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*WHEN HER STORY BECOMES CULTURAL HISTORY:
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS OF ZARATHUSTRA'S SISTERS*

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

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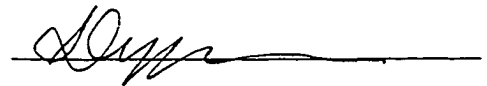
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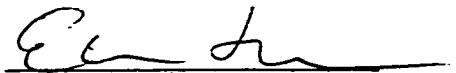
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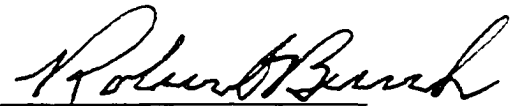
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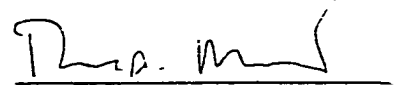
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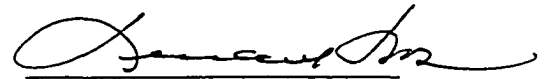
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ABSTRACT

This study reads the autobiographical writings of six women who share the experience of being in and writing about a relationship with a man significant to the tradition of Western letters. Unlike the life-writing of other "significant others," these authors represent their autonomy in an ambiguous manner, playing upon, and thus encouraging focus on, the cultural implications of self-representation. Situating itself at the intersection of scholarship on Nietzsche, autobiography and modernity, the study explores the means by which these women expressed the relationality inherent both in their subjectivity and in the autobiographical genre, and establishes them as precursors of the autobiographically-oriented academic postmodern.

The study consists of three parts. After an introduction which plots the generic and socio-historical scholarly coordinates of the study, the first part draws attention to the ways in which Lou Andreas-Salomé and Simone de Beauvoir mobilized their autobiographical writing to counter societal mythologies and entrench their positions as sovereign figures of literary and cultural import. What emerges in the second part on Maitreyi Devi and Asja Lacis are eerily similar images of the ghosts of attachments past on both the parts of the women in question and the men with whom they were fleetingly involved, Walter Benjamin and Mircea Eliade. The autobiographical writings of these two women are shown to function as anti-mythologies, which counter other accounts of their intense, brief encounters with young scholars whose work was destined for substantial academic capital. The focus of the third part is on the mythologizing means by which Nadezhda Mandel'shtam and Romola Nijinsky established both their husbands' heroic artistic accomplishments and their own role in heroically writing those accomplishments. A conclusion then

tackles the question of precursing postmodernity and argues that the approach of avant-garde artists to the life-art relation serves as a link between, and provides a reading strategy for, both these texts and the autobiographical element increasingly prevalent within the Anglo-American academy.

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This book's underlying theme, the relationality of subjectivity, is reflective of my own good fortune in this regard. During the course of my research and writing, I incurred many debts in many places - from St. Petersburg and Riga to Sosnowiec and Saarbrücken, to Vienna, Prague and Ljubljana, to New York and Montreal, but starting in and always returning to Edmonton. Those are the signposts of this project - each with its faces and memories, each a special part of me. They all found their way into, and indeed made possible, the following pages. Now that this project has drawn to its far from inevitable conclusion I am particularly pleased to acknowledge all of the support that has made the past several years enjoyably productive.

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To the biggest and grandest of grandmas --
Leben macht frei...

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INTRODUCTION: ZARATHUSTRA'S SISTERS

[E]ines Morgens stand [Zarathustra] mit der Morgenröthe auf, trat vor die Sonne hin und sprach zu ihr also:

'Du grosses Gestirn! Was wäre dein Glück, wenn du nicht Die hättest, welchen du leuchtest!

Zehn Jahre kamst du hier herauf zu meiner Höhle: du würdest deines Lichtes und dieses Weges satt geworden sein, ohne mich, meinen Adler und meine Schlange.'

Vorrede, 1, Zarathustra¹

Gefährten sucht der Schaffende und nicht Leichname, und auch nicht Heerden und Gläubige. Die Mitschaffenden sucht der Schaffende, Die, welche neue Werthe auf neue Tafeln schreiben.

Gefährten sucht der Schaffende, und Miterntended: denn Alles steht bei ihm reif zur Ernte. Aber ihm fehlen die hundert Sicheln: so rauft er Ähren aus und ist ärgerlich.

Gefährten sucht der Schaffende, und solche, die ihre Sicheln zu wetzen wissen. Vernichter wird man sie heissen und Verächter des Guten und Bösen. Aber die Erntenden sind es und die Feiernden.

Vorrede, 9, Zarathustra²

Von sich absehn lernen ist nöthig, um Viel zu sehn: - diese Härte thut jedem Berge-Steigenden Noth.

Der Wanderer, Zarathustra³

The six women who serve as subject for this study share the experience of being in and writing about a relationship with a man significant to the tradition of Western letters. One would be justified in expecting a critical survey of the extent to which their reception has been shaped by their relationships. Simone de Beauvoir is also known as *la grande Sartreuse*.⁴ Lou Andreas-Salomé's name is often found with the further hyphenation "Nietzsche-Rilke-Freud."⁵ Mandel'shtam and Nijinsky are generally taken to be the names of the renowned Russian poet and dancer, Osip and Vaslav, not

of their wives, Nadezhda and Romola. And what little academic attention Asja Lacis and Maitreyi Devi receive is due to the Benjamin-Brecht-Piscator-Meyerhold and Eliade-Tagore connections respectively.

However, it is not on account of their relationships per se that I was drawn to work on these particular six women. They have much more in common than simply the fact of their involvement with "names" and their subsequent autobiographical output. All in the same intriguing way encourage focus on the cultural implications of self-representation, specifically on the question of how the autobiographical or documentary genre has been mobilized to intervene with discernibly didactic intent in hostile, condescending or indifferent cultural force fields. I first became interested in the topic working on Nadezhda Mandel'shtam's memoirs. Her verve, gumption, and unrelenting sense of purpose captured my imagination. In reading a wide sampling of autobiographical texts, I began to distinguish a "Mandel'shtam response" among women who came into their own and wrote autobiographically in the post-Nietzschian "Old World." These women had led long, active, productive, transitive lives, experiencing the kafkaesque periods of upheaval that so tragically mark the first half of the twentieth century.⁶ They had received better educations than women of their time were generally encouraged to attain.⁷ They were very quick to shed whatever shackles of bourgeois restraint they encountered, and their precocity brought them into what would in today's North America be considered rather high-brow circles, circles which remained closed to their less feisty, less favorably-situated contemporaries, and circles which, whether literary, theatrical or philosophical, have come to be recognized as among the *crème de la crème* of their respective fields. These women wrote with the same sense of urgency and engagement. They valued the

documentary nature of the autobiographical genre rather than its interpretative character. They painted their relationships with their fathers in unusually positive colors and with their mothers in less flattering, though often touchingly compassionate, shades.⁸ Their precocity far from having dissipated with age, they saturated their autobiographical writings with an earnest determination, one cultivated and represented with great pride, and one leaving little room for dissension or disbelief. They knew how it was, they'd been there, and it was important the reader recognize the value of, and benefit from, that experience. The values and benefits of their experience deserve a less partial reading than they have thus far "enjoyed" in Anglo-America and its scholarship; and this certainly was a factor in the selection of these particular six women.

There was, however, a further consideration. The main impetus of this study is the very suggestive profile these women form together, one which I see as precursing a particular part of the academic postmodern and, in so doing, contributing to our understanding of the postmodern continuum as it has been and continues to be played out within the academy. As David Simpson discusses in his 1995 *The Academic Postmodern and the Rule of Literature*, the spectrum of academic postmoderns is broad. Whereas Simpson chooses to focus on "the conservative, 'establishment' incarnations, those that have achieved a certain prestige and reproductive power in the academy: the writings of Geertz and Rorty, the new historicism, and so on" (18), I find that the more personal forms of academic criticism, which have come to be known as "intimate," "confessional" and "personal," offer a more productive entry-point into postmodern academic production.

When considered together, as is the purpose of this study, the six autobiographical projects in question encourage reconsidering the current

preoccupation with "getting a life"⁹ from the critical, "anti-aesthetic" perspective which Hal Foster, in his preface to the 1983 essay collection by that name, links with postmodernism: "the sign not of a modern nihilism - which so often transgressed the law only to confirm it - but rather of a critique which destructures the order of representations in order to reinscribe them" (xv).¹⁰ The readings in this study work towards demonstrating the extent to which questions of reinscription are at work in the texts, and not simply transgression for its own sake as is so often the case with the more aesthetically inclined."

It is here that the invocation of "Zarathustra's sisters" proves useful. The reinscriptive, "anti-aesthetic" stance of the women in this study will be attributed to consonances in situation, character and hearing, to delicate ears resonating to the same rumblings as Zarathustra's. Utilizing Nietzsche's productively provocative and ambiguous positioning vis-à-vis the postmodern, it aims at a transfer of scholarship and context from the seat of this debate to works which have received less of such attention.¹¹ However, as the previous reference to Foster's "anti-aesthetic" is intended to indicate, my reading of Nietzsche is neither of a piece with critical theorists nor poststructuralists, for whom Nietzsche represents an aesthetic, affirmative model of human freedom.¹² Rather, in situating myself at the intersection of scholarship on Nietzsche, autobiography and modernity, I draw on each of these areas to cross-pollinate the others. The rest of this chapter will specify how. It will first set up the two axes against which the six texts in this study are to be plotted: the first generic and the second socio-historical. A concluding section will then address the ethical issues shown to arise from Nietzsche's interstitial positioning.

READING UP, GOING DOWN: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING AND THE MODERN

Der aber hat sich selber entdeckt,
welcher spricht: Das ist mein Gutes
und Böses: damit hat er den
Maulwurf und Zwerg stumm
gemacht, welcher spricht: 'Allen gut,
Allen bö's'...

'Das - ist nun mein Weg, - wo ist der
eure?' so antwortete ich Denen,
welche nicht 'nach dem Wege'
fragten. Den Weg nämlich - den giebt
es nicht!

Vom Geist der Schwere, 2,
*Zarathustra*¹⁴

A) IS FOR AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The generic terms currently available for the denotation of the texts to be considered in this study present certain problems. The formal, more traditional definitions of *autobiography*, *memoir*, *autobiographical novel*, and *biography* are too narrow to adequately encompass the body of work in question, while the more recent term, *life-writing*, is so broad as to be practically meaningless.¹⁵ The purpose of introducing *life-writing* as a conceptual category was in part to overcome this earlier rigidity.¹⁶ However, it quickly assumed a more political, reformatory function, one of creating an academic space within which to discuss types of writing traditionally subject to little academic attention, such as those of women, other "minorities" and also the newer, more hybrid, less formal types of writings such as internet interaction. In that sense, both the present project and the texts it will be examining could conceivably be considered life-writing, making a terminological distinction desirable.

Autobiographical writing, as introduced here, is intended not to supplant *life-writing* but rather to supplement and clarify it. It would be reserved for texts which involve intervening with one's own lived experience into one's surrounding written culture, and would be marked by

being based on one's own lived experience and its realization into writing. More fundamentally, *autobiographical writing*, as opposed to *life-writing*, would be restricted to works that deliberately invoke Lejeune's autobiographical pact, which "supposes that there is identity of name between the author (such as he figures, by his name, on the cover), the narrator of the story, and the character who is being talked about" (12). Maitreyi Devi's supposed *roman-à-clef*, *It Does Not Die: A Romance*, for example, is not at all operating under the same kind of pact with the reader as either Beauvoir's *The Mandarins* or Andreas-Salomé's *Fenitschka*. While *The Mandarins* and *Fenitschka* are obviously written out of the autobiographical experiences of their authors, *It Does Not Die* invites, indeed challenges, the reader to accept it as Devi's version of her actual real-life encounter with Eliade, the same type of claim being made in Beauvoir's *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* and Andreas-Salomé's *Looking Back* and deliberately not being made in their more fictional writing. It is precisely in the willingness inherent in the autobiographical pact on the part of the reader to accept the story as *more than mere* fiction, and the willingness or determination of the author to have the story read as the true story of at least part of her life, that the ethical potential of the genre resides (a point to which I will return in the concluding section of this chapter on the relevance of Nietzsche to the project).

The choice of the term *autobiographical writing*, as opposed to both autobiography, etc. and life-writing, is dictated by subject matter. While the present project would like to plant itself into the fertile poststructural soil where the inclusive notion of *life-writing* has taken firm root, it cannot do so unconditionally. Without wanting in any way to negate the theoretical gains of the conceptual shift that has allowed theorists to target and

clarify the power matrices which give shape to our lives,⁷ I want to stress here the ways which the texts to be examined here do not allow for an unquestioned acceptance of these new terminological developments. While demanding consideration of the implications of the new generic category of *life-writing*, they at the same time reinforce its challenge to philological categories of periodic classification. The following overview is intended to briefly illustrate the way in which autobiographical texts have traditionally been approached as purely aesthetic objects, and the way academic periodization reflects this priority.

The traditional view of autobiography is as a truthful representation of its author's life history, an approach founded on the ontology of an observable and comprehensible self. Problems began to arise, however, among those who have come to be known as the literary modernists when authors not only recognized that the self was neither coherent nor knowable but began to explore what it meant to live within the "incomplete" paradigm of modernity.¹⁸ However, at a time when, *pace* Yeats, "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold/ Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world," even this consciously-stylized, despairing vision of increasing fragmentation and human powerlessness in the face of blind technology could not be expected to last. As the very possibility of representation, immutable disciplines and genres, Truth, History, Science, and the Author fell under attack by what Gadamer has called "the French challenge," the effects of especially its rather acidic American fall-out could not but be felt in the area of autobiography.¹⁹ However, even the most radically poststructural French flank of the postmodern condition has been shown to suffer from a certain orthodoxy which has left it open to attack from forces Theo D'haen has termed "counter-postmodern." The counter-postmodern, according to D'haen:

counters orthodox postmodernism in putting its finger on the latter's complicity with what it purports to subvert or problematize... [and] writes the subjectivity, history, and language of those hitherto suppressed by the discourse of modernity as emanating from Western bourgeois society. (194)

That is, destabilized poststructural subjectivities have been found to be as terribly Eurocentric, patriarchal, straight, etc. as their essentialist Enlightenment counterparts. It is this counter-postmodern which has lately been causing a great splash in the already murky waters of autobiography. To briefly summarize, as conceptions of the self changed from truthful, enlightened representation to anguished anathema, destabilized multiplicity and down-trodden but embodied victim, so too did the form of those selves' stories, as the following examples illustrate. Whereas Rousseau's *Confessions* and Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* can be seen as classical instances of the traditional introspection of great men, Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and Michel Leiris's *L'age d'homme* are prototypically modernist in their purely formal type of experimentation; Barthes' *Roland Barthes* and bp Nichol's *Selected Organs* are their postmodern equivalents in playfully experimenting with fragments, while the heart-wrenching episodes in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* rank among the better-known exemplars of the rapidly expanding canon of the counter-postmodern.

As will become apparent during the course of this study, the above chronology leaves no room for discussion of the texts under consideration here. Neither classical nor modernist, postmodernist nor counter-postmodernist, the autobiographical texts of these six women chafe uncomfortably under categories of periodization and genre designed with

others in mind.²⁰ In thus eluding generic and periodic capture, they serve to draw attention to the bases on which these categories are constructed. Just as life-writing has its own agenda, so do the varieties of "modernism"s outlined above. They are explicitly literary labels which affix to texts read as, and only as, literature. As we will see, not one of the women in question here considered or constructed herself, nor has been considered or constructed by scholarship, as a primarily literary artist; not one understood her autobiographical project as a solely aesthetic undertaking.²¹ Thus, unlike Elliott and Wallace's commitment in *Women Artists and Writers: Modernist (Im)positionings* "to rethinking modernism as a discursive and historical field" (1, italics in original), it is in the spirit of Adorno's *force field* that the present study will proceed.²²

B) BUILDING UP A "MATRIOYSHKA" MODERN

Modernity, as Octavio Paz reminds us, is a tradition divided against itself. Thus it is fitting, if not inevitable, that this study's response to it is also divided. In order to encompass the various levels of criticism on this tradition and distance myself from the Anglo-American tendency in scholarship to conflate modernism with the avant-garde, I approach the concept as a "matrioyshka" modern.²³ Like the smooth-shaped, colourfully-painted wooden dolls which have so gleefully been appropriated of late for political and pop-cultural purposes,²⁴ my "matrioyshka" modern unpacks into progressively smaller, more specific figures, ranging from the grand narrative of philosophical modernity through the period of literary history known as modernism to the brief moment in high modernism of the avant-garde.

The innermost figure of this "matrioyshka" modern, then, belongs to Peter Bürger and his socio-historical distinction between the avant-garde and modernism in *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. His analysis of the institutionalization of modern art is particularly useful for the present study as it encourages one to think in terms of the institutional implications of these women's work. For Bürger:

the development of the avant-garde has nothing to do with a critical consciousness about language; it is not a continuation of tendencies already present in Aestheticism. Rather, for him the turning point from Aestheticism to the avant-garde is determined by the extent to which art comprehended the mode in which it functioned in bourgeois society, *its comprehension of its own social status*. The historical avant-garde of the twenties was the first movement in art history that turned against the institution 'art' and the mode in which autonomy functions. In this it differed from all previous art movements, whose mode of existence was determined precisely by an acceptance of autonomy. (Foreword, xiv, italics added)

Bürger's approach focuses on the way in which avant-garde artists worked to overcome their societal isolation "to alter the institutionalized commerce with art" (Foreword, xv). While I am not arguing that the women who comprise this study are by any means avant-garde artists, I do think they lived and wrote, in a very non-avant-garde way, avant-garde lives as Bürger understands that term, a point which will prove crucial to my concluding argument. Keeping Bürger's methodological framework in the background will help to focus on and contextualize the mechanisms by means of which these women strove towards an ambiguously autonomous status, a matter which has hitherto created difficulties for scholars.

Involvement with culturally significant figures has neither aided nor abetted scholars in dealing with these six women. As one might expect, early studies and those of a more traditionally philological bent have tended to treat them as glorified appendages, help-mates who happen to be a useful source of valuable biographical material but of no intrinsic interest themselves. The title of Althaus-Schönbucher's "Nadezhda Mandel'shtam: *Vosponimaniya und Vtoraja kniga. Memoiren als Ergänzung der Literaturforschung*" and the comment in Grigulis's introduction to Lacis's *Red Carnation* that it is a "rich source of information" (5) are cases in point. Theoretically-informed feminist scholarship has since intervened to "right/write" these "wrongs" by concentrating on the conditions under which these women wrote and were written. While studies such as Toril Moi's of Beauvoir and Bidy Martin's of Andreas-Salomé do provide an important, sociologically-informed background for their subjects, as feminists these authors choose to highlight their subjects' struggles for, and not with, autonomy. Moi, for example, concludes:

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, [Beauvoir] still makes it easier for us to live our lives as we wish, without regard to patriarchal conventions... When I realize how hard it was for her to gain a sense of autonomy and independence, I find her achievements all the more admirable. (256-7)

Instead of assuming that the women in the present study strove for autonomy and independence, I proceed from Bürger's work on the avant-garde to suggest that their aim was ambiguity and *interdependence*.

Bürger targets a social dynamic within the larger artistic movement of modernism, which is the second figure in the "matrioshka" modern. Continental and Russian criticism on the modernist movements in literature

is useful for its attention to the questions of the creation of cultural myths and *zhiznetvorchestvo*, which has been variously translated as life-art and life-creation. As Gasparov explains the development of modernism from romanticism:

Modernism breathed new life into the romantic cult of the creative personality and of the artist's messianic calling. Here too, however, Modernism reinterpreted a traditional motif in accordance with the Modernist concept of total eschatological synthesis. Romantic individualism and eccentricity, the Romantic's flight from the 'vulgarity' of everyday life, and his dedication to the creation of lofty spiritual values were replaced by the idea of 'life-creation' (*zhiznetvorchestvo*) which demanded that the antinomy between 'life' and 'art' be obliterated and the entire life of the artist-messiah be transformed into a continuously unfolding and totalizing artistic text. Where the Romantic artist 'fled' from the quotidian to serve his creative calling, the Modernist artist refused to live in historical time at all. Every moment of the Modernist artist's life was seen as a synthetic creative act that occurred in a paradigmatic time where all his potential symbolic reflections were mythologically co-present. (3-4)

While I am not suggesting that the modernist relation between life and art, which tended to degenerate into dandyism and caricature, is evidenced in the texts under consideration, the modernist cultural landscape the women in this study inhabited was dominated by the social fact of cultural mythologies and, as we will see, it is important to consider how these played themselves out in their writing.

What is the significance of these mythologizing tendencies?²⁵ As will be addressed in greater detail in the first chapter on Lou Andreas-Salomé, mythological figures function to allow for the expression of the epoch's obsessions, its inner tensions and fears, under the guise of historical distance and objectivity. By creating or inventing themselves and their relationships as mythologies, these women were actively intervening into and subtly shifting the societal basis of consensus. One could speak here more of an "anti-tradition" than an "anti-aesthetic." That is, this cultural mechanism operates in a similar yet counter fashion to that identified in Hobsbawm and Ranger's essay collection *The Invention of Tradition*, in which traditions, such as those surrounding the British monarchy in its public ceremonial manifestations, are unmasked as late 19th and early 20th century products: "practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (1). It was not always the case that the tradition of Scottish national identity was represented by kilts, tartans and bagpipes; rather it is a relatively new, modern, "retrospective invention" (15). Inventing traditions proved crucial to the success of colonizing Africa in the late 19th century:

the invented traditions imported from Europe not only provided whites with models of command but also offered many Africans models of 'modern' behaviour. The invented traditions of African societies - whether invented by the Europeans or by Africans themselves in response - distorted the past but became in themselves realities through which a good deal of colonial encounter was expressed. (212)

So too were the mythologies these women created of themselves and their relationships aimed into the cultural fray not as models of "modern behaviour," but rather as "anti-traditions," subversively inimitable examples.

Further, *zhiznetvorchestvo* is tantalizingly related to Beauvoir's notion of *l'enterprise de vivre*, or art of living, which is the undercurrent informing Karen Vintges's *Philosophy as Passion: The Thinking of Simone de Beauvoir*. Vintges looks at how Beauvoir:

continues to emphasize her life as active subject... I think we can conclude this is what Beauvoir had in mind with her art of living... [T]hrough her own life, she wanted to prove a woman could live as subject. Her own life was to form a refutation of Freud's theory; it would give other women a successful example of life as an active woman and thus mean something for them. (107)

Like Lynn Tirrell's "Sexual Dualism and Women's Self-Creation: On the Advantages and Disadvantages of Reading Nietzsche for Feminists," though in much greater depth, Vintges' interest is in Beauvoir's project of self-articulation. While Tirrell finds it "significant that both Nietzsche and Beauvoir were concerned with their own need to tell their stories of their lives, working on the borderland between philosophy and literature, and that both tried to recreate the self that was telling in the process of the articulation" (159), Vintges sharply distinguishes Beauvoir from Nietzsche and "neo-Nietzschean postmodernism" along ethical lines (160-1, and 189-90, n1-3). Her central thesis - now that "postmodernism has swept away all foundations for a positive ethics... Beauvoir's idea of ethics as art of living can fill the hiatus that is left" (162) - has the disadvantage of rather nonchalantly dismissing the context of "neo-Nietzschean postmodernism" for both Beauvoir's and her own work. It is this "neo-Nietzschean

postmodernism," and the larger debate it has spawned about and within the philosophical project of modernity, which provides the backdrop against which the accomplishments of Beauvoir and the other five subjects in this study can best be appreciated. As such it forms the outermost shell of my "matrioyshka" modern.

The groundwork for a discussion of the postmodern has already been staked out in Mary Evans's 1996 study of Simone de Beauvoir. While Evans begins by situating Sartre and Beauvoir as moderns:

Both these people, frequently regarded as pariahs by their own society, were nevertheless entirely integrated into its central, modernist, belief: that there are universal, general laws and the world, through properly developed and understood 'laws,' can be rendered coherent. To understand de Beauvoir, and indeed Sartre, it is essential to situate her not just in France (and urban, cosmopolitan France at that) but in the intellectual climate of European modernity... (22)

she then makes the following contrast:

As de Beauvoir confronted Sartre in London in the mid-1930s, she puts forward an argument which was to reappear later in feminism and postmodernism, namely, that the world's diversity cannot, or indeed need not, be understood in terms of single epistemologies. Sartre's search for a universal theory of knowledge... looks, in the 1990s, like a pointless and redundant exercise, whereas de Beauvoir's resistance has about it more than a suggestion of the way in which postmodernism was to fracture the great universalistic expectations and assumptions of the Enlightenment. (32)

Evans's efforts to salvage something of Beauvoir for postmodern scholarship sidestep the underlying difficulties that Beauvoir's well-reasoned writings

present it. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the jump Evans is making is not to the literary movement of modernism but to the philosophical and social paradigm of modernity, just as Biddy Martin does in her study, *Woman and Modernity: The (Life)styles of Lou Andreas-Salomé*. What are the methodological implications of making a such jump? As the editors of the series *Reading Women Writing* to which it belongs point out, "Martin's *Woman and Modernity* is not simply a reading of Lou Andreas-Salomé's writing...; this book attempts to read Salomé the 'writer, thinker, and lay analyst' institutionally, that is to read her life and work *in* as well as *against* its historical, political, and intellectual context" (ix, italics in original). The next step along this critical path is to ask what kind of readings ensue from assuming a self-reflexive stance to the lives and works in question, that is, not just situating them in and against their social contexts but reading them as active interventions into that context, that is, as examples of the autobiographical writing outlined above.

This "matrioyshka modern" thus allows for consideration of all relevant, interrelated layers of criticism. It also helps clarify my choice of the texts of these six women and not of others. The reason for not including, for example, a section on the diaries of Anais Nin and Frida Kahlo, or one comparing the liaison of Lily Brik and Vladimir Mayakovsky with that of Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and Frederick Philip Grove, or one looking at the texts of Anglo-American authors such as Lilian Hellman and Mary McCarthy is that these other texts do not evince the same "modern" (in the sense of Nietzschean avant-garde) spirit that my six subjects do.²⁶ The six women in this study have other, more didactic, less aesthetic priorities; they read and write themselves, and set themselves up to be read, in different

ways than these other authors. It is these differences that I am attempting to highlight in dubbing them "Zarathustra's sisters."

LIFE AND WRITING AS A BRIDGE TO THE ÜBERMENSCH²⁷

Der nämlich bin ich von Grund und
Anbeginn, ziehend, heranziehend,
hinaufziehend, aufziehend, ein
Zieher, Züchter und Zuchtmeister,
der sich nicht umsonst einstmals
zusprach: 'Werde, der du bist!'

Das Honig-Opfer, *Zarathustra*²⁸

Nietzsche's writings, and especially *Thus Spake Zarathustra* with its infamous whip comment, were traditionally regarded as too incendiary to be of any use for approaching women's writing.²⁹ However, as the 1989 special issue of *History of European Ideas* on "Turning Points in History" makes apparent, the Berlin Wall did not fall on its own: its collapse was concurrent with those of other barriers, such as the one between Nietzsche's and women's writings. In the past decade, "Nietzsche" has marked a site of critical intervention in Anglo-American academia. Since the 1991 translation of Irigaray's 1980 *Amante marine* into *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, it is not uncommon to find such comments as: "Nietzsche's misogyny is tempered by a surprising understanding of the situation of the (white, European, upper-class) women of his day... [he] enjoins women, in contemporary feminist terms, to stop being male-defined and to actively engage in creating their own identities" (Tirrell, 176) and "Nietzsche's objections to feminism contain the 'post-feminist' message that women's attempts to define woman as such commit the same essentialist fallacies as the masculinist tradition of Western philosophy" (Ansell-Pearson, 327). As pointed out in the previous section, none of the subjects in this study were particularly on-side as far as feminism is considered, and this has created difficulties for their rehabilitation in the hands of feminist scholars. Even or perhaps especially

Beauvoir, the "mother" of feminism, had a most problematic relation with the feminist movement both in her own country and abroad.³⁹ In drawing on Nietzsche, this study hopes to overcome these difficulties. It recognizes that each particular scene of writing is not a neutral space but rather one that in turn resists and is to be resisted, thus heeding Shoshana Felman's warning in *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference* that "resisting reading for the sake of holding on to our ideologies and preconceptions (be they chauvinist or feminist) is what we tend to do in any case" (6). Like Felman, I am not keen to attempt "a dogmatic summary of feminist theory and scholarship as yet another legislating process of codification of the real and another institutional legitimation and authorization" (6) and would rather "experiment pragmatically with strategies for reading sexual difference insofar as it specifically eludes codification and resists any legitimizing institutionalization" (6). Like Seyla Benhabib in *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, I aim at steering a course between disinterested historicism, "which kills the interest of contemporary readers in past texts by blocking the asking of any questions that transcend the immediate historical context in which these texts were written," and the self-righteous dogmatism of latecomers, such as Adrienne Rich:

This [Rich's] kind of reading of past texts is particularly prevalent among activists of social movements who, very often, simply juxtapose the misunderstandings of the past to the truths of the present. For the collective self-understanding of social movements, this kind of simplistic heuristic may be part of an inevitable process of political identity formation that requires a breaking away from the past and an assertion of one's identity as distinct from the legacy of the past. For the art of reading and appropriating the past, however, such an

attitude is inadequate. If we approach tradition and thinkers of the past only to 'debunk' them, then there really is no point in seeking to understand them at all. (4-5)

Likewise, I share the impatience Joanna Hodge sees in Habermas's 1981 lecture on "Modernity: An Incomplete Project" with the production of the terms "postmodernity" and "postmodernism" as responses to the demands of a product hungry market for cultural goods, rather than the result of identifying genuinely new phenomena for analysis (90). However, the phenomenon targeted by these theorists, which I have already tentatively called a "postmodern" academy and will return to in more detail in the conclusion of this study, does seem if not genuinely new, then a rather disturbing mutation. Certainly the star-studded, groupie-dominated, Anglo-American academy against which Barry Olshen rails in "Subject, Persona, and Self in the Theory of Autobiography" is a much different beast than its staid counterpart of a few decades previous, dominated as it was by great-yet-humble men of letters who wrote confidently on topics such as *Truth and Design in Autobiography* as though both were not only possible but self-evident. I found in Nietzsche's philosophy of the self an adroit context in which to situate not only the autobiographical writing in question but also this not unrelated academic mutation.

When tarred with an autobiographical brush, three of what are arguably Nietzsche's most critical, and contentious, concepts - the eternal return, the will to power and the *Übermensch* - fit together like so many pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. In *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, Alexander Nehamas finds in Proust's *Recherches du temps perdu* "the best possible model" for explicating Nietzsche's idea of a perfect life:

The life of Proust's narrator need not have been, and never was, Nietzsche's own specific ideal. But the framework supplied by this perfect novel which relates what, despite and even through its very imperfections, becomes and is seen to be a perfect life, and which keeps turning endlessly back upon itself, is the best possible model for the eternal recurrence...³¹

Nietzsche seems to think that to lead a perfect life is to come to know what the self is that is already there and to live according to that knowledge. But to live according to that knowledge will inevitably include new actions that must be integrated with what has already occurred and the reinterpretation of which will result in the creation or discovery of a self that could not have been there already. This paradoxical interplay between creation and discovery, knowledge and action, literature and life is at the center of Nietzsche's conception of the self. (168)

It is also at the center of autobiographical writing. What more appropriate way is there to "become what one is" than by living *autobiographically*? In autobiographical writing, a character, a cultural persona replete with personal narrative is created,³² one that comes to function metonymically for its author; and that character is *recreated* by reviewing, by overviewing, one's life in Nietzschean style, asking questions such as whether one can accept one's life exactly as it has been. How does one handle the return of one's memories? Has one lived in such a way that they can be fashioned into a narrative which one is willing to acknowledge as one's own story, to affirm as one's inevitable fate, *à la amor fati*? While the question of fashioning a self-narrative is more often answered by the burning of bridges than in building ones to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, the act itself is inherently one

which can provide for a Nietzschean expression of the will, for a demonstration of the power which it takes to create in life and then recreate in writing a coherent self-narrative.

Another way of looking at "coherent self-narrative" is, of course, as identity. In *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, Seyla Benhabib defines identity as follows:

Identity does not refer to my potential for choice alone, but to the actuality of my choices, namely to how I, as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape and fashion the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stands as my life's story... The self is not a thing, a substrate, but the protagonist of a life's tale. (161-2)

The question arises, however, as to how to read these selves' stories. In her critique of Habermas's, Rawls' and Kohlberg's universalist moral theories based on a "generalized" (ie. bourgeois, white, male property owner) other, Benhabib concludes that what is necessary is to recuperate a sense of a "concrete" other and thereby "to reconsider, revise, and perhaps reject the dichotomies between justice and the good life, interests versus needs, norms versus values" (170), i.e. between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*, ethics and morality.

While Nietzsche might perhaps strike the reader as an odd bridge for such a context, seen within the history of philosophical thought, he is not. For Nietzsche wrote to fill the Platonically-induced lack in 19th century European society to which his classical training was attuned. In the introduction to *Love's Knowledge*, Martha Nussbaum paints for us this prelapsarian intellectual idyll:

for the Greeks of the fifth and early fourth centuries B.C., there were not two separate sets of questions in the area of human choice and action, aesthetic questions and moral-philosophical questions, to be studied and written about by mutually detached colleagues in different departments. Instead, dramatic poetry and what we now call philosophical inquiry in ethics were both typically framed by, seen as ways of pursuing, a single and general question: namely, how human beings *should* live. (15, italics added)

It is thanks to Plato's inaugurating such a difference that we find ourselves trapped in the disciplinary boundaries we do: "Before Plato came on the scene the poets (especially the tragic poets) were understood by most Athenians to be the central ethical teachers and thinkers of Greece, the people to whom, above all, the city turned, and rightly turned, with its questions about how to live" (15). In answering for himself the question of how one should live - as a continual revaluing of all values, a process of creative self-revaluation which would eventually drive him mad³³ - Nietzsche proved himself a tragic poet, both stylistically and fatally. In briefly turning to *Ecce Homo* we find the form which Nietzsche put to his tragic fate, and the key in which to listen to our examples of autobiographical writing.

Ecce Homo begins: "In the predictability of shortly having to appear before humanity with the most difficult of demands" (257) and ends in a tirade against Christian morality, in which Nietzsche likens this tirade (and himself) to a "*force majeure*, a destiny, - he sunders the history of humanity in two" (373). By placing his story within these bookends of "humanity" and beginning with this imperative, Nietzsche demonstrates the seriousness and the scale with which he perceives his life-project. He sees it as his duty to tell his story: "Under these circumstances, there is a duty against which strictly

speaking my habit, even more the pride of my instincts revolts, namely to say: listen to me! For I am so-and-so" (257). Nietzsche thus opens the story he tells of himself by placing it not under the rubric of ambition or scandal but of obligation. He does not want to say who he is, his entire being revolts against this task, but he feels that he must. Such an opening immediately imparts his writing with a sense of urgency. I really don't want to have to tell you this, the subtext of Nietzsche's opening lines states, it goes against my nature but I must, therefore it must be important. He then goes on to explicitly declare the feelings of responsibility which propel his project:

Life has become easy for me, easiest when it makes the hardest demands of me. Whoever saw me during those seventy days this fall, where I without interruption did a whole pile of first rate things, for which there is no equal and no teacher (*die kein Mensch mir nachmacht - oder vormacht*) with a responsibility for all millennia after me, will have noticed no trace of tension in me, and all the more overflowing freshness and levity. (297, italics added)

By the end of the work, Nietzsche has justified his feeling of urgency and responsibility in summarizing his oeuvre as one long, lonely cry against false morality: "And this all was believed, as morality! - *Ecrasez l'infâme!*" (374).³⁴ He constructs himself as an inimitable example and urges his readers to do the same, to pay attention to the basic concerns of life itself and to shape and value one's existence for oneself.

The same sense of revaluing drives *Zarathustra*. In the opening of Zarathustra's speeches in Part I, three metamorphoses are outlined according to which a spirit might learn its own will and in(ter)dependence: those of the camel, the lion and the child. The first "weight-bearing" spirit must traverse its own desert, laden with the heaviest of burdens; the second

"preying" spirit must track, pounce on and dismember existing "thou shalt's" that the camel would otherwise bear; and the third "innocent and forgetful" spirit must begin anew in the newly-created world of its own. An analysis taking these spirits as their guide would approach a work with such questions as: Are burdens borne or portrayed as being borne, and if so, how? Does any kind of moral disembowelment take place and if so, how graphically? Does a new, individual, unique world-view emerge and if so, what are its parameters? Immediately preceding these speeches is a prologue which sets the stage for this revaluing. The prophet goes down to the people and comes across a market-scene with a tightrope-walker who falls. During his *self-imposed* vigil over the body of the tightrope-walker, Zarathustra equates the *Übermensch* with giving life meaning: "Human existence is uncanny and still without meaning: a jester can be fateful to it. I want to teach humans the meaning of their existence: which is the *Übermensch*, the bolt out of the dark cloud of humankind" (18).³⁵ The context of these words is important. Confronted with an other who has literally fallen from the sky and landed at his feet, Zarathustra, and only he, not only feels but acts on his feelings of responsibility in the face (or body) of this other: "The crowd rushed pell-mell apart, and especially where the body was about to fall. Zarathustra, however, remained where he was" (17). While the sudden presence of this body confronts all with the same ethical obligation, Nietzsche demonstrates that not all have the courage necessary to shoulder it. The earlier assertion that "one has to shape and value one's existence for oneself" must be amended to "for oneself for others."³⁶

In following from Nietzsche in this style, I propose here to enact a new kind of ethics of reading, one which is neither general ethics nor moral philosophy.³⁷ If it is akin to anything, it is to an "ethics of personality" which,

as Agnes Heller contends in her reading of Nietzsche in the third volume of her *Theory of Morals*, is the culmination of all modern ethics:

All modern ethics culminates in an ethics of personality. An ethics of personality tells us that we are morally responsible for ourselves and our fellow creatures and that we should leap - yet it provides no crutches. This is why modern men and women still need a general ethics and a philosophy of morals. (6)

There is, however, a problem with Nietzsche's ethics of personality:

a merely formal concept of the ethics of personality is too broad (for example, even Hitler would qualify for it). The substantive determinations offered by Nietzsche either narrow down ethics to the most preferred type (to Nietzsche himself, to his overman, his Dionysus) or remain unfit for intersubjective generalization. (89)

Heller argues that Wagner's Parsifal is much better fitted for an ethics of personality because one "substantively determined by *Mitleid* alone already contains morality" (90). Nietzsche's growing obsession with Wagner can be accounted for when understood in this context: "Nietzsche revolts [against *Parsifal*]: man is free; he must be fully autonomous" (91). That is, he must not kneel down before any Grails, as Parsifal does, he must not look upward, he must not humiliate himself before something (or someone) that stands higher than himself. But Parsifal *chooses* to do so: "[n]o one tells Parsifal 'you should empathize'; he simply does" (90). While my reading of Nietzsche credits him with a more ethical stance than Heller's, I take her query of Nietzsche's revolt against all morality: "[b]ut is there such a thing as full autonomy? And if there were, could it be still called 'human'?" (91) as my sounding board. In approaching the autobiographical writing in this study as the stories of selves and their "concrete others," I will be reading them empathetically in

search of empathy. I will argue that each, in her own way (as befitting an ethics of personality which is always in the indefinite singular), struggled with Nietzsche's injunction and that each, in her own way, found her own answer to the riddle of human autonomy, precisely in making a "Parsifalian" choice, one which in the conclusion of this study I will link to modern art and the challenges of postmodern production.

The study is structured comparatively. It consists of three parts, each comparing two projects with respect to their choices and to the cultural implications of mythologizing the gender-specific self/other representations which assured the cultural relevancy of their writings. However, before proceeding to the sisters themselves, the stage will first be set, in *Zarathustrian* fashion, with a prologue. I began this introduction by raising the question of reception. Because the women in this study were all very much public personae, and because the nature of that publicity was in each case bound up to a well-known *male* figure, the challenge with which their autobiographical writing confronts the reader, of how to negotiate between life, text and culture without getting unduly mired in any ideological nets, is magnified. As Toril Moi emphasizes in her work on Simone de Beauvoir, it is due to *both* Beauvoir's unorthodox lifestyle and her success as a writer that she became "the stuff that myths are made of" (5) and that is why "traditional biography actually has come closer than literary criticism to capturing something of the importance of Beauvoir for our century" (5). In the prologue, I will tackle the nebulous status of the biographical in scholarship in addressing the biographical relevance of *Zarathustra*. Part one will then read the autobiographical writings of Lou Andreas-Salomé and Simone de Beauvoir against each other as the responses of canny, culturally-established writers to uncontrollable cultural and personal forces,

predictable in their perversity, which dictated the terms against which they lived and wrote. What will emerge in the second part on Maitreyi Devi and Asja Lacis are eerily similar images of the ghosts of attachments past on both the parts of the women in question and the men with whom they were fleetingly involved, Walter Benjamin and Mircea Eliade. The focus of the third part will be the means by which Nadezhda Mandel'shtam and Romola Nijinsky establish and represent their cultural authority in telling the stories of their husbands' heroic artistic accomplishments. Thus all three parts work to establish the modern, mythological parameters operating in the production of the autobiographical writing in question and to determine how they work as ethics of personality. A conclusion then tackles the question of precursing postmodernity and argues that, like Nietzsche, these women were important precursors of a movement in the academy which has been considered postmodern. Whereas Habermas saw in Nietzsche a "turning point" to contemporary "postmodern" French philosophy, I argue that in their ambiguous autonomy, these women paved the way for, and offer us important reading strategies for, the autobiographical criticism increasingly prevalent within the Anglo-American academy.

This study, then, is founded on the following convictions: that there is a difference between simply assuming the story of one's own life narratively and actually writing it down, that is, becoming not just text but a tangible part of one's cultural history; that it makes a difference whether one understands one's life in terms of obligation, and to whom or what that obligation is directed; and finally, that autobiographical writing, as it is understood here in its ethical dimension, plays the role of keystone in these matters.

Getting a life is a Heraclean, if not Sisiphean task. In setting the voices of my women in counterpoint with that of Nietzsche's controversial prophet, I hope to harness some of their spirit and thereby bring out harmonies in the melody of modernity which may modulate the abrasive muzak to which our postmodern condition has grown so alarmingly accustomed.

PROTOTYPICALLY ZARATHUSTRIAN: A PROLOGUE

'Seltsam ist's, Zarathustra kennt
wenig die Weiber, und doch hat er
über sie Recht! Geschieht diess
desshalb, weil beim Weibe kein Ding
unmöglich ist?

Und nun nimm zum Danke eine
kleine Wahrheit! Bin ich doch alt
genug für sie!...

Du gehst zu Frauen? Vergiss die
Peitsche nicht!

Von alten und jungen Weiblein,
Zarathustra³⁸

Nietzsche claims in *Ecce Homo* that the first part of *Zarathustra* "overtook" him in ten tumultuous days in January 1883. While the actual length of Nietzsche's creative outburst has been questioned, that it occurred in the traumatic aftermath of his encounter with Lou Salomé has not. Not only does their story make manifest the socio-historical stakes inherent in the designation "Zarathustra's sisters," it allows us to redress the nebulous status of the biographical in scholarship. Before proceeding to the sisters themselves, the stage must first be set by turning to the romantic circumstances surrounding *Zarathustra's* conception and to the consideration they have been granted in the reception of the two main protagonists.³⁹

Nietzsche first met Lou Salomé in late April 1882, in the full bloom of a Rome spring. Lou Andreas-Salomé⁴⁰ recounts in her memoirs that this meeting took place in St. Peter's Basilica where their mutual friend, Paul Rée, was in the habit of working. "From which stars have we fallen to each other here?" is how Lou Andreas-Salomé recalls being greeted by Nietzsche (LRB, 80/47).⁴¹ It was not the first attempt at such a meeting. At the end of March Lou had made a detour through Genoa in the hope of meeting Nietzsche but he had already embarked on a Columbus-like sea-voyage for Messina. "Through this

step you've shocked and worried the young Russian girl the most," a reproachful Rée wrote Nietzsche when he learned of the news. "You absolutely must meet her," the letter continued (Dok, 106). When they did meet, however, it exposed the crossed purposes of the self-proclaimed "holy trinity." Both men raced to propose marriage to the "energetic, unbelievably clever creature with the most girlish, even childlike of features" (Dok, 106), while that creature had her own dream, which she found "particularly convincing," perhaps because it "flew directly in the face of all social conventions. In it I saw a pleasant study filled with books and flowers, flanked by two bedrooms, and walking back and forth between us, a cheerful, earnest circle of collegial comrades in work" (LRB, 76/45). Lou was not a stranger to marriage proposals. Back in her native St. Petersburg, the Dutch Protestant pastor whom she had approached as a seventeen-year-old for spiritual and intellectual guidance had not only agreed to provide her with instruction in Goethe and Schiller, Spinoza and Kant (and could she possibly learn Dutch and help him with the translation of Otto Pfeiderer's *Philosophy of Religion on a Historical Foundation*? Of course she could), but he eventually could not resist offering to leave his marriage and two children of her age in order to be better able to instruct her in more worldly topics as well. Her response? "When the decisive moment unexpectedly required me to descend from the heavenly to the earthly I could not (*ich versagte*). At one blow, that which I had worshipped fled from my heart and mind into foreign lands" (LRB, 29/13), and she departed for Switzerland and university studies forthwith.

The "Lou affair" as it is commonly referred to in the scholarship on Nietzsche lasted approximately six months. Shortly after their first encounter in Rome, on 5 May 1882, Lou, her mother, Nietzsche and Rée met up

in a small mountain town north of Milan, where Lou and Nietzsche took much longer climbing Monte Sacro than their companions thought necessary. Nietzsche would later thank her for it, "the most exquisite dream of my life" (Dok, 183), while Lou Andreas-Salomé would later claim not to remember whether or not she had kissed Nietzsche during the hike (LRB 236/167). A week later, after Nietzsche had paid a visit to friends in Basel, they all met up again for a few days in Lucerne where the infamous "whip" photograph was taken which has come to be seen as epitomizing the dynamics of their platonic *ménage-à-trois* and as inspiring the imminently quotable "Going to the ladies? Don't forget the whip" barb in *Zarathustra*. Against a painted Alpine background, the two men are standing, as Nietzsche insisted, harnessed to a cart in which Lou is crouched holding a stick with a rope and a sprig of lilac dangling from it. After a few short days together, they once again set off on their separate ways. After mother and daughter Salomé had made stops in Zürich, Hamburg and Berlin, the younger was able, with the written assurances of her eminently respectable and trustworthy male protectors, to convince the elder to leave her for the rest of the summer in their care. Lou stayed at the Rée homestead in Stibbe in western Prussia (now northern Poland) until the Bayreuth première of *Parsifal*, the last festival of Wagner's lifetime. There she was introduced to the Wagners and to Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth, with whom she then traveled and spat on the way to Elisabeth's summer residence in Tautenburg where Nietzsche was waiting. The prudish, spinsterly, jingoistic, thirty-six year old Elisabeth, who would later marry the antisemitic founder of an Aryan colony in Paraguay and whose coffin would be crowned with a laurel wreath by the same Nazi *Führer* who had paid the eighty-nine year old a surprise visit at her Nietzsche Archives ten days before her death in 1935, was not likely to take kindly to

an irreverent, uninhibited twenty-one year old foreign beauty who mesmerized both Bayreuth society and her beloved brother, especially when she was then shut out of the following three weeks of lively philosophical conversation. In her memoirs, Lou records a letter she sent to Rée on 18 August:

We will live to see him as the prophet of a new religion, one which recruits heroes as disciples. How similarly we think and feel about all this, practically taking the words from each other's mouths. We've talked ourselves practically to death these past three weeks, and strangely enough he's suddenly now able to talk almost ten hours a day (LRB, 84/50).

Elisabeth did not realize how little she had to worry about. It was a point of pride with Lou not to assume any subservient duties; she was not about to become either a good little disciple or a good little wife. Judging from her correspondence and from the diary which she was keeping for Rée of the intense visit, Lou seems relieved when it draws to a close and she can leave for Stibbe. When Lou, Rée and Nietzsche meet up again in Leipzig a month later, plans for a winter of living and studying together in Paris are marred by Nietzsche's jealous undermining of Rée. On 5 November, Rée and Lou leave for Berlin to visit Rée's mother. They part amicably from Nietzsche, who does not suspect that they will not meet up again in Paris as planned, that he in fact is never to see either of them again. As the following weeks confirm the treachery of his two friends, Nietzsche falls into despair and writes letters threatening suicide and otherwise giving vent to his suffering, just as his sister is mounting a poison-pen campaign of her own in order to get Lou sent back to Russia. Neither epistolary effort had the intended effect, yet it brought them briefly together. Nietzsche allowed himself to believe

Elisabeth's vindictive stories of the past summer and a year later was even motivated to send off a libelous missive to Rée's brother in which he calls Rée, among other things, a slimy liar and likens Lou to a "scrawny, dirty, smelly, little ape with false breasts" (Dok, 325). However by the next spring (of 1884), he has realized the extent of his sister's meddling and writes to ask her why he must continually regret their reconciliation. The letter continues: "I have never hated anyone, except you... Of all acquaintances I have made, the most valuable and full of consequence is that with Fräulein Salomé. Only since knowing her was I ripe for my Zarathustra" (Dok, 353).

The extent to which this chronology should be understood to imply causality has been subject to scholarly debate. As Walter Kaufmann would have it in his influential 1950 monograph *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*: "The relationships between Nietzsche, Lou, and Rée have been a matter of controversy ever since Nietzsche broke with Lou and Rée" (49). The spin which Kaufmann thus tries to put on Nietzsche's agency in the situation - as though the break had been *Nietzsche's* idea! - does not negate, or sublimate, the question of how to read Lou's relation to Nietzsche's subsequent work. In a letter unburdening herself to a sympathetic friend in Basel, Clara Gelzer, in late September 1882, Elisabeth Nietzsche delivers the first dart at a Zarathustrian Lou by seeing in the cunning little vixen her brother's philosophy *personificiert* (Dok, 252, italics in original). Her brother provides further fuel for such speculation. In another letter to Basel, this one sent a few weeks before his sister's, Nietzsche fills his close friend, Franz Overbeck, in on the developments of the late summer:

Unfortunately, my sister has developed into a deadly enemy of Lou's, she was full of moralistic indignation from beginning to end, and now claims to know just what my philosophy is about. She wrote to

my mother, she 'experienced in Tautenb. my philosophy in person and was shocked: *I love evil, she however loves good...*' My sister (who didn't want to come to Naumburg as long as I was there, and is still in Tautenburg) ironically quotes in this context 'Thus began Zarathustra's going under/downfall (*Untergang*).' - In fact, it is the *beginning of the beginning*. (Dok, 229, italics in original)

A passage in a reworked version of the Columbus poem which Nietzsche gave Lou in Leipzig before their parting further hints at a connection between Lou and Zarathustra. While the final version counsels her against trusting "Genoans," there exists a version entitled "Towards New Seas" ("Nach neuen Meeren") which ends with the suggestive lines "There, suddenly, girl-friend, one was two - / And Zarathustra passed me by" ("Da, plötzlich, Freundin! wurde eins zu zwei - / Und Zarathustra ging an mir vorbei..." (Dok, 462-63), while a letter he writes Lou at the beginning of September 1882, just after her departure, ends with the entreaty: "Finally, my lovely Lou, the old, deep, heartfelt request: *become that which you are!* First one has need of emancipating oneself from one's *chains*, and then one must *emancipate* oneself from this emancipation!" and is signed "In fond devotion of your destiny - for in you I also love *my hopes*. F.N." (Dok, 224, italics in original). While Nietzsche's friends expressed no doubt concerning this co-mingling in Nietzsche's mind - Peter Gast writing that "He saw in her someone rather extraordinary. Lou's intellect and her femininity sent him into ecstasies. Out of his illusion about Lou the spirit of Zarathustra was born" (as cited in Etkind, 21, and Peters, 142) - Nietzsche scholars have remained singularly unconvinced, seeing in the circumstances nothing but the possibility of Nietzsche's influence on Lou. Kaufmann's fellow English Nietzsche

translator, R.J. Hollingdale, admonishes in his 1965 *Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy*:

At the time, Nietzsche thought it [the 'affair' with Lou Salomé] very important and his disappointment at its failure threw him off balance for a while: but there is no ground for thinking it changed him in any way or that his work from 1883 onwards would have been any different in its essentials if he had never met Lou Salomé. (179)

There is, of course, ample ground for such thinking. The facts will remain that Nietzsche did meet Lou, that he did fall in love with her, that they did spend an intense summer together, and that her rejection of him instigated the writing of *Zarathustra*. There is no point engaging in idle speculation as to what might have occurred had circumstance been different. It wasn't. What is important, however, is to remember that such commentary was made in the name of scholarship a comparatively short time ago, and that it still holds academic currency. The title of Mike Gane's 1993 *Harmless Lovers? Gender, Theory and Personal Relationships* would seem to declare an intention to go beyond the philosophical and sociological pale and interrogate the effect of personal relationships on the works of noted social theoreticians. However, it is a sober, skeletal recounting of the encounter that Gane offers in his chapter on Nietzsche and Lou. While careful to avoid making any outrageous statements about the "Lou affair," Gale is equally careful not to see in the involvement of others, especially a notorious *femme fatale*, anything more than background lighting for the development of philosophical thought.

Scholarship on Lou Andreas-Salomé, on the other hand, is marked by a welcome heterogeneity. While some work to establish Lou as *the* model for Zarathustra, others reflexively interrogate such an approach. Biographers

Peters, Livingstone and Etkind devote sections of their work to the ways in which "in creating the Superman, Nietzsche was merely translating Lou into the masculine" (Livingstone, 57), while feminist scholars, such as Bidy Martin and Brigid Haines, make ample mention of the Nietzschean elements of her *Weltanschauung*: her lack of *ressentiment*, her serene optimism and *amor fati* (Haines, 1993, 78-9) without drawing attention to their "Nietzscheness." Lou Andreas-Salomé's biography is a decidedly "mixed blessing" for feminists, as Haines elaborates:

While it is advantageous that, unlike many female authors before and since, she is well-known, it is nevertheless to be regretted that her fame should result almost entirely from a fascination on the part of succeeding generations of critics with her biography, in particular her connections with the many famous men that she knew (Nietzsche, Rilke and Freud, to name but a few), and that so much of the writing on her should be underwritten by often prurient speculation as to the nature of her relationships with them. (1991, 416)

In order to compensate for "this over-emphasis on the biographical" which has meant that Lou Andreas-Salomé's literary, essayistic and psychoanalytical works "have not been looked at for their own intrinsic interest" (416), this latest surge of scholarship has caught the "Death of the Author" wave and ridden its liberating poststructural discourse in order to establish "gender as a product of the conflict between competing forms of subjectivity" (417). The biographical had its day; it was misused and had its plug deservedly pulled, draining away the tepid fascination of critics as well as the baby so often subject to prurient speculation.

While it is admittedly not enough to facilely attribute or deny causality to real-life encounters such as the "Lou affair," I believe that one must

nonetheless heed and respect the historical resonances of texts. They are not, as the above récit amply demonstrates, written in vacuums. *Zarathustra* need not be directly equated with Lou, yet her part in it should be neither white-washed, aggrandized nor ignored.⁴² In order to capture the complexity of the situation, I suggest reading *Zarathustra* as addressed in the first instance to Lou, as speaking with and thereby trying to continue at least intellectual contact with her, his friend, and with others like her:

My gift is poor, my voice is not loud,
And yet I live - and on this earth
My being has meaning *for someone*:
My distant heir shall find it
In my verses; how do I know? my soul
And his shall find a common bond,
As I have found *my friend* in my generation,
I will find a reader in posterity. (italics added)⁴³

In a similar spirit, the following readings of "Zarathustra's sisters" will be attuned to the frequencies on which Zarathustrian echoes register and will focus on them as, in Moi's words, "the stuff that myths are made of" (5). In the case of Lou Andreas-Salomé and Simone de Beauvoir, attention will be drawn to the ways in which these two women mobilized their autobiographical writing to counter societal mythologies and entrench their positions as sovereignly established figures of literary and cultural import. The autobiographical writings of Maitreyi Devi and Asja Lacis will be presented as anti-mythologies, operating to set the record straight about their fatefully fleeting relationships with young scholars whose work was destined for substantial academic capital. And the texts of Nadezhda Mandel'shtam and Romola Nijinsky will be analysed to reveal the mythologizing means by which these literary widows offered up both their husbands and themselves as heroic figures. Let us now turn to Lou Andreas-Salomé's memoirs and listen to the echoes against which it made itself heard, to names insidiously twisted in slanderous whisper.

PART 1 - WRITING OVER...

ISHTAR: important
Babylonian-Assyrian goddess,
also with male attributes, a
goddess of war and of love,
also of fertility. She often
appears as the sister of the
weather god. The main
goddess of Ninive, the capital
of the Assyrian empire which
was destroyed by the
Babylonians and the Meders
(*Reclams Bibel Lexikon*)

CHAPTER I LOU ANDREAS-SALOMÉ

Still ist der Grund meines Meeres: wer
erriethe wohl, dass er scherzhafte
Ungeheur birgt!

Unerschütterlich ist meine Tiefe:
aber sie glänzt von schwimmenden
Räthseln und Gelächtern.

Von den Erhabenen, *Zarathustra*⁴⁴

When her memoirs were first published in 1951, fourteen years after her death, under the editorship of her literary executor, Ernst Pfeiffer, Lou Andreas-Salomé was a forgotten remnant of a lost age. Born Luise von Salomé in St. Petersburg on 12 February 1861, just as Russia was emancipating its serfs and almost exactly five years after it had lost the Crimean War, this not particularly dutiful daughter of a Germanic Balt highly-placed in tsars Nicholas I's and Alexander II's service was to let nothing and no one tie her down. The youngest of six children, and the only girl, little Ljolja found herself afloat in a world of fluid boundaries, both at home and not at home in her family, her religion and her country. She had a Russian nurse, a French governess, the family spoke German and at age 8, she was sent to an English private school. The family's sumptuous living quarters across from the Tsar's Winter Palace and their summer house in Peterhof seemed the stuff of fairytales, as did the beggars outside in the street. While her older brothers played at being adult, her soon-to-be-pensioned father played with her, his long-desired daughter, like a child. She soon lost faith with the strict, pietistic religion that a family of Huguenot descent was bound to practice but, not wanting to hurt her father, long kept up the ruse of prayer. The lines separating fantasy, play and reality smudged for little Ljolja. She

belonged nowhere, and everywhere, felt tied to no one, and everyone, a dynamic which would characterize her later life and writing.

It was the spectre of confirmation that drove her to secretly seek out Hendrik Gillot at age seventeen, and the Dutch pastor responded not only with an education which would later stand her in good stead, in Zürich, with Nietzsche and beyond,⁴⁵ but also, as he found the Russian short-form of her name unpronounceable, by rechristening her. When her father died in February 1879 at age 74, "Lou" felt free to tell her mother about her secret education, and Gillot felt free to propose and then obliged, when she refused, to organise the necessary religious certification for her in Holland so that she could obtain the Russian passport she needed to study abroad. With her mother as travel companion, she arrived in Zürich, where the phenomenon of the foreign female revolutionary student was pronounced, just in time to hear the news of Tsar Alexander's assassination. Despite being impressed by the drive of her female compatriots to study medicine and return to minister to their folk, she did not feel that pull of necessity and made no attempt to join their ranks or their all-night political discussions. Her studies were soon marred by the poor health which was to be her incessant plague, and which forced her now to sunnier climes.⁴⁶ Leaving a strong impression on professors and fellow students alike, she was soon the new favorite of Malwida von Meysenbug's salon. A witness at her close friends', Richard and Cosima's, nuptials, this "patroness of the revolutionaries... celebrated as *the* idealist of her day" (Sorell, 141, italics in original) was just back from a recuperative winter in Sorrento spent together with Nietzsche, Rée and another student. While Lou was appreciative of her new friend's emancipatory fervor, she found elements of it problematic:

But I realized a long time ago that we two are constantly talking about different things, even when we agree. She keeps saying 'we' mustn't do this or that, 'we' have to do this - and I really don't have any idea who this 'we' is - some ideal or philosophical entity no doubt - but the only thing I know about is 'I.' I can't live according to some model, and I could never be a model for anyone else; but I intend to shape my life *for myself*, no matter how it turns out. (78/46, italics added)

Lou was less than appreciative of Meysenbug's bourgeois propriety and her attempts to encourage special friendships, i.e. those that result in societally-sanctioned marriage, with first Rée and then Nietzsche, and then again with Rée. As discussed above, Lou was not so inclined:

it was precisely *this* which prevented me from allowing myself to become his (Nietzsche's) apostle, his successor. I would always have been leery of going in *that* direction, one which I had to escape in order to find clarity. (84-5/50, italics in original)⁴⁷

She preferred or (as she insisted, and will be discussed presently) felt compelled to have Gillot marry her to the Orientalist Friedrich Andreas, and so it happened, on 20 June 1887, that she once again participated in a religious ceremony of dubious meaning in the small Dutch church in Santpoort. Unlike Nietzsche, the Batavian (now Jakartan)-born Andreas was prepared to accept her on her own terms. When ten years later, his thirty-four year old wife takes up, albeit most discreetly, with a twenty-one year old poet of modest repute by the name of René Maria Rilke (which she immediately suggests he change to Rainer), Andreas does not complain. When in the summer of 1897, she, Rilke and their mutual friend Frieda von Bülow rent a small Bavarian farmhouse, which they nickname "Loufried" after Wagner's "Wahnfried," he

is happy for the five weeks he and their dog can visit. When she and Rilke become engrossed in Russian, he leaves them to their studies and expresses interest in combining the trip to Russia they are eagerly planning with the return visit to Persia he has long been intending. He even allows them to return for a second time to Russia in the summer of the next year (1900), this time unaccompanied. He tries to stop his wife neither from attending the 1911 conference of the International Psychoanalytic Association in Weimar, nor from becoming the only woman in Freud's Wednesday evening circle, nor from accepting psychoanalytic patients in the lean and crazily inflationary post-war years when Freud's generosity is the only thing putting butter on their daily bread. And, perhaps most remarkably, Andreas insists neither that she consummate the marriage nor that she play housekeeper in his Berlin-Tempelhof bachelor apartment where they spend their first married years or in Göttingen where he receives a university appointment in West Asiatic Languages in 1903.⁴⁸

Perhaps Andreas did not feel he had any right to demand anything wifely of Frau Lou as it was her pen that was supporting them. When they met, his was a hand-to-mouth existence offering private instruction in Turkish and German to soldiers and diplomats - his tutoring someone in her building occasioned their first chance encounter - whereas she was already a respected member of the European literary scene with a well-received publication to her credit. Under the pseudonym Henri Lou (one will remember that Gillot's first name was Hendrik), she had penned the 1885 *Im Kampf um Gott*, a weighty, quasi-autobiographical novel which takes the form of the memoirs of a parson's son who wreaks unintentional havoc on three women, the first dying giving birth to his illegitimate child, the second poisoning herself after nobly relinquishing him to his freedom, and the third

drowning herself after discovering that he cannot become her husband, as she had hoped, because he is her father. After her marriage, Lou Andreas-Salomé turned to scholarly writing as a means of securing the "family" livelihood. At the center of the Naturalist movement in Berlin, she began to publish articles in Otto Brahm's newly founded *Die Freie Bühne*, in the *Vossische Zeitung*, the *Neue Deutsche Rundschau*, and *Die Frau*. Her timely 1892 *Henrik Ibsens Frauen-Gestalten* and 1894 *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken* were recognized as ground-breaking additions to scholarship. The majority of her almost twenty books are autobiographically-influenced fiction, while her hundred-odd articles range from literary reviews to treatises on religion and sexuality.

It was in Göttingen in the early 1930s that her health began insinuating the pressures of posterity. If she were to leave a testament to her life as writer and participant in some of the key cultural developments of her day, it had to happen quickly and thus, as she notes in the margins at the conclusion of the addition "What's Missing from the Sketch": "This all was written too quickly because my eyes no longer dare wait for anything" (307/145). While the writings of the psychoanalytically-tainted "Hexe von Hainburg" ("Witch of Hainburg," her Nazi nickname) did, unsurprisingly, have to wait, their author was lucky enough to make her final exit on 5 February 1937, without any Nazi prompting. *Lebensrückblick: Grundriß einiger Lebenserinnerungen* was published posthumously, and although French, Danish and Spanish translations were to appear in 1977, 1979 and 1980 respectively, an English translation, *Looking Back: A Memoir*, did not appear until an even forty years after the publication of the German original.

1991, the year of Breon Mitchell's English translation, also saw a full-fledged recuperation of Lou Andreas-Salomé by feminist scholarship in the

form of Bidddy Martin's *Woman and Modernity: The (Life)Styles of Lou Andreas-Salomé*. While earlier scholarship had tended to be male and hostile (cf. Peters, Binion, Andrews) and the biographies written by women in the 1980s to emphasize Lou Andreas-Salomé's mystical femininity (cf. Livingstone, Koepcke), Martin's feminist focus is on the way "Salomé's constructions and negotiations of sexual difference open up interesting conceptual possibilities and tell us a great deal about the significance of sexuality and sexual difference in late 19th century Germany" (8). Martin's work has since been supplemented by articles by Brigid Haines and Karla Schulz as well as a special issue of *Seminar* edited by Raleigh Whiting. Having served as subject for fiction and poetry, stage and screen,⁴⁹ Lou Andreas-Salomé is now firmly established not only within the German (feminist) canon⁵⁰ but in European cultural history as well.

This change, or evolution, in the focus of Lou Andreas-Salomé scholarship provokes the question of how to go about reading "Lou" without getting tangled in the well-laid web of stories surrounding her person and her writing, and the question of how to negotiate the many "Lou"s and "Salomé"s that have become part of our tradition. For if the figure of Lou Andreas-Salomé is nothing else, it is prismatic, split into a series of well-defined, well-known, hardly reconcilable characters: the young "Ljolja" who is enraptured by the religious and in turn enraptures her Dutch pastor; the slightly older "Lou" who beguiles the European literary-salon scene in general and one lonely, sickly former Herr Professor from Basel in particular; the established, married "Lou Andreas-Salomé," whose work and person dazzles a young poet from Prague; and the older, stately "Frau Lou" whose influence in psychoanalytic circles was subtle yet profound. All are highly programmatic figures, isolated into manageable slivers of mythology,

all with "something fairytale-like" about them (Ross, 115). Lou Andreas-Salomé herself has done much to contribute to this tendency by fragmenting *Looking Back* into highly separate chapters, each encapsulating a formative "experience"⁵¹ in her life - with God, with love, with friendship, with Russia, with Rainer, etc. These sections do not seem intended to be united into a larger narrative; they are autonomous pieces, as though each were from a different jigsaw puzzle. One is not to reassemble them so much as string them along, forming a necklace of semi-precious stones whose smooth surfaces and mottled colors encourage a kind of peaceful, seaside contemplation. There is a tendency in the scholarship on Lou Andreas-Salomé to simply trip from stone to stone along this biographical path. The following reading will situate *Looking Back* along that path, not simply acknowledging its zigzag nature, as does Martin - Lou Andreas-Salomé insisted that all women run a zigzag path between the feminine and the human - but focusing on what she was dodging.

That the names "Lou" and "Salomé" were an integral part of the *fin-de-siècle Zeitgeist* has not gone unnoted in the scholarship on Lou Andreas-Salomé:

Salomé entered a Europe in which the woman question and the perils and promises of modernity constituted a virtual obsession and in which the name of Salomé, that murderous seductress of old, Herod's daughter, inspired the creative imaginations and the fears of male artists and thinkers.... She has been read not only as the proponent but also as the literal personification of misogynist turn-of-the-century stereotype, the living reflection of the Lulus and Salomés, the femmes fatales who dominated the imaginations of turn-of-the-century male artists. (Martin, 19, 21)

Rose-Maria Gropp offers the following summary:

As a 'phantom woman' in pure culture, Lou Andreas-Salomé is here something of a figure of integration. The fascination of the beautiful man-destroyer as well as the tendency to eliminate the disturbing 'woman' factor, which has been aptly described as 'revirginalization,' are united in an exemplary way in her: 'Salomé: the name promises contradictory images of passion and prudery.' This *nomen-est-omen* analogy evokes the monstrosity of the involuntary 'femme fatale,' while at the same time dulling the fictionalisation: one then would have to show her what she *actually wanted*. (Gropp, 12, italics in original)

The phenomenon of *nomen-est-omen*, while thus glossed, has yet to be approached as to its potential influence on Lou Andreas-Salomé's creation of a cultural persona for herself in her memoirs. Lou Andreas-Salomé's memoirs will be considered here to constitute a sophisticated response to the mythologizing pressures of the *Zeitgeist* and its zigzag path to represent a concerted attempt to dodge or at very least dilute the harshness of predatory cultural rays.

LOU-LOU STRIKES FIRST

The figure of Salomé, and more specifically, the Salomé of the Dance of the Seven Veils, was one of the most popular themes in fin-de-siècle European art. The brief biblical episodes - Matthew 14 1-12 and Mark 6 14-29 - were to prove the stuff of scandalous decadence beginning with Heine's 1842 *Atta Troll* and cresting in Huysman's 1874 epoch-making *À Rebours*. They also served as one of the French symbols *sine qua non*,⁵² in addition to providing the subject matter for over a hundred pictorial works of European art between 1870 and

1920 (cf. Wäcker), just that period when Lou von Salomé was establishing herself in the European cultural scene. The attraction of the biblical Salomé at this time is not difficult to account for: "hardly any other subject corresponded with so many of the epoch's preferences: the orient and the exotic, dance and seduction, demonization and eroticization, hedonism and death" (Wäcker, 1). The figure of Salomé functioned, as myths do, to allow for the expression of the epoch's obsessions, its inner tensions and fears, under the guise of historical distance and objectivity:

Representation professes to re-present these origins but does so according to a mythology upheld by the society which invents it. What representation re-presents, then, is the need for a society to believe in forgetting, in order to cover up the arbitrariness and mortality of consensus. (Meltzer, 216)

By turning the obedient, shy biblical daughter into a "deathly pale, cold, tyrannical virgin" (Schaffner, 5), the inherently misogynistic *fin-de-siècle Zeitgeist* betrayed the threat it felt women to represent, at the same time allowing for its expression and for it to be forgotten, covered up.

The centrality, indeed scapegoating, of Lou Andreas-Salomé in this process of cultural representational repression can be seen by turning to a second very popular female figure at the time - Lulu. The heroine of two Wedekind dramas, *Der Erdgeist* (1898) and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1904), is the quintessential femme-fatale.⁵³ At the opposite end of the spectrum from the "hooker with a heart of gold" syndrome so prevalent in North American culture, Wedekind's Lulu leaves not broken hearts but a trail of male corpses in her wake, prompting one critic to dub her "the most ambitious whore in the history of the German theater" (Andrews, 203). An indicator of the resonance which Wedekind's plays found among his contemporaries is the

success of G.W. Pabst's 1929 film *Die Büchse der Pandora* and Alban Berg's 1937 opera *Lulu*, both based on the Wedekind plays.

The connection between the character Lulu and Lou Andreas-Salomé has become part of German literary legend.⁵⁴ Lou Andreas-Salomé describes becoming acquainted with Wedekind in Paris in the spring of 1894, at which point he was riding the success of his 1891 *Frühlings Erwachen* as follows:

I spent almost the most time in Paris with Frank Wedekind. But that was later on. For at first, after we had met at the home of the Hungarian Countess Nemethy, and accompanied the others to the onion soup restaurant across from 'Les Halles,' where we continued our lively conversation into the early hours of the morning, a Wedekindian misunderstanding arose, as he later recounted with touching openness and without any attempt to exonerate himself (and which I also later made use of as padding for a novella [*Fenischka*, written 1896, pub. 1898]). (100/60)

Ernst Pfeiffer felt it appropriate in his capacity as editor to intercede and attribute to Lou the words she has her female protagonist in *Fenischka* utter:

The delicate situation in which Lou A.-S. involved herself by her innocence regarding signs of male interest is recognizable in this story [*Fenischka*] - as are the words (even if not actually spoken) Lou used in order to extricate herself and Wedekind: 'The blame is mine, Mr. W., for I have never yet met a dishonorable man.' (187, n60)

And Lou Andreas-Salomé's biographers, in not neglecting to include mention of this passage (Livingstone, 232; Koepcke, 177), have assured that it has become yet another facet of the Lou legend. This episode reveals Lou Andreas-Salomé's strategy in negotiating cultural space, a strategy which could be

summed up as a "first strike" approach. Astutely anticipating both the likelihood of Wedekind using her character and her name in a less than charitable way and the resonance that it would find in the *Zeitgeist*, she made sure to make available her version of events, first in the fictional form of her novella and then in her last text of autobiographical writing.⁵⁵

Looking Back can be read as a compendium of first strikes. In the first episode in which she concretely presents the figure of herself as a young child, the approach to which she attributes herself as having assumed is an anticipatory one:

A small memory makes believable to me this method whereby I tried to hold off doubt: in a splendid pop-open package which my father had brought home from some festival at court, I got the idea that there were golden dresses. When I was wised up to the fact that the clothes in it were simply made of satiny paper trimmed in gold - I decided not to open it. Thus what *remained* in the box were still to a certain extent the golden clothes. (13/3, italics in original)

Lou Andreas-Salomé thus introduces herself as a strong-minded little girl who already at a young age began to attempt to control how reality is thought of. Anticipating the truth of the allegations that the clothes will indeed turn out not to be real gold, she finds for herself a way of minimizing the damage of this revelation and manages to keep the clothes, "to a certain extent" (*gewissermassen* - not in the English translation), golden.

The rest of the book then falls into a pattern of keeping things a certain extent golden in the face of serious challenges to her expectations, particularly in her relations with others, and particularly those others of the opposite sex. The stuff of the second chapter, "The Experience of Love,"

marks the beginning of her rejection of God-substitutes, of which she writes with evident pride:

But aside from this negative result, the childish aspect of God's disappearance also had a positive side: it thrust me into real life with equal irrevocability. I am certain that - judged autobiographically to the best of my ability - any substitute concepts of God which might have got caught up with my feelings would only have restricted, deflected, impaired me. (23/10)

Her relation with and her not so much rejection of as moving beyond Gillot sets the tone for later ones, both written (with Nietzsche, Rée, Rilke and her husband) and unwritten (Ledebour and Pineles). While the later chapters offer little of the beginning's theorizing, the pattern thus established with Gillot was to carry on interminably. With the important exception of Freud,⁵⁶ Lou Andreas-Salomé invariably found her "childlike dreams and fantasies pushed aside in the real world" as she writes of her experience with Gillot (28/12); and she felt helpless to do anything about it. In the case of Paul Rée, "in spite of the honest and open discussions we had..., a fundamental misunderstanding persisted" (92/55); neither in the case of Nietzsche is there anything she can do: "I was protected from much of the ugliness of this period..., it even appears that some of Nietzsche's letters never reached me" (85/50); in the case of Rilke, "deep in the heart of anyone who saw it happen a realization remains of how little could be done to alleviate Rainer's final loneliness... Those who saw it happen could only let it happen. Powerless and reverent" (138/84); in the case of her husband she again wrote of her helplessness, that she married out of compulsion (*Zwang*): "what brought about this compulsion was the power of the *irresistible* to which my husband himself succumbed" (200/125, italics in original though

not in the English translation). In each case, she did what she could but felt herself helpless to change the situation - she could neither resist her husband, nor alleviate Rilke's anxiety nor communicate with Rée or Nietzsche.

Yet her reputed helplessness is infused with a distinct sense of agency, for there is considerable value in the text placed on women being the helmspersons of their own existence and banishing all others if not down into the hold then off the ship entirely. Certainly the element of independent choice is glorified in her description of her mother's final years:

Her greatest problem toward the end was that we children saddled her with a companion in her old age, so that we would know she was well cared for - a relative she liked of course, but not quite as much as she liked being alone and free to do exactly as she wished. Despite the circle of sons and grandchildren with which she was surrounded, she enjoyed being on her own, and she kept wonderfully busy to the last. Even her reading was seldom dependent on the recommendation of others; one of the very last books she read, with great enthusiasm, was the *Iliad*. (53/28)

The explanation Lou Andreas-Salomé gives for rejecting friendship with Malwida von Meysenbug - that Malwida allows herself to be influenced by bourgeois propriety whereas "I can't live according to some model" - demonstrates a similar sentiment. The comment "so we *let* motherhood happen to us" (35/18, italics added)⁵⁷ is a further indication of her attitude towards and expectations of women.

What is one to make of Lou Andreas-Salomé's accounting of this paradoxical choosing of helplessness in her relations with men, her choosing to portray herself as sovereignly helpless, while insisting that particularly

women maintain an independence of spirit? One possible explanation lies in the nature of the "passion of belief" which she attributes to the Russian character:

I felt then... that there was really no contradiction between that small group of revolutionary bomb-throwers who were willing to sacrifice their private lives totally for a murderous mission in which they believed, and the equally total passivity of the pious peasant, who accepts his fate as God-given. It is the passion of belief which in the one case calls for worship and in the other calls to action. Over both lives, over everything privately expressed within them, is a guiding principle which does not arise from the personal sphere, from which they are able for the first time to realize themselves, and which allows both types - the peasant martyrdom as well as the terrorist martyrdom - to incorporate the consolation of their patience and the power of their violent acts. (65/36-7)

One senses in Lou Andreas-Salomé's autobiographical writing a desire to ascribe to this "passion of belief," a certain wistfulness to enter "the circle of that which fully links a man and woman" (146/90). However, her praise of female freedom indicates that she senses a fundamental flaw in such passions - that they necessarily demand martyrdom. In every case she encounters a God-substitute, a mere human towards whom it would be inappropriate, and unworthy of her, to direct such passion. If she were to have a guiding principle (*Motto*), it would be somewhere between these calls for worship and to action. However, such a possibility, of impersonal guiding principles, is firmly rejected:

And it's not that I have any principle to represent, but rather something much more wonderful - something that's inside of one and

that's hot with the heat of life and that's itching and wants out.

(78/46)

It is something wonderful (*das Wunderbare*) that provides her with orientation, that substitutes for guiding principles and a passion of belief.

For Lou Andreas-Salomé would have us believe that she does not believe in anything else. For her, one's most important challenge lies in maintaining a sense of wonder when confronted with the differences between "what we expect and what we find." In her own experience, the catalyst is reported to be her loss in faith resulting from a rather mundane joke played on her by one of the hired-help:

A servant who each winter brought fresh eggs to our city residence from our house in the country announced one day that in front of the miniature house in the middle of the garden which I alone possessed he had found a 'couple' requesting entrance, but he had told them to go away. The next time he came, I immediately asked about the couple, no doubt because I was worried that they might have starved or frozen to death in the meantime; where could they have turned?

(15/4)

The snow couple's disappearance is crucial in Lou Andreas-Salomé's self-portrait. Not only does it trigger her loss of faith, it brings her to the realization that it is not only *her* loss: "the God painted upon the curtain didn't just disappear for *me*, he disappeared *totally* - he was lost to the entire universe as well" (16/5, italics in original). Her knowledge of this loss awakens in her "a sort of instinctive sympathy for my parents. I didn't want to cause them trouble since, like me, they had suffered a blow - for God was lost to them as well, - *they just didn't know it* -." (17/6, italics in original). No sooner is the burden of religion shed than a multitude of others are assumed

in its place. Even the characters in the stories she tells as a child come under the cloak of her responsibility:

I recall a nightmare... - In it I saw a multitude of characters from my stories whom I had abandoned without food or shelter. No one else could tell them apart, nothing could bring them home from wherever they were in their perplexing journey, to return them to that protective custody in which I imagined them all securely resting...

(18/7)

In recognizing that "something of the sort [as her experience with the Snowmen pair] happens to each of us" (16/5), she then sets this break as a pivotal moment: how we deal with it determines our future orientation. For her, this break results in an "uncanny" relation with the world (17/6), in "serving to increase the difficulty of making myself at home in the real world, the world without God" (17/6). At the very outset of her life-story, Lou Andreas-Salomé presents herself as separated from, not fitting in to and suspicious of, her surroundings. The reason, in this case her knowledge of the loss of God, is not as pertinent as its result. She is "like a little stranger called from the outermost edge of an immense solitude into an unbelievably distant land" (17/6).⁵⁸ The world in which she found herself was to remain strange, a place without God in which she recognized a terribly weighty responsibility, a place which, for one's own protection, had to be anticipated and parried.

The organization of *Looking Back* is an integral part of these anticipatory, parrying efforts, proving Lou Andreas-Salomé an experienced, canny writer. As alluded to earlier, the chapters come, like God's creatures onto Noah's ark, in twos. The first two chapters - "The God Experience" and "The Experience of Love" - are heavily general and theoretical, the former

beginning "our first experience... is that of loss" (9/1) and the latter "in every life there is an attempt to begin again" (27/12). In the next two chapters - "Family Life" and "The Russian Experience" - the tone changes completely, to one more conventional to the genre. Here she relates the background and characters of her parents and brothers. The two following chapters - "The Experience of Friendship" and "With Other People" - have a more gossipy, society-page feel to them, as she enumerates her encounters with the literary establishments in first Switzerland and then Berlin, Paris, Vienna and Munich. The two chapters after that are dedicated to Rilke - "With Rainer" and "Epilogue 1932"; and the two after that to Freud - "The Freud Experience" and "Epilogue: Memories of Freud (1936)". Finally, with the solitary chapter entitled "Before the World War and After" serving as an appropriate caesura, the final two chapters are dedicated to her husband - "F. C. Andreas" and "What's Missing From the Sketch (1933)". By parceling off her life experiences into such neatly symmetrical, vaguely chronological chunks, it is easier to bypass episodes she does not feel it proper to include. Her intention not to write anything tabloid-trashy, "that kind of 'gossip about people' made up of hasty formulations and accidental emphases making up the great majority of our judgments" (95/57) is stated explicitly elsewhere⁵⁹ as well as being implicit in the subtlety with which she alludes to her "friends." Gillot, to whom the second chapter is dedicated in spirit if not directly, is never named, although in giving both his profession (pastor) and nationality (Dutch), there is obviously no attempt being made to be completely secretive about his identity. Ledebour, the Socialist statesman who begged her to leave her husband for him, receives similar, though more limited, treatment. It is not difficult to guess the identity of this "friend" - a Member of Parliament who has just finished serving time for *lèse-majesté*. The complete absence of

her lovers - Pineles, by whom she conceived although did not bear a child, and Tausk, the *Brudertier* in her *Freud Journal* - is also indicative of the discretion which characterizes *Looking Back* as a whole.

Like the poem with which she closes the chapter on love (the poem which Nietzsche set to music and which had not been to Freud's taste), *Looking Back* is intended as a hymn to life, with an appropriately joyful, peaceful, Sunday afternoon tone. The adoption of such a tone is also a canny choice, as it is harder to lambaste - one feels, or should feel, slightly ridiculous attacking the devotional act of a simple, kindly soul. The epigram at the beginning of Lou Andreas-Salomé's memoirs reads:

Human life - indeed all life - is poetry. It's we who live it,
unconsciously day by day, like scenes in a play, yet in its inviolable
wholeness It lives us, It composes us. This is something far different
from the old cliché 'Turn your life into a work of art:' we are works
of art - but we are not the artist.

In living her life as an artwork, a hymn to life, Lou Andreas-Salomé found a way to elude the hostile cultural mythologies of her times. As the above reading of its tone, organization, subject matter and personal philosophy demonstrates, *Looking Back* is ironically a very forward-looking book, guaranteeing that future generations would find an impressively, yet ambiguously, sovereign figure as a counterweight to the demonical ones she had seen spring up around her bearing her names. While Lou Andreas-Salomé had recognized early on and had come to appreciate via her training in psychoanalysis that what was to be found in her own personal box was satiny paper with gold trim, she provided in the form of autobiographical writing a cultural persona that is, to a very definite extent, golden.

CHAPTER II SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

'Warum?' sagte Zarathustra. Du fragst warum? Ich gehöre nicht zu Denen, welche man nach ihrem Warum fragen darf.

Ist denn mein Erleben von Gestern? Das ist lange her, dass ich die Gründe meiner Meinungen erlebte.

Müsste ich nicht ein Fass sein von Gedächtniss, wenn ich auch meine Gründe bei mir haben wollte?

Schon zuviel ist mir's, meine Meinungen selber zu behalten; und mancher Vogel fliegt davon.

Von den Dichtern, *Zarathustra*⁶⁰

Another highly programmatic, highly stylized and highly fragmented cultural icon, Simone de Beauvoir also left behind an autobiographical legacy, a comparative reading of which mutually illuminates both its own and Lou Andreas-Salomé's anticipatory stance.

As befitting her *haut bourgeois* background, Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir was given many names at her christening, but unlike little Luise von Salomé, her mother's wasn't one of them.⁶¹ While both were theoretically of similar minor nobility, the situation into which the young Mlle. Bertrand de Beauvoir was born, on 8 January 1908, was neither as serene nor as secure as the one little Fräulein von Salomé had enjoyed over a half century earlier, over half a continent away. Simone's father was not a gracefully aging general but a young man of aristocratic education and habits who had found the legal profession the only socially sanctioned outlet for his theatrical aspirations. Her mother was not the daughter of a prosperous owner of a confectionary plant who had dared leave the security of Hamburg to seek his fortune in the Russian capital but the daughter of a provincial banker whose imprudent business dealings would lead to

bankruptcy, a thirteen-month stint in jail, default on his daughter's dowry and general disgrace. As Ljolja's father hadn't married for a dowry, he wouldn't have felt its loss so deeply; but Simone's had and did. As Ljolja's mother had been born in the capital and grown into the rhythms and customs of family life there, she was able to take up the running of her husband's household in stride; but Simone's hadn't and wasn't. Simone's mother didn't have the experience of five previous children to draw on, Simone was her first; Simone's father didn't have the benefit of military discipline or contacts to draw on, he was easily distracted, shiftless. If, as Deidre Bair maintains in the opening of her biography (21), Simone de Beauvoir's memories of her childhood were painted black, it is little wonder.

Yet for all the differences, there are marked similarities in their upbringing. First, the role of religion. While Mme. de Beauvoir may have been a staunch Catholic and Frau von Salomé a devout Protestant, they were both to so insistently inflict upon their daughters such heavy burdens of belief that it was, in both cases, to trigger a traumatic, lasting loss of God. Second, the role of education. Both daughters were sent to properly bourgeois private schools whose specialization was churning out "marriage market"-ready products. Neither found their early education in any way instructive, except in the negative, but both were born autodidacts with a penchant for philosophy and theology. From the cocoons of these cute, precocious, spoiled little darlings blossomed singlemindedly rebellious, fiercely intellectual young women. Girls who would be men, girls who aspired to study and debate rather than society gossip and diapers, girls who felt their rightful place to be in philosophy books and not kitchens, their rightful companions to be intellectuals and not maids. Girls who would take delight in standing their

social worlds on end, in setting off and then placing themselves out of the hearing range of wicked tongues.

There is one question in Beauvoir scholarship which seems destined to return eternally: why was a nice girl like Simone wasting her time sucking up to a boring old fart like J.-P.? (Moi citing Angela Carter, 253). Why didn't she reject him the way Lou had Nietzsche? It's a good question, one which has long perplexed and infuriated feminists. Why was Beauvoir content, nay proud, to accept second place to Sartre, the second place she was accorded when competing with him for the 1929 *agrégation* in philosophy? No matter that the eminent French philosopher and Benjamin translator, Maurice de Gandillac, was later to report that two of the judges "told me later, it had not been easy to decide whether to give the first place to Sartre or to her. If Sartre already showed great intelligence and a solid, if at times inexact, culture, everybody agreed that, of the two, she was the real philosopher" (Cohen-Solal, 74). No matter that it was Sartre's second attempt at the prestigious exam. No matter that Sartre, at 24, was three years older and had enjoyed the superior education of the *École Normale Supérieure*. No matter that he had not been the one to baptize her "Castor" during their exam preparations, that it had been their fellow study-mate, René Mateu, who had playfully punned on her last name: "'You're a little Beaver,' he told me, 'always fussing and working...'. At first I didn't know if I should be insulted or not, but Maheu was never sarcastic with me, only to others'" (Bair, 129). Mateu was married, and therefore safe. He became her trusted companion, her Rée, and the only one of the group who failed the *agrégation*. Sartre was something else. Of the study companions, he was, as Beauvoir was later to recollect for her last biographer, "the dirtiest, the most poorly dressed, and I think also the ugliest" (Bair, 143). He was also the most brilliant, and the

most needy, something to which, as will be noted later, Beauvoir was particularly susceptible. As he wrote her during his military service, "because it's only to you that I can say what I think, what I want to write, and only you can understand my daily state, the smoke and fire of ideas" (LC, 43-4). In short, because of Sartre, Beauvoir's being had meaning for someone; she felt she had found in him the friend with whose soul hers was to find a common bond. As will be discussed below, it was a commitment she was making as much to herself as to him, and one that was therefore undoable.

As Simone de Beauvoir herself found, it is difficult to recount her life *après études* without referring to Sartre. The rest of her life hinges upon their pact of "essential" love in which Sartre promised to be faithful for two years if afterwards, as he magnanimously suggested, they agreed to *both* have "contingent" affairs, which they would then share in frank and brutal honesty with the other. Personal glasnost without perestroika, it was to lead to triangular and pentagonal constellations of dizzying moral complication, all nicely subsumed under their umbrella-term of "The Family." At the conclusion of the final volume of her memoirs, Beauvoir was to write: "It is just because I loathe unhappiness and because I am not given to foreseeing it that when I do come up against it I am deeply shocked or furiously indignant - I have to communicate my feelings" (ASD, 426). Having been made terribly unhappy for most of her adult life, she knew of what she wrote.

The academic year 1931-32 was a particularly unhappy one. It was the year Sartre finished his military service and, because she refused on principle to marry, they were posted to different lycées, he in Le Havre, she in Marseille. Both considered themselves writers and neither found teaching particularly rewarding. The next year was marginally better as she received

a requested transfer to Rouen, a mere half-hour train-ride from Sartre; the year after that, 1933-34, Sartre spent in Berlin studying phenomenology in a blissfully apolitical bubble. When he returned, Olga Kosakiewicz, the eighteen year old student who had been Beauvoir's solace during Sartre's absence, became her nemesis, exciting Sartre's passions and playing the two off against each other for her affections. The rollercoaster ride of the threesome, on which Beauvoir's first novel *L'Invitée* (*She Came to Stay*) is based, continued when they all returned to Paris for the 1936-37 term, and soon took on a more florid complexion with Olga's younger sister, Wanda, Sartre's prize pupil from Le Havre, Jacques-Laurent Bost, as well as some of Beauvoir's new students joining their soap-operatic ranks.⁶²

The coming of war changed the tenor of their licentious self-absorbed lifestyle and thrust them out into the *rive gauche* café scene. With the 1938 publication of *La nausée*, Sartre made his literary debut. In 1943, Gallimard published not only Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* and *The Flies*, but also Beauvoir's *L'Invitée*. With the October 1945 launch of *Les Temps Modernes*, they had an organ for their increasingly political writings, led off by Sartre's manifesto for a literature of commitment. They were officially not just a writing couple, but the phenomenally productive, highly visible, existential pulse of a roiling Parisian intellectual scene that included the likes of Camus, Koestler, Bataille, Leiris, Gide, Claudel, Malraux, Cocteau, Genet, Merleau-Ponty...⁶³ But what kind of a couple were they? The first *Temps Modernes* issue, published in October 1945, was dedicated "To Delores," the vivacious French woman with a wealthy American doctor for an estranged husband whom Sartre had fallen for on a journalistic junket to the U.S. earlier that year. When Beauvoir undertook her American lecture tour two years later, she followed in Sartre's footsteps in more ways than

one, beginning a torrid romance with Nelson Algren, a grittily virile Chicago writer with two modestly successful novels under his belt, whose *The Man with the Golden Arm* would later serve as a vehicle for Frank Sinatra. From their own accounts, these other relationships were wonderfully intense. Both Delores and Nelson came to Paris; both insisted on exclusivity; both became frustrated with their lovers' steadfast commitment to the by now mythical "pact;" and both were unceremoniously set adrift when they wouldn't accept and conform to their contingent fates.⁶⁴

In many ways Beauvoir's "America affair" was to the inception of *The Second Sex* what the "Lou affair" was to *Zarathustra*.⁶⁵ The infamous revelation in her controversial 1949 tome, that woman is not born but made, raised her cultural profile enormously, especially when it and *The Mandarins* were placed on the Vatican Index of prohibited books in 1955, while her further writings, philosophical, autobiographical and fictional, served to ensconce her reputation as an unflinching, uncompromising intellectual. In the 1950s and '60s, as intellectual interest in existentialism waned in France, she and Sartre found themselves in the eye of one highly political international hurricane after another. They threw their support behind Algerian independence and became the targets of extremist bombs. Sartre refused the Nobel Prize in Literature for 1964⁶⁶ and became the target of international scorn and abuse. They both sat on the Russell Tribunal, the international commission organized to protest U.S. involvement in Vietnam. They were on the barricades during May '68 and their controversial Maoist publications provided a barometer on state repression. And throughout it all, they lived hard, drank hard and travelled extensively.

Travel had always been one of Beauvoir's "most burning desires" (*PL*, 81) and, since their first taking the train to Spain together the summer before

beginning teaching, part of her and Sartre's routine.⁶⁷ While they tended to holiday in the south of France, Switzerland or Italy, invitations from abroad also kept them on the go. She and Sartre were feted as official guests of communist governments in China (September/October 1955), Yugoslavia (summer 1956), Cuba (February/March 1960), and the Soviet Union (June 1962, and again each summer until 1966, when Brezhnev assumed power and put an official end to the Thaw by sending two popular dissident writers, Sinyavsky and Daniel, to labor camps for "reeducation"). In Brazil and Japan, Finland and Estonia, Poland and Czechoslovakia, Egypt and Israel, Sweden and Denmark, "at home and abroad Sartre and de Beauvoir remained an indivisible institution" (Francis/Gontier, 329).

Only in 1970 was Beauvoir first approached to support a political organization on her own, without Sartre. The request was made by the MLF (*Mouvement de Libération des Femmes*), and Beauvoir promptly threw the weight of her public persona behind them and spoke out for abortion. Her presence in the feminist movement served to show up its fault-lines. Many could not accept the way she had always idolized Sartre, had made such admissions as: "philosophically I only had the role of a disciple" (Bair, 144), that she had considered his work more important than hers. It was particularly difficult for American feminists to understand her attraction for Sartre as they had gotten to know him during his final years, which were not his most elegant. Despite dramatically deteriorating health, he continued to drink, smoke, pop pills and cavort as he had in his prime. Sartre had always had the luxury of pampering; his life was a steady stream of companions, with care-givers replacing lovers as he aged. Somehow he managed to hang on until 1980. Beauvoir's liver was in equally bad shape when she followed him six years later.

In her 1996 monograph *Simone de Beauvoir*, Mary Evans introduces her subject as follows:

My subject is not one de Beauvoir but several, all of them inspired by the same actual person and the same social circumstances which inspired de Beauvoir herself. Thus just as 'the other' was a central person in de Beauvoir's work, so the other de Beauvoir's are important here, 'others' who have de Beauvoir's name, but who are often a long way removed from *the public person* whom de Beauvoir and feminism would like to record. (2-3, italics added)

Beauvoir's predilection for the public sphere has been duly noted. Her insistence on working in cafés at the beginning of her writing career so that she could look up and remind herself that she was not alone, her silent, jagged crying bouts among circles of friends, and her penchant for travelling companions all have received their fair share of comment. However, the extent to which Beauvoir strove to create herself as a *public* person is often underestimated. Even more so than with her fictional and philosophical output, Beauvoir was prolific autobiographically. Beginning in 1958 with *Memoires d'une jeune fille rangée* (which appeared the following year in English as *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*), there are four expansive volumes of official memoirs, ending with *Tout Compte Fait* in 1972 (*All Said and Done*, 1974), in addition to books on the deaths of her mother and Sartre. While Beauvoir charts, at least in the first volume of her memoirs, a relatively smooth progression from ungainly though well-brought-up bourgeois daughter to critical, culturally-acknowledged intellectual woman: "her conscience and self-awareness develop before the reader's eyes" (Francis/Gontier, 276), her structural principles allow her, like Lou Andreas-Salomé, to exclude images which do not fit nicely into this frame. Simone the

dutiful yet rebellious daughter, yes; Simone the world-renowned writer, certainly; Simone the lesbian lover, not a chance. Bair records her as once exclaiming with indignation: "Well, you couldn't expect me to tell *everything*, could you?" (654, n30, italics in original). The public and private Simones can, and have, been read in a myriad of ways, the great majority of which, as in the case of Lou Andreas-Salomé, were initially virulently hostile and then increasingly feminist, which is not to say lacking in their own hostility.⁶⁸ The general trend in scholarship on Beauvoir's autobiographical writings can be discerned from the titles of the three "Readings of the Autobiography" included in the 1998 Routledge *Critical Reader*: Francis Jeanson's "The Father in *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*," Alex Hughes's "Murdering the Mother in *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*" and Elaine Marks's "Encounters with Death in *A Very Easy Death* and the Body in Decline in *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*." In contrast with these psychologically and psychoanalytically-tinged interpretations is the following reading, which has as its focus the dynamics of Beauvoir's relation to the French cultural establishment.

SIMONIAL SIMONE

In focusing on the process of Beauvoir's self-construction as an anticipation of and response to cultural pressures, what immediately strikes one is the chronology of her oeuvre. It was only after *The Mandarins* had won the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 1954, her first formal recognition in the beatific world of French letters, that she set about her massive autobiographical undertaking; that is, it was only after, but also *as soon as*, she had come to occupy the long-cherished, long-craved role of established French writer that she set about writing an official autobiographical account of how she

had come to be that writer. Her extraordinary speed in ensconcing herself as a recognized, distinguished French writer points to the importance the position held for her, as does the fact that she wrote no more monumental works of either fiction or philosophy after beginning her autobiographical project.⁶⁹ There has been a great deal of comment and conjecture about the highly autobiographical nature of Beauvoir's oeuvre, and especially her tendency to write *romans-à-clef*. In a letter to Algren she "complained with a certain degree of bitterness that no one gave her credit for having an imagination of her own" (Bair, 449, also 662, n57). Viewed against the chronology of her oeuvre, it seems as though Beauvoir had only been waiting to lift the veil of fiction and claim the life she had long aspired to, that her desire to write the stories of her experiences was constant but she felt she had to wait to claim them as her own until she could do so from the position of authority to which she aspired.⁷⁰ Given her notorious carelessness with respect to the detail and "authenticity" of her memoirs, the only meaningful difference between the accounts she wrote, for example, of her relationship with Algren in the fictional *Mandarins* and the autobiographical *Force of Circumstance* would seem to be the use of the pseudonyms Brogan and Anne in the first.⁷¹ Certainly both infuriated him to the same degree and seemed to him the same breach of privacy; he considered both to belong to the scurrilous genre of "autofiction."⁷² Her autobiographical writing is, then, not simply, as Vintges has noted, the "core" (115) of Beauvoir's oeuvre, it is also its culmination.

Beauvoir began her autobiographical project not only at a pivotal point in her own career as writer, but also one for the existentialist movement, just after it had crested, and she continued to write as though their position of authority within French intellectual circles had not been

eclipsed by first structuralists and then poststructuralists. "It happened so fast,' Beauvoir reflected in 1986. 'One day we were the main attraction... and the next day there was an entirely new way of looking at the world of politics and literature'" (Bair, 522).⁷³ Consideration of Sartre's later works, especially the 1960 *Critique of Dialectical Reason* which renounces his earlier existentialist writing and is followed by a noticeably different style of auto/biographical work (*The Words* and *The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert*) not to mention the Maoist turn in his political thought, throws a much different light on especially the second and third volumes of Beauvoir's memoirs, making them appear not, as Evans would have it, a dialogue with Sartre (7) but rather a counterbalance to the writer he was changing into. As Bair astutely notes, "her autobiography becomes in many instances an apologia for Sartre's life, a diatribe that scolds all those who ignored, reviled or disagreed with him" (469); one might add in light of Sartre's concomitant works that they also scold Sartre himself. Given the time frame, Beauvoir can be seen to be recreating the Sartre that had barely beat her out to take first place in the *agrégation*, the Sartre with whom she had made the famous pacts, the Sartre whose existentialist principles she had both helped form and which served as her anchor, just as Sartre was in the process of intellectually as well as privately hoisting up that anchor and sailing away from her. In 1956, the year Beauvoir was immersed in the first volume of her memoirs, and when the Algerian crisis was gathering momentum, Arlette Elkaim, then a seventeen year old Algerian student, later to become Sartre's adopted daughter and thus literary heir, joined the Sartrean family and began quietly usurping Beauvoir's role in his life. Beauvoir's objections to Sartre's new blend of Marxian psychoanalysis which she could not follow - "the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* went right over my

head" (Bair, 516) - can in part explain his "uncharacteristic indifference to her role as first reader, critic and editor of his work" (Bair, 466). However, that "more and more he wanted to do his writing at Arlette's apartment, which he claimed was most conducive to concentration and relaxation" (Bair, 495) also points towards his having found more compliant ears elsewhere. It was on this threshold that Beauvoir found herself upon completing what she had intended to be the one and only volume of her memoirs. "My last book, the story of my childhood, was fun to write and is selling very well, but I don't know what to write next in these upsetting times,' she told Algren in her New Year's greetings of 1959" (Bair, 468), without specifying how much of the upset should be attributed to the worsening political situation and how much to her worsening personal one. It did not take her long to decide to continue with her autobiographical project, not as Bair would have it *despite* the fact that it would mean writing the story of her relationship with Sartre and their life together (468) but precisely *because* it provided her with the opportunity to establish *her* Sartre.

1960 thus saw the publication of two very different Sartre's, his and hers. Toril Moi finds the second and third volumes of Beauvoir's autobiography, published in 1960 and 1963 respectively, "her most interesting works, not because they always offer the best plots or the most energetic writing, but because they are so profoundly contradictory in tone and style" (251). Moi attributes the dryness of Beauvoir's prose in writing about Sartre to her not being able to avow in writing the real nature of their relationship:

it is not only Sartre's death that pains Beauvoir, it is also his lack of loyalty to her during their final years, his betrayal of what she took to be their common ideals, and his cavalier disregard for her feelings

in his dealing with other women. The price she pays is an almost complete blockage of affect in her language. (251)

As Beauvoir had so integrated a particular version of Sartre into her own autobiographical project that it became its dominant thread, one can hardly imagine her avowing the "real" Sartre. What was *her* life to look like without him, without their "essential" love? Publically avowing Sartre's new political direction and accepting his rejection of his previous writings would have been tantamount to writing off both her emotional and intellectual investment in him and the philosophical underpinnings of her life-project. It would have meant reimagining a future without him and the security their relationship provided her because to avow his new writings would be to renounce her status as equal intellectual partner and become a faithful, non-thinking follower, while to publicly avow that any of his liaisons were anything more than "contingent" would be to renounce her status as partner period. Beauvoir prided herself on the role she played in Sartre's formative, pre-1960 writing, which was substantial enough that scholarship has now begun to question just how much of them she actually was responsible for.⁷⁴ This pride is reflected in the prominent standing she chose to give Sartre in the second and third volumes of *her* autobiography: "an informal, unscientific page count... shows that she wrote as much about Sartre as about herself if not more, filtering the details of her life through his philosophy, political activity and travels" (Bair, 469). However, the decision to do so, to interweave him and their existentialist philosophy into the very fabric of her autobiographical writings had the serious consequence that she could no longer, after 1963, renege on that philosophy without it threatening to unravel the very weave of her own life-project. Is it only the irony of fate that Beauvoir recreated her relationship with

Sartre in writing just as it was falling apart? Or can this not also be read as a sign of her lack of faith in him to live up to her dreams which she perhaps suspected were doomed but nonetheless wanted to fulfill at least in writing?

Sartre's official adoption of Arlette on 25 January 1965, making her his legal heir, takes on more ominous overtones when situated in this chronology. More than simply a rude reminder of Beauvoir's age (something of which he knew her to be very sensitive, not surprisingly so), it was also an official expression of his breaking with her intellectually, by ensuring that she would not be able to posthumously publish his *Nachlaß*, such as the *Cahiers pour une morale* which Arlette published in 1983. Even then, Sartre underestimated what their pact and their partnership meant to Beauvoir, the lengths and humiliations she was willing to bear:

[W]ith her usual indomitable optimism, by March, when the adoption was final, she had not only stood as one of the sponsors (Lanzmann was the other), but was able to raise a glass of champagne to help the new father celebrate the joy of having a brand-new daughter. (Bair, 496)

It worked, Beauvoir was able to force her view of their relationship through. Francis and Gontier's 1985 biography on which she collaborated calls *Force of Circumstance* "a celebration of her extraordinary and singular understanding with Sartre" (302). One finds in it the following passage: "In 1964 de Beauvoir and Sartre were as indivisible in the eyes of the public as they were in real life. 'In more than thirty years, we have only once gone to sleep disunited,' de Beauvoir wrote in the epilogue to *Force of Circumstance*" (306), and it is followed by a chronicle of their travels in the second half of the '60s as politically-engaged partners par excellence.⁷⁵

In *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, Beauvoir predicts "my life would be a beautiful story come true, a story I would make up as I went along" (170); in *The Prime of Life*, she describes her life as "a lovely story that became true as I told it to myself" (363). In both cases it is the same story, a story for which she had a particular script in mind, an existentialist fairytale which, given her propensity in her correspondence with Algren towards what would now be considered most unpolitically-correct national slurs could quite justifiably be entitled "The Frog Prince."⁷⁶ Vintges concludes her study of Beauvoir's philosophical project with a critique of Bair's biography:

Deirde Bair wanted to write an intellectual biography of Simone de Beauvoir and to treat her life and work as interwoven elements... Her enterprise stranded completely because her point of departure was that the life and work of Beauvoir had to be understood from Beauvoir's orientation on Sartre. Bair failed to see that Beauvoir *actually oriented herself on her orientation on Sartre*. Her work and life revolved around the problem of women's relative identity, and it is this theme that made it - and her - an original. (177, italics in original)

While I would dispute the harshness of Vintges' judgment of Bair's work, it is a point well-taken. If Bair's project stranded at all, it was only insofar as her subject's story did as well. As many feminist writers have since concluded, it was an impossible, conflicted story upon which Beauvoir embarked, and the fact that she succeeded at all, that she managed to keep it as the foundational text for her entire life, only speaks to her indomitable will and courage. While it may be "insufficient, and indeed damaging, to use de Beauvoir as an example to women, since in so many ways the paths which she followed were fraught with destructive possibilities" (Evans, 119), especially

North American feminists have made much of learning from her example, not because it was exemplary as much as instructive. And here Beauvoir's fate overlaps with Lou Andreas-Salomé's. Both are admired for refusing to leave unconventional living arrangements for "normal" marriage. Just as Lou Andreas-Salomé refused to leave her husband and their open marriage for a noted Socialist politician with very traditional, patriarchal views, Beauvoir could not bring herself to leave Sartre in the 1950s and become a housewife in Chicago. That was not the course they had embarked on, the story they wanted to be able to tell about their lives. The difference is that Beauvoir felt her story required a hero, not one that would insist upon her doing the cooking and the housework but rather one that would respect her independence and encourage her to be his equal partner, or at least not object when she chose to write their relationship in such a light. Yes, Lou Andreas-Salomé's relationship with her husband was similar, but she did not choose to, or have the need to, represent him as her story's overriding hero.

Stories, while integral to her development and very existence, had a serious drawback for Beauvoir. She felt they could not be realized alone: "A partner was absolutely essential to me if I was to bring imaginary stories to life.... I owe a great debt to my sister for helping me to externalize many of my dreams in play.... What I appreciated most in our relationship was that I had a real hold over her..." (MDD, 44-5). Evans draws attention to the fact that it was this sense of control that provided the basis of Beauvoir's relationship with Sartre:

For some thirty years de Beauvoir manages Sartre's emotional life; from a position of apparent detachment she guides him through the various complexities of his affairs and offers to him the comforting

explanation that the reason why 'other' women become upset is because they have deluded beliefs about heterosexual love. (103)

Thus, the kind of relations Beauvoir depicts herself in are far from those of either Lou Andreas-Salomé or Zarathustra and the tightrope-walker. The others she encounters are valued for what they can do for her as well as vice versa. It is not the case that Beauvoir feels responsible for her sister or Sartre. Rather she needs them to need her: "As soon as I felt useful and loved, the horizon brightened and again I would begin to make fresh resolutions: 'be loved, be admired, be necessary, be somebody'" (MDD, 232). Karen Vintges takes Beauvoir's need for admiration and love and derives from it the ethical basis of her writing:

She organized and guided herself through her writing and used it as self-practice within the framework of a '*souci de soi*.' And for Beauvoir too, the self is something to be stylized on the surface rather than examined in depth. This basic approach would later culminate in the writing of an autobiography whose aim was to be useful for *others*. (91-92, italics in original)

Because Vintges compares Beauvoir's project with Foucault's, Beauvoir's ethics are found to be exemplary. Had she taken as a counterpart not Foucault but Lou Andreas-Salomé, her conclusions would have been less favorable. Lou Andreas-Salomé's serene, reverent acceptance of her lot in life is a marked contrast to Beauvoir's "Writing of Depression,"⁷⁷ her protracted, exhausting revisings of her life-story and its existential hero. We have seen the way Lou Andreas-Salomé assumed responsibility in her autobiographical writing for others, the way she worried about abandoning even the characters in the stories she told as a child. In contrast, it is Beauvoir herself who is a character, who feels herself abandoned: "The truth was

that, separated from my family, deprived of those affections which assured me my personal worth, cut off from the familiar routine which defined my place in the world, I no longer knew who I was, nor what my purpose was here on earth" (MDD, 62). Beauvoir's response to losing her belief in God is also markedly different than Lou Andreas-Salomé's. Instead of feeling responsible for those who may not yet have made the discovery of this loss, Beauvoir's concern is solely to find an alternate source of affection: "there was no longer any God to love me, but I should have the undying love of millions of hearts" (MDD, 143). Beauvoir may have seen and written her life in terms of a search for her own values: "We neither of us had any faith in conventional values; but I was determined to find some I could believe in, or else invent new ones" (MDD, 220); she may have claimed to aspire to the kind of life which Lou Andreas-Salomé fashioned for herself:

That is why, when I got to know Herbaud, I had the feeling of finding myself: he was the shadow thrown by my future. He was neither a pillar of the Church, nor a book-worm, nor did he spend his time propping up bars; he provided by personal example that one can build from oneself, outside the accepted categories, a self-respecting, happy and responsible existence: exactly the sort of life I wanted for myself. (MDD, 317)

However, as we have seen, Beauvoir's ambitions for her writing were to compromise this desire for a self-respecting, happy, *responsible* existence. In choosing to write the story of her life as the *Bildungsroman* of an intellectual woman, Beauvoir made explicit the world-view which motivated her struggles to attain the position of cultural prominence to which she aspired and which, at the time of writing, she felt herself to have achieved. This view could be a page out of Nietzsche: God is dead therefore

one must create oneself in one's own image. However, unlike Lou Andreas-Salomé, Beauvoir did not have feel herself enough a stranger to have an image unto herself. She needed others too much, was too much in their debt, to be able to take on responsibility for them in the way Lou Andreas-Salomé did. Beauvoir was willing to put up with satiny, gold-trimmed paper dresses, as long as they got her onto the literary dance-floor to which she aspired. She made herself into a socially-conscious, internationally-respected writer but it left her writing depression.

PART 2 - WRITING BACK...

NANAA: a Persian or Mesopotamian goddess whose temple treasures were confiscated in 164 BC by Antichus IV who was then murdered by the priests
(*Reclams Bibel Lexikon*)

Maitreyi Devi and Asja Lacis are not the cultural and feminist icons that Lou Andreas-Salomé and Simone de Beauvoir are. Their writings can hardly be described as well-known, indeed they are hardly available in the West. Nor have they generated the tidal waves of critical words thrown up by the myriad of critical approaches that the subjects of Part I have. Yet, in a strange way they have made names for themselves or, rather, have found themselves made names: through and on account of the writings of a disappointed love-interest. However, Mircea Eliade and Walter Benjamin are not one's usual flings. One might imagine Eliade's and Benjamin's accounts of their short, fateful relationships to have piqued the curiosity of their acolytes, that being linked romantically with such popular yet enigmatic intellectuals would have guaranteed that their names would do more than surface periodically in the circles of their scholarship. That has not been the case. The when's and why's of these two women's autobiographical writing remain unaddressed in the criticism. The following two chapters will trace the defiant wieldings of these two women's pens and detail how they provided a personal and cultural contextualization of their infamous involvements, so that they and their stories would live on as anti-myths to counter the inhuman creatures others would try to create of them.

CHAPTER III MAITREYI DEVI

'Sie sind lustig, begann er wieder, und wer weiss? vielleicht auf ihres Wirthes Unkosten; und lernten sie von mir lachen, so ist es doch nicht mein Lachen, das sie lernten.

Aber was liegt daran! Es sind alte Leute: sie genesen auf ihre Art, sie lachen auf ihre Art; meine Ohren haben schon Schlimmeres erduldet und wurden nicht unwirsch.

Dieser Tag ist ein Sieg: er weicht schon, er flieht, der Geist der Schwere, mein alter Erzfeind! Wie gut will dieser Tag enden, der so schlimm und schwer begann!

*Die Erweckung, 1, Zarathustra*⁷⁸

Sreemati Maitreyi Devi was born in the coastal town of Chittagong in what was then known as East Bengal on 1 September 1914, just as European troops were settling into their trenches during the Battle of the Marne. European history was to have little effect on her, however. Although India sent over a million troops in support of its colonial masters, the great majority were from the Punjab; Bengal's share was a mere 7,000. It was the European tradition of learning, and not its history, which was to leave its mark on Maitreyi.

Like Simone de Beauvoir, Maitreyi was the first-born; like Ljolja von Salomé, she had five siblings and an ambitious, influential father with access to the highest echelons of society. Surendranath Dasgupta seems to have been of the type that pass directly from child prodigy to learned expert. Upon the completion of his M.A. in Philosophy at age 26, he was awarded a permanent professorship in Calcutta and the patronage of the Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandi of Kasimbazar.⁷⁹ With the Maharaja's encouragement and support, Dasgupta began what would become the five

volume *History of Indian Philosophy* and spent 1920-22 in Cambridge, studying and debating European philosophy. His paper on Croce at the 1924 International Congress of Philosophy in Naples prompted the latter's attendance and rebuttal, while his 1926 American lecture tour caused a similar international splash. Dasgupta thus had good reason to be a strong believer in the mutual benefit to be had in working with foreign scholars.

Maitreyi was fourteen when, in 1928, a self-confident Romanian student seven years her senior took the initiative in petitioning the Maharaja for a scholarship to study with Dasgupta in Calcutta, where the latter had, since 1924, been head of the Philosophy Department. When Mircea Eliade's boat docked in November 1928, Dasgupta was there to extend him a hearty welcome. After several months, Dasgupta suggested that Eliade was acclimatized enough to move in with his family in their Bhowanipur residence. It would be misleading to assume that this invitation conveyed with it any particular favor. Devi recollects that: "Those were days when many foreigners visited us. Our house hummed with scholarly discussion on literary and philosophical problems" (22). The eminent historian of religions encouraged the two young people to exchange language lessons, Bengali for French, and to work together cataloguing his library. However, when they fell in love, a not terribly surprising turn of events given the circumstances,⁸⁰ the learned man seems to have been most taken aback, and when confronted about the dalliance, his pupil even more so. Neither officer nor gentleman, Eliade took to his heels, first fleeing their home, and then, after six months in a Himalayan retreat studying with Swami Shivanananda, their country. As Eliade tells it, further paternal meddling was to blame:

My father sensed that I was intending to stay in India for another three or four years, and he was afraid I might never return, that I

might choose the solitude of the monastic life or marry an Indian girl. And I think his intuition was correct. So, since it was up to him to renew my exemption from military service, well, that year, January 1931, he simply did nothing about it. In the autumn he wrote saying that I must come back home. My father had been an army officer. He added: 'It would be a disgrace for me personally, and a great humiliation for the whole family, if my son became a deserter.' So I went home. I fully intended to return to India later on, to continue my research. Meanwhile, I presented my dissertation on Yoga, and the university committee in charge of these things asked me to work on a version for publication in French. (OL, 69)

However, the tides of academia and history were to sweep Eliade away; he was never to return to India. After a period of de facto mourning, Maitreyi was married to an engineer fourteen years her senior, with whom she went to live in remote colonial circumstances near the Nepalese border in the Darjeeling district, from the peaks of whose mountains one can see two of the world's tallest mountains.

Upon arriving back in his native Romania, Eliade set about fictionalizing his Indian adventures in a *roman-à-clef* entitled *Maitreyi*. With its publication on 1 May 1933, a scant four months after Hitler's government was sworn into power in nearby Germany, *Maitreyi* quickly assumed the stature of a Romanian *Effi Briest* or *Anna Karenina* and Eliade's reputation as a writer was made. When he began teaching at the University in Bucharest in November of that year, his lecture on "The Problem of Evil in the History of Religions" enjoyed unusually large crowds, the majority of whom, as he notes in his autobiography, "had not come to learn what constituted the problem of evil and salvation, but to see and hear the

author of *Maitreyi*" (270). Thus, when the fictional Sergui in Maitreyi Devi's own autobiographical novel, *It Does Not Die*, replies to the protagonist's question of "Do you know me?" with "Everyone in my country knows you. You are the heroine of a fairytale" (12), he is not describing a fictional situation but stating a well-known fact in Romanian literary history.⁸¹

In the meantime, Maitreyi Devi was adjusting to life in the remote rural household she would spend the next 22 years running before returning to Calcutta. While she did not find the pressures of the small colonial "forest resort" (202) particularly agreeable, visits from her friend and mentor, the Nobel Prize-winning poet Rabindranath Tagore, strengthened her resolve. She did not allow her isolation to hinder her in becoming as pre-eminent a poet and scholar in her own country as Eliade had been in his own pre-Soviet Romania. As the daughter of the learned Dasgupta and the "lady-disciple of Rabindranth," as she is referred to in the preface of *The Great Wanderer*, the volume in which she collected the reactions in the Western press to Tagore's travels and lectures abroad to mark the Tagore Centenary of 1961, her cultural stature was guaranteed. Devi published extensively but not exclusively on Tagore. Her *Maung-pu te Rabindranth (With Tagore at Maung-pu)* was a Bengalese best-seller, and in her own English translation, *Tagore by Fireside*, it attained a measure of renown in Mother England as well. She became a noted writer and social activist, founding boarding schools for destitute children and organizations such as one for the Promotion of Communal Harmony in 1964. She lectured on issues from social reform and philosophy to poetry and travel. A self-described "globe-trotter," she received, as her father had before her, numerous invitations to lecture abroad - in the Soviet Union, Eastern and Western Europe and the United States. Her *Maha Soviet*, akin with Beauvoir's travel writings, received

considerable attention and was important in sharing her impressions of life in Soviet Russia with Bengali readers.

By writing in his native Romanian, Eliade successfully limited the audience of *Maitreyi*, preventing those with no knowledge of Romanian, such as Maitreyi Devi and her family, from having access to his text. Thirty years later, in 1963, when he returned to the events in India in his autobiography, Eliade once again chose to write in Romanian, even though he had already by that time served for six years at the University of Chicago as chairman of the History of Religions Department, and published scholarly work in English and French. It was in French that Eliade's autobiographical work first appeared. In 1950, *La nuit bengali*, a translation by Alain Guillemlou, was published by Gallimard. Then, in 1973, Gallimard came out with *Fragments d'un journal*, the journal Eliade kept in French, in which he recorded, among other things, the experience of writing his autobiography. The entry for 5 April 1963, for example, reads:

I'm beginning the second volume of my autobiography. I will try to summarize my years spent in India by emphasizing certain events exclusively and by omitting all the others. I must keep certain secrets for myself. Moreover, I've written about India so many times that I no longer have any desire to return to the subject. (NS, 183)

It was the last of these efforts to write about writing about his experiences in India, that is, the journal, which was the first to be translated into English, by Fred H. Johnson Jr. It appeared, in 1977, with Harper & Row as *No Souvenirs: Journal, 1957-1969*. The autobiography was translated from the Romanian into English by Mac Linscott Ricketts, a former student of Eliade's at the University of Chicago, and it appeared in 1981 as *Autobiography, vol. 1, Journey East, Journey West, 1907-1937*, also with Harper & Row.

In 1972, before any of Eliade's autobiographical writings were available in English, the only European language in which Maitreyi Devi was proficient, a Romanian visitor confronted her with details from Eliade's *Maitreyi*. This event compelled her, first, to become familiar with the book's contents, then to visit Eliade at the University of Chicago and, finally, to answer the 1933 novel which bore her name with one of her own. *Na Hanyate* appeared first in Bengali in 1974 and then two years later with an Indian publisher, P. Lal, as *It Does Not Die: A Romance* in Maitreyi's own English translation. However, it wasn't until 1994, after both of the protagonists had passed away - Eliade in 1986 and Maitreyi Devi in 1991 - that their stories appeared for the first time together in the same language, English, for the same press, the University of Chicago.⁸² As this publication occurred shortly after Maitreyi's death, it does not seem untoward to assume that Eliade acted to hinder an English version of his novel from appearing in her lifetime.⁸³

It seems appropriate that the two articles in English devoted solely to Eliade's *Maitreyi* should be by a Romanian male and an Indian female. Coincidentally, they were both written for special collections by noted scholars: Mihai Spariosu's "Orientalist Fictions in Eliade's *Maitreyi*" is a contribution to a 1978 conference at UCLA on "Fiction and Drama in Eastern and Southeastern Europe," while Meenakshi Mukherjee's "Mircea Eliade and India: A Reading of *Maitreyi*" is an expanded version of a book review for the 1995 Festschrift for Professor M. Sivaramakrishna, *Framing Literature*. Spariosu is interested in revealing the ways in which both Eliade's and Devi's tales are ideologically bound: "If *Maitreyi* revolves around certain Orientalist fictions, *It Does Not Die* predictably reveals certain preconceptions and simplistic generalizations about the Western world" (357).

He draws attention to the myths typical to their respective cultures on which the works are based: Eliade's narrative is "nothing but the reenactment of a most common Christian myth: the story of the Fall of Man" (356), while Devi's "is built around the myth of the immortality of the soul, (and the confrontation between the atemporal and the historical results into a not uncommon fictional form)" (358). Eliade's Maitreyi is an "unpredictable, cruel sex-goddess who is beyond the Western moral code" (357); Devi's Mircea is "a cold-blooded, rational Westerner who spends his life (and his passion) buried in books" (357). Both demonstrate "the typical attitude of a traveler who reads his [sic] own ideological biases into a foreign culture" (354). Thus, just as Maitreyi becomes Eliade's passage to India, he kindles for her a bonfire of the vanities. Mukherjee's more recent article covers much the same ground, considering "the more fascinating aspect... the gaps in cultural comprehension which underlie their relationship" (91), but hers takes more of a literary focus. She finds Devi's work "far superior to *Bengali Nights* [sic], its complexity and maturity is perhaps due to the fact that it is emotion recollected" (93).

A PASSAGE TO THE VANITIES

These gaps in cultural comprehension, these Orientalist and Occidentalist fictions, manifest themselves in striking images of their male and female protagonists. However, the exotic, orientalizing representation of the character of Maitreyi at the beginning of Eliade's eponymous novel quickly descends from the mythic to the melodramatic. Eliade's Maitreyi is not a conventional beauty but rather "so disturbing and so unfeminine" (2):

On catching sight of her, a strange tremor went through me,
accompanied by a curious feeling of contempt. I thought her ugly,

with eyes that were too large and too black, thick and curling lips and the powerful chest of a Bengali maiden who had developed too quickly. (1)

Not only is Maitreyi portrayed as lacking in beauty, the poor thing is not even allowed to be mortal. Her eyes are "absent, inhuman" (25); her "too black" hair, "too large" eyes and "too red" lips have the effect that they "inhabited this veiled body with a life that was somehow inhuman, miraculous and hardly real" (7): "it was the flesh of a goddess or a painted image rather than a human" (2). And goddesses, unlike the rest of us merely female mortals, tend to have a certain effect on men. Maitreyi's "quaint and formal, somewhat scholarly" English is found to be "like the calls of a siren" (7); her "irresistible, contagious" laugh is that of:

both a woman and a child. It gripped my heart, and I shivered. I leaned out of the window and beheld, stretched out across two steps of the courtyard stairs, Maitreyi, almost naked, her hair in her eyes, her arms clasped over her chest. I saw her move her legs, quite shaken with laughter, and then, with a brisk jerk of her ankles, throw off her two slippers against the wall opposite. I stood transfixed, unable to avert my eyes. (9)

Why should it be these otherworldly aspects of the ugly goddess-like creature which attract Alain, Eliade's protagonist, and set the tale on its fatal course? Alain's ability to recognize the sacred, magical qualities inherent in this girl, this hierophany, this revelation of the sacred in everyday experience, proves his inherent superiority over both the Indians, who are primitives and barbarians, and the Anglo-Indians, whom he considers "idiots and fanatics" (2). Unlike the Anglo-Indians, Eliade's hero is enchanted with India. He knows better than to fall for one of the Anglo-

Indian girls he and his Anglo-Indian friend Harold take out, girls that "come too cheaply to love" (13). Neither English nor Bengali, freed by fate from the dilemma of being either master or slave, Alain boasts of being "very proud of my [Romanian] nationality and my continental origins" (2),⁸⁴ and proud, too, of the offer to live in his host's house, to live:

this new life that no white man, to my knowledge, had ever experienced at source, the life which Lucien's research had revealed to me as magical and which Maitreyi's presence would render more fascinating and mysterious than a medieval legend. (23-4)⁸⁵

Eliade's memories can only take on their bittersweet quality, however, within a tragic framework, and thus the tale follows a very unfairy-tale-like course. First, the unique, memorable nature of the passion generated is emphasized:

Maitreyi squeezed my legs between hers as though she wanted to break them, expressing in that embrace all her final passion and terror. Then, with a gentleness I had never known in her before, her warm skin rubbed softly against mine. Her last caress infused me with a warmth and a passion that I will never forget, separated though we are in time and in distance. (131)

Then Maitreyi's father "suggests" that their guest is tired and should leave immediately for the mountains and Eliade's protagonist understands that he is being evicted. The effect is immediate and violent:

The engineer left and I collapsed into sobs, pulling my hair and biting my knuckles like a madman. I threw myself onto the chair, obliterated, almost suffocating from a pain for which I had no name. It was neither frustrated love nor sorrow but rather a feeling of total dissolution. I had suddenly woken up alone in a cemetery, with

no one to hear my woes or comfort me. I had been broken into a thousand pieces, my body nothing but a gaping wound, my soul destroyed. (135)

And so his story ends, after an interlude in the mountains where a love-affair with a Finnish Jewess serves to confirm his love for Maitreyi:

It was Maitrey whom I loved, Maitreyi alone! I had had to grit my teeth as I invented all sorts of caresses that made the innocent Jenny swoon with delight - but which only excited my rage, because they did not numb my pain, or efface from the lively memory of my senses the other, the only one, Maitreyi. (171)

Maitreyi is thus reduced to a memory, albeit lively, no more to him than a pang of conscience: "I would like to be able to look Maitreyi in the eyes..." (176), "I wish she would forget me, that she were not suffering. Our love is over" (173).

However, as the title of Maitreyi Devi's "romance" indicates, it was not over. It did not die, but rather modulated from minor to major key. Devi chose not to structure her story around the tragic encounter: "Such episodes are aplenty. They have happened in the past and will happen in the future. Many writers have written about the sad ending of first love, with pens much more powerful than mine" (245). Rather she concentrates on the unique way the experience unfolded: "I am writing to record the episode that happened forty-two years later, because it is astounding and probably without precedence" (245). By choosing to thus interweave past and present, she thickens her story from a soupy romance into a veritable historical stew, with a decidedly philosophical and theological tang replacing the syrupy seasonings Eliade preferred. Like Eliade, Devi does not set herself up as the hero of her tale: "this is not my biography, this is just a story in which Mircea

is the hero" (168). However, her hero is given a less than godlike demeanor. Whereas Eliade's Maitreyi is a siren, Devi's Mircea is so unassuming he does not attract her immediate attention: "during this time Mircea used to visit father. But I had not noticed him" (30). It is only after they are introduced that he makes a certain, by no means unfavourable, impression: "Mircea stood up. I noticed he wore spectacles with thick lenses, his hair was thin, he had a square face, broad forehead, high cheek bones and very sensitive lips. I like this habit of Westerners - they stand up to greet a woman" (31). It is not Mircea himself but rather primarily his Europeanness which registers favourably. These European manners seem to have made quite an impression on Maitreyi as they are one of first memories of Mircea she recounts:

Our first car was a Chevrolet - comfortable and high, no one wants that kind now - but to us it was a beauty. Mircea would offer his arm to help me out of the car.

'Do I need help to get down from this little height?'

'Our custom. One must help a lady out of the car and must kiss her hand while greeting or taking leave.'

'Custom?'

'Yes. One would be considered uncivilised if one failed to do so. Have you no such custom?'

'No...' (19)

Mircea's heroic status is further undercut by the figures of her husband and her mentor Tagore. It is Tagore who makes her "twenty-two years of... solitary confinement in a forest life" bearable (175); it is her husband without whom she is incomplete (168). Mircea is "just a tool,... someone else who is using his name, changing my whole personality, my inner being" (225).

In contrast: with Mircea's generic qualities, her own prismatic figure is decisive and courageous. The forty-two years that separate their meetings are both a disruptive and a uniting element in her life: "And I have entered eternity, I have no future or past. I stand with one foot in 1972 and another in 1930" (10). Even split, Maitreyi's protagonist is a more imposing figure than her "hero." In her final conversation with Mircea, which ensues upon her showing up unannounced in his office at the University of Chicago, she emphasizes the courage the decision to visit him required:

'It has not been an easy task, ignoring the frowns of society round me. Before my family, relatives and even before my own children, I have fallen from the high pedestal of honour. Some must think me senile. What will people think if they come to know of this? You know our country - they will spit at me. Is it easy to come to see you after forty-two years?'

'Not at all. I could have never done it. How many times have I had invitations from my dreamland India, but I have never gone.' (254)

Not only does she have greater intestinal fortitude than Mircea, she also comes out on top during a conflict with her English neighbors in her mountainous, far from postcolonial retreat:

A clash is imminent over the issue of drinking alcohol. I am not going to be defeated. I am not the person to yield to pressure and gradually follow in their footsteps. They say a person is known by the company he keeps. I am a different bird; I will not flock with them. (179)

This different bird never finds a situation in which she can belong. Upon moving back to Calcutta in 1954, she notes that "when I left this city twenty-two years ago the ethos of the literary world was different" (202) and, as she did in the mountains, here too she feels: "estranged, I am a stranger here"

(202). Like Lou Andreas-Salomé, Maitreyi's sense of strangeness coexists with a personal ethos based on agency: "I was thrown into a world where I did not belong. I watched them just as a clean person watches the unclean, the awakened the sleeping, and the emancipated the person in bondage" (181). She, with her courage found in difference, is emancipated; the conformity of the others condemns them to bondage. In his journal, Eliade's journal indicates that he mistook this courage for freedom:

26 January 1961: I think that my interest in Hindu philosophy and asceticism can be explained as follows: India has been obsessed by *freedom*, by absolute autonomy. Not in any naive, superficial way, but with full regard to the numberless forms of conditioning to which man is subject, studying them objectively, experimentally (Yoga), and striving to find the tool that will make it possible to abolish or transcend them. Even more than Christianity, Hindu spirituality has the merit of introducing Freedom into the Cosmos. A *jivanmukta's* mode of being is not *given* in the Cosmos; on the contrary, in a universe dominated by laws, absolute freedom is unthinkable. India has the merit of having added a new dimension to the universe: that of free existence. (OL, 63-4, italics in original)

While his Maitreyi is lacking in transcendence and driven mad by the chains of duty, Maitreyi's own writing both substantiates and refines his claim. As in the case of Lou Andreas-Salomé, Maitreyi expects women to be strong and free. Lou Andreas-Salomé's disappointment in Malwida's conventionality is matched by Maitreyi's of her mother: "Before, mother was in full command of the house; now her voice is ignored.... I feel ashamed of her weakness" (154); "I constantly ask myself, How can I be free? Mother was never properly free, she has to steal money or persuade father for her constant need of helping poor

relatives.... I used to wonder how those who love freedom could want to keep others in chains" (157). Maitreyi realizes her freedom, as does Lou Andreas-Salomé, through the exercise of a strong sense of agency within the framework of an open marriage:

The emptiness I felt at the time of my marriage did not disrupt my world. My desire to be free had been fulfilled. The moment I entered my husband's home, my shackles fell off. I realize that from then I would be able to do what I felt was right. Freedom of course does not correspond to irresponsibility. I hope I have never used my unlimited freedom in a way that is unworthy of me. (168)⁸⁶

The use she makes of her freedom is what allows her to answer for herself. Because it is "worthy," she feels herself in a position to judge, beginning with herself: "I judge myself severely - I do not condone any weakness..." (13).

At the same time she trumpets female agency, Maitreyi acknowledges, as Lou Andreas-Salomé did before her, her helplessness and the facticity of her situation. She therefore makes much of the fact that she chose for many long years to remain in ignorance about Eliade's book. Her protagonist tells the Romanian visitor who finally sparks her interest in the past that she knows of Eliade's book only from heresy:

It is today fortytwo years since Mircea left; off and on I have heard about the book, named after me, but I never asked anyone about the contents of that book. Is it a story, or a book of poems, or a dissertation? I never cared to enquire. Today I ask you, tell me, what is in that book? (12)

She later conveys her earlier impression of the book's content in such a way as to make intelligible her lack of curiosity:

(a)s far as I can remember that was in 1938. Father told me in Calcutta, 'Mircea has dedicated a book to you and he has sought your forgiveness in the dedication.'... After a few minutes he said, 'He has been jailed for writing pornography.' My English was poor, I did not know what the word pornography meant. I had no desire to ask father. I knew it could not be anything excellent if it had sent the writer to prison. I walked away silently. I was astounded to look up the meaning in the dictionary - how ugly - perverse - is the book he dedicated to me the same one?... I felt no curiosity about the book because my mind shrank in disgust. I shivered to think that at one time I had come so close to such an awful man. I tried to forget the whole affair. With a firm determination I rolled down a boulder of repugnance and closed the opening of that cave which lay in abysmal depth, illuminated by the colours of memory. It would be wrong to say I did it. It just happened that way. (175)

Her accounting aims at mirroring the confusion she felt in the face of Eliade's text, first claiming to have willfully tried to close off access to her memories of that time, and then that "it just happened" without any willful act on her part. It would not have been impossible for Devi to have come across a copy of the French translation. She tells of later trips she made to France both with her husband and alone, the first in 1953, three years after the appearance of *La nuit bengali*, during which she met with Romanians who knew her as Eliade's "first flame" (199). She even tells of the opportunity to meet with Eliade which she could not bring herself to take advantage of. It was not to be. She preferred to see it, as Lou Andreas-Salomé did, as beyond her control, as a "conspiracy of destiny" (227), the "conspiracy of eternal time" (234) that "fate has conspired to tell me all now" (227), i.e. in 1972. It is not

until 1972 that she was finally confronted with that which she had hitherto been able to avoid - the form of things that "do not die." The problem is that:

the book is alive. I can see that it has an unusual longevity... I tell my friends, 'Look at the prank *fate* has played *on me*. The family I have raised, the events of my long life, my husband and children - they will be wiped away in time. This, my real life, will become a shadow, but someone who is nobody to me, whom I met for a brief while in the long journey of life, he will remain - someone who is nowhere in my life - my name shall remain tied with that total stranger, even after death. Social relations, even blood relations end with death, but the tie he has created is unbreakable.' (215, italics added)

Devi's disappointment with Eliade's text is not with its immortality as such. Like Lou Andreas-Salomé's writing that life "lives *us*, it composes *us*... we are works of art - but we are not the artist," Maitreyi Devi's view of life is also recounted in the passive. Eliade's book is part of the game of life, which she admits "is someone else's game we are playing. We are marionettes in his hands" (225). And she too sees life in artistic terms:

As I try to write the story of my life I can very well see that there is no story at all. How can there be? Stories emerge from contact with life. The contact and conflict of human experience and variety of efforts give colour to our life's picture. What story can nature evolve? Many incidents occur that are fierce but one cannot make stories out of them. (187)

Her problem with *Maitreyi* is not that it is a story but rather that it is an unethical one, that "it wears a mask of truth" (226), and that lies can be as immortal as truths (216). Devi's disappointment with Eliade is that he chose

not to share her truth, that he chose the wrong form of immortality for her soul:

I lay wondering why he destroyed this love, a gift of God. What did it matter if he had to go? If in ten years we could have exchanged even a single letter, that would have been enough. With that one letter we would have bridged the oceans and continents of separation and could have become 'ardhanariswar.' Our two-selves could have acquired a completeness... I can see myself again in his arms, framed with a door. He is whispering, 'Not your body, Amrita. I want to touch your soul.'

This is the truth, truly the truth. The body perishes, the soul is immortal. (217-8)

Her immortal soul, however, was not touched as she wished, but textualized, and misrepresented in the bargain. She may have wanted to, may have set out to, meet the Truth: "So I say, 'Uncover your face, O Truth, I want to meet you'" (226) but her encounter was with "eyes turned into stone" - blind, mute surfaces capable only of reflection.

CHAPTER IV ASJA LACIS

Gefährten suchte einst der
Schaffende und Kinder seiner
Hoffnung: und siehe, es fand sich,
dass er sie nicht finden könne, es sei
denn, er schaffe sie selber erst.

Also bin ich mitten in meinem Werke,
zu meinen Kindern gehend und von
ihnen kehrend: um seiner Kinder
willen muss Zarathustra sich selbst
vollenden.

Denn von Grund aus liebt man nur
sein Kind und Werk; und wo grosse
Liebe zu sich selber ist, da ist sie der
Schwangerschaft Wahrzeichen: so
fand ich's.

Von der Seligkeit wider Willen,
*Zarathustra*⁸⁷

Anna Ernestovna Lacis was born on a country estate in Latvia on 19 October 1891, the same year as three of the characters we will encounter in the third part of this study - Romola and Bronislava Nijinsky and Osip Mandel'shtam. However the circumstances into which Lacis was born were considerably humbler; in fact, they are by far the humblest of this group. Her mother wove and dyed blankets, gardened, sang sad hymns and suffered, while her father was off repairing the gentry's furs and saddles. The progressive socialist proclivities of the latter ensured that his only daughter received upper-class schooling and moral, if not financial, support to continue with her studies. The Bekhterev Psychoneurological Research Institute in St. Petersburg was one of the few of the day which accepted women, and so it was there that Asja went, in pursuit of a course of study to complement her interest in the theater, as she had caught the theater bug at school. Studying in St. Petersburg in 1913-14 and then in Moscow at Fyodor Komisarovsky's theater studio in 1917, Asja soon found herself caught up in the politically fulminating times and quickly became active in

pedagogically-oriented revolutionary theatrical circles. When events dictated her presence in Orel during the civil war, she set about organizing a theater-school for *bezprizorniki* and other young war refugees, in the villa which once served as setting for Turgenev's *A Nest of the Gentry* and is now a Turgenev museum. In 1922, her interest in expressionist theater took her to Berlin, where she met her second husband, the director Bernhard Reich. (She had met, had a child with and divorced Julijs Lacis while still in Riga, and also had a relationship with one of the leading Latvian revolutionary poets, Lainards Laicēns, whose volume of love poetry dedicated to her, *Ho-Tai*, is among the classics of Latvian literature.) When Reich and his younger colleague, Bertold Brecht, were appointed to the Munich Residenztheater, she moved there with them and, at Brecht's insistence, was hired on as an assistant director despite the initial refusal of the bourgeois Bavarian management to have a foreign communist on their premises. During the 1924 trip she and Reich made to Capri on account of her daughter's poor health, they took the opportunity to visit, among others, Maxim Gorky and the famed Futurist Filippo Marinetti. It was also in Capri that she met and decisively intervened in the fate of Walter Benjamin, encouraging his Marxist leanings, his *Einbahnstrasse*, which is dedicated to her, and the trip to Moscow in the winter of 1926-27 which resulted in his *Moskauer Tagebuch*.⁸⁸ Upon recovering her health, she worked with Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya, to establish a children's cinema in a movie theater near the crowded, chaotic Sukharevsky market in Moscow. In 1928, she was appointed cultural attaché to the Soviet trade commission in Berlin, where she again had the opportunity to visit with her good friends Benjamin and Brecht, and where she set about furthering the cause of Soviet film in general, and Vertov's *Kinoglaz* (kino-eye) in particular. In 1930, she returned

to Stalinist Russia, first working with Erwin Piscator during the filming of Anna Seghers' novella, "The Revolt of the Fishers from St. Barbara," and then embarking on doctoral studies in theater in Moscow. Like so many good communists, she was arrested in 1937. Unlike so many good communists, she survived ten years in Khazakhstan in the gulag, something she would later attribute to the fact that she had been allowed to organize her fellow prisoners into an amateur theater troupe.⁸⁹ She returned to her native Latvia in 1948 and began reestablishing herself as a director and theoretician of the theater, first in Valmiera and then in Riga, where she was a prominent member of the Soviet Latvian cultural scene until her death in 1979.

During this last period of her life, Anna Lacis composed two volumes of memoirs.⁹⁰ The first is the German *Revolutionär im Beruf*, subtitled *Berichte über proletarisches Theater, über Meyerhold, Brecht, Benjamin und Piscator*, which is an accurate overview of its contents. Lacis recounts its genesis as follows:

In the mid-1960s I received a letter from the chief editor of the West German journal *Alternative*, Hildegard Brenner, with the request that I send copies of my correspondence with Walter. Unfortunately, that correspondence had been destroyed, but I offered some of my recollections in their place. My story was printed in *Alternative*, and later, in the April 1968 issue, my article on the children's theater of aesthetic education [in Orel] appeared with Benjamin's program. (RC, 133)

One has the impression that Brenner was pleasantly surprised to have come across such a wide-ranging source of information. Her initial request resulted not only in the *Alternative* selections but also in *A Revolutionary by Profession*, which was published in 1971 to coincide with Lacis's eightieth

birthday. For Brenner, Lacis was an important link in reconstructing the circumstances of intellectual life in the Weimar Republic in general and of the proletarian worker's movement in particular, as well as an opportunity to point out how conservative post-war scholarship had operated to ignore or delete valuable voices of the "wrong", i.e. Marxist, ideology. Brenner was interested in what Lacis was able to add to knowledge about well-known, left-leaning male cultural figures, as indicated by the subtitle of the volume, and she thus solicited Lacis's recollections on these particular figures. Both Lacis's personal circumstances and her theatrical connection are downplayed, for example: "A decisive stage for me was working in Riga. (Personal circumstances had brought me back)" (*RP*, 32). Those circumstances involved a frustrating, unsuccessful attempt to cross civil-war-torn Latvia in time to be with her dying mother. When the German memoir was reprinted in 1976 scaled back by ten pages, it was these areas - Lacis's childhood reminiscences, her descriptions of relatives and the final excerpt from her book on *Revolutionary Theater in Germany* - which were shortened, and the title of the first chapter correspondingly changed from "Latvia: In the Village/Riga" to "St. Petersburg, Moscow, 1913/17," originally the title of chapter two. Lacis was thus introduced to the West in the guise of an impersonal Marxist functionary, a *mulier sovietica* who, as is emphasized in the collection *Russen in Berlin*, "had a decisive influence on [Benjamin's] entire existence" (Mierau, 352). And it was in this guise she was to remain, as her other memoir, *Krasnaya Gvozdika (The Red Carnation)* was posthumously published in 1984 in Riga, and has garnered no attention west of the former Iron Curtain.

Asja Lacis died in 1979. In 1980, Walter Benjamin's *Moskauer Tagebuch* appeared with Suhrkamp. This is not a coincidence. As the editor of the

English translation, Gary Smith, informs us, Benjamin's diary was not published earlier, "for two reasons. First the publishing house decided not to issue the diary during the lifetime of Asja Lacis. Secondly, the diary was scheduled for publication in the sixth volume of Benjamin's *Gesammelte Schriften*, which contains all of his extant autobiographical writings and fragments" (145). It is unfortunate that Lacis was thus deprived of the opportunity to respond to Benjamin's portrayal of her. As pointed out in both Gershom Scholem's preface and Gary Smith's afterword, Lacis is the diary's catalyst and ostensible heroine in the same way Maitreyi is in Eliade's "homage." The diary begins with Benjamin's arrival in Moscow, on 6 December 1926, where he immediately displaces his rival, Bernhard Reich: "We had only been underway a few minutes... when Asja waved to us from the side of the street, Reich got out and walked the short remaining distance to the hotel, we took the sleigh" (9). When Benjamin leaves Moscow on 1 February 1927, the narrative breaks off not with his actual departure from the city but with his final farewell from Asja:

I asked her to hail a sleigh. As I was about to get in, having said goodbye to her one more time, I invited her to ride to the corner of Tverskaia with me. I dropped her off there, and as the sleigh was already pulling away, I once again drew her hand to my lips, right in the middle of the street. She stood there a long time, waving. I waved back from the sleigh. At first she seemed to turn around as she walked away, then I lost sight of her. Holding my large suitcase on my knees, I rode through the twilit streets to the station in tears. (121)

In addition, most of the initial entries begin with a reference to her. 8 December: "Asja dropped by in the morning" (12); 9 December: "Asja again came by in the morning" (14); 10 December: "We went to see Asja in the morning" (16);

12 December: "Reich took a walk with Asja in the morning" (19); 14 December (written on the 15th): "I shall not see Asja today" (21); 15 December: "Reich stepped out briefly after he got up and I hoped I would be able to greet Asja in private. But she didn't turn up" (25); 16 December: "I was writing my diary and had given up hope that Asja would stop by. Then she knocked. As she entered the room, I wanted to kiss her. As usual, it proved unsuccessful" (27). There can be no mistaking that Asja was the primary motivation in Benjamin's coming to Moscow, that she did not reciprocate his feelings and that she has been subsequently vilified in German scholarship because of it.⁹

MOSCOW BELIEVES IN TEARS

There is a striking similarity between the representations of the figures in the *Maitreyi* saga and those of Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis in their albeit less dueling autobiographical writings. Just as Eliade's first description of Maitreyi is rather unflattering, emphasizing her ugliness and lack of femininity, when Benjamin first catches sight of the object of his affections, "Asja did not look beautiful, wild beneath her Russian fur hat, her face somewhat puffy from all the time she had spent bedridden" (9). In the sketch he makes of their relationship on 20 December, Benjamin admits that "on three or four occasions, I directly or indirectly avoided sharing a future with her" (35) because of his "fear of those hostile elements in her which only now do I feel I can confront" (35) and concludes with "no idea whether I could even now bear living with her, given her astonishing hardness and, despite all her sweetness, her lovelessness" (35), which, in light of the fact the sketch begins with the dejected statement that "I find myself facing an almost impregnable fortress" (34), takes on a self-justifying air, as if to say "I can't have her but she's not really worth having anyway." As in the case of

Eliade's protagonist, there is a curious discrepancy between Benjamin's rather unflattering portrayal of his alleged object of desire and the passions she is claimed to enflame. In both cases, the protagonists make much of the unique quality of this passion. Not only does Benjamin "g[e]t a great deal of pleasure out of the way she was unpacking my suitcases and tidying up my things" (19), he "cannot remember a woman granting gazes or kisses this long" (35) and goes on to describe the way Asja "grabbed hold of me violently and ran her hands through my hair" (35). Benjamin's tale is given similarly tragic dimensions within a similar framework of an educational voyage.⁹² Just as Eliade must leave India, so too must Benjamin leave Moscow, and he responds to the cruelty of the fates in the same way, with a passionate outburst, as though despair and tears offered proof of the sincerity and the strength of their feelings. In contrast to Alain's histrionics, however, Benjamin's tears as he rides "through the twilight streets to the station" (121) are tastefully understated. Thus, despite differences in genre and circumstance, Eliade and Benjamin construct their female love-interests and the nature and course of their relationships in remarkably similar fashion.

While Eliade and Benjamin write about voyages of discovery, during which the self emerges from necessarily short-lived, intense and doomed contact with a mythical goddess-type creature, Lacis and Devi too chart courses similar in bend, bank and current. More specifically, Devi's *It Does Not Die* resembles the Russian memoir which Lacis put together and reworked herself, and not the German *A Revolutionary by Profession* assembled by Brenner, as it is the former which reflects Lacis's own priorities.⁹³ *The Red Carnation*, unlike *A Revolutionary by Profession* but like *It Does Not Die*, is the literary endeavor of an intellectual woman, and radiates scholarly interest. Just as Devi follows and includes details about Eliade's later career

in the West, Lacia reports on the archives devoted to Benjamin's writings in Potsdam and Frankfurt, and includes one of the poems Brecht wrote in memory of Benjamin's suicide at the Franco-Spanish border during his flight from the Nazis. The following statement of Devi's could be attributed to either of them: "I am very conscious of my name and fame. If someone tells me, 'I read a report of your speech,' I at once get the paper to have a look at it. If any paper criticizes me, I am very upset" (216).⁹⁴

When these intellectual women come to write their own stories, similar shapes and figures emerge. Just as Maitreyi's Mircea does not attract her attention until they are introduced, Lacia recounts that it is not she who notices Benjamin but vice versa: "For around two weeks now I've been watching this woman in a long white dress and her long-legged daughter in her green one: you don't walk across the piazza, you float!" (RC, 84). Just as Mircea makes a favorable impression on the heroine of Maitreyi's tale as a well-mannered Western intellectual, so too does Benjamin on Asja:

[H]e explained to the shopkeeper what I wanted.

I bought up most of the small packages and the stranger didn't leave.

He had very thick, dark hair, and thick glasses with golden rims that flashed with his every movement, sparkling in the sun.

'Permit me to introduce myself: Dr. Walter Benjamin.'

I gave my name and he offered to carry my packages home, but they immediately fell out of his hands. We both began to laugh.

Benjamin looked elegant, he was wearing expensive striped trousers.

'Probably from a rich bourgeois family,' I decided. We walked, and enjoyed a lively discussion. (RC, 83)⁹⁵

The role that husbands and lovers play in these two women's lives is also similar. Both women find great support and happiness in old age with their

husbands, and both pay homage to these men in their texts. Lacia dedicates *The Red Carnation* to Reich and Devi writes: "in order to complete the story I have to say something about my husband too, because I am incomplete without him" (168). However, despite these strong bonds, both women are also captured by their memories of previous involvements with men of scholarship, Devi admittedly more so than Lacia. Unlike Devi's "story of two young people,... [t]he sudden and abrupt ending of an early love" (245), Lacia offers the anecdote of two people, both married with children, who enjoy a holiday romance and develop a friendship based on common intellectual and ideological pursuits. Lacia can praise Benjamin as "elegant" and admire his "exceptional knowledge of contemporary French literature and of French, of which he was no less a master than of German" (RC, 84) but she never refers to the possibility of a serious relationship with him. Devi, on the other hand, did have such expectations and thus tries to condemn Eliade. However, even the reference to Eliade's morally questionable behavior during the war which she is careful to include is marred by the wistful confession of her desire to hear from him:

'He has not actually died, but he is dead to us. He had gone over to the fascists.' 'Has he?' I chuckled. I could see him standing there, with a butterfly moustache like Hitler's, opening the gas-chamber. It suited him well. He is certainly competent in the job. Has he not sent me there repeatedly by refusing steadfastly to respond to my call? (202)

If Devi's Mircea is, as Sparioso claims, "a cold-blooded, rational Westerner who spends his life (and his passion) buried in books" (357), it is perhaps not only a reflection of Devi's reading her own ideological biases into a foreign culture. Lacia comes from a different culture and should be projecting different biases into her text and yet her portrayal of Benjamin bears a

remarkable resemblance to Devi's of Mircea, with the important exceptions that she felt herself neither jilted nor subsequently vilified, and that she did not have access to the text Benjamin had written about his visit to her.

The motor driving these two autobiographical projects also revs along on similar fuel: the evolving relation of text and truth against the background of a broken family. As young girls, both Devi and Lacis take on with pride the ideological burdens their well-intentioned fathers inflict on them, incorporating them as the cornerstone of their identities. Both mention the way in which they were encouraged as children to learn, that their fathers not only provided them with books but also supported their efforts at acquiring an education.⁹⁶ Lacis mentions it in both of her memoirs:

Although ours was a difficult life, Father felt that I needed to receive a good education. Mama was against it, but he insisted. (RC, 17)

Father took care that I studied and absorbed knowledge. Once he drove to Ligatne, to a relative whose sons had university educations. Father wanted to know which secondary school in Riga was the best. They recommended - Kenins. I remember my father placing a book on my desk, *Woman and Socialism*, by August Bebel: 'Read it, it's a useful book.' (RP, 13)⁹⁷

Devi's father also had educational ambitions for his daughter: "Father saw such philosophic ideas reflected in my poems that he was certain in due time I would be either a great philosopher or a great poet" (IDND, 23). She reports his telling her mother that their daughter "will have to go out in the world - she must learn to mix with people. She will not stay at home like you. Why, if she exerts herself a little, she will one day become another Sarojini Naidu" (IDND, 29).⁹⁸ Both sets of parents are described as having "different" (RP, 9),

"opposite" (IDND, 22) characters. Just as both fathers are progressive and learned, both mothers are beautiful, talented and subservient. Laci's:

Mother embodied her day's conception of female beauty - of medium height, dainty hands and feet, a face of milk and blood, large blue eyes and the long, luxurious, greenish blond hair of a mermaid... Actually Mother was very talented. She had a beautiful voice, a high soprano. She liked to sing folksongs, as well as church hymns: "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," "Oh Head, Full of Blood and Wounds." Developing her voice - that was out of the question, and even singing in the choir was almost impossible; we lived far away. (RP, 10-11)

Devi's mother is described as "exquisitely beautiful in 1930; tall and erect, she moved like a shaft of moonbeam in our house... [and] carried in her heart kindness and love like a bowl full of nectar" (22). She is:

like that spreading tree. She had spread a cool shadow over my father's path, to take away his fatigue. She wanted nothing for herself, she kept him encircled by the warmth of her love, untiring service and constant sacrifice of all personal comforts. (55)

Neither marriage is reported as being particularly happy. Laci's father is "not home often. But when he was, there were often fights and tears" (RP, 11), while her mother:

suffered her bitter fate in silence, as that was what she thought life was - a valley of darkness, of suffering and hardships. The worse one's lot on this sinful earth, the better the one which awaited us in heaven. When I directed Ibsen's *Ghosts* in Valmiera, Mrs. Alving's opinions and errors before her enlightenment were very familiar to me. (RP, 11)

Both marriages end in divorce, the children staying with their mothers. While Lacis refers to it only briefly in the German memoir and obliquely in the Russian, Devi describes the trauma of the break:

Exactly eleven years after Rama came to us, that is twelve years after Mircea's departure, my mother's life became a shambles. The decay that started ten years ago slowly and steadily undermined the edifice on which a family is built.... In spite of her unwavering loyalty to her husband, her constant endeavour to cover up his faults, she could only postpone the ultimate collapse that happened in 1941. Father left her with her four minor children to fend for herself. Our beautiful home that had floated on the crest of poetry and philosophy crashed on the rugged rocks of a mundane world. (196)

Both daughters also refer to the sorry states in which their mothers die. Devi's mother is "crushed in body and mind" (207); Lacis's is "helpless, alone" (RC, 50).

Against the rather bleak backdrop of these dutiful, suffering, undesired female role models, the daughters turn for inspiration and strength to the texts with which their fathers found satisfaction. These familial constellations account for the otherwise puzzling struggles which give shape to both their lives and their texts. Why did it take Devi 42 years to be able to read Eliade's story? What was the attraction of the communist ideology for Lacis and why was she seemingly blind to the system's obvious inequities, inefficiencies and cruelties? The answer in both cases can be located in a crisis in textuality.

Just as Devi is horrified when she finally brings herself to discover the "mask of truth" Eliade's story wears, Lacis also sets out to equate texts with the Truth, to be revered, venerated and worshipped, and she too runs up

against the equally cold, reflective brick wall of alterity. She becomes just as caught up and bogged down in her relation with communist doctrine as Devi does with Eliade's story. It is the socio-cultural aspects of revolutionary activities which attract Lacis; she sees them as part and parcel of Western philosophy and culture:

Being friends with Leons Paegles and his friends opened my eyes to much. I gradually became a politically engaged member of their circle. It was from Daige, a man of wide-ranging education, that I first heard the name of Vladimir Soloviev and other philosophers. Daige was very nice to me, gave me literature to teach. Thanks to his friendship with the well-known collector Tshukin, I had the opportunity to become acquainted with his valuable collection of Western European art: the paintings of Gauguin, Van Gogh, Picasso. (RC, 36)

This first reference in the Russian memoir to the political tenets which were to become her guiding principles demonstrates the way Lacis associates communist engagement with learning and art. At the time, Lacis was in her twenties, studying abroad in Russia and experiencing the revolution first-hand. She formulates the choice she saw facing her at that time as follows:

The students from Komisarevsky's studio were also divided into two groups: one for the Soviets, the other - against. The former insisted on an immediate change in repertoire, concentrating on new plays which were close to the masses and which they could understand, representing the interests of the revolution; the others - that a change wasn't necessary, that the revolution, so they said, would soon be over. We, the *believers* in the Soviet government, went to factories, handing out free tickets to shows, organized circles and workers' clubs. (RC, 43, italics added)

The granddaughter of serfs and daughter of a staunch socialist, Lacis was innately aware of the injustices of the imperial class system, an awareness which was fostered further in her theater circle. That she formulates her relation to the Soviet government in terms of "belief" is noteworthy. It served the function of a religion, providing her with a way of giving life meaning and purpose: "People committed to the revolution, who gave their own lives for the happiness of the people, became my examples, my ideal" (RC, 43). Her early condemnation of Christian hypocrisy lies not in the fact that it demands suffering but rather that it offers no material prospects for that suffering and that it occupies a power base which acts against the simple folk: "The protestant religion held great sway over the consciences of simple Latvians, especially the women. This opium also poisoned my mother. Her life was tepid and monotonous" (RP, 10). Religion is her mother's "last joy and hope" (RP, 11), a function Lacis judges harshly. Its utopian vision is otherworldly, useless; it only serves to encourage and protract her mother's tepid and monotonous existence. God, for Lacis, as for Lou Andreas-Salomé and Simone de Beauvoir, is decidedly dead:

As a high school student, I wanted to 'reeducate' Mother. If she sang one of her endlessly long church hymns, I would say, 'Why do you sing those songs and pray? God doesn't exist, He isn't in Heaven.' And I made an effort to explain to her the origin of the world. (RP, 11)

And the new gods are to be of the *homines sovietici*, the new Soviet people.⁹⁹

Lacis's writings offer us an opportunity to reflect on the role of textual models in the negotiation of personal and state ideology. How was it possible to have lived in what has come to be recognized as one of history's most brutal dictatorships without experiencing it as such, without traces of critique or disillusionment seeping in through the cracks of one's memoir,

especially if that memoir was being published in the West? As will be discussed in the next chapter, Nadezhda Mandel'shtam composed her memoirs at approximately the same time as Lacis - *Hope Against Hope* came out in 1970 in Paris, *A Revolutionary by Profession* in 1971 in Munich. If Lacis had been so inclined, the time was ripe for stories about "how it had really been" to come out. And yet Lacis was not so inclined. Like the diary of Stepan Podlubnyj, the son of a Ukrainian kulak who came to Moscow in 1931 to become a New Soviet Man, Lacis's memoirs reveal how the tenets of the communist ideology could positively affect identity formation. In Lacis's case, they even act as a crutch with which to hobble through totalitarian perversion of that ideology.

In his introduction to Podlubnyj's diary, Hellbeck compares it with contemporary articles from *Pravda*, and identifies aspects of the Soviet ideology which appear in both, that is, which Podlubnyj had made his own.¹⁰⁰ Extending this comparison to Lacis's memoirs draws attention to the Soviet-specific ideals which are also present or implicit in her writing and which Hellbeck identifies as encouraging the participation and loyalty of a certain profile of young people. Becoming a *homo sovieticus* involved both "working on oneself and for society" (TaM, 37), that is, it implies a certain dissatisfaction with both oneself and one's surroundings, a certain conviction that change is both necessary and possible.¹⁰¹ Both Podlubnyj and Lacis share a respect and reverence for the kind of learning and culture which aim at self-improvement, not only for themselves but for the "simple folk," the workers, etc. Lacis's priority was didactic in this sense: "we strove to find a way to the hearts of the people in order to bring them closer to the revolution, to an understanding of how complicated the world we lived in was" (RC, 101). In his capacity as "Brigadier" of a section of printers and

Komsomol representative, Podlubnyj was also convinced that he must educate his subordinates, to get them to realize "that work went more smoothly when it was carried out in the *proper spirit*" (TaM, 37, italics added). Both Podlubnyj and Lacis turn to texts in their search for examples and motivation, and judge texts and art in general by its ability to educate, to provide answers. Lacis sees the function of the theater in these terms: "People came to study and comprehend life" (RC, 44); Podlubnyj looks to literature, museums and theater "once again seeking guidance for his thinking" (TaM, 39), and expresses disappointment in Gorky's *The Life of Klim Samgin* when it doesn't provide him with a clear direction for his own thinking. Both he and Lacis dream of completing higher studies - Podlubnyj in medicine; Lacis in the theater; and, like the state, both keep scrupulous track of their progress on the way to these goals. Just as "Stepan's own yearly reports contain a critical review of his work at the factory and his private studies, as well as his 'cultural growth'" (TaM, 41), Lacis offers such summaries as:

The year I'd spent in Riga hadn't been a waste. It had been very rewarding creatively: discussions and debates about the workers' theater, appearances in the press, shows for adults, founding the children's section... And the most important task - the political enlightenment of the workers - which I fulfilled with all my strength. (RC, 110)

One can thus see that the ideal expressed in both Podlubnyj's and Lacis's writing is: "an ideal of human development: the New Soviet Person, who through 'cultural' work works for the state and at the same time towards their own emancipation" (TaM, 41).

Podlubnyj is eventually forced to confront the senseless reality of Soviet terror when his mother is arrested in 1937. While there is little in

Lacis's writing to indicate that she similarly assimilated the extent of Soviet brutality, there are indications that censorship, whether by her Soviet editors, herself or both, was likely a factor. The name Stalin is singularly lacking in her memoirs, not mentioned once in either text, and it is not a coincidence that the years glossed in her writing are precisely those of his reign. Further, there is an identifiable turning point in *The Red Carnation* with respect to Lacis's relation with the Soviet state. In the late 1920s when the RAPP (Proletarian Writers Union) board of directors and the members of its theater section, to which she belonged, diverge: "a majority of the members of the theater section left RAPP, forming a new section for proletarian theater" (RC, 123) and embittered infighting results. The RAPP decision marks the end of Lacis's overtly political engagement. She turns her attention to film, accepts an assignment in Berlin as Soviet cultural attaché, and when she returns to Moscow, is only interested in aiding German refugees fleeing the fascists. After the war she distances herself completely from earlier propaganda work and immerses herself in provincial theater.

A different interpretation of her silence is provoked by a notable irregularity in the numbering of the chapters. Chapter 14 ends with an anecdote illustrating the favor her work had found with Lunacharsky:

In 1933, I was lucky enough to become acquainted with Anatoly Vasilievich Lunacharsky... In those years the newspaper *Proletarian Revolution* appeared, which sometimes carried my articles. Somehow Anatoly Vasilievich was given my sketch "Differentiations among the German Intelligentsia" to review. "Article discussed. Fit to print. A. Lunacharsky" he wrote in a corner. The article was published. (RC, 150)

Chapter 15 begins some fifteen years later:

In January 1948, I was offered the position of director at the Russian Theater in Karagandin. But I wasn't to work there long: an unexpected letter arrived from Riga from Daga, asking me to come to her. (RC, 154)

Between these two chapters is Chapter 22, in which the events of the intervening years are summarized in a little over four pages (150-54). Its tone and emphasis hint at an inner break that Lacis made with those administering the Soviet system. Usually Lacis portrays herself as being convinced, and convincing others, of the necessity of new assignments. "I returned to Latvia [in 1925] more convinced than ever of the rightness of my revolutionary convictions, in the necessity of founding a political theater in my home country" (RC, 96) is a comment typical of the pre-WWII years. In Chapter 22, however, Lacis makes a point of emphasizing that she has no choice but to accept the two positions she is offered. First, she is approached by the Central Committee of the Party:

'We have a huge request: help us build up the Latvian Theater "*Skatuve*" [Scene].' Although I was swamped at the time - family, work in MORT [the International Union of Revolutionary Theaters], doctoral studies at GITIS [the State Institute of Theater Arts in Moscow], it wasn't possible to refuse. (RC, 150)

Her reaction to being "offered" the position of artistic director in a Latvian collective theater by the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic's Narkompros (Commissariat for Education) is similar:

The seat of the theater was Smolensk. But I also had work and obligations in Moscow, so I declined.
'But you don't necessarily have to live in Smolensk the entire time,' they told me. 'Put together the repertoire for the season, appoint an

assistant and drop in from time to time to make sure your concept is being carried out. And, of course, attend the dress rehearsal.'

I had to agree. (RC, 152)

Then:

1937. Reich and I were separated for a long time. For the term of ten years I led an amateur group in Khazakhstan.... In the summer of 1941, I lost touch with Reich. (RC, 153-54)

One is left to speculate whether chapters 15-21 originally covered this critical time in more depth and, if so, what became of them. In the chapter 15 included in *The Red Carnation*, the final chapter which begins in 1948 and ends with Reich's death in 1972, Lacis's life returns to its "normal" course on conviction:

Before my return to Karaganda I was walking along some street, sunk in my own thoughts. Unexpectedly a tall man barred my way.

'Anna Lacis?'

'Yes.'

In front of me stood Andrejs Upits.

'You're alive?'

'As you can see,' I smiled sadly. 'I'm just about to leave for Karaganda where I'm working as a director.'

'Not under any circumstances!' he protested. 'We need our directors here. Come to my dacha tomorrow.'

So there I was in Yurmal. Upits tore off a clean sheet of paper: 'Sit down and write an official request: You want to stay in Latvia and work here.' He spoke in a tone that brooked no objections.

'What are you talking about! I've already agreed to work in Karaganda. I've stayed here too long as it is.'

Upits set about convincing me to stay, for so long and with such fervor that I stayed. (RC, 155)

The emphasis in the last chapter on her private and theatrical accomplishments as well as the irregularity in chapter numbering point to a subtle but pronounced shift in her allegiance, which is also a subtle but pronounced critique of what became of Soviet ideology.

Soviet doctrine thus proved as disappointing to Lacis as Devi found Eliade's novel to be when she could finally bring herself to read it. Youthful enamourment gives way in both cases to disillusionment with later deeds done by the paramour. Lacis is attracted to the early Soviet tenets. In her opinion, Marx, Engels and Lenin wrote with wisdom and astuteness; there was much to be learned from them. Anyone recognizing the values of these texts, such as Reich, was worthy of admiration: "Reich knew the classical works of Marxist-Leninism backwards and forwards" (RC, 112); those that didn't, the doubters and unbelievers, such as Benjamin, came in for heavy debate. While Devi had the luxury of being able to object to the crassness with which Eliade portrayed what had been for her a beautiful reality, it nevertheless took her a long time to be able to do so. Lacis's silence and her directorial activity are the only indication we have that she experienced the reality resulting from the implementation of her beautiful texts, the classics of Marxist-Leninism, as anything less than ideal.

PART 3 - WRITING UP...

ATALIA: the widow of a king could also gain power. The daughter of King Ahab of Israel, married to Joram of Judea. She tried to introduce the cult of the tyrannical Baal in Jerusalem. After her son Ahasia fell, she seized power and ordered all Davidinians killed. Only her grandson Joash escaped, and six years later (840 BC) toppled her (2 Kings, 11)
(*Reclams Bibel Lexikon*)

Is black an appropriate colour for literary widows? Some literary biographers have tended to think so, those who have maligned or satirized women like Florence Hardy and Sonya Tolstoy, making them look ridiculous for their "willingness to be attached, Nora Barnacle-like, to the underside of an author's career; and then, when that career is over, to submit herself to the unrewarded task of preserving that career in the public imagination" (Rifkind, 532). However, there are also literary widows who have been painted in much brighter hues. In the case of Soviet Russia in particular, where people could, as Nadezhda Mandel'shtam noted, "be killed for poetry - a sign of unparalleled respect - because they are still capable of living by it" (23),¹⁰² the inclination, as Beth Holmgren and Sarah Pratt have argued, was for women to function, and be revered, as guardians of the domestic and literary spheres, as "angels in the Stalinist house." The following two chapters will look at two such angels, one from each side of the former Iron Curtain, both of whom known for their authoritative biographies of husbands they portray as tragic heroes. Not merely "a widow to culture" (Brodsky, 154), Nadezhda Mandel'shtam has been hailed as "the most heroic literary widow in modern history" (Rifkind, 544) for saving her husband's poetry from almost certain destruction by acting as a living library through the dark years of Stalinism and then writing it out when it was possible, if not safe, to do so. The efforts, literary and otherwise, of another notable Slavic widow, the Hungarian-born Romola Nijinsky, to engage in the sorry fate of her schizophrenic husband, Vaslav, the meteoric star of the Ballets Russes in the first decades of this century, may have been comparably heroic, but in the international beau monde of the ballet they have been decidedly less well-received. As in the previous two parts, it is instructive to compare the mythologizing means by which these two women create themselves and

their significant others, in this case as part of cultural couples. While their methods can be shown to run parallel, again noteworthy differences in attitudes towards and valuations of others can be discerned.

CHAPTER V NADEZHDA MANDEL'SHTAM

Diese Vorsehung ist über meinem
Schicksal, dass ich ohne Vorsicht sein
muss.

Und wer unter Menschen nicht
verschmachten will, muss lernen, aus
allen Gläsern zu trinken; und wer
unter Menschen rein bleiben will,
muss verstehn, sich auch mit
schmutzigem Wasser zu waschen.

Und also sprach ich oft mir zum
Troste: 'Wohlan! Wohlauf! Altes Herz!
Ein Unglück missrieth dir: genieße
diess als dein - Glück!'

Von der Menschen-Klugheit,
*Zarathustra*¹⁰⁵

Nadezhda Iakovlevna Khazina and Osip Emilovich Mandel'shtam met on May Day 1919, in the Junk Shop, the artsy drinking establishment in civil war-torn Kiev which the nineteen year old Nadezhda and her avant-garde painting companions habitually frequented. The poet, eight years her senior, was passing through town on his way to the Crimea, and the two, as Nadezhda Mandel'shtam tells it, "at once took up with each other as though it were the most natural thing in the world" (28). And why not? They had much in common. Both came from pampered Jewish bourgeois backgrounds. Osip's father had been so successful a leather merchant that he was able, soon after Osip's birth,¹⁰⁴ to move the family from Warsaw to St. Petersburg; his mother was a cultured lady who taught piano. Nadezhda's father had "completed a degree in mathematics,... finished law school in several months... staggering his professors with his brilliance" (TK, 81; cited in Holmgren/a, 92) and moved the family from Saratov to Kiev; her mother was among the first wave of Russian women-doctors. Osip and Nadezhda were equally well-versed in European ways, history and languages from their education and youthful travels. Nadezhda's family had made several trips to

Europe and she had been sent to a girls' school "with a 'male' (that is, implicitly more difficult) curriculum that required such impressive subjects as Latin" (Holmgren/a, 89) - even as an octogenarian, she remained fluent in English, German and French. Osip also knew Europe well, having studied in Paris in 1908, in Heidelberg the following year and then travelling through Italy before returning to studies in Romance and German Philology in St. Petersburg. In 1913, Osip's first book of poetry, *Kamen'* (*Stone*) appeared in *Appolon*, "one of the elegant journals of art and literature that adorned the revival of Russian taste around the turn of the century" (Brown, xi). *Appolon* was the forum of a group of young poets who called themselves Acmeists to reflect their constructively classicist aspirations and their rejection of Symbolist mysticism, on the one hand, and the revolutionary, experimental pyrotechnics of Mayakovsky's Futurists, on the other. Led by Nikolei Gumilev and his wife Anna Akhmatova, their apolitical, historical stance was to prove untimely. Gumilev was shot by the Cheka in 1921; Akhmatova was first "unofficially" forced into "inner exile" and later openly denounced in the 1946 Zhdanov Report but nonetheless permitted to expire naturally, which she did in 1966. Osip was less fortunate.

Nadezhda Mandel'shtam attributes the naturalness of her so spontaneously taking up with Osip to their "lightheadedness and a sense of doom" (28), a shared sensibility which made it possible for them to not only survive but enjoy their togetherness through the next two decades of chaos and destruction. Their years together saw them in all but the far corners of the Soviet Union, scrambling to maintain the dignity of their existence as the Stalinist hammer and sickle descended: "We used to think of arriving in a new town as a kind of game. We had passed through Moscow, Rostov, Baku, Batumi, and Tiflis, and now, going in the reverse direction, Novorossisk,

Rostov, and Kharkov. We seemed to spend all our lives coming to strange cities, and I went on doing it without M. - but then it was no longer a game" (95). Although their relationship began in May 1919, they had only a short time together before Osip had to leave. Nadezhda "had promised him I would come down to the Crimea with the Ehrenburgs, but with all the bloodshed in the streets outside I just couldn't bring myself to move" (35). It was only a year and a half later, with the end of the civil war, that Osip was able to return to Kiev to seek her out and take her away with him, thus beginning their great "wander years," as Maitreyi Devi might have called them had she been called on to chronicle their fate and not Tagore's. At some point during the following eighteen and a half years, the Soviet bureaucracy required a marriage certificate of them, as it had of Asja Lacis and Bernard Reich, and so they too acquired one: "Before buying a ticket for a 'special' coach,... we had to pay a visit to the Register Office to obtain a marriage certificate. As soon as we arrived in Moscow we lost it. I am not even sure, in fact, that we got it on that particular occasion" (97). They attached as little importance to marriage as Lacis and Reich did, considering themselves bound by greater forces, forces which whisked them about like autumnal leaves in a forest of nightmares.

March 1921. After a brief stay in Moscow, Nadezhda and Osip set off on an extended trip to the Caucasus which is to last a little over a year. Upon their return to Moscow the next summer, Osip's second book of poetry, *Tristia*, is published and they are granted a room in Herzen House, the infamous headquarters of the Writers' Union on Tverskoi Boulevard where those currying the regime's favor (and those wanted for surveillance) were housed. They then spend the summer on the Crimea where Osip writes the autobiographical *Shum Vremeni (The Noise of Time)*. As intrigues against Osip

worsen, they move to Leningrad and try to support themselves with odd jobs translating and editing. As in the case of Beauvoir and Sartre, Clarence Brown surmises that Nadezhda provided more assistance to Osip than can ever be ascertained with any certainty:

She translated and edited numerous books - probably, I should think, under a pseudonym. At any rate, it would be impossible to determine what she translated, for those chores were no sooner finished than forgotten. She even collaborated with Mandelstam on many of the works, including those in verse, that carried his name as translator... It must surely have been Nadezhda Yakovlevna who was mainly responsible for translating things like Upton Sinclair's *Machine* or editing the novels of Captain Mayne Reid for she knew English far better than her husband, but when I asked her this she waved the question away with a gesture of distaste: 'Who knows? What *didn't* we translate?' (vii, italics in original)

Only in 1926, when Nadezhda contracts TB and spends the winter in Yalta, does Osip have to work on translations on his own, to pay for the sanitarium. 1928, the year Stalin assumes power, marks the pinnacle of Osip's commercial success in the Soviet Union. Thanks to the patronage of Bukharin, his second autobiographical story, *Egipskaya Marka (Egyptian Stamp)* appears, as do a collected edition of his poems, a volume of collected essays *On Poetry* and, more importantly, several not unfavorable reviews. In 1930, Mayakovsky, the yellow-coated flame of the revolution, snuffs himself, or is snuffed, out and Osip and Nadezhda go on a six-month *Journey to Armenia*, which results in a poetry collection that he is later pressured to denounce. Upon their return, Osip's poems take on a more politically critical tone. In 1933, after returning from a summer of feeling assaulted by the

starvation on the Crimea, he writes the infamous poem his widow refers to as "Kremlin's Mountaineer" and, whether carelessly or defiantly, recites it in the presence of "friends":

We live, deaf to the land beneath us,
Ten steps away no one hears our speeches

But where there's so much as half a conversation
The Kremlin's mountaineer will get his mention.
(an earlier version reads: All we hear is the Kremlin mountaineer,
The murderer and peasant-slayer.)

His fingers are fat as grubs
And the words, final as lead weights, fall from his lips,

His cockroach whiskers leer
And his boottops gleam.

Around him a rabble of thin-necked leaders -
fawning half-men for him to play with.

They whinny, purr or whine
As he prates and points a finger,

One by one forging his laws, to be flung
Like horseshoes at the head, eye or groin.

And every killing is a treat
For the broad-chested Ossete. (HaH, 13)

In 1934, the year of the First Congress of Soviet Writers and the assassination of Kirov, Osip is arrested for the first time. Again thanks to Bukharin's intervention, he is saved and released into three years of exile in Voronezh, after which they return to Moscow to beg for work and lodgings. In April 1938, they are offered a place in a rest-home for writers by the secretary of the Writers' Union, and it is from there that Osip is arrested for a second time and sent to a Siberian grave, putting an end to, at least, his nightmares.

For the first two dozen of her subsequent years alone, Nadezhda kept her politically-suspect self alive through the purges, the Great Patriotic War, and the pestilent post-war years, vigilantly maintaining the low profile of a provincial speck of dust in order to survive long enough to

transcribe her husband's entire oeuvre from memory. She supported herself by teaching English at various teachers' colleges and, in 1956, completed a doctorate in English philology with Zhirmunsky on "Functions of the Accusative Case on the Basis of Materials Drawn from Anglo-Saxon Poetic Monuments." Permission granted her in 1964 to live in Moscow, where she remained until her death in 1980, provided her with the long-awaited opportunity to finally realize her life's task of "tell[ing] the story of what happened to us" (15). *Vospominanya* (Memoirs) and *Vtoraya Kniga* (Second Book) were smuggled to the West, where they were published by the YMCA Press in 1970 and 1972, and immediately translated into English as *Hope against Hope* (1970) and *Hope Abandoned* (1974).

Nadezhda's sharp wit and acidic, irreverent style initially raised the ire of many in the Soviet literary establishment used to hagiography. As Carl Proffer notes in his 1987 *Widows of Russia*, in the Russian tradition of memoir-writing:

there is little of the rough and tumble of Western memoirs and diaries; a Russian Anais Nin would cause cramps; Harry Truman's bluntness and language would be totally unacceptable. Art is mentally capitalized, sex does not exist. And unpleasant historical events are glossed over or not mentioned. (35)

Typical is the following account offered by a close friend of the Mandel'shtams in their final years together:

Surely it is rare to find such a marriage, such understanding, such spiritual kinship. Nadezhda Iakovlevna was equal to her husband in intelligence, education, and her enormous spiritual strength. I never heard her complain, I never saw her irritated or depressed. She was always even-tempered, outwardly calm. Without a doubt she was Osip

Emil'evitch's moral support.... His difficult, tragic fate became hers. She took this cross on herself as if there were no other way. (Shtempel', 230)

Nadezhda Iakovlevna herself was much harsher in accounts of her contemporaries. Unseemly comments in her memoirs about such Russian literary icons as her close friend, the regal and respected Anna Akhmatova, created a furor. Instead of appropriately humble worship, Nadezhda saw fit to use her memoirs to correct and criticize Akhmatova in no uncertain terms: "Akhmatova is wrong when she says that this was said about [the well-known critic, translator and author of children's books] Kornei Chukovski - M. would never have wasted such a splendid quip on him" (389). Akhmatova's cultivation of feminine "cults" and wiles comes under heavy criticism: "What Akhmatova has to say is also not completely reliable, given her cult of love" (290); as does her temperament in her later years:

In her old age she was impervious to argument and would simply take refuge in her own authority, brooking no challenge to it: 'What are you trying to tell me? I know.' The slightest attempt to contradict provoked a storm of furious indignation. 'Annush, you're like an angry cat,' I used to say to her, whereupon she would erupt in resounding fury, and there was nothing to do but give in. (499);

In her last years Akhmatova 'put on her phonograph record' for each visitor, that is, told him or her the story of Acmeism and her own life, hoping they would commit it to memory and pass it on in the only permissible version - her own. (511)

Appreciative as they might have been of the fact that she had preserved her husband's poetry,¹⁰⁵ many within the Soviet literary community initially found it difficult to forgive Nadezhda these scathing comments and

inappropriate characterizations. Anti-memoirs, such as those of Lidiia Chukovskaia, an influential literary critic and daughter of the above-mentioned Kornei, were published in an unsuccessful attempt to throw her unconscionably brash assertions into disrepute. However, with time and glasnost, the rancor has subsided. Not only do Nadezdha Mandel'shtam's memoirs now receive universally high praise for what they convey about her husband (Althaus-Schönbucher) and the plight of women in Stalinist Russia (Holmgren, Pratt), not only has the romance of the relationship as she described it become part of literary legend (Rifkind, Margolina), Nadezhda Mandel'shtam has also begun to receive attention and praise as a writer in her own right (Isenberg, Robey). In the increasing number of works and collections devoted to Russian women writers since Barbara Heldt's influential 1987 *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature*, and to twentieth century Russian documentary writing such as the 1990 collection *Autobiographical Statements in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature* edited by Jane Gary Harris and the special volume of *a/b Autobiography Studies* (Fall 1996) devoted to Russian autobiography, it is rare for her memoirs to go without mention. Parallel to this inexorable rise to canonical status in Slavic Women Studies is the increasing amount of international attention Nadezhda is garnering, as evidenced by the inclusion of the Mandel'shtams among the 16 couples in the 1989 collection *Liebespaare*, which features the stories of Beauvoir and Sartre and Lou Andreas-Salomé and Rilke, among others.¹⁶⁶ As the following reading will attest, this status and the manner in which their relationship is now represented, is due in no small part to Nadezhda's own efforts.

WE

Beth Holmgren, who has written the only book-length study of Nadezhda Mandel'shtam to my knowledge, alludes to the fact that the Nadezhda in these memoirs is a construct, a literary creation.¹⁰⁷ She also reiterates Charles Isenberg's comparison of the Mandel'shtams' relationship with that of Sartre and Beauvoir. Isenberg supports his comparison with the following details of the "extraordinary" nature of the Mandel'shtam's relationship:

There is the casually undertaken commitment, the testing through extramarital affair, the refusal of children, the long separation with their letters and telegrams, the perpetual homelessness, the wrenching poverty and constant, grinding scutwork, the utter subservience of Nadezhda to Osip's gift - and then decades later the revelation of her own gift, and finally, the will evident in N.M.'s prose to make the marriage, in retrospect, both a counter society and a laboratory for understanding the spouses' own social formation. (195)

As far as it goes, Isenberg's comparison stands. However, it does not address the related issues of cultural context and relational representation, as the following reading does. While Beauvoir and N.M. both wrote their memoirs into frays, the nature of those frays and the aim or targetting of their writing was very different. Sartre was still alive when Beauvoir wrote each of the four volumes of her memoirs, and in writing them, as shown in Chapter II of this study, she was trying to resurrect what Sartre had once been and what they had once had. N.M.'s resurrection could proceed more smoothly as she did not have to battle the resurrectee's resistance at every turn. Like Lou Andreas-Salomé, Maitreyi Devi, Asja Lacis and not Beauvoir, N.M. wrote her memoirs at the end, not the prime, of her life, but unlike them, and like Romola Nijinsky who will be discussed next, she wrote as a

widow and witness to the Western tradition of high culture. Like Maitreyi Devi and not like Beauvoir, N.M. used her autobiographical writing as a counterbalance to what she knew to be the false testimonies of others and the silence of those with less courage. Like both Lou Andreas-Salomé and Maitreyi Devi, N.M. wrote out of a deeply spiritual sense of rightness, whereas Beauvoir's and Lacis's writings, as we have seen, were essentially hampered by a lack in this area.

What separates Nadezhda Mandel'shtam from the rest, however, is her finessing of the act of mutual creation. N.M. "repeatedly invokes the life story her husband imagined for her;"¹⁰⁸ she repeatedly represents herself as "the work of his own hands" (218), his "Europa," the wild horse and foolish young thing he tames (139, 146, 298). She never lets the reader forget her husband's influence on the formation of her thoughts and values, creating the impression that she has been more of a disciple than a wife: "From what M. told me I know that Tsygalski was quite exceptionally kind - a quality M. taught me to value above all others" (107).¹⁰⁹ This meekness in her attitude towards her husband is accentuated by her refusal to subordinate herself to or conform with any implicit literary and social contracts, such as those of genre and gender: refusing to write an hagiographic biography and flying in the face of the societal constraints on women.¹¹⁰ Osip commands her respect because of the world-view he imparts on her, because of the meaning with which he imbues her existence: "M. was perhaps the only person I knew who pondered the meaning of events, as opposed to their immediate consequence - the only concern of the older generation - or the garish manifestations of the 'new,' which was all the young thought about" (33). Without him, she would have been only one of many: "The only restraining influence on me came not from Dostoyevsky, but from M. It was he who stopped me from

drifting with the current and aping the latest fashion of our cruel and tawdry age" (305). Just as her life "really began when I met M." (211), when he dies, she too ceases to exist and only comes back to life again writing her "other self" (23):

In writing my first book, I excluded myself. This happened quite spontaneously, without any conscious intention: it was simply that I still did not exist. I came back to life only when my main task was at an end. (24)

In "her" memoirs, Nadezhda makes much of her task "to preserve M.'s verse and tell the story of what happened to us" (3, italics added), and of her goal "to justify M.'s life by means of preserving what constituted its meaning" (103). From beginning to end, the focus is ostensibly Osip. However, as critics do not tire of pointing out, she is included in this focus as she is, as she entitles one of the chapters of *Hope Against Hope*, his "Archive and Voice." She would not tolerate anyone else editing Osip's poems and has rather harsh words for those who interfered, such as her "devoted friend" (Holmgren, 1993b, 139) Nikolai Ivanovich Khardzhiev, whom she accuses of destroying rough drafts and variants of Mandel'shtam's poetry so that his editing would be consistent:

Future editors please note: the cycle to Bely is no longer to be found in the 'Codex Vaticanus' manuscript because it was ripped out and destroyed by Khardzhiev, the first 'well-wisher' to work on M's poetry. (446); He did nonetheless return the bulk of the manuscripts, keeping a few items for his 'collection' and destroying things on which he wished to change the date or replace with some other text not considered the final one by M. - as in the case of 'January 10'.... I am myself to blame, of course, for entrusting the papers to someone who

is mentally ill, but who except madmen ever did anything about the work of forbidden poets? I must say, too, that I have suffered less from Khardzhiev than from Rudakov, whose widow returned nothing at all. (447)

In the 1960s, when Osip had not yet been rehabilitated, "both Russian and non-Russian specialists made their way to N.M. and other widows as they were writing their essays and dissertations" (Proffer, 28) and N.M.

"vigorously developed this instruction on her own, providing introductions for those few verses that were being published, writing out textual commentaries for at least one M. scholar, and, in general, dispensing all the information she could about M. and his work" (Holmgren/b, 140). It is also to be noted that while she was quick to help, she was equally quick to criticize the way in which *her* M. was interpreted. As the following examples illustrate, N.M. set herself up as the final authority on his work. It was her domain and her word on him final:

It is preposterous to suggest, as somebody does, that he was talking about himself in the line: 'ashamed, strange fellow, of his poverty/Yevgeni breathes in petrol fumes and curses fate.'... (N)ever, for one second, could M. have thought of saying about himself that he 'cursed fate.' Together we went through all kinds of ordeals and endured terrible disasters. It sometimes happened that I cursed life and fate, and everything under the sun. But it was I who did so, not he. I never once heard him say such things. (91);

I would like to dispel another legend, the one put about by Ehrenburg to the effect that it was Voloshin who saved M. from Wrangel's jail. What actually happened was the following:... (106)^m

These repeated assertions of unique authority are supported by her first-hand knowledge of the production of the entire oeuvre, as she had been its stenographer: "The final versions were generally taken down by me to his dictation. As he dictated, he always grumbled because I could not at once memorize the whole poem at first hearing" (536). In offering details of the circumstances in which the dictation took place, she is not only substantiating her claims to authorial sovereignty. This also serves to draw attention away from the process of double creation at work in the memoirs, from the fact that it is a story that is being told, characters that are being created and memories that are being recreated. At the same time she claims to be his creation, she is creating herself and her life philosophy in telling his story and the story of his poetry.

The Osip in N.M.'s memoirs has become the "canonical image of the poet" (Freiden, 250). It is a believable, realistically human image, heroic in its humaneness. N.M.'s M. has a very concrete, consistent, many-sided character, one "full of energy, wiry, high-spirited, and talkative, reacting to the slightest thing" (111), one whose "blithe good spirits" never desert him (128), one whose "chirpy, free and easy self" closes his eyes to the future (383). This free spirit is given very human dimensions and passions:

There was nothing at all of the ascetic about M., and no end to the things he was fond of, or would have liked to have. He was always hankering after the south; he loved large rooms with plenty of light, a bottle of dry wine for dinner, a well-made suit (and not some monstrosity produced by the Moscow Tailoring Combine); and most of all, he loved well-baked bread rolls, something we always particularly longed for after our first experience of hunger. (159)

He is sociable, within limits:

He generally got on well with people - unless they were lackeys, hangers-on, or the sort of writers who, as he put it, produce 'things solved in advance' and 'help the judges to visit punishment on the doomed.' (289)

Not able to both answer his own conscience and the demands put on him by others, N.M. represents him as opting repeatedly for the former, paying no one else heed, neither his wife nor Soviet societal standards:

M. had a knack for making enemies by a blunt outspokenness which was quite needless in situations of this kind. (142);

I never had the slightest influence on M., and he would have thrown me over rather than his city. (118);

Everybody knows from his letters that he loved me, but he was infinitely exacting (yet indulgent at the same time) towards his 'you,' and if I had not agreed to become his shadow, ready to partake in his sense of joy, he would have had no difficulty in giving me up as well. (291)

His actions are decisive, vehement and always of his own accord:

Just as a few hours previously M. had been quite oblivious to me, he was now totally unmoved by Olga and her tears... I am still surprised even now at the ruthless way he chose between us and at the decisiveness with which he acted. (244);

M. tackled him [Berdiayev] with all the vehemence of his Jewish temperament... I wasn't actually present at this scene, but I had more than once borne the brunt of M's fury (sometimes for good cause, sometimes unjustly), and I can imagine how it must have frightened the unsuspecting Berdiayev. M. told me himself that he had never seen

Berdiayev have such a bad attack of his tic as during this conversation. (113)

Besides being decisive and of his own mind, N.M.'s M. is also decidedly despotic: "Nothing would have induced him to set foot in the place in the evening. Nor would he let me go anywhere by myself, so I never got to know the Moscow salons in those early days of the new imperial epoch then beginning" (141). He is also misunderstood: "Even Akhmatova did not completely understand him.... Nobody was closer to us than Akhmatova, and if she failed to grasp the forces that shaped M., then there is no point in expecting others to" (152-53). All of this set M. apart: "In the crowd of braggarts M. stood out like the proverbial white raven" (273).²² N. M.'s M. is heroic precisely in the strength of his individuality and in the tragic impossibility of being anything else, both utterly unique and one of millions who suffered for it.

In portraying her own character, N.M. adopts a similar strategy, alternating in her emphasis on the one and the many. There are many "we"s of which she feels part, which she uses to establish her identity as an intellectual woman, a Russian Jew, and, most importantly, the wife of a great poet.²³ Her first, most general "we" refers to her feminine side:

I remember the wretched things I hankered after, in common with all the women of my generation: a little place to call my own or, rather, a room in a communal apartment; a wad of rubles, at least enough to last the week through, a pair of shoes and some nice stockings. All of us, whether housewives or secretaries, were obsessed about stockings. Made out of real, but slightly spoiled silk, they never lasted for more than a day and, swallowing *our* tears, *we* all learned to mend ladders. And there was not one of *us* who did not weep real tears when the high heel - a legacy from a very different life - broke on her beloved

only pair of those foolish shoes which had once been designed for stepping from one's gracious residence into a waiting carriage, and no farther. (139-40, italics added)

Second, she belongs to a certain Russian class - the intelligentsia:

To appreciate M.'s poem about meeting again in Petersburg, one has to understand the situation that had arisen for people *like us* who belonged to the intelligentsia by birth and had grown up in an atmosphere of *our* own intimate small talk, bound together by common interests. (76, italics added);

At the present day - in 1970 - the little differences between our government and the handful of intellectuals who as a result of them land up in forced labour camps really spring from only one thing: we are forbidden to let out 'state secrets.' (102, italics added)

The Russian intelligentsia was, and to a great extent remains, a class one is born into, and it is the world *she* is born into:

The doctors who came to see my parents were intellectuals in the true sense of the word, as one could tell from the conversation at table and the books they took away with them to their homes deep in the country. (114-5)

As in the cases of Maitreyi Devi and Asja Lacis discussed in Part II, it is N.M.'s father who is given credit in her writing with having provided the initial impetus to her studies:

It was my father who once taught me to read by asking me a seemingly quite casual question: What kind of material was Chichikov's frock coat made of? For my father, as for the author, this was a telling detail which put the stamp of the age on Chichikov and showed him

up quite precisely, in an analytical way, for what he was: a semidandy who displayed his soul in his dress. (615)

I shall never forget the hush that fell on the audience when he [V. Ivanov] ascended the rostrum (this I once witnessed as a young girl when my father took me to hear his lecture on Scriabin, or Medtner). (454)

Although a member of the Russian intelligentsia, N.M. does not identify herself as a Russian national. She does not write of "we Russians" but rather compares herself to them as though they were different:

I too was always ready to drop from weariness, but because I simply did not dare, I managed to preserve my strength. I have all the staying power *of the Russians* - it developed during my years of waiting. For half a century it was all that kept people going here and has become a weakness with *them*. (213, italics added)

Her ties are not nationally but linguistically determined, to a socio-historical entity distinguished clearly from the Soviet state in which she lived:

If, for one single moment, I had started speaking in my own language instead of in prescribed official jargon, none of them would have hesitated to ensure that I spend the rest of my life felling timber. (626)

All the same I am glad that my capital is Moscow, not Kiev - my native language, after all, is Russian, and if the Jews are going to be slaughtered in both places, better it happen to me in Moscow. In Moscow there will always be some kindly soul who will try to stop the mob with a few good-humoured oaths: 'Don't you touch this one,'

she will say, 'you so-and-so sons of bitches!' It will be easier to die to the familiar sound of Russian swearing. (96)

This self-confessed "Jewish girl" (31) for whom the Orthodox religion became increasingly important as her life neared its end, is clear about which "we" has the most importance to her. At the beginning of the second book, N.M. introduces herself as follows:

Like any other wife of a prisoner, like any other *stopiatnitsa* or exiled person, I thought only about the times I lived in... The fact is that there was nothing exceptional about my case. There were untold numbers of women like myself roaming the country - mute, cowed creatures. (3)

However much she may have resembled other women, N.M. was also aware that hers was a special case: "I would eventually, before I died, have a sealed bottled with a message to cast upon the waves, (while they have) only empty bottles" (4), i.e. the kind you take back for money. She is a poet's wife, wondering: "How many of *us* are there spending sleepless nights repeating the words of our dead husbands?" (276, italics added). It is not with every poet's wife that she feels kin, though, but with a select group:

those who would name 'accomplices' only under torture, never voluntarily, at the first invitation. As long as there are people who try to overcome their instinct for self-preservation, hope is not lost and life may continue. (652)

It is with those who preserve themselves in preserving others, who prefer to endure rather than inflict suffering, that she feels bound, those for whom life's meaning is found in their connections with others. She writes at length about the importance of feeling connected with a special group of others which she terms a "we":

We witnessed the disintegration of a society which was as imperfect as any other, but which concealed and curbed its wickedness and harbored small groups of people who were truly entitled to refer to themselves as 'we.' I am quite convinced that without such a 'we,' there can be no proper fulfilment of even the most ordinary 'I,' that is, of the personality. To find its fulfilment, the 'I' needs at least two complementary dimensions: 'we' and - if it is fortunate - 'you.' (39)

In this description, one becomes aware of exactly the dimensions that unity takes on for N.M. She is both of the multitude and unique because her self, as she perceives it, only came into being, that is, took on meaning, through others:

If my life had any meaning at all, it was only because I shared all the tribulations of Akhmatova and M. and eventually found myself, my own true self, through my closeness to them. (266)

She is aware, and wants the reader to be aware, of the extraordinary nature of her accomplishment:

Surkov's first question was about M.'s papers and literary remains. He could hardly believe his ears when I said I had preserved it all - a small part he could have understood, but *all* of it! (656, italics in original); and of the feisty nature of her personality, hence the "salty" language, sexual candor and forthright opinions.¹⁴ Yet more important is that the reader understand how this strength of character came about, that in her view it is a gift of others, one to which it is imperative to be open.

This phenomenon of existing by, through and for others is the basis of the cohesive ethical program laid out by N.M. in her memoirs. As Max Hayward, her English translator puts it, she endeavors in *Hope Abandoned*:

to complete on (M.'s) behalf something he did not himself have time to do before his life was cut short, namely, to set forth a system of values and beliefs that run quite counter to the dominant ones of the age we live in, whether in the East or the West. (7)

The most salient tenet of the Mandel'shtam philosophy as it is found in the pages of N.M.'s memoirs is the question of answerability.⁴⁵ It is placed by N.M. on the side of poetry and freedom and distinguished from the duplicity inherent in totalitarian life which she likens to acting:

Like actors, everybody lived a double life - with the difference that for an actor his duality, the wearing of a mask, is essential to his art, whereas for Tynianov's contemporaries it was more in the nature of a protective device. (373)

She then contrasts actors with poets: "it is no good for an actor to try to be like a poet. These are quite different types of activity: one in a mask and the other without" (373). The difference between them is a fundamental one and lies in taking responsibility for one's words:

The actor's personal contribution can be made only jointly, as it were, with the character he plays and whose words he speaks. Having to represent someone else, he becomes a dual personality who does not play in his own right, any more than he answers for the words he learns by heart: they have been put into his mouth on behalf of the character whose identity he assumes on the stage. But the poet answers for everything. (365)

In digressions juxtaposing freedom with licence and fear with cowardice, N.M. expounds on the necessity of maintaining an inner freedom by doing not what one wants but what one is willing to answer for. For N.M. the poet is exemplary of such a person; he or she can maintain links with a special "we,"

that is, express in verse not the platitudes forced upon him or her from outside but those ideas which he or she believes in and has assimilated into a special communal individuality. It is "a capacity to select and define the components of one's own inner world" (112) which sets each person apart. Finding one's own voice implies freeing oneself from external influence:

The one thing a poet - or indeed any man - must not do is give up his freedom, become like everybody else, merge with his surroundings, and speak in the current language of the day. (303-04)

Verse has the potential to liberate, both for the reader and the poet:

In full consciousness of being a slave, I repeated to myself: 'For free is the slave who has overcome fear.' I could not really, of course, overcome fear, but verse gave inner freedom, showed that man was capable of higher and better things. (201)

She encourages people not to be atomized individuals but rather interconnected yet unique personalities sensitive to all of creation, asking why it is "that in this country the individual, the particular, is never seen as a token or a symbol of the world as a whole?" (395). Such personalities as her husband who remained connected with others, and with history, are an important countervailing force to the disconnected, destructive evil against which her writing is directed. She elaborates at length such an ideal because it is for her the only answer to the calamitous events she has experienced: "A person possessed of inner freedom, memory, and a sense of fear is the blade of grass or wood chip that can alter the course of the swift-flowing stream" (206).

CHAPTER VI ROMOLA NIJINSKY

Ich würde nur an einen Gott
glauben, der zu tanzen verstünde...
Ich habe gehen gelernt: seitdem lasse
ich mich laufen. Ich habe fliegen
gelernt: seitdem will ich nicht erst
gestossen sein, um von der Stelle zu
kommen.

Jetzt bin ich leicht, jetzt fliege ich,
jetzt sehe ich mich unter mir, jetzt
tanzt ein Gott durch mich.

Vom Lesen und Schreiben,
Zarathustra^{u6}

In the history of the ballet, the figure of Vaslav Nijinsky makes the impression of the kind of blade of grass or wood chip that Nadezhda Mandel'shtam would have had great empathy for - carried along by a turbulent stream but nonetheless engaged in a struggle to maintain internal freedom and in doing so perceptibly altering the ballet world. Generally regarded as one of the greatest male ballet dancers of all time, the tragic piquancy of Nijinsky's fall into madness subsequent to being dismissed from Diaghilev's Ballets Russes guaranteed his legendary status. It is not due to his spectacular jumps and unique interpretations per se that the figure of Nijinsky enjoys a special standing in the history of the ballet. Although the technology was available at the time, the phenomenon of Nijinsky dancing was never captured on film and the faded photographs of him that have come down to us are for the most part studio portraits which only hint at the electricity with which his dancing ignited audiences. Rather, it is as an English-language literary creation that the "God of the Dance" became an integral part of balletomania, one resulting from an intricate series of cross-cultural mediations and translations, and one primarily of his Hungarian wife Romola's making. Her role both in the dismissal and in

legend-making after his illness has received critical attention in the scholarship on Nijinsky and in ballet circles where memoirs are habitually written by artists, their relatives, friends and patrons.⁴⁷ This chapter will focus on Romola's efforts at becoming a Nijinsky and at writing Nijinsky, and on how those efforts have been received. After doing so, it will highlight the similarities and differences between her heroic creation and accomplishments and those of Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, particularly with respect to the important, contrasting role that Russia played in both instances.

Romolda (Romola) Flavia Ludowika Polyxena Consuelo Marie de la Consolation de Pulszky⁴⁸ first saw the great Nijinsky dance in Budapest in March of 1912. One of the many questionable facts in Romola's story is her age at the time of this first encounter. Although she claims "that I was already seventeen years of age" (21)⁴⁹ when she was allowed to study with the *Ballets Russes's* Cecchetti at Christmas of that year, that is, a good nine months later, according to her mother's prayerbook she was born "in the year 1891 on the 19th February at dawn 3:45 am" (N&R, 1; also Reiss, 139; Ostwald, 80) which would have her pushing 22 at the time. In the panache evidenced by this sleight of hand, Romola displays the single-minded determination of a Zarathustrian sibling. While she may not have been as young as she claimed, Romola was still two years younger than the genius she saw on the stage that spring night,⁵⁰ who so captured her imagination that she promptly took advantage of her family's prominent cultural standing to insinuate herself into the circles of Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*. Her mother, Emilia Markus, was the foremost Hungarian actress of her day, the "Blonde Wonder" whose talents were considered by many to outstrip those of Sarah Bernhardt and Elenore Duse, while her father, Count Karoly de Pulszky, was a member of

parliament and director of the Hungarian National Gallery of Art.²¹ Romola does not fail to draw attention to the advantages she made of her familial connections: "But why was my godfather head of the Imperial Family's archives and the confidant of Franz Joseph? To help me. And why was my brother-in-law [Erik Schmedes, the husband of her younger sister, Tessa] the first Wagnerian star of his day? To serve me, of course" (23). It worked, as Romola was confident it would: "I was neither awed nor embarrassed when we went to see Diaghileff. I was determined to obtain my point, and, when my mind was definitely set, nothing and nobody mattered" (24). Diaghilev gave his permission and Romola was allowed to accompany the *Ballets Russes* on their 1913 season from London to Monte Carlo, Paris, back to London and then, because so many of the regular dancers refused to go, to South America. This latter leg of the journey was to prove fatal, Diaghilev having remained in Europe pleading sea-sickness and Nijinsky unaccompanied for the first time since Romola had begun travelling with the troupe. By the time the boat docked in Buenos Aires on 6 September 1913, the two were engaged and on their way to the first suitable altar. Diaghilev's dismissal of his protégé and lover upon getting wind of the hasty wedding was a matter of course. Further work in America, England, Spain and South America was marred by contractual squabbles and Nijinsky's inability to attend to the business of running and not just dancing and choreographing for a ballet company, as well as by the first historical thorn to derail Romola's arduously laid plans, the First World War. By the time the Nijinskys had found themselves and their three year old daughter, Kyra, a safe haven in Switzerland in December 1917, Vaslav was more fit for its sanatoria than a cozy chalet in St. Moritz. And it was not long before his increasingly bizarre antics landed him in one, the Sanitarium Bellevue in Kreuzlingen. The

diagnosis of "schizophrenia" is the brain-child of the psychiatrist Eugene Bleuler, who invented it in 1911. Romola was quick to seek out Bleuler's expert services in nearby Zürich and he in turn was quick to see in Vaslav a manifestation of this new malady of the soul. Romola reports the Professor telling her: "Now, my dear, be very brave. You have to take your child away; you have to get a divorce. Unfortunately, I am helpless. Your husband is incurably insane" (410).²² Kreplin, Ferenczy, Freud and Jung would later all confirm the diagnosis.

The following decades were not easy ones for Romola. For periods of time, she would try to reincorporate Vaslav, together with a trained male attendant, back into her household but fits of violence would force her to readmit him into a nearby sanitarium. In 1921, Vaslav's sister, Bronislava, and their mother escaped from the same carnivalesque Kiev Osip and Nadezhda Mandel'shtam were also then departing, in order to rejuvenate him with their presence. But by the time they made the trek to Vienna where Romola had moved the previous summer to give birth to their second daughter,²³ Vaslav's condition had deteriorated to the point that he did not so much as recognize them. In 1923, Romola moved her family to Paris, as her younger daughter claims, in yet another attempt to bring her husband around:

She nourished the implicit belief that Paris, the city of his greatest triumphs, would awaken at least the dimmest spark of recollection in her Watza. People have told me in later years how hard she tried, taking him to the theater, the ballet, to the haunts he had frequented in happier days, long strolls through the Bois de Boulogne, motor tours of the environs. All to no avail. (N&R, 215)

Romola became increasingly overwhelmed at the task of providing for nine mouths (N&R, 222), with no stable source of income and no marketable

skills.²⁴ She disbanded the household in 1925 to pursue opportunities in the United States, leaving Vaslav in the care of her sister, sending Kyra to a boarding school in Switzerland and Tamara to her grandparents in Hungary. By the time of Diaghilev's death, appropriately enough in Venice, on 19 August 1929, a few months before Black Friday created chaos on international stock markets, Romola had given up on script-writing in Hollywood. It had occurred to her that it was "both necessary and desirable, for the history of art and of genius, and to help preserve the memory of the greatest and kindest human being [she] had ever known" (*LYN*, 419) that her husband's story appear in print. In a letter to her mother marking the end of 1931, she conveyed her new resolutions: "Now I will aim at establishing the Bayreuth of Dance and win the Nobel Prize of Literature; with God's help... this is my humble ambition for the time being" (*N&R*, 242). Her *Nijinsky* was published in 1933. She then set about culling the notebooks in which Vaslav had been madly scribbling during the six weeks leading up to his hospitalization for non-incriminating selections, which were published under her editorship in 1936 as *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky*. Following his death on Easter Saturday, 1950, Romola felt motivated to tell the world about *The Last Years of Nijinsky* (1952), chronicling their adventures and experiences with mental institutions before, during and after World War II. As Peter Ostwald tells it:

Romola lived for another 28 years [after Vaslav's death]. She travelled widely, usually with Paul Bohus (her distant relative and companion since WWII), visited Russia - where she had an amusing interview with Krushchev²⁵ - and Japan, where she fell in love with a transvestite actress who remarkably resembled the young Nijinsky. Romola died in

1978 in Paul Bohus' arms in a Paris hotel. She too lies in the Montmartre Cemetery, but not close to her husband. (341)²⁶

Romola presents a daunting hermeneutic challenge to those writing about Nijinsky, whether in the form of documentary writing, biography or artistic production. Beginning in 1937 with Anatole Bourman, one of the six boys in Vaslav's first class at the Imperial School of Ballet in St. Petersburg in 1898, who "would survive to write a bad book about his great school-fellow for the bafflement of future biographers" (Buckle, 4),²⁷ Nijinsky scholarship has been hard-pressed to avoid the versions of the Nijinsky saga which Romola so actively promulgated. Even those works which stick strictly to Vaslav's artistic accomplishments and avoid his person, such as Lincoln Kirstein's elegant picture-book, *Nijinsky Dancing*, cannot but perpetuate the highly stylized way that person has come down to us, something which drove a reviewer already in 1938 to complain that "because of the way in which his misfortunes have been flaunted and commercialized, one cannot help but ask the question -- Is Vaslav Nijinsky fact or fiction?" (Ware, 39). It is a question Romola's younger daughter would echo some fifty years later: "Did she know when she crossed the borderline between fact and fiction?" (N&R, 33).

When one approaches the question of Nijinsky reception, one is immediately confronted with a most striking tendency: it is rarely neutral, and usually either very much for Romola or very much against her.²⁸ Among the harshest condemnations of Romola for her culpability in her husband's fate, her attempts to capitalize on it after the fact and her general disregard for matters of fact in her biography, are by those associated with Diaghilev. Serge Lifar heads this category. Originally a pupil of Bronislava Nijinska's in Kiev, then one of Diaghilev's protégés and later the driving

force of the Paris Opera Ballet where he was the one responsible for moving Nijinsky's body to the Montmartre Cemetery in June 1953 so that it might rest beside the male dancing legend of the 19th century, Auguste Vestris, Lifar repeatedly castigates Romola for inaccuracies in her depiction of Diaghilev and uses them as an excuse to throw her entire project into question:

"Unfortunately in her biography, interesting and rich with material as it is, there are so many unchecked and deliberately falsified facts [for example, about Diaghilev's life] that it is difficult to make use of it" (177). Misia Sert, a patron of the Parisian avant-garde art scene and a close friend of Diaghilev and his ballet, also concentrates on the negative aspects of Romola's involvement with the ballet, describing the Nijinskys' marriage as "one of the first tragedies to shake the Russian Ballet" (89) and blaming Romola for the lack of a reconciliation afterwards:

many times both men were on the verge of reconciling. But Romola stopped at nothing to prevent this. God only knows whether Nijinsky wouldn't have enjoyed many more years of fame if he hadn't met this woman who drove him so quickly into the mad-house. (93)

These accounts are tempered by those of Nijinsky supporters, in the first instance Vaslav's younger sister Bronislava, a noted dancer and choreographer in her own right.¹²⁹⁹ In her *Early Memoirs*, Bronislava draws on her insider's knowledge of the situation and contextualizes her brother's decision to get married in terms of tensions surrounding the *Ballets Russes*, Diaghilev's constant struggle for patronage and the reinstatement of Fokine whose condition for rehire was that he replace Vaslav as the company's choreographer (475). She reports that the news of her brother's marriage brought her "great joy" (478) and that she was positively predisposed towards her "pretty" (494) sister-in-law on first meeting her in Paris in 1914, not in the

least because both she and Romola were pregnant at the time. The only hint that their relations were anything less than harmonious comes during the descriptions of the preparations for the London "Saison Nijinsky":

I had strongly advised Vaslav that he should present his *Faune* in the first programme, but Romola and one of her influential London society friends insisted on *Les Sylphides*. They both tried to persuade Vaslav to return to the classical dance and perform ballets that were more appealing to the general public, rather than continue on the way of *Sacre*. They disapproved of both *Jeux* and *Faune*, though Vaslav did plan to include them in the Saison Nijinsky. (498)

Here it is clear that the reason Bronislava resents this "outside" influence of high society is that it goes against what she felt to be her brother's integrity as an innovative artist. However, in general one has the impression that she was kindly disposed towards Romola when she felt that she was acting in her brother's interests and respecting the ways of the ballet world.

A comparison of the two most substantial English-language Nijinsky scholars on the question of Romola's always precarious financial situation further demonstrates the dichotomous tendency in her reception. The fact that publication of Romola's books was intended primarily as a money-making enterprise is not in dispute. Romola relates being questioned by the invading Soviet forces at the end of WWII:

'What is your profession?'

'I haven't one. I was brought up as most other society girls, a general education, chiefly the arts and music.'

'So how did you provide for both of you?'

'At first I used the funds my husband gave me which he earned while he was dancing. Later, when I saw that the doctors' fees, treatments

and nursing homes would swallow all our savings, I began to write, lecture and work for film.' (LYN, 513)

The presentation of these circumstances, however, is a matter very much open to scholarly interpretation. Richard Buckle belongs to the inner circle of English ballet aficionados. He was one of the poll-bearers at Nijinsky's funeral and had his "definitive" 1971 biography of Nijinsky approved by both Romola and her grand-niece Irina (Bronislava's daughter). Buckle characterizes Romola as "courageous" (501), "dauntless" (507) and "indomitable" (519), emphasizes that she had been Vaslav's wife for thirty-seven years and his breadwinner for thirty of those years (537) and casts a noble light on Romola's literary endeavors: "one of the tasks Romola undertook in order to earn money to keep Vaslav and herself was to write her husband's life" (512). Buckle's respect and admiration for Romola seep into his description of the challenge she faced upon Nijinsky's being diagnosed as hopelessly insane:

Now began for Romola Nijinsky thirty years of hope, despair, struggle, poverty and heroism.... Romola was advised to make use of her American visa and to leave Vaslav in a Swiss State Asylum.... Rather than risk cancelling all the good Vaslav's treatment had done him, she renounced comfort and security for herself in America and resolved to stay beside him. This was perhaps her most unselfish and heroic decision. (501, 521)

Peter Ostwald, in contrast, is decidedly less enamoured with Romola. His interest in Nijinsky is that of a sensitive, cultured psychiatrist and his 1991 account of Nijinsky's illness, *Vaslav Nijinsky: A Leap into Madness*, received the support of Romola's daughters, although they did express reservations about the less than glorious nature of the project. Instead of emphasizing

Romola's heroism, Ostwald focuses on the unrelenting trail of debts resulting from her insistently lavish lifestyle:

(As can be surmised from Mme. Nijinsky usually staying in the best and most expensive hotels, she was not as destitute as she often claimed. However, she was notably negligent in paying her bills.) (283)

Ostwald's research disclosed such correspondence as:

'It was a considerable disappointment to us, writes the bank manager [of Barclays], 'to learn that you had gone [back to Austria] without making any arrangement for the repayment of our advance.' (329)

He also includes what he thought were the pertinent parts of the records kept of Vaslav's stays in sanatoria:

'A visit from his wife!' reports his psychiatrist, Dr. Kroll, on 4 April 1934. Having been away for four years, Romola created quite a stir at Bellevue. 'Generous as always,' writes Dr. Kroll sarcastically, 'she brings with her many presents, for which the hospital is expected to pay customs duty and freight charges. But at least she buys some clothes and laundry for the patient, who smiles at everything.'... Regarding the nonpayment of his hospital bill, Romola explained that her daughter Kyra is 'extraordinarily gifted and will be ready to contribute to her father's support in just a few years.' (287, italics in original)

This tendency to be either for or against Romola is also reflected in the artistic productions of the phenomenon that was Nijinsky.³⁹ They generally take as their lead either Romola's biographies or Vaslav's diary, with those based on the biographies tending to a more sympathetic portrayal of Romola and those based on the diary either paying her no or limited but negative heed. The publication of an unexpurgated version of the diary in

French in 1995, the same year that Romola's version of it first appeared in Russian, has been accompanied by a comparatively large number of productions which take their material from, or are in some way based on, the diary.¹³¹ Because Romola's role first withholding and then heavily editing the original version of the diary has been roundly condemned, one can detect a perceptible shift towards more negative portrayals of her in these more recent works. Time has not been as kind to Romola Nijinsky as it has to Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, bringing with it artistic as well as scholarly productions in the majority of which one is left to choose between her and Diaghilev as the greater of two evils.

IN SEARCH OF A MOTHER-LAND

Before exploring the problematics of the husband and wife representations in Romola's writing and comparing them with those of Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, attention should be drawn to the fact that this less than flattering portrayal of Romola, the image of a manipulative, power-hungry, scheming and conniving vixen answerable for the unhappy fate of her husband, is not simply one contrived by mean-spirited historians, biographers and dramatists but rather one mostly of her own creation. Romola herself describes her pursuit of Nijinsky in terms of "ha[ving] succeeded in fooling such an inconceivably clever man as Diaghilev" (21) into allowing her to travel with the company. As soon as she can communicate with her new husband somewhat in pidgin French and Russian, she relates that "I began to rave about all the Callot dresses, Reboux hats, and Cartier jewels, and of all the mondaine life I was going to lead in the future" (208). She reports that her thoughts upon seeing smoke coming out of the closet in their bedroom are "that I might save the money, jewels, furs, and passports" (264) and that

she flies into a panic thinking her jewels had been stolen during a train-ride to Paris (316-17). She admits frequently to less than gracious or harmonious behavior. She is "very unhappy" that her first-born is a girl and not the desired male (219) and by her own accounts does not seem to have been a very good-humoured companion: "He had many little tricks of driving that I disliked intensely" (267); "I was so angry that I sat silent" (267); "I was really angry with him this time" (287); "for two days I was disagreeable" (206) "I really got angry, and walked home with Kyra" (332); "I lost my temper" (333); and she makes good on a threat to walk out on her husband if he does not comply with her demand to drop Tolstean friends she regards as an evil influence (300-1).¹³² Thus, Romola did nothing to counteract the prevailing opinion that she was a pampered, status-conscious socialite, either before their marriage, when the presence in the ballet troupe of a girl who insisted on traveling first-class with a maid and whose connections were more evident than her talent was viewed with general derision and cynicism, or after Vaslav's institutionalization when she traveled back and forth across the Atlantic writing to both the likes of Eleanor Roosevelt and the Queen Mother (Ostwald, 332-3), and Presidents Nixon and d'Estaing (N&R, 479, 494) to help support treatment for her husband.

What lies behind this deliberately provocative self-representation? Romola's younger daughter attributes it to upbringing:

It was inevitable that the Pulszky daughters were to be strongly influenced by their environment. Throughout their lives, neither could quench her thirst for luxury and a high life style. Both had absorbed a craving for the finest fashion, and money was to run through their fingers like grains of sand. (N&R, 10)¹³³

In this respect, one cannot overlook the fact that their father was "highly educated,... could boast degrees from the Universities of London, Turin and Leipzig,... spoke eleven languages,... was an avid reader of the classics" (N&R, 5) and named his younger daughter after the heroine of a George Eliot novel which he had translated into Hungarian (and published under a pseudonym) so that his wife might read it (N&R, 5).³⁴ However, there is a further consideration. Romola conspicuously sets herself up as an outsider to her husband's world:

Bronia was untiring too. She spoke only Russian and Polish, but I soon noticed that she did not like me; she seemed to resent everything that happened and blame it on me. I was the intruder in the Russian Ballet, in the family. She isolated herself behind a screen of ice which I could never penetrate. (212)

In light of Bronislava's positive reaction to her brother's marriage (she "deeply wanted to share this happiness with Vaslav" (478)), Romola's feelings of exclusion seem to have much less to do with the sister than with the brother. Romola suddenly had not only to share Vaslav's attentions with someone else for the first time since their marriage, but she found herself facing competition for his attentions with a rival enjoying a distinct home-field advantage: "At Laroux's, or at Jiel's, I used to await them for lunch sometimes until four or five o'clock in the afternoon. But they worked and danced all the time" (212). Her reaction to Diaghilev when they meet in New York is similar: "But Sergey Pavlovitch was beyond forgiveness. I could see that he still loved Vaslav and deeply resented my existence" (262). One further instance of Romola's alienation, from her eldest daughter, offers an important clue to the mechanism behind it.

It was remarkable how the child changed the moment Vaslav entered the room. It seemed almost as though they had been one person split apart, and constantly wishing to be reunited. Sometimes I almost felt as if I was intruding on them. They were both essentially and fundamentally Russian - something we Europeans can never, never penetrate. (317)

These words echo exactly those she put into the mouth of the *Ballets Russes's* venerable ballet master, Cecchetti, a dozen pages earlier: "These Russians are a strange lot. For thirty-five years I have taught and studied them. They are my friends, I love them, but there is something about them that we Europeans can never, never penetrate" (305). Despite the fact that Vaslav was Polish,¹³⁵ Romola continuously draws attention to his "Russianness," that "he carried in his heart an eternal love for Russian soil" (30), that he "loved Russia with every fibre of his being" (97). She also raises their first-born to be a Russian. During the first World War while interned with her husband and young daughter at her mother's, she writes of being: "reproached with teaching Kyra only Russian, and forbidding her to learn Hungarian. But I said, 'She is only sixteen months old. *Of course* she will be learning Russian, but she is too small to speak any language yet'" (235, italics added).¹³⁶ Romola presents it as a matter of course that she will place her daughter in the world she herself failed to enter. Romola's identification with, and glorification of, Russia is unmistakable. When arrested in Spain, she says with pride, "you have no right to arrest me; I am a Russian citizen, and not a member of the Russian Ballet" (303) and when she learns that "the power in Russia had been seized by the local soviets, and Lenin and Trotsky, repatriated three days ago, had formed a Government" (316), her comment is "We neither

of us knew what this really meant for *our* country and the world" (316, italics added). Describing the Stravinskys, she comments:

The wife was a *real* Russian woman, *a devoted wife and mother*; in her great simplicity there was the strength of one who devoted herself - her life and personality - to the genius of another. She was *the ideal wife* for a great artist... Madame Stravinsky was a real artist in handicraft. She embroidered, knitted, and painted beautifully. I always tried to please Vaslav by emulating these Russian women, but with little success. (253, italics added)

The reason behind this emulation can be revealed by relating it to Romola's attitude toward her nationality and her mother. When their boat is searched during the first World War on the way back to Europe from South America by English officers, Romola reports herself as panicking and throwing the Jesus of Prague picture which Vaslav had given her as a present overboard:

I became frantic. 'Vaslav, they will arrest me, take me off the boat.'

'But what for, *femmka*?'

'Because I was born Hungarian.'

'Now, *femmka*, *tu es bête*. The English are sensible people, they will not do anything to you.' (315)

Hungary is the country where they are interned during not just one but both world wars.¹³⁷ Upon finding herself a second time a prisoner with her husband in her mother's house, Romola comments:

I deeply worried, realizing the great mistake I had made in bringing him to my family's home where he had suffered so deeply in the past. It was an error with far-reaching consequences to place him here in this antagonistic atmosphere, charged with discord and suspicion,

especially after the insulin shock treatment. Vaslav needed now to be surrounded with sympathetic understanding and kindly people. (LYN, 456)

In a word, he needed Russians, who, when they finally arrive four years later, are recorded as understanding intuitively how to deal with the "patient":

For the first time since 1919 people did not stare at him, did not shrink from him because he had suffered from a mental illness. They [the Russian soldiers] spoke to him in the same nonchalant manner as they did to us.

At first I warned them: 'Leave Vaslav Fomitch alone, don't talk to him. He might get annoyed and impatient, he is afraid.'

But they just laughed. 'He won't be afraid of us,' they said. 'Let him alone to do what he wants.'...

As the days and weeks passed, I noticed that the primitive Russian soldiers had a better method of treating him than we had, in spite of all the doctors and nurses of the last twenty-six years. (LYN, 516-7)

It is the Hungarians, not the Russians, who are their tormentors.

Throughout the text they are consistently portrayed as less than pristine figures. Not only does the "kinsman," called only Don de B., whose acquaintance they make on their second trip to South America, turn out to be an extortionist (308-12), her mother is portrayed as an inveterate schemer and autocratic terror.¹³⁸ Perhaps the most graphic display of the antipathy Romola feels for her mother is in recording a distasteful incident during their first internment in which her mother unjustly accuses Vaslav of killing her pet cat, after which Romola "could not stand this any longer. Next day I went to our Chief of Police and begged him to send us to a

concentration camp" (232).³⁹ Her godfather, at the time one of the five members of the Austro-Hungarian War Council, explains that the root of her mother's difficult nature is her nationality: "Your mother, the great artist, was chained to Hungary all her life. Her success never passed the frontiers, because she played in Hungarian. Your husband's art is universal. He is known and admired everywhere" (234). The last thing Romola wanted was to be chained to Hungary, or to her mother. In becoming Vaslav's *femmka*, she attempted to distance herself from her past, and join the Russian cultural aristocracy. Just as Nadezhda Mandel'shtam left behind her "small herd of painters" (26) to accompany Osip on his life-journey, so too was Romola trying through marriage to escape. However, she was not to have the same success. The Soviet powers which provided for the arduous atmosphere in which Nadezhda thrived first as girl-friend and then as literary widow closed off the escape-route which Romola had assumed would be open to her when she married the God of Dance in 1913: "I'd always wanted to visit Russia," she confessed in a 1965 interview. "Nijinsky and I had planned a journey in 1913, but then he became ill" (Stevenson, 10). The regal aspirations of the elder de Pulszky daughter were to be foiled, time and again, by historical circumstance.⁴⁰ After the birth of their daughter Kyra in Vienna on 19 June 1914, nine days before the assassination of the Austrian Archduke and Duchess in Sarajevo, the Nijinskys intended to travel to Russia: "We decided to return to St. Petersburg as soon as I was allowed to travel," writes Romola in her biography, betraying with the word "return" the strong affinity she felt for the country she had at that point never visited. However, their week's stop in Budapest in July 1914, before proceeding on to Russia - "to allow a rest for Kyra and myself" (223) - was to turn into a year and a half's internment, until January 1916, at which point historical, diplomatic and

cultural intervention had determined a much different destination - New York. It was not in Russia but in America, in the New York-based belle-monde of the ballet, that Romola was to be feted as the cultural aristocrat (or translated into American - celebrity) she figured herself to be.⁴¹ Stevenson's article, for example, begins:

Among holiday visitors to New York was one whose connection with Ballet is both legendary and real. She is Madame Romola Nijinska, widow of Vaslav Nijinsky and author of the primary source book of his career. But she is also very much a part of the real world of today, especially as she recently emerged victorious in a lengthy legal battle over screen rights to her book, long tied up in the estate of the late King Vidor. This, in fact, was the reason both for her visit and its brevity. She was passing through New York en route to Hollywood and conferences with several contesting bidders for production rights to the Nijinsky saga. (10)

It was to be in pre- and post-WWII America that Romola found she could make a "career" of being Nijinsky's wife, as in the newspaper article with the headline: "Being the Wife of a Dancer - It is an Arduous Career!"⁴² An announcement for a lecture series Romola gave in New York in 1952-53 indicates that there was ample cultural space available in the United States after Vaslav's death in 1950 for her to occupy in the role of widow to culture and that she wasted little time assuming functions in this capacity. As in the case of Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, Romola attempted through her marriage to imbue her life with both meaning and a future.⁴³ When her first attempt, through marriage, did not succeed in the way that she had hoped, Romola resorted to another means which Nadezhda well understood: writing her husband into a legend.

ANOTHER GIANT LEAP

Romola's portrayal of her husband as martyred hero, the techniques with which she sketches his character, career and their relationship, bear noteworthy similarities to Nadezhda Mandel'shtam's. M.'s "blithe good spirits" and "chirpy, free and easy self" are a match for Vaslav's, who "was gay, laughing, mischievous, like a boy always trying to play some prank" (203). Just as Nadezhda mentions that M. "liked order and would always put things back in their proper place after I had scattered them around the room" (159), even the insane Vaslav is "neat, and as orderly as ever" (341).⁴⁴ Both men shun adoration and praise. If Nadezhda "happened to blurt out some word of praise to him (which was against our rules), [M.] was sincerely taken aback" (273), whereas "Vaslav was thoughtful, modest, not in the least conceited, and so embarrassed if anybody complimented him" (225). And both are represented as uncompromising and highly principled. M's "deep bedrock of principles" (160) finds its match in Romola's Vaslav, who "was always just and correct, even to his enemies" (251), and never led astray by the temptation:

The news of Vaslav's dismissal was known in a few days through-out the world. Offers were showered upon him, from impresarios, theatres, with incredibly high salaries. But Vaslav refused. The agents came personally to Budapest to win him over. The fee rose higher and higher, but Vaslav shook his head, and asked the secretary of the Russian Consulate, who was constantly with us: 'Please tell them I cannot do anything inartistic. I must first have the right ballets, artists to appear with me. I must think, create, and, under no circumstances will I appear in a vaudeville house. I cannot be unfaithful to my art.' No money could tempt him. (210)

The trajectory which the wives of Messrs. Mandel'shtam and Nijinsky recount is also very similar. Both men enjoy early renown and fame as part of a new artistic movement, Osip with Gumilev's Acmeists, Vaslav with Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*. Just as Osip goes through a period of silence and adjustment in the 1920s - "The austere person I now found myself living with in Herzen House was completely different from the carefree one I had met during the Kiev carnival" (141) - only to regain his equilibrium and rediscover his voice after their *Journey to Armenia*, so too does Vaslav suffer greatly the chaotic historical circumstances, and so too is he able to regain his equilibrium, at least briefly during their first internment in Hungary, through art: "Where and when this ballet [*Til Eulenspiegel*] could be produced was a mystery, but we did not think of it. Vaslav was a changed person. He became mischievous again, and I saw his face light up with joy" (231). Just as Osip's tragic fate is attributed by his wife to his principles, and is presented as a choice on his part, a choice of death over spiritual compromise, Romola's Vaslav also refuses to remain in a world which prevented his living an artistically-principled existence and chooses to "withdr[a]w from this world" (341).

These artists of principle offer their wives new visions and endow their lives with meaning. Just as Nadezhda emphasizes the new vistas that her husband opens to her, so too does Romola:

Vaslav inspired and influenced me, in my feelings and outlook on life and art. He opened to me an unlimited vista of humanity, and gave me constantly new ideas from the undrainable richness of his thoughts.
(236)⁴⁵

Like Nadezhda, Romola is only too eager to take on this new vision and to become her husband's disciple:

I was brought up to believe that this [the high life] was what marriage meant, and Vaslav, to whom all this was strange, perhaps, for a second, felt a little tired of it all; he had yet to teach me (208); He developed the theory of the dance. Every day, as a test, to see if it would be practical for general use, he taught me the system of notation. (231).

The nature of both relationships is similar and special, second only to art. In her commentary to Sandoz's vignettes, Romola writes: "It is true, as Mr. Sandoz quotes, that our 'marriage was perfectly happy and that my husband loved me more than anything in the world' *except dancing* and that, I am convinced, he would not have sacrificed for anybody's sake" (11, italics in the original). Both relationships take on their special shape due to isolation imposed on the couple:

When a man was isolated - at first by his own wish and later thanks to the official disfavour still in force today - it was natural that he should look for someone to whom he could say 'thou,' and M. stubbornly tried to make a wife out of me, a wretched girl he had found quite by chance. (163)

During those long months of our internment, when we were thrown utterly on each other's company, we gained a knowledge of each other's character which under different circumstances would have hardly been possible.... In our great isolation we talked over many subjects. (236)

Both wives make a point of choosing to share their husbands' fates, a point which has been duly noted and credited in the scholarship:

Of the two [she and her husband], Nadezhda Iakovlevna seemed to have the better chance for escape; she might have spared herself much

grief if she had divorced Mandel'shtam and recanted her association. But she chose, again and again, the noble, tragic role of sharing his life and persecution, of working for him and even begging with him and they staved off his inevitable doom. (Holmgren/a, 97)

Now [after Nijinsky's being diagnosed hopelessly insane] began for Romola Nijinsky thirty years of hope, despair, struggle, poverty and heroism.... Romola was advised to make use of her American visa and to leave Vaslav in a Swiss State Asylum.... Rather than risk canceling all the good Vaslav's treatment had done him, she renounced comfort and security for herself in America and resolved to stay beside him. This was perhaps her most unselfish and heroic decision. (Buckle, 501, 521)⁴⁶

Neither wife neglects to mention how firmly rooted the relationship is in the physical. Nadezhda made no secret of the fact that she had slept with Osip the night they met and briefly engaged in a *menage-à-trois* with the one woman who posed a serious threat to their relationship (Proffer, 23);

Romola's recounting is more decorous:

Our intimate life was ideally happy. Sometimes the strangest feeling would come over me, and I felt that the women of mythology may have felt as I did when a God came to love them. There was the exhilarating and inexpressible feeling that Vaslav was more than a human being. The ecstasy that he could create in love as in art had a purifying quality, and yet there was something intangible in his being that one could never reach. (300)

And neither woman takes up with another man after the loss of her husband. While Nadezhda seems to have remained celibate, Kyra recalls finding her mother with another woman: "Mother told me she had given up

on men. "The only man in this world I will ever love is Vaslav" (cited in Ostwald, 285).

While both Nadezhda and Romola imbue their lives with meaning by writing their husbands' lives, there is a crucial difference in their attitude towards the inculcation of themselves and their husbands into larger artistic tradition. Nadezhda portrays herself as motivated only by her faith in her husband's poetry, the worth of which she does not see as in any way related to his current favor:

In the years when we [she and Akhmatova] preserved M.'s verse, we scarcely dared hope, but we never ceased to believe in its rebirth. It was only this faith that kept us going... Now that this [his poetry being read by others] has come to pass, what happens in the future is out of our hands. All we can do is believe and hope. I never ceased to believe in M.'s and Akhmatova's poetry. (21)

One must not mistake her concern that others will read her husband's work for a willingness to allow them to dictate to her the worth of that work. On the contrary, she is rather harsh in her pronouncements about them: "I would love to know who these readers are. I have no great faith in their quality, since they were brought up on a rationalist pap which has impaired their capacity to think logically - every idea is mulled over for them in a thousand ways before it actually reaches them" (22). Romola, on the other hand, considers the collective consensus on the *Ballets Russes* and her future husband as a measure of their worth. She is impressed by the "fantastic tales of the great heights of artistic achievement" (11) which precede the company to Budapest and describes Nijinsky as "the marvelous apparition the whole world had learned to admire" (15). She happily accepts the terms of membership into the Ballet (22) and assumes rather than condemns its

ruthless mores. Whereas Romola and her characters occupy a largely aesthetic space, one ruled by matters of taste and inveterate scheming, in Nadezhda's world situations repeatedly arise in which the characters choose not between staging arrangements, costumes or the like but between life and death: "With the best will in the world, N.N. could not bring herself to name five 'accomplices.' It was an act of free choice, a truly human gesture, and this is why she remains so human and has such a zest for life" (650). The question of responsibility resounds throughout Nadezhda's writing:

Poor, trembling creatures - we don't know what meaning is; it has vanished from a world in which there is no room any more for the Logos. It will return only if and when people come to their senses and recall that man must answer for everything, particularly for his own soul. (23);

Everyone of us, to some degree or another, had a share in what happened, and there is no point in trying to disclaim responsibility. (191)

While one would search Romola's writing for a similar passage in vain, and come away with the impression that she has the scruples of a Mme. de Merceuil and the self-reflexivity of a fruit-fly, her description of continuing with a second volume of memoirs in strikingly similar to Nadezhda's in terms of necessity and a sense of mission:

[it seemed] both *necessary* and desirable, for the history of art and of genius, and to help preserve the memory of the greatest and kindest human being I had ever known. (LYN, 419, italics added)

if the verse I have preserved is of some use to people, then my life has not been wasted and I have done what I *had to* do both for the man

who was my other self and for all those people whose humane, that is,
human instincts are roused by poetry. (HA, 23, italics added)

While their differing receptions would lead one to believe that these two women's writings are incomparable, this analysis, which focuses on their sense of obligation and duty as well as their mythologizing tendencies, would suggest otherwise.

CONCLUSION: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING AND THE POST/MODERN

Verstandet ihr diess Wort, oh meine
Brüder? Ihr seid erschreckt: wird
euren Herzen schwindlig? Kläfft
euch hier der Abgrund? Kläfft euch
hier der Höllenhund?...

Habt ihr Muth, oh meine Brüder?
Seid ihr herzhaft? Nicht Muth vor
Zeugen, sondern Einsiedler- und
Adler-Muth, dem auch kein Gott
mehr zusieht?

Kalte Seelen, Maulthiere, Blinde,
Trunkene heissen mir nicht herzhaft.
Herz hat, wer Furcht kennt, aber
Furcht zwingt, wer den Abgrund
sieht, aber mit Stolz.

Wer den Abgrund sieht, aber mit
Adlers-Augen, wer mit Adlers-Krallen
den Abgrund fasst: Der hat Muth.

Vom höheren Menschen, 2/4,
*Zarathustra*¹⁴⁷

The previous chapters explore a form of documentary self-representation which proceeds, and understands itself, as cultural engagement. They read the autobiographical texts of women who have intervened into their surrounding literary culture by textualizing as true a life-story which both was and was not their own. The subjects of the first part, Lou Andreas-Salomé and Simone de Beauvoir, wrote to entrench themselves as established, iconoclastic writers; the second pair, Maitreyi Devi and Asja Lacis, wrote as women responding to situations of portrayal turned betrayal; and finally, Nadezhda Mandel'shtam and Romola Nijinsky wrote as wives guaranteeing their husbands' artistic inheritance. The readings concentrate on the subtle mythologizing of the lives in question, more specifically, the conjunction of these lives and those of the culturally prominent others with whom the women were intimately involved.¹⁴⁸ The readings demonstrate how these autobiographical writings turn the intimate relationships in which their

authors were involved into masks, albeit ones with unusual, generative hermeneutic properties, ones which serve to recoup a sense of otherness so crucial in going beyond a strictly formal ethics. It is this relation to alterity which imbues individual ethics of personality with whatever moral substance they have. John Caputo's Dionysus maintains a trace of the rabbinical; Agnes Heller's Nietzsche is "Parsifalized" or "Levinasized." It is this alteric gesture which is enacted to varying degrees in these autobiographical texts, and to which the differences noted between the two subjects of each part can, and in the second section of this conclusion will, be ascribed. However before dealing with these differences, the theoretical underpinnings on which their similarity rests should be summarily restated.

What unites these women writers is a common tenor in the relational nature of their self-representation: fiercely independent, unshakably intransigent, all at the same time belie a definite interdependence. Will-filled statements may seem to evidence a strong sense of personal autonomy, yet that autonomy is unconventional, continually called into question and undermined by unabashed admissions of specific subservience vis-à-vis the men with whom they chose to remain in long-term relationships, as these relationship provided them the kind of freedom their strong characters insisted upon.⁴⁹ Upon tapping into the modern *Zeitgeist*, the sap that these women extracted all had a similarly distinctive, yet ambiguous, autonomous flavor. That sap now needs to be poured onto the sullied snow of the debate over the postmodern to order to discern from the resulting frozen configuration its relevance to the increasingly autobiographical tendencies in the academy. In identifying the ambiguously autonomous agency of my writing subjects, I am not downplaying the objectifying forces inherent in either the process of textualizing one's life or in the cultures in which we

all live. Rather, as will be accounted for in the opening section of the conclusion, my argument is intended as a parry to those forces; that is, it mirrors that which I claim is enacted in the six texts. Let me then in the concluding chapter of this project first isolate the issue of autonomy by relating it to the model of modern art, and then revisit the texts in question with an eye towards pulling if not tying together the threads relevant to ethics and postmodern scholarship. Targeting the potentiality and slipperiness of the Munchhausenesque proclivities residing in the Zarathustrian spirit of these autobiographical texts will prove the study's *coup de grâce*.

PORTRAIT OF THE ART-WORK AS AN OLD WOMAN

Wie geschieht diess doch! so fragte
ich mich. Was überredet das
Lebendige, dass es gehorcht und
befiehlt und befehlend noch
Gehorsam übt?

Von der Selbst-Überwindung,
*Zarathustra*¹⁵⁰

"Not the artist," writes Agnes Heller in *An Ethics of Personality*, "but the artwork (more precisely, the modern artwork) will stand for the model of Nietzsche's ethics of personality" (81). The key feature of the model, that which it shares with modern artwork, is a problematic sense of autonomy:

In modernist arts, the achievement of the autonomy of the object is a problem - the artistic problem. Autonomy is no longer provided by the conventions of an art, for the modernist artist has continually to question the conventions upon which his art had depended; nor is it furthered by any position the artist can adopt towards anything but his art. (Cavell, 116)¹⁵¹

The historical antecedents for this state are not applicable or relevant only to art, as the following description of this kind of art illustrates:

Autonomous art, art whose forms are no longer underwritten by or derived from myth or religion, metaphysics or tradition, whose forms are internal to each artistic domain itself (literary forms, musical forms, etc), this art has become problematic because autonomization makes the question of its sense, meaning, point, telos without any but an external, relative and contingent answer. (Osborne, 50)

Uprooted and adrift, the modern condition entails a continual search for the "sense, meaning, point, telos" previously to be found in tradition, and the continual creation of new myths and traditions, or revival of old ones. Similarly, as Heller so tirelessly repeats, "*the modern person is a contingent person*" (1990, 5, italics in original) and must continually imbue one's existence with the "sense, meaning, point, telos," which were a given in premodern times. In order for life to become meaningful and for "the disengaged, particular [modern] self, whose identity is constituted in memory... [to] find an identity," that life, *pace* Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self*, must be lived like a story (288-9). The women in this study, however, go beyond living life simply *like* a story à la Taylor and Paul Ricoeur.¹⁵² They live modernist lives, composing their lives *as* stories, written literally out of words and mythologies. In other words, they work to cross the life/art divide in the same way as Bürger suggests that avant-garde art does, only in the other direction. Whereas avant-garde artists such as the dadaists with their ready-mades or Marcel Duchamp with his *objets-trouvés* sought to overcome the insular world of autonomous aesthetic practice in art by drawing attention to its real world components, these women sought in their autobiographical writing to overcome the insular world of the aesthetic practice of bourgeois life by drawing attention to its artistic components. As we have seen, the query made of Romola - "Did she know

when she crossed the borderline between fact and fiction?" (N&R, 33) - is applicable to all of the others with the exception of Lacis, whose life was bound to the theater. The epigram at the beginning of Lou Andreas-Salomé's memoirs reads:

Human life - indeed all life - is poetry. It's we who live it, unconsciously day by day, like scenes in a play, yet in its inviolable wholeness It lives us, It composes us. This is something far different from the old cliché 'Turn your life into a work of art:' we are works of art - but we are not the artist.

Maitreyi Devi writes:

As I try to write the story of my life I can very well see that there is no story at all. How can there be? Stories emerge from contact with life. The contact and conflict of human experience and variety of efforts give colour to our life's picture. What story can nature evolve? Many incidents occur that are fierce but one cannot make stories out of them. (187)

Nadezhda Mandelshtam writes:

The fact that I have begun to ponder whether I had a task, and how well I have acquitted myself, is a sure sign that I have begun to recover my 'self.' In writing my first book, I excluded myself. This happened quite spontaneously, without any conscious intention: it was simply that I still did not exist. I came back to life only when my main task was at an end. (24)

Simone de Beauvoir writes:

I was particularly anxious to arouse the interests of the men: I tried to attract their attention by fidgeting and playing the ingenue,

waiting for the word that would snatch me out of my childhood limbo and really make me exist in their world. (*MDD*, 8)

But I do not feel a gap between the intention that incited me to write books and the books that I have written... I wanted to make myself exist for others by conveying, as directly as I could, the taste of my own life. (*ASD*, 463)

Nehamas notes that Nietzsche himself heeds Zarathustra's counsel to become who one is: "Characteristically, he [Nietzsche] follows it [Zarathustra's counsel] by making it the object of his writing as well as the goal of his life" (169). Seen in this light, realizing the desire to become "the poets of our life" (Nagl, 747), this desire to write oneself into history (Nehamas, 234) means not only moving beyond the *general* good and the *general* evil; it means doing so by linking life to an addressee,⁵³ to the inherently shared and thus ethical medium of words, and struggling to create out of them, and to express, one's own values.

ECCE MULIERES MODERNAE

Frei nennst du dich? Deinen
herrschenden Gedanken will ich
hören und nicht, dass du einem Joche
entronnen bist.
Vom Wege des Schaffenden,
*Zarathustra*⁵⁴

While all six women complicate their sense of autonomy, and the textually-oriented of them explicitly acknowledge the literary means of their existence, they do not all handle or resolve the tensions inherent in their autonomy in the same way. Returning by way of summary to the texts, one cannot avoid the observation that the question of control neatly cleaves the group in two. Nijinsky, Lacis and Beauvoir all make a point of their preference for situations in which they were needed and which offered

them the opportunity to control and shape others. As we have seen, Lacis's Russian memoir overflows with instances in which her expertise and usefulness are called upon. Time and again she mentions the way someone convinces her to accept a position organizing some revolutionary theatrical endeavor in Latvia or another. Lacis was well-aware of the Zarathustrian potential of her profession - to give children the self-confidence and the support to become what they are. However, it is not an entirely innocent, altruistic project. The hands of the director do not shape just herself, they also shape her charges: "I divided the plot into parts according to its main ideas and we began to act out scenes. The children didn't sense any interference from the director, any guiding hands. The improvisation was a fun game for them, an exciting adventure" (*RC*, 12). Her charges were not trusted to shape themselves; after all, they might make the wrong choice and become, God forbid, Mensheviks or fascists. This is the same unobtrusively guiding directorial role Evans identifies Beauvoir playing in Sartre's life:

For some thirty years de Beauvoir manages Sartre's emotional life; from a position of apparent detachment she guides him through the various complexities of his affairs and offers to him the comforting explanation that the reason why 'other' women become upset is because they have deluded beliefs about heterosexual love. (103)

It is the same role Algren accused her of playing in directing their visits so as to make for better material for her memoirs. In fact, it is common enough charge to be considered a trope. In *The Groves of Academe*, Mary McCarthy refers to it as the "Potter's Hand," more specifically, "the insidious egotism of the Potter's Hand, the desire to shape and mold the better-than-common clay and breathe one's own ghostly life into it - the teacher's besetting temptation" (75). It is not the veracity of these charges which is at issue here,

or even the charges themselves, as much as it is the question of whether and how the women themselves struck this pose in their autobiographical writing. As we have seen, Lacis not only admitted but took pride in the guiding, shaping nature of her work. Beauvoir too readily confessed to the satisfaction to be had from exerting her influence: "When I started to change ignorance into knowledge, when I started to impress truths upon a virgin mind, I felt I was at last creating something real..." (MDD, 45). Romola too seems to have taken such exertions for granted:

But Cambo assured us that Diaghilev would have to grant Vaslav the terms he asked. So he drew up a contract, that Vaslav was willing to go to South America, and that his salary was to be the same as in the U.S.A., payable, in gold dollars, one hour before the curtain rose at every performance. *I insisted* on such a clause. (N, 303, italics added)

Lou Andreas-Salomé, on the other hand, represents herself in the opposite manner, as exceedingly laissez-faire and even helpless in her dealings. Rilke himself was captivated by Russia, she merely enhanced and provided the frame in which these longings could be expressed:

But the greatest part of his energies he - *who had been deeply involved with Russian literature for a long time* [i.e. independently of her] - now dedicated to the study of the Russian language and national customs, since we were seriously planning for our grand voyage there. For a time this was tied to my husband's plan to take a trip through Transcaucasia into Persia, which, however, never materialized. Around Easter of 1899, we three left together to visit my family in Petersburg and then to Moscow. (116-7/70, italics added)⁵⁵

Similarly, Nadezhda Mandel'shtam had no illusions about influencing either her husband: "I never had the slightest influence on M., and he would have

thrown me over rather than his city" (118) or her circumstances: "We were silent. There was no point in objecting: he knew what he was doing" (332); "we knew too well there was no escaping anywhere... We used to tell an anecdote comparing our existence to life aboard ship: limitless ocean all around, but nowhere to go" (613). Maitreyi Devi too writes of being helpless in the face of a merciless "conspiracy of destiny" (227).

Concomitant with an insistence on agency in the texts of the women discussed in the second chapter of each of the three parts of this study, that is, Beauvoir, Lacis and Nijinsky, is a ceding of responsibility. Or expressed conversely, a deference to the agency of others in the texts of the women in the opening half of each chapter is accompanied by an assumption of responsibility. While Lou Andreas-Salomé, Maitreyi Devi and Nadezhda Mandel'shtam all laud themselves with this heaviest of burdens, their counterparts don't, and all for no apparent reason. One could ask of them, as Nadezhda Mandel'shtam does of the young woman she holds up as a shining example of "Surviving with Honour" towards the end of the second volume of her memoirs:

What is the source of N.N.'s independence and inner freedom? Being a true child of her times she believes in nothing, and talk about immutable values just makes her laugh. For her these are pure fictions, and good and evil are abstract categories to which she has never given a moment's thought - they simply have no place in her matter-of-fact mind. When I asked her: 'Why is it you behave well and not badly?' she replied without pausing to reflect: 'Because I want to.'

By such licence I am quite disarmed. (647)

One is equally disarmed by the way she, Devi and Lou Andreas-Salomé all spontaneously express the same type of desire to "do the right thing." One

could ask, reiterating the question of the ethical, how they know how to live, why it is that their answers to this fundamental question are of a piece. What is it that makes Maitreyi Devi express the following sentiment: "Freedom of course does not correspond to irresponsibility. I hope I have never used my unlimited freedom in a way that is unworthy of me" (168)? What is it that makes Lou Andreas-Salomé both have and write of nightmares in which:

I saw a multitude of characters from my stories whom I had abandoned without food or shelter. No one else could tell them apart, nothing could bring them home from wherever they were in their perplexing journey, to return them to that protective custody in which I imagined them all securely resting. (18/7)?

There is no answer, only a curious coincidence with respect to the seemingly obverse relation between agency and responsibility. Where controlling efforts are acknowledged, or even boasted of, these efforts in each case generate such strong resentment in at least one family member that a hostile "anti-memoir" is the result. In the case of Beauvoir, the posthumous publication of her correspondence with Sartre, which revealed the "Dangerous Liaisons" nature of their menage-à-trois machinations, prompted Bianca Lamblin's 1993 *Memoires d'une jeune fille dérangée (A Disgraceful Affair)*, in which she tells of how being involved with Beauvoir and Sartre eventually drove her to seek therapy from Jacques Lacan. Lacis's daughter, Dagmara Kimele, wrote a similarly scathing "Mommy Dearest" chronicling of her childhood in the 1996 *Asja: Rezisores Annas Laces dekaina dzive*, while Romola Nijinsky's youngest daughter, Tamara Nijinsky, offers somewhat less harsh of a condemnation of her mother in her 1991 *Nijinsky and Romola*. The form of critique offered in these "anti-memoirs" is of a much different, more intimate nature than the scholarly attacks to which these women have also

been subjected. They speak not only to the public stature of their targets but to the increasingly intimate nature of the discourse on public figures.¹⁵⁶ In our post-Auschwitzian reality, it is perhaps inevitable that the matter of morally questionable conduct eventually raise its shorn head and this is an important way in which the women in this project are to be seen as precursors of a particular skein of the postmodern, not of the pop-culture postmodern for which they first will be shown to be an antidote but rather of an interdisciplinary, increasingly autobiographically-oriented academic postmodern.

PRECURSING THE POSTMODERN: ENCOUNTERS ARTISTIC, ACADEMIC AND OTHERWISE

Ich lehrte sie all mein Dichten und
Trachten: in Eins zu dichten und
zusammen zu tragen, was
Bruchstück ist am Menschen und
Räthsel und grauser Zufall, -
- als Dichter, Räthselrather und
Erlöser des Zufalls lehrte ich sie an
der Zukunft schaffen, und Alles, das
war -, schaffend zu erlösen.
Von alten und neuen Tafeln, 3,
*Zarathustra*¹⁵⁷

A) HOPE AGAINST REPRESENTATION

A preliminary point should be made regarding the overcoming of autonomy evidenced in these autobiographical texts as it anticipates the argument to be made about modernist and postmodernist art in this section. This hallmark of Bürger's avant-garde evidences a certain commonality with the postmodern critique of representation and the subject.¹⁵⁸ In "Adorno, Poststructuralism and the Critique of Identity," Peter Dews outlines the convivial symbolic which Borges's fish story, "The Fauna of Mirrors," provides Lyotard for his critique of modern subjectivity in his 1973 essay on the painter Jacques Monory:

Borges imagines these beings [these fish] as forces, and this bar [the bar between representation and the represented] as a barrier; he imagines that the Emperor, the Despot in general, can only maintain his position on condition that he represses the monsters and keeps them on the other side of the transparent wall. The existence of the subject depends on this wall, on the enslavement of the fluid and lethal powers repressed on the other side, on the function of representing them. (cited in Dews, 4)

This protest at the coercive unification implied by the notion of a self-conscious, self-identical subject is, as Dews reminds us, one of the central themes of poststructuralism. In the importance they grant to others in their own self-representations, the six subjects of this study similarly register a protest at such coercive unification, and render inoperative the notion of a self-identical subject, which is in keeping with the relational nature of both women's writing and women's subjectivity:

feminist critics have explicitly rejected accounts of the 'birth' of human consciousness in the originary moments of Western individualism, often turning to psychoanalytic theories to explore psychic identity and models of intersubjectivity in autobiographical texts, including the concept of 'relational' selves proposed by theorists such as Nancy Chodorow. (Marcus, 220)¹⁵⁹

As we have seen, however, the women in this study offer a twist to this general tendency: they take the fact of their relationality as a keystone, and play upon it. Strong, sleek fish, not dangerous ones like the moray eels associated with the biblical Salomé in *fin-de-siècle* art, but spirited, intelligent fish, like porpoises, these six were satisfied with neither attaining complete autonomy nor in remaining subserviently relegated to

the station in life to which their gender tried to condemn them. They swam purposively in and against the cultural current, jumping purposively back and forth between the streams of life and art.

No matter the direction, it seems to be the attempt at a paradoxical non-crossing of, or the deliberately unsuccessful attempt to cross, the life/art divide which is the precondition, though not the guarantor, of critical potential. To reiterate, the stuff of these women's existences bears a striking resemblance to modernist art, "the sort of art for which the existence, the meaning of art is a question, and that question is posed by art's autonomy" (J. Bernstein, 1989, 64). In a more recent essay on Adorno's aesthetics, Bernstein draws a parallel similar to the one I am making here: "What Ibsen discovered, and what remains a central ingredient in Adorno's aesthetics, is the isomorphism or homology between the position of women in society and the position of art and art works in society" (1997, 170). More specifically, the parallel I would like to draw here is not with any pauschal notion of modernist art but rather with one particular stream of it. The analysis of the relation between the Surrealists and other historical avant-garde movements that Richard Wolin offers in "Kulchur Wars: The Modernism/ Postmodernism Controversy Revisited" is helpful in understanding how the women in this study act to counter, to albeit differing but nonetheless substantial degrees, the nonauratic, simulacric postmodern sense of non-identity continuing to amass pop-cultural capital.¹⁶⁰ Just as the Surrealists found a way to critique the public sphere of art while still remaining art, so too did these women find a way to critique public stricture of personal identity without surrendering their own ethics of personality.¹⁶¹ As Wolin so ably recapitulates, the Surrealists found a third way, that of "de-aestheticized autonomous art":

This category suggests that surrealism's uniqueness lies in its having simultaneously negated the aura of affirmation characteristic of art for art's sake, while nevertheless refusing to abandon the modern requirement of aesthetic autonomy... [Theirs is] a still aesthetic attack on bourgeois aestheticism. It consciously divests itself of the beautiful illusion, the aura of reconciliation, projected by art for art's sake, while refusing to overstep the boundaries of aesthetic autonomy, beyond which art degenerates to the status of merely a thing among things. (21)

The historical avant-garde and its provocations, on the other hand, in desperately seeking to avoid being works of art, ironically found its socio-critical program quickly assimilated by the commercializing pressures of the bourgeois art-world. The same fate awaited postwar, postmodernist art which "behaves as if the radical transformation of material life sought by the avant-garde has already been achieved. But since this is not in fact the case, what results instead is merely the false sublation of autonomous art" (23). In other words, instead of resulting in a potentially productive, critical sublation, modernism's dialectical anxiety of being and non-being devolves into postmodernist simulacra. In again drawing a parallel with the life side of the life/art divide, we find the development of postmodern pop-cultural models of identity. Like Wolin, I am less inclined to view popular culture as "a repository of spontaneous dissent and refusal" (29) and would also insist that "one must seriously question whether the proliferation of clone-like 'wannabes,' more firmly than ever ensconced in a consumer-oriented cultural identity, furthers the type of critical individuation that the notion of empowerment suggests" (29). The contrast the women in this study provide to such models is where the antidotal properties which I refer to in

the concluding remarks reside. Just as the Surrealists "proffered fragmentary works of art that are nonetheless still works" (21), these women offer hope in proffering fragmentary, ambiguously autonomous identities that are nonetheless still, and perhaps all the more so, identities.

B) HOPE ÜBER ALLES

Wachet und horcht, ihr Einsamen!
Von der Zukunft her kommen Winde
mit heimlichem Flügelschlagen; und
an feine Ohren ergeht gute
Botschaft.

Von der schenkenden Tugend, 2,
*Zarathustra*¹⁶²

The value of the women in this project, however, is beyond the antidotal. In their parallels with the Surrealists, they also provide a hitherto missing link in understanding at least one aspect of postmodern cultural production. In "Feminism and Postmodernism," Joanna Hodge succinctly diagnoses a major pitfall of many scholarly exegeses of the modern/postmodern condition: the relation of cultural formations to sociohistorical conditions. Her work, on the other hand, clearly:

presupposes that Benjamin, in his study *Baudelaire: Lyric Poet of High Capitalism*, has shown how modernism as developed by Baudelaire is a response to and articulation of the condition of modernity.

Furthermore, it supposes that Adorno's cultural Marxism is a development of Benjamin's analysis of modern cultural production as the articulation of the modern age, although the precise nature of their agreements and disagreements remains to be clarified. Their work establishes a connection of some kind between the condition of modernity and the cultural formation called 'modernism.' No such connection has been established between a condition called

'postmodern' and a cultural practice called 'postmodernism.'

Habermas's paper ("Modernity vs. Postmodernity") suffers from its presupposition that both connections have been established, when there is only an established connection between modernity and modernism. (90)

In the remainder of this conclusion, I would like to suggest a link to be forged in such a postmodern chain. Instead of proceeding from Benjamin's writings on Baudelaire, I would like to call on his essay on the Surrealists and suggest that their postmodern equivalent is a specific kind of writerly academic practice for which the women in this study are precursors.

Benjamin's Surrealism essay is subtitled "The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia."¹⁶³ Originally published in *Die Literarische Welt* in 1929, it identifies the task of the intelligentsia as one of overcoming the opiates of the people with the opiate of critique, or as Benjamin termed it, *profane illumination*: "the true overcoming of religious illumination certainly does not lie in narcotics. It resides in a *profane illumination*, a materialistic, anthropological inspiration, to which hashish, opium, or whatever else can give an introductory lesson" (179, italics in original). Fast-forward seventy years and one finds a preponderance of technological opiates, varied forms of mind candy which have not replaced the old ones but rather added to and considerably fortified their ranks. If one were to proffer a "Last Video of the Global Academic," one would find the task of literary criticism has not changed as much as mortified even further.¹⁶⁴ "To live in a glass house is a revolutionary virtue par excellence. It is also an intoxication, a moral exhibitionism that we badly need. Discretion concerning one's own existence, once an aristocratic virtue, has become more and more an affair of petit-bourgeois parvenus" (180). Benjamin wrote these

words without dreaming of the glass houses that would be created by future technological developments and the nostalgia for discretion they would in turn generate. Our simulacric glass houses are mined with nets of images and webs of intrigue. The last academic video seems in danger of mimicking its socio-political counterpart caught in automatic loop mode, stuck on a never-ending rollercoaster of scandal and destruction.¹⁶⁵ In the final remarks which follow, the concept of autobiographical writing will be reiterated in order to shine an interrogatory light on the autobiographical element in the postmodern academy.

Beauvoir's status as "mother" of feminism, however problematic such a designation may be,¹⁶⁶ behooves us to question what exactly it is that she is supposed to have given birth to. The traditional answer of "feminism and women's studies" does not capture the full scope of the changes which Beauvoir's writing helped to inaugurate. Beauvoir herself signals the direction, in:

point[ing] out the fact that her autobiography generated a great response from women who, like her, practiced an intellectual profession: 'In contrast, other readers are women of my own age who have had to go through the same struggle in order to lead the life of an intellectual. I have received many letters from women working in education.' (Vintges, 118)

Here is the final paragraph of Moi's monograph on Beauvoir, slightly truncated:

Simone de Beauvoir now belongs to a past generation. Her pioneering example has opened the way for women to be taken seriously - and loved - as intellectuals and as women. On the threshold of the twenty-first century, she still makes it easier for us to live our lives

as we wish, without regard to patriarchal conventions. My awareness of the complexities and contradictions of her life has added depth to my admiration for Simone de Beauvoir.... Reading her autobiography, I am struck at once by her strength, energy and vitality, and by her helplessness and fragility. When I realize how hard it was for her to gain a sense of autonomy and independence, I find her achievements all the more admirable. To admire, however, is not to worship. We do not need to be perfect, Simone de Beauvoir teaches us, we simply need never to give up. To me, that is both a comforting and an utterly daunting project. (256-7)

This warm, personal, very moving conclusion evidences more than Beauvoir's influence. It is also exemplary of the kind of scholarship increasingly being produced. Going against the grain of what pseudo-scientific prose was once supposed to sound like in its ample use of personal pronouns and emotive language, Moi's text presents difficulties in terms of genre classification similar to that of its object of study. Moi problematizes her book's methodological stance in the introduction, asking "what I am to call this thing I have written?" (7). Because it goes beyond the traditional categories of biography and literary criticism to "contain reception studies, sociology of culture, philosophical analysis, psychoanalytic inquiry and feminist theory" (7), she eventually settles for "personal genealogy," at which point she footnotes Biddy Martin as sharing her impatience with generic limitations. Shoshana Felman goes a deconstructive step further in *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference* in suggesting that "we might be able to engender, or to access, our story only indirectly - by conjugating literature, theory, and autobiography together through the act of reading and by

reading, thus, into the texts of culture, at once our sexual difference and our autobiography as missing" (14):

If the critical suggestion I am making in this book is that people tell their stories (which they do not know or cannot speak) through the others' stories, then the very force of insight of this critical suggestion was at once borne out and actively enacted, put in motion, by the process of my writing which was driven, in effect, by the ways in which I was precisely missing my own implication in the texts before me. (18)¹⁶⁷

Upon finishing Moi's and Felmen's books, one cannot but feel a sense of admiration for them similar to that which Moi professes for Beauvoir. Theirs is engaged, passionate writing,¹⁶⁸ writing which encourages the reader by example, by the sense that the writing process has led the writer to some kind of personal realization. Could we not call theirs autobiographical writing and, if so, what is its relation to or place in the postmodern?

At the onset of this study, autobiographical writing was introduced as involving the intervention with one's own lived experience into one's surrounding written culture based on one's own lived experience and its realization into writing. Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo*, despite or on account of its flamboyantly, ironically euphoric style and copious citations from the decidedly fictional *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, can thus be read as Nietzsche documenting his intervention into his surrounding written culture. Moi's work, and Felman et al's, is not substantially different, except for the important difference that they do not take their own lives as the object of study but subtly weave them through their theoretical explorations. Two trends in recent academic writing show how blurry this boundary is becoming: the increasing number of predominantly minority scholars

(referred to in the introduction as the "counter-postmodern," i.e. not necessarily heterosexual WASP male) who are forging new, increasingly personal styles of scholarship and the increasing number of autobiographies by "intellectuals" in general.⁶⁹ To the latter belong such works as Alice Kaplan's *French Lessons*, Marianna De Marco Torgovnick's *Crossing Ocean Parkway: Readings by an Italian American Daughter*, Jill Ker Conway's *The Road to Coorwain*, Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days*, Ronald Fraser's *In Search of a Past*, Carolyn Steedman's *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Study of Two Lives* and Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*, as well as essays such as Linda Hutcheon's "A Crypto-Ethnic Confession," to scratch but the tip of the iceberg. However, where inroads are being made is within the former grouping of "personal criticism" which, as Nancy Miller elucidates, "entails an explicitly autobiographical performance within the art of criticism" (1991, x).⁷⁰ Works such as Christine Overall's *A Feminist I: Reflections from Academia*, Alvin Kernan's *In Plato's Cave* and Vieda Skultans's *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* as well as collections such as the 1993 *The Intimate Critique: Autobiographical Literary Criticism* and the 1996 *Confessions of the Critics* are exemplary here in challenging the separation of the autobiographical and the theoretical, stretching and enlivening the boundaries of academic discourse by incorporating the autobiographical impulse, and in so doing proving these categorical distinctions amorphous at best. It is here that Georges May's non-definition of autobiography proves suggestive.⁷¹ If autobiography is indeed "a literary attitude, which we have come readily to recognize because we have all read so much autobiographical literature" (320), then one could also argue that with the amount of cross-over in recent writing, it is also an academic attitude which is easily recognizable, this new non-genre of "personal criticism."

It turns out, however, that some forms of this autobiographical academic output attempt to be more equal than others. In order to weigh their respective equalities, the designation of autobiographical writing, as opposed to an amorphous non-definition of autobiography, is appropriate, not as a generic category as such but rather as a critical reading strategy. When we read texts with an eye towards considering them as autobiographical writing, we are interrogating their depiction of relationships: with themselves, with important others and with the culture at large. As I put it in the introduction, we are reading empathetically in search of empathy. In other words, we are attempting to measure them by the critical yardstick of Benjamin's rather enigmatic "moral exhibitionism," a quality that acts to counterbalance what Wolin has considered "perhaps the greatest deficiency of affirmative cultural criticism":

its shameless fetishization of the concept of culture itself: its treatment of culture as something independent, divorced from the life-process of society. In truth, culture is valuable only when it remains true to its implicit critical capacities. Its independence from society allows it the breathing-space required to reflect on society with critical acumen, rather than to turn its back on the social world in the celebration of eternal verities. (41)

Whereas Wolin's interest is the legacy of this century's European totalitarianism and philosophy and its lessons for the American (academic) mindset, my ears have discerned the echoes of this legacy in the troublingly unthinking exuberance in much of the recent autobiographical outpourings. "I write this as part of a community of creative critics refusing to be co-opted by the usual critical conventions of impersonality coupled with one-upmanship and the linear 'logic' that keeps the poetic and personal from the

professional and theoretical," declares Diane Freedman at the end of her "Border Crossing as Method and Motif in Contemporary American Writing, or, How Freud Helped Me Case the Joint" (21), the lead-off essay in *The Intimate Critique*, continuing: "We must write out of that psychically unrestful juncture - a juncture dangerous for tenure, publication, and promotion - of the personal and the theoretical, in the realm where knowledge is not separated from poetry, where borders of self and other and one genre or language and another collide" (21). The danger to which Freedman alludes seems more rhetorical than real; her "we" has a disturbingly anonymous, congratulatory ring to it.⁷² The collision of borders elides any critical breathing-space. Here it is not eternal verities which are being celebrated, but ones which, if successfully implemented, threaten to become as monolithic as the system they would replace.⁷³ Unlike in Moi's work, there is not the same sense that a personal methodology has been cobbled together out of thoughtful, individual study. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl also insists on this distinction: "Identity is not insight. And autobiography that ends where it began, that defensively or offensively armors an identity rather than journeys in search of one, is simply a weapon, not an education" (17).

The direction indicated by our opening theoretical signpost, Hal Foster's "anti-aesthetic," is now discernable. In determining whether critique "destructures the order of representations in order to reinscribe them" (xv), the focus is thus directed at the manner in which the order of representations are reinscribed, if at all, and whether a critical threshold of independence has been attained, that critical threshold before which declarations of interdependence are dangerous and after which imperative.

The quantity and spectrum of recent autobiographical output on the part of academics is an extraordinary development, begging the question of

why it should be that as the technologically-enhanced vice of cultural homogenization and commodification has tightened, it has been matched or perhaps even surpassed in fervent written declarations of identity.⁷⁴ It has not been the purpose of this study to analyze or account for this trend, and it would therefore be presumptuous at this point to pretend an answer. However, as impetus for further study, I would like to make the following suggestion: that postmodernity is suffering from an Alzheimer's of the soul characterized by the same progressive memory and identity loss as its physiological counterpart, and that it is in need of antibodies such as the autobiographical writings of the six subjects of this study. These women do not presume to tell their readers how to live, or how to write. They simply tell of how they have lived and what they feel life has taught them, of how they pulled themselves out of the various beds of quicksand life scattered across their paths, with the tacit assumption that this knowledge will somehow be of use. As Deidre Bair notes:

If [Beauvoir's] answers and actions disappointed others, she had a simple yet abrasive answer for them: 'Well, I just don't give a damn. It's my life and I lived it the way I wanted. I'm sorry to disappoint all the feminists, but you can say that it's too bad so many of them live only in theory instead of in real life. It's very messy in the real world, and maybe they should learn that.' (642-3, n14)

When confronted with others and their less-than-godlike dimensions, one is faced with choices and with messiness, which some choose to acknowledge and others not. As the textual representation of those choices is a paramount choice in and of itself, readings of autobiographical texts that reconstruct them in terms of those choices will have found a way to counteract art's and life's perverse potential to go beyond good to evil.

NOTES

'[O]ne morning [Zarathustra] rose with the dawn, stepped before the sun, and spoke to it thus: 'You great star, what would your happiness be had you not those for whom you shine?

For ten years you have climbed up to my cave: you would have gotten fed up with your light and with the journey had it not been for me and my eagle and my serpent (Prologue, 1).

All translations of Nietzsche are mine, based on both the Kaufmann and Hollingdale translations. When the name Zarathustra appears italicized, it should be taken as referring to this text, otherwise Nietzsche's prophet is meant.

²Companions the creator seeks, not corpses, not herds, not believers. Kindred creators, the creator seeks, those who write new values on new tablets.

Companions the creator seeks, those to harvest with: for everything is ripe for harvesting around them. But the creator lacks a hundred sickles: so the ears of corn are husked in great annoyance.

Companions the creator seeks, and such as know how to whet their sickles. Destroyers they will be called, and despisers of good and evil. But they are the ones who harvest, and who celebrate (Prologue, 9).

³It is necessary to learn to *look away* from oneself in order to see *much* - every climber of mountains needs this hardness (The Wanderer).

⁴See, for example, Douglas Johnson's review entitled "La Grande Sartreuse."

⁵Works such as Schmidt Machey's 1956 *Lou Salomé, inspiratrice et interprète de Nietzsche, Rilke et Freud*, Angela Livingstone's 1984 biography *Lou Andreas-Salomé. Her Life (as Confidante of Freud, Nietzsche and Rilke) and Writings (on Psychoanalysis, Religion and Sex)* and Werner Ross's 1992 *Lou Andreas-Salomé: Weggefährtin von Nietzsche, Rilke, Freud* make evident this tendency.

⁶This is not to imply that the second half of the twentieth century has been any less tragic, nor to create the misleading impression that, with the exception of Lou Andreas-Salomé, these women no longer lived to see it. However, it is primarily the turbulence up to and including World War II which set the course for their writing and thus it is that period which I wish to draw attention to here.

⁷While these educations may seem enviable from a late 20th century North American perspective, one should note that compared to those available to their male counterparts, they are not particularly remarkable. Toril Moi's *Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman* offers a good account of the educational opportunities available to Beauvoir and her contemporaries.

⁸It is not the intention of this study to tackle the psychoanalytic implications of the particular familial constellations in question. Readers who find the biographies as they are presented here to be psychoanalytically suggestive are encouraged to consult Jessica Benjamin's *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference*, particularly chapter 4, "Father and Daughter, Identification with Difference: A Contribution to Gender Heterodoxy" (115-43). Benjamin turns the tables on interpretations of penis envy which emphasize the girl's need to identify with the father as a *figure* of separation from the preoedipal mother and argues that it is the father, not the phallus, which matters in both boys' and girls' psychic development:

The rapprochement girl's wish for a penis is not a self-evident response to anatomical difference. She desires it even as the boy cherishes it... because she is struggling to individuate. Girls seek what toddler boys recognize in their fathers and wish, through identification, to affirm in themselves - recognition of their own desire. And their ambivalence around separation may be more intense than that of boys because of the bond of likeness between mother and daughter. All the more reason for them, too, to seek a different object in whom to recognize their independence. This other object is very often the father, whose otherness is guaranteed and symbolized by his other genital. (125)

However, the process of identification can only be successful when it is reciprocal, that is, when the father identifies with his child and makes himself available as a mirror of desire. Problems often arise for girls, according to Benjamin, when patriarchal fathers are less than forthcoming in this regard and refuse their daughters recognition. Benjamin's hypothesis that "incorporation is a means of becoming the ideal object rather than an end in itself" (129) and her question of whether "a more positive father-daughter relationship [could] in fact allow a different integration of

identification" (126) receive striking confirmation in the cases of "Zarathustra's sisters."

⁹I refer here to Smith and Watson's collection, *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography*. The exponential increase in both autobiographical writing and scholarship since the end of World War II is a noteworthy and suggestive trend, nicely captured in the entry on "autobiography" in the 1991 edition of the *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*: "Since the Second World War almost anyone who has achieved distinction in life - and many who have not - has written an account of his [sic] life; especially politicians, statesmen and high-ranking members of the services" (73). An indication of the growth in the scholarship on this topic is to be found in the MLA bibliography where the number of references for autobiography grew from 617 in 1963-80 to 5549 between 1981-98. Similar growth is also to be found for memoirs (596 to 1887) and for life-writing (18 to 143). One will note that these numbers take into consideration only work on autobiography and not the increasingly autobiographical nature of academic work in general.

¹⁰I should add that postmodernity is understood here, as it is in Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan's *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* and Smith and Watson's collection, among others, as a historical situation "characterized by the global reach of late commodity capitalism, the widespread bureaucratization of all aspects of corporate life, the shift to electronic communications networks that are altering notions of time and space, the condition of cultural asymmetries, and the interrogation of received concepts of a universal, rational, and autonomous humanist self" (Smith and Watson, 3).

¹¹Anais Nin is a particularly exemplary case in point.

¹²I allude here, of course, to Habermas's assault on Nietzsche as chief promulgator against the enlightenment project, its rationality and progressive emancipation. Nietzsche has been heralded as a "turning point" to the postmodern, if not the postmodern herald incarnate. For a concise synopsis of the debate surrounding Nietzsche's role in Habermas's critique of the postmodern condition, see Nagl.

¹³To take but two examples: Axel Honneth distinguishes Nietzschean affirmation from Hegelian recognition in "Pluralization and Recognition:

On the Self-Misunderstanding of Postmodern Social Theories" in *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy*, while Gilles Deleuze's approach in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* similarly emphasizes that: "The lesson of the eternal return is that there is no return of the negative. The eternal return means that being is selection. Only that which affirms or is affirmed returns" (189).

⁴They have discovered themselves who say, 'This is *my* good and evil'; with that they have reduced to silence the mole and dwarf who say, 'Good for all, evil for all.'... 'This is *my* way; where is yours?' - thus I answered those who asked me 'the way.' For *the* way - does not exist (Of the Spirit of Gravity, 2).

⁵I will return in the concluding chapter of this study to Georges May's assertion that "[a]utobiography is neither a genre, nor a form, nor a style, nor even a language, as has been argued - often with considerable skill - by one or the other of the chief contemporary theorists of this kind of literature. Rather it is something much vaguer and more general: a literary attitude, which we have come readily to recognize because we have all read so much autobiographical literature, but which simply does not lend itself to the would-be scientific approaches featured in most trends of contemporary literary theory" (320). Writing in the wake of Lejeune's autobiographical pact, which he indeed cites, May's is an odd and oddly productive premise, if one specifies, as I will in the conclusion, what it is that we recognize as autobiographical.

⁶Marlene Kadar discusses this point in her introduction to the 1992 collection, *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice*.

⁷I am indebted to Johanna Meehan for drawing this point to my attention.

⁸This position is most notably staked out by Habermas in "Modernity: An Incomplete Project."

⁹For a good discussion of the debate between Gadamer and Derrida, see Michelfelder and Palmer.

²⁰While it is true that these others tended to be male, I am not arguing here for any kind of *écriture féminine autobiographique*, nor attributing the fact that these categories do not fit the subjects of this study solely to their gender. Obviously there are many women writers whose writings do mesh well with these categories.

²¹Beauvoir saw herself as a socially-committed writer. Lou Andreas-Salomé's interest was not in creating beautiful prose but in offering well-reasoned critiques of, among others, Ibsen, Nietzsche and, later, Freudian theory. Her fictional work was published reluctantly, and only out of financial considerations. Neither Mandel'shtam nor Nijinsky considered themselves writers at all, while Lacis remained firmly rooted in the pedagogic potential of the theater. The only one for whom the designation "literary artist" could be considered is Maitreyi Devi. However, while she certainly paid a great attention to the aesthetic element of her autobiographical text, the woman she creates in it is never figured to be an artist as such.

²²By "force field" Adorno intends "a relational interplay of attractions and aversions that constitute the dynamic, transmutational structure of a complex phenomenon" (Jay, 14).

²³See Mozejko's "Literary Modernism: Ambiguity of the Term and Dichotomy of the Movement" for a thorough discussion of the tendencies of the different national scholarships.

²⁴And increasingly often, both. The Bill Clinton set of dolls in which the smallest is a cigar is an excellent example of this conflation.

²⁵It is perhaps worth noting in passing that R.J. Hollingdale, one of the noted English translators of Nietzsche, would surely object to this usage on grounds of sloppiness. In "The Hero as Outsider," he makes much of the difference between legend and myth: "Legend is fiction presented as truth. The word is often used as if it were synonymous with myth, but legends differ from myths in that, while myths, being fictions about gods, are necessarily set in what is imagined as the very remote past, legends, being fictions about heroes, can attach themselves to the people or events of any period, including the most recent" (72-3). My usage of this term is not in keeping with Hollingdale's but rather with Barthes' productively semiotic approach to "mythologies," as will immediately become apparent.

²⁶Mary Oppen, wife of American poet George Oppen, is the only other possible candidate for inclusion I found. She could have been included in the chapter with Mandel'shtam and Nijinsky, if it were the purpose of this study to develop a typology and not work comparatively. However, it would be difficult to find further subjects to include in such a study as most wives resemble not the irrepressible Mrs. Oppen but Elisabeth Bacon Custor of whom

Shirley Leckie writes: "all the factors in Elizabeth's early life, including her family, her education, and the books she read reinforced her attachment to the prevailing middle-class ideology, based on nineteenth-century domestic ideals" (xix).

²⁷Translation of the term *Übermensch* is hazardous at best. Given that the subjects of this study are female, "super-man" and "over-man" are inappropriate. More gender-conscious solutions would include such possibilities as "over-person" and "over-human." In lieu of an unprovocative translation, the term is rendered here in the original.

²⁸For *that* is who I am through and through: reeling, reeling in, raising up, raising, a raiser, cultivator and disciplinarian, who once counseled himself, not for nothing: Become who you are! (The Honey Sacrifice).

²⁹For a bibliography of work that addresses the question of Nietzsche and women to 1994, see Burgard, also the section in Pauline Johnson's "Nietzsche Reception Today" on "Feminist Readings" and, for an Eastern European perspective, Tadeusz Slawek's "The Eye and the Body. Some Remarks on the Philosophy of the *Baba*."

³⁰Anna Alexander's "The Eclipse of Gender: Simone de Beauvoir and the *Différance* of Translation" provides a concise overview of Beauvoir reception and how it has been affected by translation.

³¹Nehamas prefers Kaufmann's translation. I have opted for *eternal return* as I am not intending to invoke events or series, for which *recurrence* is admittedly better suited. While one could just as easily speak of having one's life recur as one assembles an autobiography, it is more common to speak of returning to the past, and I want to emphasize the more active connotations of returning, not the involuntary ones of recurring.

³²For a good discussion on the concept of "persona" in autobiography, see Renza.

³³Cf. Agnes Heller's *An Ethics of Personality*: "Whether Nietzsche had syphilis or not, no one knows. But what one can know is that he manoeuvred himself into a philosophical situation (and philosophy was his entire life) where madness was the only escape left" (301, n50).

³⁴If I might be pardoned a rather pop analogy, in effect what Nietzsche is doing is likening the Christian tradition to the *SS Titanic* and warning people that when it sinks, as he is convinced it *must*, they had better be

prepared to rescue themselves because that particular religious tradition, while it preaches equality and tolerance, when push comes to shove will turn out to be a sham and have reserved seating in the too few life-boats, and those so privileged will simply sit there and let the underprivileged drown. As we know from our vantage-point at the other end of a predominantly genocidal century, he was not far wrong.

³⁵When first introducing the *Übermensch*, in his speech to the folk gathered in the marketplace, Zarathustra also equates it with meaning: "Behold, I teach you the *Übermensch*! The *Übermensch* is the meaning of the earth."

³⁶Here is but one example of why it is wrong to read John Caputo's distinction in *Against Ethics* between heteromorphism (*heteros* in the sense of multiplicity, difference as discharge, as forces differentiating themselves à la Deleuze and Nietzsche) and heteronomism (*hetero* as *alter*, as alterity to be respected, before which one is responsible à la Levinas) as fixed, as Eva Plonowska Ziarek does in "Toward a Radical Female Imaginary: Temporality and Embodiment in Irigaray's *Ethics*." One must not forget that Caputo's Dionysus is as rabbinical as his rabbi is Dionysian (see chapter 3 on "Dionysus vs. the Rabbi").

³⁷Nor, it goes without saying, is it in either J. Hillis Miller's deconstructive or John Barbour's theocratic vein.

³⁸It's strange. Zarathustra knows little of women, and yet he's right about them! Is this because nothing's impossible with women? And now take a little truth as thanks! I'm certainly old enough for it!... Are you going to the ladies? Don't forget the whip! (Of Old and Young Women).

³⁹By highlighting this one factor, I am not minimizing the importance of others, such as the question of Nietzsche's relationship with Wagner. However, consideration of the myriad ways all the various biographical factors have been received would be as unwieldy as it is redundant.

⁴⁰Like Angela Livingstone in her biography of Lou Andreas-Salomé, I find myself faced with a dilemma in deciding how to refer to this first of my subjects. Livingstone's solution, and reasoning, are as follows:

On most occasions I am calling the subject of this book by her Christian name, firstly because she was herself particularly attached to it and used it prominently, secondly because, while not a feminist, she was a very independent woman whom it seems wrong to call by

her father's or her husband's name, and thirdly because the other possible alternatives have distinct disadvantages: There are inappropriate connotations to 'Salomé,' Andreas-Salomé is long and awkward, and 'Lou A.-S.' sounds cold. (Prefactory Notes)

While it is admittedly rather long, I will be referring to her by her full name, as it is the name under which she wrote her memoir and I too find Pfeiffer's "Lou A.-S." awkward. "Lou Salomé" will be reserved for the young girl whose name this was when she encountered Nietzsche.

⁴²Because of the liberties taken by the English translator of *Lebensrückblick*, the quotations here are my own translations followed by the pages numbers from both the original and the English translation.

⁴³By her part, I mean both the role she played in its inception and in its reception. Her 1894 *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken* was one of the first and the most influential early interpretation, providing a substantial alternative to Elisabeth Nietzsche's multi-volume ode to her brother, which begins with the 1895 *Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches*. Ernst Behler's contribution to the 1996 *Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, "Nietzsche in the Twentieth Century," offers a succinct comparison and contextualization of these works.

⁴⁴This poem of Baratynsky's is cited in Osip Mandel'shtam's essay "On the Addressee."

⁴⁵Still is my sea's floor: who would guess that it harbors jocular monsters!

Imperturbable is my depth: but it glistens with swimming riddles and laughter (Of Those Who Are Sublime).

⁴⁶Koepcke identifies her study of Spinoza at this time as the foundational experience of her inner life (40-3).

⁴⁷The factor of poor health, both of Lou Andreas-Salomé and those around her such as Nietzsche, should not be overlooked in understanding the dynamics of their relations. The aura of frailty and death can serve to accentuate a strong character, and to add romance to an otherwise staid atmosphere. Such a theme provides the cultural book-ends for the second-half of the 19th century, from Alexandre Dumas fils' 1848 *La Dame aux camélias* to the 1896 premiere of Puccini's *La Bohème*. It also forms the backbone of Lou Andreas-Salomé's own analysis of Nietzsche.

⁴⁷That Lou correctly understood Nietzsche's intentions in this regard can be seen by the following: "I have the hope that she will become my pupil" wrote Nietzsche early in the summer to Malwida von Meysenbug, 'and if my life should not go on forever, my spiritual heiress'" (cited in Andrews, 55).

⁴⁸It should perhaps be noted that in return he expected her to accept the illegitimate child he had with their housekeeper Marie, which she did.

⁴⁹L. Cavani's 1977 film *Al di là del bene e del male*, G. Sinopoli's 1981 opera *Lou Salomé*, R. Jaccard's 1982 novel *Lou*, Lars Gustafsson's 1982 poem "Vor einem Porträt von Lou Andreas-Salomé," Utta Wagner's 1985 play *Lou Andreas-Salomé* and Irvin Yalom's 1992 novel *When Nietzsche Wept* are cases in point.

⁵⁰Cf. Hahn's *Frauen in den Kulturwissenschaften: Von Lou Andreas-Salomé bis Hannah Arendt*.

⁵¹"*Erlebnis*" has, for LAS, an almost magical quality to it, focussing on the incommensurability and unrepeatability of each event, in contrast with "*Erfahrung*" where events pool into a pond of greater knowledge and even wisdom.

⁵²For example, in Flaubert, Laforgue, Mallarmé, and Wilde who in turn served as inspiration for Richard Strauss.

⁵³Littau's "Refractions of the Feminine: The Monstrous Transformation of Lulu" is a helpful overview of recent Lulu reception but, typically, does not mention the connection with Lou Andreas-Salomé.

⁵⁴I intend this term in the spirit of Ross's concluding chapter on "Das Märchen von der schönen Lou" (The Fairytale of Lovely Lou).

⁵⁵Lou Andreas-Salomé was no stranger to such shenanigans, having been duly initiated by Nietzsche's sister:

It is worth remembering that Lou, who kept well out of all controversy and never attempted to justify herself or to answer Elisabeth publicly, certainly knew that her character was torn to shreds in books that many people were reading.... Fifty year later (in May 1932) Freud wrote to Lou: 'Often and often I have felt angry on finding your relationship to Nietzsche mentioned in a way that was obviously hostile to you and could not possibly be in accord with the truth. You have endured it all, you have been much too noble; won't you finally, in the most dignified manner, come to your own defence?' (Livingstone, 56).

⁵⁶Freud provides an instructive counter-example. As Martin reminds us, their friendship was Lou Andreas-Salomé's "only pedagogical relation that displaced that hierarchical gender divide and inevitable appropriation characterizing other pedagogical exchanges, other all-too-conventional scenes of seduction and tragedy" (a, 190).

⁵⁷Or not, as the case may be. One will remember that Lou Andreas-Salomé did not allow herself to become a mother, choosing to initiate a miscarriage when she found herself carrying Pineles's child. Her oblique confession in her memoirs reads: "There can be no doubt that the failure to experience motherhood bars a person from the most valuable part of being a woman. I remember how astonished someone once was when, in a long discussion of similar matters in my later years, I confessed, 'Do you know I never dared to bring a child into the world?'" (35-6/18).

⁵⁸She again identifies herself as a stranger in joining Freud's psychoanalytic circle:

A stranger simply entered the room, was received without love or hate, was calmly introduced to the work at hand - and was exposed to something more overwhelming than anyone can imagine who had not experienced it firsthand.

The years passed, age thinned the ranks of my contemporaries as the war had thinned the ranks of the young - and the stranger stayed. (183/115).

⁵⁹Koepcke, 382: "Together with the title *Looking Back* is already indicated what these pages are not intended and shouldn't be: gossip."

⁶⁰'Why?' said Zarathustra. 'You ask why! I do not belong to those of whom one may ask of their 'why.'

Is then my experience of yesterday? It was long ago that I experienced the reasons for my opinions.

Would I not have to be a barrel of memory, should I want to have my reasons with me?

It's already too much for me, keeping my opinions myself, and many a bird flies away (Of the Poets).

⁶¹Lucie is her maternal grandmother, Ernest-Narcisse her paternal grandfather, Marie for the Virgin Mary, and Simone was simply a popular name at that time.

⁶²Sartre's other star student from that time, Lionel de Roulet, would later marry Simone's sister H el ene and their harmonious relationship would provide "The Family" with some much-needed stability. Bost, who later married Olga, remained the most steadfast of Beauvoir's friends and lovers. In the 1980s, after Olga's and Sartre's deaths, he became Beauvoir's favorite drinking companion.

⁶³That this is an all-male list serves to highlight what an exception Beauvoir was.

⁶⁴Circumstance does make it appear that Beauvoir simply copy-catted Sartre as in other relationships. While her friendship with Sylvie le Bon began casually, they became closer in the fall of 1963 after the death of Beauvoir's mother, just as Sartre was growing closer to Arlette. However, she waited until after Sartre's death in 1980 to adopt Sylvie.

⁶⁵And I mean her affair with the country as well as with Algren. Her 1948 travel diary, *L'Am erique au jour le jour*, makes clear her fondness for the country.

⁶⁶It went unclaimed for the eighth time since its inception in 1901, the other years being 1914, 1918, 1935, and 1940-43.

⁶⁷It has been calculated that Beauvoir made 143 journeys between 1929 and 1962 (Vintges, 190, n10).

⁶⁸This tendency, which Moi links to that of patriarchal ideology to denounce women as "epistemological impostor(s)" and "false intellectual(s)" (92), is equally operative in the demonizing which dominated the early reception of Lou Andreas-Salom e. In fact, all of the ploys which Moi identifies in her chapter on "Clich es and Commonplaces in the Reception of Simone de Beauvoir" are equally relevant to the reception of Lou Andreas-Salom e, as amply demonstrated by Bidy Martin (b, 20-2).

⁶⁹The only other novel written after that, *Les Belles Images*, was in 1965 after a car accident and resulting hospitalization, and is by far the shortest of all her novels. Neither does the only philosophical essay written after that, the 1970 *Old Age* approach the tome-like dimensions of *The Second Sex*.

⁷⁰Baisn e's is perhaps the most thorough demonstration of how much of Beauvoir's autobiographical writing is prefigured in her fictional and philosophical work.

⁷²Vintges phrases it well: "Various authors have remarked that, in her autobiography, Beauvoir is extremely economical with the truth" (89). Beauvoir herself admits in *Force of Circumstance* to touching her story "up improvingly here and there in the telling" (363), an example of which is the following:

Sarraute questioned SdB's reliability as 'a historian of her time,' saying, 'Every time she mentioned me in her memoirs she made some comment about my 'blue' hat or dress or suit. She knew very well that I seldom if ever wore blue, always green.' I questioned SdB about this, and she said unhesitatingly, 'But I always *think* of her as blue.' (Bair, 459)

⁷³If one can judge from his withering responses, the fictional account of their time together seems, if anything, to have been closer, and more revealing, than its autobiographical counterpart (cf. Bair, 500, 658, n10).

⁷³William Barrett wrote in 1958: "French Existentialism, as a cult, is now as dead as last year's fad. Its leaders, to be sure, are still flourishing: Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir are still phenomenally productive, though in the case of Sartre we feel that he has already made at least his penultimate statement, so that now we have his message pretty completely" (8).

⁷⁴The Fullbrooks have done much valuable work in this regard.

⁷⁵The sombre, depressing tone of the tome as a whole, especially the famous, controversial closing, "I was gypped," are correspondingly downplayed.

⁷⁶In their correspondence, he was the "crocodile" while she was his "frog wife."

⁷⁷This is the subject of the third part of Moi's study, which addresses the psychic costs for Beauvoir in becoming "a woman admired by a whole world for her independence" (252).

⁷⁸And if they learned to laugh from me, still it is not *my* laughter that they have learned. But what does it matter? They are old people: they have their own way of convalescing, their own way of laughing; my ears have suffered worse without becoming gruff.

This day is a victory: it is already fading, it is fleeing, the spirit of gravity, my old archenemy! How good will this day end that began so badly and gravely! (The Awakening).

⁷⁹A comparison suggests itself at this point with Nietzsche, who was appointed to the Philology Chair in Basel at age 24 on the recommendation of Friedrich Richl, with whom he had studied in Bonn and Leipzig.

⁸⁰The purpose of Eliade's trip was to immerse himself in Indian philosophy and religion, and his main area of interest was yoga. His dissertation, which was later published in French as *Le Yoga: Immortalité et Liberté*, includes a section (vi) on "Yoga and Tantrism -- Mystical Eroticism, Maithuna and the Conjunction of Opposites." Maithuna is defined as the sexual rite by which the human couple become a divine couple (260). Like Eliade's, Dasgupta's work on yoga, the 1924 *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, also bears a dedication to the Maharaja.

⁸¹*Maitreyi* enjoyed a renaissance in the late 1960s in Romania when it was removed from the list of banned books, and became "a novel of the seventies, not unlike some Russian novels of the sixties (such as *The Master and Margarita*) which, although written in the twenties or the thirties, established themselves in Soviet literary consciousness only after the end of the Stalinist period" (Spariosu, 350).

⁸²The title of Eliade's half of this autobiographical duo, *Bengal Nights*, as well as its publication credits, betrays a belief that the French translation was in fact the original. As translator Catherine Spencer, unlike Ricketts and Johnson, has provided neither a translator's preface, nor notes of any kind; one is left to speculate on the translation's inception.

⁸³That the film *Les Nuits Bengali* was made and released the year after Eliade's death is also suggestive of such legal provisions having been taken.

⁸⁴In an interview, Eliade was to say of himself: "I wasn't English, luckily, and I came from a country that had never had any colonies, from a country that had in fact been treated like a colony itself for centuries. So I had no reason to have an inferiority complex. But, simply as a European, I did feel shame" (OL, 53).

⁸⁵Eliade's penchant for legends, mystery and magic becomes, in its turn, an object of ridicule, in Devi's romance. When in the final episode Amrita enters Mircea Euclid's office at the University of Chicago, he is portrayed as unable to deal with this concrete manifestation of his dreams and descends into absurd angst:

I entered the room. At once the old man made a sound, 'Ohh!', and sprang to his feet. Then he sat down and got up again and then turned his back towards me....

'Mircea, why are you standing with your back towards me?'

'I am waiting for someone else.'

'Who are you waiting for, Mircea?'

'For an Income-Tax Officer.'

'Income-Tax Officer!'

'Yes, yes, yes.' (251)

Two pages later, Mircea has still refused to look at her, and Amrita is becoming increasingly exasperated:

'I don't want to listen to all this chatter. Turn around, Mircea, I want to see you.'

He is standing but unsteady - there is about three yards space between us - so I raise my voice. We are quite old, maybe our hearing is weak. He appears confused. 'How can I see you? Did Dante ever think he would see his Beatrice with eyes of flesh?'

I am trembling. I am angry at his confusion. This man really lives in an unreal world of fantasy. From where does he bring in Dante and Beatrice? (253)

Whether Amrita is right or not, whether she was "a simple little girl who sometimes played the philosopher" and not an enigma, whether the mystery was all Mircea's creation or not, the point remains that she is unable to "free him from his world of fantasy" (255), to awaken him, to make him see her in "this real world."

⁸⁶Her husband, like F. C. Andreas, came from a family in which men were not expected to be lords and masters: "I was pleasantly surprised to know the men folk of my husband's family. They never lorded it over others, women were the real mistresses of their homes. I had noticed in many other families that all the best things were reserved for the master of the house. This could never happen here: the men would take no advantage over the women. On the contrary, when the wife was cooking the husband tried to fan her in spite of her embarrassed protests! In fact I had never before seen so many good people in one family" (168).

⁸⁷Companions the creator sought once and children of his hope: and behold, he found that he couldn't find them, unless he created them himself first.

Thus I am in the middle of my work, going to my children and returning from them: for his children's sake, Zarathustra must fully realize himself.

For one loves completely only one's child and one's work; and where there is great love for oneself, there is pregnancy emblematic: that's what I have found (Of Involuntary Bliss).

⁸⁸She was hospitalized for a neural disorder and not, as her German memoir would have it, because of a nervous breakdown. I will address the hostile German forces which conspired to paint a negative portrait of her, and this portrait's similarities to the one Eliade painted in *Maitreyi*, presently.

⁸⁹This was related to me in August 1998, in private conversation with one of her favorite actresses, Maria Adamova.

⁹⁰Neither has yet been published in English. My translation of them is set to appear in the SUNY Press's "Women Writers in Translation" series. The page numbers given here are from the original texts.

⁹¹The appalling reception of Lacis in Germanist scholarship is discussed in my forthcoming article, "The Writing of Assja Lacis."

⁹²Just as Sartre headed to Berlin in 1933 to study phenomenology in German and Eliade headed to Calcutta in 1928 to study Yoga in Sanskrit, Benjamin's flirtation with Marxism in part motivated his trip to Moscow in the winter of 1926-27. Benjamin's lack of commitment (to both Marxism and Lacis) is reflected linguistically in the fact that he never acquired as much as a reading knowledge of Russian. Sartre's stay in Berlin was also marked by a decided lack of commitment, both politically and romantically: "a listless affair with the wife of a fellow student at the French Institute whom he and Beauvoir agreed to nickname 'the Moon Woman' because of her round face and dreamy disposition" (Bair, 189). Of the three, only Eliade would make the following type of claim about his stay abroad: "I became politically aware in India. Because there I witnessed the repression" (OL, 53).

⁹³I will later question the extent to which Lacis's Russian editors exercised ideological vigilance. However, that does not take away from the fact that the subject matter and direction taken in the *The Red Carnation* are her own and not her editor's as is the case in the German.

⁹⁴It would perhaps be more accurate to say that Lacis would be upset by Communist criticism and proud of "bourgeois, Western" criticism, however that only serves to support my contention, not contradict it.

⁹⁵As I discuss in "The Writing of Asja Lacis," the Russian variant is more lively and the figure of Benjamin takes on a different, less clutzy and more sophisticated, form. In German, the initial description reads: "My first impression: eye-glasses which threw off beams like little headlights, thick, dark hair, narrow nose, clumsy hands - he dropped the packages. In general - very much the intellectual, one of the well-off ones. He accompanied me home, took his leave and asked whether he could be permitted to pay me a visit" (*RP*, 42).

⁹⁶Not unlike Beauvoir who commented that her father "had destined me to a life of study" (*MDD*, 181); "I loved my father and my father loved books: he had filled my mother with a religious respect for them" (*ASD*, 7). Lou Andreas-Salomé's father, on the other hand, had a much more laissez-faire approach to his daughter's education:

In her later school years, when Russian was the compulsory language of instruction and Lou, who spoke German and French at home, felt her Russian was not up to it, her father arranged for her to *hospitieren* (attend lessons without doing homework or exams), laughing and saying '*She doesn't need the compulsion of school.*' (*Livingstone*, 22)

⁹⁷In the German version the father comes off sounding more progressive; he "was a resourceful worker. He found work in Riga in a carriage factory. He participated in the revolutionary struggles of the year 1905" (*RP*, 13). In the Russian version, on the contrary, he can't even provide for his family: "Father found a job in a factory, but he was often sick, and in order to earn enough for the family, Mama opened a little store" (*RC*, 17).

⁹⁸The poetry of Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949) was highly acclaimed in England in the first half of the 20th century. Many considered the poems in her collections *The Golden Threshold*, *The Bird of Time* and *The Broken Wing* second only to Tagore.

⁹⁹See Hellbeck, 27, for a discussion of the Nietzschean influence on the Soviet revolution.

¹⁰⁰Hellbeck's German translation, *Tagebuch aus Moskau*, is of the entire diary. An English excerpt can be found in *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*, 291-331.

¹⁰¹As we will see in the next chapter, Nadezhda Mandel'shtam was decidedly not of this profile, considering revolutionary change far from either being necessary or possible.

¹⁰²Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Nadezhda Mandel'shtam are taken from Max Hayward's translation of *Hope Abandoned*, New York, 1974, in consultation with *Kniga Vtoraia*. 4th ed., Paris, 1987. The first volume of her memoirs, *Hope Against Hope, A Memoir*, New York, 1970, will be cited as *HaH*.

¹⁰³This providence lies over my destiny, that I must be without caution.

And whoever does not want to fade away while among people must learn to drink out of all cups; and whoever would stay clean while among people must know how to wash even with dirty water.

And thus I often comforted myself, 'Well then, old heart! You have experienced a misfortune; enjoy it as your -- good fortune!' (Of Human Prudence).

¹⁰⁴Osip was born on 15 January 1891, during a veritable baby-boom of Russian poets: Marina Tsvetaeva was born in the year before, Boris Pasternak a year later and Anna Akhmatova the year after that.

¹⁰⁵In the introduction to her first volume of memoirs, Clarence Brown stresses the magnitude of this accomplishment: "Had [she] not lived, or had she been less valorous, intelligent and loving than she is, Mandelstam would no doubt have died several years earlier, and his work, that great concealed body of poetry and prose that never emerged in public print, would almost certainly have perished" (xiii).

¹⁰⁶In order to appreciate the type of literary company the Mandel'shtams are now travelling in, let me enumerate these other pairs: Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller, Susette Gontard and Friedrich Hölderlin, Dorothea Veit and Friedrich Schlegel, Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas, Stella Patrick Campbell and George Bernard Shaw, Bella Rosenfeld and Marc Chagall, Wallis Simpson and Edward VIII, Eleonara Duse and Gabriele D'Annunzio, Felice Bauer and Franz Kafka, Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann, Gertrude

Stein and Alice B. Tolkas, Eva König and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin.

¹⁰⁷*Women's Work in Stalin's Times* is albeit more correctly only half a book, as Lidiia Chukovskaia's *Notes on Akhmatova* shares the stage with N.M.'s memoirs. It is cited here as Holmgren/b. Holmgren's article "The Creation of Nadezhda Mandel'shtam," is cited as Holmgren/a.

¹⁰⁸Holmgren/a, 87. Rankled feminist historians such as Holmgren and Robey have tried to downplay and reevaluate this aspect of N.M.'s writing.

¹⁰⁹Further examples include:

As regards achieving the status of a classic, I have been taught by M. to scorn the very idea, but when it comes to money I have some sympathy for them. (214);

M. taught me to beware of any kind of authoritarianism, and I hate a metallic note of command in anybody's voice, much preferring reasoned argument, or even the passionate appeal of genuine conviction. (227);

M. had knocked out of me the idea that I had a right to be happy, but I cannot advise anybody to court suffering or to take pride in it. (286);
He taught me that even people who had written only two or three real poems (such as Mei) were part of Russian poetry... (99)

¹¹⁰Holmgren's article discusses this point at length.

¹¹¹Others of the multitude of examples include:

Since he was also not in the least prone to melancholia, Ivask and Lurye are wrong to derive M.'s black sun, which created such a stir in the years just before the Revolution, from Nerval. (132);

[T]here is as much truth in this as in her yarn about someone pointing M. out to her as he stood among other 'modernists' in a Moscow salon frequented by the Symbolists - at the time in question he was still going to school in Petersburg, satchel in hand, and never went anywhere near Moscow. (141);

As I never tire of pointing out, the order of the poems in *Tristia* is completely haphazard... (75);

Now that a demand has grown up for it, apart from the balderdash published abroad we also have the native variety to contend with.

One must distinguish between the various kinds of lying: the pernicious... and the innocuous... (55)

¹²²Further examples include:

M. was the only person I knew who was absolutely devoid of all pretensions or affectations, always remaining utterly true to his own natural self (355);

There was something about him that I have never seen in anybody else, and it is time to say that what distinguished him from all the people around us (the Fedins and Fadeyevs of this world) was not irresponsibility, but this infinite sense of joy... Everybody else was always after something - but not he. He just lived his life and reveled in it. (291);

I only know that M. had a hard core, a deep bedrock of principles, which set him apart from anyone of his own or later generations. (160)

¹²³The resonance of the expression "we" in Soviet literature should be noted. Zamiatin's science fiction novel, *We*, is one of the most significant anti-utopian novels of this century. The prototype for Orwell's 1948 *Nineteen Eighty Four*, it was the first novel to be banned by the Soviet censorship board Glavlit, which was established in 1922.

¹²⁴Cf. Holmgren/a, 109, n29; Proffer, 17, 22-5.

¹²⁵It is to be noted that the philosophers N.M. draws on include Sergei Bulgakov, Berdiayev, and Bergson but that Bakhtin receives no mention, indicating that his work was not yet known in the Soviet Union. This emphasis correlates with Caryl Emerson's contention that the current recuperation of Bakhtin by Russian and Anglo-American scholars is proceeding along much different lines:

The Bakhtin one increasingly sees in Russian contexts, then, is no apostle of carnival and certainly not of trend-setting literary theory. He is being read, rather, as an old-fashioned 'philosopher of life' with roots in the pre-Romantics, a disputant with Kant and Henri Bergson rather than a Marxist or semiotician in a twentieth century sense of the word. To contemporary Russians, Bakhtin now seems to matter not as a revolutionary or radical destabilizer but as a bridge to their own deeply felt but long-suppressed religious humanism. (14-5)

¹¹⁶I would believe only in a god who can dance... I learned to walk: ever since I let myself run. I learned to fly: ever since I don't want a push-start.

Now I am light, now I fly, now I see myself beneath me, now a god dances through me (Of Reading and Writing).

¹¹⁷The extent of this attention, it should be noted, is limited to the sphere of her husband's profession. The only work, to my knowledge, which focusses on Romola as its primary subject is her daughter Tamara's biography, *Nijinsky and Romola*, hereafter cited as *N&R*.

¹¹⁸Romola's mother recorded her given names as such in her prayerbook (*N&R*, 1).

¹¹⁹Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Romola's writings are taken from *Nijinsky*.

¹²⁰For a discussion of the uncertainty surrounding Vaslav's exact date of birth due to the probability of his mother's having changed it so that he might avoid military duty, see Ian Fergeson's "Nijinsky's Birthday?".

¹²¹Like Gustav von Salomé, de Pulsky's ancestry can be traced back to the Huguenot expulsion. However, his family (at that point called de la Poule) did not flee via the Baltic to St. Petersburg, but via Poland to Hungary, where both titles and landed estates were bestowed upon it by the Habsburgian Empress Maria Theresa.

¹²²There is some question as to the veracity of Romola's accounting of her interview with Bleuler. According to Ostwald's examination of Vaslav's medical records: "Prof. Bleuler never made the statement that Waslaw was incurably insane" (*N&R*, 204).

¹²³Zsenia Anastazia Marie de la Consolation Madeleine Nijinsky was born on 14 June 1920 and at her father's insistence called Tamara (*N&R*, 208). The rumors that Vaslav was not in fact her father but rather the doctor who was attending him are convincingly dismissed by Acocella in her introduction to the English translation of the unexpurgated version of Vaslav's *Diary*.

¹²⁴Romola's petit aristocratic upbringing had aimed at marriageability, that is, it was precisely the "career" trajectory from which Simone de Beauvoir had been spared by her family's fall on hard times. The extent to which Romola internalized this socialization is indicated in a letter to her daughter, Tamara: "It is not right nor proper for a woman to wander through life without a supporter or protector" (*N&R*, 337). In a letter to Tamara's

daughter, Kinga, upon the latter's completion of high school in Phoenix, Arizona in the 1960s, she reiterates this sentiment, but with a qualification: "In my opinion, marriage is the best solution, if one finds a good partner. But even that is not easy" (N&R, 460).

¹²⁵This meeting occurred late in 1960, on the last day of Romola's stay in the country, and is reputed to having been followed by her airplane being delayed at the airport so that a full-length sable coat could be delivered to her, with Krushchev's compliments (N&R, 419-22).

¹²⁶Tamara Nijinsky's biography of her parents ends with her accounting of the bureaucratic fight she was (and, one presumes, still is) embroiled in trying to get her parents into the same grave.

¹²⁷Buckle enumerates the other five as follows: Ilidor Lukiano poisoned by his own hand at twenty-one, George Rosaai dead of pneumonia at twenty-one, Grigori Babitch killed by a jealous husband at twenty-three, Mikhail Feodorov dead of tuberculosis at twenty-six, Nijinsky insane at thirty-one (4).

¹²⁸This is something she had in common with her mother: "No one could remain impartial to Emilia Markus; people either went into raptures and worshipped her or... despised her" (N&R, 6).

¹²⁹How much Bronislava privately supported, or even got along with, Romola is to be viewed with some skepticism: "Bronislava has confided... that she had distrusted Romola on a number of issues and could never rid herself of the feeling that Romola had been partly to blame for Vaslav's insanity" (N&R, 476). However, public displays of family loyalty were a priority among the Nijinskys and Bronislava's public criticism of her sister-in-law was muted at best.

¹³⁰A more detailed review of these productions can be found in my forthcoming article, "Nijinsky: From Modern Love to Postmodern Madness."

¹³¹Kyril FitzLyon's English translation appeared in 1999 under the expert editorship of New York dance critic, Joan Acocella.

¹³²The episode has the following denouement: "Next morning, Vaslav found me in the Prado and begged me to return, saying, 'It shall be as you wish.' From that day on, Kostrovsky and H. never entered our home any more" (301).

¹³³This is something they learned from their mother: "Frugality, economy of means were unknown [to Emilia Markus].... It was said that the Emperor

Franz-Joseph often reached into his purse to help his favourite Hungarian actress" (N&R, 36).

¹³⁴The later fate of Guiseppi Garibaldi's godson is certainly unexpected given its promising start. Charlie, as he was commonly called because of his English birthright, became the scapegoat in a political plot against his brother, Agost, then Minister of Justice. Unfairly convicted of improprieties in the purchase of an Italian painting by Piombo, Charlie first spent a year and a half in a sanitarium and then, even though his wife refused to accompany him, pressure from the de Pulszkys forced him to go into exile. He travelled alone, first to England and then to Australia where after the collapse of the insurance company he had tried to start, he committed suicide in 1899 at age 46. He was posthumously exonerated by the Hungarian courts (see N&R, 14-28).

¹³⁵Not only were both his parents Polish, his sister relates that his early education was also in that language: "At the beginning of 1894, Stassik [their older brother who was seven at the time] and Vatsa [who was almost five] began to learn to read and write, both in Polish and Russian" (19).

¹³⁶These priorities were to change in the face of the changing geopolitical realities. When she was thinking of sending Kyra to her grandparents in 1925, her written instructions to them were that "for six to eight weeks, Kyra should learn English and French, nothing else" (N&R, 226).

¹³⁷While it is far from my intention to offer any type of psychological or psychoanalytic commentary on any of the subjects of this study, it is difficult to refrain from at least drawing attention to the very obvious nature of the repetition complex involved in Romola's struggles.

¹³⁸It might be argued that Diaghilev is also somewhat less than a pristine figure. While this is undoubtedly true, Romola does indicate that Diaghilev behaved very admirably towards them both in America and in Spain and that the conflicts that ensued in both places were due to contractual disputes: "We tried to forget the disagreeable fact that Diaghilev owed Vaslav half a million francs, for which we would be obliged to fight. Vaslav would have preferred to drop the matter altogether, but, thinking of his family, he felt he could not do it, and left the whole case in my hands" (259, also 302). There is a great deal of respect in her accounting of "his amazing hypnotic power" (296), for which there is no equivalent descriptions of her mother.

³⁹According to Tamara Nijinsky, her grandmother was, not surprisingly, debilitated with shock upon reading Romola's accounting of their relations in the first biography (N&R, 252).

⁴⁰Romola's younger sister, Tessa, did not fare any better. Her marriage to tenor Eric Schmedes collapsed due to the latter's alcoholism. She was as ill-equipped as her sister to support herself and ended up managing, usually very badly and often by pawning off Romola's shaky resources. The ensuing sibling acrimony played itself out brutally: "Tessa suffered from arteriosclerosis and because of Romola's financial straits had to be placed in a psychiatric clinic in Gest" (N&R, 405) where she died of pneumonia on 19 March 1963.

⁴¹The United States was also to prove the final destination of both Romola's daughters: Kyra settling in San Francisco and Tamara in Phoenix. Vaslav's sister, Bronislava, who died (of a heart attack) in 1972 in Los Angeles, could also be mentioned in this regard, as could her daughter Irina, who is "happily settled in Pacific Palisades, California and [has] two grown children" (N&R, 487).

⁴²See also the newspaper articles by Howard and Gilbert. All clippings are available in the Romola de Pulszky Nijinska file at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

⁴³But not by way of children. Like Lou Andreas-Salomé and Simone de Beauvoir, both Nadezhda and Romola felt procreation neither necessary nor desirable. Romola's poor relationships with her daughters stem from her decided lack of enthusiasm about motherhood, and children in general. Upon finding herself pregnant shortly after their marriage, Romola admits a long, considered contemplation of abortion. Conception of her second daughter (who receives scant attention in either the biographies or in real life, and makes much of this fact in her own biography) was an attempt to cure her husband's illness. When her granddaughter miscarries her first child, Romola is quick to comfort her in a letter: "Believe me, in our century, in our times, it is almost criminal to create a child" (N&R, 500).

⁴⁴Ostwald's documentation of Nijinsky's institutionalization offers a much different portrayal, with such entries from the supervising physicians as "Often he is unclean, smearing urine all over the floor" (280). I am not implying that Nadezhda's characterization is equally misleading but simply offering a concrete example of the creative aspect of these portrayals.

⁴⁵Further examples include:

As the spring began we prolonged our walks, and through Vaslav I learned to love nature. Each flower, each tree, had a meaning for him; he could find an expression of beauty in them, which he made me understand. (229)

Nijinsky would watch their [the animals'] movements for a long time, and made me notice everything lovely around us. It seemed to me that life began to have a new meaning. Suddenly I realized that so much beauty surrounds us which, before, I had failed to observe. (203)

⁴⁶Buckle further characterizes Romola as "courageous" (501), "dauntless" (507) and "indomitable" (519). Romola has also received praise in Russian criticism: "The eccentric and extravagant woman did herself perform miracles of patience, devotion and courage" (Krasovskaya, 344).

⁴⁷Do you have courage, o my brethren? Are you hearty? Not courage before witnesses, but anchorite and eagle courage, which not even a God any longer regards?... They have heart who know fear but vanquish it; who see the abyss, but with pride. They who see the abyss but with eagle's eyes -- who with eagle talons grasp the abyss: they have courage (Of the Higher Person, 2/4).

⁴⁸If Alice B. Toklas had written *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and thereby come into the same kind of cultural capital as the subjects of this study, that process would correspond to the mechanism I am trying to elucidate. Stein's having written it herself disqualifies the text because she was not using her autobiography as cultural collateral but rather as aesthetic, modernist self-expression.

⁴⁹As we have seen in each section, it is precisely this paradoxically committed lack of commitment which make them awkward, slippery subjects for feminist scholars.

⁵⁰'But how does this happen?' I asked myself. What convinces the living one to obey and command and commanding still practice obedience? (On the Self-Overcoming).

⁵¹Gregg Horowitz's reading of art in the aesthetic theories of Kant and Adorno is even more evocative of the parallel between it and women's lives: "autonomous art criticizes society just by being there because the 'there' where it is is no 'proper' place" (264).

¹⁵²Both Ricoeur and Taylor highlight the dialogic, narrative, ethical nature of identity in their works. Taylor states in *Sources of the Self*: "We think of this fundamental moral orientation as essential to being a human interlocutor, capable of answering for oneself" (29), while for Ricoeur: "The capacity of the moral subject to impute his own actions *to himself* is based on his capacity to assume *narratively* the story of his own life" (1995, 397, italics added). Thus for both Ricoeur and Taylor, as for Nietzsche, to engage in the autobiographical process of determining one's identity is to be faced with a narrative and ethical imperative; put differently, the duty to oneself for oneself to come to terms with who one thinks one is is what makes the autobiographical act, whether written or simply thought out, an ethical as well as aesthetic one.

¹⁵³As in the Prologue, I refer to Osip Mandel'shtam's essay "On the Addressee."

¹⁵⁴You call yourself free? I want to hear your ruling idea, and not that you have escaped from a yoke (Of the Creators' Way).

¹⁵⁵That it need not be told from this perspective is evidenced by the following account:

In the spring of 1899 Rilke set off for three months in Russia in her company and that of her official husband, Dr. Friedrich Carl Andreas. *SHE had decided* that Rilke could earn his living as a translator from the Russian and *SHE obliged him* to learn the language. While in Moscow the three of them called on Tolstoi at tea, and in Saint Petersburg she introduced Rilke to her family and her friends. This was not all that *SHE accomplished*. *SHE* also implanted in his mind the suggestion that Russia was his true spiritual home, however slight his understanding of the Russian soul might be.... (247-8, bold and italics added)

In Wayne Andrews' 1972 *Siegfried's Curse: The German Journey From Nietzsche to Hesse*, men are generally portrayed as victims of this fearsome specimen of womanhood, who sizes them up (or down, as the case may be) and treats them accordingly.

¹⁵⁶In "The Trouble with Memoir," a chastised Alice Kaplan soberly notes that "breaking down the boundary between private and public life is essential to memoir, but keeping that boundary secure is essential for well-being in life" (B5).

¹⁵⁷I taught them... to create and carry together into one what in human beings is fragment and riddle and dreadful accident; as creator, guessor of riddles and redeemer of chance, I taught them to work on the future and to redeem with their creation all that *has been* (On Old and New Tablets).

¹⁵⁸In likening such divergent approaches, I am not minimizing their substantial differences. However it is precisely because of their differences that this point of commonality can be seen as evocative of the larger *Zeitgeist*, or what Heidegger (and Richard Bernstein, among others, in his wake) would call a *Stimmung* or mood.

¹⁵⁹Eakin's latest work, in which he recoups for all genders the relationality which Mary Mason's ground-breaking 1980 essay, "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers," claimed for women, is part of a larger wave of relational criticism. While Nancy Chodorow's work is often cited in this regard, Kenneth Gergen's work on the "saturated self" has yet, to my knowledge, to receive any attention and might prove a fruitful area of investigation.

¹⁶⁰For a sense of this shattered, non-identity, one could consult the films of Atom Egoyan, in which it is effectively both presented and critiqued (a point which I am grateful to Monique Tschofen for drawing my attention to).

¹⁶¹Their doing so is in keeping with the way Nietzsche unites the personal and political: "If we understand *Kultur* as the German equivalent to the Greek *paideia*, then [Henning] Ottman is right to say that "was Nietzsche suchte, war die Überwindung der Entfremdung, die Wiedergewinnung der allseitigen Persönlichkeit und der Dominanz der Kultur über Ökonomie und Politik" (cited in Rosen, 257, n43).

¹⁶²Wake and hark, you lonely ones! From the future come winds with a secret flapping of wings; and good tidings go out to delicate ears (Of Gift-Giving Virtue).

¹⁶³The following citations are from Edmund Jephott's English translation. The original is to be found in the *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. ii, 1, 295-310.

¹⁶⁴I intend these remarks in the spirit of Irving Wohlfarth's warning: "To apply Benjaminian categories to the present without also trying to rethink them in the light of intervening history is... not merely to remain trapped within the coordinates of his thought, but to arrest the recasting process that it sought to initiate" (as cited in Wolin, 56). In his letter of 9 Dec. 1923 to

Christian Rang, Benjamin describes criticism (where it is identical with interpretation and the opposite of all current methods of art appreciation) as "the mortification of works of art" (Corr, 224).

Gregory Ulmer's essay in the Foster collection, "The Object of Post-Criticism," is particularly illuminating in this context. Under the headings of Collage/Montage, Grammatology, Allegory, and Parasite/Saprophyte, he analyzes "the application of the devices of modernist art to critical representations" (83) to support Barthes' contention that when there are only writers, the categories of literature and criticism can no longer be kept apart. After first quoting Rosalin Krauss on "paraliterature":

If one of the tenets of modernist literature had been the creation of a work that would force reflection on the conditions of its own construction, that would insist on reading as a much more consciously *critical* act, then it is not surprising that the medium of a *postmodernist* literature should be the critical text wrought into a paraliterary form (from "Poststructuralism and the 'Paraliterary,'" *October* 13 (1980): 40).

he then concludes that:

The insight of paraliterature is that although by the 1960s the collage revolution seemed to have run its course, it was in fact being renewed in critical discourse, which was itself finally being affected by experiments with representation. Indeed, as Elizabeth Bruss proposes in *Beautiful Theories* (concerned with the criticism of Susan Sontag, William Gass, Harold Bloom and Roland Barthes), theory is not only the most interesting of contemporary literary forms, it is the mode best suited for moving out of the impasse reached by the modernist movements in the arts. (107-8, 110)

¹⁶⁵It is a lovely irony that Heidegger, and his penchant for the productive aspect of "*Destruktion*", has led the pack in terms of scandal (cf. Wolin's *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*). The trend towards discrediting academic work on an "ad hominem" continues to gather momentum, and is a deserving topic for in-depth study.

¹⁶⁶See Evans, 9, for an example of the "discomfort" with such constructions of Beauvoir.

¹⁶⁷It is this premise on which Jack Miles' reading of the Bible in *God: A Biography* is based.

¹⁶⁸While Vintges takes passion as her overriding theme, she does not explore any of the implications of her subject's passion. Rather she leaves Beauvoir at her book's end literally suspended and in process:

Beauvoir thought it strange that people did not want to believe in 'intellectual passions' (FoC, 200). As Sartre once said, she was capable of shedding 'metaphysical tears,' and her passion was sometimes infectious:

I found myself alone with Sartre in the streets of Paris at dawn. I began to sob over the tragedy of the human condition; as we crossed the Seine, I leaned on the parapet of the bridge. 'I don't see why we don't throw ourselves into the river!' 'All right, then, let's throw ourselves in!' said Sartre, who was finding my tears contagious and had shed a few himself (119).

But they simply continued on their way over the Seine. (177)

One possible line of enquiry would lie in recalling Lacan's final seminar in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*:

I think that throughout this historical period the desire of man [sic], which has been felt, anesthetized, put to sleep by moralists, domesticated by educators, betrayed by the academies, has quite simply taken refuge or been repressed in that most subtle and blindest of passions, as the story of Oedipus shows, the passion for knowledge. That's the passion that is currently going great guns and is far from having said its last word. (324)

¹⁶⁹That this trend has not been greeted by universal enthusiasm is evidenced by Simpson's comment: "Literary critics are busier writing about themselves than they have ever been before, to the point that the award of tenure now seems to bring with it a contract for one's autobiography" (25) and his later description that "there is a virtual stampede into autobiography on the part of literary critics" (82).

¹⁷⁰An in-depth study of both of these trends so often mentioned in passing would be a welcome addition to scholarship.

¹⁷¹I would not like to create the impression that his is the only such observation, only that it is particularly felicitously worded for present

purposes. Paul de Man's essay on autobiography begins in a similar vein: "Empirically as well as theoretically, autobiography lends itself poorly to generic definition: each specific instance seems to be an exception to the norm; the works themselves seem to shade off into neighboring or even incompatible genres and, perhaps, most revealing of all, generic discussions, which can have such powerful heuristic value in the case of tragedy or of the novel, remain distressingly sterile when autobiography is at stake" (919).

⁷²David Simpson's response to Jane Tompkins's "now widely circulated remark that 'people are scared to talk about themselves... they haven't got the guts to do it'" (32) would seem to indicate his agreement: "there is no clear license for our autobiographical literary critics and exemplary storytellers to bestow upon themselves the rare and special virtue called courage as they launch into an extended account of themselves and where they are coming from" (31-2).

⁷³R. Bernstein reminds us that "it is Hegel who teaches us over and over again to be alert to the uncanny way in which radical gestures of opposition and negation are complicit with, and parasitic upon what they are presumably rejecting" (308).

⁷⁴And not only written. New types of radio and television programs, not to mention internet sites, whose sole *raison d'être* is self-expression, continue to mushroom.

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