this serve as a good enough reason to hate Miss Twice, but it also indicates that he regards Miss Twice’s refusal to learn Russian as a deficiency and even an insult which extends to all foreigners, regardless of nationality. It can be argued that Russian literature began to foreground national pride which had come as a result of several developments during the early parts of the nineteenth century. These

\(^{360}\) Maximiliane Müntjes, p. 107
\(^{361}\) А.П. Чехов, Рассказы, c. 4 (my italics)
included the experiences of the Napoleonic Wars, the Vienna Congress, the debate among intellectuals as to how to define Russia’s strengthened military and political position vis-à-vis the West, the rise of nationalism throughout the German-speaking lands and Eastern Europe which influenced the thinking of the Russian intelligentsia and heightened the concern about identity at the time of the debate between Westernisers and Slavophiles, and the attempts by the government to define the Russian state. This stereotype had become so entrenched by the time Chekhov wrote his satire, that he could take it to extremes in the interaction between his landowner and governess in ‘A Daughter of Albion’. The stress on the ability of Russian noblemen in literature to speak foreign languages shows a desire in Russian cultural consciousness to articulate a favourable image of Russian identity.

As was demonstrated above, nationality is often of secondary importance in the representation of foreign (Western European) governesses and tutors. Their literary portrayal is more concerned with their being from the West in general and with their inferiority in social status, physical appearance and language ability. However, national stereotypes nevertheless impress upon the consciousness of Russian authors and do form part of the description of foreigner instructors. There are many associations connected with individual nationalities in Russian literature, which were developed over centuries and have their origin in popular culture. As my literary evidence clearly implies, the French are ‘known’ to be superficial, vain and flirtatious, the British are shown as skilled, cold and stiff, and the Germans have a well-established literary image as pedantic, hard-working, frugal and narrow-minded.
people. Commonly accepted stereotypes are simply re-articulated and thereby strengthened.

In Dubrovskii, for example, Pushkin refers to an eighteenth-century and rather obscure characteristic associated with the French, i.e. whistling. Monsieur Deforges, a Frenchman on his way to the estate of landowner Kirila Petrovich Troekurov to take up his new position as tutor, is stranded without horses at a provincial posting inn. Deforges never reaches his destination, because the brigand Dubrovskii takes his place, but even the short interlude, the meeting between Deforges and Dubrovskii at the inn is important for the development of the story. It explains Dubrovskii’s disguise as French tutor and his presence on Kirila Petrovich Troekurov’s estate. When Pushkin introduces the Frenchman he is whistling, which the stationmaster’s wife greatly resents.

«Вот бог послал свистуна, – говорила она вполголоса. – Эх посвистывает, чтоб он лопнул, окаянный басурман».

[“The Lord blessed us with a whistler,” she muttered. “Ugh, how he goes on and on! I wish he’d burst, the cursed infidel”].

This notion that French people like to whistle (a feature that is condemned by many Russians even today, because it is supposed to drive money away) can be traced back to the eighteenth century. In Nikolai Gavrilovich Kurganov’s Опись Качеств

\(^{362}\) А.С. Пушкин, т. VI, с. 277
The most common association with French people, however, is their supposedly exciting love life. Although Pushkin gives a rare example of a French tutor in his *The Captain's Daughter* who shows «страсть к прекрасному полу» ["passion for the fair sex"], this label is more regularly given to French women, i.e. French governesses turned mistresses. They are never described in any great detail. but even a fleeting allusion to their presence, their “typical” French good looks and fiery, promiscuous temperament can have an impact on the plot. Mlle Mimi, for example, in Pushkin’s *Dubrovskii* is indirectly responsible for Dubrovskii’s presence on Troekurov’s country estate: she is the mother of Troekurov’s illegitimate son. She had left the estate long before Pushkin picks up the narration, and her sole use to the story is to provide Troekurov with a reason to employ a tutor, which then turns out to be Dubrovskii. An equally short appearance of a French governess, Mademoiselle Roland, can be found in Tolstoi’s *Anna Karenina*. Stepan

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363 Н.Г. Курганов *Российская универсальная грамматика*, Санкт Петербург, 1769; cited in Сергей Николаев, с. 19
364 My italics.
365 Valentin Kiparsky, p. 88
366 А.С. Пушкин, т. VI, с. 394
Arkad'ich Oblonskii had had an affair with her. This is the cause for the disruption in the Oblonskii household at the beginning of the novel, which leads to the famous first sentence: «Все счастливые семьи похожи друг на друга, каждая несчастливая семья несчастлива по-своему» ["Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way"]). One implication clearly seems to be that a state of normalcy is disrupted by the presence and actions of foreigners.

Chekhov’s ‘Дорогие уроки’ ['Expensive Lessons'] also has at its core the perceived sexuality of a Frenchwoman, in this case the language teacher of the main protagonist Vorotov. The story is told by a third person narrator, but almost everything the reader learns about Mademoiselle Enquete is derived from Vorotov’s comments and thoughts, which tend to focus on her physical appearance. As was discussed above (p. 147-149), the physical description is a frequent attribute of the governess/tutor type. Her first appearance includes a lengthy description of her dress, figure and possible age:

«Молодая, по последней моде, изысканно одетая барышня»; «это была настоящая, очень изящная француженка, еще очень молодая. По лицу, бледному и томному, по коротким кудрявым волосам и неестественно тонкой талии ей можно было дать не больше 18 лет»;
«взглянув же на ее широкие, хорошо развитые плечи, на красивую спину и строгие глаза, Воротов подумал, что ей.

367 Л.Н. Толстой, Собрание сочинений в двадцати томах, т. VIII, с. 7
"She was a young lady, a genuine Frenchwoman, elegantly dressed according to the latest fashion and still quite young. Judging by her pale, languid face, her short curly hair, and her unnaturally slim waist, she could have been eighteen"; "but looking at her broad, well-developed shoulders, her beautiful back and her stern eyes, Vorotov thought that she was no less that three-and-twenty and might be already twenty-five. But then again she seemed to be no more than eighteen years old"

Her countenance, however, does not correspond to that of a ‘typical’ Frenchwoman: the expression in her eyes is severe; her face is cold, professional and unsmiling rather than sensual and flirtatious. The story develops out of Vorotov's failure to understand Mademoiselle Enquete's businesslike behaviour towards himself. He is so focused on his stereotypical perception of French women, that he totally ignores Mademoiselle Enquete’s obvious coldness and reserve.

Vorotov's prejudices find further confirmation when Mademoiselle Enquete once comes to a lesson wearing a pink dress with décolleté and wrapped in a cloud of perfume. Her attire is explained at once: she plans to go to a ball straight after the class. Nevertheless, looking her over, Vorotov seems to see his prejudices confirmed:
["He looked at her neck and bare back, and thought he understood why Frenchwomen had the reputation of being frivolous creatures who could easily be led astray"].

Again, Mademoiselle Enquete gives him no reason at all to assume that she is flirtatious, she remains cool and businesslike towards her 'pupil'. Despite her uninviting and cold demeanour, Vorotov lusts after her, or rather, the image of 'the typical Frenchwoman', which he remembers whenever it suits him.

["During the next lessons he devoured his elegant teacher with his eyes. He no longer struggled with himself and gave full rein to his imagination, chaste and unchaste"].

Chekhov plays with the expectations, stereotypes and prejudices of his protagonist who wants his French teacher to behave according to type, while in actual fact she is represented as being very unlike the traditional image of the sensual French femme fatale.

368 A.P. Чехов, т. VI, с. 392
369 Ibid., с. 393
Kuprin uses a similar reversal of a historical stereotype in his short story ‘The Poor Prince’. Based on my historical evidence, one characteristic habit of English women actually living and teaching in Russia was their love of fresh air, i.e. talking regular walks, regardless of the weather and the time of year. Their pupils regularly recall this habit in their memoirs, and several English governesses talk about it themselves, not without a certain pride. Hannah Tracey, nursery governess to Tolstoi’s three small children was remembered as the daughter of a gardener at Windsor castle “who exemplifies that attitude of ‘fresh air and common sense’, which was the hallmark of the British nanny and governess abroad”. Nathalie Majolier had several governesses, French, English and Russian. Yet only in describing the English Miss Lena does Majolier mention activities such as going for walks, learning the names of plants and birds, bird-nesting, collecting flowers and mushrooming. Harvey Pitcher describes Miss Emmie’s daily walks with her charge Volodia as an “excellent English habit”, while Amelia Lyons who worked in Russia as a governess, goes as far as to call walking her “national custom”.

The governess in the story ‘The Poor Prince’, Miss Jenners, is a ‘typically’ dull and unsightly English governess. Her charge Dania, the nine-year-old main protagonist of the story, suffers from overprotection by females. He is the only son of the most important and most educated person in town, according to Dania. The

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370 Harvey Pitcher, *When Miss Emmie was in Russia*, p. 28
371 Nathalie Majolier, p. 24-28
372 Harvey Pitcher, *When Miss Emmie was in Russia*, p. 76
373 Amelia Lyons, p. 120
combined forces of his mother, three aunts, a nurse, and his governess look after and worry about his physical and mental well-being. They curtail any activity, which might harm him and, unsurprisingly, this includes taking daily walks during the winter.

«Но его милое лицо мучительно-бледно, и это происходит от недостатка воздуха: чуть ветер немного посильнее или мороз больше шести градусов, Даню не выпускают гулять. А если и поведут на улицу, то полчаса перед этим укутывают: гамаши, меховые ботики, теплый оренбургский платок на грудь, шапка с наушниками, башлычок, пальто на гагачьем пуху, беличьи перчатки, муфта... опротивеет и гулянье!»

[“Lack of fresh air made him look very pale. Dania would not be allowed to go out for a walk if the wind began to blow a bit harder or the temperature fell below minus six degrees. And if he was let out, then only after having been wrapped up properly for half an hour in gaiters, fur boots, a warm woollen scarf, a cap and a hood, an eiderdown-lined coat, squirrel mittens, and a muff. Enough to put you off any walk!”]
introduction of his English governess cause a disparity between a popular stereotype (English governesses always go for walks with their pupils) and the actions of a fictional character. There is no such association with French or German governesses. so, the fact that Kuprin chooses an English Miss was likely to cause surprise among the contemporary Russian readers. In general, this detail added another layer and thus enriched the characterisation of a minor protagonist.

German tutors and governesses generally correspond to the typical stereotypes so common in Russian literature. Turgenev’s German tutors, for example, are usually kind, yet pathetic, slightly ridiculous and pitiable characters. Schimmel in ‘Фауст’ [‘Faust’] is described as «седовласый, но аккуратный младенец» 375 and «безвредный этот старик» 376 [“a grey-haired, but well-organised child” and “harmless old man”]. Riekmann in Дневник лишнего человека [Diary of a Superfluous Man] fares worse:

«Один худосочный и слезливый немец, Рикман, необыкновенно печальное и судьбою пришибленное существо, бесплодно сгоравшее томительной тоской по далекой родине».377

[“Riekmann was a sapless, tearful German and a remarkably mournful creature who had been cruelly mistreated by fate. He

375 И.С. Тургенев, Собрание Сочинений в пяти томах, т. II, с. 285
376 Ibid., с. 288
377 И.С. Тургенев, т. I, с. 473
was unfruitfully consumed by a lingering grief for his distant fatherland”].

German governesses tend to be described in physical rather than intellectual terms, as was common for all governesses. However, while English governesses tended to be stiff, lean and ugly and French ones sensual and beautiful, the stereotypical exterior of a German Fräulein is generally large and crudely physical. Zoia in Turgenev’s Накануне [On the Eve] is depicted as белокурая, пухленькая [blond and plump], while Rosalia Karlovna in Chekhov’s ‘Нервы’ [‘Nerves’] is толстая, краснощекая [stout with red cheeks]. The only one to diverge from the stereotypical German image is Charlotta Ivanovna in Chekhov’s play The Cherry Orchard. She is of slender build and certainly not ordinary.

The characterisation of French and British governesses and tutors is usually reduced to the bare minimum, whereas teachers who play a more prominent role in the context of the novel or short story, especially in the works of Turgenev, are often German. A possible explanation for this is that, firstly, the presence of German settlers and interactions with Germans in general were more common. Secondly, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, Russian noblemen and men of the intelligentsia went abroad to study at German universities. And thirdly, as is common knowledge, German philosophers and philosophical ideas became very popular among the Russian intelligentsia. Not having any ‘native’ philosophers of a similar magnitude and importance, Russian intellectuals turned to Western European sources.
As they were most familiar with German intellectual movements, such thinkers as Herder, Schlegel and Hegel proved to be especially influential. Unsurprisingly, these experiences and ideas found their way into contemporary writings. German characters, however, are not the only teachers that play a role in Russian literature. Governesses and tutors in general have a function in the narrative which will be discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5: The Role of the Foreign Instructor in Russian Literature

In nineteenth-century English literature, governesses such as Jane Eyre and Agnes Grey in the novels of the same title by Charlotte and Anne Brontë, or Becky Sharp in William Thackeray’s Vanity Fair hold a prime position as main protagonists. In contrast, their counterparts in Russian literature are almost always mere ‘Randfiguren’, figures of secondary importance. The Russian country estate tended to be a haven for a multitude of people. It was home to the core family of the nobility, as well as to innumerable servants, distant relatives, impoverished neighbours, guests who arrived and forgot to leave again, хородивые [holy fools], wards, and the ubiquitous foreign governess, tutor or companion. As is typical for minor characters in Classic Realist novels, these Western Europeans are represented with little psychological subtlety and depth and turned into predictable, stereotypical figures. They never undergo any developments and changes of conviction or personality. The largely unfavourable depiction of Western Europeans deserves attention. As the characterisation of these foreign teachers is usually both basic and predictable, it is going to be productive to analyse those features with which they are endowed in the texts. The narrative gives insufficient, or even not any, details about their social backgrounds or their thoughts. Consequently, the question arises as to what these

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378 Fools for Christ. A literary example would be the fool Grisha in Tolstoi’s Childhood, chapter 5.
379 Lennard J. Davis, Resisting Novels, p. 118f.
380 E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 75
381 Cf. chapter 4, p. 141 about the social background of governesses and tutors in eighteenth-century Russian literature and how it changed in the 1830s.

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foreigners are doing in literary works? This chapter discusses the nature and the role of these foreign educators in Russian literature. Despite their usual position as minor characters, Western European governesses and tutors in Russian literature tend to have a more complex function in the text than their reductive representation might otherwise suggest. Although many foreign tutors and governesses are only acting in the background, and although some of them do not even utter a single word, these figures often hold vital clues to the development of the plot and the characterisation of the main protagonists.

Several literary narratives investigate the role of tutors or governesses and describe their supposed duties in their employers' household. It ranges from teaching "French and all the sciences",\textsuperscript{382} German conversation, "lessons about mythology and geography, history, travelogues and other essays",\textsuperscript{383} to "manners, articulateness and dance".\textsuperscript{384} It could also include getting the children out of bed in the morning and nursing them when they fell ill.\textsuperscript{385} As the previous chapter illustrated, one of the stereotypical character traits of these foreigners was that they were either never actually seen in the role of the teacher, or they were portrayed as being far too unintelligent or idle to be of any educational benefit anyway. Thus, in contrast to what historical records confirm, their main function, i.e. the education of the children, is represented ironically or not at all in many literary texts.

\textsuperscript{382} Vrāl'man in Fonvizin's The Minor. Фонвизин, с. 114
\textsuperscript{383} Mademoiselle Boncourt in Turgenev's Rudin. Н.С. Тургенев, т. IV, с. 52
\textsuperscript{384} Monsieur Champougne in Chekhov's 'In a Foreign Land'. А.П. Чехов, т. IV, с. 163
\textsuperscript{385} Karl Ivanich in Tolstoi's Childhood. Л.Н. Толстой, Детство, с. 19
The ubiquitous presence of English, German and French governesses and tutors in Russian literary works, however, has other, more important consequences. On the most basic level, these foreigners are simply used as a literary tool to create an element of humour. This is particularly apparent in plays where the utterances and actions of a character have a far more direct comical effect on an audience. Thus, foreigners usually speak with an exaggeratedly heavy accent. This conforms to popular stereotypes that foreigners are unable ever to acquire a sophisticated level of Russian. In fact, even today foreign visitors may well witness how lasting the impact of this kind of representation has proved to be. Examples of this can be found in some of the earliest Russian plays, such as Fonvizin’s *The Minor*. The German tutor Vral’man has a very strong accent. However, his vocabulary (e.g. words like утрёба [womb], взмоститься [to climb up]), his use of idioms (тертый казач [old hand]), and – with a few exceptions – his grammatical abilities are quite remarkable for a foreigner. For example, he does not often mix up aspects of verbs as one would expect of a non-native speaker. He does, however, sometimes err in his endings and usually mixes up his voiced and unvoiced consonants and, in this example, uses the wrong tense:

«Ты, матушка, снаешь, что смотреть фсегта тофче
зповышу. Так я, пыфало, на снакому карету и сасел, та и
сматру польной сфет с косел. [...] Ваш трашайший сын

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386 Cf. chapter 4, pages 133. and 137.
"My dear, it's always easier to look about you from a raised position, you know. So, I sometimes klimped onto another karriage and looked at the vorld arount me from the coach-box. [...] Your tarling son should also sitt somewhere higher up in ze vorld, look at ze people and show himselve"].

In the character of Vral’mam, Fonvizin does not attempt to imitate the pattern of errors a native speaker of German would make in Russian. He is satisfied with creating a superficial impression of inadequacy.

Turgenev continues this trend in A Month in the Country when he presents the German tutor Schaaf in the same manner as Fonvizin did. Schaaf is a minor character who only appears in the first two acts. He sets the scene in the first act and provides comic relief with his accent and idiosyncrasies. He also has problems with his consonants and endings:

«Я фе люблю, что фи любит. О Катерины, вот жоит немношко. Э! ничефо. Фот и я иту... Как это сказать, рибить, фи понимайт, рибить, то ись риб брать. Фи любит? Риб?»
["I love efrysing you loves. Oh, Katerin, faiit a leettle. Hey. it's
nossing. You see, I go... How do you zay, fishen. you
understands, fishen, I mean, take fish. You like? Fish?"]

His pathetic and ineffectual attempts to woo the maidservant Katia further enhance
his ridiculousness. Predictably, the girl is embarrassed and inconvenienced by his
endeavours to embrace her: «полноте, полноте, как вам не стыдно...» ["Stop it,
stop it, you should be ashamed of yourself..."]

Curiously, the foreigners who are ridiculed the most (especially with regard to
language) tend to be of German origin. British nationals are more often completely
silent (as in Chekhov’s ‘A Daughter of Albion’, or Miss Jackson in Pushkin’s The
Squire’s Daughter), whereas French governesses and tutors do not seem to have any
accent. The most likely explanation is that they are speaking, or are assumed to be
speaking, in French (like Monsieur Desforge in Pushkin’s Dubrovskii, Mademoiselle
Boncourt in Turgenev’s Rudin, or Monsieur Champougne in Chekhov’s ‘In a Foreign
Land’). This distinction is probably linked to the position of Germans in Russian
society. Historically, Germanic and Slavonic tribes had long been neighbours whose
territories and boundaries overlapped and who had continuous connections through
trade. This is reflected in the very word the Russians use for “German”, i.e. немец,
the one who cannot talk. As is commonly known, the word was originally applied to
all non-orthodox foreigners who came to Russia. It was as late as the eighteenth

388 Dieter Boden, p. 7
century that foreigners began to be recognised by their individual nationalities, for example, француз, англичанин, итальянец [Frenchman, Englishman, and Italian]. Only the Germans retained the original term used for foreigners and remained “mute”. The word германец [German] was never applied to them.

However, despite these close ties, relations between Russians and Germans were hardly ever straightforward. The saying «Что русскому хорошо — немцу смерть» [“What’s good for the Russians is death to the Germans”] tries to define the incompatibility of the two nations. Russian opinions of Germany and the Germans were subjected to constant vacillations. While many Russian writers were influenced by and fascinated with German idealist philosophers such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, the writing of Russian authors shows derision and condescension towards German bourgeois tendencies and narrow-mindedness 389 (e.g. Gogol’, Dostoyevsky, but even such a supposedly staunch Westerniser as Turgenev); admiration for certain German character traits, such as propensity for hard work and efficiency, went hand-in-hand with envy for success of Germans in high offices in Russian high society. 390

389 One of the most conscious early attempts in Russian literature to problematise the figure of the German in Russia is Germann in Pushkin’s Пиковая дама [The Queen of Spades].
390 At the end of the nineteenth century about 1% of the Russian population was German. Nevertheless, ca. 50% of military officers, 57% of staff in the ministry of foreign affairs, and 46% of staff in the ministry of defence were of German origin. Dieter Boden, p. 11
Although there was an extensive colony of several thousand British citizens in St. Petersburg\(^\text{391}\) (mainly engaged in trade and diplomacy), they never constituted as much an element of Russian society as the Germans. Russians admired, envied and resented the success of Britain as a sea-faring and colonising nation, but daily contact was minimal. Equally, France was admired for its cultural domination of European high society. Hence came the necessity for every Russian of status to speak fluent French, preferably with a true Parisian accent. Nevertheless, governesses and tutors were regarded with ambivalent feelings. As foreigners they were politically suspect, as British and French citizens they were admired and envied. People of German origin, on the other hand, penetrated all layers of Russian society, which distinguished them from most other foreigners in general. Their professions ranged from that of farmers on the Volga, bailiffs and teachers on country estates, artisans and professionals in the cities, to members of staff at educational institutions, in the military, the administration, and at court. In spite of the fact that they were evidently part of every day life in Russia, which was, of course, less the case with British and French citizens as there were fewer areas of contact and tensions, Germans remained conspicuous and alien in their Russian environment just as any other Europeans.

This otherness of foreigners in Russian society became the main focus of their representation in literature. Moreover, even a fleeting introduction of a tutor, otherwise wholly unconnected with the rest of the work, often contains some form of condescension, grotesque physical description or – for a Russian reader – humorous

\(^{391}\) C.L. Johnstone, *The British Colony in Russia*, p. 52
incidents. For example, the Frenchman, Monsieur Beaupré in Pushkin’s *The Captain’s Daughter* was “ordered from Moscow, together with the yearly supply of wine and olive oil” [«мосье Бопре, которого выписали из Москвы вместе с годовым запасом вина и прованского масла»]\(^{392}\). The narrator treats him with almost the same attitude as the other two French commodities, although the usefulness of wine and oil is never questioned.

Monsieur Beaupré’s presence, however, is challenged by the protagonist’s former *diad’ka*, Savelich: «Куда как нужно тратить лишние деньги и напивать мусье, как будто и своих людей не стало!»\(^{393}\) [“Why waste good money on a Frenchman, as if there weren’t enough of us around!”]. Savelich obviously resents being supplanted by somebody else in the care of his charge on a personal level, yet the accusation allows a deeper interpretation. Savelich’s sentiments highlight the antagonism between Russian village people and their landlords over the introduction of change in general, and foreign habits, life-style and people to the Russian countryside in particular. To the peasant, the attempts by the nobility to ape manners completely alien to theirs seem not only futile, but also unfair, especially if the master is hiring somebody as seemingly unnecessary as Monsieur.

Charlotta Ivanovna in Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, although German, does not speak in a humorous manner. In a letter Chekhov confirms that Charlotta does not have an accent; only occasionally does she mispronounce the ending of a

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\(^{392}\) A.С. Пушкин, *Проза. Драматические произведения*, с. 67

\(^{393}\) ibid.
word and makes mistakes in the masculine and feminine forms of adjectives.\textsuperscript{394} Yet, even Charlotta is used for creating effects for amusement: in her case though this is achieved through unusual dress and grotesque behaviour which are emphatically non-Russian. For example, in act two, stage directions require Charlotta to appear in an old peaked military cap, carrying a rifle [«Шарлотта в старой фуражке; она сняла с плеч ружьё и поправляет пряжку на ремне»\textsuperscript{395}], and while she muses about her possible origins and unusual upbringing, she suddenly pulls a cucumber out of her pocket and starts eating it:

«Шарлотта (в раздумье). У меня нет настоящего паспорта, я не знаю, сколько мне лет, и мне все кажется, что я молоденькая. Когда я была маленькой девочкой, то мой отец и мамаша ездили по ярмаркам и давали представления, очень хорошо. А я прыгала salto mortale и разные штучки. И когда папаша и мамаша умерли, меня взяла к себе одна немецкая госпожа и стала меня учить. Хорошо. Я выросла, потом пошла в гувернантики. А откуда я и кто я - не знаю... Кто мои родители, может, они не венчались... не знаю. (Достает из кармана огурец и ест.) Ничего не знаю».

[“Charlotta (thoughtfully). I don’t have a real passport. I don’t know how old I am, and I always think that I’m young. When I

\textsuperscript{394} David Magarshack, \textit{The real Chekhov}, p. 194; letter of 2 Nov 1903 to Nemirovich-Danchenko.

\textsuperscript{395} Чехов, А.П., т. XII, с. 215

\textsuperscript{396} Ibid.
was a little girl my father and mother used to travel around fairs and give performances, and very good they were, too. And I used to do the salto mortale and various other things. And when papa and mamma died a German lady took me in and began to teach me. That was good. I grew up and then became a governess. But where I came from and who I am, I don’t know. . . . Who my parents were--perhaps they weren’t married--I don’t know. (Takes a cucumber out of her pocket and eats it) I don’t know anything”].

Charlotta’s comments reveal a profound sense of displacement and unease\(^{397}\). In her words, her parents are referred to as wandering, unestablished individuals whose role in Russia was that of fairground entertainers. Like them, Charlotta uses her “otherness” to make a living by drawing on her German language skills to work as a governess. She also stands out in her dress and manners. The reference in an aside to her taking a cucumber out of her pocket and eating it makes use of the caricature of Germans eating cucumbers as if they were apples. Charlotta’s eccentricity is clearly linked to her Germanness. Weirdness becomes synonymous with foreignness.

As was discussed in chapter 4, the physical appearance of a tutor or governess is an integral part of their typification. This stress on exterior qualities informs the characterisation of these instructors and allows several interpretations. Firstly, it adds

\(^{397}\) Toby W. Clyman, *A Chekhov companion*, p. 74f.
yet another layer of humour and ridicule. This is how Turgenev introduces Mademoiselle Boncourt, the French governess in his novel *Rudin*:

«Старая и сухая дева лет шестидесяти, с накладкой черных волос под разноцветным шарфом и хлопчатой бумагой в ушах».\(^{398}\)

[“A dry old spinster aged about sixty, with false black curls peaking from underneath a parti-coloured cap, and with cotton wool in her ears”].

None of the Russian characters is seen with cotton wool sticking out of their ears.

Secondly, it can signify a correlation between a character’s exterior and his or her inner values, morals and social status.\(^{399}\) Seen in this respect, foreign governesses and tutors in Russian literature fare rather badly. Miss Jenners in Kuprin’s ‘The Poor Prince’ is described as «длинная [...] со своим красным висячим носом, поджатым прыщавым ртом и рыбыми глазами»\(^{400}\) [“tall […] with a bulbous red nose, a screwed up, pustular mouth and fish-eyes”]. This is the only descriptive passage in the text referring to the English Miss. The reader is led to infer that she is probably not a very nice person to have as a governess. Schimmel in Turgenev’s short story ‘Faust’, for example, is described as:

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\(^{398}\) И. С. Тургенев, т. IV, с. 24  
\(^{399}\) Lennard J. Davis, p. 123  
\(^{400}\) А. И. Куприн, Собрание Сочинений, т. V, с. 166
"clean, shaved, threadbare, with a meek and honest face and a
toothless smile. He smelled of chicory coffee... all old Germans
smell like that”].

Iakov Iakovlevich von Scheppe, the German teacher in Kuprin’s ‘На переломе’ [‘At
the Turning Point’], has very similar characteristics:

“Это был очень чистенький, добродушный немец. От него
всегда пахло немного табаком, немного одеколоном и еще
tем особенным неприятным запахом, который издают
мебель и вещи в зажиточных немецких семействах”.

[“He was a very clean and good-natured German. He always
smelled a bit of tobacco and a bit of eau-de-Cologne. He also
had this distinctive and unpleasant odour which the furniture and
other things give off in the houses of prosperous German
families”].

In both examples, the omniscient narrator appears to give a favourable
characterisation of the external appearance of the German tutor. However, upon
closer observation it becomes clear that these remarks are only superficially well-
disposed. The comments on their clean, honest and kind appearance are quickly

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401 И.С. Тургенев, т. II, с. 280
402 А.И. Куприн, т. II, с. 402
revoked by being juxtaposed to stereotypes about how Germans and their houses smell. This gives a negative overall impression of the two German tutors and suggests that the average representative of this nationality is perhaps not so clean after all. The gaze that sets the norm is obviously Russian. This implies that Russian ways are “normal” and, thus, serve as point of references. Of course, the narrator offers no views of how Russian houses “smell”.

The description of many of these Western European instructors seems to be primarily constructed around this one particular feature of physical appearance. Pushkin’s “The Squire’s Daughter” is another, more elaborate, example of this tendency, because it involves the juxtaposition of two minor characters, one English and one Russian, which are introduced successively. Both are employed for the benefit of Liza, the main protagonist. One is her foreign governess, the other her Russian maid. It is interesting to note the differences between those two and how they are characterised. The English governess, Miss Jackson’s physical description instantly equates her appearance with that of a typically prim, stiff Englishwoman: «набеденная и затянутая в рюмочку»403 [“she had put on her make-up and laced herself into the shape of a liqueur glass”]. Whenever Miss Jackson enters the scene, the narrator mentions these particulars, her powdered face, plucked eye-brows and prudish figure. Even though her employer, Muromskii, is an anglophile and has tried to organize his estate according to English ways and methods, Miss Jackson is made to look artificial and foreign.

403 А.С. Пушкин, Проза, Драматические произведения, с. 56
In the case of the textual production of the maid, the narrator firstly establishes that Liza and Nastia are very close:

«За Лизою ходила Настя; Она была постарше, но столь же ветренна, как и ее барышня. Лиза очень любила ее».404

["Liza had a maid called Nastia. She was a little bit older, but just as light-hearted as her mistress. Liza loved her very much"].

After that, the major source of characterisation is through dialogue, which shows that Nastia has no compunction to do and say what she likes, as well as support her mistress in her pranks:

- Позвольте мне сегодня пойти в гости,- сказала однажды Настя, одевая барышню.
- Изволь; а куда?
- В Тугилово, к Берестовым. Поварова жена у них именинница и вчера приходила звать нас отобедать.
- Вот! - сказала Лиза,- гостода в ссоре, а слуги друг друга угошают.
- А нам какое дело до господ?405
... 
- Да что тут мудреного? Тугилово от нас недалеко, всего три версты: пойдите гулять в ту сторону.406

... наденьте толстую рубашку, сарафан да и ступайте смело в Тугилово; ручаюсь вам, что Берестов уже вас не прозевает.407

[- Please, may I go visiting today, said Nastia once as she was dressing her mistress.
- You may; where are you going?
- To Tugilovo, to the Berestovs. Their cook’s wife has her name-day. She came over yesterday to invite us to dinner.
- So! – said Liza,– while the masters are quarrelling the servants invite each other to dinner.
- What the masters do is none of our business!

...
- How I would love to see him [Aleksei Berestov]! – said Liza with a sigh.
- Why ever not? Tugilovo is not far from here, only three verst: go for a walk in that direction.

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406 Ibid., c. 53
407 Ibid., c. 54
Put on a thick shirt and sarafan, pluck up your courage and go to Tugilovo; I assure you, Berestov will not pass you by without taking notice of you.

Unlike Miss Jackson, Nastia’s appearance is not referred to at all, and she naturally fits into her environment and into her role as confidante of her mistress. Thus, in the case of the foreigners physicality rather than spirituality becomes the major focus and is pushed into the foreground.

Miss Twice in Chekhov’s ‘A Daughter of Albion’ is one of the most extreme examples: she is hideously ugly. In addition to the barrage of insults which the landowner Griabov hurls at Miss Twice (mentioned above), her clothes complement her negative image:

«Одета она была в белое кисейное платье, сквозь которое сильно просвечивали тощие, жёлтые плечи.»

[“She was dressed in a white muslin dress, through which one could distinctly discern her scraggy, yellow shoulders”].

Pushkin’s Miss Jackson is partly redeemed by her obviously kind albeit stiff nature and by Liza’s affections for her. In ‘A Daughter of Albion’, however, the physical description is the only component in the characterisation of the governess and it leaves no room for redemption. Moreover, the title of the short story yet again confirms the typifying tendency in nineteenth-century Russian literature to equate

408 А.П. Чехов, Рассказы, с. 3
individual citizens of a foreign country with the supposed “quintessence” of that nation.

Maxim Gorkii interpreted this story as “a well-fed squire’s mockery of a person lonely and strange to her surroundings”.409 In many respects this statement is fair. The landowner Griabov vents his anger and frustration at his children’s governness in what is basically a monologue (interrupted occasionally by comments of his visiting friend). His motivation for this diatribe seems to be his bad luck at fishing, his fishing partner, Miss Twice’s unwillingness and inability to communicate with him, and the way she seems to look down her nose on him: «С презрением на всё смотрит...».410 [“She looks upon everything with contempt...”]. As Griabov puts it: «Посмотри, как бровями двигает! Не уходит... Выше толпы стоит!»411 [“Look how she twitches her eyebrows! She won’t go away... thinks she is better than anyone else!”]. The portrait of Miss Twice is a caricature rather than a detailed representation of a human subject. Put simply, the narrator chooses not to relate any of her qualities. She is undoubtedly lonely; however, the portrayal of her physical characteristics and demeanor do not evoke sympathy.

On the one hand, ‘A Daughter of Albion’ can indeed be seen as criticism directed against an ignorant, brutish landowner who ridicules a dependant, foreign and defenceless member of his household. On the other hand, Chekhov’s narrator

409 W.H. Bruford, Chekhov and his Russia. A sociological study. p. 88
410 А.П. Чехов, Рассказы, с. 4
411 Ibid., с. 6
does not exclusively focus his criticism on the landlord, either. His narrative characterises both Griabov and the governess by observing their behaviour. In the case of the landlord, his own words and attitudes debunk him, whereas the detached and icy disposition of Miss Twice marks itself through conspicuous silence. Gorkii’s interpretation focuses solely on the landowner Griabov. It is therefore a rather one-sided critical reading of the short story, which stresses social criticism more highly than, for example, the psychological aspects of the human interaction and relationship between governess and employer. Gorkii clearly interprets the story in the tradition of Belinskii and the revolutionary democrats, the writer-critics Dobroliubov, Chernishevskii and Pisarev, who see the literary text as social documents rather than artistic construction.

Several other possible interpretations present themselves. Firstly. Chekhov’s attention could have been directed to the social customs among the Russian nobility who continued to employ foreign nationals for the upbringing and education of their children, even into the late nineteenth century. Secondly, with the character of Miss Twice, Chekhov follows in the footsteps of, for example, Fonvizin, Pushkin and Turgenev by continuing to draw upon the established stereotype of the foreign governess (and the ‘barbaric’ nature of provincial landowners). Yet, unlike his predecessors, Chekhov takes the type one step further and turns her into a completely bizarre and grotesque caricature.412 She also displays the ‘typical’ lack of knowledge

412 Cf, chapter 4, p. 147 and the discussion of how Chekhov uses animal references to describe Miss Twice.
of Russian. Although she has been living in Russia for many years, she has never bothered to learn the language:

«Удивляюсь, брат, я немало! — продолжал Грибов. — Живет дурица в России десять лет, и хоть бы одно слово по-русски!..»

["I can’t make heads nor tails of it," Griabov went on, "this idiot has been living in Russia for ten years, and does she speak a single word of Russian?!"]

As we have heard before, Griabov sees this as a form of disrespect towards himself and his people. She makes no attempts to interact with him, even though they spend the whole day fishing next to each other.

Griabov levels another accusation at her: supposedly she does not even regard Russians as human beings [«И за людей нас не считает!»]. Whether this accusation is justified is hard to say, because Miss Twice is not given the opportunity to speak. The narrator fails to refer to her thoughts, nor does he reveal anything about her background and her motivations for coming to Russia in the first place. However, she is portrayed as showing no shame or embarrassment when Griabov undresses in front of her in order to release his hook which had got caught on a stone in the water.

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413 А.П. Чехов, Рассказы, с. 4
414 Ibid., с. 6
Petr M. Bicilli suggests that Chekhov wrote ‘A Daughter of Albion’ as a response to a passage from Ivan Goncharov’s *Fregat Pallada* [фрегат Паллада]:

«Я только не понимаю одного: как чопорные англичанки, к которым в спальню не смеет войти родной брат, при которых нельзя произнести слово «панталоны», живут между этим народонаселением, которое ходит вовсе без панталон? Разве они так вооружены аристократическим презрением ко всему, что ниже их, как римские матроны, которые, не зная чувства стыда перед рабами, мылись при них и не удостоивали [sic] их замечать?»

[“There is just one thing I do not understand about these prudish Englishwomen. Their own brother does not dare enter their bedrooms; you cannot possibly utter the word “knickers” in their presence. Yet, how can these same Englishwomen live among natives who wear no knickers at all? Are they really armed with that much aristocratic contempt towards everything beneath them; just like those Roman matrons who washed themselves in front of slaves without feeling the slightest shame by choosing not to honour them with their attention?”]
The parallel is obvious: Miss Twice does not condescend to take any notice of Griabov’s actions either, thus showing her contempt for someone she considers to be far beneath her, an inferior creature rather than a sexual human being.

If Miss Twice’s physical description is the most grotesque, then in the case of Lemm, the German musician in Turgenev’s *A Nest of the Gentry*, it acquires exaggerated proportions:

«Он был небольшого роста, сутуловат, с криво выдвинутыми лопатками и втянутым животом, с большими плоскими ступнями, с бледно-синими ногтями на твердых, не разгибающихся пальцах жилистых красных рук; лицо имел морщинистое, впалые щеки и сжатые губы, которыми он беспрестанно двигал и жевал, что, при его обычной молчаливости, производило впечатление почти зловещее; седые его волосы висели кочками над невысоким лбом; как только что залитые угольки, глухо тлели его крошечные, неподвижные глазки; ступал он тяжело, на каждом шагу перекидывая свое неповоротливое тело.

Иные его движения напоминали неуклюжее охорашивание совы в клетке, когда она чувствует, что на нее глядят, а сама едва видит своими огромными, желтыми, пугливо и дремотно моргающими глазами. Заставляло, неумолимое горе положило на бедного музыкуса свою неизгладимую
He was short, stooping slightly, with crooked shoulders, pulled-in stomach, large flat feet, and bluish nails on the gnarled bony fingers of his sinewy red hands. He had a wrinkled face, sunken cheeks, and compressed lips, which he was forever twitching and biting; and this, together with his habitual taciturnity, produced an almost sinister impression. His grey hair hung in tufts on his low brow; his tiny, fixed eyes smouldered like recently extinguished embers. He trod heavily, swinging his ungainly body forward at every step. Some of his movements recalled the clumsy actions of an owl in a cage when it feels that it is being looked at, but itself can hardly see out of its great yellow and drowsily blinking eyes. Constant sorrow had pressed its indelible stamp on the poor musician, disfiguring and deforming his already unprepossessing figure).

In order to introduce the old musician, Turgenev uses a great number of unflattering and negatively-loaded adjectives, concentrating on Lemm’s weather-beaten appearance. In trying to lessen the unpleasant impact of this characterisation, the story-telling voice adds some redeeming qualities:

\[^{417}\]Н.С. Тургенев, т. IV, с. 142
"But people who were able to get over the first impression would have discerned something good, honest and out of the ordinary in this battered, broken-down creature".418

However, these patronising words hardly change the overall, unfavourable impression of this description.

As has been mentioned above, regardless of the omnipresence of foreign instructors in Russian literature, they generally feature as minor characters. Their primary function in the plot and their main characterisation are based on highlighting their otherness, on ridicule, funny accents and intonation, as well as on grotesque behaviour and appearance. However, the usefulness of these foreigners does not end with the presentation of their humorous or contemptuous nature. Unsurprisingly, upon closer analysis and in accordance with my hypothesis, most instructors do indeed play a greater role than their minor nature would suggest. As was discussed in the methodology, there are three useful categories Susan Rubin Suleiman has studied for the determination of function of minor characters.

418 Ibid.
The first, qualifying, function is probably the most common. It characterises the protagonists indirectly with the help of minor characters. Those secondary figures give an insight into the hero’s or heroine’s personality, actions and motivations through interaction and conversation. For example, in Pushkin’s Евгений Онегин [Eugene Onegin] there are several pieces of information about Onegin’s background which contribute to his early characterisation. Apart from his place of birth and his father’s social status, provided by the author, a few lines of the novel in verse are dedicated to his French teacher Monsieur l’Abbé:

Monsieur l’Abbé, француз убогой,
Чтоб не измучилось дитя,
Учил его всему шутя,
Не докучал моралью строгой,
Слегка за шалости бранил
и в Летний сад гулять водил.⁴¹⁹

[Monsieur l'Abbé, the mediocre,
reluctant to exhaust the boy,
trated his lessons as a ploy.
No moralizing from this joker;
a mild rebuke was his worst mark,
and then a stroll in Letny Park⁴²⁰].

⁴¹⁹ А.С. Пушкин, т. 11, с. 188 (1, III)
⁴²⁰ Transl. by Charles H. Johnston
Considering these lines in their historical rather than literary context, in working for a family such as the Onegins, this French teacher had to move in prestigious upper class circles in the capital, St Petersburg. Pushkin’s description of the Frenchman does not show a foreign simpleton lacking in appropriate qualifications. Monsieur is no less than an abbot. However, his physical description, убогий or squalid, depicts him as a person who does not pay any particular attention to his dress, appearance and — perhaps — even personal cleanliness. This first qualifying adjective enriches the characterisation of Onegin’s parents: they cannot have been too much interested, or at least not overtly critical, of who was teaching their son. Moreover, the rest of the stanza sheds some light on some quintessential Russian ideas about the French, and on Onegin’s upbringing. The “lightness of touch” and overall freedom from heavy-handed morality clearly expresses the suspicion Pushkin and his contemporaries had about Roman Catholicism.\(^{421}\) It is also apparent that Monsieur l’Abbe is keen for his pupil to enjoy himself rather than to acquire any scientific knowledge. Thus, he not only reduces his workload, but also avoids potential problems and confrontation with Evgenii. A number of Onegin’s characteristics are thereby introduced early on in the novel. By chatting with an enlightened and sophisticated Frenchman while walking around Letnii Park, Onegin received an education which adequately prepared him for a life of leisure and service at court. It also provides the reader with the foundation of an image of Onegin which develops into the bored, immoral and “superfluous” young

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\(^{421}\) Opposition, hatred and fear, as well as notions of superiority towards Roman Catholicism were common feelings in Russia and the result of centuries of religious schism. While Orthodoxy was seen as pure, pious and righteous, Western European Christianity was associated with militant expansion (especially from Poland) and heresy. David L. Ransel and Bozena Shallcross (eds.), Polish encounters, Russian identity, p. 21f.
man of the rest of the novel. Thus, the minute reference to Monsieur l’Abbé leads to awareness about Onegin’s social background, upbringing and the early formation of his character.

The Frenchman in Pushkin’s The Captain’s Daughter fulfils exactly the same qualifying role. He only features at the very beginning of the novel and mainly serves to illustrate the inadequacy of the main hero’s education, i.e. its complete absence.

«Bonpre в отечестве своем был парикмахером, потом в Пруссии солдатом, потом приехал в Россию pour être outhitel. [...] Мы тотчас поладили, и хотя по контракту обязан он был учить меня по-французски, по-немецки и всем наукам, но он предпочел насконо выучиться от меня кое-как болтать по-русски, — и потом каждый из нас занимался уже своим делом.»

[“In his native land Beaupré had been a hairdresser. Later he became a soldier in Prussia. And finally he came to Russia pour être outhitel. [...] We got on immediately, and although his contract stated that he was required to teach me French, German and all the sciences, he preferred to pick up some Russian from me. After that, we each minded our own business”].

This type of the ineffectual tutor served as a useful literary tool to establish the background and social class of a character. The narrator thereby locates Beaupré’s
employer Andrei Petrovich Grinev firmly among lower gentry, thus eliciting the interpretation that Grinev either was unable to afford a better-qualified teacher or was intellectually not aware of the tutor’s shortcomings.

Suleiman’s second category considers the syntagmatic function of minor characters, which involves ‘any act which serves to advance the story’. There are several works which employ foreign governesses and tutors to that effect. Pushkin’s The Squire’s Daughter is described by Afanasiev as “любовная история представлена в жанре веселой комедии” [a love story written in the manner of Commedia dell’Arte]. As the title suggests, the story is all about the daughter of a nobleman, Liza, who poses as a peasant girl in an attempt to make the acquaintance of Aleksei, a young nobleman who lives in the neighbourhood. A more direct meeting with him is impossible, as Aleksei’s and her own father are sworn enemies. The Commedia dell’Arte is known for its distinct stock characters and the use of masks to distinguish their personalities and social class. Its main categories are split into the zanni (lower class, servants), vecchi (upper class, usually old men) and innamorati (the lovers). In an ironic twist of fate, Liza is forced to conceal her identity further in front of Aleksei, in order to cover up her true family background. Therefore, the chain of disguises is as follows: Liza the squire’s daughter (vecchi) pretends to be Akulina the blacksmith’s daughter (zanni) who then hides her tanned complexion under a layer of make-up to become the arrogant, French-speaking...

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422 Susan R. Suleiman, Authoritarian Fictions, p. 157
424 J. Douglas Clayton, Pierrot in Petrograd, p. 20-23
daughter of Muromskii, the nobleman, once more. The first “mask” in the story, however, is worn by Liza’s governess, Miss Jackson, who habitually “whitens” her face, as was already mentioned above. She is necessary for the development of the plot, because she provides the make-up (although unknowingly) for Liza, who “borrows” it to disguise herself as part of her successful masquerade. Therefore, although Miss Jackson does not actually speak even once, her function (or better, her make-up) is vital in the context of the story. Without her white powder Liza could not have hidden her dark complexion. As a consequence, she would not have been able to fool Aleksei into believing that there were two girls, Liza, the fair and fashionable nobleman’s daughter, and her alter ego, Akulina, the dark-skinned daughter of Vasilii the blacksmith.

Monsieur Desforges in Pushkin’s Dubrovskii has a similar syntagmatic function to advance the story. The brigand Dubrovskii, born and bred a nobleman, seeks a means to avenge his father’s death, which he blames on Troekurov, a former neighbour and friend. By accident, Dubrovskii meets the Frenchman Desforges who has been appointed to teach Troekurov’s son and is on his way to the estate. Dubrovskii offers him money for his papers, his absence and for his promise to return at once to Paris and talk to no one about this meeting:

«Если бы вместо этой будущности предложили вам 10 000 чистыми деньгами, с тем, чтоб сей же час отправились»

Cf. p. 145f.
obratno v Paris. [...] Mnë nužno toldko vashë
otсутствие i vashë bułagi. [...] Dajte mne čestnoe słovo,
что всё это ostanëtsja mezdju nami».427

["If I were to offer you 10 000 roubles of honest money for your
future employment. You merely have to return to Paris at once...
I only need your absence and your papers... give me your word
that all this will remain between ourselves"].

By assuming Monsieur Desforges’ nationality, identity and profession (i.e. that of a
French tutor), the main hero Dubrovskii manages to gain convenient access to the
house of his greatest enemy, which otherwise would have been impossible to achieve
by peaceful means. Unwittingly, it also gives him access to Troekurov’s daughter,
Maria, which develops into a romantic love-story. Thus, the encounter between
Dubrovskii and Desforges facilitates the further development of the plot.

Suleiman’s final category outlines the interpretative function of a literary
figure. In this capacity, minor characters help to analyse, interpret and judge the
protagonists or events that matter to the author, either through direct speech or
through their position in the plot and interaction with the main character. Several
nineteenth-century Russian literary works employ governesses and tutors in this way.
The French governess in Turgenev’s Rudin is a curious choice for this role.
Superficially educated, hardly able to follow an ordinary conversation in Russian, let

426 A.С. Pushkin, т. VI, с. 279-280
427 Ibid., с. 280
alone speak it herself, it is through her eyes that Turgenev reveals how primitive and impolite the landed nobility is when seen through Western European eyes. Despite her apparent disadvantages to act as a judge, Mademoiselle Boncourt is nonetheless endowed with psychological skills which allow her to make a number of succinct and appropriate comments about several characters. She has the ability to grasp the main 'quality' of a person with regard to his (all three instances concern men) power of speech. "Mais c'est une horreur ce que vous dites là, monsieur".428 [But sir, what you say there is horrible], she exclaims when Pigasov, a regular visitor to the estate, tells how he finally managed to get a "natural" reaction (i.e. a scream) from a "splendidly pretentious girl" by deliberately poking a stick into her side from behind!

«Удалось-таки добиться однажды истинного, неподдельного выражения ощущения от одной замечательно неестественной барышни!»429

["I actually managed to get a natural, unaffected reaction once from a splendidly pretentions girl"]).

It is, moreover, a very apt observation about most of Pigasov’s assertions in general, who revels in abusing women verbally as well as physically. At the same time, Mademoiselle Boncourt’s remark questions Dar’ia Mikhailovna’s (the landowner’s) propriety to rely on Pigasov for her entertainment. Although Dar’ia Mikhailovna does not believe a single word Pigasov is saying, she finds his presence and tirades again

428 И. С. Тургенев, т. IV, с. 27
429 Ibid.
women highly amusing, owing to her own dislike of women whom she regards as her rivals.

If everything Pigasov says is "une horreur" according to Mademoiselle Boncourt, then her verdict on Sergei Pavlych Volnytsev is that he does not speak enough. Volnytsev, a retired army officer and neighbour, is secretly in love with Natalia, Dar’ia Mikhailovna’s daughter. Observing Volnytsev’s clumsy attempts to talk to Natalia, Mademoiselle Boncourt thinks to herself: "Quel dommage que ce charmant garçon ait si peu de ressources dans la conversation".430 ["What a pity that this charming man has so little talent at making conversation"] Volnytsev indeed has very little talent for beautiful rhetoric, for electrifying and captivating an audience. Unsurprisingly, the very next person to join the set of characters on the estate is Rudin, who possesses exactly those qualities in abundance. Thus, Mademoiselle Boncourt rightly foresees that a man with more “ressources dans la conversation” would make an impression on her charge Natalia, which Rudin promptly does.

Several characters are employed in their qualifying function to elucidate Rudin’s power of speech. Pigasov, for example, serves as ‘sparring partner’ which Rudin needs in order to flaunt his eloquence and power of reasoning. Dar’ia Mikhailovna’s instantaneous admiration confirms the strong impression Rudin’s rhetoric produces on his audience:

Пигасов: … Передавайте, господа, факты, и будет вас.

430 Ibid., c. 32
- В самом деле! - возразил Рудин. - Ну, а смысл фактов передавать следует?

- Общие рассуждения! - продолжил Пигасов, - смерть моя эти общие рассуждения, обозрения, заключения! Всё это основано на так называемых убеждениях; всякий толкует о своих убеждениях и еще уважения к ним требует, носится с ними... Эх!

...

- Прекрасно! - промолвили Рудин, - стало быть, по-вашему, убеждений нет?

- Нет — и не существует.

- Это ваше убеждение?

- Да.

- Как же вы говорите, что их нет? Вот вам уже одно, на первый случай.

Всё в комнате улыбнулись и переглянулись.

- Позвольте, позвольте, однако, - начал было Пигасов...

Но Дарья Михайловна захлопала в ладоши, вскликнула: «Браво, браво, разбит Пигасов, разбит!» - и тихонько вынула шляпу из рук Рудина.431

[Pigasov: ... Give us facts, sir, that’s all!]

431 Ibid., с. 35-36
- Really! - retorted Rudin. - But shouldn’t one also give the significance of those facts?

- General arguments! - continued Pigasov. - They will be the death of me, these general arguments, observations and conclusions! All this is based on so-called convictions: everyone flaps about his convictions and even demands credit for them, makes a fuss about them. Huh!

...

- Splendid! - said Rudin. - You mean to say that in your opinion there are no convictions?

- No, they don’t exist!

- And that is your conviction?

- Yes.

- So, how come you say that they don’t exist? Here you have one at the first opportunity.

Everyone in the room smiled and looked at each other.

- Hang on, hang on, I mean. - interjected Pigasov...

But Dar’ia Mikhailovna clapped her hands and cried: “Bravo. bravo, Pigasov has been crushed!” - and she gently took the hat from Rudin’s hands].

The protagonist most responsible for the analysis of Rudin’s character is Lezhnev. While Lezhnev gives lengthy explanations for Rudin’s actions and motivations, the
omniscient narrator has Mademoiselle Boncourt sum it up in one sentence, although she is unable to understand any of Rudin’s speeches: «Впрочем, он в ее глазах был чем-то вроде виртуоза или артиста».432 ["In her eyes, however, he was something of a virtuoso or an artist"]'). Art, at least in its conventional definition in the dictionary, is “the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination”.433 As such, it produces works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. Rudin’s “art”, however, is like that of a pianist who plays somebody else’s music, not that of a composer. He does not have the creativity, intellectual capacity and emotional depth that is needed to come up with original ideas. His “artistic skills”, his charisma consist merely of his eloquence and ability to arouse temporary passion and enthusiasm in his audience or, as Lezhnev puts it, in young souls, not yet spoiled and disenchanted by life:

«Но кто вправе сказать, что он не принес, не принес уже пользы? что его слова не заронили много добрых семян в молодые души, которым природа не отказала, как ему, в силе деятельности».434

[“But who can rightly say that he won’t, that he hasn’t already been of use? That his words have not planted many good seeds in young hearts, to whom nature has not denied, as she has to him, the power for action”]

432 Ibid., с. 54
433 Oxford Dictionary of English
434 И.С. Тургенев, т. IV, с. 110
Rudin offers his services to whoever is willing to provide him with a livelihood, and again, like many other artists he dies unrecognised and unappreciated by his contemporaries and in poverty.

While Mademoiselle Boncourt performs her interpretative function as the gauge of the significance of characters’ behaviour in an active manner by providing direct comments about a number of protagonists, such as Rudin, Pigasov and Volyntsev, other governesses and tutors fulfil their role as commentators in a more indirect manner. This way is no less effective in throwing light on the main protagonists. The German companion, Zoia, in Turgenev’s *On the Eve* is such a character. Originally, Turgenev intended Zoia to be Elena’s sister. Changing her nationality and position in the household is significant. She acts as a point of reference, as an “other”, to the main heroine Elena and thereby gauges Elena’s development.

*On the Eve* can be split into two halves of almost exactly equal length. The first half sees Elena looking for love and a purpose in life, while in the second half she finds another aim, namely adopting her husband Insarov’s cause. While in the course of the narrative Elena becomes stronger, more determined and generally more secure of herself and her position in life, Insarov’s power wanes, ending finally with his death. Woodward describes Elena’s development as a change from altruistic idealism to self-discovery and self-assertion. Another possible way of interpreting the

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135 James B. Woodward, *Metaphysical conflict, a study of the major novels of Ivan Turgenev*, p. 87
136 Ibid., p. 87
changes that take place in both these characters throughout the novel is to assess their links to “Germanness”. The novel projects the Elena of the first half of the novel as lacking the German qualities with which her governess, Zoia, is so emphatically endowed. In the case of Insarov, this phenomenon is reversed.

Elena associates with people like Katia, a peasant girl and childhood friend, who dreams about living «на всей Божьей воле»437 [“in the full freedom of God”]. Thus, Elena’s youth passes almost unnoticed in inactivity, day-dreaming and spiritual searching, which contrasts sharply with the active German Zoia. The latter, employed to act as her companion, is of no interest for Elena. Like other Russian authors before him, e.g. Pushkin in *The Squire’s Daughter*, Turgenev characterises his foreign governess (or companion in this case) through concentrating on her physical description. This link between Western Europeans and physicality, as was discussed above, can be used to analyse the relationship between Elena and Zoia. The narrative reveals no spiritual qualities about Zoia. She is described as an attractive young woman («миленькая, с красными крошечными губками, белокурая, пухенькая»438 [a plump, fair-haired, darling girl with tiny red lips]). The artist Shubin only comments on her shoulders: «у нее плечи так хорошие»439 [her shoulders are so beautiful]. Unlike Elena, Zoia is actively involved in the service and entertainment of people around her, and thus her actions always have a purpose. For example, she goes to the river to fetch Shubin and Bersenev to lunch, regardless of

437 И.С. Тургенев, т. IV, с. 299
438 Ibid., с. 289
439 Ibid., с. 295
the heat of the day. She plays the piano to amuse her mistress, Anna Vasilievna, keeps her company, serves her tea and sings whenever the conversation begins to flag. Otherwise, she is described as shallow.Šubić: “вы хотите сказать, ..., что я ей под пару, что я так же пуст, и вздорен и мелок, как эта сладковатая немочка?” [Šubić: “are you implying that I am her equal, that I am just as feather-brained, foolish and petty as this sweet little German?”]. Unsurprisingly, Elena feels she has nothing in common with, and nothing to say to, her companion: «Она решительно не знала, о чем ей говорить с Зоей, когда ей случалось оставаться с ней наедине».441 [“Whenever she happened to be alone with Zoia, she most certainly did not know what to talk about with her”].

Unlike Elena, Insarov is directly and indirectly associated twice with Germanness in the first half of the novel. He is endowed with a fierce energy, a mental strength which helps him adhere to a decision once taken, and with “более чем немецкая аккуратность”442 [“a more than German precision”], according to his friend and fellow student Bersenev. His life is dedicated to the liberation of his native Bulgaria, for which – in the past – he had been prepared to forego personal happiness and comfort. Thus, Insarov lives the kind of philosophy which Bersenev contemplates: «не любовь-наслаждение, [а] любовь-жертва»443 [“not love for enjoyment, but love for sacrifice”]. This, according to his artist friend Šubić, «это хорошо для немцев» [“this is good for Germans”].

440 Ibid., c. 292
441 Ibid., c. 289
442 Ibid., c. 316
443 Ibid., c. 283
The turning point of the novel, and with it the reversal of roles of Elena and Insarov, is at the lake scene. The external impetus for the change taking place in Insarov and Elena is provided by Germans: firstly, by Zoia’s performance of a song on the lake, and secondly, by the attention this attracts among a group of drunken German officers. Insarov’s action (i.e. throwing the offending officer into the water) and his fierce, unrelenting physical strength induce Elena to rethink her feelings for him. Once their love for each other has been declared, the second half of the novel reveals a slightly different attitude towards Germanness in Elena and Insarov.

With regard to Zoia, Elena’s appreciation of the girl increases the more she falls in love with Insarov. Not only does Elena feel more positive about her German companion 444: «Елена решила, что она не видела прелестнее личик». 445 [“Elena decided that she had never seen a more lovely face”]. She even takes over some of the activities which before had been carried out by Zoia: «Она разливала чай вместо Зои». 446 [“She poured the tea instead of Zoia”]. Personally, Elena becomes much more active and independent. Her youth was spent in apparent idleness:

«Годы шли да шли; быстро и незаметно, как подснежные воды, протекала молодость Елены, в бездействии внешнем, во внутренней борьбе и тревоге». 447

\[444\] James B. Woodward, p. 115
\[432\] Ibid., c. 351
\[446\] Ibid., c. 368
\[447\] Ibid., c. 299
[“The years passed; Elena’s youth flowed quickly and silently like water under the snow, seemingly unmoved on the outside, yet struggling and worrying inside”].

Insarov, however, provides her with a cause and a direction in life. Elena’s father comments on her new life-style as follows:

«Теперь барышня разговаривает с кем ей угодно, читает что ей угодно; отправляется одна по Москве, без лакея, без служанки, как в Париже».448

[“Now the girl talks with anyone she wants, reads whatever she likes; she travels around Moscow on her own without a footman or maid, just as they do in Paris”].

Apart from a greater display of activity and a revised attitude towards Zoia, it is even suggested that Elena could easily acquire German nationality. When Insarov tries to obtain a false passport for Elena in order to be able to leave the country without her parents’ consent, he goes to visit an acquaintance, a retired former attorney, who now makes a living by producing false passports. This man exclaims: «Кто вас знает. Марья ли вы Бредихина, или же Каролина Фогельмейер?» 449 [“Who can tell whether you are Mar’ia Bredikhina or Karolina Vogelmeier?”]. Subsequently, in his feverish dreams, it is this second, German, name which Insarov associates with Elena.

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448 Ibid., c. 383
449 Ibid., c. 367
Insarov, on the other hand, loses his ‘German’ strength of character in the course of the novel. He had decided that he would never fall in love and thus endanger his mission to liberate his country.

«Он немедленно бы уехал, если бы что-нибудь подобное с ним случилось, так как он не желает [...] для удовлетворения личного чувства изменить своему делу и своему долгу. «Я болгар,— сказал он,— и мне русской любви не нужно...»».450

[“If anything like that ever happened to him, he would run away directly, because he did not want to fail his cause and his duty for the mere sake of gratifying his own personal feelings."I’m a Bulgarian," he said, “and I don’t need Russian love...”].

By giving in to his love for Elena he abandons his former ‘Germanic’ attitude (‘любовь-жертва’ – ‘love for sacrifice’) in favour of personal fulfilment (‘любовь-наслаждение’ – ‘love for enjoyment’). This results in his fatal illness and eventual death. During the last months of his life he no longer seems to be in control: Elena has become the driving force. She is the first to declare her love where Insarov tried to run away, she visits him in his flat although this could ruin her reputation, she overrules his hesitation about her accompanying him to Bulgaria, to name but a few instances.

450 Ibid., с. 343
Thus, the protagonists are in several ways linked to the Russian perceptions and stereotypes of “Germanness” and the one representative of the German nation, Zoia. Furthermore, once the conversion of Insarov and Elena has taken place, Zoia herself seems to become less German. Her earlier purposeful activity and careless silly behaviour gives way to a more Russian romantic melancholy and a greater intellectual interest in literature. «Зоя предавалась меланхолии и собиравалась прочесть 'Вертера'».451 [“Zoia abandoned herself to melancholy and decided to read through ‘Werther’”]. In addition, she marries Elena’s intended fiancé Kurnatovskii and even stops to “think” in German («она [...] даже перестала думать по-немецки»452 [“she even stopped thinking in German”]).

The final example of a foreign character fulfilling an interpretative function according to Suleiman’s division is the German musician Lemm in Turgenev’s *A Nest of the Gentry*. Like the governesses and tutors in the works discussed above, Lemm is a minor character, although his depiction is much more rounded and detailed than is normally the case. On the surface, Lemm is of little actual importance for the development of the main plot of the novel, the ill-fated love story between Liza and Lavretskii. However, his presence adds another “musical” dimension to the plot and the main protagonists which enhances the artistic merit of the novel.

Similarly to the way in which Zoia and her nationality act as a pendant to Elena and Insarov, several characters in *A Nest of the Gentry* are characterized by

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451 Ibid., c. 375
452 Ibid., c. 411
their attitude towards Lemm and his music. The two characters most opposed or indifferent to him are the representatives of the urban higher society, Panshin and Mar’ia Dmitrievna Kalitina. Panshin exclaims: «От младых ногтей не могу видеть равнодушно немца: так и подымает меня его подразнить».453 ['Ever since I was boy I could not look at a German with indifference; I can’t help but tease him’]. While Mar’ia Dmitrievna considers him to be a crank whose serious, sophisticated music (unlike Panshin’s trifling salon pieces) she dislikes: «Бетговен слишком волновал ее нервы».455 ['She found that Beethoven rather irritated her nerves’]. While Russian literature draws strongly upon stereotypes about foreigners, preeminent writers such as Turgenev and Chekhov use this knowledge to create ironical effects not only about Western Europeans but also about Russian poshlost’. The comments by Panshin say more about his own views about the world than about German residents in Russia. This kind of effect is sustained; with Mar’ia Dmitrievna’s remark about the irritating quality of Beethoven’s music the narrator reiterates the milieu of poshlost’ surrounding Lemm and the protagonists in the provincial town of O.... For contemporary Western Europeans, or the sophisticated Russian cultured elite, Beethoven was of course regarded as the embodiment of human musical genius.

The two main protagonists, on the other hand, are positively inclined towards the German musician. Lavretskii is drawn towards him: «Он очень понравился

453 Peter Brang. I.S. Turgenev: Sein Leben und sein Werk, p. 89
454 Ibid., c. 144
455 Ibid., c. 188
Lavraïkomu】 ["Lavretsky liked him very much"], and 【Лаврецкий, видимо, интересовался им】.456 ["It was obvious that Lavretskii was interested in him"]. Liza regards the old man with pity: 【Этот немец, - бедный, одинокий, убитый человек – и вам его не жаль?】.457 ["This German is a poor, lonely and broken man - how can you feel no pity for him?"]]. This is the second time that Lemm is represented as a deplorable figure. The first one was the emphatic, lengthy description of Lemm’s appearance cited above (p. 187f.). This allows the interpretation that, although depicted as a naturally gifted musician and a person superior to the likes of Panshin and Mar’ia Dmitrievna Kalitina, the German is to be pitied. Furthermore, Lemm’s main raison d’etre is to play a supporting role to and complement the Russian protagonists.

Lemm does not only ‘classify’ protagonists; he also fulfils a similar function as Mademoiselle Boncourt in Rudin, although in a slightly modified way. While Mademoiselle Boncourt seems to comprehend several characters intuitively, Lemm has an insight into the triangular relationship between Lavretskii, Liza and Panshin. Turgenev’s portrait of the two men is a representation of different social types common among the Russian upper classes in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Panshin is a product of St Petersburg high society and invites comparisons with Pushkin’s Onegin. He works in the civil service, feels at home in the capital’s salons and drawing rooms, speaks Russian interspersed with Gallicisms, has great gifts of eloquence and dabbles in the arts, yet at heart he is cold and sly. In fact.

456 Ibid.
457 Ibid., c. 144
Panshin fits the type so common in Russian literature of the first half of the nineteenth century: the so-called “superfluous man”. The difference between him and Lavretskii is that the latter’s life was shaped by the countryside rather than the city. He was influenced by his upbringing on the country estate, his father’s Anglomania and an unusual choice of tutors which left him unprepared for life in Russian high society. The extent to which he failed to fit into that society is demonstrated by his disastrous marriage to a St Petersburg belle. While both Panshin and Lavretskii were exposed to foreign influences in their formative years, Liza, like Pushkin’s Tat’iana, had a largely “Russian” upbringing. She was looked after by a peasant nanny and was brought up in the Russian Orthodox faith. With this the author implies purity, simplicity, naturalness and a lack of mendacious sophistication, relying as much on stereotypes of Russianness as of Western Europeanness in the characterisation of Lavretskii and Panshin.

The differences between the two men and their relationship with Liza (Lizaveta Mikhailovna) are vocalised by Lemm who has a clear understanding of Panshin’s character long before anyone else sees the young man’s shortcomings.

«Лизавета Михайловна девушка справедливая, серьезная, с возвышенными чувствами, а он... он ди-ле-тант, одним словом». [...] «Она может любить одно прекрасное, а он не прекрасен, то есть душа его не прекрасна».458

458 Ibid., c. 191
["Lizaveta Mikhailovna is a sensible and sincere girl, with higher feelings, whereas he... to put it bluntly, he is a di-let-tante. [...] She can only love what is good, and he isn't good. I mean, his soul isn't good”].

Unlike Mar’ia Kalitina, who is charmed by Panshin’s dazzling and entertaining demeanour and irritated by Lavretskii’s lack thereof, Lemm is able to see through him and judge the man behind it. While Lavretskii is still convinced that Liza will get married to Panshin, Lemm ‘knows’ that «это не будет» 459 [“this will not happen”]. It is not surprising that the Westerniser Turgenev, who spent much of his adult life in France and Germany, should suggest that it is the outsider, a Western European, who can interpret and evaluate Russian characters correctly.

It is music in general which can be used to interpret the main protagonists, and Lemm’s compositions in particular, which document the development of the triangular relationship 460. As Lavretskii first enters the Kalitin household, different types of music are performed or discussed: Panshin’s Romance, a Beethoven Sonata and Lemm’s Cantata. Panshin’s romantic ditty characterises the composer perfectly: it is an entertaining but shallow piece of little artistic merit. Lemm comments on it: «Всё второй номер, легкий товар, специальная работа. Это нравится, и он нравится». 461 [“Everything he does is second rate, light-weight and hurried work. People like it, and people like him”]. Furthermore, it is again Lemm who recognises

459 Ibid. c. 190
460 James B. Woodward, p. 69
461 Ibid. c. 146
and responds to Liza’s profundity, her rich spirituality and the depth of her emotions, which all find expression in his religious cantata.

Lemm’s next composition, his own romance, is a failure. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, Lemm, a serious-minded and skilful composer, tries to work with a genre that is simply beyond his expertise. He has no more knowledge of light salon music than Panshin has of religious cantatas or Beethoven sonatas. Secondly, the words Lemm chooses are immediately linked to Liza. His attempts to compose a libretto about «чистые звезды» [“pure stars”] is then directly echoed in Lavretskii’s thought about Liza as «чистая девушка» [“pure girl”]. A light show piece with the serious-minded Liza at its core was bound to fail. Thirdly, Lemm (and the relationship between Liza and Lavretskii which he is ‘monitoring’) is not yet ready for a successful composition:

«Казалось, небывалая, сладкая мелодия собиралась посетить его: он уже горел и волновался, он чувствовал уже истому и сладость ее приближения... но он не дождался ее...».

[“He felt as though a sweet, unreal melody were descending upon him. He already felt hot and flustered; he already felt the languor and sweetness of its approach... but he did not wait for it”].

__462 Ibid., c. 190__
The song is performed at a time when the relationship between Lavretskii and Liza has not been clarified yet, especially with regard to Liza’s feelings for Panshin. Lemm’s music sounds hollow:

«Увы! музыка оказалась запутанной и неприятно напряженной; видно было, что композитор силен выразить что-то страшное, глубокое, но ничего не вышло: усилие так и осталось одним усилием».

[“Alas! The music turned out to be entangled and unpleasantly strained. It was obvious that the composer had tried to express something passionate and deep, but in vain. The effort had remained nothing but an effort”].

It echoes the sentiments and the atmosphere of the previous day, when Liza and Lavretskii disagreed on whether he had been justified in leaving his wife: «Наши убеждения на этот счет слишком различны, Лизавета Михайловна. - произнес Лаврецкий довольно резко, - мы не поймем друг друга».

[“Our convictions on this subject are too different, Lisaveta Mikhailovna,” Lavretskii said, rather sharply; “we do not understand one another”].

Unsurprisingly, when Liza and Lavretskii confess their love for each other on that memorable night in the garden, the next thing Lavretskii hears is Lemm’s magical music, now complete and fully developed:

463 Ibid., c. 200
464 Ibid., c. 192
«Вдруг ему почудилось, что в воздухе над его головою разлились какие-то дивные, торжествующие звуки [...]». Сладкая, страстная мелодия с первого звука охватывала сердце; она вся сияла, вся томилась вдохновением, счастьем, красотою, она росла и таяла; она касалась всего, что есть на земле дорогого, тайного, святого; она дышала бессмертной грустью и уходила умирать в небеса. Лаврентий выпрямился и стоял, похолодев и бледный от восторга. Эти звуки так и впивались в его душу, только что потрясенную счастьем любви; они сами пылали любовью».

[“Suddenly he felt as if the air above his head were filled with divine and triumphant sounds [...]. From its first notes, this sweet and passionate melody touched his heart. It seemed to glow and languish with fire, happiness and beauty. It rose and faded away. It touched on everything dear, mysterious and sacred on earth. It was filled with infinite sorrow and departed to die in the heavens. Lavretsky straightened up and stood there in raptures, cold and pale. These sounds seemed to seize his very soul, which had been shaken by the happiness of love experienced not long ago. The music itself was ablaze with love”].

465 Ibid., c. 225-226
This music is the expression of the fleeting moment of happiness experienced by Liza and Lavretskii\textsuperscript{466}, and it only lasts for as long as Lemm plays it. The following day Lavretskii is informed that his wife has returned. Like their happiness and the magical evening of hope and love, Lemm’s music is lost forever. Lemm pronounces the finality of the situation: «Все умерло, и мы умерли (Alles ist todt, und wir sind todt)»\textsuperscript{467} [“All is dead, and we are dead”].

It is perhaps not surprising that Turgenev’s work provides the best examples of characters with interpretative functions among governesses and tutors. As a committed Westerniser he was ready to give this important function to Western Europeans and endow them with the necessary psychological insight to understand and interpret Russians and their society. Yet, even Turgenev does not break with the traditional literary image and stereotype of the foreign governess and tutor. Unlike Liza or Lavretskii, Lemm is not discussed as a human subject, but fulfils a function. Like other Russian authors before him, Turgenev does not focus on a historically accurate representation of the profession or the people involved in it. He continues the trend to use foreigners as a type and as representatives of “the West”.

\textsuperscript{466} James B. Woodward, p. 70
\textsuperscript{467} Ibid., c. 264
CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation has aimed to highlight and evaluate significant divergences between the historical image of the Western European governess and tutor and their literary representation. Historical data suggests that the Russian nobility was dependent on the presence of private teachers for the upbringing and education of their children. After the Westernisation of the administration, the military and the upper classes in the eighteenth century, the social identity of the nobility rested on the knowledge of foreign languages, the wearing of foreign dress, and the attainment of what was deemed to be a Western-style education. In the eyes of eighteenth-century members of the Russian elite, the ability to speak French or German and the knowledge of how to behave appropriately in society could determine someone’s social affiliation with the nobility or the lower gentry. Owing to a paucity of schools and indigenous teachers, these accomplishments could only be provided by foreign instructors from Western Europe. Consequently, the initial education of boys, and often the entire upbringing of girls were shaped by French, Swiss, German, Scottish, Irish and English nannies, companions, governesses and tutors.

As my analysis of historical records has demonstrated, the foreign educator predictably emerges as a distinctly complex individual. The motivations of British governesses for going to Russia are as varied as their backgrounds, qualifications, abilities, attitudes and experiences with their Russian families. Similarly, the memories of erstwhile Russian pupils writing about their Western European
instructors touch upon the whole spectrum of feelings, from love and respect via indifference to hatred. Not one of these three categories predominates. There are roughly the same number of sources commenting favourably, with derision, or essentially indifference on the foreign governesses and tutors they describe.

By comparison, the image of the foreign educator in Russian literature is decidedly one-dimensional and, as a rule, negative. The portrayal of governesses and tutors exhibits none of the rounded and unique characteristics of a human being. Instead, it has been reduced to a clichéd type which was developed in the late eighteenth century by Fonvizin and his contemporaries as a criticism against the fervent Gallomania among the upper classes in the country. Nineteenth-century authors retained some of the established characteristics of the type, such as the alienated and isolated nature of the profession as well as the teachers’ general incompetence. Other typical features changed subsequently. For example, the inferior status of teachers became less of an issue. It was replaced by a stress on physical appearance (especially using references to animals in the description) as well as on the inability and unwillingness of foreigners to communicate in Russian. This change in the representation of foreigners in literature corresponded to a shift in the Russian upper classes. Excessive adoration and emulation of French society, for example, gave rise to a more critical attitude towards “the West” in an attempt to establish and define Russia’s national identity and position among the European powers.
The representation of foreign governesses and tutors was thus used to fulfil a function, both within the novel and Russian society. Within the literary context, these foreign characters act as “the other”. Their actions, conversations and comments help to advance the plot and facilitate a better understanding of the main, Russian, protagonists. In the wider context of Russian society, the “otherness” of the foreigners was used to help define what is Russian. Any relationship between a self and an other creates self-awareness of fresh ideas about identity.468 This explains the stress on governesses’ and tutors’ inadequacy, ridiculousness, pitiful nature and physicality. By paying disproportionate attention to the foreigners’ appearance, authors highlight Russia’s spirituality and soul. By focusing on the teachers’ weaknesses such as their inability to learn Russian, authors can contrast this with a skill Russians were known to be particularly good at, i.e. the learning of foreign languages. Representatives of Western Europe may have a superior understanding of human nature (as, for example Mademoiselle Boncourt or Lemm in Turgenev’s Rudin and A Nest of the Gentry), but they are also pathetic, ugly, and they at times smell, thus producing an advantageous representation of the Russian protagonist and a satisfactory image of Russian identity.

A direct comparison between historical and literary sources produced the following results. Firstly, in personal memoirs teachers were mentioned sometimes with ardent love, sometimes with fervent hatred, but they were generally central to a child’s formative years. In literary texts they are largely sidelined and are depicted as

468 Bill Ashcroft, p. 169
subordinate, minor and unsympathetic characters. Russian literary narratives produced the impression that little is said about governesses and tutors because they are "unimportant" human beings. The excellent and well-loved foreign teachers that did work in Russia, as documented in various historical memoirs, did not make their way into novels and short stories. Secondly, governesses and tutors who were employed to teach and supervise the children of the elite are portrayed by authors as being idle. They might like to listen to "histories" as Vral’man in Fonvizin’s *The Minor*, re-read *Pamela* and powder their noses like Miss Jackson in Pushkin’s *The Squire’s Daughter*, or sit by the river and fish all day like Miss Twice in Chekhov’s ‘A Daughter of Albion’. One thing they never seem to be doing is teach. Thirdly, the Russian nobility was dependent on Western European instructors for the much coveted "Western" education and manners. Yet, these people who were employed for their language skills to teach the Russian nobility how to speak French, German and English, are effectively silenced in novels and short stories. The descriptions of their physical features are given far more prominence than their conversation. Furthermore, historical data showed that many governesses took pride in learning the native language of their employers. However, the inability to speak Russian, or even the active refusal to learn it, is one of the persistent elements of the literary type. Authors juxtapose intellectually third-rate characters of Western European origin with characters of the most educated segment of Russian society, reduce them to a type and literary function, and yet present them as a truthful image of "the West" and as realistic representatives of their countries. This portrayal is driven by defensiveness
and insecurity. Its aim was to debunk the other in order to present the self in a more impressive light.

With hindsight, the country estate together with its inhabitants, so vividly described by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian authors, can be seen as part of a way of life that was finally destroyed by the Bolshevik Revolution. It highlights liberal attitudes, manners and customs, as well as a dialogue of cultures that were lost forever. Contemporary research in Russia has rediscovered an interest in the life of the elite and its country homes, as is demonstrated by the publication of Ol’ga Aleksandrovna Tolstaia-Voeikova’s letters,\textsuperscript{469} and various other monographs on the Russian nobility, or estate architecture. Much more will come to light when provincial archives reveal their treasures. As for the literary governess, her fate was finally decided in Boris Pasternak’s \textit{Доктор Живаго [Doctor Zhivago]}: After all his vicissitudes Zhivago returns to Moscow. From the tram he catches sight of a former governess in the hubbub of the street. After twelve years of appealing to the authorities Swiss national Mademoiselle Fleury finally manages to obtain an exit visa, and from the narrative we learn that she is getting ready to leave. The foreigner succeeds where the nobleman Zhivago fails in a changed Russia: she is allowed to go home. Zhivago and his circle of friends, however, have no home any more to which to return.

\textsuperscript{469} Cf. p. 5, Véronique Jobert’s collection of her great-grandmother’s letter.
APPENDIX I: List of Primary Literary Sources

Denis Fonvizin:  
Недоросль [The Minor], 1781  
Выбор гувернера [Choosing a Tutor], 1792

Aleksandr Pushkin:  
(1799-1837)  
Капитанская дочка [The Captain's Daughter], 1836  
'Барышня-крестьянка' ['The Squire's Daughter'], 1831  
Евгений Онегин [Eugene Onegin], 1825-33  
Дубровский [Dubrovskii], 1832

Ivan Turgenev  
(1818-1883)  
Дневник лишнего человека [Diary of a Superfluous Man], 1850  
Месяц в деревне [A Month in the Country], 1855  
Рудин [Rudin], 1856  
Фауст [Faust], 1856  
Дворянское гнездо [A Nest of the Gentry], 1859  
Накануне [On the Eve], 1860

Lev Tolstoy  
(1828-1910)  
Детство [Childhood], 1852  
Анна Каренина [Anna Karenina], 1875-77

Anton Chekhov  
(1860-1904)  
'Дочь Альбиона' ['A Daughter of Albion'], 1883  
'На чужбине' ['In a Foreign Land'], 1885  
'Нервы' ['Nerves'], 1885  
'Переполох' ['An Upheaval'], 1886  
'Дорогие уроки' ['Expensive Lessons'], 1887  
Вишнёвый сад [The Cherry Orchard], 1904

Aleksandr Kuprin  
(1870-1938)  
'На переломе' ['At the Turning Point'], 1900  
'Бедный принц' ['The Poor Prince'], 1909
**APPENDIX II:**

**Peter I’s Table of Ranks (January 24, 1722)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Rank in Civil Service</th>
<th>Rank in Army</th>
<th>Rank in Navy</th>
</tr>
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<td>Канцлер</td>
<td>Chancellor</td>
<td>Field Marshall</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Действительный тайный советник</td>
<td>Active Privy Councillor</td>
<td>General</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Тайный советник</td>
<td>Privy Councillor</td>
<td>Lieutenant General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Действительный статский советник</td>
<td>Active State Councillor</td>
<td>Major General</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>State Councillor</td>
<td>Brigadier</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Коллежский советник</td>
<td>Collegiate Councillor</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Надворный советник</td>
<td>Court Councillor</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
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<td>Major</td>
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<td>Staff Captain</td>
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<td>District Secretary</td>
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<td>Коллежский регистратор</td>
<td>Collegiate Registrar</td>
<td>Guidon Bearer</td>
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</table>
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