



This is to certify that the
thesis entitled

Jurij Nagibin's Short Stories:
Themes and Literary Criticism

presented by

Ellen J. Cochrum

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Russian,
Language and Literature

Manuscript

Major professor

Date 11/17/1971

© Copyright by
ELLEN JOAN COCHRUM

1977

JURIJ NAGIBIN'S SHORT STORIES: THEMES AND LITERARY CRITICISM

By

Ellen Joan Cochrum

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of German and Russian

1977

ABSTRACT

JURIJ NAGIBIN'S SHORT STORIES: THEMES AND LITERARY CRITICISM

by

Ellen Joan Cochrum

This dissertation treats the themes in and criticism of the short stories of Jurij Markovič Nagibin during 1843-1974, synthesizing widely scattered data available from Soviet and Western sources.

Chapter I provides insight into the thematic range of Nagibin's stories, scrutinizing five of his principal themes: (1) man's awakening; (2) the war; (3) love; (4) societal ills; and (5) the kolkhoz. The chapter also focuses on Nagibin's accomplishments and shortcomings in his early period, 1945-1954.

Chapter II examines several aspects of Nagibin's Meščera, or hunting, theme and characterizes Nagibin's work during the period 1954-1964.

Chapter III investigates Nagibin's children's stories, including his non-autobiographical children's stories on war, nature, the role of an adult in a child's upbringing, and the coming of age, and his autobiographical children's stories from the *Čistye prudy* and *Leto moego detstva* collections; it emphasizes Nagibin's achievements in his most mature period, 1965-1974.

Chapter IV surveys the critical reception of Nagibin from 1943-1974, including Nagibin's criticism of himself and other writers, the criticism of Nagibin's links with other writers, and the criticism of

poetics.

For cataloging and analyzing the themes, 67 out of his 252 stories were selected by these dictates: (1) Nagibin's own choosing as evidenced by his self-critical statements and reprints in collections of his short stories; (2) literary criticism of Nagibin; and (3) my own evaluation. The criticism cited includes all significant Russian and foreign critiques of Nagibin's stories.

The method is descriptive and chronological, emphasizing Nagibin's thematic preferences in the course of his literary development. The analysis of any given work is not exhaustive; the dissertation seeks to present his work from various angles, thus offering a general portrait of Nagibin as a Soviet short story writer.

The conclusions find Nagibin's thematic dispersedness to be an integral part of his style. Embracing a broad spectrum of human life, some themes are typically Russian (societal ills and the war theme), others universal (hunting, school, man's awakening, love, death, etc.). Parallel to the variety of themes is the variety of character types: men, women, and children from all walks of life.

Nature plays a significant role in Nagibin's stories; changes in nature are frequently attuned to changes in characters. Nature is used to determine a character's moral worth; descriptions of nature abound in lyrical undercurrents.

Nagibin's autobiographical children's stories reveal his youth; he shows the child's inner world as more complex than adults realize. His children's stories are better written than others, filling the traditional theme of childhood, boyhood, youth, with a new content.

He has followed in the steps of Turgenev, Tolstoj, and Čexov, among

others. Links to Turgenev's *Zapiski oxotnika* are obvious; parallels with Turgenev are also evident in the comparison of Nagibin's *Šurik to Bežin lug*, notably in the fate of the heroes.

The parallel to Tolstoj is apparent in the first person narrative of Nagibin's *Leto moego detstva*, reminiscent of *Detstvo*, *Otročestvo*, *Junost'*.

Nagibin's interest in man's inner world may be attributed to Čexov; Nagibin's *Škola dlja vzroslyx* evokes *Dama s sobačkoj*.

Nagibin is among the first contemporary writers to minimize the precepts of Socialist Realism by avoiding dogmatism and mellowing didacticism, focusing on self-expression and a sincere attitude toward life and his fellow man.

Nagibin's well-composed and compact *pacckaz* is a distinguished literary type. In his struggle for conciseness in the short story, Nagibin has achieved a stringent verbal economy. Due to this succinctness, lack of superfluity, and the "artistism" of his style, Nagibin has been acclaimed one of the foremost short story writers in the Soviet Union today.

To my favorite teacher and my family:
Mother, John, Jenny, Lynn, Julie, Paul,
Jeane, and Jim.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my daughter Julie Carlson for her invaluable financial help during my one year leave of absence from Michigan State University to write this dissertation.

A very special word of thanks goes to my committee: Professors Alexander Dynnik, Frank Ingram, and Denis Mickiewicz for their readings and comments. I am particularly indebted to my chairman, Professor Munir Sendich, for his guidance and excellent editorial assistance which have aided me immeasurably.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: A Survey of Themes in Nagibin's Short Stories	12
Introduction	12
The Theme of Man's Awakening	14
The War Theme	22
The Love Theme	33
The "Na zlobu dnja" Theme	38
The Kolkhoz Village Theme	46
Conclusion	57
CHAPTER TWO: The Meščera Stories	59
Introduction	59
Nagibin's Meščera and Its Literary Antecedents	60
The Meščerans and Their Way of Life	66
The Meščera and Its Landscape/Nature	68
The Love Theme in Nagibin's Meščera	78
Societal Ills of the Meščera	81
Conclusion	96
CHAPTER THREE: The Children's Theme	98
Part One: Non-Autobiographical Children's Stories	98
Introduction	98
War Stories About Children	99
Nature Stories About Children	103

The Role of an Adult in a Child's Upbringing	111
Coming of Age	114
Part Two: Autobiographical Children's Stories	118
Introduction	118
The <i>Čistye prudy</i> Collection	121
The <i>Leto moego detstva</i> Collection	132
Conclusion	140
CHAPTER FOUR: Nagibin in Literary Criticism	142
Introduction	142
Nagibin About Himself, His Writings, and on Other Writers	144
Criticism of Nagibin's Links with Other Writers	159
Criticism of Nagibin's Poetics	166
CONCLUSION	191
BIBLIOGRAPHY	197

INTRODUCTION

Among the post-war generation of Soviet writers, Jurij Markovič Nagibin occupies a prominent place. Some of his better works have been compared to the works of Russian literary greats, Turgenev and Čexov for example, the others have been placed on the same level with the works of well-known Soviet writers, Paustovskij's among others. He has been saluted for his refined literary professionalism, his innovative *paccka3*, or short story, and his continuity of traits innate to Russian classic literature. He has enjoyed an enviable popularity among Soviet readers, old and young alike. His works have been included in many Soviet highschool anthologies; his name is well-known to any educated Russian in the Soviet Union.

And yet, Nagibin has remained largely a stranger to the Western reader; he is hardly known in the West, let alone in the United States. Several American surveys on Soviet Russian literature, though mentioning Nagibin along with such other prominent writers as Jurij Kazakov and Vladimir Dudincev, fail to give any in-depth analysis of his major works.

This study strives to fill the existing gap in the Nagibin scholarship, here and abroad. For despite the rather extensive criticism of Nagibin in the Soviet Union and some other Eastern European countries, a doctoral dissertation on Nagibin has not yet been attempted. This is to say that not one bibliographical source available here or in major Soviet library catalogs, which I have had examined by my friends visiting

the Soviet Union during the summer of 1977, has recorded a dissertation on Nagibin.¹

Since three-quarters of Nagibin's creative activity (from 1943 to the present) has been devoted to his favorite genre, the short story, it seemed only natural to concentrate on this body of his work. In my view Nagibin's best and most representative short stories have been written during the span from 1955 to the present; I have, therefore, devoted two chapters to this period.

Chapter One gives an insight into the entire thematic range of Nagibin's short stories, thoroughly surveying five of his principal themes: 1) the theme of man's awakening; 2) the war theme; 3) the love theme; 4) the "na zlobu dnja" theme; and 5) the kolkhos village theme. In addition to this thematic inventory, the chapter focuses on the literary accomplishments and shortcomings of Nagibin in that early period (1943-1953), thus preparing the ground for a detailed analysis of his two major themes--the Meščera stories and the children's stories.

The second chapter focuses on the first of the two most significant themes in Nagibin's stories, the hunting theme, or the Meščera theme, as these stories have been more aptly labeled after their locale.

Chapter Three is devoted to the second most significant theme, the children's stories which include themes from Nagibin's own childhood memories. This chapter, treating the most prolific theme of Nagibin to date, will include critical opinions and short synopses of Nagibin's best children's stories, the majority of which have not been translated into English. More specifically, Part One of the chapter will scrutinize the

¹The dissertation catalogs of the Lenin Library in Moscow and the Saltykov-Ščedrin Library in Leningrad have no record of a dissertation on Nagibin.

non-autobiographical stories: 1) war stories about children; 2) nature stories about children; 3) the role of an adult in a child's upbringing; and 4) the coming of age; and Part Two, focusing on the autobiographical children's stories, will include stories selected from the collections *Čistye prudy* and *Leto moego detstva*.

The fourth chapter will provide a critical survey of the major literary criticism of Nagibin's short stories and give Nagibin's own views of himself, his work, and the writers who had influenced him.

The Conclusion will summarize factual data contained in the four chapters.

The Bibliography following the main body of the dissertation is a comprehensive compilation through 1974. None of the Soviet monographs on Nagibin contain a bibliography. There is, however, one reference bibliography to contemporary Soviet writers: *Russkie sovetskie pisateli; bibliografičeskij ukazatel'* (Leningrad, 1964), III, 108-123, but even this source fails to list many items recorded in my bibliography.

In order to catalogue and describe the themes in Nagibin's stories, 67 stories out of the total of 252 will be chosen for discussion. In this selection, I have been ruled by the following dictates: 1) Nagibin's own choosing as evidenced by his self-critical statements and by reprints in anthologies and collections of selected stories; 2) literary criticism of Nagibin; and 3) my own evaluation. Needless to say, not in any category will it be possible to include Nagibin's total output on a given theme. But the literary criticism to be cited throughout the dissertation will be comprehensive, with the inclusion of all significant critiques, Russian and foreign, of Nagibin's short stories.

The methods used to evaluate Nagibin's writings throughout the

investigation will be: 1) descriptive and 2) chronological. This means that my analysis of any given work is by no means exhaustive; rather this dissertation seeks to study Nagibin's short stories from various angles, and thus, strives to offer a general portrayal of Nagibin as a Soviet short story writer.

I would like to conclude this Introduction with a brief biography of Nagibin, with an emphasis on his early formative influences. Nagibin was born on April 3, 1920, in the Moscow Čistye prudy district. In Čistye prudy he knew every bench, every tree, every bush of stinging nettle by the old boat station. There he went fishing with his neighborhood playmates at the pond where it seemed a miracle to catch a fish in the center of a bustling city. It was there he enjoyed boating in an old shallow-bottomed boat, swimming and diving from the piles. Čistye prudy was a spot where early in life nature was Jurij's second home and classroom and very few of its lessons were missed.²

In Čistye prudy Nagibin spent his childhood and youthful years under the influence of his mother and paternal grandparents whom he immortalized in his story *Priezd*. His earliest memories of his father go back to the long journeys he and his mother made to see him, the strange towns and large rivers they crossed to be with him. With the word "grandfather," on the other hand, Nagibin immediately recalled their time together when he would teach the boy how to hoist himself up on rings, work out with weights, or take his first steps on ice skates. The growing youth would turn to his grandfather for his first man-to-man discussions about fights or the girls in his class at school, and could listen

²Ju. Nagibin, *Čistye prudy* (Moscow: "Moskovskij rabočij," 1962), p. 8.

to him for hours when his grandfather would relate his past to him.³

By the time Nagibin was seven, he knew the stories of several writers including Dickens, Scott, and Cooper from his mother who read to him.⁴ He loved these reading sessions, and although it seemed to him that his mother chose thin little books to read from he was surprised in later years when re-reading them for himself how much enjoyment these old friends provided. How great was his joy when his mother showed him a thick volume with the emblem of a musketeer's cape, crossed swords, and a wide-brimmed hat on the cover. Dumas's *The Three Musketeers* was the very first book he read by himself,⁵ discovering the deep enjoyment when what is read becomes so clearly related to life that one is hard put to tell fiction from reality.

Jurij loved his father deeply,⁶ though he seldom saw him because he was always away on business. It would not be wrong to say that the boy learned his geography while keeping track of his father's frequent moves from one part of the country to another.⁷ Each name of a town, lake, or river meant another construction site where his father was working. Jurij used to boast to his friends about his father's incredible strength and courage.⁸ But his father was of very short stature, not a midget, but had he been any shorter, he would not have been able to serve

³*Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴Ju. Nagibin, *Zimnij dub* (Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1955), p. 72.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Ju. Nagibin, *Izbrannye proizvedenija v dvux tomax* (Moscow: "Xudožestvennaja literatura," 1973), II, 287.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*

in the army. Jurij found his father's size difficult to accept and took it very much to heart. Such a short little man did not fit into the heroic legends he told about his father which helped him to cope with his father's constant absence.

Among the many friends that frequented the Nagibin household Jurij could easily tell his father's friends from his mother's, whom he preferred. His mother's friends would bring his mother flowers and a little something for him. But his father's rare visitors paid no attention to Jurij at all. They arrived with heavy briefcases, locked themselves in his father's study, and, smoking constantly, talked and argued about something, becoming so vociferous at times that Jurij was afraid for his father. But these sessions ended peaceably: the door would swing open expelling a cloud of smoke and his father would call for tea.

All the members of Nagibin's family were very busy people. Even his mother, who had completed high school but had not gone on to learn a profession, found herself a job tying at home. The money she received for her work paid for German lessons for her son, for she had decided early that Jurij should study foreign languages.⁹ Thus, after school Jurij found himself as busy as his parents: studying German, learning his times tables and doing sums on the four rules of arithmetic.

When Nagibin's grandfather died shortly before the boy turned ten, his mother discovered that he had left them some money which she put to good use: Mrs. Colbert, a "real" Englishwoman, appeared in their household and Jurij embarked on learning English.¹⁰ Later, when he was in the

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 345.

¹⁰Nagibin, "Čistye....," p. 74.

tenth grade, French was introduced in their school. After his grandfather died, going through his library, Nagibin came across a French book with an interesting title: *Memoires de Monsieur d'Artagnan* he read with difficulty. He began to read the book dealing with his favorite literary hero, and started attending the first session of French at his school.

His teacher, an older Russianized Frenchman, Sergej Petrovič Lefevr, moved by Jurij's zeal, suggested he take some additional French lessons free from his niece Marie, who had recently come from France.¹¹ Thus it was that along with German and English Jurij also began to study French.

Apart from his language study Nagibin did not prefer any one subject at school. He was an "A" student which meant to him a lack of a special interest in anything. Like most of the boys, he played soccer in school and his coach, Jules Limbeck, foresaw a soccer career for him. But his mother, who had by then remarried, had other plans for her son. Under her careful prodding the boy's stepfather, the writer Ja. S. Rykačev, asked Nagibin to write something.

His first story about a skiing trip his class took to Losinoostrovskoe was very poor. And yet Nagibin believes that his yen for writing started from this first attempt.¹² At the time he noticed that in the course of writing the simple events of the day, the events themselves and the traits of the people in the story became more meaningful to him. It was as though he saw his friends and the unexpectedly fine, confused pattern of their relationships to one another in a new light. He

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹²Ju. Nagibin, "A cel' vse ta-že," *Sovetskaja kul'tura* (June 16, 1970), p. 4.

discovered then that writing was comprehending life. At that point in time his future literary path clarified itself: he vowed not to invent, but to take everything from life, from what he personally experienced or witnessed.

The path of becoming a writer, however, was neither short nor simple for Nagibin. Upon graduation from high school, unable to resist the example of Čexov and Bulgakov, who became professional doctors, he studied medicine briefly before becoming a student at the Institute of Cinematography. But he continued writing, and in 1940 his first story, *Dvojnaja ošibka*, was published in a popular wide-circulation magazine.¹³ The Sunday following its appearance in print, a very excited young man ran from one book kiosk to another asking whether they had something new by Nagibin.

At the outbreak of World War II he volunteered for service at the front. A good knowledge of German decided his fate in the army. He became a political worker publishing a German-language newspaper and making frequent trips to the front lines with a mobile radio unit to conduct ten- to fifteen-minute broadcasts for enemy soldiers. In his spare time he wrote stories about signal-men, chauffeurs, translators, political workers, soldiers, and economic executives at the front.

Nagibin's path to writing was quite different from that of his other literary friends. There was the school of war undoubtedly; the war gave him the right to publish, but it did not become the main impulse or theme in his works. He was preparing for a writing career before the war and actually started publishing before the war. Unlike

¹³Ju. Nagibin, "Dvojnaja ošibka," *Ogonek*, No. 11 (1940), p. 3.

many of his colleagues, he never worked as a journalist for a civilian periodical. He was a man of letters from the start and became a professional writer, remaining one all of his life.¹⁴ Incidentally, in March 1942, when Nagibin was still at the front he was admitted to the Union of Soviet Writers. The whole procedure transpired with unusual simplicity. At a meeting for young writer-initiates the late L. Solov'ev read one of Nagibin's war stories to which A. Fadeev commented: "Он же писатель, давайте примем его в наш союз."

The first and most difficult stage in his writing career was the publication of his very first books, which were not accorded high accolades by the critics. His biography, furthermore, was thoroughly lacking in unexpected, sensational events. A young writer simply returned from the war and started writing. His first stories were a cross between the очерк and рассказ, with ample attention given to nature descriptions and characters, and to everything else that is prescribed for in a story.

Among these stories appeared *Vaganov* with an almost conditional romantic hero, as pure and ardent as Gorkij's Danko surrounded by common soldiers, a story imbued with the idea that love triumphs over death. In it one can find decorative style, "красивость" and "заданность," but it was dominated by genuine artistry and a gripping passion. This story, however, and the "romantic" *Trubka*, writes Amlinskij,¹⁵ were still a probe of his pen; when Nagibin became thirty-three and published *Komarov* and *Zimnij dub*, he made his mark as a writer.

¹⁴Vladimir Amlinskij, "Jurij Nagibin," *Literaturnaja gazeta* [Moscow] (January 14, 1970), p. 6.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

After *Komarov* and *Zimnij dub* followed *Nočnoj gost'* and *Četunov, syn Četunova*. In the earlier stories Nagibin wrote about the happiness of being alone. The loneliness of Komarov who had escaped from his importunate teacher to the slope by the sea and that of Savuškin in the forest, is a form of happiness, a getting to know oneself, and a discovery of the surrounding world of nature.

All Nagibin's рассказы and повести are local. But early in his writing career he wanted to grasp a broader segment of life so that the winds of history could be heard and masses of people would take part in his works. For this he would have had to write a novel. "Но я не могу писать толсто," confesses Nagibin.¹⁶ Thus, Nagibin made a decision to write in the genre of the short story which, as he frequently argued, suits best his creative aspirations.

The themes in Nagibin's stories teem with variety: the war and its fighting men, hunting and fishing, the kolkhoz village, nature and its beauty, children and the role of the adult in a child's upbringing, and many more. Nagibin's protagonists likewise abound in variety, most of them being ordinary Soviet citizens: foot soldiers, signal-men and radio communications men at the front, simple peasant hunters and fishermen of his beloved Meščera countryside, the visiting hunters from Moscow, boys and girls from his native Čistye prudy district of Moscow, teachers, composers, writers, and kolkhoz chairmen, to name but a few.

In 1955, after writing war stories for ten years, a non-autobiographical children's story became Nagibin's choice of theme; this was followed by the kolkhoz village and the love stories. In the period from 1956 to 1960, he chiefly emphasized the war theme again, followed

¹⁶Ju. Nagibin, "A cel'...", p. 4.

by the love theme and autobiographic and non-autobiographic children's stories. From 1961 to 1965, Nagibin made several trips abroad which accounted for a great number of travel stories and travelogues, the former being a cross between a travel sketch and a short story. In addition, he continued work on his cycle of autobiographical children's stories, and completed the Mesčera cycle. In the years between 1966 and 1970, Nagibin produced his autobiographic children's cycle, the stories with the theme "*Na zlobu dnja*" and the theme of illness and death; the years 1971 through 1977 marked the conclusion of the last of his autobiographical cycles, a continuation of the "*Na zlobu dnja*" theme, and the introduction of two new themes: the theme of famous men and the theme of the writer and his work.

All of these themes will be analyzed in the following study, entitled "Jurij Nagibin's Short Stories: Themes and Literary Criticism."

CHAPTER ONE

A Survey of Themes in Nagibin's Short Stories

	Page
Introduction	1
The Theme of Man's Awakening	
a) <i>Nočnoj gost'</i>	4
b) <i>Podsadnaja utka</i>	7
c) <i>Molodožen</i>	8
d) <i>Razgovor</i>	8
e) <i>Slezaj, priexali</i>	10
The War Theme	
a) <i>Boj za vysotu</i>	12
b) <i>Pavlik</i>	14
c) <i>Deljagi</i>	15
d) <i>Čelovek s fronta</i>	17
e) <i>Zerno žizni</i>	19
f) <i>Škiper uxodit v plavanie</i>	20
g) <i>Vaganov</i>	21
h) <i>Put' na perednij kraj</i>	21
The Love Theme	
a) <i>L'ubov'</i>	22
b) <i>Skalistyj porog</i>	23
c) <i>Vejmar i okresnosti</i>	24
d) <i>Čelovek i doroga</i>	25
e) <i>Škola dlja vzroslyx</i>	25
f) <i>Sročno trebujutsja sedye čelovečeskie volosy</i>	26
The "Na zlobu dnja" Theme	
a) The Nobile Theme	27
b) The Jurij Gagarin Theme	29
c) The Children of Famous Fathers Theme	30
d) The Anti-Stalinist Theme	33
The Kolkhoz Village Theme	
a) <i>Stranicy žizni Trubnikova</i>	35
b) <i>Mat' kolxoza</i>	36
c) <i>Sovremennik Ščepkina</i>	37
d) <i>Novaja professija</i>	38
Conclusion	46

CHAPTER ONE

A Survey of Themes in Nagibin's Short Stories

Introduction

Although Nagibin has written in several genres, long and short stories, film scenarios, travelogues and critical essays for example, it is clear that the short story remains his most beloved genre. That this is so, is evidenced not only by the number of stories he has published (252), or by Nagibin's discrimination for short stories as worthy of his collections and anthologies, but also from the book and articles he has published about the genre of the short story and short story writing.

Also, one should note that critics generally agree that Nagibin is one of the foremost Russian short story writers today, a criticism to be expounded in more detail in Chapter Four. In my own study of Nagibin's works, I have come to the same conclusion: the short story is his *magnus opus*. It is for the above reasons that I have decided to devote my dissertation to a thematic analysis of Nagibin's short stories exclusively.

And another reason: Nagibin's short stories show great thematic diversity, so much so that some Soviet critics accused him of "thematic dispersedness," to which Nagibin retorted:

...я никогда не думал, что тематическая специализация в жанре рассказа, подобно медицинской, является достоинством, а отсутствие ее -- недостатком, требующем искоренения. Неужто только классикам рассказа представлено право на "тематическую разбросанность," каковая даже

восхваляется в этом случае, как знак широты охвата жизни...¹

Indeed, this "thematic dispersedness" is part and parcel of Nagibin's stories. He has written stories about the war and fighting men who have returned from war to the difficult task of picking up the pieces of their lives in a war-ravaged country and economy. He has written about children and his own childhood and youth. He has written love stories, stories about hunting, fishing and ecology and stories about the kolkhoz village. He has written about man's awakening and about some famous men and women: poets, composers, explorers, and astronauts, about some not so famous but equally outstanding personalities among huntsmen, soldiers, teachers, writers, kolkhoz chairmen, etc., and about aging, illness, and death.

Several of the themes mentioned may be singled out and unified for closer examination. The two most significant themes in Nagibin's short stories, i.e., the hunting theme in his Meščera stories and the children's theme, as mentioned in the Introduction to this dissertation, will be examined in greater detail in Chapters Two and Three, respectively. Chapter One will be devoted to the examination of five more themes which stand out in Nagibin's short stories: 1) the theme of man's awakening; 2) the war theme; 3) the love theme; 4) the "na zlobu dnja," or "on the evil of the day" theme; and 5) the theme of the kolkhoz village.

¹Ju. Nagibin, "O rasskaze," *Literaturnaja gazeta*, No. 21 (February 16, 1957), p. 3.

The Theme of Man's Awakening

The theme of man's awakening is one to which Nagibin has turned frequently. Whether he writes about children or adults, the local huntsmen of the Meščera country and their sophisticated counterparts from Moscow or of trained specialists in a village collective farm, the theme of man's awakening has been superimposed on an existing theme and elevated to the main theme in many of his stories.

In an interview, Nagibin maintained that the theme of man's awakening has always been one of his main themes because "Пробуждение - это как весна, это всегда волнует."² To awaken a person, to help him overcome the blind spots of his everyday existence, to help him to know himself, or to reveal another person's true nature, this has been Nagibin's field of action for many years. George Gibian, one of the few American scholars to write about Nagibin, duly observes that in Nagibin's stories of psychological analysis the genre "is revealed in its purest and most perfect form."³

In these stories, Nagibin does not focus on man's character in the making. Many of his heroes have had years of experience in the army or work labor force. Yet, the heroes themselves, their biographies and experience rarely become the subject of the stories. All that remains behind the scenes. Only the psychological results of their experience are shown. On the one hand, on center stage is man's inner world as it has been molded by contemporaneity, while on the other, the writer tests the inner world of the character for humaneness.

²Ju. Nagibin, "V edinom rabočem stroju," *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (January 1, 1972), p. 2.

³George Gibian, "New Trends in the Novel," *Survey*, No. 36 (April-June, 1961), p. 49.

The critic Inna Borisova notes this aspect of Nagibin's psychological stories and how it affects characterization. The constant testing that goes on in Nagibin's stories, writes Borisova, has determined a special method of character building. Nagibin focuses on a person's feelings exposing the essence of the character. He takes off one mask after another until only the core of the personality remains. The borderline here lies between the seeming and the real. But it is not the contrast between the outward impression and inward actuality that interests Nagibin, concludes Borisova. He is interested in the essence of man and how "this essence impregnates the many layers and masks of the character."⁴

It frequently happens in these Nagibin stories that the reader has barely had enough time to realize his dislike for the hero when he suddenly starts taking a liking to him, then quite unexpectedly the aversion returns followed again by sympathy, etc. until through all these feelings for the hero the reader arrives at a decisive event in the story after which only one stand is possible: a clear-cut for or against the hero.

A good example of this type of characterization technique is evident in *Nočnoj gost'* (The Nighttime Guest).⁵ Here we get a glimpse of the inner world of Pal Palyč appearing unexpectedly in the hut of Babka Jul'ja and are surprised that he has come all the way from Moscow to go fishing, but neglected to bring any fishing equipment or to dress

⁴Inna Borisova, "Put' na perednij kraj," *Družba narodov*, No. 4 (1959), p. 236.

⁵This and all subsequent translations of the titles of Nagibin's works are mine.

appropriately . However, in a few minutes we have forgotten about his fetching city attire which seems so incongruous in the country setting. His carefree attitude becomes something to think about; it is quite fascinating. Pal Palyč begins to win us over by his kindness and amiable disposition, by an ability to put the guests and hosts at ease in the crowded hut. We are carried away by his sensitive reaction to the charming family and the poetry of the surrounding countryside. We are impressed with Pal Palyč's "sniper's eye," his steady hand and unerring instinct for catching fish. Only the skepticism of the second fisherman, the silent and gloomy Nikolaj Sem'enovič, disturbs us. Brushing his silent hostility towards Pal Palyč aside, however, we readily agree with the narrator that the new guest has brought something with him that no other fisherman has thought about: a genuine interest for the members of the family which has brightened their lives:

...мне...невольно подумалось: а что принесли этим людям мы с Николаем Семеновичем? Сколько народу прошло через этот домик, но, кроме рыбы, никто ничем не интересовался. А вот Пал Палыч оказался совсем другим, и, верно, он останется у хозяев в памяти теплом и весельем, которое внес в их жизнь...⁶

At this point we may think that we have fathomed the hero's nature but we are wrong. Nagibin continues to reveal Pal Palyč's character. We descend still deeper and find ourselves in a veritable swamp, a mire of egoism and parasitism. This is how his hosts will think of him, rather than with warmth and joy. It is all the more repugnant because these people were led to think of him as kind and outgoing. For this reason their deception is all the more cynical. The cynicism is not so much in the uproar Pal Palyč stages at the loss of his pen knife as in his

⁶ Ju. Nagibin, *Izbrannye proizvedenija v dvux tomach* (Moscow: "Xudožestvennaja literatura," 1973), I, 44.

hypocritical attitude toward Babka Julja's six-year-old granddaughter who, having played with the knife, forgets it in her apron pocket, an act for which she is severely punished.

Nagibin shows that kindness and compassion were simply tactics for Pal Palyč, rather than characteristic virtues; they were an egoistical profiteering of people's suffering rather than genuine compassion. Moreover, his far-sighted profiteering is based on an exceptional knowledge of human nature with its innate desire for happiness and responsiveness to sympathy.

We can only admire Pal Palyč's open-hearted faith in humanity which he believes will come through for him even if he finds himself in the desert with nothing more than a handkerchief in his pocket:

Вы знаете, когда идешь к людям с открытым сердцем, тебе всегда помогут. Я готов отправиться хоть в Каракумы, хоть на Маточкин Шар с одним носовым платком в качестве багажа -- и убежден, что не пропаду!⁷

Nagibin does not object. He simply exposes the profiteering, sponging essence of Pal Palyč's philosophy. It is the philosophy of a thief who enters openly, in broad daylight, and begins to steal while enjoying the confidence of his hosts.

In this simple story without any dramatic plot, Nagibin manages to develop the central character in such a way that we unavoidably see that the real man is not the one Nagibin tries to personify, but the one who reveals himself at the end of the story.

The critic M. Čerkasskij is grateful to Nagibin for introducing Pal Palyč, a new type of hero whom the critic has not met in Russian

⁷*Ibid.*, I, 93.

literature before;⁸ at the same time, however, he resents having the old fisherman sum up Pal Palyč: "...Ничтожный, жадный, ласковый паразит," and Nagibin's additional philosophical summation which spoils an otherwise excellent story.

Most of Nagibin's writing retains several basic features of socialist realism. Russian literature has always been characterized by a desire to preach (Gogol', Dostoevskij, Tolstoj), and a certain amount of didacticism remains in contemporary Soviet literature. The difference is one of focus; Nagibin's more personal directive might be applied specifically to the Soviet citizen rather than to humanity as a whole. Much as in socialist realism, Nagibin sets forth ideals of human behavior.

Nagibin sometimes depicts a character who is willful, authoritarian and self-assured. It frequently turns out, however, that at the end of the story the character reveals himself to be a pitiless and petty man.

In another story, a similar case of irresponsible behavior and lack of consideration for one's fellow man identifies the central character. In *Podsadnaja utka* (The Decoy Duck), a visiting huntsman from Moscow stays up all night talking to a general at the hunting site in the Meščera and in the morning accidentally shoots the local huntsman's live decoy duck. After the hunt the narrator overhears him telling the others hunters how it happened:

-Я знаете ли, потратил-таки порошу на своем веку, и вот не далее как сегодня сижу на зорьке, а спать хочется -- страсть. Только прикорнул, вдруг будто под руку толкнуло. Продрал очи -- матерая! Я ка-ак стебану из обоих стволов -- так перья и полетели. Слышу, егерь чего-то кричит. Мать честная -- я подсадную приложил! -Насмерть? ...с придыханием спросил чей-то молодой голос. Андреев засмеялся.

⁸М. Ćerkasskij, "Detali i mysl'," *Neva*, No. 5 (1957), p. 183.

-О чем спрашиваешь дите малое!...⁹

In other instances a selfish character realizes his own shortcomings by observing another efficient man in action.

In *Molodožen* (The Newlywed), the visiting huntsman, Voronov, watches the young local huntsman, Vas'ka, with whom he is contrasted. He admires Vas'ka's efficient handling of the boat, his effortless rowing. But most of all Voronov marvels at the intense feeling Vas'ka has for his wife: Vas'ka decides on an impulse of jealousy to make the difficult eight-hour trip home from the hunting site to see the woman to whom he has been married for six years and to be back again at daybreak. At the end of the story Voronov realizes how empty his own life is in comparison with that of happily-married Vas'ka. The fact that Voronov makes this comparison and begins to understand himself better because of it, adds to the beauty of his awakening.

D. J. Richards, in his introduction to *Yurii Nagibin Selected Short Stories*, expands on this point by including some political considerations as well. He contends that Nagibin's interest in individual psychology stems from the view that Communism is not simply a pattern of social organization, but an attitude towards life. "This attitude," writes Richards, "is illustrated in some of Nagibin's most attractive heroes, who are characterized by a natural honesty and openness towards their fellows, sensitivity towards nature and often also by a certain reserve and modesty."¹⁰

Typical of such heroes is the quiet gamekeeper, Striž, in *Razgovor*

⁹Ju. Nagibin, *Na tixom ozere* (Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1966), p. 19.

¹⁰D. J. Richards, Introduction to *Yurii Nagibin* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. xv.

(The Conversation). As a result of his courageous defense of the chapel, Striž is elected game warden. When a writer arrives in Striž's native Meščera to hunt, the gamekeeper comes to talk to him because he wants to get to know all visiting huntsmen. The Moscow visitor invites him to have some drinks and Striž, unable to refuse the hospitable gesture, gets hopelessly drunk. He has come to tell the writer "самое главное, что он вынес из жизни: человеку надо верить." But instead, he finds himself saying things further and further removed from what he had intended. The visitor takes him for the village drunk. The awakening comes for Striž when he suddenly realizes that the man is not interested in him at all, but is treating him nicely because he wants Striž to do him a favor.

That people fail to communicate with each other is one of Nagibin's deep concerns in man's realization of himself. Richards observes that "like Chekhov, Nagibin sometimes stresses the lack of communication between people, the difficulty of really understanding another person."¹¹

The problem that arises here is probably one of personalities because in Nagibin's stories people of very different characters meet and some Soviet critics have expressed resentment for Nagibin's interest in such meetings as they do not provide sufficient material for the depiction of a valuable conflict.¹² Gibian contends, however, that the mere portrayal of characters in a true-to-life situation is valuable in itself and that Nagibin here shows sympathy and compassionate understanding for imperfect and inconsistent humanity.¹³

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. xiv.

¹²M. V. Romenec, *Problema gumanizma v sovremennom russkom rasskaze* (Xar'kov: Izd. Xar'kovskogo universiteta, 1969), p. 17.

¹³Gibian, p. 53.

o
s
o
t
o
f
n
t
i
e
i
i
m

pa
fa
sta
co

pp.

In *Slezaj, priexali...* (Get Off, We've Arrived...), the insight into another person's nature is revealed very gradually. The external action describes how Sergej Danilovič Maruškin drives a young Moscow agronomist from the MTS¹⁴ to two collective farms, then back to the railway station. In each of the kolkhozes the working conditions are not to the girl's liking and she refuses to stay. However, the real plot pertains to the progressive revelation of the girl's nature and Maruškin's concurrent disillusionment. His attitude toward the girl gradually evolves from a protective, paternal feeling to complete disgust at her selfishness and lack of human kindness. Richards, among other critics, notes that in Nagibin's stories the extent of a character's sympathy with nature is used as a measure of his whole moral worth. Richards cites *Slezaj, priexali* as an example, indicating that "the decline of the agronomist in the eyes of Maruškin begins when she sees nothing beautiful in the local countryside."¹⁵ The following passage supports Richards's statement:

И вдруг всей кровью он ощутил, что смертельно обижен этой маленькой милостивой девушкой, обижен за себя, за свой край, в котором ни один уголок не пришелся ей по душе... Он вспомнил, как неприязненно, холодно исподлобья оглядывала она родной ему простор: поля, перелески, Ворицу под чистым, светлым льдом... И по человечески обидно и стыдно было ездovому, что он, старый мужик, так ошибся в ней, называл "дочкой"...¹⁶

Nagibin's interest in individual psychology, however, does not let

¹⁴ *Mašinnno-traktornye stancii* were government-staffed rental and repair stations renting tractors and other farm machinery to collective farms, operating from 1929 to 1958 when they were converted to repair stations only (*remontno-techničeskie stancii*). Since 1958 individual collective farms acquired their own farm equipment.

¹⁵ Richards, pp. xvi-xvii.

¹⁶ Ju. Nagibin, *Zimnij dub* (Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1955), pp. 195-96.

him ignore contemporary issues: many of his stories are set on collective farms, and the author is well aware of the problems facing Soviet agriculture. In *Slezaj, priexali...* for example, two kolkhozes are contrasted:

И ездовой задумался над тем, над чем много думают и не одни крестьянские головы: почему так по-разному складывается судьба двух хозяйств, лежащих поблизости друг от дружки, а порой и вовсе бок о бок? И земли у них одинаковые, и люди как будто не разнятся, и те же беды пережиты в войну и в послевоенную пору, но одно хозяйство... крепло, росло, двигалось к столбовой дорожке жизни, а другое неуклонно катилось под откос...¹⁷

In addition, another modern issue is mirrored in the same story: the social antagonism between the struggling peasantry represented by the MTS driver Maruškin and the privileged educated class, depicted by the young Moscow agronomist.

But Nagibin is not interested in exposing the problems of the collective *per se*, nor is he interested in baring the issue of social antagonism. His primary interest lies in the inner world of his heroes, in their attitude toward life, toward nature, toward their fellows and themselves.

The War Theme

Nagibin's experiences of World War II have prompted one of his leading themes--the war theme. The writer feels indebted to his generation. He wants to say all he knows about the war itself and about his peers, many of whom did not return from the war. In an article in 1970, Nagibin gives us his reasons for his yen for war stories. Even after many years, writes Nagibin, his war experiences continue to haunt him and he yearns to write again about the Volga, the Donets Basin of the

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 192.

war years, and of the many people he met at the front. He feels he may never completely exhaust these memories.¹⁸ In these war stories, Nagibin also recalls the war through experiences of its rank and file fighting men. He depicts their courage and humaneness, their martial spirit, their sense of duty and honor.

In *Boj za vysotu* (The Fight for a Peak), a young political instructor, Aleksej Rakitin,¹⁹ is an inexperienced officer who gains in stature over Captain Šaternikov, whose courage and experience delight everyone including Rakitin. Rakitin refuses to compromise: he cannot agree to even the least inaccuracy where translation for clarity in propaganda leaflets for the enemy is concerned:

- Листовка не годится, - сказал Ракитин спокойно и твердо. - Она противоречит духу нашей политработы, которая строится на правде и только на правде. Мы не лжем противнику.²⁰

Rakitin's courage and candor score a high regard from Šaternikov who before this pays no attention to him. The captain helps the inexperienced Rakitin get through a wooded area that is infested with enemy sharp-shooters.

Boj za vysotu, contends the critic V. Dorofeev, is not only one of Nagibin's most characteristic stories, but the peak of his literary output so far. The fusion of deep social content and a precise, colorful imagery in the story embody Nagibin's ideas in the flesh of characters and pictures:

¹⁸Ju. Nagibin, "A cel' vse ta že," *Sovetskaja kul'tura* (June 6, 1970).

¹⁹The hero's name seems to evoke Nagibin's own name.

²⁰Jurij Nagibin, *Čelovek i doroga* (Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1958), p. 67.

Один из замечательных и наиболее характерных для Нагибина рассказов "Бой за высоту." Рассказ этот написан в последнее время, и пока что он, по-моему, вершина всего того, что создано Нагибиным. В этом рассказе удивительно гармонично слились глубокое общественное содержание, важнейшая идея о первостепенном значении партийного подхода в любом деле и конкретная, точная яркая образность, облекшая эту идею в живую художественную плоть человеческих характеров и картин.²¹

On the other hand, a Hungarian writer, Kristó Nagy, thinks that the main character is too literary.²² But A. Aronov, a Soviet critic, praises Nagibin's remarkable literary craft in the well-developed character of Šaternikov. "How we all want to be like Šaternikov!" writes Aronov, "the well-built, smart, handsome, skillful and successful Šaternikov everyone admired." This character who stands out in Nagibin's book more realistic than life, concludes Aronov, is the product of the mastery and plasticity of the writer.²³

Aizenštok, Nagibin's former war buddy and a contemporary writer, recalls that both he and the author served at the same time during the war and knew the same officers. Aizenštok describes one of them as Captain T. whom he recognizes in Nagibin's characterization of Šaternikov. But he adds that the writer not only vividly drew the character of Šaternikov, endowing him with the traits of Captain T. but also gave Šaternikov exceptional bravery, something which his original lacked altogether. Thus, Nagibin only starts with a real person, changing and enriching the

²¹V. Dorofeev, "Rasskazy Nagibina," in Jurij Nagibin's *Rannej vesnoj* (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1961), p. 459.

²²István Kristó Nagy, *Az új szovjet irodalom*, eds. János Elbert and László Kardos (Budapest: Gondolat c., 1963), p. 260. The translation from the Hungarian is by Maria Nevai.

²³A. Aronov, "Za Šaternikovym i čut' dalše," *Moskovskij komsomolec* (Sept. 15, 1974), p. 3.

personality to fit the artistic task before him. Nagibin's penchant for drawing portraits from live people illustrates his creative method without in any way lowering the artistic merit of his work. This aspect of character portraiture, contends Aizenštok, concomitantly reveals the writer's wish to preserve for the reader the authenticity of life at the front which is so characteristic for Nagibin's stories.²⁴

Boj za vyсотu juxtaposes the characters of Šaternikov and Rakitin; it reveals their understanding of duty and life at the front which formed and tempered their personalities.

Another story, "Pavlik," seeks a solution to problems which are just as important today as they were then: the training of young soldiers who are familiar with the war only in its heroic aspect. The story was published in 1960 as a separate book which was lengthened considerably from its original journal publication in 1959.

Its hero, Pavlik, resembles Rakitin in looks and character. Pavlik is a young man who even after he is married and serving at the front continues to be a "mama's boy" until, in the new conditions of life at the front, in battles and in the most tragic ordeals, he gradually undergoes such a change that he dies a seasoned commander and courageous soldier.

In the original version of the journal publication Pavlik's path to courage and heroism seemed simpler due to the many reductions. In the book version many episodes have been restored showing the complex inner tempering of the hero by the trials of army life. Incongruous as it may seem for a commander to be known to his men as "Pavlik" Nagibin purposely leaves the name unchanged to show that even with maturity Pavlik

²⁴J. Aizenštok, "Frontovye povesti Jurija Nagibina," *Zvezda*, No. 6 (1961), p. 209.

retained his boyish inner purity. Gibian rightfully notes that with an eye to the contradictions of human life, "Nagibin shows that although he became an admired hero, his men still called him Pavlik, a diminutive of Paul, as if he were a little boy - as his mother called him."²⁵

Nagibin's stories and sketches written during the war, as the critic M. Čerkasskij observes, were "омытые потом и кровью куски жизни."²⁶ People had fought and died for their country and the writer told about what he had seen and could not help revealing. That is why his stories were exciting and thought-provoking. There was no time to deal in trifles. But when the war ended and the writer took off his uniform, as did his heroes, his main characters continued to have conflicts. But now these conflicts did not blow up like bombs, they were no longer on the surface of life. Now Nagibin had to search for them in his newly acquired life-style. He needed a new approach.

Allied to the war stories are those about the destinies of people who have returned from the war. Characteristic of these stories is *Deljagi* (The Dealers), about two ex-service men, Fedor Rožkov and Sergeant Stepan Zaxarovič, who decide to earn some money upon discharge from the army by doing odd carpentry jobs. In one of the village collective farms Fedor meets and falls in love with a war widow and starts helping her fellow villagers, each time refusing their money. His comrade goes to a neighboring town. After a separation of a week, Fedor is to meet Stepan and fears that the sergeant, being more practical than he, will be angry at him for working for free. When they meet, however, he discovers that Stepan has also been working for nothing. Stepan confesses:

²⁵Gibian, p. 53.

²⁶Čerkasskij, p. 179.

Поработал я может, и получше твоего. Банкоброш, сложнейшую машину, отремонтировал. В жисть так не трудился. А как стали об оплате говорить, я этаким гордым чертом: примите, мол, вподарок от Советской Армии. Да, видать, мы с тобой на одних дрожжах замешены.²⁷

Critics have appraised this story differently. B. Dajredžiev singled it out for special mention. He believes that the vitality of the story is expressed in the actions of the two ex-fighting men. They felt they could not take money from people for whom they had just fought a war. And yet just before they had set out on their venture, Stepan Zaxarovič said: "С месячок поездим -- вернемся тысячниками." The critic believes that both men, although they had lost everything, remained human and humane. The vitality and acuity of Nagibin's perception, writes Dajredžiev, distinguishes this story from the rest. The reader is attracted to Fedor because Fedor, though maimed and homeless, does not become embittered, undisciplined or callous. "не по мне такие деньги," he says to Stepan, i.e., money of the poor and needy villagers.²⁸

A different view of the story is taken by the critic A. Tarasenkov, who contends that the unselfish, idyllic ending seems far-fetched, and, furthermore, that the heroes of the story are too removed from life with its vicissitudes which the Soviet people experienced in the post-war years.²⁹ One critic, Dorofeev, notes that when one reads Nagibin's earliest war stories today, such as those published in the collection *Čelovek s fronta* (A Man from the Front), one inevitably remembers the words

²⁷Nagibin, *Zimnij...*, p. 70.

²⁸B. Dajredžiev, "Rasskaz v tolstom žurnale," *Večernjaja Moskva* (Oct. 1, 1956).

²⁹A. Tarasenkov, *Stat'i o literature* (Moscow: GIXL, 19), II, p. 184.

of Lev Tolstoj:

В известные годы писатель может даже до некоторой степени жертвовать отделкой формы; и если только его отношение к тому, что он описывает, ясно и сильно проведено, то произведение может достичь своей цели.³⁰

V. Smirnova, another critic, while praising Nagibin's talent, contends that Nagibin's early war stories lacked imagination and inventiveness; she concludes that the photographic quality of characterization with the recurring chance meetings of characters failed to excite the reader.³¹

These stories did not paint battle scenes but told instead of episodes from a battle or an event in the prosaic workaday life of the front. However, even these first stories were infused with a certain quality not found in Soviet war stories of the period. For example, in *Čelovek s fronta*, an unknown soldier who is on his way to the rear for a short leave happens upon a column of trucks carrying munitions which is stopped by an attack from enemy planes. He assumes command of the column, bringing it to safety by another route, then leaves as unexpectedly as he appeared. A significant lyric detail in the story, incidentally, is the sound of a song which is heard before the soldier appears and after he is gone.

P. P. Gromov, another critic, contends that the concrete historical aspect of the story is missing and that the episode depicted by the writer may have occurred in any era, in any country, in any situation. Who is the brave, resourceful man from the front? Why does he do what he does? What is the source of his courage and resourcefulness? Why is

³⁰Dorofeev, p. 459.

³¹V. Smirnova, "Xolodnen'kimi slovami...", *Znamja*, Nos. 9-10 (1943), p. 316.

he a Soviet man? Wherein lie the roots of his patriotism? These are the questions posed by Gromov that Nagibin leaves unresolved. Gromov argues that this "romantic stranger," whose emotional appeal for the reader is due precisely to his heroic, adventurous, remote and mysterious qualities, serves as a literary device characteristic of all Nagibin's stories of the *Bol'soe serdce* collection.³²

Gromov concludes that Nagibin has depicted a romantic stranger-hero whose appearance is accompanied by distant strains of a song coming as if it were from the wind in the trees. For this romantic wind to be heard, however, the author needed another detail which caused an incongruity in the plot. From the ten or more soldiers involved in the incident not one could recall the stranger's name.

The critic insists that the lyrical strain in Nagibin's stories is reminiscent of the Russian national flavor and of Russian nature in the poetry of Blok and Tjutčev. He disapproves, however, of Nagibin's use of lyrical details to conceal, as it were, the non-existent historical meaning of the event in the story. For this reason, Gromov calls it an imaginary lyrical psychologism, an appended super-structure over the hero's character as opposed to the hero's true character. Nevertheless, he implies that without this strange lyric detail, a unique literary device serving as the psychological collision of the narrative, Nagibin's story would resemble the many thousands of run-of-the-mill war sketches that filled the army newspapers and Soviet literary periodicals.³³

In subsequent collections of war stories, such as *Bol'soe serdce* (The Big Heart) and *Zerno žizni* (The Kernel of Life), Nagibin continued

³²P. P. Gromov, *Geroj i vremja* (Leningrad: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1961), p. 26.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 24.

to work over the war theme, deepening the content and perfecting the form of his stories. It is evident when reading these stories that the writer is seeking his own treatment of the war theme and at the same time is seeking the treatment of subjects and themes which correspond to his experience and creative inclination. In their majority these are frontline stories which exude heroism and bravery. However, among them are also stories which focus on the hero's pre-war life. For example, in *Zerno žizni*, an old soldier, who is fatally wounded, knows he has not long to live. Realizing that he is afraid of death with its uncertainty, he thinks back on his life in his village.

Here Nagibin depicts a soldier's behavior that is perhaps less courageous than that of his more heroic peers, and yet we feel respect for this old soldier, trusting him more than many of the other war heroes with their brave exploits. Our trust seems to grow as we find out about the soldier's pre-war peasant life which passes before his dimming consciousness. He loves his village, his region and his fatherland. He appreciates the beauty of his homeland. He remembers how in his native village the summer air is filled with mingling fragrances of the local countryside. As he identifies these different smells, a calm comes over him. It is as though he can smell them again: fragrant camomille, wild berries and mushrooms, replaced later in the year by the full-bodied aroma of apples and pears. In these recollections of his native village so dear to him the soldier receives strength and sustenance.

The simple events Nagibin describes in war stories prompt the reader to think not only about the fate of man during war and the formation and changes of his character while he is engaged in battle, but also about his former pre-war years which, although remembered somewhat

one-sidedly and stressing only their brighter aspects, nevertheless, help to explain where the hero gets his fortitude and patriotism. With short but deft strokes Nagibin traces the evolution of his hero's inner world from confused, fearful thoughts of death to the fearless decision to die like a soldier.

The theme of love and faithfulness appears in the early war story, *Škiper uxodit v plavanie* (The Skipper Goes a-Sailing). Captain Savin leaves on the ship "Gromoboj" to deliver munitions to Stalingrad. But on the way to the besieged city an enemy bomb sinks his ship and the tragic news soon spreads up and down the Volga. However, Savin's wife cannot believe that her husband is dead:

Она и слушать не хотела и спрашивать не спрашивала. Все дома сидела, никуда не выходила. А как захрустел на реке ледок, поставила в печь кислое тесто для лепешек, которые Савин предпочитал всем другим. Но не пришел муж, а вместо него зачастил боцман, приятель капитана. "Стань моей женой," сказал он однажды.
 - Рано вы мужа моего схоронили, - ответила Савина, - а еще другом его назывались... И она закрыла дом от людей. Только раз зашла она к жене начальника порта и попросила у нее белой муки в долг. - Моя вся вышла, - сказала она, - а я хочу к мужнину приезде лепешечки спечь... 34

In March when the ice on the river breaks, Ol'ga Andreevna can stand it no longer. She asks permission to become skipper of a boat and, leaving her children with the harbor master's wife, sets out to look for her husband. Though his death was rumoured, the living Captain Savin returns home in May to find his house empty. But in the cold oven he discovers some dried-up *lep'ěski*--the type of bread he loves. Thus, for the first time in the history of the Volga, a sailor husband waits for his wife to return from the high seas. There is nothing superfluous in this story, but the reader will notice the many fine details. Three times the

³⁴Ju. Nagibin, *Bol'soe serdce* (Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1944), pp. 125-26.

author mentions *lep'eski*, and each time it reminds us of Savina's faithfulness and love. Other significant details reveal the war privations the people faced. For instance, when the boatswain brings some black cookies ("Ботсман насыпал горку черного печенья..."), we are immediately reminded of the difficult war period. Čerkasskij contends that an actual incident was at the inception of the story, however, even if in reality Savin had not returned, if he had perished, the writer did well to resurrect him to show that love and faithfulness triumph.³⁵

As mentioned above, critics generally agree that in his early stories and sketches of army life Nagibin rarely paints battle scenes. Instead, he focuses on the inner world of his hero, away from the action at the front. For instance, in *Vaganov* (1946) Nagibin depicts "the vital strength and fiery spirit of his hero - and of Russia - not in the violent clashes with the enemy, but in the full-blooded vigor of a Russian folk dance and in the squadron's inability to believe that Vaganov can be dead."³⁶

In *Put' na perednij kraj* (The Trip to the Front Lines), a radio communications man suffering from serious shell-shock is sent to the army doctor in a neighboring village. On his way there and while waiting for the doctor, he meets two women who make a lasting impression on him:

От ее милого, доверчивого домашнего облика повеяло на меня вдруг чем-то неприятным и чуждым... Мне вспомнилась та, другая женщина, в темном, ночном поезде. Она до нитки обобрана войной, она лишилась мужа, родителей, крова. И вместе не потеряла ничего; быть может, даже приобрела ту удивительную щедрую доброту, что способна приютить и согреть всякого кому одиноко и плохо... Она

³⁵Čerkasskij, p. 181.

³⁶Richards, p. xiii.

доживет до того великого праздника когда встретятся все разлученные, соудутся все надежды... А эта, такая же молодая и крепкая, не знала никаких горестей и потерь. Она окружена удобствами, у нее сильный, любящий муж, готовый защищать ее от всех напастей, и все-таки она бедна и грядущий праздник не для нее.³⁷

In his subsequent evaluation of these chance meetings, the hero ponders about the striking difference between the two women. The first, who had lost everything, had remained humane and kind; the second, who lacked neither physical nor material blessings, was unfulfilled and spiritually impoverished. And here Nagibin comes close to religious questions in his interpretation of the "Big Holiday," symbolizing, in its own way, life after death, in which the first woman would participate but the second would not.

The main attraction of Nagibin's stories is not so much the variety of their themes as the interesting inner world of their heroes, their feelings and thoughts. The distinctive trait his positive heroes have in common, that makes them akin to one another and truly Nagibinesque, is a scrupulous exactingness in questions of duty, honor and conscience. This is what determines their attitude toward life. They are young men and women with strict moral judgements towards others, as well as towards themselves and their work.³⁸

The Love Theme

Not surprisingly, in his focus on the complex inner world of his heroes, Nagibin frequently writes about love; this is often love seen from an uncommon point of view, or it is an unhappy, unrequited love.

In the story *Ljubov'* (Love), Nagibin tells about the true love of a village boy, Egor, for his boyhood sweetheart, Nast'ja. Egor leaves

³⁷ Ju. Nagibin, *Skalistyj porog* (Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1958), p. 221.

³⁸ N. Vasil'eva, "Jurij Nagibin," *Oktjabr'*, No. 12 (1958), p. 212.

his native village to study in town. Upon his return he is surprised to learn that Nast'ja no longer lives at home. He finds out that she has had a love affair with a prominent man who has then abandoned her. Now, demoralized and cynical, she is working as a dishwasher. In her conversation with Egor the writer shows how completely she has lost her innocence. She tells Egor that she has learned about other ways of life different from those of the village.

Nagibin analyzes Egor's many-sided and changing attitudes toward Nast'ja. For reasons that are unclear to him, Egor no longer loves his childhood sweetheart whom he has lost, but this strange, new Nast'ja. When he asks her to return to him she again shows the full extent of her degradation by boasting to her girlfriend about Egor's devotion. Finally, after rejecting him several times, she joins Egor.

Gibian observes that, like his contemporary Jurij Kazakov, Nagibin avoids facile interpretation of a situation. In *Ljubov'*, as in many of his other stories, writes Gibian, Nagibin sees human nature as complex and baffling. But he refuses to embellish ("lakirovat'") reality. Nast'ja's flightiness and unreliability are underscored as human frailties which lead to weakness and unhappiness.³⁹

Skalistyj porog (Rocky Rapids) is a story of the unrequited love of a young girl, Katja, living in a remote botanical experimental station in the high mountains bordering the Afghan frontier. The geologist-narrator on an expedition to that region brings Katja a letter. By chance she confides to him that at the university she fell in love with a man who was weak and irresponsible. After accepting her work at the outlying post, she managed to have him assigned to the same botanical

³⁹Gibian, p. 52.

station, but after a few months he became bored and ran away. Tracing his whereabouts, Katja entreats him to come back. The letter the narrator brings is the young man's reply refusing ever to return.

Although Katja's only companions are her pets, a turtle, a chicken, a puppy and a pig, she has courage and hope. She continues her work, trying her best to conceal her sorrow. This story shows, writes Gibian, that like Kazakov, Nagibin considers unhappy or mixed emotions sufficiently worthy topics in themselves without involvement with work, industry or agriculture.⁴⁰

Vejmar i okresnosti (Weimar and Environs) is an interesting analysis of an uncommon middle-aged relationship in which the lovers lose spiritual contact with one another. For the backdrop of the story, Nagibin reproduces the terrifying spectacle of the Buchenwald concentration camp. The hero, Georg Berger, is a Buchenwald guide who takes a group of Soviet tourists through what used to be his former prison. A history teacher who refused to take his hat off to the Führer's portrait on his birthday, Berger was sentenced to seven years of hard labor. Now he has given his life to exposing the crimes that were perpetrated at Buchenwald. That evening in a dimly-lit Weimar basement pub the narrator learns of the tragic fate of Georg Berger and his sweetheart Gisela who has been waiting for him for over eleven years. The hopelessness of her situation is summed up in her own words as she realizes that Georg has allowed a Buchenwald of his own making to keep him from her forever:

Ее глаза расширились выражением ужаса и боли. "Я не дождусь тебя, сколько бы не ждала! Ты никогда не выходил и не выйдешь из лагеря, Георг! Ты "бессрочный

⁴⁰George Gibian, "Soviet Literature During the Thaw," *Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia, 1917-62*, eds. Max Hayward and Leopold Labedz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 138.

Бухенвальда"...⁴¹

In *Čelovek i doroga* (A Man and a Road), a chauffeur-hero popular in Soviet literature (the reader is reminded of Antonov's "Empty Run") is typified as the characteristic new socialist technician. An important feature of the story is its unexpected ending. A young girl is picked up by the lorry driver Byčkov who has an undesirable background. At first he is unconcerned about the girl, then aggressive and finally he becomes tenderly passionate. But she stays totally indifferent to his changing moods. However, the opportunity for Byčkov to talk to someone, who, albeit a captive audience and total stranger, makes self-renewal possible. The cathartic alleviation of his fears and problems is the turning point in the story.

The total vision which recognizes and uncovers paradoxes and the complication of occurrences gradually deepens in Nagibin's writings. He is able to describe his hero's personality with mood-evoking elements by creating an adequate atmosphere and by psychological analysis which uncovers not only the simple but complex, paradoxical and ambivalent feelings without resorting to moralizing.

This is shown in the story *Škola dlja vzroslyx* (The School for Adults), where there are neither exhortations, the traditional remembrance of one's childhood friendships, nor the unwarranted happy ending. Instead, there is a trustworthy depiction of characters: a young country hobo, Ulešov, turned tanner and a rather plain, but charming school teacher, Anna Sergeevna. There are true-to-life details, such as class sessions, dances and dates of Anna Sergeevna and Ulešov and their disparate feelings about life, their feelings which do not consider the

⁴¹Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, 243.

clichés of good or bad.

The main point in the story is that conflicts such as this do not take place in a vacuum, but in the unique conditions of the school for adults where it ill behooves a teacher to fall in love with her student.

In *Škola dlja vzroslyx*, incidentally, the critic M. Iof'ev hears intonations of Bunin. In the composition and atmosphere of the story the critic sees a fruitful assimilation of past experience. But in the stylistics where the rhythm and phraseology may be cited, Bunin's intonations are unmistakable, concludes Iof'ev.⁴²

That Buninian *solnecnyj udar*-type of life, to follow up the remark above on Bunin, is described in another story, *Sročno trebujutsja sedye čelovečeskie volosy* (Gray Human Hair Urgently Needed). Only here the sudden "sunstroke" love comes to an old family man, Guščin, who is tired of life with his wife and daughter who do not love him, so he spends all his free time pursuing a hobby--the architecture of old Petersburg. In Leningrad by a theater marquee announcing a film about gray hair he meets a young actress, Nataša Proskurova. That same day he expresses his love for the arts to her. Nataša in turn shows Guščin her favorite Petersburg haunt--an artist's studio. Back at home in Moscow, convinced of his genuine love for Nataša, but unsure of her actual feelings for him, he sends her a curious telegram in the form of a question asking whether or not she has any further need of gray human hair: "Требуются ли еще седые человеческие волосы?" The reply: "Да, да, да, срочно!" shows how the story gets its name, and reassures Guščin, who tells his wife and daughter that he is leaving. On his way to the railway station, however, glancing back at his house, Guščin sees his wife in the window, and turns back.

⁴²M. Iof'ev, "Pisatel' v puti," *Novyj mir*, No. 3 (1959), p. 240.

Some critics attribute the surprise ending of the story to Guščin's weakness,⁴³ but a different and more plausible view is taken by Šapošnikov who holds that Guščin's interest becomes more than just a hobby. It is his refuge from an unhappy marriage. Guščin devotes all his time to a scholarly study of Peterburg's architecture with which he is then able to impress Nataša. Ironically, however, while pursuing this means of escape Guščin is gradually shutting himself off from reality and building a shell around himself that grows so hard that human emotions can no longer penetrate it. This shell shuts tight at the precise moment when Guščin was required to take one step towards his happiness. It was not Nagibin's aim to accuse or unmask anyone in this story, continues Šapošnikov. The author has simply written an excellent love story reminding the reader that happiness comes to those who deserve it. In the critic's view Nagibin's story is one of the most poetic in the annals of contemporary love stories.⁴⁴

"Na zlobu dnja" Theme

Some of us might remember from history classes that in 1928 the whole world was shaken by the tragic fate of aeronaut Umberto Nobile and his companions who undertook an expedition to the North Pole on the airship "Italia." Short wave radio enthusiasts all over the world stayed at their wireless sets hoping in vain to catch the "Italia" crew's SOS. Swedish and Norwegian ships were dispatched to Spitzbergen. Scandinavian, French and Italian pilots launched a rescue mission. The Soviet

⁴³Lidija Fomenko, "Pobeždaet xudožnik," *Znamja*, No. 9 (1973), pp. 228-29.

⁴⁴V. Šapošnikov, "Dela semejnye, dela serdečnye," *Sibirskie ogni*, No. 9 (1974), pp. 172-73.

Union set two ice-breakers, the "Krasin" and "Malygin" with the noted Polar aces, Babuřkin and Čuxnovskij aboard.⁴⁵

Nagibin relates how at the age of eight he emulated the brave explorers and years later was asked to write the screen version of the ill-fated polar rescue:

Вместе с другими людьми самозабвенно следил за борьбой смельчаков восьмилетний мальчик, воображавший себя поочередно то фанатичным Амундсеном, то отважным Чухновским, то романтическим Мальмгренем, то суровым Самойловичем. Этим мальчиком, почти исчезнувшим из моей памяти, был я сам... Спустя тридцать семь лет мне предложили написать сценарий о спасении экспедиции Нобиле. Конечно, я с радостью и волнением согласился.⁴⁶

It was as though an unseen bridge was thrown across the present from the days of the author's youth. All the excitement he felt then came alive in him now as he poured over the yellowing pages of newspapers and magazines and then set out to interview participants and eyewitnesses of the expedition both in the Soviet Union and abroad. From their stories Nagibin wrote the scenario and an additional four stories about the places he visited and the people he interviewed, among them the "Italia's" communications operator, Giuseppe Biaggi, in Rome. He combined the four stories into one long narrative under the title *Po sledam odnoj ekspedicii* (On the Trail of an Expedition).⁴⁷

In it Nagibin focuses on the characters' worth, on their reactions in the dramatic surroundings of an Arctic prison. It is as though the author were filling the shells of the actors in the scenario with emotional and psychological content. The actors portrayed in the scenario had to be described by their outer portraits as characteristically

⁴⁵J. Nagibin, "Vmesto predislovija," *Ne daj emu pogibnut'* (Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1968), p. 5.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 101-146.

required in a scenario. But here the author does not concern himself as much with the events. The sphere of his search here is the human soul. At the same time, he records many interesting developments and discoveries which serve to illuminate the actual events. The critic I. Kozlov calls the story one of meetings and reactions. In working out the same Nobile theme, says the critic, Nagibin structures it as a sort of commentary to the scenario in the genre of "pure prose." Thus, the story has independent artistic value.⁴⁸

In 1970⁴⁹ and 1971,⁵⁰ Nagibin wrote a cycle of fourteen stories in honor of the first cosmonaut, Jurij Gagarin, entitled *Malen'kie rasskazy o bol'soj sud'be* (Little Stories about a Great Destiny). In 1974 he published seven more stories called *Rasskazy o Gagarine* (Stories about Gagarin)⁵¹ which complete the collection. Initially, Nagibin gathered the material for a scenario of Gagarin's life but the plans to produce the film did not materialize. Written after Gagarin's death in 1968, the stories about him give a retrospective view of the Smolenščina, Gagarin's school years, days of occupation, then the flying club, years of training and finally, a trip to the stars.⁵² Many stories are told from the point of view of the hero's parents, others from the author's point of view. One story named *Bujanka*, which was the name of the Gagarin family cow, has a humorous-polemic ending in which Nagibin compares Bujanka to

⁴⁸I. Kozlov, "Po raznym stranam," *Znamja*, No. 9 (1968), p. 244.

⁴⁹Ju. Nagibin, *Perekur* (Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossija," 1970), pp. 89-108.

⁵⁰Ju. Nagibin, *Pereulki moego detstva* (Moscow: "Sovremennik," 1971), pp. 7-48.

⁵¹Ju. Nagibin, *Ty budeš' žit'* (Moscow: "Sovremennik," 1974), pp. 5-30.

⁵²V. Povoljaev, "Načinaja s pereulkov detstva," *Literaturnaja gazeta* (Sept. 27, 1972, p. 5.

the legendary she-wolf that nursed Romulus and Remus:

Прославлена в веках волчица, вскормившая кровожадного Ромула-братоубийцу. Не счесть ее изображений в мраморе, бронзе, граните. А в Риме, у Капитолия, обитает в клетке живой символ кормилицы основателя Вечного города. Какого же памятника заслуживает добрая русская корова, вспоившая своим молоком прекраснейшего сына нашего века!...⁵³

In *Četunov, syn Četunova* (*Četunov, The Son of Četunov*)⁵⁴, Nagibin investigates the theme: children of famous fathers. The young geologist, Četunov, son of the famous geologist and academician, undergoes a severe trial in the hot desert sun where he works alone scaling the wall of a huge crater-like basin. His inner world is tested on the touch-stone of privations and intense desert heat. Perched on a perpendicular wall of rock, his supply of water gone, he struggles to conquer his fear and weakness. The scorching sun is the second main character in the story:

Солнце - добела раскаленный, почти бесцветный шар - стояло в зените, и всякий раз, когда Четунув взглядывался в него...ему приходилось на несколько секунд закрывать глаза... Рот его обволокло липкой слюной, кожа на лице и руках зудела и чесалась от ожогов солнца... Ему представлялось, что солнце пронизает его фигуру, словно стекло...⁵⁵

Četunov is mistaken about his strength and ability but he does not find this out until he lives through the ordeal in the desert discovering himself as he really is: a weakling and coward.

Nagibin first got the idea of writing a story set in the Kara-Kum desert when he crossed it in an airplane. The yellow-gray emptiness of the landscape was heart-rending:

⁵³ Nagibin, *Ty budeš...*, p. 7.

⁵⁴ The story was first published under the title *Pustynja* (The Desert) and co-authored by geologist L. Tisov in the *Zimnij dub* collection.

⁵⁵ Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, I, 67-68.

...мы словно недвижно повисли над желто-серым гофрированным пространством, пустым, печальным, хватающим за сердце, оно казалось одновременно и бесконечно далеким, и опасно близким... Позднее, когда мне пришлось на автомашине пересекать песчаные пространства Кара-Кумов, я уже не мог сильнее почувствовать пустыню, чем при первом ее открытии с воздуха...ничто не могло ни разнообразить, ни усугубить мою первую тягостную ошеломленность от бескрайних, пустых серо-желтых пространств. И тогда я понял, что не успокоюсь, пока не напишу рассказ о пустыне.⁵⁶

Ten years passed after Nagibin's first glimpse of the desert but he still had no theme for the story that would utilize the awesome landscape until he became interested in the children of famous fathers theme. Not a new theme in literature, it seemed, nevertheless, as inexhaustible to him as other themes common to all mankind such as, love, envy, friendship, etc. Moreover, his interest in this theme was heightened because he had a close personal friend with a famous father. If he were not the son of his well-known father this talented, ambitious young man would have achieved great success or even fame. However, he always felt in constant conflict with those around him and in order to write about him Nagibin had to get away from the prototype so that neither his friend nor his friend's acquaintances would guess his identity.⁵⁷

...я ставил себе целью анализ характера а вовсе не разоблачение и все же решил как можно дальше увести своего героя от его прототипа, поставить его в иные жизненные обстоятельства, дать ему иную биографию, профессию, внешний облик. И тут меня осенило: уведу-ка я его в Кара-Кумскую пустыню, дальше некуда. Так мой герой и стал геологом, а действие рассказа перешло в глубину Кара-Кумов. Наконец-то населил я столь долго пустовавший пейзаж...Чтобы быть понятным до конца, должен добавить: пустыня в этом рассказе не фон, а действующее лицо притом весьма активное.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ju. Nagibin, *Razmyslenija o rasskaze* (Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1964), pp. 61-62.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

He achieves this by changing his friend's profession and luring him from his natural surroundings to the heart of the scorching Kara-Kum desert.

In this story the main character, Četunov the younger, seems to have nothing in common with another Nagibin hero, Pal Palyč (*Nočnoj gost'*). Četunov is a young geologist, son of the famous academician, Četunov; Pal Palyč is an older experienced man who turns out to be shallow and petty, used to living parasitically off the kindness and outgoing nature of those around him.

And yet, the two characters have some similar character traits. Četunov, a talented, goal-oriented man, nevertheless, as Nagibin shows, is also a parasite: his relative success in life is due largely to the name of his famous father:

Играя со своими сверстниками в любимую детскую игру "Кем ты будешь?", он никогда не терялся среди всевозможных заманчивых профессий... Он всегда говорил одно и то же, просто и убежденно: "Я буду знаменитым геологом." На этот счет не было никаких сомнений, ни у него самого, ни в семье. Кем же мог стать Четунов, сын Четунова? Ему не пришлось искать, ошибаться в определении своего пути.⁵⁹

Whereas the character of Pal Palyč is fully formed, Nagibin shows Četunov in development. Faced with the first difficult situation in life with which his father could not help him, he finds that he is not well prepared for life on his own. In fact, in his judgement he has failed miserably. The reader, nevertheless is left with the hope that young Četunov will overcome his weakness and develop into the worthy, honest and courageous man he thought he was. We are encouraged in this hope as we see how severely he chastizes himself for his cowardliness. We are further assured of this by the changes for the better that have taken

⁵⁹ Nagibin, *Zimnij...*, p. 287.

place in his character during the few short hours he spent on the dangerous crater wall.

Penetrating into his hero's consciousness, Nagibin shows Četunov's utter confusion at the moment when he loses his self-control, ready to curse all those near and dear to him, including his parents.

Nagibin raises some serious questions when he calls for the reader to think about the responsibility of man towards society and towards himself. At the end of the story he leaves us with the thought that, in the final analysis, the most terrifying thought is not that someone else may find out about one's unseemly actions of cowardice and lies (for Četunov everything turned out well in this respect) but the loss of one's own self-respect.

In his story *Svet v okne* (A Light in the Window), Nagibin tells about a sanatorium in which a magnificent apartment is kept vacant for years in the hope that a certain "someone" will soon occupy it. So real is the expectancy of this personage that his bodiless authority, the specter of officialdom already resides in the empty rooms. The utopian promise reminiscent of that in Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" becomes a symbol. Phantom-like, the great "someone" rules in the hearts of the people in the sanatorium. His presence is especially closely felt by the sanatorium director and Nastja, the cleaning woman.

The director, Vasilij Petrovič, did everything in his power to ensure that the arrival of the great guest would not take him unawares. He instructed the best cleaning woman to take care of the rooms and Nastja devoted herself to her new assignment with all the strength of her uncorrupted heart. Gradually the legendary personage who was to occupy the apartment took on an ever more story-like appearance in her mind until

she was convinced that a being to whom one was so devoted every minute of the day can have little to do with other mortals. For this reason nothing provided a greater joy than the daily upkeep of the beautiful rooms that would welcome him. But the days passed, weeks turned into months, and months into years but no one came. The rooms grew colder and emptier because no one warmed them with their presence. The television gazed with a blind eye, the billiard balls slumbered on the grassy table top. Then one day Nastja stopped waiting. The foolishly wasted time, her meaningful love began to turn to hate. There is a verse in Proverbs 13:12 stating that hope deferred makes the heart sick. Finally, the one that Nastja had so long hoped for became the one she hated, so that she considered it the greatest injustice to turn the bright rooms and useful objects over to the "hated one." Nagibin shows that Nastja could stand the empty rooms no longer. She therefore invites the lowliest of the lowly--the sanatorium watchman and his children--into the apartment to watch television with her. When the director sees the light in the window of the apartment and realizes what has happened, he angrily throws them out, but in so doing only feels aversion for himself.

The East German critic, Helen von Ssachno, comments on the symbolism in the story which depicts Nastja as the hardworking, patient people that rise up in hatred against the "someone" for whom Vasilij Petrovič is a paid guardian of the masses. Von Ssachno remarks that Nagibin's story "rests" on two "pillars," a realistic and a symbolic one, and that Nagibin portrays a typical Soviet sanatorium where nothing "richtig klappt."⁶⁰

The most dangerous symptom of all is the gap between the party officials and the people which allows the reader to draw the direct

⁶⁰Helen von Ssachno, *Der Aufstand der Person* (Berlin: Argon Verlag, 1965), p. 166.

conclusion that class differentiation still exists.

The Kolkhoz Village Theme

In the late fifties and early sixties Nagibin started writing stories with sharp societal conflicts and contemporary issues. Such stories, for example *Razgovor* (The Conversation), *Xazarskiĭ ornament* (The Hazar Ornament), *Kogda utki v pore* (When Ducks are in their Prime), *Pogonja* (The Chase), belong to this group. But the dramatic effect of these stories never reached the intensity of societal conflicts portrayed in *Stranicy žizni Trubnikova* (The Pages of Trubnikov's Life). This long short story was immediately acclaimed as an example of the writer's literary creativity.⁶¹ Its hero, Egor Trubnikov, is a maimed ex-soldier who returns from the war to breathe new life into the devastated collective farm in his native village.

In an article Nagibin describes his meeting with an unusual kolkhoz chairman who became the dominant hero in Nagibin's stories of the kolkhoz village theme. Travelling extensively throughout the U.S.S.R., Nagibin spent the summer of 1947 in the Kursk region. The year before, a severe drought had parched the Kursk lands, destroying the *Mašinno-traktornaja stanciĭa*. Collective farm workers were forced to plough their fields with their cows that year or to harness themselves to their ploughs. But suddenly, like a veritable oasis in the desert, there, in the village of Čerkasskie konopel'ki, near Sudža, was a large, prosperous collective farm:

...колхоз "Луч" зажиточный, сытый, а в нем председательница Татьяна Петровна Дьяченко...безмерно талантливая в каждом крепко поставленном слове, в каждом выразительном

⁶¹Fomenko, "Dalekoe i blizkoe," *Naš sovremennik*, No. 2 (1966), p. 109.

картинном жесте, в каждом решении... Эта пожилая грузная женщина была от бога организатором, трибуном, вожаком. Потом я писал о ней и напрямую и косвенно, наделяя терпким ароматом ее личности других героев. Она была так богата, что ее на многих хватало. Неожиданно для меня самого, она прорвалась в Егоре Трубникове...⁶²

Mat' kolchoza (Mother of the Collective Farm) is the second story with Tat'jana D'jačenko as prototype. It tells about the life and work of an unusual peasant woman, Nadežda Petrovna Kostenko, who was elected kolkhoz chairman by the people of her native village of Malye dvoriki. The narrator describes his meeting with Nadežda Kostenko in the fall of 1947 when he undertakes to visit several collective farms in the Kursk region under enemy occupation during the war. He wanted to see for himself how kolkhoz workers were managing to restore the damages.

Only semi-literate but with an unbounded energy and a natural gift for leadership, Nadežda Petrovna tells about the efforts that went into the rebuilding of a collective farm which was burned to the ground during the war. The story, thus, has two narrators: Nagibin and Nadežda Kostenko. Nadežda's narrative is frequently interrupted by collective farm administrative personnel who come to see her about the everyday problems pertaining to the life of the farm. As demands are made on her time, Nagibin takes the opportunity to give the reader his own evaluation of the farm and the colorful character of Nadežda Kostenko. In one of these asides, for example, when she goes to inspect the newly-erected club house, he goes along, and with the description of the farm grounds and buildings gives us the main character traits of Nadežda Kostenko, who is making her dream farm a reality:

На этом базу я лучше понял черту характера Костенко, порой ускользавшую от меня в частых проявлениях ее

⁶²Nagibin, "A cel'..., p. .

темперамента... Человек необыкновенной душевной емкости, способный бесконечно много в себя вместить, она все подчиняет единой цели, жесткой внутренней дисциплине. Такой же образцовый порядок, как на базу, царит в ее мыслях и чувствах...⁶³

In *Sovremennik Ščepkina* (A Contemporary of Ščepkin), the narrator tells how he joins another correspondent whom he meets while in the Kursk region who is on his way to the village "K" near Sudža to interview the collective farm chairman about sheep-herding in the winter. While his friend is interviewing the chairman, the narrator finds out that the famous actor Ščepkin was born in this very village; and that there is an old man living in the village who is Ščepkin's coeval. The narrator asks if he can interview the man and the chairman, after talking it over with his wife, suggests the man be brought over to his house. In the meantime the conversation turns to the oldster's age. The consensus is that he must be between a hundred and ten and a hundred and fifteen.

When Ščepkin's coeval finally arrives and the questioning begins, we learn that the man does not remember Ščepkin at all but the story turns out to be a fine character sketch which is dominated by a description of the old man:

Откинулась дверь, и показалась крупная, под старинным кожаным картузом, голова в седине волос, бровей, усов и длинной, мало не до полу, бороды. Из заросли выглядывал крупноватый нос, тоже в мелких седых волосках, и два синих-синих глаза, чистых, будто ключевой водой промытых, как у врубельского Пана. За головой показалось большое, сломленное в пояснице туловище... даже скрюченный годами, он все равно был высок, куда выше не только председателя, но и комсомольского секретаря, поддерживавших его сзади за локти. Он опирался на толстую палку, медленно переставляя как свинцом налитые ноги в аккуратных чесанках. На нем был опрятный, добротный азамчик, застегнутый до самого горла, и брюки в полоску, заправленные в чесанки. Его рост и ширь тела, в котором, несмотря на нынешнее бессилие, угадывалась былая твердая прочность, не только не

⁶³Nagibin, *Zimnij...*, p. 130.

уменьшали, напротив подчеркивали дряхлость старца. А ясная синь его чистых, будто промытых глаз говорила лишь о бездумье, о почти полной исключенности сознания...⁶⁴

Along with very well written stories, such as *Stranicy žizni Trubnikova*, *Mat' kolchoza* and *Sovremennik Ščepkina*, the story *Novaja Professija* (The New Profession), is weak because the author does not tell us enough about the main character. In *Novaja professija*, the author is given an assignment to write about the local shepherds. So he sets out to see a hero-shepherd Xlopin. On the way to the village he meets a bearded man driving a late model "Moskvič." When he arrives at the place where the flock is grazing, he finds out that the man in the Moskvič was Xlopin. Sorry to have missed him, the writer stays to talk to the shepherd's helper and finds out amazing things about Xlopin. Should the reader take the writer's word for it? Taking a skeptical pose, Nagibin records the conversation with the shepherd's helper:

- Но согласитесь, что и Хлопин - далеко не общее явление в колхозной деревне.
- Да, но Хлопиных по колхозам становится все больше и больше. И правильно о нем писали в нашей районной газете, что он показатель процесса, который идет в деревне...
- Что же он сделал такого, чтобы стать "показателем процесса"?
- Что сделал? - паренек задумался - Как вам сказать? Он совсем по-иному подошел к стаду...
- Что же тут нового? Всякий хороший пастух должен знать своих коров.
- Знать-то можно по-разному... Одно дело знать "новор" коровы, выбивать из нее кнутом "блажь", как это делал прежний пастух, а другое дело - знать по-хлопински, по-научному. Нужно изучить физиологические особенности каждой коровы, ее характер, привычки и создать для нее на пастбище особые условия... Ведь это главная, творческая задача пастуха.⁶⁵

Should it be surprising that an artificial scheme will produce

⁶⁴Ju. Nagibin, *Rasskazy* (Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1955), p. 173.

⁶⁵Ju. Nagibin, *Gospodstvujuščaja vysota* (Moscow: "Pravda," 1950), p. 90-91.

artificial language? In addition, the author is talking about the virtues of a man with whom he has not so much as exchanged a word. A fleeting encounter on the village road is all we see of Xlopin. There is no background on him, but the story bristles with fine detail, for example:

От нечего делать я стал смотреть на воду, над которой кружились стрекозы со стеклянными крыльями. Они носились среди камышинок и длинных, тощих хвощей, то исчезая, то появляясь вновь; а затем я понял, что они вовсе не исчезают, а, складывая крылышки, прилепляются к хвощам и камышинкам в виде волосяно-тонких стручочков.⁶⁶

This is a keen observation about dragonflies and almost an idea. Xlopin and other *pokazateli processa* exist and it is entirely possible that Nagibin may have met them in a Moskvič somewhere. This story might arouse some curiosity about the processes of kolkhoz life; as a literary work, however, it is not one of Nagibin's better short stories.

Some of us may remember that many such stories were written and considered acceptable at a time when the village economy was going through a difficult period. A similar lack of artistic quality is displayed in other Nagibin stories.

Another shortcoming in Nagibin's stories of that period is a schematicism and a happy ending that is contrary to logic, a criticism voiced by Tarasenkov. A deficiency in many of his stories, contends Tarasenkov, becomes evident when one reads Nagibin's stories one after another, whereupon the same scheme in plot development appears.

Critics have pointed out that one of the most characteristic traits of Nagibin's prose is his use of precise, meaningful detail. In his search for a better style in his post-war stories, however, Nagibin goes overboard in the use of insignificant details. His stories of that

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶⁷Tarasenkov, II, 182.

period are replete with unhappy choices of detail which only expose a weak, unlikely narrative. There are instances when his choice of detail is so far removed from the narration that it stands in the way of an otherwise good story.

Besides superfluous detail, some of Nagibin's post-war stories suffered from *et'udnost'*--a sketchy, unfinished quality. Evgenij Vorob'ev, praises Nagibin's story *Pauk* (The Spider)⁶⁸. Vorob'ev's praise is valid, however, only for the beginning and ending of the story. This is how it starts:

По ночам усольцы ловят рыбу "пауком" - плоским сачком, прикрепленным к длинному шесту из ствола молодой березки или осины.⁶⁹

After this short description of their fishing nets, called "spiders," the fishermen gather on the bridge with their nets. There is talk of a fulfillment of a plan and that someone lacked getting the premium by three tenths of one percent, and about other things not pertinent to the story. But at last the main character Glotov appears, but says nothing. The reader finds out from the fishermen that Glotov is a very greedy man and had to be reprimanded. However, nothing had changed, for he is one of those people who knows all the ins and outs of the courts, so people have had to put up with him. Suddenly a stranger gets into the conversation and says "Труссы вы братцы, вот что!" But when one of the fishermen inquires who this stranger is, somebody out of the darkness answers: "Кто его знает -- Человек."

Thus, the story closes on an important note, a remarkable description of a cold spring night, another exchange by the fisherman and an

⁶⁸Evgenij Vorob'ev, *Novyj mir*, No. 11 (1955), p. 249.

⁶⁹Nagibin, *Zimnij...*, p. 213.

effective ending. All this makes a certain impression, but it is forgotten in a few minutes. The reason for this is simple. "Одно дело рассказать, другое -- изобразить," Maksim Gor'kij was known to say. This is precisely the problem here. It is not enough for Nagibin to call Glotov a "spider" where there is no evidence against him. The reader cannot believe the author's word alone. He must see the hero, know about his vices or virtues, then make up his own mind whether he likes or dislikes him. The writer hears some negative reports on Glotov: he is supposed to have lied about his age, so in addition to a pension he gets a hundred and seventy rubles from his daughter. However, the reader gets no clue as to how Glotov gets the money. We want to believe the author, but he fails to convince us!

...чтобы тронуло, чтобы взяло за душу, мы должны увидеть как паук-деспот истязает старуху; как забил он родную дочь; как ловко оплел всю округу, в том числе и судачащих о нем рыболовов; как жаден и мерзок, как холоден и жесток. Вот тогда-то и мы с омерзением скажем "Паук!"⁷⁰

Lukaševič⁷¹ sees a number of Nagibin's shortcomings in the fact that the writer left the novella and turned to the "rasskaz," that is, instead of the unusual he started writing about the ordinary and commonplace. But Čerkasskij believes it is not exchanging the uncommon for the ordinary events that spoils such stories as *Kombajnery* (The Combine Operators), *Ličnoe pervenstvo* (Personal Superiority), *Pobeditel'* (The Winner) for example, in which the hero's character does not fit the artist's intention, but a fictitious scheme dwarfs and cripples the character. Thus we find a shallow truth of details instead of a story that rings true to the hero's character.

⁷⁰Čerkasskij, p. 180.

⁷¹V. Lukaševič, "Pogovorim o rasskaze," *Literaturnaja gazeta* (August 16, 1955), p. 3.

The sensation of artificiality grows when we read some other Nagibin stories. There is the schematic portrait of the seventy-six-year-old milkmaid, Avdotja, who after retirement cannot stay home but zealously interferes in all the affairs of the collective farm (*Na pokoe* [The Retirement]). Then there is the awkward but hardworking and honest student Kostja who successfully competes with the handsome Alik for Tanja's love (*Junnye gody* [Young Years]). Also the champion ice-skater Strešnev who runs a race knowing he will lose his championship to his student, Kurčatov (*Pobeditel'* [The Winner]). Such individuals in similar situations if they are taken separately do occur. However, the importunate monotony of irreproachable characters, and happy endings recur too frequently and are too obvious in the stories under discussion to give the illusion of true-to-life conflicts.

Even the director of an MTS, Petr Kirillovič, who has been suspended from work because he failed to keep pace with life, as Nagibin assures us, will soon understand his shortcomings and re-orient himself (*Pozdnjaja osen'* [Late Autumn]). Unhappy Polja will cease envying her Alikper and marry him soon to everyone's general contentment (*V Sinegorii* [In Sinegorie]).

Thus, it seems that the optimism of a number of Nagibin's stories is an automatic optimism. The conflicts that arise in the course of the narrative are not solved by means of victory of the progressive principle over the backward one, but are simply forced out of life, which dissolves into a "general happiness."

In *Kombajnery* (The Combine Operators), Nagibin forces combine operators who have fallen behind in production to work in great anxiety while awaiting the arrival of a master combine operator, Gorban' from the

Rostov region. As they prepare to meet this legendary hero, the local combine workers double their output norms. The writer tells about this interestingly. At the end of the story, however, it becomes apparent that the famous combine operator is not coming after all; he is already working at another collective farm, and moreover turns out to be a female worker by the name of Elizaveta Gorban'. Thus, the conflict never materializes, and furthermore, the story becomes an anecdote that is not original as the reader is reminded of Nozdr'ev's Elizaveta Vorobej.

Yet another Nagibin shortcoming was the result of his falling under the influence of the "no conflict theory," of which, as Tarasenzov states, he may not even have been consciously aware. Nagibin's timidity in portraying the existing contradictions of life, contends Tarasenzov, is one of the latent results of the no-conflict theory.⁷²

In *Gosudarstvennoe delo* (A State Affair), which was initially called *Pokupka konja* (A Horse Purchase)⁷³, the hero of the story, Kretov, who is a connoisseur and lover of horses, wants to establish a horse breeding farm in one of the well-to-do collective farms in the South. The obstacle in the path of Kretov's dream is the chairman of the kolkhoz, Struganov, who refuses to advance the few thousand rubles for the project. This is the main conflict in the story.

In the beginning Kretov and the zoo technician are exchanging their views about Kretov's idea:

- Но позвольте, за чем дело стало? На конезаводах можно подыскать все, что вам нужно... Ваш колхоз в нынешнем году большой доход взял. Так неужто правление не может отпустить каких-нибудь тридцать тысяч?
- А вы со Стругановым поговорите - он за колхозный карман

⁷²Tarasenzov, p. 185.

⁷³Ju. Nagibin, "Pokupka konja," *Novyj mir*, No. 9 (1950), p. 109.

обеими руками держится!... Он ведь как пень упрямый.⁷⁴

Further along in the story the author explains Struganov's obstinacy: although he is a good manager, he lacks long-range vision.

Струганов хорошо знал хозяйство, умел зажег людей, не боялся нововведений. Но была ему свойственна какая-то ограниченность, заставляющая его отстранять от себя многое, что не было связано с ближайшими интересами хозяйства.⁷⁵

Nagibin outlines very carefully the beginning conflict between the far-sighted determined man and the able but limited administrator who is unwilling to make a long-range commitment. On the next page Nagibin gives a dialog which explains the main point of the conflict. Struganov would rather put the money into construction of greenhouses for the raising of vegetables which will return the initial outlay of capital much faster than the breeding farm:

- Да помысли же ты экономически, Алексей Федорович! Ранние овощи в госпоставку килограмм взачет трех берут, а на рынке им, сам знаешь цена какая. Мы этот завод в первый же год оправдаем. А с конефермы когда еще доходу дождешься?⁷⁶

Thus, in the exposition of the story we have a conflict between a narrow-minded, utilitarian attitude on the one hand, and an attitude that is bold in its vision on the other. This is the point of departure from which the plot should develop. The author seems fully aware that his proposed conflict is serious and fundamentally sound. Unfortunately, the matter ends with the posing of the conflict. The writer does not give an effectual development of the conflict but takes a completely different course.

⁷⁴Ju. Nagibin, *Gosudarstvennoe delo* (Moscow: "Pravda," 1950), p. 4.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 6.

In great detail he tells how Kretov starts training the young kolkhoz filly, Strelka, for an upcoming horse race, how patiently he works with Nikifor, the horse's rider. Indeed, he does such a creditable job of describing all this that the reader does not become aware of the fact that the writer has actually substituted one story for another. Instead of showing the clash of two different points of view, how the heroes' characters are developed in the conflict, Nagibin shows us an exciting horse-race, thus circumventing the initial conflict altogether. However, at the end of the story he brings Struganov back on stage. The kolkhoz chairman comes to watch the race, and from sheer delight that Strelka has won, he allots the needed funds for the horse-breeding farm. Thus, somehow Nagibin makes both ends meet. However, the conflict is resolved purely by chance. Kretov was just lucky that Strelka had won the race. But this is not the important issue. This outcome would have been valid in the event that the controversy was not about a state or utilitarian approach to a matter but rather about which horse would win.

Soskin opines that Nagibin's existing solution of the initial conflict has weakened the ideological content of the story:

Уклонившись от прямого, конкретного изображения конфликта в его развитии и разрешении, писатель, хотя и сумел завершить рассказ, но значительно снизил его идейную ценность. Рассказ мог бы называться "Государственное дело," но должен называться "Покупка коня."⁷⁷

⁷⁷ A. Soskin, "Vozmožnosti žanra," *Zvezda*, No. 3 (1953), p. 158.

Conclusion

As we have seen, in the period 1945-1954 Nagibin wrote a number of weak stories. A reason for this may well have been his involvement in themes that were of little interest to him, themes that were perhaps "thrust" upon him such as stories with the village theme.

This assumption is corroborated by Gibian who notes that both Kazakov and Nagibin choose their themes very carefully:

[Their stories] are characteristic of something new - of disagreement with the public values of the party. They do not express their dissent in direct polemic. Kazakov and Nagibin are saying "No" by turning their backs on public themes, ignoring them completely - and cultivating assiduously what they have staked out as their own small garden.⁷⁸

Indeed, when Nagibin chooses a theme with which he cannot fully identify or when he does not become directly involved with the inner world of his heroes no matter what the theme, his stories turn out to be of little artistic merit, as El'jaševič rightfully observes:

Там, где Нагибин выбирает для себя темы мнимо актуальные, иллюстрирующие, а не открывающие жизнь, темы, построенные на внешних конфликтах (это особенно характерно для целой серии произведений писателя о колхозной деревне), там он ничем не выделяется из сонма самых ординарных рассказчиков. Но стоит Ю. Нагибину погрузиться в мир переживаний своих героев, как он снова становится мастером-кудесником, в совершенстве владеющим всей палитрой изобразительных красок.⁷⁹

Some good stories of this early period include the war stories *Vaganov*, *Perevodčik* (The Interpreter) and *Radiosoldat* (The Liaison Man). Only partially successful is the kolhoz story *Gosudarstvennoe delo*. A favorite with many critics is a story about gypsy life called *Trubka* (The Pipe). Differing from gypsy stories and poems that depict gypsy nomad

⁷⁸Gibian, "New Trends...", p. 49.

⁷⁹A. El'jaševič, "Характеры и сужзеты," *Zvezda*, No. 10 (1957), p. 201.

life primarily in a romantic light as for example its wild but beautiful originality, Nagibin shows us the other side of this imaginary beauty by portraying the rapacious gypsy chieftain Baro Širo, a brutal, implacable man who leads his gypsies in wild clashes with other gypsy gangs that break and perish in the calamitous time of the Revolution.

Nagibin observed in an interview that this story is often mistaken for one of his autobiographical pieces:

Мои повести и рассказы и есть моя настоящая биография. Только "Трубка" написана со слов покойного артиста и драматурга Н. Нарожного, хотя читатели упорно считают именно ее вещь автобиографической.

But Nagibin's greatest success in this post-war period was his persistent work on language and style which becomes evident in such stories as *Molodožen*, *Meščorskie storoža* (Meščeran Forest Rangers) and many others to be discussed in the following chapter.

⁸⁰Nagibin, "A cel'...., p. 3.

CHAPTER TWO

The Meščera Stories

	page
Introduction	59
Nagibin's Meščera and Its Literary Antecedents	60
The Meščerans and Their Way of Life	66
The Meščera and Its Landscape/Nature	68
The Love Theme in Nagibin's Meščera	78
Societal Ills of the Meščera	81
Conclusion	96

CHAPTER TWO

The Meščera Stories

Introduction

In the ten-year period of 1954-1964, Nagibin wrote a cycle of stories about the Meščera, a land of lakes and forests about 200 kilometers from Moscow, situated on the border of the Moscow and Ryasan territories. These stories include, in their chronological order, the following: *Nočnoj gost'*, *Razgovor*, *Podsadnaja utka*, *Molodožen*, *Meščorskie storoža*, *Xazarskij ornament*, *Poslednjaja oxota*, *Petrak i Val'ka*, *Ispytanie*, *Kogda utki v pore*, *Oležka ženilsja*, *Obormot*, and *Pogonja*.

In his Meščera stories, Nagibin shows us many sides of life in this region: its heritage of centuries of want; the paradox of its economy today. The Meščera means living from hand to mouth; it means ignorance and the fatalism of the peasant. The Meščera is a swamp that isolates its people from the rest of the world for months at a time. It is the need to poach in order to survive. It is children who end their education at age ten: only girls go on in school, the boys are needed in the economy.

All this goes on just 200 kilometers from Moscow. Hunters from the capital come here on Sundays, traveling the distance in several hours; however, the distance from the Meščera to Moscow seems to be far longer. For example, it takes a letter ten days to get to the capital. Not more

than three Meščerans have even been to Moscow, and they went because of army duty.

Nagibin's Meščera and its Literary Antecedents

Nagibin, as we all know, was not the first to write about the Meščera. Turgenev, Kuprin, Paustovskij, to name but a few, have also written about this region. For example, Kuprin's *Lesnaja gluš'* (The Dense Forest), *Boloto* (The Swamp), and *Na gluxarej* (Hunting Woodgrouse) are unified in so far as they all take place in the forest; in fact, the action of the story *Boloto* takes place in the Meščera.¹ Paustovskij devoted the entire cycle of stories, *Meščorskaja storona* (The Meščera Region), to this territory. Attracted to the simple beauty of this land, Paustovskij tells us how he came to love it, and how his love for it grew, never to be forgotten:

На первый взгляд - это тихая и немудрая земля под неярким небом. Но чем больше узнаешь ее, тем все больше, почти до боли в сердце, начинаешь любить эту обыкновенную землю. И если придется защищать свою страну, то где-то в глубине сердца я буду знать, что я защищаю прекрасное как бы невзначай на вид оно было - этот лесной задумчивый край, любовь к которому не забудется как никогда не забывается первая любовь.²

But in his first volume of *Povest' o žizni* (A Story of Life), Paustovskij describes this region quite differently from the aesthetic manner of landscape depiction that he uses in *Meščorskaja storona*:

В пятидесяти верстах от Москвы начиналась глушь - разбойничьи леса, непроезжие дороги, гнилые посадки, облупившиеся древние соборы, лошаденки с присохшим к шерсти навозом, пьяные побоища, кладбища с поваленными крестами, овцы в избах, сопливые дети, суровые монастыри, юродивые

¹A. I. Kuprin, *Sobranie sočinenij* (Moscow: "Xudožestvennaja literatura," 1971), III, 201-18.

²Konstantin Paustovskij, *Sobranie sočinenij v vos'mi tomach* (Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1969), VIII, 257.

на паперти, засыпанные трухой базары с пороссячьим визгом и матерной бранью, гниль, нищета, воросство.³

Paustovskij found himself anew in the Meščera. But he was a hobo rather than a hunter: he would pitch his tent in the dense forest and sit for hours on an old raft watching the float of his home-made fishing rod. He would see bears turning out old tree stumps to feast on ants, and would hear the singing of numerous birds; he would admire the blue-bells on the meadows. For this elegiac admiration of the simple Russian countryside the reader grew to love the artist.⁴

The epithets, colors and accessories with which Paustovskij describes the Meščera clash with Nagibin's Meščera description. Paustovskij's Meščera is a peaceful pastoral countryside, whereas Nagibin, an avid hunter, first sees it as a hunter's paradise. He paints a cold wind lashing the water, a gray sky or milky-white fog, roads rutted by pits and puddles, mud huts flooded by early spring rains and thick, coal-black water in the many lakes and canals. Like Paustovskij before him, Nagibin sees numerous birds, but they are not song birds. His birds are game birds, such as the wild duck, Golden eye and Teal that excite the half-frozen hunter lying in wait at twilight.

This similarity of features in works of both Paustovskij and Nagibin has been observed by Ssachno; she emphasizes, however, that Nagibin presents his Meščera region without aesthetic embellishments:

Es ist Paustovskij's geliebte Meschtjera...die Nagibin aller ästhetisierenden Romantik entkleidet. Schön ist an der Meschtjera nur die unberührte Natur, aber auch diese ist der Raublust des Menschen ausgeliefert, der die Wälder fällt, die Flüsse ausplündert, das

³*Ibid.*, IV, 48.

⁴Nikolaj Atarov, "Čelovek iz glubiny pejzaža," *Naš sovremennik*, No. 12 (1972), p. 106.

Wild vernichtet.⁵

Nevertheless, it is here, amid the simple hunters and fishermen, that Nagibin finds his poetry; he finds in the Meščera a greater sensitivity for the unusual and even the miraculous, than he can find in the city.

But the writer who most closely resembles Nagibin's Meščera stories is, of course, Turgenev, in his *Zapiski oxotnika* (A Hunter's Sketches). The content of Nagibin's Meščera stories, for example, shows us the lasting quality of the material which Turgenev used for his hunting fable. Today, just as a century ago, the writer-hunter wandering along the backroads of Russia meets people of different backgrounds, talks with them, inquires and observes, and in so doing brings many contemporary problems to light. Furthermore, these stories, based on the traditional hunting stories in Russian literature, exhibit qualities similar to those in *Zapiski oxotnika*. As the Polish critic, Jadwiga Szymak, correctly observes: "Turgenev's style is clearly evident in the description of a village hut the huntsmen enter in 1956."⁶

Turgenev's influence is likewise evident in Nagibin's choice of a

⁵ Helen von Ssachno, *Der Aufstand der Person* (Berlin: Argon Verlag, 1965), p. 170.

⁶ Jadwiga Szymak, "Opowiadania myśliwskie Jurija Nagibina," *Slavia Orientalis*, No. 16 (1967), p. 294. One can easily substantiate Szymak's statement with a passage from Nagibin's story *Xazarskij ornament*: "В Междере не было случая, чтобы охотникам отказали в пристанище, как бы мало и тесно не было жилье. А уж теснее этого жилья нельзя себе и представить посреди комнаты висела зыбка, и старуха с лицом изъеденным волчанкой, качала зыбку, напевая что-то однотонное, что убаюкивало ее самое, а не младенца. Стоило старухе заклевать носом, как ребенок принимался истошно кричать. Его крик несколько не тревожил других многочисленных обитателей избы, спавших в покат на полу. Да еще с печи свешивались две пары босых ног (Ju. Nagibin, *Na tixom ozere* Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1966), p. 38.

narrator, Anatolij Ivanovič, who in reality is the hunter and forest ranger, Anatolij Ivanovič Makarov.⁷ In *Zapiski oxotnika*, Turgenev's faithful companion in all of his hunting ventures was Ermolaj, whose prototype was Afanasij Timofeevič Alixanov. Turgenev relates that Ermolaj was formerly a serf who belonged to one of the landowners near his home at Spasskoe. Meeting him by chance, Turgenev was very impressed with Ermolaj and decided to buy him from his neighbor, whereupon he immediately gave him his freedom. Alixanov, like Nagibin's Anatolij Ivanovič, was a skilled hunter and nature lover who knew many secrets of the forest. In particular he was a bird-fancier, able to imitate their calls perfectly.⁸

This does not mean that Nagibin's Meščera stories are patterned by the Meščera and hunting stories of, say, Paustovskij or Turgenev. On the contrary, Nagibin's Meščera cycle displays a great deal of novelty. While the plot of his stories, for example, is based on the traditional hunting stories in Russian literature, Nagibin's attempt at composition

⁷In an article, Nagibin tells of his first acquaintance with the Meščera and with the man who first introduced him to this region, Anatolij Ivanovič Makarov, who later became the hero of many of his stories: "...помню откровением было для меня знакомство с Анатолием Ивановичем Макаровым, мещерским егерем, который познакомил меня с целым краем дотоле неведомым, красивым, тонким. Помню как начали мы ездить с ним Великое озеро, показавшееся мне вначале таким ненаселенным, и как егерь заставил меня полюбить его, научил языку природы..." (Ju. Nagibin, "Moj trud vliwaetsja v trud moej respubliki," *Literaturnaja gazeta*, [February 11, 1971], p. 6). Another hero, known in these stories simply by his nickname, Dedok, is in real life Meščera's oldest hunter, Mixail Semenovič Savel'ev. Both Anatolij Ivanovič and Dedok are as vivid in the pages of Nagibin's stories as are Turgenev's Ermolaj in *Zapiski oxotnika* or Tolstoj's Eroška in *Kazaki* (The Cossacks).

⁸H. Salonen, *Die Landschaft bei I. S. Turgenev* (Helsingfors, 1915), p. 98.

is new. The stories, complete in themselves, form a cycle by the unity of place--the Meščera region, by manner of exposition, by use of a single narrator, and by an interdependence in the chronology of events.

In addition to the unity of place, manner of exposition, single narrative style and an interdependence in the chronology of events, another unifying factor is that the same heroes appear in several of the stories. For instance, the main hero, Anatolij Ivanovič, is the leading character in *Podsadnaja utka*, *Novyj dom* (The New House), *Pogonja* and *Kogda utki v pore*. Additionally, in six other stories he is either a secondary character or has taken part in an incident which is related in the story. And those stories that do not have a narrator, *Nočnoj gost'*, *Molodožen* and *Ispytanie*, are included in the cycle on the basis of unity of composition.

Still another unifying factor involves the comparison and appraisal of characters who are representatives of two social groups: the inhabitants of the Meščera and visitors from Moscow. This comparison forms the compositional basis of many stories, for example: *Nočnoj gost'*, *Razgovor*, *Podsadnaja utka*, and *Molodožen*. Generally, the comparison does not flatter the Moscow visitors who frequently turn out to be intellectuals, representatives of the capital's elite.

Also, the names of places mentioned in the Meščera stories exist in reality: the town Spas-Klepiki, the villages of Kon'kovo, Podsvjat'e and Faleevka, the river Pra, Lake Velikij, etc. In general, then, the Meščera stories are clearly autobiographical, as are incidentally the author's other works. This true autobiographical quality is similar to that of Turgenev in *Zapiski oxotnika* and in his other works as well.

In addition to true settings and characters, Nagibin bases

the plots of his stories on his own experiences. Where names of places or things are used colloquially, he gives explanations, as in the following dialog from *Pogonja*, in which he explains the meanings of *корь*, *пожанька* and *кулички*:

--Что это за название такое, "корь"? - спросил генерал... Законное слово. Березовый корь. Липовый корь, Исаев корь. Корь, еще корье говорят, - низкорослый, кривой лесок. Почвы тут на островках такие, что настоящий лес не растет, одни кривулины.

--А "пожанька"?..

--Островок луговой, где в любой год косят. А вот "кулички" - это островки, где можно косить лишь в сухой год, в мокрый - непролазная топь.⁹

Another example, in *Meščorskie storozha*, explains the word *протоки*:

Протоки - это узние, в шаг, каналы, соединяющие многочисленные озера и реки этого края. Прорыли их крестьяне-промысловики в незапамятные времена, а все последующие поколения мешерских охотников и рыболовов заботливо следили за нитяными водными тропками, оберегая их от заиления и высыхания.¹⁰

The narrator in Nagibin's stories is also one of the story's main characters. It is his ideas and perceptions that create the image of contemporaneity. His influence gives the story its inner unity. His knowledge of life and people, his happiness or sadness, his unwillingness to accept oppression, his hatred of the local regime and his yearning for purity and simplicity go to make up the image of contemporary man and his attitude toward reality.¹¹

⁹Jurij Nagibin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Moscow: "Xudožestvennaja literatura," 1973), pp. 220-21.

¹⁰Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 20.

¹¹This point is also convincingly discussed by Szymak (p. 300) and George Gibian, "Soviet Literature During the Thaw," in *Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia 1917-62*, eds. Max Hayward and Leopold Labedz (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 146.

The Meščerans and Their Way of Life

One of the principal themes in Nagibin's Meščera stories is the theme of the people's way of life in this region. For example, Nagibin is attracted by their stern wisdom and simplicity, their life close to nature, and their system of values which differs from that of the city dweller. Thus in the home of Babka Jul'ja in *Nočnoj gost'*, Nagibin is attracted by the old-fashioned way of life characterized by their sincerity of feelings and genuine actions which he contrasts with the flightiness and egoism of Pal Palyč.

Another trait of the people the author admires is their sense of duty. For example, in *Meščorskie storoža*, the inhabitants, who had never written a petition before, send a letter to the government requesting the removal of a game warden who did not fulfill the obligations of his office. In the same story, Anatolij Ivanovič explains the custom of using first names among the hunters. Those who are not considered by their fellow hunters to be solid citizens, are called by their first names only. In this respect it is interesting to note that only Anatolij Ivanovič and the forest ranger from the town of Spas-Klepiki, Egor Ivanyč, had patronymics. In contrast is the case of Dedok who is almost seventy. We are told that his passion for poaching, which has persisted throughout his life, has earned him a nickname instead of the more respected patronymic.

In dress the Meščera hunters present a stereotyped appearance. They wear rough quilted jackets, caps with torn-off visors and boots stuffed with straw. When they go hunting they invariably carry a basket with the подсадная, a live decoy duck. Their rifles are old, rusty тулки or ижевки¹², the stocks frequently cracked and bound with wire.

¹²Rifles manufactured in the city of Tula and in the Iževsk factories, respectively.

In *Podsadnaja utka* the narrator tells us:

...я ни разу не слышал, чтобы кто-нибудь из охотников мечтал о Зауэре-три кольца тульском тройнике или любом другом современном оружии, до которого столь падки московские любители. Они вполне полагались на собственный глаз и руку... Но вот подсадная утка - дело другое, ее не заменить никакой сноровкой.¹³

The подсадная is trained to sit on the water in front of the hunter's hut to lure wild fowl. To insure her staying on the water, a string with a plummet is secured to the duck's foot. This allows her enough freedom, but prevents her from flying away. A clever decoy duck, one that understands what is required of her is a pearl of great value to the hunter:

Такая утка не дерет даром глотки, но ни один селезень не пролетит мимо, заслышав ее негромкий, зазывной крик. Она тонко и вкрадчиво подманивает товарок, летящих на вечерний жор... Она загодя предупреждает охотника о пролете; словом, она понимает, что от нее требуется, и работает не за страх, а за совесть.¹⁴

An example of how the hunter places the подсадная on the water is given in *Poslednjaja oxota*:

...когда он вынул из кошелки подсадную, она забилась в его окоченевших руках. Дедок испугался, как бы не скинула она ногавку и не улетела бы к своим родичам... Наконец ему удалось укрепить манжетку на ее лапке, он с облегчением разжал руки. Подсадная упала на воду, рванулась вперед и ввысь, но грузило, стремительно и бесшумно уйдя на дно, пригвоздило ее к месту. Она закричала высоким и резким голосом раз-другой и, успокоившись, зарыла клюв в грудные перья.¹⁵

Incidentally, these last two descriptions are remarkable pieces of narrative; first, because they describe a rarely-used practice in duck hunting today and, secondly, because of their vocabulary. Nagibin again uses a

¹³ Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵ Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, p. 143.

style which reminds us of Turgenev's hunting experiences by his utilization of a number of special terms proper to the practice of Meščeran hunters. Such words, for example, as подсадная, the live decoy duck; нагавка, a bracelet which is clamped onto the duck's foot; манжетка, another term for this bracelet; грузило, the plummet; зазывной крик, the decoy duck's luring quack; and вечерний жор, the duck's evening feeding.

The Meščera and its Landscape/Nature

In Russian literature the relationship between man and nature has been a subject of interest from its early beginnings. In *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, for example, nature plays an active part in man's destiny, warning him of impending danger, helping him, suffering with him. According to Fedotov, "nature and its phenomena occupy in Igor's Tale at least as important a place as human society."¹⁶

The works of some of the finest 19th century writers, such as Puškin and Lermontov, contain colorful landscapes of the native country-side which reflect the many moods of their heroes. Moreover, Tolstoj and Turgenev are "outstanding proponents of a romantically tinged attitude to man's relations with nature. Tolstoj insists that only a return to a simpler existence, closer to nature can save man from the moral depravity of society."¹⁷ For example, in *Anna Karenina*, Levin hopes to find contentment only when he returns to the land.

On the other hand, Turgenev holds that nature has to live an

¹⁶George P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* (New York: Harper Torch Books, The Cloister Library, Harper and Brothers, 1946), p. 323.

¹⁷Erika Dibahl, "The Theme of Man and Nature in the Works of Konstantin Paustovskij," an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1974, p. 8.

independent life in literature. The landscapes in his stories are not accessories, but an organic part of the narration and critical to the fates of the heroes.¹⁸ His main characters combine love for nature with kindness and sincerity of feelings (*Xor' i Kalinyč* [Xor' and Kalinyč], *Bežin lug* [The Bežin Meadow], etc.) or, as in *Otcy i deti* (Fathers and Sons), and *Živye mošči* (The Living Relic), the heroes' characters and world view depend on their attitude toward nature. The true Russian, Nikolaj Petrovič Kirsanov, cannot admire the Russian countryside without considerable emotional feelings whereas his brother Pavel Petrovič, who has spent most of his life abroad, cannot be moved by anything Russian, not even a native landscape.

There are writers who are constantly preoccupied with nature's values. The deep feeling with which they experience the beauty of nature colors all their works. Such writers were Prišvin and Paustovskij. Although to a lesser extent, Nagibin stands with them as well.

Nagibin frequently uses descriptions of nature in the Turgenevian tradition and Salonen's statement about Turgenev applies to Nagibin as well:

Der wichtigste und zugleich gewöhnlichste Zweck einer Landschaft bei einem Schriftsteller ist den räumlichen Hintergrund der Handlung darzustellen, d.h. den Ort des Tuns und Treibens der handelnden Personen in der Natur zu schildern.¹⁹

In the Meščera stories where most of the action takes place out-of-doors this is self-explanatory. The hunter is in a position to observe the changing scenery throughout the seasons of the year. Moreover, "it is hunting," says Turgenev, "that brings us closer to nature;

¹⁸ Lev Leviskij, *Konstantin Paustovskij. Očerki tvorčestva* (Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1963), p. 180.

¹⁹ H. Salonen, *Die Landschaft bei I. S. Turgenev* (Helsingfors, 1915), p. 120.

only the huntsman sees nature at every time of day and night in all its beauty and all its terror."²⁰

Typical are the following illustrations of Nagibin's nature descriptions used as background. The first is a sunset on Lake Velikij in late autumn:

Между тонкой сизой полосой, лежащей на горизонте, и тяжелой, слоистой синемеловой тучей возникло кроваво-красное зубчатое пламя, будто занялась пожаром верхушка сторожевой башни. Затем что-то сместилось в насыщенном влагой воздухе, и зубцы слились воедино, образовав плоско обрезанное сверху тучей полукружье огромного заходящего солнца.²¹

The second is a description of a night sky over Lake Ozerko:

Небо висело низко-низко, так плотно набитое звездами, что казалось, оно не удержит их и звезды просыплутся. Да они и впрямь осыпались. И там и здесь, хрустально зеленея на лету, то отвесно, то крутыми, то широкими дугами падали они на землю. От перегретой за день земли в воздух волнами тянуло теплое испарение.

Both selections are characterized by a quiet, rhythmic narration with simple syntactic structures, a large number of color words, compound adjectives, expressive descriptive similes and metaphors.

In addition to using descriptions of nature as background to the action of a story, Nagibin often makes nature interact with the inner world of his heroes. And Salonen, who has studied the same manner of description in Turgenev, gives the following commentary:

Er hat nämlich das Verhältnis zwischen Landschaft und Mensch, zwischen Naturstimmung und Seelenstimmung des Menschen zu schildern und betritt also neben der Naturschilderung das Gebiet der psychologischen Schilderung: er hat dem Leser zu zeigen, welche Gefühle der Anblick einer

²⁰ A quotation from Turgenev's letter to the editor of *Sovremennik*, cited by H. Salonen, pp. 95-96.

²¹ Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, pp. 138-39.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Gegend oder eine Naturstimmung erweckt.²³

An example of nature used this way is seen in *Pogonja*, where Anatoli Ivanovič, after a long absence from Lake Velikij, is back rowing his boat in its cool water once more and breathing its uniquely-scented air. In fact, here we see a subtle description of the process of estrangement of a man from his family, a man for whom nature has become the be-all of his life:

...очень соскучился он по Великому, по особому, ни с чем не сравнимому здешнему воздуху, по той внутренней сосредоточенной тишине, какую он испытывал только здесь. Сейчас, снова оказавшись в милом, привычном окружье понял он по-настоящему, как плохо и несчастно он жил все последнее время. Он и к домашним утратил свое обычное доброе внимание. Танька первый год пошла в школу, их учили писать палочки и нолики. "Папая! восторжено кричала Танька. --Гляди какого я кругалю нарисовала!" А он смотрел на кривой кружок и не находил в себе ласки, которую она ждала от него...²⁴

The hero, feeling his strong connection with nature, observes the life around him with the eyes of a true creature of nature. He feels sorry for the bittern whose plaintive cry he hears high above him. He is aware of the interdependence of all living creatures and of their dependence upon nature:

От ее сиротливого голоса [выпи] все сжималось внутри. Анатолий Иванович будто видел себя глазами выпи: маленькая черная точка на огромном сумрачном просторе озера. Как же непрочен человек в мире природы! Вот он тоскует от близости зимы, когда все вокруг загложнет под снеговым покровом, а для природы это всего лишь короткий сон. Пробудившись, она вновь играючи построит самое себя, и так будет до скончания века...²⁵

Dedok, whose very breathing seems to be in harmony with nature, sees a musk-rat's nest which triggers for him a whole chain of thoughts

²³Salonen, p. 129.

²⁴Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 126.

²⁵Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, p. 223.

about reincarnation:

Чувство: я исчезну без следа, меня не будет - было чуждо его душе. Он не то чтобы верил, а допускал, что умерший человек возвращается в каком-либо животном, а тот, в свою очередь, в более мелкой твари, и так до тех пор, пока дело не сведется к незримому существу, которое уже останется навсегда... Человеческое обличье - самая лучшая, самая достойная пора этой бессмертной жизни.²⁶

The youngest natural man is Jurka, the 12-year-old son of Anatolij Ivanovič, who is allowed to go hunting alone for the first time. He may shoot only five ducks although he has many more shells. When he shoots his limit, a variety of water fowl alights on the lake and he is tempted to go on hunting:

Едва ли он сознавал, что в этой душевной борьбе решалось его будущее... Юрка растерянно огляделся, словно искал помощи против самого себя. Но кругом были лишь тихо покачивающиеся озерные травы, небо, вода и усеявшие ее утки. Он был один, никто не мог ему помочь.²⁷

Nagibin often places his heroes in a situation where they must grapple with their conscience to make an individual choice. Jurka was able to overcome the temptation and come out of this test of courage a better person. As he watches the ducks on his way home, he feels as one with them:

Юрка глядел на одушевленную жизнь озера, на красивых и сильных птиц... гибнувших сотнями под выстрелами охотников и все же сохраняющих в целостности свой кроткий и упрямый род, и чувствовал себя в них, а их в себе. И он думал о том, что не было бы в нем этой радостной близости всему живому на озере, если бы он смалодушничал.²⁸

Another way in which Nagibin uses nature is as a measure of a person's moral worth, as Borisova points out: "Природа входит в

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

²⁸ Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 64.

рассказы Нагибина как строжайший критерий оценки людей."²⁹ This approach to the analysis of a character is seen in stories where the conflict ends in an unveiling of the hero. For example, in *Podsadnaja utka*, the game warden's duck is accidentally shot. The event seems insignificant. But Nagibin, following his bent of analytical investigation, exposes the true culprit, Andreev, who is indifferent to nature and proves to be a petty man hiding behind a mask of goodnaturedness and joviality. However, Nagibin does not always choose the device of sudden revelation. Burenkov, in both *Pogonja* and *Kogda utki v pore*, exhibits character traits that typify him from the beginning as a power-hungry, incompetent man. Loud and fidgety, Burenkov nevertheless likes to assume a statue-like pose with his hand on his chest and his light blue gaze directed into the distance over the head of the person with whom he is talking:

Он стоял на ступеньках недостроенного смолистого крыльца, его бледноголубой взгляд поверх головы собеседника уходил куда-то в даль. "Будто полководец," подумал Анатолий Иванович, снизу вверх рассматривая небольшую, коренастую фигуру начальника в темном ватном костюме, туго перехваченную широким офицерским ремнем.³⁰

And:

Буренков был громогласен, настырен, суетлив, хотя и любил иной раз покрасоваться в истуканьей позе, с рукой, сунутой за борт ватника, с взглядом победителя, устремленным в сторону Дуняшкиной заводи.³¹

Burenkov does not understand nature, and placed in a position of power over her, he could think of nothing better than to build a battery

²⁹Inna Borisova, "Put' na perednij kraj," *Družba narodov*, No. 4 (1959), p. 235.

³⁰Nagibin, *Izbrannye....*, p. 214.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 249.

of outhouses on the steep bank of the lake.

Another man who is indifferent to nature is Semen in *Obormot*. Hired by Burenkov as hunter and guide for the newly established hunting base, Semen knows nothing about the habits of the wild fowl or how to handle a boat. His boredom during the hunt awakens the narrator's curiosity and gives the reader an insight into his character:

--Да какой я егерь! - с той же зверинной тоской в глазах сказал Семен. - Я крестьянин...
 --Ну и работал бы в колхозе.
 --Нет у меня капитала в колхозе работать.
 --При чем тут капитал?
 --А при том! У нас на трудовень не разгуляешься!
 Вот и рассуди, как тут без капитала прожить?³²

Semen is not only indifferent to nature, but cruel to her creatures. From sheer boredom he kills a harmless water-rat. This senseless killing spoils the narrator's hunting for the day:

--Окромя пользы, ничего, - сведующим тоном натуралиста сказал Семен.
 Крыса покачивалась возле шалаша, маленький комочек недавно еще живой деятельной плоти.
 Это бессмысленное убийство испортило мне охоту, я чувствовал, что не могу стрелять по уткам. Конечно это пройдет, но сейчас я для охоты не годился.³³

On the other hand, Nagibin's characters who are close to nature are described with great warmth. Voronov, the visiting hunter from Moscow in *Molodožen*, watches young Vas'ka's dexterous movements:

Ему приятно было следить, как ловко и сильно орудует Васька веслом. Чуть заленившееся крепкое тело парня, видно, испытывало радость от этой разминки. Чувствовалось как играют под рубашкой его налитые мускулы, как хорошо ему дышится.³⁴

He admires his skill and marksmanship:

³²Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 138-39.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 140.

³⁴Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, p. 113.

Воронов был потрясен не столько неожиданным выстрелом, прогремевшим над самым его ухом, сколько сверхестественной быстротой и ловкостью Васьки, успевшего бросить весло, схватить и вскинуть ружье с такой необыкновенной точностью.³⁵

Dedok in *Posledn'aja oxota*, cannot resist the call of the great outdoors to go hunting again:

Голубой, зеленый, опаленный ранней желтизной осени мир раскрывался перед ним, тянул, звал, и Дедок зашагал в его напоенную крепким, влажным болотным духом свежесть, на темносиний, с серебристой искрой, ветренный блеск реки.³⁶

At the end of the hunt we are given to understand that Dedok will die, and mother nature starts rocking under his feet, ready to claim her son:

Земля то подымалась перед ним вверх со всеми деревьями, избами, с яркорыжим кустом рябины, с синей полоской реки, то стремительно ухала вниз, кружа, дурманя голову, земля укачивала его, как в детстве укачивала зыбка.³⁷

Critics have noticed some similarity in the plot of *Poslednjaja oxota* and Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. In both cases it is the story of an old man who gradually acquires wisdom as he is bidding farewell to life and nature, and through it, to his youth. There is, however, a very important distinction in that Hemingway used hunting as the framework for masculine self-fulfillment, whereas Nagibin and other Russian writers today, as in the past, have sought for harmony between man and nature and for a natural settlement of the individual in the world. In commenting on Nagibin's story, the Hungarian critic Kristo Nagy states that if Nagibin had not written anything but *Poslednjaja oxota*, this

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147-48.

story alone would place him among the best writers of his age.³⁸

It is also interesting to note that Soviet critics, when comparing Nagibin's *Poslednjaja oxota* with Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, find Hemingway's novel pessimistic in outcome. They claim that the American author's old man actually fails in his efforts, whereas Nagibin's hero, Dedok, is more successful in his last hunt.³⁹

One of Nagibin's most vivid characters is Anatolij Ivanovič, the one-legged warden of the Meščera. If Burenkov is presented as the personification of dark forces, foreign to the harmony with nature, then Anatolij Ivanovič, who has devoted his life in service to nature and his land, is the true natural man. The beauty of his hunting skill is portrayed by the wisdom of limitation which distinguishes hunting from killing. His concern for the preservation of the species and his unsentimental yet kind love for nature are born from a feeling of a bond with all living creatures.

Some critics tend to find likenesses between Anatolij Ivanovič's attitude to nature and that of Turgenev's hero, Bazarov, in *Otci i deti*. One must concede, however, that there are more distinctive contrasts than similarities between the two. Bazarov's attitude to nature is pragmatic. Nature to him is a battlefield, a sphere of action, whereas for Nagibin's hero it is an independent world living its own versatile life. He admires nature, yet his admiration is devoid of idealization. For example, in pursuing the poacher in *Pogonja*, he is aware of the treacherous marshy banks of forest lakes hidden under luxuriant vegetation.

³⁸István Kristó Nagy, "Nagibin," *Az új szovjet irodalom*, eds. János Elbert and László Kardos (Budapest: Gondolat, n.d.), p. 260, translated from Hungarian by Maria Nevai.

³⁹George Gibian, "New Trends in the Novel," *Survey*, No. 36 (April-June, 1961), p. 53.

Another way in which Nagibin uses nature is by placing the nature description close to the action of the story and letting the reader decide for himself how it relates to the action. In this respect Luterbacher's comments are of interest:

Es wird übrighens bei vielen Landschaften vom subjektiven Empfinden des Lesers abhängen, ob er ihnen Selbständigkeit zuerkennen will, oder ob er psychologische Beziehungen zur innern Handlung spürt.⁴⁰

A case in point is the story *Petrak i Val'ka*. When the hunt is over, the hunters get together on the lake, each in his own boat, to see how successful they have been. The bragging teenager, Val'ka, tells a lie about how many ducks he has shot. Petrak, who is trying to break him of lying, rows off into the dark and the other two hunters follow, leaving Val'ka alone in the night, very frightened and calling out to his friend, Petrak.

In the nature description that follows, Nagibin personifies the lake, the trees, the grass and the night, leaving it up to the reader to interpret the passage as either independent of the action, or as sympathetic with Petrak and the other hunters while grieving with them over Val'ka's poor behavior:

Никогда еще не видел я озера Великого таким угрюмым. Тихо ворча, оно трепало челнок, силясь повернуть его вспять, дышало промозглым холодом, на берегу стонали деревья, и травы шептались тоскливыми, нездешними головами.⁴¹

Still another way in which Nagibin uses nature is to give it the role of a main character in the story:

⁴⁰ Otto Luterbacher, *Die Landschaft in Gottfried Kellers Prosawerken* (Tübingen, 1911 "Sprache und Dichtung," Heft 8), p. 26, cited by H. Salonen, *Die Landschaft bei I. S. Turgenev*, p. 116.

⁴¹ Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 72.

Природа в рассказе Нагибина – полноправное действующее лицо. Можно специально говорить о Нагине пейзажисте, но даже самый детальный анализ его пейзажей не будет полноценным если не учитывать их совершенно особой сюжетной роли.⁴²

In *Hazarskij ornament*, the floodwaters after the spring thaw become one of the leading elements in the story subordinating, at the very beginning, not only the heroes but their actions as well. Flooding all the low-lying areas of the Meščera, the waters keep rising until there are newly-formed lakes as far as the eye can see. The sun is mirrored from the surface during the day and when darkness falls the light of the moon shines down from the sky and is mirrored on the water in such a way that one can hardly tell the earth from the sky:

По зеркалу новоявленных озер, над пашнями, лугами, перелесками скользили плоскодонки... Деревья и кусты, над которыми они проплывали, цепляли их за днище своими верхушками, словно водоросли... Выйдя под вечер, мы к ночи из-за бесконечных обходов не сделали и пяти километров полезного пути. Тьма населилась звездами. Они горели над нами, под нами, вокруг нас. Ближе к полуночи сверху вниз и снизу вверх потек лунный свет, и уже нельзя было распознать, где земля, где небо.⁴³

The Love Theme in Nagibin's Meščera

Nagibin writes about sex with the characteristic restraint of Russian writers, but in stories where intimate relations do occur, we find a note of wonder at the beauty of the natural instinct. In *Kogda utki v pore*, Anatolij Ivanovič gets restless and irritable when his wife leaves for a few days to visit her parents. The following day, as he and the narrator are returning from the lake after the hunt, he cannot help voicing the regret that his wife has been away for so long. But as they near the house they see Šurka standing in the doorway so beautifully dressed

⁴²Borisova, p. 235.

⁴³Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, pp. 34-35.

that the narrator does not recognize her at first. They walk up to the house without speaking, but the narrator notices a deep crimson flush cover Anatolij Ivanovič's face and neck at the sight of his beloved: "Я никогда еще не видел Шуру такой нарядной и царственно праздной и не сразу узнал ее. Лицо и шея Анатолия Ивановича медленно залились тяжелым, густым румянцем. Я остро позавидовал егерю. Почему и меня не ждет на пороге женщина необходимая мне до смятения, до потерянности?...⁴⁴

In *Molodožen*, Voronov asks Vas'ka if he loves his wife. The young man registers surprise at the question:

--Ну как же не любить? - сказал Васька радостно и удивленно.

--Вы же видели, какая она... Кто я перед ней есть?... И он развел руками.⁴⁵

Six years after Vas'ka's marriage the whole village still calls him the newlywed. He agrees to submit to his wife. Without vacillating, he decides on an impulse of yearning to go to her. He leaves the hunting site where he has brought Voronov and is back again early in the morning just as Voronov is waking up. Listening to Vas'ka's confession the visiting hunter from Moscow cannot conceal his irritation:

--Вы не подумайте, что я ей не доверяю. Просто меня такая вдруг тоска взяла... Чего-то мне вспало, что могла же она другого выбрать, могла же с другим сейчас быть. И так мне невмоготу от этих мыслей сделалось!..

--Ты, поди, и охотиться-то не сможешь теперь, заметил Воронов. Выматался весь!

--Что вы, Сергей Иванович! Да я сейчас такое пона-делать могу! Да я...⁴⁶

It becomes evident to Voronov that Vas'ka is the recipient of a steady

⁴⁴Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, p. 264.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 119-20.

stream of strength and joy from his preoccupied little freckle-faced wife. This feeling is lacking in Voronov's life.

In *Poslednjaja oxota*, Dedok, who usually wants to be self-sufficient, is, on this occasion, overcome by weakness and allows his wife to help him get ready to go hunting. As she helps him with his hunting jacket a long-forgotten feeling of tenderness for his wife comes over him:

Старуха помогала ему натянуть ватное пальтецо, одернула полы, обмяла заскорузлый ворот. Он чувствовал на себе ее жесткие руки, слышал теплое, чуть горьковатое учащенное дыхание, и в нем подымалась давно забытая нежность к старой спутнице его жизни.⁴⁷

Another love story has even become controversial in the U.S.S.R. The plot of *Oležka ženilsa* is simple. The old veteran, Bolotov, who runs a hunting lodge, is surprised one evening by a visit from his best war-buddy's son, accompanied by his young bride and a friend, a serious young man in horn-rimmed glasses. After a cheerful summary in which Bolotov thinks back on his life (and finds in it no room for envying the happy newlyweds), he is suddenly plunged into shock when he comes early the next morning to awaken the young people. He finds in bed beside the young woman, not Oležka, her husband, but the other man. And immediately some Soviet critics were up in arms:

Больно за мастера, написавшего рассказ "Олежка женился". Неужели для того, чтобы обрушить гнев на "модерную" молодежь нужно было натуралистически обнажить половую распущенность?⁴⁸

But other critics find the story to be an idyl: "the writer's excellence is shown by this 'stunt,' and the story becomes the carrier of deep moral

⁴⁷ Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 104.

⁴⁸ Lidija Fomenko, "Dalekoe i blizkoe," *Naš sovremennik*, No. 2 (1966), p. 109.

values."⁴⁹

Although Nagibin's favorite and recurring theme is the complicated inner world of his characters, in the Meščera stories he also reveals an interest for social problems. With respect to Nagibin's interest for social problems in the Russian village, there is another parallel with Turgenev's *Zapiski oxotnika*, which of all his works was to have the greatest social significance.⁵⁰ This aspect of Nagibin's work has been, so far, mentioned only in Polish criticism:

В его творчестве наблюдается интерес к проблемам общественного порядка о которых он заговорил впервые. Этому способствовали перемены в стране после 20-го съезда Партии. Стало возможным писать о тех проблемах о которых молчали до 1956г.⁵¹

Societal Ills of the Meščera

In different stories of the cycle, Nagibin brings to light the many social ills that beset the Meščera people and their land. He shows the intellectual-peasant conflicts existing between the visitors from Moscow and the local population. He reveals bureaucratic mismanagement in the countryside which leads to the wasting of natural resources; he discloses the low standard of living which is neglected by government officials specifically appointed to find ways to ameliorate the problem. He exposes local government representatives who are incompetent and, therefore, fail to command the peasant's respect, causing distrust for the law and a further widening of the existing gulf between the little man in the village and a far-removed, hostile government in Moscow. He discloses the failure of the government to build roads in outlying areas

⁴⁹Nagy, p. 146.

⁵⁰Salonen, p. 96.

⁵¹Szymak, p. 294.

while spending millions on columns, arches, balconies and "wedding cake" structures. He decries poaching, which leaves the country impoverished, and attacks injustice in the courts.

One of the problems in the Meščera is the conflict that frequently occurs between the intellectuals from Moscow and the local peasant population. In *Pogonja*, the head of the hunting base shows disinterest and mistrust to the native hunter who has come to offer his services. In *Razgovor*, the writer from Moscow cannot be bothered with what the forest guard has come to say.

Nagibin believes that the visiting intellectual is not obliged to be the peasant's psychologist, who would be hard put to understand the peasant's confessions.⁵² He speaks of the difficulty in which the intellectual finds himself in this type of situation. Could this be the typical Russian intellectual complex with feelings of guilt toward the peasant? The answer is found in stories beginning with *Xazarskij ornament*, where the author enriches the social background and shows that the small quarrels between intellectuals and peasants are not accidental and often grow out of all proportion to become difficult social problems that reflect deep-seated antagonism.

The following dialog in *Kogda utki v pore* reveals that these quarrels are not limited to the sphere of morals alone:

--Как хотите, - говорил он [охотник из Москвы] сытым голосом, - а не верится мне, что ваша жена так мало заработала!

--Почему мало? Она еще выговор заработала, чтоб не ленилась...

--Как же вы прожили зиму?..

--Так вот и прожили! отрезал Анатолий Иванович.

--Небось рыбкой пробавлялись? Высказал предположение

⁵²Szymak, p. 296.

Болотов.

--Не особо, сказал Анатолий Иванович. --На Озерке вовсе ловля была запрещена.

--Наконец взялись за охрану рыбных богатств! обрадовался седовласый.

--Взялись, да не с того конца, спокойно сказал Анатолий Иванович. Невозможно сколько рыбы подо льдом задохлось.⁵³

In 1956 Lake Ozerko was made a reserve. Government reasoning behind this decision was the fact that year after year there were fewer fish in the lake. Before the decision was enacted, however, no one checked the unique peculiarity of this lake: every winter it froze almost to the very bottom causing the fish to die from lack of oxygen.

The Meščera peasants had learned from their forefathers how to keep the fish alive. While fishing in the winter, they would cut holes in the ice so the fish could breathe. When Ozerko was declared a reserve, Nagibin describes the damage done by the decree in the following passage from *Kogda utki v pore*:

Мы подплывали все ближе к затопленному березняку, и золото становилось больше и больше, оно простиралось в глубь леса, громоздясь кучами у стволов. Тяжелой, нестерпимой вонью потянуло от березняка. И вот будто овальное золотое блюдо закачалось у самого борта челнока... крупный дохлый окунь, сохранившийся до последней чешуйки, с хвостом и плавниками, с характерно приоткрытым глупым ртом.⁵⁴

Bureaucratic mismanagement was the direct cause, in this instance, of tons of dead fish. Wasting of the country's natural resources was not the only social ill evident in the Meščera. The low standard of living generally attributed to the backwardness and ignorance of the peasant was in part also caused by mismanagement and neglect. The regional secretary in *Xazarskij ornament*, who comes to inspect the region assigned to

⁵³ Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, p. 253-54.

⁵⁴ Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 188.

him, tries to get to the bottom of peasant's apathy, and Ssachno comments in the following way:

Er, der selbstlose Kommunist, der sich keineswegs nach seinem Schreibtisch zurücksehnt, ist dennoch der Unterlegene, denn in diesem archaischen Land ohne Sünde und ohne Erlösung, wo das Übel nicht moralisches, sondern nur irdisches Leid, das heisst Hunger und Armut, Krankheit und Unwissenheit ist, verhält jede Botschaft.⁵⁵

Indeed, in a comparison of living conditions in the Meščera and the village of Zarečje, just across the river Pra, the Meščerans come out second best; in fact, it seems that a whole century separates the Meščera from this neighboring village. The Zarečje peasants enjoy electricity, radio, a ten-year school, a club, a cinema, and performing artists from Moscow while the Meščera still depends on the wick-lamp and only one resident in three villages owns a radio which he uses exclusively to hear the latest news, so as to save on batteries.

In answer to the question why this is so in the Meščera, the peasant replies that the government has forgotten them. To the inhabitants of this region, the concept "government" is the symbol of inaccessible authority residing in Moscow which appears in the village exclusively for the purpose of seeing an ordinance carried out. In the great majority of cases, this ordinance turns out to be in conflict with the natural characteristics of the given region and with the natural laws that govern life in this land of forests and lakes.⁵⁶

The government's gross negligence of existing conditions is further brought to light in *Xazarskij ornament*. The old peasant who has welcomed the disguised secretary and two other hunters is asked if the regional secretary has ever come here "из города," as the government seat is referred to in the Meščera. His answer reveals that for six years the

⁵⁵Ssachno, p. 170.

regional secretary was a woman who found it difficult to visit remote places. She, in turn, was replaced by a man who made it a rule never to leave town, but the man who replaced him actually visited the Meščera once in March when flood conditions were as bad as the ones at the present time. This official decided to come to the Mescera by boat straight across Lake Velikij, which is very stormy during the spring floods. Arriving in a terrible mood, he demanded some vodka, used it as a rub-down and immediately left for home. And the peasant narrates:

Народ, конечно обрадовался: за пол литром, известно, самый душевный разговор идет. Наладили парус и махнули в фалеевку за двенадцать километров. Чуть не утопли, но полущечку раздобыли. А секретарь эту водку в наружнее пустил, обтерся ею с головы до пят, спросил лошадей да и дунул восвояси. Говорят, его сейчас сняли, так сказать, по совокупности дел!..Вот как о нас начальство печется.⁵⁹

Moreover, Moscow's local representatives are not an improvement over the city bureaucrats. Burenkov, head of the newly-established hunting base, refuses to hire local hunters to escort visitors from the capital, preferring loafers who are lured by good tips and leisure hours. He also turns down the local flat-bottomed dug-outs and orders brightly-colored row boats with a keel which, though roomier and more colorful, are unsuitable in local conditions. The keel scrapes the silty bottom of the lakes and the oars get caught in the duckweed.

Another example of incompetent local government representatives is the new chairman of the kolkhoz, Dun'ka, a former war sanatorium cleaning woman. The incompetency of such officials nurtures the peasants' disrespect for the law as the gulf between the local population and the government in Moscow widens.

⁵⁶Szymak, p. 297.

⁵⁷Nagibin, *Na tixom....*, p. 49.

Of course, such critical views of the activity of the Communist party and the central government's emissaries also provoked the discontent of the official critics, as for example, Ozerov, who levels some strong criticism at Nagibin for his choice of character to fill the chairmanship of the collective farm and gives him a dressing down:

Автор словно и не понимает, какая большая проблема, касающаяся жизни миллионов людей, мимолетно затронута им с удивительным легкомыслием. При серьезной ее постановке она может послужить предметом глубокого обсуждения. Но заниматься иронизированием вокруг таких сложных вопросов просто недостойно, а мимоходом ставить их, ничего не раскрывая по существу, оскорбительно для жизни, для наших людей.⁵⁸

Another example of incompetent local representatives is the forest or lake guard. It is the duty of the lake guard to preserve wild life by apprehending those who hunt illegally before the official opening of the hunting season or in the areas designated as wild-life reserves.

For a long time after the war there was no guard appointed in the Mescera at all; however, the same year that the river Pra was declared a reserve, a lake guard arrived. Sadly enough, the supposed lake guard turned out to be no guard at all. He would pick mushrooms and berries, as well as do some fishing now and then, but when he heard shots fired in the wild-life reserves he would look the other way. Unfortunately, this type of guard usually stays on for the longest period of time, except in the Meščera. The people, who had never filed a protest before, sent a letter to town asking that the guard be removed. Consequently, he was called away, and a new guard was sent to replace him. His name was Pavluša Star-
šinov.⁵⁹

Pavluša, a young man of about nineteen or twenty was different in

⁵⁸V. Ozerov, *Na putjax socialističeskogo realizma* (Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1958), pp. 360-361.

⁵⁹Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, pp. 24-28.

every way from the previous guard. The day he arrived he announced a meeting for all interested hunters. That evening he read from a book called *Oxotniki* about a region rich in wildlife that became impoverished by thoughtless hunting and poaching. It made many of the hunters think for the first time what would become of their own Meščera. Others started to watch Pavluša carefully. Perhaps this was the man the Meščera needed?⁶⁰

It was not long before the new lake guard started to gather a large group of Meščera children called Pioneers for "talks." What these talks were about became evident when the first ducks flew over Lake Velikij. The hunters who went out before the start of the hunting season could not shoot a single bird. Some discovered that their gunpowder was damp; others said that their cartridges were blank. They soon realized, however, that Pavluša had formed a humane society which all of their children had joined. Of course, they dealt with the young defenders of flora and fauna and went to talk to Pavluša. But he was able to prove that he did not incite the children: they had thought of it themselves. After this incident the children would inform Pavluša who was poaching where, so he could immediately set out in his boat and fine the wrongdoer.⁶¹

In short, Pavluša acted with confidence and cunning. But it must be said to his credit that he almost succeeded in eradicating the illegitimate hunting that went on in the Meščera. Nevertheless, an incident occurred which turned the quiet Meščera people against him. It involved the farmworker, Njurka, a girl of sixteen, and a calf that was born at the collective cattlefarm. The calf was the sickliest at birth, so

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

⁶¹Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 29.

Njurka started to take care of him, feeding him from a bottle. When he fell ill she watched over him day and night. Five times she went by boat for the veterinarian and walked twenty kilometers to town for his medicine. The calf survived and grew to be big and strong. All the calves at the farm were called Vas'ka, but she named her calf Milenok, or "darling," and he would answer to no other name.⁶²

Soon it came time for the cattlefarm to deliver its meat quota to Moscow, but when they came for the calves all the Vas'kas were on hand but Milenok was nowhere to be found. On the fourth day someone spotted him grazing in a clearing of the Kučkin woods. Njurka was guarding him with a rifle. "I'll kill anyone who comes near him," she said, trembling like an aspen leaf. The head of the cattlefarm and the brigade leader would have left without the calf, but at that very moment Pavluša happened by. "What's going on?" he asked. The two men told him. "So that's how you carry out your duties," he said to Njurka, "because of your attachment to the calf the kolkhoz will fall short of the needed meat quota!" Then he levelled his rifle and shot the calf in the head, and Nagibin says through his narrator:

Правильный вроде поступок, а всем как-то нехорошо стало. Правильность тоже разная бывает. Иная правильность мимо человека глядит.⁶³

Before the incident, no one took Pavluša's harsh measures to heart. On the contrary, they were even proud of his strictness. "Our guard is a beast!" they would say, which made other hunters almost envious of the Meščerans' good fortune. However, the severity he now displayed, which was devoid of all humaneness, alienated everyone. The people were hurt and

⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 32.

angry.⁶⁴

Nagibin concludes that the people will understand everything and pardon everything as long as they see the sense in it, but if it makes no sense to them, then there can be no justification.⁶⁵

Yet another problem the Meščeran's faced was the government's failure to repair roads in the countryside or build new ones. The narrator in *Xazarskij ornament* first voices this problem as he and his companions plod through the flooded area of the Meščera during the spring thaw:

Мы двинулись гуськом через кустарник и вскоре вышли на широкую, поблескивающую множеством луж, уходящую вдаль, во тьму, полосу земли. Но идти по этой дороге оказалось немного легче, чем по болоту. Видимо, когда-то она была мощена булыжником, но ее давно разъездили, разбили, и булыжник сохранился лишь на закраинах глубоких ям.⁶⁶

As the three men enter a village hut to spend the night, the narrator is joined in his complaint about the road conditions by the disguised secretary who, examining the road map in the dim light of a wick lamp, becomes enraged that the road is designated as paved:

--Но это же черт знает что такое, а не дорога! взорвался человек. И не стесняются на карте пометать! Ведь по всему району такие, с позволения сказать дороги. Да что по району, по области!.. Дороги - это лицо страны. А разве у нас дороги? Сколько лишних мук терпит русский человек из-за проклятого бездорожья!⁶⁷

In handling the theme of poor roads, Nagibin presents it much like a gradually generalized complaint expressed first by one individual, then repeated by another, sometimes in a different mood. Finally a whole

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

chorus of people joins in. Thus, in *Xazarskij ornament*, the narrator first brings the poor condition of the roads to the reader's attention, then the disguised secretary, map in hand, voices his complaint. Finally, in a third rendition of the theme the narrator and his companion hunter, Leontij Sergeevič, become as indignant as the secretary. They are in full agreement as he reiterates:

Теперь это видно как никогда! И народу чуждо все, что идет от глупости, от жестокости, от произвола, все показное, парадное, всякая пустая видимость.⁶⁸

Nagibin offers no solution to this problem in his stories but he states the problem forcefully and underscores it until there is no doubt in the reader's mind where he stands on the issue.

Relative to the same problem, the American critics McLean and Vickery make the following observation:

...Nagibin makes in passing some...notable thrusts, e.g., at the failure of the regime to build roads in outlying areas while spending vast sums on the ornate "Socialist Gothic" skyscrapers which now disfigure the Moscow horizon.⁶⁹

It must be said, however, that although we find in the story some anger expressed by the main characters over the fact that the government spends its efforts elsewhere before improving the bad roads in the Meščera, no reference is made to any particular constructions or buildings as McLean and Vickery seem to suggest.

In addition to his concern over the government's failure to build roads in the Meščera, Nagibin exposes the illegal hunting that goes on in the country's lakes and forests which impoverishes the land of its wildlife as Richards rightly quotes Nagibin:

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁶⁹ Hugh McLean and Walter Vickery, eds. *The Year of Protest, 1956* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 224.

Он [браконьер] стреляет уток-самок весной, бьет маток на тетеревиных и глухариных токах, разоряет гнезда водоплавающих птиц, истребляет птиц в период линьки. Браконьерство - это худший вид паразитизма.⁷⁰

Nagibin has made his feelings on the subject known in an article in which he expresses his conviction that poaching, i.e., not only blood-thirsty killing but also any thoughtless and wrong behavior in the countryside, towards the animal kingdom, inevitably debases man.⁷¹

But unfortunately, poaching goes on in the country. It is practiced not only by the occasional visitor to the Mešćera, but by most of the inhabitants themselves, for whom illegal hunting has become a way of life. Poaching was only partially alleviated with the government appointed lake guards. But even then it continued and the guard, if he did his job well, soon found that his life was in danger.

One such incident is told in *Mešćerskie storoža* where the feared brothers Ermol'ev, Slavka and Glupoj, the latter being one of the worst offenders when it comes to poaching, have an encounter with a lake guard and threaten his life.

The results of poaching are seen from a dialog in which the regional secretary turned hunter asks the old peasant about the beaver, elk, and otter which have become endangered species in the Mešćera. When he inquires about certain game birds, the old man has to admit that although he is nearing seventy, he has never heard of these birds. The secretary then reads from a clipping of a hunting journal published 75 years ago that these game birds used to abound in this region:

--Вон как! сказал человек и полез в нагрудный карман гимнастерки. Он вынул оттуда пачку плотно смявшихся от

⁷⁰Richards, p. xvii.

⁷¹Nagibin, "Oxota iz-za ugla, zametki pisatel'a," *Literaturnaja gazeta* (May 15, 1956).

долгого лежания бумажек...Вот послушай, что писали в "Охотничьем журнале" семьдесят пять лет назад:
 "...Издавна славились своими глухаринными и тетеревинными токами лесистые берега Пры. К сожалению, несоблюдение правил и срока охоты, уничтожение самок на токах привело к тому, что ныне эти ценные птицы исчезают..." Что, дед? Лет этак через пятьдесят станут говорить: "Утка? Да у нас в Мещере сроду утка не водилась!.."72

The story ends on a positive note: the old peasant, impressed with what the disguised secretary is saying, calls his fellow villagers. Together they agree that poaching must not be allowed to continue. Thus, potential progress does come to the Meščera. In the course of the story *Meščorskie storoža*, however, a better solution to the problem is worked out. The hunters come to the realization that no outsider can have more concern for the preservation of their wildlife than they. The guarding of their lakes and forests must of necessity be a community project. The solution promises to be a workable one, and although poaching is not eradicated, the initial steps toward wildlife preservation are taken by the people themselves.

Another story about poaching, *Pogonja*, has a surprise ending. It is psychologically well-motivated and justifies the seemingly impossible. *Pogonja* portrays the one-legged Anatolij Ivanovič who, on crutches, pursues a poacher for eighteen kilometers over treacherous swampy forest terrain. After a brief scuffle, he catches him and delivers him to his superior, Burenkov, who lets the poacher go and orders Anatolij Ivanovič off the premises. Nagibin does not give any explanation as to why Burenkov lets the poacher go, but Burenkov's action is implicit in the general structure of the story. It is also explicated in some letters to a newspaper where similar problems were publicly debated. For example, in one such letter, A. Kogan, a critic, states that the administrator and

⁷²Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, pp. 50-51.

the poacher are eager to profit from societal efforts without making any contributions:

Тот и другой готовы греться у общественного костра, не делая в него никакого своего вклада. Вот, что их объединяет, и вот почему им обоим инстинктивно неприятен Анатолий Иванович с его обостренной бескорыстностью и совестью.⁷³

Thus, Burenkov can be viewed as much a poacher as Saška, although Burenkov is a masked poacher who is protected by a government job. He exists for show. "If the generals had not left, how beautifully the story would have turned out," we know from his inner monolog. But without the audience he sees no profit in detaining the poacher.

Kogan agrees with this evaluation of Burenkov, and he continues on about the moral illegality of such a parasitical existence:

И понимая где-то внутри всю ненужность общественную и нравственную незаконность такого своего существования, он пуще всего боится, что-бы кто-нибудь его не разоблачил, чтобы люди не увидели: король-то голый, "будто полководец," а не полководец в самом деле.⁷⁴

One can assume that the very fact of Anatolij Ivanovič's existence is a threat to Burenkov's way of life and were one to project oneself into Burenkov's thoughts as a continuation of his monolog in the story they might go something like this: if Anatolij Ivanovič is really all that fearless and a champion of truth, then today he has caught the poacher and tomorrow he may be after me.

The way in which Nagibin ends the story is also significant. Saška's surprised little laugh as he says, "He's a strong goose!", the silence with which Anatolij Ivanovič returns to his boat and the three

⁷³ A. Kogan, "Odin rasskaz," *Sibirskie ogni*, No. 9 (1964), p. 184.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

dots in punctuation at the end all attest to the fact that the battle has not ended. It will continue in real life, its outcome depending on the stand the reader takes. The end of the story meets the requirements Nagibin had set for himself: to set readers thinking about the evil of hidden poachers and to help people in their battle against them.

Another problem the Meščera inhabitants faced was the unjust punishment for a given crime. It is evident from some stories that the man who goes in pursuit of a poacher is helpless although he is acting in the name of the law, and in *Pogonja*, for example, Nagibin comments:

...даже среди честных окажутся такие, что охотнее помогут преследуемому, чем преследователю. Из короткой жалости, из неуверенности в том, что кара будет равна повинности, а не перехлестнет ее во много раз.⁷⁵

This problem corrupts society and arises as a result of the instability of the law and evident injustice. It is brought to light in *Brakon'er* which, although not part of the Meščera cycle, was written in the same year as *Pogonja*, i.e., in 1964, and in its views is close to the latter story. Based on court records, the story ends in a public trial in which the accused poacher, Petriščev, is sentenced to a three-year prison term. We begin to doubt the justice of the commuted sentence when we find out that one of the jurors, Kmet', is a big man about town, director of a local film factory which daily pours waste materials into the river destroying every living thing for miles around. Although only the very delicate fish had perished in the outlying Koščeev Lake where the poacher was apprehended, all other lakes and streams in the area had no fish in them at all. The fact that Kmet' does this does not disqualify him as juror, but Nagibin has drawn a picture of another poacher in disguise, similar to Burenkov in *Pogonja*, whose activity of

⁷⁵Nagibin, *Na tixom...*, p. 159.

poisoning the country's rivers and streams is contrasted to that of Petriščev's catching a few fish illegally.

To show us how Petriščev's sentence was agreed upon, Nagibin takes us into the chamber where the judge and two jurors are deliberating. One of the jurors, a retired major who believes the sentence is too severe, is immediately reminded by the judge that it was decided in Petriščev's case to stage a show-trial which should serve to remind all poachers of the stiffer penalties:

--Три года!..Отставной майор покрутил головой. Это что же - показательный процесс?..

--Если хотите - да! Судьях закурила новую сигарету. Вы разве не видели - в зале полно корреспондентов из области. Делу Петрищева решили дать широкую огласку, чтоб браконьеры поняли: их безнаказности пришел конец.⁷⁶

Although Kmet' does not like Petriščev, he is willing to let the punishment fit the crime; three years for a few fish seems to him too harsh. However, he feels a greater antipathy toward the judge than toward Petriščev, and when he finds out that she is moved with pity for the accused and wants to mitigate the sentence, he decides to side with the majority for the three-year term.

Kmet' experiences the call of duty welling up inside and decides he must help this woman in spite of herself, and protect his native land from poachers, such as Petriščev:

Чувство долга, живое гражданственное чувство восстало в Кмете против незаконных посяжек... Он поможет этой трудной молодой женщине против нее самой. Он поможет краю, который давно уже считал своим, родным, против петрищевых всех видов и мастей.⁷⁷

The comparison of the degree of guilt of Kmet' and Petriščev before

⁷⁶ Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, p. 397.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

nature and society protests strikingly against the sentence commuted by the court. Furthermore, Kmet' and Petriščev are compared not only on the social but also on the moral plane. Petriščev sincerely loves his wife. Kmet', on the other hand, is on his way to meet his paramour after the trial. She is the wife of an ambitious young lab assistant who is completely dependent upon Kmet'.

At the end of the story, Nagibin, asserting lawfulness, comes out against cruelty and in favor of just and humane treatment even for those who do not keep in step "с нашим бытом."⁷⁸ He believes that all must be equal before the law, and, furthermore, that the offender should be answerable only for his offense rather than carry the burden of decisive campaigns or be the scapegoat for show-trials. And Szymak correctly observes:

Нагибин не является художником народных святы и потерянной простоты интеллигенции. Речь идет о противоречии и разницы между социальными слоями. Только поверхностному наблюдателю может показаться Мещера резерватом естественных человеческих достоинств.⁷⁹

Indeed, the author of *Pogonja* is not alone in his search for an ethical model based on constant values and thus resorts to "folk wisdom" and its morality.

Conclusion

In themes and descriptions of nature, Nagibin's Meščera stories exhibit a certain similarity with Turgenev's *Zapiski oxotnika* and Paustovskij's *Meščorskaja storona*. Nagibin's Meščera stories, however, are not an imitation of identical settings and themes in the Meščera and hunting stories of his predecessors. Nagibin's Meščera cycle is an original

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

⁷⁹Szymak, p. 298.

collection of stories. Its novelty is displayed in the composition, manner of exposition, the role of a narrator, variety of theme and plots, and, above all, in Nagibin's remarkable portrayal of the Meščera landscape.

As we have seen, nature in Nagibin's Meščera stories appear in different ways: 1) it may form the background against which the action takes place; 2) it may interact with the inner world of man; 3) it may enter the story as a device of characterization (the degree of man's sympathy with nature determines his whole moral worth); 4) it may be left to the reader's perception as to whether nature is to be viewed independently, or is to be psychologically linked with the action of the story; and 5) nature may become a decisive force in the story. Nagibin's heroes are not only aware of nature in different ways, some sympathetic to her, others indifferent, but they all enter into interactions with her as though she were a living, thinking center of consciousness, capable of emotions and actions. But most significantly, Nagibin's Meščera stories show, as Mixail Zotov aptly noted, "очень много превосходной лирики, очень много поэзии, [в них] удивительно тонко выписаны пейзажи."⁸⁰

⁸⁰Mixail Zotov, "Obyknoennye geroi," *Izvestija* (March 18, 1974), p. 4.

CHAPTER THREE

The Children's Theme

Part One - Non-Autobiographical Children's Stories	98
Introduction	98
1. War Stories About Children	99
a) <i>Igra</i>	99
b) <i>Rannej vesnoj</i>	100
2. Nature Stories About Children	103
a) <i>Zimnij dub</i>	103
b) <i>Komarov</i>	107
3. The Role of an Adult in a Child's Upbringing	111
a) <i>Deti lepjat iz snega</i>	111
b) <i>Četvertyj papa</i>	112
4. Coming of Age	114
a) <i>Pered prazdnikom</i>	114
b) <i>"Kak skažeš, Aurelio..."</i>	116
Part Two - Autobiographical Children's Stories	118
Introduction	118
1. The <i>Čistye prudy</i> Collection	121
a) <i>Na vsju žizn'</i>	122
b) <i>Ščedryj podarok</i>	124
c) <i>Babočki</i>	127
d) <i>Èxo</i>	128
e) <i>Ženja Rumjanceva</i>	130

2. The <i>Leto moego detstva</i> Collection	132
a) <i>Priezd</i>	132
b) <i>Pobeditel'</i>	134
c) <i>Zabrošennaja doroga</i>	135
d) <i>Čerdak</i>	136
e) <i>Šurik</i>	136
f) <i>Ataman</i>	138
g) <i>Krasnyj kar'er</i>	138
h) <i>Ja zarabatyvaju na žizn'</i>	139
Conclusion	140

CHAPTER THREE

The Children's Theme

PART ONE - Non-Autobiographical Children's Stories

Introduction

Many critics have emphasized Nagibin's penchant for children's stories. Lapšin, for example, contends that Nagibin perceives in his young heroes a combination of the funny and deeply serious:

В "детских" произведениях писатель как бы заново переживает свою юность. В них с особой силой проявилось все доброе, отзывчивое, внимательное к облику и внутреннему миру "чудесного и загадочного гражданина будущего", которое привлекает нас и в военных рассказах писателя.¹

Indeed, a great portion of Nagibin's work is devoted to the theme of children. He has written 73 stories about children; 22 of them deal with children in general while the remaining 51 relate to his own childhood. This Chapter, for that reason, is divided into two sections: (1) non-autobiographical children's stories; and (2) autobiographical children's stories. The first section, discussing the children's stories in a chronological order, analyzes eight stories which critics and this author have singled out as the most significant models of Nagibin's non-autobiographical children's stories. These eight stories will center on four major themes: (1) war stories about children; (2) nature stories

¹М. Lapšin, "S ljubov'ju k človeku," *Moskovskij komsomoлец* (April 4, 1970), p. 3.

about children; (3) the role of an adult in a child's upbringing and the child's awakening; and (4) coming of age.

War Stories About Children

A child's creative idealism regardless of difficult circumstances is the theme of a war story about children called *Igra* (The Game). It unfolds against the backdrop of the Leningrad blockade when daily artillery attacks on the city were regularly carried out by the enemy.

All the action of the story takes place in a room adjoining the narrator's apartment where two small boys - eight-year-old Kotja and six-year-old Mik - are playing. Pretending to be a rescue squad, they are saving an old professor whom they have just pulled from a bombed building. The younger boy, Mik, is doubting their efforts in reviving the old man. Kotja, on the other hand, works with great determination; his faith that the man will live knows no bounds. While Kotja is giving him mouth to mouth resuscitation, Mik gloomily reports that the man is still not showing any signs of life. Kotja, however, does not give up. After much arduous breathing - the narrator comments on how difficult this is for the emaciated child - the man regains consciousness:

--Все-таки профессор не дышит, - сурово констатирует Мик. Но Котя неутомимо продолжает свою работу: раз-два, раз-два. Слышно его прерывистое дыхание, чувствуется, как тяжело дается эта работа истощенному ребенку. Но он побеждает: профессор ожил, ожил вопреки всему, вопреки неверию Мика, вопреки тому, что был... лишь диванной подушкой.

--Ты слышишь, Мик?

--Что?

--Он вздохнул. Послушай, он вздохнул. Задерживая дыхание, Мик прислушивается.

--Да-а, - говорит он неуверенно. Котя, надо послушать

пульсу. Ты знаешь где пульса?
 --Знаю. Ты послушай пульсу. А я еще немножко подышу
 ему... - Ну вот, теперь он совсем дышит. Мы спасли
 его, Мик.²

Although the action takes place in a room adjoining the narrator's apartment, we plainly see these children: their pale thin faces, Kotja's set lips and the surprise in Mik's eyes. We not only see the children but all of Leningrad with its suffering but unbroken people. Very ordinary facts are depicted in the story and yet we see more than what is described in the game of Kotja and Mik: the time, the struggle, the characters.

In another war story, *Rannej vesnoj* (In Early Spring), Nagibin explores the theme of an adopted war orphan. In the car of a slow train among a motley crew of passengers most of whom are women evacuating from Stalingrad, is the narrator of the story, a male newspaper correspondent, and a man who has just adopted a little war orphan.

The foster father, a one-eyed man, picked up the little ten year-old girl at Beketovka station just before the train left. "Mother has no idea that I am bringing her a grandchild," he told the other passengers with a kind smile. But he would say nothing of what happened to the orphan during the war and watched over her carefully to see that no one would ask her any questions. The passengers knew only that the little girl had formerly lived with her aunt at Beketovka. In January the aunt had died leaving her an orphan. Whatever it was that the child had experienced in the war left an imprint upon her appearance as well as her character:

²Ju. Nagibin, *Zerno žizni* (Moscow, 1948), pp. 52-55.

Девочка была какая-то странная, она словно задумалась раз на всегда и не могла вырваться из плена этой думы. Большеглазая, с упрямым лбом и тесно сжатыми губами, с хилым, неразвитым тельцем, она замечала только своего приемного отца. Но и с ним почти не разговаривала, ограничиваясь кратким "да", "нет", никогда к нему не ласкалась, и все-таки мы невольно чувствовали, что в ее маленькой сосредоточенной душе к нему таится глубокая, напряженная привязанность.³

Late one night when all the other passengers were asleep, the narrator overhears part of a conversation between the little girl and the dark-haired lady tram conductor whom the little girl tells how one by one her father, mother and sister had died before she ventured out to find her aunt at Beketovka:

--Прямо не верится - говорила черненькая кондукторша - такая махонькая, и сама из Ленинграда вкюировалась!.. - Как только тебя мать пустила?
 --Мамы уже не было... - послышался ровный, медленный, чуть скрипучий голос.
 --Ну как папка!
 --Папы уже не было. И Фенички ие было. Никого не было...
 --Господи - всплеснула руками черненькая.
 --Тише! - резко, по взрослому, хоть и вполшепота, сказала девочка. - Папа Коля проснется. Он не велит мне про это говорить. Я и не говорю никогда. Я думаю...⁴

Incidentally, in this story and in Šoloxov's *Sud'ba čeloveka* (Fate of Man), the theme is analogous. However, that is where the similarities of the two stories end. The war did not seem to affect Šoloxov's Vanja perhaps because he was still too young to fully comprehend the tragedy of his fate. Quite the reverse is true of Nagibin's young heroine.

The author stresses how much love and warmth was required to erase from his heroine's memory the terror she had witnessed and assist her to return to a normal way of life. He shows how the slightest display of

³ Ju. Nagibin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Moscow: "Xudožestvennaja literatura," 1973), I, 158.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

cruelty or injustice to anyone around her revived the past in her memory and caused her to grieve anew.⁵

Nagibin tells of the incident when an old man carrying two heavy sacks of food joined the passengers in the car of the train in which the one-eyed man and his adopted daughter were riding. From the very first day the old man kept to himself and refused to join the passengers who at mealtime would share what little food they had brought with them. Sitting astride his sacks of food, he kept eating constantly. Nagibin stresses the manner in which the old man ate which serves to underscore the condition of the passengers. Hunger had exhausted them; the long journey depleted their meager food supply. The appearance of the man with the food is an important event in the story insofar as the reaction of the little orphan girl is concerned:

Этот старик не только сделал для нас голод трудно переносимым, он загрязнил теплую, дружескую атмосферу нашего путевого товарищества. Люди, ехавшие в вагоне, не были ни стойками, ни героями. Сведенные случаем, настрадавшиеся, они невольно, в силу многолетней привычки и воспитания, соединились в коллектив перед лицом дорожной беды. Пока не появился этот старик, никто не представлял себе, что можно существовать в этом вагоне не делясь своим и не получая помощи от соседа. Старик показал нам эту возможность: он думал только о себе; и гром над ним не грянул, и земля не разверзлась.⁶

Some of the passengers started to doubt whether they should share their food while others came to the firm conviction that the old man should be put off the train. Finally, on one of the stops they did get rid of the man and his sacks of food. The conflict of the story reaches

⁵See also: Miriam Elberg, "Children as Portrayed by Soviet Prose Writers during the Period of the 'Thaw,'" an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1971, p. 138.

⁶Nagibin, *Izbrannye*. . . , I, 167.

its apex at the very moment when the sight of the old man eating calls forth tears of horror in the little girl:

Она вдруг тоненько и болезненно заскулила, забилась в угол вагона, и только глаза ее, прикованные к старику, сверкали страхом и ненавистью... Одноглазый парень долго не мог успокоить девочку. Он прижимал к себе ее головку, гладил тонкие, испуганно сцепленные пальцы и говорил, говорил...

Nagibin uses this artistic device to reveal the meaning of the event through the reaction of a child. In reality all felt that the man's behavior was intolerable. The decision to get rid of him, however, was reached only after the protest was voiced by the little girl. Thus, the awakening of a carload of people is triggered by a child.

Nature Stories About Children

According to Nagibin, children are better able to understand nature. A case in point is the story *Zimnij dub* (The Winter Oak). The boy Savuřkin is invariably late for school which makes his young country schoolteacher very sad. Confident of herself and her subject - native speech - Anna Vasil'evna purposely chose the beginner's class because she was certain that Savuřkin would not be late to her classes. However, he continues to be tardy and is not very attentive. When the class is required to give examples of a common noun, Savuřkin shouts joyfully: "Winter oak! Winter oak!" Anna Vasil'evna asks Savuřkin to see her after class, but her talk with him gives her no clue to his daily tardiness. Savuřkin himself cannot understand why he is late to school. He leaves home early and takes a short cut through the forest. Then the teacher decides to have a talk with his mother, a nurses' aide in a sanatorium.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 170.

Anna Vasil'evna and her pupil set out for the sanatorium through the forest. And here the teacher is caught in the same circumstances that make the boy late for school. Bewitched by the beauty of the winter forest, by the whiteness of the gigantic story-like winter oak, she is late for the appointment with the boy's mother who has already left for home. Now Anna Vasil'evna understands that it is not Savuškin's fault but her own. If she were able to make her classes as interesting to him as nature and the winter forest he would never be late to class. This realization lets Anna Vasil'evna understand her pupil. Now he is no longer a careless youngster, but "a wonderful and mysterious citizen of the future!"

The story is written with great warmth toward little Savuškin who was able to find the key to his teacher's heart through his spontaneous love for nature. Nagibin tells us that the greatest insight the teacher gained in the forest was not the life surrounding the oak tree at all, but rather her new appreciation for Savuškin:

Отходя недалеко, Анна Васильевна в последний раз оглянулась на дуб, бело-розовый в закатных лучах, и увидела у его подножия небольшую темную фигурку: Савушкин не ушел, он издали охранял свою учительницу. И Анна Васильевна вдруг поняла, что самым удивительным в этом лесу был не зимний дуб, а маленький человек в разношенных валенках, чиненой, небогатой одежде, сын погибшего за родину солдата и "душевой нянечки", чудесный и загадочный гражданин будущего.⁸

A. El'jaševič, among many other critics, comments on the external physical action of the story which serves largely as framework for the unfolding of the internal drama, the growth of a human soul:

В рассказе "Зимний дуб", как в большинстве произведений Ю. Нагибина, внешнее действие сведено до минимума, событий почти нет, и они следуют друг за другом

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 43.

мерно, неторопливо. Сюжет складывается из описаний борьбы, которая протекает в сознании героя, из смены различных ощущений и переживаний. Обычная для Нагибина способность к психологическому перевоплощению и умение создавать характер, безупречный в своей эмоциональной правдивости, и на этот раз приводят к возникновению сюжета, где нет ни одного фальшивого и немотивированного хода.⁹

In *Zimnij dub*, as D. J. Richards observes, the forest stands in "strong contrast with the time-ridden, rationally-ordered world of civilization, represented by the school."¹⁰ Nagibin stresses this contrast in many spots, notably in the following passage:

Едва они вступили в лес и тяжело нагруженные снегом еловые лапы сомкнулись за их спиной, как сразу перенесли в иной, зачарованный мир покоя и беззвучья.¹¹

Furthermore, "childish spontaneity" is opposed to "adult reflection . . . in the contrast between little Savuškin's immediate and living knowledge of the life of the forest and the school mistress's rational division of experience into grammatical categories."¹²

In his article, "Esli ty pišeš rasskazy . . ." (If You Write Short Stories), Nagibin tells how he came to write *Zimnij dub*. This article is of interest not only because the story is acclaimed by criticism to be one of Nagibin's finest stories about nature and children, but also because the writer explains in detail the difficult process of its origin.

On a correspondence assignment after the war, on his way from one Smolensk village to another, Nagibin took a short cut through the forest and saw in a clearing "an oak tree towering gigantic and magnificent as a cathedral." He left this simile of his first impression in the story

⁹A. El'jaševič, "Xaraktery i sjužety," *Znamja*, No. 10 (1957), 201.

¹⁰D. J. Richards, Introduction to *Yurii Nagibin: Selected Short Stories* (New York, 1963), p. xx.

¹¹Nagibin, *Izbrannye . . .*, I, 39.

¹²Richards, p. xx.

because his native Russian countryside always evokes a prayerful attitude. When he arrived at his destination, he recorded his rendezvous with the forest for a projected story with the theme: nature as seen for the first time after the war. Unable to write stories about nature without "figures that enliven the landscape," however, Nagibin's descriptions of the winter forest with its bubbling hot springs under the frozen ground, the majestically towering oak tree, the tiny creatures sleeping in grottos under the roots of the tree and in its bark - all this remained an entry in his notebook.

A few years later, while writing his story *Trubka* (The Pipe) at the Dom Tvorčestva in Maleevka, Nagibin met Nikolaj Atarov, a well-known Soviet novelist, who was working on a story with a school theme. Atarov shared with Nagibin his ideas about schools, school teachers and their attitudes to their pupils. He stressed the importance of making the teaching in schools subject oriented so that a word in the child's mind would not become disassociated from its meaning. The child should always feel the connection of language with life. When the teacher says "tree" to the children he should take them into the forest or a grove and show them a splendid tree whose beauty remains even when it has lost its leaves.

Nagibin thought, he continues, about their conversation for a long time. In his mind he conjugated, combined and took apart words, trees, children and teachers; thought about the miracle of language and the importance of words. All his walks that winter took him by a school where he had spent a summer with a Young Pioneer detachment. As he observed the children converging toward the school every morning, he could not help thinking what an important period in a person's life his school years are.

Once, as he returned to the Dom Tvorčestva from one of his walks, he overheard the dishwasher say to her son: "You are going to be late to school again!" This was like an electrical discharge to Nagibin. It instantaneously unified the separate elements of his observations and reflections: the winter forest, the school, the boy who is constantly tardy, and his teacher. Nagibin sat down at his desk and in two or three days, which never happened to him before, he wrote the story with great ease and joy.¹³

"It is evident," writes Atarov, "that Nagibin felt his own presence in the twilight of the forest. This is the secret of his success. Ÿсехов advised: "Если вы хотите, чтобы живопись дала какой-то пейзаж, то вы должны себя представить в этом пейзаже." This is exactly what Nagibin does. He sees himself, i.e. man, his hero, in constant contact with nature."¹⁴

Another boy's discovery of nature is the theme of *Komarov* (Komarov). Standing on a sunny beach is a four-year-old who is stark naked except for a white cotton hat pulled over one ear. He is constantly being corrected by his kindergarten teacher whose other twenty-five charges are obediently sun-bathing. The narrator turns around to see this disobedient youngster and finds himself looking straight at a navel that looks like "the imprint of a ten-cent-piece in the sand." Now the reader follows Komarov, the boy who sees the world around him with the eyes of an explorer. He wants to investigate everything: to touch it or feel it with his bare feet.

¹³Ju. Nagibin, "Esli ty pišeš' rasskazy . . .," *Molodaja gvardija*, No. 7 (1964), pp. 296-308.

¹⁴Nikolaj Atarov, "Čelovek iz glubiny pejzaža," *Naš sovremennik*, No. 12 (1972), p. 104.

He talks to the green pine cones and frogs; he declares war on the stinging nettle. His plans to be a real explorer are thwarted by the kindergarten teacher in the confines of a little yard surrounded by a wooden fence. So Komarov pries one of the boards loose and makes his escape. He is now free to investigate the world of nature around him which he is hardly able to comprehend. He sees a calf grazing in a clearing which to him is a "big dog." Nagibin writes of their confrontation:

...встретились двое ребят: сын человеческий и рыжий
младенец-бычок...¹⁵

The boy wins one of the most wonderful battles in all of Nagibin's stories. He merely stretches out his hand to pet the animal, but the calf lowers its head, ready to charge. So Komarov stretches out his neck and with his eyes closed charges at the calf. But the calf refuses to fight, he runs away. Komarov runs after him to stroke his side. Atarov sees the boy's bravery and kindness which, incidentally, are present in many of Nagibin's male characters:

Комаров, пожалуй, самый классный мужчина в когорте нагибинских мужчин. Отважный, но добрый. Беспощадный и добрый – такие сложные характеристики часто встречаются в рассказах Нагибина. Проекция Комарова на взрослый мир бесстрашных асов, солдат, спортсменов, охотников и рыбаков представляется мне главной линией его творчества.¹⁶

In his book *Razmyslenija o rasskaze* (Reflections on the Story), Nagibin recalls how he wrote the story *Komarov*. It concerns a very small boy who for the first time discovers the complexity and beauty of an enormous world, and for the first time feels like a person in it.

¹⁵Nagibin, *Izbrannye*. . . , I, 48.

¹⁶Atarov, "Čelovek. . . ," p. 106

At that time Nagibin lived on the Karelian isthmus where he liked to lie on the beach with a book. On one such occasion he heard a rasping female voice calling a person by the name of Komarov to order: "Komarov stop it! Komarov behave yourself! Komarov do not bother people!" Unaware that children in kindergartens were called by their last names and astonished by this bureaucratic dryness, Nagibin resolved to write a story about the four-year-old Komarovs, Spiridonovs and Bogatyrevs. The characters were already there: Komarov, his playmates and their kindergarten teacher. The landscape was made to order: a flat sea and rocky beach under a bright sun. Within walking distance was a pine grove, the turpentine smell of pine needles and thickets of meadowsweet.

On his way to the beach Nagibin hears a familiar rasping voice behind a wooden fence. He barely had time to realize that it belonged to the kindergarten teacher when one of the boards of the fence moved and a scraped foot in a sandal appeared. Then half of a little person in satin trunks with "Komarov" stitched in red tried to squeeze through the crack. Nagibin wondered if he should help his story along by letting the boy escape. What will freedom be like for him, how will he behave once he is free: he mused. Of course he was sorry for the kindergarten teacher who would be worried until Komarov is found. But the metallic voice "Делай п-раз!", prevented his further deliberations. His act of freeing the boy would benefit the teacher. What if she realizes that you cannot turn a kindergarten into a prison? Nagibin made a hole in the fence big enough for Komarov's escape.

This is how one of Nagibin's most fascinating trips began even though it was a very short one: from the kindergarten to the top of the hill from which the view of the sea opens. On the way the boy and the

writer met not only stinging nettle but also large rocks, pine cones, a frog and a calf. When Komarov was finally found, Nagibin already had his story.¹⁷

E. Nikolin has taken note of Komarov's indifferent, callous kindergarten teacher with whom the boy carries on a conversation at the beach and from whom he later makes good his escape. The teacher, Nina Pavlovna in the *Komarov* story is contrasted to the sensitive and sensible Anna Vasil'evna in *Zimnij dub* and with little Komarov himself whose conversation with the pine cones, the frog and the calf as well as with the kindergarten teacher show his outgoing nature, his kindness and inquisitiveness:

Нагибин словно задается вопросом: можно ли человеку, которому доверили воспитание детей, так убого, так засушенно воспринимать их? Да, воспринимать. Ведь очевидно, что назойливо повторяющийся в рассказе возглас "Комаров!" не только и не столько форма обращения, сколько форма мироощущения, мера доброты и понимания, с которыми воспринимается окружающий мир и люди. Ответ - в образе Комарова, в любовном, проникнутом доброй нагибинской лукавинкой описании побега малыша с территории дачи. В эпизодах встречи с сосновой шишкой, с телятком на лужайке, с лягушкой перед читателем предстает широкая, щедрая натура, пока еще только инстинктивно, подспудно, но уже любящая мир и стремящаяся постичь его.¹⁸

Whether or not Nagibin had intended for his story to be an illustration of bureaucracy in the daily give and take of life, he has achieved it in the attitude of the unimaginative, narrow-minded Nina Pavlovna toward little Komarov.

¹⁷ Ju. Nagibin, *Razmyšlenija o rasskaze* (Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossija," 1964), pp. 53-59.

¹⁸ Evgenij Nikolin, "Polnoj dušoj," *Neva*, No. 7 (1963), pp. 171-72.

Similar to *Zimmij dub* in theme is the story *Deti lepjat iz snega* (Children Making Snowmen) in which a child's creative awareness evokes the same awareness in others. Yet another resemblance of the two stories is evident when we compare the teachers in each. Sensitive to the needs of their young pupils, each one is portrayed as open, understanding as well as willing to guide their charges.

The story has a simple plot: a young teacher takes orphan children for a walk on a snowy winter day and when they come to a vacant lot she suggests they divide up in pairs to build snowmen. All the children except one follow the teacher's directions. Only Minaev starts making a statue very unlike a snowman. He works at it with complete abandon and while at work, his attitude toward the other children changes. Usually quiet and obliging, he is rude to his working partner Gusakova; he yells at his good friend Berezkin and speaks harshly to the teacher.

Their dialog is significant. To the teacher's question where are the legs of the figure he is making, Minaev points downward. He explains that the man he is making is climbing out of a coal mine. When the teacher suggests that he may have forgotten that an elevator brings miners out of the mine, he looks at her angrily. How could he forget? His father was a miner. To the question where his father is now, the boy points downward again:

--Там! - Минаев ткнул пальцем вниз. - Он вылезает из шахты.

--Шахтеров поднимают наверх в клетки. Ты, наверное забыл...

--Забыл? - Узкие глаза гневно глядят на воспитательницу. - Мой отец был шахтером.¹⁹

.

¹⁹ Nagibin, *Čistyě*. . . , p. 456.

--А где твой отец?

--Там! - Минаев снова показал вниз. - Он там остался.²⁰

Minaev's speech is harsh: it mirrors his emotional state. Nagibin shows how significant the role of a sensitive educator is in this type of situation. Instead of punishing the boy for his sharp words she is quick to sense his bitterness and to praise him for his talent. Without uttering another word she stands before the strange miracle of the boy and his man of snow giving him the opportunity of full creative expression.

Elberg has likened Nagibin's theme to that of V. Panova, who similarly pays a great deal of attention to the role of an adult in a child's education:

Подобно В. Пановой, всегда подчеркивающей роль взрослого в воспитании детей, Ю. Нагибин также показывает, как значительна роль чуткого и умелого воспитателя. Учительница не наказала мальчика за резкость и непослушание. Видя, с каким упоением и самозабвением он работает, она поняла, что перед ней талант, и молча "в какой-то горькой и счастливой пониклости перед странным чудом этого мальчика и его человека из снега", дала возможность ему проявить себя.²¹

Četvrtýj papa (The Fourth Daddy) has as its theme the revelation of a person's true nature through his attitude toward a child. Little Saša's constant quest for a daddy ends when Bajkov, a sailor friend comes to spend the day with the boy's babysitter, Fenička, who takes the place of Saša's working mother. Actually, the boy had a father, but had never seen him. All he knows about his daddy is what he had overheard from the neighbors, that "he left with the beautiful one." What this meant Saša did not understand. For him the most beautiful person in the world is his mother:

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 458.

²¹Elberg, p. 73.

Самой красивой на свете была мама - большая, толстая, теплая. У нее замечательная родинка на щеке, с двумя черными волосками, и другая родинка в уголке губ, и еще одна на мочке уха, а что может быть красивее этого?²²

Nagibin successfully evokes the emotional atmosphere of childhood and draws a true picture of the adults as they are seen from the boy's point of view. Moreover, like nature, the child becomes the touch-stone for the adults' moral worth. Bajkov's love and kindness is revealed and Fenička's insensitivity is exposed in their respective attitudes toward Saša. Bajkov becomes disillusioned with Fenička when she mistreats the boy. This is his awakening, for he discovers her true nature:

--Слушай - говорил Байков, - а я не думал, что ты такая...
 --Какая еще такая?
 --Злая, - чуть помолчав, сказал Байков.
 --Еудешь злой - жалобно отозвалась Феничка. -В кой веки свиделись - и ни минуточки покоя.
 --Так ведь понимать надо... Он меня папой называл!...
 --Да у него все папы! Ну, чего ты? - Была короткая тишина, потом снова голос Байкова:
 --Нет, не могу я так... Будто щепка в сердце... Ну тебя к богу в рай, нехорошая ты!²³

The boy's admiration and love for his fourth daddy is brought out in his stream of consciousness as he is lying in bed thinking what he might give Bajkov to remember him by. He decides it must be his teddy bear, Kuzja, because it is the toy he loves best and since it makes him sad to part with Kuzja, that's what he should give Bajkov. With this happy thought Saša, holding his teddy bear, flings open the

²²Ju. Nagibin, *Pered prazdnikom* (Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1960), p. 32.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 47.

door and chimes: "Daddy, take it!" only to be chased back to bed by an angry Fenička:

Саша слез с кровати, вытащил из темного угла жалобно заворчавшего Кузю и с размаху распахнул дверь.

--Папа! - крикнул он ликующим голосом и осекся. В комнате была одна Феничка, она сидела боком на поручне кресла, чуть склонясь. Неужели Байков уехал? Но вот Феничка обернулась, и Саша увидел Байкова. Ничего он не уехал, он сидел в кресле, и Феничка его загородила.

--Папа, возьми!..

--Да пропади ты пропадом! - взвизгнула Феничка. - Надоел хуже горькой редьки!²⁴

Coming of Age

Nagibin contended once that he does not indulge in imaginations but only writes about things which have really occurred. If it were a matter only of observation and experience, then how are we to account for a story such as *Pered prazdnikom* (Before the Holiday) in which the heroine experiences the change from girlhood to womanhood?

Orest Petrovič is the first to notice a certain change in Nataša at play when he hears a note of complaint in her voice and vaguely suspects it must have something to do with growth and maturity, which she herself cannot begin to understand. He could tell Nataša wanted to continue the game she was playing, but a sudden awkwardness disturbed her movements and prevented her from playing. Slowly she goes toward the house and once inside falls on the bed. She could sense her life oozing out of her body and thought surely, she is dying:

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

...у нее закружилась голова, и острая, горячая боль опалила живот. Она согнулась, выпрямилась и потерянно побрела к дому. Колька пошел было за ней. --Отстань! - резко крикнула Наташа. Она вошла в дом, молча прошла мимо матери в комнату и повалилась на кровать. Секунду-другую она словно чего-то ждала, и, когда это пришло, Наташа решила: это смерть. Вот от чего было ей так тоскливо днем, вот почему томилась и страдала она вечером. Она умирает, жизнь стремительно вытекает из ее тела. --Мама! - крикнула она отчаянно, хрипло, звонко. И когда мать, сразу почувывая опасность, вбежала в комнату, сказала: --Я умираю. - И заплакала.

Марья Васильевна поначалу как-то оторопела, а потом засмеялась.²⁵

Besides Nataša, the other children in the story are Kolja, Nataša's eleven-year-old brother with a world of his own which no one may enter; little Vitja, her youngest brother, whom their mother considers the smartest in the family and their neighbor Sonja, a gentle, trustful and awkward young child. As in his *Igra*, Nagibin observes these children at play to determine their characters:

Колька труженник: когда ему надо спрятаться, он сломя голову мчится к дальнему стогу и зарывается в сено глубоко и основательно, будто намерен отсиживаться там год. Наташа - вся риск и дерзость: она не прячется даже, а просто становится за спиной водящей Соньки или садится на корточки у ее ног и "выручается" сразу, как только Сонька объявляет: "Вожу!" А в Соньке то кроткое упорство, с которым она переносит все неудачи...²⁶

The main character in the story is, without doubt, Nataša. She is the manifestation of the indomitable violence of life and its fine prosaic simplicity, its contradiction and harmony. Pictured as a village girl enjoying the twilight hours, the thundering of the herd as it returns from pasture, the game with her brothers and especially the boat

²⁵Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, I, 195.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 192.

rides on the river with her father, she is also a dreamer. When she goes down to the river she sees a midget fishing and imagines him to be her "prince":

Стоя на высоком носу лодки, Наташа тонко и смешно повизгивала от восторга. Она едва не забыла о "принце" и вспомнила о нем, когда покосившаяся, старая банька осталась позади. Наташа обернулась, но "принца" там не было. Странно, она так мечтала его увидеть, она и самое катание затеяла ради него, а сейчас, когда его не оказалось, нисколько не была огорчена.²⁷

The metaphor of the river as the life-giving, all-sustaining natural resource of this fishing village is underscored by the many fishermen, natives of the village as well as outsiders, who come here to fish for fun and relaxation. The Hungarian critic, Kristó Nagy, observes that this short story "is a masterful, psychologically valid and artistically tasteful presentation of this sensitive subject which is unique in the whole of modern world literature".²⁸

Another awakening into womanhood of a teenager is shown in "*Kak skažeš, Aurelio...*" (Whatever You Say, Aurelio); in this story, at sixteen Ljuda sees her first movie picture and is captivated by its hero. The words the movie heroine says to her beloved, "Whatever you say, Aurelio....," become indelibly imprinted upon her heart and she begins to expect to find her own Aurelio to whom she can say these words.

Here too, as in *Pered prazdnikom*, we have the metaphor of the "water of life", this time the life-giving water of a lake:

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

²⁸István Kristó Nagy, "Nagibin," in *Az új szovjet irodalom*, ed. by János Elbert and László Kardos (Budapest, n.d.), p. 264.

Сюда ударяли майскими грозами слепящие молнии, июльские полные радуги опускали семицветие своих опор, без счета осыпались звезды августовскими ночами. А разве солнце в ежевечернем погружении не оставляло озеру немного розового света, разве исчезало бесследно все изливающееся в него лунное и звездное сияние? Озеро приняло в себя столько радужного, звездного, лунного и солнечного вещества, что вода его обрела целебную силу.²⁹

Nagibin tells subtly and lyrically about the inner change of the young girl through a sudden unexpected change in nature:

Сейчас в природе царила растерянность. Летняя жара после холодов, близких к заморозкам, сбила с толку все растущее из земли. На бесплодных вишнях распустились белые, с чуть приметной розоватостью цветочки, заневестились и дикие яблони белым цветом, а на луговине левого берега вновь расцвели пунцовые маки... Вот плывет серебряная паутина, застрявшая между небом и землей с бабьего лета, набухают почки на вербах, желтеет березовый лист, осина сбрасывает баgreц, но цветут фруктовые деревья, раскрываются чашечки белых водяных лилий; тянут на юг утки и гуси, а тетерева, похоже, собрались не откладывать на весну брачных турниров и свадеб...

И такая же весенняя путаница творилась в Люде.³⁰

Nature stands as one with Ljuda. It also awakens suddenly to the great secret of life. Several details, for example the way the girl walks "легко и вкрадчиво" and old Matveič's remark that "девка заневестилась" underscore her new awakening.

This somewhat ironic story with its imagery takes us into a world which for the writer has become a place apart: the world of his own childhood.

²⁹Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, I, 352-53.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 357.

PART TWO - Autobiographical Children's Stories

INTRODUCTION

In Nagibin's autobiographical stories there are five separate collections. Chronologically first is a collection of twelve stories about Nagibin's childhood, entitled *Čistye prudy*. Since then Nagibin has returned to his childhood theme four times: in 1965 he published his *Malen'kie rasskazy* (which appeared in his book *Dalekoe i blizkoe*); in 1969 a collection of stories, *Leto moego detstva*, came out as a part of his book *Čužoe serdce*, in 1971 another collection appeared, *Pereulki moego detstva*; and in 1974 he published his latest collection of four stories, *Kniga detstva*, included in his book, *Ty budeš žit'*.

Nagibin's frequent return to his own childhood theme has prompted several critics to express their views of Nagibin's lively interest in the past. Atarov, for instance, comments that Nagibin is comparing his childhood with the *Weltanschauung* he has today: a world filled with beauty of which he had become aware even as a child:

В основе ярко вспыхнувшего интереса к прошлому, кажется мне, лежит как бы удивление Нагибина перед тождеством впечатлений детских лет и восприятия им мира сегодняшнего, "взрослого". Писатель глубоко убежден в том, что красота в жизни существует и принадлежит равно всем, но ее надо было уметь увидеть и услышать; и вот он проверяет сейчас, видел ли он сам в детстве всю эту красоту?³¹

While V. Provoljaev sees a return to the past as a purification as well as self-verification:

Возвращение к прошлому - это очищение, проверка самого себя, это светлая дума о самом хорошем и самом добром, что когда-то "имело место быть".³²

³¹Atarov, p. 111.

³²V. Povoljaev, "Načinaja s pereulkov detstva," *Literaturnaja gazeta* (Sept. 26, 1972), p. 5.

F. S. Rjabikina, on the other hand, believes that Nagibin's return to the childhood theme is influenced by that creative principle which Nagibin calls "the memory of the heart," a creative principle which refines and polishes life's occurrences before letting them become part of him.³³

And Nagibin himself, commenting about his interest in the past, states, in one of his stories, *Samyj ščastlivyj den'* (The Happiest Day), that the past, present, and future are intricately interwoven into a whole, that nothing fades without a trace and that man's memory is a sanctuary where images of the past live forever:

...прожитое - это не разбег для взлета в какую-то будущую настоящую жизнь... это уже жизнь, в которой все связано: далекое прошлое с настоящим, а если мне суждено будущее, то и оно окажется нерасторжимо связанным с пережитым; ничто не проходит бесследно, не зарастает травой забвения, и человеческая душа не кладбище, а святилище, дарующее вечную жизнь образам былого.³⁴

These "образы былого" are reflected in all of Nagibin's autobiographical stories. Nagibin's *Naš bylo četvero* (There Were Four of Us), for example, is undoubtedly one of the very first stories with the theme of Nagibin's own childhood, even though the writer has not included it in his collection of autobiographical childhood stories, the *Čistye prudy*.

In the Čistye prudy neighborhood of Moscow live four youngsters who are now all in school together. But even before they went to school, they were drawn to one another by the need to know everything,

³³S. Rjabikina, "Pamjat' serdca," *Naš sovremennik*, No. 7 (1972), p. 123.

³⁴Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, II, 335.

by that childhood wisdom which is born in the fast pace of life and which produces men and women who take in all the good in life and are able to give of it freely to others. Many of the themes of later childhood stories are already present in this early story about which Richards makes the following comment:

...the highly-charged atmosphere of the boys' world is strikingly recalled: the make-believe heroism and the actual clashes with rival gangs, the activities of youth organizations, visits to the magical world of the cinema, fishing trips and the rest, and overall the friendships that endure through the other rapidly changing enthusiasms and loyalties of the boy evolving into the adult world.³⁵

Nagibin esteems mutual understanding very highly. In the emotional climax of this story the author, who has returned to Moscow after an absence of several years, is climbing the stairs to the apartment of one of his boyhood friends when he hears Kol'ka's shout of "*No passaran!*" revealing that their boyhood feelings are not forgotten, that they are still true friends:

С сильно бьющимся сердцем направился я к Кольке. Я выбрал Кольку, потому что он был самым легким и отзывчивым, настоящий барометр дружеских отношений. На лестнице знакомо запахло кошками, я немного приободрился. --Но пассаран! -- таким восклицанием встретил меня Колька. И хотя ожидал иных слов встречи, я обрадовался. Я понял, чем сейчас живут мои друзья. Своим восклицанием Коля как бы открывал мне двери в свой новый мир и вместе с тем проверял меня: попрежнему ли я с ними.³⁶

S. Dmitriev also observes that the main themes of Nagibin's *Čistye prudy* had already appeared in *Naš bylo četvero*. Furthermore,

³⁵Richards, p. xix.

³⁶Ju. Nagibin, *Zimnij dub* (Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1955), p. 94.

the critic contends that it is characteristic of Nagibin to return to his favorite topics and themes:

Мастерство Нагибина в цикле "Чистые пруды" окрепло, обогатилось новым, глубоко гуманистичным содержанием. Что это так, можно легко увидеть, сравнив "Чистые пруды" с ранним его рассказом "Нас было четверо". Собственно, все основные мотивы "Чистых прудов" заложены в этом рассказе.³⁷

The Čistye prudy Collection

Nagibin's *Čistye prudy* is twelve stories about the author's home in Moscow; this collection portrays the young boy Sereža Rakitin's formative years. Among the stories are those which tell of his comrades who lived in the same neighborhood, others which introduce members of his family who are mentioned in the stories for the first time, still others describe trips the young boy made to see his father who was far more often away from home than living with the family in their modest apartment. Focusing more upon the child's personal life are stories about his yearning for a bicycle, his collection of butterflies, his teachers at school and about some of his favorite school friends.

From these stories we are able to see how the boy grew up. It is significant that his father, a construction engineer, was rarely with the family while the boy was growing up. This void in Sereža's life was filled by his grandfather:

Отца я видел редко, профессия строителя и врожденная тяга к перемене мест кидала его с одной стройки на другую, с низовой Волги в самую глубь Сибири, из Подмоскovie за Полярный круг... Зато при слове "дед" я сразу вижу себя в старой комнате, где он учил меня подтягиваться на кольцах и работать с гантелями, или на Чистых прудах, где под его руководством я осваивал первые в моей жизни коньки.³⁸

³⁷S. Dmitriev, "Nagibin, Ju. M.," in Jurij Nagibin's *Čistye prudy* (Moscow: "Moskovskij rabočij," 1962), p. 555.

Na vsju žizn' (For a Lifetime) is devoted to Sereža's formative years at Čistye prudy. The story is nostalgic in that the child's many "firsts" are remembered, for example, the first time Sereža went ice skating, his first family portrait, his first recollections of the beauty of the changing seasons, and his first love:

Чистые пруды - это чудо первого скольжения на коньках, когда стремящиеся лечь плашмя "снегурочки" становятся вдруг полсунными, прямо, стройно режут широким лезвием снег и ты будто обретаешь крылья. Чистые пруды - это первая горюшка, которую ты одолел на лыжах, и я не знаю, есть ли среди высот, что приходится нам брать в жизни, более важная да и более трудная, чем эта первая высота. Чистые пруды - это первая снежная баба, первый дом из глины, вылепленные твоими руками, и пусть ты не стал ни ваятелем, ни зодчим, ты открыл в себе творца, строителя, узнал, что твои руки могут не только хватать, комкать, рвать, рушить, но и создавать то, чего еще не было...³⁹

Nagibin tells of the unhappy love of his boyhood and youth. The pretty and popular Nina Baryševa lived in the same lane as the young Nagibin close to Čistye prudy. In the elementary grades Nagibin would follow her to and from school at a safe, respectful distance. In the fifth and sixth grades they would walk side by side talking all the way, still later they walked hand in hand and in the upper grades arm in arm. But in no way did this bring the growing youth closer to the object of his affection. They always parted at the large brick house with the awesome Menšikov tower rising directly behind it, Nagibin's heart sinking as the girl walked out of his sight.

How much the author was to suffer because of this girl! It was a rare day that he was not beaten up. Kalabuxov, a boy who also lived in the Čistye prudy district, never allowed Sereža nor Nina to pass.

³⁹Nagibin, *Čistye...*, p. 7.

Sereža was strong: for this reason Kalabuxov never attacked alone. The young Nagibin would be beaten when they were leaving school, along the boulevard, at the skating rink. The attacks came whenever he was seen with Nina: when he was by himself, he was safe.

It made Nina very sad that she was the cause of Sereža's dilemma, but understanding his devotion to her, she could not suggest that they no longer walk together.

When they became older the fighting stopped. Sereža and Nina were no longer harassed even when they sat together on a park bench near Čistye prudy and Sereža would try to ascertain for the thousandth time why it was that Nina did not like him as much as their former Young Pioneer leader Šapavalov or Lemešev, or, for that matter, as much as the famous flier Gromov or her film idol Conrad Veidt. The eminence and remoteness of these rivals freed Sereža from a feeling of envy but not from anguish. Unfortunately, Nina had other admirers, such as the handsome, dandyfied editor of their school paper, Lazutin, and an older student who often brought her to school on his motorcycle.

But the most trying time began for Sereža when they were in the ninth grade. The whole school had "discovered" Nina. Something Sereža had known for years and kept in secret finally became evident to all the boys on the school campus: that in school No. 311 there is a walking miracle who is Nina Baryševa. Nagibin comments on the mass infatuation with Nina that swept their school:

Общее поклонение, как и всякий культ, непременно должно было обрести единую форму. Этой формой стала поэзия. Школой овладело стихотворное помешательство. Не было дня, чтобы очередной поэт не вел Нину на Чистые пруды, к беседке, чтобы прочесть ей стихи своего сердца. Стихи были плохие, с однообразными околичностями, почти в каждом упоминались роща и озеро, читай: бульвар и пруд.⁴⁰

Nagibin relates how he sat up all night trying to compose verses for his beloved only to find by morning that all his efforts were in vain. His inability to write poetry comes as a great disappointment for him. Finally, just before class, he takes a clean sheet of paper and pens with bold letters: "Ты самая красивая, я очень тебя люблю." Nina's face, when she reads this brief declaration, registers annoyance. She reads it over again and after a long, thoughtful smile, says: "Пиши прозу - у тебя получается."

In *Ščedryj podarok* (The Generous Gift), Nagibin continues the theme of his bygone childhood. He relives a never-to-be-forgotten trip from Moscow to Irkutsk where the nine-year-old Sereža and his mother spend a memorable summer at the invitation of his father:

Отец не дарил мне подарков; инженер-строитель, он постоянно находился в разъездах, пропадая иной раз на год, а то и больше... Когда же мне исполнилось девять лет, отец раз щедрился и подарил мне целый город - да какой - с дорогой через всю страну! Он вызвал нас на лето в Иркутск, где в ту пору работал.⁴¹

Before setting out on the journey Sereža had imagined that he lived in an unbounded world: a large communal apartment that opened out on two courtyards with access to three lanes, the Armjanskij, Potapovskij and Telegrafnyj. Then there was the immense spaciousness of Čistye prudy and the summer house at Puškino Station by Akulova mountain where he spent the summers with his grandfather.

The trip showed him that all this was but a minute particle of the country in which he lived. As day turned to night and night into day he could see the ever-changing landscape from the train window.

⁴⁰Nagibin, *Čistye...*, p. 10.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 12.

From the Moscow summer they entered a Ural mountain snowfall. Next morning there were fields covered with a thick blanket of snow. Then came another drastic change in the landscape. Bypassing spring, the scenery was dressed in summer greens again.

For Sereža, Irkutsk presented a series of miracles. The icy Angara river, transparent to great depths, revealed a beautiful underwater kingdom. The River Ušakovka carried its warm waters so swiftly toward the Angara that fish swimming upstream seemed at times to be standing still in the water. At such times they could be caught with bare hands or a spear. Swimming in the Ušakovka was like flying in one's dream. Sereža waved his arms barely touching the water which slipped away instantaneously carrying him along with breathtaking speed to the wide mouth of the river where its waters mixed with those of the Angara producing a smooth braking effect.

Another miracle for Sereža were the wild flowers covering the hillsides on the outskirts of town:

Были цветы, похожие на садовые бессмертники, но не сухие, а трепетно-мягкие, полные в каждом лепестке нежной, непрочной жизни, с желтыми венчиками и синей коронкой; были, как садовые лилии, целые луга палевых, навошенных лилий, на длинных, стройных стеблях с саблеобразными листьями; были, как махровая гвоздика, но пышнее и всех расцветок - от фиолетового до бордового; были и такие, что не сравнишь и не опишешь, словно фантастические гибриды василька с георгином, ромашки с настурцией, причудливые, сказочные цветы с длинными тычинками, торчащими, будто щупальца, из глубокой слоистой чашки.⁴²

In Irkutsk in an unprecedented closeness to the mountains and rivers, to wide open spaces, to the trees and flowers, the boy was becoming saturated with the beauty of the outside world.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 13.

But apart from the unexpected beauty of his natural surroundings, Sereža saw some people who were different from Moscovites in appearance, dress and customs but for whom he felt an immediate, unexplained closeness.

From the roof of the long, narrow barn adjoining the house in which they lived, he was able to observe what went on in the courtyard of the inn next door. There were always many carts in the courtyard. The horses that pulled them looked more like ponies with thin necks and distended bellies laced with thick protruding veins. The horses were constantly feeding. Short, stocky dark-complexioned people with firm, round cheek-bones resembling fists and narrow, slitted eyes walked to and fro between the carts. They were Burjats who drove into town in great numbers. They wore fur caps and their shirts over their trousers. Sometimes they were accompanied by their moon-faced wives wearing colorful beads and long earrings as well as very lively, black-headed youngsters. Their days were spent at the market but towards evening they would gather at the inn, unharness their little horses, feed them and sit under a shed drinking tea from a fat-bellied copper tea-pot. They would frequently sing sad songs in high-pitched, heart-rending voices:

Странным и волнующим родством веяло на меня от них. Порой мне казалось, что я понимаю их песни и даже могу подпевать, словно они звучали мне до здешнего моего существования. В их смуглых лицах было родное сходство и со скуластым лицом моего отца, и с тонким лицом матери, и моим собственным детским лицом. Мы были одного корня.⁴³

When this most remarkable summer came to an end and they were getting on the train for the return trip to Moscow, Sereža's father

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 14.

hurriedly handed his son some presents: white fur-lined mittens, a malachite teddy-bear and a tin pistol. At the time it did not occur to Sereža that he was carrying his father's most generous gift home in his heart.⁴⁴

The theme of *Babočki* (Butterflies) reveals that a child's spontaneous enthusiasm is superior to adult reflection. A similar contrast to that in *Zimnij dub* is evident in this story. A boy is instinctively drawn towards the world of butterflies after seeing the collection of an older friend. He is magically attracted to their extraordinary names, such as mourning-cloak, death's head, etc. And although he misidentifies almost every butterfly in his collection, his naive enthusiasm is for the author superior to the systematically accurate classification of the adult expert.

Remembering the errors that were pointed out to him by Fedor Sergeevič, the boy recalls that it brought him a bitter sense of loss, as though a whole world had been taken from him:

У меня отняли целый мир, я чувствовал себя обманутым, обобраным, нищим! Что с того, что теперь я знаю правильные названия бабочек! Эти названия ничего не говорили моему сердцу, они были мертвы для меня.⁴⁵

Nagibin established a relationship between nature and goodness which is most beautifully brought out in another story of the collection, *Èxo* (Echoes). Its heroine, Vit'ka, is the personification of natural innocence and spontaneity. The boy, Sereža, first meets her on the beach while he is looking for pebbles. Bathing naked, Vit'ka confides in him, telling him about her collection of mountain echoes:

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 14

⁴⁵Nagibin, *Pered prazdnikom*, p. 150.

--Я тебе скажу по секрету, я тоже собираю...
 --Что?
 --Эхо... У меня уже много собрано. Есть эхо звонкое, как стекло, есть как медная труба, есть трехголосное, а есть горохом сыплется...⁴⁶

As Vit'ka shows Sereža the various secret places where the mountain echoes are heard, she becomes almost a magical figure in his eyes.

Nagibin also points out the serious conflicts of childhood represented in Sereža's predicament: he is trapped between his feelings of allegiance to Vit'ka and concern for his own standing in the eyes of Igor's gang. He chooses to betray Vit'ka's trust, for which nature punishes him: when with Igor's gang, he is unable to get any response from the mountains.

Richards, who discusses *Èxo* in the introduction to his book, comments on the lyrical tone of the story:

..."Exo" is sustained throughout by that delicate lyrical buoyancy which distinguishes Nagibin's best stories. Here, as in some of his hunting tales, the realistic and psychologically convincing action is suffused with the atmosphere of a lost Golden Age. The subject is a wistful memory from the author's own childhood of thirty years ago; the action is set in a holiday resort with the evocative name of Sinegorija and closes on a muted note of missed opportunity.⁴⁷

In *Razmyšlenija o rasskaze*, Nagibin tells how he wrote this story; it is significant to note that Nagibin refers to *Èxo* as one of his most original stories. The idea for the theme came to him when he had written a scenario about echo collecting called *Devočka i èxo*. A well-known producer, F. M. Ermler, told Nagibin that the best part

⁴⁶Nagibin, *Pered prazdnikom*, p. 150.

⁴⁷D. J. Richards, P. xix.

of the scenario was the invention of echo collecting. This gave Nagibin the idea of writing a story with the same theme. He remembered Koktebel' where he spent his summers. There were hikes to Karadag and Devil's Finger where a strange multi-echo was heard. He remembered the precipice near Serdolikov Bay where the echo was long and melancholy, scattering at the bottom by the black rocks as though it had been an avalanche. Koktebel' suggested the theme and landscape for the story. The plot is concerned with the meeting of two very different characters, a romantic and a rationalistic one; it received its momentum from the echo hunting. Next, was the decision about who would star in this plot.

Nagibin sees himself as very complex, and therefore, well-suited to juxtapose the already dynamic Vit'ka. He remembers that in his character as a child there was a mixture of an intelligent, realistic approach to reality as well as the readiness to believe in miracles. It was more difficult to characterize the little girl. In his childhood Nagibin never had a friend who collected echoes. Although several of his childhood boyfriends leaned towards the fantastic and miraculous, the girls were all uncommonly sober-minded. Nagibin decided to build his little heroine by the mosaic method, or even imagine her entirely. But even this time Nagibin was able to begin the character sketch with a real person. He remembered Galja, a girl from the Akulov summer home where Nagibin lived in the late twenties. This girl seemed to him the ugliest little urchin he had ever met. He pitied her and gave her chocolates that he would steal from his grandfather. But at the end of the summer he found out that the adults of Akulovka considered Galja a paragon of beauty. Nagibin's associa-

tion with the real Galja gave him an additional dimension to the plot. An ugly duckling little girl who also claims to be an echo-collector turns out to be in the eyes of the enlightened narrator the most beautiful person in Sinegorie. This additional development was perfectly interwoven with the main line of the story. Everything else about the girl Vit'ka was the product of Nagibin's imagination, the details of her behavior, her favorite words, and her interpretation of the miraculous mountain echoes. But even in this invented story, Nagibin has included much from real life.⁴⁸

Nagy has noticed a deep social moral in *Èxo*. His comparison of Vit'ka's echo-collection to the silence-collection of Heinrich Böll's hero Doctor Murke is noteworthy:

The story's excellent focal point is echo-collecting. This echo collection is the antipode of the silence collection of Doctor Murke, the hero of Heinrich Böll.

Let us compare the motivation of the child, perceptive to nature, with the task of the alienated West-German office-worker. Böll's radio operator hero collects and tapes together to one huge silence the pauses, lengthy silences, sighs, etc. which he cuts from the tapes of different radio presentations. This is a good satirical sketch of the disgust with word-noise. The little heroine of the Soviet short story, on the other hand, is waiting for her own voice sent to unknown depths and she does not want to keep it all to herself.⁴⁹

The poetically written story *Ženja Rumjanceva* (Eugenia Rumjanceva) is full of recollections of graduation from high school. On the last day of school the whole graduating class finds itself lingering in the hallways and classrooms, as though there was some-

⁴⁸Nagibin, *Razmyslenija...*, pp. 65-69.

⁴⁹Nagy, pp. 263-64.

thing left unsaid after ten years they had spent together: it was as though they were afraid to leave the school for the outside world which suddenly looms infinite before them:

Все мы растроганные, взволнованные, радостные и о чем-то жалеющие, растерянные и смущенные своим мгновенным превращением из школяров во взрослых людей, которым даже можно жениться, слонялись по классам и коридору, словно страхась выйти из школьных стен в мир, ставший бесконечным. И было такое чувство, будто что-то не договорено, не дожито, не исчерпано за прошедшие десять лет, будто день застал нас врасплох.⁵⁰

The heroine, Ženja, is described as an unusual girl. She was always too busy to join the rest of the class in its outings, but no one held that against her. Everyone knew that she had to make time for her work in the astronomical society and the planetarium. On the last day of school she surprises the hero of the story Sereža by asking him to meet her in ten years:

--Через десять лет, двадцать девятого мая, в восемь часов вечера, в среднем пролете между колонн Большого театра.⁵¹

Ženja predicted that she would be a famous astronomer by then. Sereža hesitated; he had not even decided on his major yet, but said he would also be famous, and would come in his own car.

Ten years went by; In 1941 Sereža found out Ženja left the institute to enter a flying school. In 1944, while in a hospital, Sereža heard on the radio that major Rumjanceva was awarded the title of "Hero of the Soviet Union." When he returned from the war,

⁵⁰Nagibin, *Čistye...*, p. 140.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, pp. 145-46.

Sereža found out that the award had been made posthumously.

When the day of the rendezvous at the Bolšoj Theater arrives, Sereža decides to be there as he had promised. Had he met Ženja, he would have told her that he had not become famous, but did publish a book of stories and would continue writing.

The Leto moego detstva Collection

Nagibin values naturalness and spontaneity very highly. It is not surprising, therefore, that children play an important part in his world as central characters in some of his best stories. He often juxtaposes childish naiveté to adult calculation (*Zimnij dub, Babočki*), recognizes the very real conflicts of childhood (*Èxo*), and shows a child's relations with the adult world - a mixture of bewilderment, admiration, misunderstanding and frustration (*Četvertyj papa*). Like modern child psychologists he watches children at play (*Igra, Pered prazdnikom*), and provides for sensitive teachers to guide them (*Deti lepjat iz snega*).

The little man in *Priezd* (The Arrival) remembers the first great injustice with which he had to deal: his grandfather had but a few months to live. Eight-year-old Sereža protests, and his protest takes on the form of rudeness, a necessity to hurt his grandad for the big hurt he will suffer when grandfather is gone:

То был последний год жизни деда. Опытный врач, умный и мужественный человек, умеющий жить без самобмана, он знал, что ему остался недолгий срок, и, любя, жалел всех нас, старался быть неизменно веселым, бодрым до какой-то даже лихости. Он словно хотел передать нам свою силу и свое глубочайшее убеждение, что жизнь превосходна и смерть бессильна ее унизить и даже просто омрачить неизбежностью прихода.⁵²

⁵²Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, II, 270.

In this story, a melody of confession appears which was not known in Nagibin's earlier works, when the child narrator tells how his beloved nurse Veronja came to be with their family. A young newly-wed couple arrived by train in Moscow from Ryazan. The young man told his seventeen-year-old bride, "Wait here, I'll be quick!" She waited, but he did not return. When she finally went to look for him, she found him lying on the cobble-stone street with his throat slit and a razor in his hand. No one ever found out why Veronja's husband committed suicide. Did she know? She probably did, but her pride prevented her from ever speaking about it. It seems they were forced to marry. However, Veronja did not love her husband, and he was in love with another girl.

For some reason Veronja did not choose to return home after the incident, though she was given the money her dead husband had in his pockets. Instead, she wandered aimlessly around Moscow all day until an elderly woman, wearing a large hat noticed her and took her to the home of her widowed brother, a young physician, who was looking for a governess for his young sons.

Thus, Veronja entered Sereža's grandfather's household and found the one and only love of her life. She became everything to him: his beloved, a helpmate in his work, a mother-governess for his children. Her mighty physical and inner strength sufficed for all. When World War I broke out she followed him to the front. She was with him throughout the Civil War. But, because of a strange peasant pride she refused to become his wife and even be considered as such in the eyes of his patients and friends. When Sereža's grandfather became very old and needed only her care and moral support, she

transferred her inexhaustible supply of tenderness to the boy Sereža. She died many years ago, and now Sereža who is himself old and grey weeps whenever he thinks of her.⁵³

There is no melodrama here. That would be unthinkable for Nagibin for whom sincerity is of utmost importance and good taste, a matter of proportion.

In *Pobeditel'* (The Winner), Sereža's father, returning home unexpectedly after one of his long absences at a remote construction job, finds a handsome lawyer-guest in their summer home serenading his wife. The boy, who idolizes his father, tells of his rapid change of emotions from admiration and pride to sheer disgust and hatred for this Don Juan:

Присутствие этого человека наполняло меня гордостью. Мне нравились его небольшая черная блестящая голова, разделенная стрелой пробора, и седые мысы висков, и маленькие, тоже с проседью, усики над большим ярким ртом, и его длинные музыкальные пальцы, и костлявые колени худых, стройных ног, и его романсы...⁵⁴

When someone suggests a contest in athletics, Sereža watches with amazement, mixed with hope and fear that his father also decides to take part in the competition and, furthermore, realizes that his dad wants to compete only with the lawyer:

...И тут я понял, что отец состязается только с адвокатом, а до остальных ему нет никакого дела. Теперь я остро ненавидел адвоката с его маленькой изящной головой, пробором, длинными ногами, фатоватым кителем, гитарой и романсами.⁵⁵

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 298.

Told as a parable, the story *Zabrošennaja doroga* (The Abandoned Road) differs from the remainder of the collection first of all, by its dynamic plot. The boy-narrator meets another boy his age who is pulling weeds on an old untravelled road. When asked why he is bothering to do that, he replies that every road leads somewhere, and perhaps someone on the other end is also trying to clear the road. Many years later Nagibin returns to the place where the old road had been, but does not find it, and a whole chain of associations linked with the abandoned road come to him.

He thought of the many roads that led from his heart to different people. Some about whom he could never forget and others who were almost forgotten. If he was successful in keeping those paths in good repair, it was only because there was always a similar interest in keeping the way open from the opposite direction. Only one path, one of most import, he was unable to save, perhaps because there was no one coming to meet him from the other side.⁵⁶

The children that surround the hero at the village of Akulovka that memorable summer influence his formative years, albeit to a lesser degree than the members of his family. The gang of which he becomes a part consists of Ronja, Vovka, Katja, Galja and Vera. In addition, three other children who enter Sereža's life that summer stand out in his memory.

The first was the teenager Kol'ka Glušaev, a strange, lonely boy who was a stranger in his own home. Kol'ka's stepmother hated him and his weak father was unable to love him. He became Sereža's first teacher.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 325.

Kol'ka taught Sereža how to swim by throwing him into the river; to fight by beating him up. Evidently he thought this method of teaching was beneficial for Sereža because of Sereža's developed tenacity and resistance. In addition, he taught him the sports and games that were popular at the summer house, the eminent swear words and all the most important ratings so necessary in one's childhood years. From Kol'ka Sereža found out, for example, who the world's best chess player was, the best stage actor, writer, football player, singer, flyer, boxer, wrestler and ballerina. He also taught Sereža how to do things with enthusiasm and abandon.⁵⁷

In *Čerdak* (The Attic), Kol'ka takes Sereža into the attic of the old summer house and introduces him to his first book. A new world opens to Sereža--no less complex and, at the same time, no less wonderful than the world of reality.

The second youngster was five-year-old Alex in the story *Šurik* (Little Alex). This boy, looking more like a girl with his golden curls, large blue eyes and thick, long lashes, was despised by the gang. The pampering and attention Alex received from his parents and other adults, turned the children against him even more. When the grown-ups set the boy up as an example for the rest of the children, the gang sought for ways to get back at the helpless creature who was afraid of frogs and didn't know how to climb trees.

Opportunities to tease and torment little Alex were not hard to find. For example, when out hunting mushrooms in the near-by forest, the gang would take Alex into the densest part of the woods while they hid close by so they could watch his every move. First,

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 273.

Alex called, his voice becoming more desperate and high-pitched, then he would burst out crying. Looking very innocent, the children would come out of hiding and scold the boy for purposely running away from his friends and award him with slaps.

When they went swimming, their favorite pastime would be to drag Alex into deep water and watch how helplessly he floundered, gulping the salty river water and blowing bubbles:

Шурик все переносил с завидной кротостью и никогда не жаловался взрослым. Это не мешало нам дразнить его ябедой и поколачивать за мнимые доносы. Его беззащитность, терпеливость и беззлобие лишь разжигали свирепый пыл гонителей.⁵⁸

Soon, however, Sereža starts feeling sorry for the youngster. Alex greets the children with a trusting smile every morning hoping that anything unpleasant in the past is now forgotten and he will be allowed to become their friend. Sereža remembers how Alex plods after them on their way to the forest keeping a safe distance not out of fear, but because he does not want to annoy the others. Otherwise, they would probably chase him away. Sereža also realizes that Alex is quite indifferent to the kindness and fawning of the adults and attracted only to the children.

Sereža becomes trapped between his awakening kindness and concern for Alex and his allegiance to the gang whose unwritten law he continues to obey. The gang remains unmerciful to Alex.⁵⁹ Alex existed as quietly and unnoticeably as a mouse. The children rarely saw him. However Sereža determined that Alex would be their

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 280.

playmate not this year perhaps, but surely next summer.

The end of the story is reminiscent of the ending of Turgenev's *Bežin lug* in which little Pavluša dies unexpectedly after he hears a drowned boy's voice calling him. Before Pavluša's fatal accident on horseback, he had told his friends that he believed no one could escape his fate. In Nagibin's story it is the old women of Akulovka who, watching Alex from a distance would say: "What an angel!" but then add: "He's not long for this world!"

Nagibin ends the story by reminding the reader that people are believing in old folks' superstitions again which by the mere power of hypnotic suggestion sometimes do come true. This reminds one again of *Bežin lug* which is, as we all know, structured on several superstitions. Little Alex died that autumn from membranous pneumonia.

In *Ataman*, Len'ka teaches Sereža to steal flowers from a well-to-do home in the neighborhood. When caught, Len'ka simply "throws himself upon the proprietors like a bone." Sereža, on the other hand, becomes terrified. He pleads with his captors to let him go assuring them that he is a good, honest boy who has never stolen before.

As soon as he is freed, Sereža hates himself for his cowardliness and admires Len'ka's bravery.

In another story, *Krasnyj kar'er* (The Red Sand Pit), the boy admires two other children who rebuild a room setting that has been destroyed by the mischievous narrator. In a ravaging mood Sereža levels this room but each time finds it rebuilt. Finally he sees the children who come to refashion their room and realizes that they are blind:

...Что творилось в этом страшном мире, так долго притворявшемся кротким и добрым? За что так беспощадно наказаны эти прелестные дети?...⁶⁰

Filled with wonder at the beautiful blind children, Sereža tries to come to grips with a world of injustice which before had seemed to him gentle and kind.

In *Ja zarabatyvaju na žizn* (I Earn a Living), the boy-narrator becomes a ferryman on the river Uča. Shaken awake to thought and action by Kol'ka Glušaev and the inevitable loss of his grandfather, he decides at eight to prove to his family that he is old enough to earn a living:

Я догадывался о подспудном смысле этих проповедей: деду оставалось недолго жить... и семья бессознательно пыталась извлечь для меня максимум назидания из благодарного образа деда. Но я не хотел расставаться с дедом, не хотел, чтобы любимого, грозного и ласкового человека превращали в пропись. Я решил доказать, что могу и сам зарабатывать на жизнь.⁶¹

Sereža turned ferryman meets a man called Volodja who asks to be rowed along shore until the raft and its passengers are hidden from view by the weeping willows growing on the bank. The people who come to the river looking for Volodja leave without him; Volodja does not answer their calls.

Years later listening to Jaxontov reading Majakovskij's poems Nagibin recalls his meeting the poet whom he remembered not from a portrait or photograph but as a real man, Volodja, from his childhood

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 330-31.

⁶¹Ju. Nagibin, *Čužoe serdce* (Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1969), pp. 15-16.

at Akulovka when Nagibin had helped Majakovskij escape from his friends or enemies or perhaps even from himself.

What Nikolin notes about Nagibin's stories in general applies especially to Nagibin's children's stories:

Предпосылкой почти каждого рассказа Нагибина является мысль о том, что воспитание человека будущего идет уже сегодня. Именно она, эта мысль, придает произведениям писателя такую "насущность", напористость.⁶²

Conclusion

Nagibin fills the traditional theme in Russian literature: childhood, boyhood, and youth with new content and uses it as a backdrop for the deeper theme being enacted center stage: the awakening and growth of the inner man in the hearts of the children.

In the two autobiographical collections under study we observe how Sereža gains maturity. He learns to understand that he is a complex human being (*Krasnyj kar'er, Šurik*); and that he lives in a world that can be very hostile (*Krasnyj kar'er, Ja zarabatyvaju na žizn'*). But it is also a world in which there is great love, especially the love of one's family (*Priezd*) and that this love can be communicated to others (*Zabrošennaja doroga*).

We see how Sereža's physical world has expanded from his small apartment at Čistye prudy to encompass his summer experience at Akulovka to his trip to Irkutsk which has opened new vistas of beauty of the great outdoors.

We see, at the same time, and most importantly for Nagibin, that Sereža's inner world has grown. He is learning to accept

⁶²Nikolin, p. 174.

himself as a complex individual. And he has learned to accept others and to keep the channels of communication to others open at all times. He has learned to love people, but not only those who love him, he has learned an empathy and closeness even for those who are unloveable and for strangers.

CHAPTER FOUR

Nagibin in Literary Criticism

Introduction	142
1. Nagibin About Himself, His Writing, and on Other Writers	144
2. Criticism of Nagibin's Links with Other Writers	159
3. Criticism of Nagibin's Poetics:	166
Original Features of Nagibin's Short Stories;	166
Criticism of <i>Lirichnost'</i> ;	170
Criticism of Humaneness;	172
Criticism of Figurativeness:	174
Criticism of Autobiographical Traits;	176
Criticism of Cyclicity in Nagibin's Stories;	182
Criticism of the Role of Nature in Nagibin's Short Stories;	183
Criticism of Nagibin's Use of the Language.	187

CHAPTER FOUR

Nagibin in Literary Criticism

Introduction

As we have seen earlier, the reception of Nagibin in literary criticism has been varied. His stories with psychological aspects are reputed to have the most perfect form, while his *многотемье*, as some critics had dubbed Nagibin's penchant for a constant seeking out of new themes and topics, has been looked upon as unworthy of a "serious" writer, such as Nagibin.

As varied as his stories are, however, their main attraction, I think, is not so much in their variety, as in the interesting inner world of his characters, in his characters' feelings, and in their thoughts. Scrupulous exactingness in questions of duty, honor and conscience, for instance, is a hallmark of some of Nagibin's heroes who exhibit strict moral judgements towards themselves and others as well.

The great variety of his heroes' experiences, moreover, has prompted Nagibin's special method of characterization which exposes an individual's true feelings. It is as though Nagibin removes one mask after another, until only the bones of a character remain, a character's very essence, displaying his attitude towards life and his fellow man.

As to this method, critics observe that Nagibin starts from a living person he has encountered before, and then he changes and enriches the personality, adding the traits necessary to the artistic task set for himself. This method shows, among other things, that Nagibin endeavors to preserve the true-to-life features in his heroes, be they part of his stories describing the life at the front, the backwoods of the Meščera, or a memory of Nagibin's own childhood.

Nagibin likes to structure his stories, as many critics have rightfully noted, around a lyric detail in such a manner that this lyrical undercurrent becomes a most important device in many of his best stories, such as *Čelovek s fronta*, and *Zerno žizni*. Critics have also stressed other aspects of Nagibin's poetics, i.e., the gradual evolution of Nagibin's style from a military novella to a psychological story (*Nočnoj gost'*, for example), and the development of a psychological story to a so-called проблемный рассказ such as *Pogonja*.

As we have observed in the Meščera stories, Nagibin frequently juxtaposes a true countryman, himself "close to nature and almost at one with the creatures he pursues," to the visiting townsman, not in harmony with nature, who comes "for the pleasure of indiscriminate killing" (to use a critic's response to Nagibin)¹ and is found to be spiritually inferior to the local inhabitants. And in Nagibin's children's stories, his propensity for contrasts of the world of children to that of the adults has been likewise discussed in literary criticism on Nagibin. He does, as displayed in Chapter Three, contrast

¹D. J. Richards, ed., *Yurij Nagibin: Selected Short Stories* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), p. xvii.

childhood's naive enthusiasm to the adult expert's methodically correct classifications (for example, in *Babočki*).

Apart from these major critical responses to Nagibin, this chapter consists of Nagibin's own views about his work and about other writers who have influenced him; in fact, the themes of this chapter are as follows:

PART ONE: Nagibin About Himself, His Writing, and on Other Writers;

PART TWO: Criticism of Nagibin's Links with Other Writers; and

PART THREE: Criticism of Nagibin's Poetics:

Original Features of Nagibin's Short Stories;

Criticism of *Liričnost'*;

Criticism of Humaneness;

Criticism of Figurativeness;

Criticism of Autobiographical Traits;

Criticism of Cyclicity in Nagibin's Stories;

Criticism of the Role of Nature in Nagibin's Short Stories;

Criticism of Nagibin's Use of the Language.

PART ONE: *Nagibin About Himself, His Writing, and on Other Writers*

As has been displayed, Nagibin has a great variety of themes which have been discussed in the Nagibin literary criticism. Indeed, Nagibin's многотемье is part and parcel of his writing. Nagibin seems to have been unrelenting to those critics who had upbraided him for that trait. In turn, he invites the critics to look at the greats of Russian literature:

Некоторые из моих друзей-критиков считают, что серьезный писатель должен почему-то избегать многотемье. Меня же словно в пику их суждению преследует это самое многотемье: война, школа,

охота, село, жизнь людей искусства... Почему я так разбрасываюсь? Быть может, тут сказывается отсутствие единого страстного интереса? Не думаю. Давайте обратимся за примером к нашим классикам.²

More specifically, Nagibin turns to Čexov as an example. Indeed, notes Nagibin, there is little that Čexov has not written about.³ There are no passions or human concerns he does not comment on in his works. Čexov had great thematic diversity, yet critics never reproached him for it.

There are themes, continues Nagibin, which he has not used. He has never written about science or production, for example, because he had had very little contact with these spheres of life. His scenario *Direktor* (The Chairman) he considers an exception. In it he writes about his close friend Ivan Alekseevič Lixačev, the Henry Ford of the Soviet automobile industry. And here, incidentally, Nagibin discovers a "law" concerning the people who become prototypes of his heroes: he writes about the man/woman, regardless of their profession:

...коли ты влюбляешься в человека, веришь в него, как в самого себя, чувствуешь его, как самого себя, и хочешь о нем написать, пишешь не о его профессии, не о том, кем он работает – директором или пахарем, инженером или егерем, солдатом или библио-текарем, агрономом или слесарем. Ты пишешь о Человеке, который тебя покори́л, очаровал... А его дело через него выявляется.⁴

Nagibin asserts that a writer working in the short genre, notably a short story, should all the more write about the most diverse subjects:

²Ju. Nagibin, "Vybor geroja," *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, No. 8 (1973), pp. 89-91.

³*Ibid*

⁴Nagibin, "Vybor geroja," p. 89.

about the factory, hunting, the school, the hospital, the road, about love, death, pride, courage, searching, honor, happiness, sorrow, faithfulness, betrayal, about dozens of other things and at the same time-- about life, about man. For the essence of the matter is not in the material the writer chooses but his attitude toward it. A writer's merit is not determined by his attachment to one theme, but by the truth and integrity of his *Weltanschauung*. Furthermore, Nagibin contends, the writer should make it his business to write about everything in life that interests him and more, about all life interjects:

Читаешь...рассказ за рассказом - и перед тобой проходит череда людских характеров и судеб. За их множественностью и разностью встает сама жизнь с ее взаимосвязями, с перечислениями прошлого, настоящего, будущего... И дело тут отнюдь не в широте представленных в рассказах профессий.⁵

From the thematic variety generated by this dispersedness, writes

O. Smirnov, Nagibin paints a composite portrait of contemporary life:

Все мы приписаны к великому ведомству литературы и к еще более великому ведомству жизни. По-моему писатель должен писать не на какую-то тему, а о том, что его волнует, что стучится в его сердце. Герои его могут быть людьми самых разных специальностей. Вспомним Бальзака!⁶

Out of the diversity of characters Nagibin creates, he contends, the most important for him remains the inner value of man independent of circumstances, the essence of man's spiritual worth which concomitantly, Nagibin insists, is his contribution to society.

⁵Jurij Nagibin, "A cel' vse ta-že," *Sovetskaja kul'tura* (June 6, 1970), p. 4.

⁶Oleg Smirnov, "Vernost' žanru," *Novyj mir*, No. 11, (November, 1973), p. 266.

In "Detail' v rasskaze" (Detail in the Short Story), Nagibin addresses the question of description, stressing, in arguing against hackneyed images, that it is the task of art to renew all our senses so that our awareness for life is renewed:

...ведь искусство призвано вечно обновлять наше зрение, слух, все наши чувства, расширять и углублять наше восприятие мира, людей, самих себя, чтобы мы не притерпелись к жизни, чтобы ощущали ее всегда как бы в первый раз.⁷

In addition, he affirms that "the writer is an educator whose calling voice is heard by millions."⁸ Evidently, therefore, observes Richards, Nagibin anticipates the new man, "the superior psychological type of the future" in himself.⁹

Nagibin's comments on the short story genre are likewise noteworthy:

Задача рассказчика - уложить скопленный, осмысленный, прочувствованный им материал в предельно сжатую форму - отнюдь не легче, чем у романиста.¹⁰

Nagibin concludes that the short story is a rigorously distinguished literary type because in a short story, as in a living organism, everything required and nothing superfluous should prevail.¹¹

Although the short story has a compact form, Nagibin foresees no limit to its content, nor to its ultimate importance:

⁷Ju. Nagibin, "Detail' v rasskaze," *Literaturnaja gazeta*, No. 107 (August 29, 1959), p. 3.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Richards, p. xxiii.

¹⁰Ju. Nagibin, "O rasskaze," *Literaturnaja gazeta*, No. 21 (February 16, 1957), p. 3.

¹¹Ju. Nagibin, "Glubže o sovremennosti!", *Literaturnaja gazeta*, (March 25, 1958), p. 3.

...на его крохотном поле надо разместить весь бескрайный мир, в котором живешь: и бездонное небо, и просторы земли, и внутреннюю "бесконечность" человека, и самую душу нашего времени и нашей страны. Ведь и рассказ отражает мировосприятие писателя. Вот почему рассказ прежде всего - обо всем, а уж затем - о чем-то. Точнее сказать: через что-то писатель должен показать все.¹²

In a dialog of his story *Stjuardessa* (The Stewardess), Nagibin endorses the "ideal of universal sympathy" which he now cherishes as a pattern for all men because, continues Nagibin, one cannot be a writer without feeling sympathy with all life. In a word, Nagibin argues, one cannot be a writer without being a human being.

Speaking through characters in his stories, Nagibin concedes that the writer's creative urge depends, likewise, on a desire for personal renown or immortality; and here he comes close to broaching upon religious questions. For example, in *Novyj dom* (The New House), Anatolij Ivanovič meditates that possibly old Dedok, who had built himself a fine new house in a race with death, was erecting a memorial to himself. This would explain the well-built house with the brightly colored artistic carvings of fish and wild fowl he fashioned for the eaves. But why should a man want others to remember him after his death, queries Anatolij Ivanovič. And what was there to remember? That he had hobbled about on one leg, fished, shot teal and mallard--there was not much to boast of there. But if he had really written those poems, would he want people to know and remember them when he was no more, muses Nagibin's Anatolij Ivanovič. His affirmative answer

¹²Nagibin, "Detal'...", p. 3.

comes as a surprise to himself. So there is something in each of us that we want to preserve after our death.¹³

Nagibin stated recently that in different periods of his creative writing he reacted to topical stories differently. At one time he preferred tense stories with a plot and a surprise ending. From these stories almost nothing has survived except *Trubka*¹⁴ which is imbued with stark realism about the vicissitudes in the life of a gypsy boy making it more true-to-life than, as N. Atarov correctly noted,¹⁵ *Nas bylo četvero* about Nagibin's own childhood.

In his book *Razmyslenie o rasskaze*, Nagibin gives some interesting insights of how he writes short stories and of the writers who have in one way or another influenced his writing. Among those writers Nagibin mentions, he devotes more pages to Čexov than all other writers combined. In fact, one of the essays in the book is entitled "O Čexove" (About Čexov). And in the foreword to the book Nagibin acknowledges Čekov's contribution to the genre of the short story:

Мне кажется, нельзя писать о рассказе, отстаивать достоинство этого жанра и не сказать слова о Чехове, который первым возвел короткий рассказ в ранг высокой литературы.¹⁶

Of all the great Russian prose writers of the past, Čexov is the closest to Soviet contemporary writers in terms of time. Čexov is closer to writers such as Nagibin for yet another reason. Until quite

¹³Ju. Nagibin, *Na tixom ozere* (Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1966), p. 125.

¹⁴Ju. Nagibin, "Pisatel' tvorit ne iz zolotykh kirpičej...", *Literaturnaja Rossiya*, (April 26, 1974), p. 7.

¹⁵N. Atarov, "Navstreču sobstvennomu darovaniju," *Literaturnaja gazeta*, No. 122 (October 13, 1960), p. 3.

¹⁶Nagibin, *Razmyslenie o rasskaze* (Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1964), p. 4.

recently Čexov's wife and sister, friends of his beloved Art Theater, were still alive and formed a living bridge between Čexov and the writers of today. For Nagibin, Čexov seemed almost an ascetic, a man with a single absorbing passion for literature. It was, therefore, difficult for Nagibin to reconcile such Čexov exploits as his trip to the island of Saxalin where Čexov undertook single-handedly the Herculean task of recording the general census of the population to determine how many innocent people were serving sentences at the Saxalin penal colony. Another example of Čexov's inner fortitude that Nagibin cites is that of preventing a cholera epidemic from spreading. Čexov, who held the office of sanitary inspector at the time, was instrumental in containing the disease in twenty-five villages, four factories, and a monastery. In a letter to Suvorin during that period he wrote with characteristic modesty that he was genuinely happy. Nagibin deems it strange that these facts of Čexov's biography did little to erode the myth of the writer as an undersized and narrow-shouldered "intelligent". This myth about Čexov, originating during his lifetime, continues Nagibin, colored not only his personality, but most of his creative work as well. The traditionally cheerless definitions of Čexov's writing, such as "певец российских будней" had apparently acquired such a lasting hold that they have come down to us in Soviet literary criticism. The meaning behind even the most brilliant definitions, states Nagibin, remains the same: that Čexov focused upon the tedious, the sad and dismal. Although these descriptions, persists Nagibin, avail nothing, they, nevertheless, find corroboration in a large number of Čexov's stories about dull-witted officials, actors who become inveterate drunkards, young women languishing in remote

provincial corners and about the idiocy of village life. This is not to say, continues Nagibin, that Čexov wrote gloomy stories exclusively. He wrote quite a few stories that contrast boldly to these, for example, Nagibin's favorite *Vory* (The Thieves) in which an honest country doctor in one mad and intoxicating night, suddenly loses his respectability. Čexov welcomes this unrestricted rebelliousness in Ergunov, notes Nagibin; for him any riot is better than the deadly complacency of a Philistine existence. That, which for other writers would have signified Ergunov's downfall, is for Čexov his awakening, concludes Nagibin.

Although Nagibin denies having studied Čexov, he has always read his much admired champion of the short story, reads him now, and will continue reading him.¹⁷ Moreover, Nagibin has always regarded Čexov's advice as something young writers should evaluate very carefully. For example, Čexov's contention that a writer should throw out the beginning and ending of his story for that is where he fabricates the most, has become an important trait of Nagibin's poetics. For Nagibin this exhortation has evolved into a method which he follows faithfully for each story he writes: before beginning the story, even before the characters have become concrete in his mind, he writes the ending. This may consist of a single sentence, a paragraph, a page or more depending upon the form the ending of that particular story requires. Having done this, he then writes the story to fit the ending. Furthermore, Nagibin considers Čexov's advice about ending a story most important. Čexov held, as is well-known, that the writer must have the courage to end the story on time without masticating for the reader or putting

¹⁷Nagibin, *Razmyšlenie...*, pp. 95-104.

on airs that he alone is able to fathom the depth and complexity of what he has written. The writer should beware, Nagibin argues, of being like the indecisive, garrulous visitor, who, hat and coat in hand, torments his hosts as though he dare not close the door behind him.¹⁸

When he had firmly chosen literature as his life's work, continues Nagibin, the absence of an imagination frequently plagued him until one day he came across N. Leskov's complaint of not having a "poetic fantasy."¹⁹ Nagibin cites that the unusual details in the behavior of Pugalo, the Immortal Golovan and the other Charmed Golovan, of Ovcebyk and Šeramura are all taken from real life, for the most part from his childhood memories. All these characters, concludes Nagibin, had their prototypes in reality.²⁰ The realization that Leskov had created these miracles lacking an imagination filled Nagibin with the determination of continuing his own career without imagination.

Nagibin admits that his stories are not rich in humor, neither is he able to write stories consisting solely of landscape, although he greatly admires such stories by Prišvin, and the young contemporary novelist Kuranov.²¹

The problem of choosing the main character, writes Nagibin, requires serious deliberation. At first glance, it seems as though such a problem does not exist: the main character is the one about whom the story is written. That, however, is not always the case.

¹⁸ Nagibin, *Razmyšlenie...*, p. 36.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

It frequently happens that in the center of the author's attention is a person or group of people but toward the end it turns out that the true hero of the story is another character who, up to that time, had concealed himself in the shadow. And the others, to whom the author had generously granted space on the pages of his story, were needed only to show what the "hidden" hero is like. Recalling the stories of Čexov and Guy de Maupassant, everyone will find examples of this type of hero.²²

It happens, infrequently, states Nagibin, that the writer himself is unaware of his main character until he reaches a certain point in his story. An example of such a story is *Sovremennik Ščepkina*.²³ Having witnessed the pathetic incident with the old man, Nagibin knew he would write a story about him. Everything seemed made to order: a ready plot, the characters and a main idea that was significant. Nagibin confides, however, that he was unable to write the story in the days and months that followed, but only years later: he lacked a main hero. For although it would seem that the hero is the old man, this passive character does not dominate the plot. There was also another drawback: Nagibin was not interested in writing a story that dealt wholly with the past. He is not an historical writer. He wants his stories to mirror the present; he does not want to draw analogies and parallels that are far removed from the contemporary scene.²⁴ The choice of the kolkhoz chairman for main character, therefore, provided the necessary solution.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 71.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 79.

²⁴*Ibid.*

Having acquainted ourselves with several aspects of his creative method of characterization, we can surmise the importance Nagibin attaches to meeting people whom he can use as prototypes for future heroes. In this respect Nagibin considers his chance meetings with Tat'jana D'jačenko and Anatolij Ivanovič Makarov, heroes of *Mat' kolchoza* and *Podsadnaja utka*, to have been important turning points in his literary career.²⁵ He calls them reformers, builders of the new, discoverers, romantics, charmed souls. He asserts that he is always carried away with the task of creating a strong character. He is, therefore, attracted to talented people who are capable of taking full responsibility for their own actions.²⁶

Another example of successful characterization is the hero of *Stranicy žizni Trubnikova*, Egor, whom Nagibin endowed with character traits of Tat'jana D'jačenko. Trubnikov turned out to be more than just a "completed character." Nagibin draws him as possessing many negative as well as positive traits. The effect was so real that critics began asking themselves whether, in fact, Trubnikov could within the tenets of Socialist Realism still be considered a positive hero.

Егор Трубников – тема, если хотите, для высокой трагедии или... для сатирического "рыцарского романа," но уже никак не кандидат на должность положительного героя в литературе социалистического реализма.²⁷

Some of Nagibin's best stories are constructed around a remarkable, strong character. His hero may be a positive, creative character, such

²⁵Nagibin, "Vybor geroja," pp. 89-91.

²⁶Nagibin, "A cel'...", p. 4.

²⁷Aleksandr Janov, "Položitel'nyj geroj ili Don Koxot?," *Voprosy literatury*, No. 8 (August 1966), p. 13.

as the schoolteacher in *Zimnij dub*, or a negative character as Andreev in *Podsadnaja utka*. When Nagibin's main character is not sufficiently well-developed, the story turns out mediocre or weak. Such an insufficient character development affects the whole artistic balance of the story rendering it incomplete.

Also important for Nagibin is the decision of how to conduct the narrative: from the viewpoint of the first person (the authorial "I") or from an omnipresent, "objective" standpoint. In this connection, explains Nagibin, the writer must keep in mind that even in the event of the absence of the first person narration in the story, the writer may "implant himself" in one of the characters making him his mouthpiece.²⁸ This device, writes Nagibin, was used by Oscar Wilde in *The Portrait of Dorian Grey* where Lord Henry is the writer's mouthpiece.

Yet another method, argues Nagibin, is possible: without identifying himself with any character, the author may choose to see everything from the point of view of one of the characters in the story. In this respect, and this respect alone, *Zimnij dub* is written from the point of view of the teacher Anna Vasil'evna, though in form the story is narrated from an author's omnipresent standpoint. Another possibility, continues Nagibin, is to narrate a story in the first person, but behind the author's first-person narrative voice is not the author, but another character.²⁹

²⁸Nagibin, *Razmyšlenie...*, p. 81.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 82.

In the case of the short story, Nagibin believes that if the story is one of gradual exposition of a character or of complex, dramatic circumstances it will be to the author's advantage to use first person narrative whether that first person is the writer himself or an invented character. This device heightens the reader's awareness by allowing him to participate in the observations, to share the delusions, the narrator's temporary blindness, to rejoice with him in his discoveries, to lose and retrieve the tracks and as a result to experience greater enjoyment from reading the story. Without the opportunity of merging into the narrator's voice and figure, the reader may feel that he is at the mercy of the writer's arbitrariness.³⁰

In a short story with its smaller scope of time and space, its comparatively fewer characters and the unified plot, the author's first person narrative, argues Nagibin, is fully capable of expressing all that is needed for the exposition of the theme. That is why the short story genre has greater possibilities of first person narration. The writer, however, should not arbitrarily strive for the first person narrative, warns Nagibin. The reader is not interested in the writer *per se*. He resigns himself to the writer's presence in the narrative only in the event that the writer "works" for the reader.³¹

But if the author becomes entangled among the characters for no apparent reason, the reader will hardly think kindly of him. In other words, states Nagibin, there is no one perfectly good method; one of several methods would be suitable for a given case.³²

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 83.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 85.

³²*Ibid.*

Beginning writers are frequently interested in the problem of conciseness. Nagibin uses the term in reference to stylistics, as for example, the conciseness of Hemingway's writing, whose fascinating style is simple and at the same time refined, resolute and secretly mournful, based for the most part on implication. But as fine as Hemingway's style may be, it seems to Nagibin that all imitation is a sin against art.³³

The question of conciseness, continues Nagibin, is not a simple one. Conciseness in its essence is the absence of void, dead, unproductive verbal substance, contends Nagibin. Thus, the impetuous Dostoevskij who is unconcerned about brevity, but seeks only to express himself more fully is concise. The loquacious Proust, strange as it may seem, is concise. The epically verbose Soloxov, continues Nagibin, and Bunin, who is infinitely more lavish with epithets, the cumbersome Tolstoj, the unseemly garrulous Hemingway who builds his story with twenty superfluous words are all concise. Every writer possessing a true mastery of his trade is concise, for each revision down to the final draft of a work is, first of all, an elimination of the superfluous. Lev Tolstoj used to say, recalls Nagibin, that the best editing is shortening. Thus, each writer is concise in his own way. It is a question of individuality, nationality, one's literary school, education, temperament, taste and even of habit.³⁴

Young writers, says Nagibin, should strive to describe the object they are depicting and all that is necessary in such a way that this "all" would be expressed in the necessary amount of words. Repetition,

³³*Ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

flaunting with words, inaccuracy, beautification, inarticulation, continues Nagibin, demand the use of the scalpel; this is the battle for conciseness.³⁵ And in this battle Nagibin has become a thunderbolt of verbal economy.

Closely related to the problem of conciseness, writes Nagibin, is the problem of the role and place of nature description in the short story. Some young writers, in their quest for conciseness, avoid nature description altogether, or reduce it to a minimum. Others use nature painting to an excess. As one reads one of their stories, confides Nagibin, the first nature description is fine--even poetic, you read another--again it is fitting, but seems an unnecessary impediment to the action; on the third nature painting you start feeling sick at the stomach and with a presentiment of a fourth you lay the book aside. The heroes of some writers cannot take a step without finding themselves amidst some natural beauty worthy of description. It is true that it is sometimes possible to improve a weak story with the help of nature description. But toying with a landscape in order to redeem a story should be avoided; and this avoidance has been a keystone in Nagibin's poetics.

Nagibin's struggle for brevity, incidentally, may be the reason why some budding Soviet writers have opted to attend his seminars, writers' workshops organized by the Soviet Writers' Union. A Soviet writer and literary critic Vladimir Amlinskij, who in 1960 participated in the first Moscow conference for young writers, gives his reasons for attending Nagibin's seminar at that conference. For him, reports Amlinskij, Nagibin was not just a good writer but "his own kind of

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 90.

writer." At that time, he explains, there were not many contemporary writers who expressed the same thoughts that Amlinskij would like to have written. From that conference, records Amlinskij, emerged several young people who had already written something, but they were discovered precisely by Nagibin. It was he who read their first stories, watched their progress, advised and helped them to publish. In a very real sense, they were his literary disciples.³⁶

Very frequently, the participants of such workshops would ask Nagibin where he got the idea of writing a certain story. The answer never varies: from life. Indeed, Nagibin's stories are often taken from life in their entirety: with a ready theme, complete with characters and conditions. Sometimes Nagibin was an eyewitness, sometimes a participant and at other times a character in the story. This is how most of his war stories, all of his children's stories (with the exception of stories of contemporary children) and stories of hunting, fishing, and life abroad were written. Actually, two-thirds of Nagibin's stories were generated from his experience without the author's imagination. Nagibin appears to be at a loss when writing from imagination.

Criticism of Nagibin's Links with Other Writers

Critics generally concur that Nagibin's stories have earned him the reputation of "the master of a well-composed short story."³⁷ They are quick to note, however, that as an artist Nagibin emerged from the

³⁶Y. Amlinskij, "Jurij Nagibin, " *Literaturnaja gazeta*, No. 3. (January 14, 1970), p. 6.

³⁷"Рассказы Ю. Нагибина," as Evgenij Vorob'ev notes, "хороши помимо всего прочего, и тем, что строго подчинены сюжету, и форма их выпукла и точна" (*Novyj mir*, No. 11 [1955], p. 249.)

same "sketch-technique" as many of his peers,³⁸ It could hardly go unnoticed that some of Nagibin's early stories (prior to 1953), despite all of their outward qualifications, were still too illustrative and sketchy -- lacking the necessary elements of generalization and artistic completeness Nagibin achieved later on. One of the reasons for that "sketch-technique" stems from the fact, I think, that Nagibin's early stories evolved from the many sketches he had published in newspapers and journals during the war. This sketch-like quality, notwithstanding, Nagibin's early stories displayed many artistic features, such as precise detail, well written nature descriptions etc.,--all of which revealed in him, even at this early stage, a talented, and an original writer.

Apparently, to eschew some of the shortcomings above, Nagibin began to seek captivating subject-matter, unusual occurrences and meetings, amusing happenings, unexpected and unavoidable turns that took place in the lives of his heroes. For a time he became a disciple of Jack London and O. Henry.³⁹ And yet, some of Nagibin's stories, especially those devoted to sports (*Pobeditel'* [The Winner]) for example, brought him neither popularity nor satisfaction; these stories were no more than a probe of the pen.

His search for entertaining subject matter and exciting plot-oriented stories with surprise endings did not bring him much success⁴⁰ for, as Nagibin recalled , he wanted:

³⁸V. A. Kovalev (ed.), *Russkij sovetskij rasskaz* (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1970), p. 590.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 591.

⁴⁰M. Iof'ev, "Pisatel' v puti," *Novyj mir*, No. 3 (1959), p. 236.

...писать новеллы - напряженные фабульные рассказы с неожиданной концовкой. Из этих почти ничего, кроме "Трубки" не сохранилось. Вообще же меня радует когда я могу рассказать читателю какую-то историю... Все же не люблю мне в сегодняшней литературе так называемые "рассказы настроения." Обычно в них много пейзажа и нитья и нет ни значительного человеческого характера, ни труда серьезного размышления.⁴¹

In time only deep psychological perspicacity and sensitiveness allowed Nagibin to contrast these sketches with the distinctive aspect of some of his better short stories such as *Boj za vysotu* and *Pavlik*. Both of these stories are examples of Nagibin's ability to surmount his previous attachment to separate events and achieve a successful generalization of his life at the front. Judging from Nagibin's mature works, his gift as an artist may be viewed not so much in the reconstruction of an outer tissue of events as in the search for hidden personal resources. In stories, such as *Čelovek i doroga* and *Škola dlja vzroslyx*, as in the extensive collection of children's stories beginning with *Zimnij dub* and *Komarov*, as Kovalev observes, everything in these works is concentrated on the exposure of man's secret inner world.⁴²

In the majority of Nagibin's stories, it is not the development of the action that performs the organizational role, but the composition of characters, nature descriptions and mood.⁴³ Inna Borisova, on the other hand, correctly contends that Nagibin's stories do not abound in outward signs of the times; she discovers the signs of

⁴¹Ju. Nagibin, "Pisatel' tvorit ne iz zolotykh kirpičej," p. 7.

⁴²Kovalev, p. 591.

⁴³N. Vasil'eva, "Ju. Nagibin," *Oktjabr'*, No. 12 (1958), p. 215.

the times in the make-up of his heroes' characters, in their thinking and mutual relations, although, as a rule, these interrelations are extremely short, almost fleeting.⁴⁴

Kovalev insists that Nagibin's latest stories are characterized by a marked weakening of the plot; the focus of his attention has shifted to the lyrically-colored nuances of man's emotional experiences,⁴⁵ and N. P. Sedova observes that the scrutiny and patient study of life evident in Nagibin's stories are to be attributed to Nagibin's careful reading of Bunin, whom Nagibin, writes Sedova, was supposed to have followed.⁴⁶ In the regard to classical traditions, which become ever more evident in Nagibin's contemporary stories, many critics have suggested that Nagibin writes in the tradition of Čexov, Bunin, and Platonov, rather than that of Jack London and O. Henry. And recently the possible influence of Kuprin has also been suggested.⁴⁷

The critic A. Gordienko points to the influence of Bunin and N. Leskov in Nagibin's early stories⁴⁸, whereas T. P. Zamorij sees Čexov's influence in Nagibin's choice of heroes who are "pure in heart and beautiful" like Čexov's ideal, positive heroes.⁴⁹

⁴⁴Inna Borisova, "Put' na perednij kraj," *Družba narodov*, No. 4, (1959), p. 234.

⁴⁵Kovalev, p. 591.

⁴⁶N. P. Sedova, "Iz otzyvov sovetskix pisatelej o Bunine," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, Kn. 84 (1973), pp. 365-66.

⁴⁷A. Pistunova, "Dorogi k ljudjam," *Literaturnaja Rossiya*, (August 17, 1973), p. 16.

⁴⁸T. P. Zamorij, *Sovremennyj russkij rasskaz* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1968), p. 91.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 93.

More specifically, Zamorij traces Nagibin's peculiar solution to the theme of beauty to Čexov where "the beauty of the surrounding world is placed in close contact with man's creativity."⁵⁰ Zamorij continues that under the guise of an outer benevolence toward people (in *Pogonja* and *Nočnoj gost'*, for example), Nagibin finds bright satirical colors in exposing triteness, rapaciousness, narrow-mindedness and cowardliness which often appear in his characters. Here again, writes Zamorij, we discern Čexov's influence. This is no repetition, but rather a common parallel with a favorite writer which helps to expose the new in life and in man's psychology.⁵¹ Zamorij attributes Nagibin's interest in man's inner world to Čexov's heritage where much attention is given to the hidden inner world of ordinary people.⁵²

Smirnov likewise compares Nagibin to Čexov, i.e., Nagibin's ability to create from numerous characters a composite portrait of society:

Здесь и учитель и ученик схожи... Юрий
Нагибин учился у Чехова, это видно по всему.
Но видно и другое: ученик не копирует учителя,
а идет своим путем, подсказанным современной
ему действительностью.⁵³

Apart from Čexov's, Bunin's, Paustovskij's, and Platonov's influences surveyed above, the Polish critic J. Szymak, maintains that in expressing the beauty of nature surrounding contemporary man, Nagibin resembles the younger prose writers Jurij Kazakov and

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁵¹Jeremija Aizenštok, "Frontovye povesti Jurija Nagibina," No. 6., 1961, p. 269.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁵³Smirnov, p. 265.

Gleb Gorišin.⁵⁴ But in asserting publicistic views and in his acuity of discovering clashes between ethics and politics, Nagibin is, I think, closest to Vladimir Tendrjakov.⁵⁵

Several critics in the Soviet Union have compared Nagibin to Hemingway. Thus, A. Atarov believes that Nagibin's reminiscences of hunting and the hunt remind one of the moral convictions of Hemingway.⁵⁶ Atarov observes that this can be seen in Nagibin's enjoyment of the brotherhood of hunters with their thoughts of masculine self-fulfillment, in the excitement with which Nagibin accompanies his characters on their hunting adventures and in his belief that the most wonderful feeling on earth is the right to enjoy hunting. Atarov emphasizes that Nagibin admires the "cruel passion" of Hemingway's *The Green Hills of Africa*.⁵⁷

Nagibin's admiration for Hemingway's hunting stories may stem from the fact that Nagibin himself is an enthusiastic hunter. As a rule, Nagibin portrays his hunter protagonist as a person who is in full harmony with nature. The forceful strong man contrasted with this true nature-lover is the visiting hunting enthusiast who is out of tune with nature and proves to be inferior to the true hunter. This is a peculiarity of many Nagibin Meščera stories: the local population is better than the visiting hunters. This view is easily explained,

⁵⁴J. Szymak, "Opowiadania myśliwskie Jurija Nagibina," *Slavia Orientalis*, No. 16 (1967) p. 294.

⁵⁵For a detailed study of Tendrjakov, see Lydia Pacira's "Vladimir Tendrjakov: A Survey and Analysis of His Works," an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of German and Russian, Michigan State University, 1975.

⁵⁶N. Atarov, "Čelovek iz glubiny pejzaža," *Naš sovremennik*, No. 12 (1972), p. 107.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 108.

according to Atarov. In time, writes Atarov, the life of any closely-knit society will take root in the hearts of the people. This "root structure," claims the critic, exerts a firm hold on the weaker members while, at the same time, strengthening the whole society with its moral law. The newcomers, on the other hand, do not possess such stability.⁵⁸

Seeking a different kind of stability is another forceful strong-man protagonist, Trubnikov (hero of *Stranicy žizni Trubnikova*) who prefers the kolkhos chairmanship of his native village to a retirement pension in Moscow. Kristo Nagy comments that this story, like Šoloxov's *Sud' ba čeloveka*, proves that through the hardships of the war numerous heroes rose from among the people to make their lives and fates typical of that age. Although one is tempted to attribute the story to Šoloxov's influence, Kristo Nagy reminds us that Nagibin wrote his *Stranicy* many years earlier, sharing with Šoloxov's later story a typical Soviet positive hero.⁵⁹

Another parallel to *Sud'ba čeloveka* is made by Miriam Elberg who found a close similarity between the little orphan heroine in Nagibin's *Rannej vesnoj*, and Šoloxov's war-orphan Vanja.⁶⁰ In comparing these two stories, one would like to add to Elberg's findings that the vicissitudes of war were less a threat to Vanja because he was still too young to realize the tragedy of his situation. The opposite is true of Nagibin's orphan who witnessed how one by one her whole

⁵⁸ Atarov, "Čelovek...", p. 110.

⁵⁹ I. Kristó Nagy, *Az új szovjet irodalom*, eds. János Elbert and László Kardos (Budapest: Gondolat, n.d.), p. 258.

⁶⁰ Miriam Elberg, "Children as Portrayed by Soviet Prose Writers During the Period of the 'Thaw,'" an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (1971), pp. 137-38.

family perished. Both children, however, share the dawns of a new life with a loving, devoted father.

PART THREE: Criticism of Nagibin's Poetics

Original Features of Nagibin's Short Stories

Nagibin's stories exhibit several features that make them unmistakably Nagibinesque, no matter what aspects of life they might depict. Whether he is writing about the front, the Mešćera village or school life, about adults or children in general--Nagibin has his own way of writing, his own themes, his own favorite heroes, and his own manner of character portraiture and nature description.

These typical Nagibin traits have been stressed by many critics, S. V. Dorofeev⁶¹ and Marc Slonim, among others. Thus, Slonim contends that Nagibin, along with Kazakov and Kazakevič, belongs to a:

...group of writers who have brought genuine emotions, careful psychological insight, humaneness and a careful objective rendering of reality into contemporary Soviet literature. They belong to a generation which had not been corrupted in Stalin's school of fear and handicapped by dogmatic blinders.⁶²

Dorofeev, on the other hand, singles out the interesting world of Nagibin's heroes as an important trait of Nagibin's poetics: heroes who are high on the list of what makes Nagibin's stories enjoyable. Some of Nagibin's young heroes with strong moral judgment towards themselves and others, writes Dorofeev, are the uncompromising Aleksej Rakitin in *Boj za vysoty* and the faithful Egor in *Ljubov'*:

...они упорно и стойко борются с чужими и собственными недостатками и слабостями, за настоящую, достойную человека жизнь - и в этом

⁶¹S. V. Dorofeev, "Rasskazy Nagibina," in *Ju. Nagibin, Rannej vesnoj* (Moscow: GOSLITIZDAT, 1961), p. 457.

⁶²Marc Slonim, *Soviet Russian Literature, Writers, and Problems 1917-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 323.

мужественном борении за совершенство, за человеческое счастье в высшем его понимании раскрывается их духовная красота, проявляется их активность, стойкость, их большие требования к миру и к себе.⁶³

Another critic, S. Dmitriev,⁶⁴ notices that Nagibin's highest form of beauty is a strong inner exactingness of the ordinary person. Nagibin, according to Dmitriev, expresses this best in *Zimnij dub* where the winter oak becomes a symbol of the perpetual newness of life. The poetic world of the boy that captivated the teacher forces her to see her pupil and herself in a new light. Dmitriev notes that Nagibin has a particularly vigilant eye for the good in people and their lives and is able to show the reader the special beauty he sees. In his works Nagibin asserts the reality of the spiritual beauty of man.⁶⁵ And Nagibin expresses this beauty, argues D. Dyčko,⁶⁶ in his own way: spiritual beauty is evidenced not only or even necessarily in heroic deeds, but also in the simple daily give and take of life. Thus, he shows the heroism in the selflessness of working people without making them particularly notable personalities. On the contrary, continues Dyčko, Nagibin underscores their ordinary behavior representing it as the norm:

...тайна обаяния написанного Ю. Нагибиным в том, видно, и состоит, что писатель умеет, будто рентгеновскими лучами высветить обыденные явления, открывая их глубинную суть.⁶⁷ (Emphasis mine, EJC)

⁶³Dorofeev, p. 457.

⁶⁴S. Dmitriev, "Nagibin, Ju. M." Ju. Nagibin, *Čistye prudy*, (Moscow: "Moskovskij rabočij," 1962), p. 553.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶D. Dyčko, "Tvoe orudie i oružie," *Znamja*, No. 9 (1972), p. 238.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

I. Borisova also comments on Nagibin rarely placing his heroes squarely in a position where they must decide "to be or not to be?"⁶⁸ The plot of his stories concerns itself more often with side issues rather than decisive situations. As a rule, continues Borisova, the hero's fate is seldom decided solely on whether he will or will not perform a certain action. Borisova points out that Nagibin tries to ascertain a person's character largely through simple actions. But it frequently turns out that the author's voice, although soft-spoken and unobtrusive, sounds exceptionally demanding. Nagibin demands humaneness in his hero's every thought and action each waking moment throughout the day, continues Borisova, and while expecting humane behavior from his characters in everything they do, he does not wait for the contingency in which his heroes may have to agree to an exploit or crime, discerning the exploit or crime in their most ordinary actions. Without setting them up on a pedestal or running them down, he, nevertheless, measures their most modest merits and most harmless offences. Yet the reader feels no disproportion between the appraisal and the deed. Even insignificant actions are judged in the light of such strong humane equity, concludes Borisova, that the severity of condemnation and enthusiastic praise seem quite reasonable.

Another critic, E. Nikolin,⁶⁹ maintains that Nagibin sharpens the reader's awareness of life by pointing out in seemingly insignificant and fleeting occurrences the important and viable issues of life, such as serious social and moral problems,

⁶⁸ Borisova, "Put' na perednij kraj," pp. 233-34.

⁶⁹ Evgenij Nikolin, "Polnoj dušoj," *Neva*, No. 7 (1963), p. 171.

As to a negative hero in Nagibin's stories, Nagibin frequently portrays a hero lacking an inner life. In his *Podsadnaja utka*, for instance, Nagibin gives us an example of such a hero in Andreev. Borisova, among others has dwelled at length on the facts leading Nagibin to that negative portrayal. At first glance the offense of Andreev, writes Borisova, seems so small as to be altogether insignificant. But it only seems that way. In reality, however, it proves to be a grave wrong. To be sure, comments Borisova, Andreev's fault seemed minimal: he accidentally and unintentionally shot and killed a decoy-duck at the hunt. He was embarrassed by the incident and felt badly for the duck's owner, the forest warden Anatolij Ivanovič. But there was nothing he could do about it; accidents of this kind do happen in hunting. Yet, in the story, continues Borisova, the ordinary hunting episode is replete with evidence that is difficult to disprove. Nagibin's investigation is carried out with subtle perception and rests on facts that would perhaps not stand in court. On the strength of all the evidence, however, Andreev's behavior turns out to be a most convincing sin of commission.

Criticism of Nagibin's Liričnost'

Another aspect of Nagibin's poetics, his *Liričnost'* has been emphasized in numerous critiques. Vasil'eva,⁷⁰ for instance, notes that Nagibin needed primarily an emotional method of expression to capture the illusive poetry of mundane things and events; in that way the harmonious arrangement of his stories took shape; they became lyrical in all aspects: in genre, composition and character creation. This lyrical undercurrent, I think, appears in many of Nagibin's stories: a fusion of lyrics and drama with a light irony and the posing of critical psychological problems, a poetic *Weltanschauung* combined with a realistic method of narration. In the collection *Čelovek s fronta*, Nagibin uses a unique literary device, writes P. Gromov, called an "imagined lyrical psychologism" which often distinguishes his stories from the war stories of the period. In conclusion, the critic asserts that this lyric detail becomes the most important aspect of the story.⁷¹ Critic N. Brjabina⁷² rightfully observes that Nagibin sought to expose the inner essence of man which explains his concentration on the psychological state of man's inner world in the many inter-relations of man and events. Characteristic for Nagibin, continues Brjabina, is the choice of form for these stories: the lyrical-psychological *rasskaz*. For its thematic rather than generic distinction, for its "weakened story line," for a strengthened inner tensi-

⁷⁰ N. Vasil'eva, "Jurij Nagibin," *Oktjabr'*, No. 12 (1958), p. 214

⁷¹ P. Gromov, "*Geroj i vremja* (Leningrad: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1961), p. 2.

⁷² N. Brjabina, "*Na tixom ozere i drugie rasskazy*," *Naš sovremennik*, No. 9 (1967), p. 115.

of topic, and a strong lyrical overtone--this peculiar form was dubbed a "hunting story."

These lyrical overtones become a major element in Nagibin's autobiographical stories. Vasil'eva notes that beginning with the *Leto moego detstva* collection, in his *Zabrošennaja doroga* and *Priezd*,⁷³ a different, deeper lyricism appears in Nagibin's works for the first time. Indeed, there appears what the critics will later call a "lyricism of confession:"

На этом этапе его творческой биографии
происходит нарастание исповедального
чувства, раскованности авторского голоса.⁷⁴

This "confessional lyricism" resounds in the story *Nemota* (Muteness), published in 1972. L. Fomenko calls this "confessional lyricism," a lyricism of "maximal exposure."⁷⁵ Atarov, too, discusses Nagibin's attitude toward this *isповedal'noe čuvstvo*.⁷⁶ Indeed, in his early works Nagibin did not show "lyricism as confession," though he did have a "lyrical hero," and extensive lyricism of nature. Now more clearly than before the lyricism in the story *Nemota* appears as a different and deeper self-disclosure. In 1973 Nagibin wrote *Son o Tjutčeve* (A Dream about Tjutčev) in the same lyric-confessional tone as his *Nemota*. Similar lyrical stories were written earlier, such as *Ženja Rumjanceva*, a story of a hardworking, studious girl who was secretly in love with the author-narrator Sereža during their school years and "*Kak skážeš', Aurelio*"--about the change of a young girl to womanhood.

⁷³Vasil'eva, p. 215.

⁷⁴Atarov, "Čelovek...", p. 111.

⁷⁵Lidija Fomenko, "Pobeždaet xudožnik," *Znamja*, No. 9 (1973), p. 230.

⁷⁶Atarov, "Navstreču...", p. 3.

Vasil'eva, referring to Nagibin's penchant for stories with the organizational role relegated to the composition of characters, nature painting and mood rather than plot development, contends that this feature makes Nagibin's stories akin to lyrical verse.⁷⁷ And Dmitriev calls *Pered prazdnikom*:

...превосходный образец той, по пушкинскому определению "нагой прозы," которая проникает в самые глубины читательского восприятия и заставляет его сопереживать литературным героям.⁷⁸

While in Richards' view, Nagibin's best stories are "sustained throughout by a delicate lyrical buoyancy."⁷⁹ Richards adds that in *Èxo* as well as in some of Nagibin's *Meščera* stories, the realistic, psychologically convincing action is infused with the atmosphere of a lost Golden Age.

Criticism of Humaneness

The theme of humaneness, to survey yet another aspect of Nagibin criticism in contemporary Soviet literature, was taken up in a discussion by the Writers' Union and the Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences in 1962.⁸⁰ As a result, Nagibin literary criticism has put the problem of humaneness in the forefront. Critic V. Pankov, for example, asserts that in discussing recent works with

⁷⁷Vasil'eva, p. 215.

⁷⁸Dmitriev, p. 554.

⁷⁹Richards, p. xix.

⁸⁰V. Pankov, *Vremja i knigi* (Moscow: "Prosveščenie," 1964), p. 251 as reported by M. V. Romenec, *Problema gumanizma v sovremennom russkom rasskaze*, (Xar'kov, 1969), p. 11.

Soviet writers, problems of humaneness, in particular, have been attracting wide attention.⁸¹ At that conference the participants noted that one of the most important aspects of the problem of humaneness in literature is the problem of the hero who, as it were, becomes "imbued with new content." This is mirrored in the subsequent artistic realization of the new qualities of Soviet contemporary man.⁸²

As to Nagibin, he holds to the view which seems to be regarded by the more sophisticated Soviet writers, according to Richards,⁸³ that "Communism is not simply or even primarily a pattern of social organization, but essentially a state of mind, an attitude towards life and one's fellow men." One may concur with Richards, especially if one recalls Nagibin's quiet gamekeeper Striž in *Razgovor*, who has an unhappy encounter with a writer-hunter from Moscow.

Humaneness, moreover, appears in both Nagibin's early stories and his mature stories. Thus, B. Dajredžiev finds Nagibin's postwar story *Deljagi* significant for the humanity of its heroes, two war veterans who, having set out to make a fortune at their trade, discover that they are unable to take money from their compatriots. Although maimed, these ex-soldiers, who might have become embittered, had remained humane and empathetic.

In contrast to the shallow approach of many Stalinist writers, notes Gibian,⁸⁴ Nagibin often stresses that life and human nature

⁸¹*Ibid.*

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸³Richards, p. xv.

⁸⁴Gibian, "New Trends in the Novel," p. 52.

are highly complex, puzzling phenomena. Man's complexity has been underscored by Nagibin time and time again: in *Nas bylo četvero*, for example, Gibian notes Nagibin's descriptions of how, when he was still very young, he discovered himself "complicated and contradictory."⁸⁵

Criticism of Figurativeness

Nagibin's use of figurativeness in character portrayal, has been likewise mentioned in criticism. In some narratives, *Rannej vesnoj*, for example, this figurativeness may appear in one poetic detail, while other stories abound in it.

One such Nagibin story abounding in figurativeness is *Svet v okne*. Two critics who noticed symbolism in *Svet v okne* were Kristó Nagy⁸⁶ and Helen von Ssachno.⁸⁷ The former underscores Nagibin's frequently-used motif: the seemingly unimportant and unnoticeable humanity, contrasted in this case to the cowardly and compromising Vasilij Petrovič. Similarly, Kristó-Nagy stresses, a parallel basic formula is sketched in *Zimnij dub* where the rich humanity symbolized in Savuškin, opposes the rigidity and rationally-ordered world of the school.⁸⁸ The structure of *Svet v okne*, contends von Ssachno is supported by two pillars, a realistic and a symbolistic one. The sanatorium is a typical Soviet institution in which nothing works too

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶Kristó Nagy, p. 260.

⁸⁷Helen von Ssachno, *Der Aufstand der Person* (Berlin: Argon Verlag, 1965), p. 165-166.

⁸⁸Kristó Nagy, p. 260.

well. Torn between sympathy and duty, continues Ssachno, its manager Vasilij Petrovič lodges his guests three and four to a room separating even newly-weds on their honeymoon, while year after year, the stately suite under his supervision stands empty awaiting its "potentate." Vasilij Petrovič, the public servant is, at the same time, a paid guardian of the masses in the service of the certain "someone." It is Nastja, symbol of the patiently-waiting, hard-working, believing and always deceived people, concludes Ssachno, who finally rebels against the certain "someone."

Most conspicuous imagery, unmentioned by critics, pervades two other Nagibin stories, *Pered prazdnikom* and "*Kak skažeš, Aurelio...*". In the former the young heroine's maturation is symbolized through pictures of nature; in the latter, a sudden change to unseasonably warm weather hastens the coming of spring. In *Pered prazdnikom*, the heroine, Nataša, discovers, as she goes for a walk early in the morning, that everything has turned green overnight. She ponders what may have caused such a rapid awakening of nature to make the grass grow almost before her eyes, and decides it must have been the unusually long, warm thunderstorm the day before. Flowing water symbolizes the awakening of new life in the young girl. Nataša is not afraid of the rainstorm because the sun's rays through a tiny patch of blue betokens happiness:

Но даже в самом разгуле грозы где-то в небе оставалась чистая просинь, маленькое окошечко, куда заглядывало солнце, и оттого грозы не пугали; все казалось, что за ними придет что-то радостное. ⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Nagibin, "*Izbrannye....*," I, 176.

The image of flowing water, to be sure, also includes the river which, at this time of year, is full of spawning fish. And the river teeming with fish about to produce new life symbolizes the beginning of a new life for Nataša. It should be noted that Kristó Nagy considers Nagibin's presentation of this sensitive subject as "unique in the whole of modern world literature."⁹⁰

Criticism of Autobiographical Traits

The autobiographic features of Nagibin's stories, notably his fictionalized "*o sebe*," have also been discussed by critics. Contemporary stories about childhood, as we all know, are not only a tribute to the past, they are a seeking of the self, a desire to comprehend the original characters and fates of people now living. In almost all works of this kind, there is a tendency toward the autobiographic. This trait is well noted in Nagibin's *Čistye prudy*. The subject matter of these stories cannot be invented, nor need be. These stories, as E. A. Šubin observes,⁹¹ are the result of a self-analysis to discover which seeds sown in childhood produced desirable results, which came up as weeds, and which remained in the ground without germinating.

The writer A. Šarov summed up Nagibin's autobiographic stories as "the epochs of man."⁹² Šarov notes that the secret of these epochs, as, perhaps, also for the childhood of animals, stars and

⁹⁰Kristó Nagy, p. 264.

⁹¹E. A. Šubin, *Sovremennyyj russkij rasskaz* (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1974), p. 90.

⁹²A. Šarov, "Sud," *Novyj mir*, No. 12 (1967), p. 9.

plants, is that the living imprints of one's past remain inside like "the yearly rings in the trunks of trees," like "a fossil of prehistoric times" or a "colored stone in amber." Similarly, childhood epochs lie dormant in unseen depths but the time will come for them to come forth even as the buds of a very old tree.⁹³

From the many heroes in Nagibin's stories over the years, it is not easy to single out the traits of autobiographical likeness. The sketches of characters are many and varied: poachers and chairmen of collective farms, geologists from the Kara-Kum desert and Buchenwald antifascist guides, boys from Nagibin's youth in the Moscow Čistye prudy district and nomad Gypsies, the first cosmonaut and forest wardens of the remote Meščera, an Arctic flyer and African village elders. And yet, to one writer-critic, Atarov,⁹⁴ it seems that of all Nagibin's heroes the one who most resembles the writer may be singled out. This remarkable person whom Nagibin endowed with traits closely resembling his own, is Komarov, the "restless man," a four-year-old who is trusting and well-disposed towards the world. He is the most gracious man in the host of Nagibin's characters: courageous, relentless, and kind. Atarov concludes that the projection of Komarov into the adult world of fearless aces, soldiers and sportsmen, hunters, and fishermen seems to be the main thrust of Nagibin's creative work.⁹⁵ One agrees with Atarov that somewhere in the traits of Nagibin's strong characters, in a world of men's passions--boxing, duck-hunting, and fishing,

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Atarov, "Čelovek...", p. 106.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

and on a different plane in the fight against Fascism, unrequited love, and crippling effects of illness, the self-portrait of Nagibin--the artist is revealed.

It is not surprising, then, that Nagibin should be found to resemble one of his favorite child-characters. Two of his children's stories, *Komarov* and *Zirniy dub*, were acclaimed by critics to be two of his best. V. Amlinskij commented:

Эта была замечательная проза, естественная, цельная, с привкусом печали, трогательная без чувствительности.⁹⁶

Amlinskij, incidentally, remarks that in *Komarov* the influence of A. Platonov is evident. Platonov's mesmerism is so strong, argues Amlinskij, that Komarov talks to the calf almost exactly the way Platonov's Egor addresses the bug: "Ты кто?", Platonov's Egor asks the worm, and Nagibin's Komarov asks the calf: "Ты кто такой?"⁹⁷ Another similarity, continues Amlinskij, is that both children experience almost identical feelings of freedom, brotherhood, and equality with the world of nature and both are drawn to this world. And yet, stresses Amlinskij, the near-quote from Platonov does not spoil Nagibin's story, for every writer knows that sometimes he unconsciously quotes his favorite writer, later becoming independent of him, but the object of his affection remains within like a part of him. In the case of Nagibin, concludes Amlinskij, the writer Platonov, without a doubt, exercised the foremost formative influence upon him.⁹⁸

Critics had noticed the autobiographical quality of Nagibin's works even before he was to confirm himself that his *povesti* and

⁹⁶Amlinskij, p. 6.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

rasskazy are, indeed, his "real biography."⁹⁹

Известно, что личность писателя, его биография, его жизненно-практический и душевный опыт всегда накладывают неизгладимый отпечаток на его произведения. В творчестве Нагибина, своегообычного лирика в прозе, это особенно сильно сказывается.¹⁰⁰

In Pavlik Čerdyncev, hero of *Pavlik*, we recognize Sergej Rakitin (from *Boj za vysotu*) and other Nagibin characters who have grown more versatile and morally stronger. Szymak¹⁰¹ notes that the strength, and capaciousness of Nagibin's images are the realization of the synonymous figure of the author with respect to the world, to his sensitivity and social activity. The value of Nagibin's prose lies in the personal tone of his narration and the resemblance of the author to his "first person voice and figure."¹⁰² Nagibin, continues Szymak, enjoys genres in which he is free to express himself, where his decisiveness is the objectification of the narrative. He creates the image of a man, the prototype of a young writer whose history of experiences is close to Nagibin's personal experiences of his period. In this respect, I think, Pavlik's thoughts on literature are significant:

Я понимал теперь жизнь только как действие, как непосредственно творимое благо... Надо писать до краев переполнившись пережитым, а не тянуть как резину крошечный душевный и

⁹⁹ Nagibin, "A cel' ...", p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Dorofeev, p. 458.

¹⁰¹ Szymak, p. 299.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

жизненный опыт... Я почти с ужасом думаю о том, что, если б не война, я бы кончил институт и - чего доброго - пописывал бы высосанные из пальца рассказы. ¹⁰³

Nikolin rightfully observes that Nagibin does not soon part with this "strong, agonizing and happy image" ¹⁰⁴ of his youth an image which colors all of his works. ¹⁰⁵

Indeed, in his autobiographical collections *Čistye prudy*, *Leto moego detstva*, *Pereulki moego detstva*, for instance, Nagibin is true to his declaration, "Я пишу лишь о том, что было на самом деле; these true remembrances Nagibin interprets in bright and clear colors. They take on a form that is more compact than any fiction. The dry facts become a fine, artistically stated truth which agitates the mind to empathize with the author. But the question arises, comments Nikolin, how to present the truth of facts artistically, with what idea to prompt the reader, to influence him in the desired way, because life itself with its many facts has been long known to him. Nagibin was able to present them uniquely. *Čistye prudy* successfully portrays what was in its incipency perceived in *Nas bylo četvero*. These stories, concludes Nikolin, are contrasted from the earlier narrative by simpler language, completeness, and greater interest. ¹⁰⁶

Similarly, critics have discussed Nagibin's juxtaposing

¹⁰³ Nagibin, *Pavlik* as quoted in E. Nikolin, "Polnoj dušoj," *Neva*, No. 7 (1963), p. 175-76.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

the world of children to that of adults. Richards, for instance, notes that in Nagibin's children's stories:

...a degree of spontaneity, sensitivity towards nature and fundamental goodness, rarely seen in adults, is exhibited naturally by many of Nagibin's child figures, most strikingly by Savushkin.¹⁰⁷

As we have seen, the schoolmistress in *Zimnij dub* becomes aware of her own boring grammar lessons when confronted with Savuškin's first-hand knowledge and love of nature. Thus, "devčonka" Vit'ka, the heroine of *Exo*, seems unconcerned about the adults' views when, bathing and sunning at the beach naked, she offers to show Sereža the secret places where she can elicit echoes from the mountains.

--Оделась бы хоть... - проворчал я.
 --Зачем? Так загорать лучше, - ответила девочка.
 --А тебе не стыдно?
 --Мама говорит, у маленьких это не считается. Она не велит мне в трусиках купаться, от этого простужаются.¹⁰⁸

Vit'ka's lack of modesty is coupled by a complete lack of vanity, as a matter of fact, she considers herself ugly. But to others, like Sereža's mother, she is a charming, delightful creature.¹

Criticism of Nagibin's children's stories has registered another important quality--his closeness to Čexov. Thus, Zamorij¹⁰⁹ observes that a following in Čexov's tradition is evident in Nagibin's childhood and children's stories, that Nagibin learned from Čexov the knack of introducing the beauty of a child's spontaneity. Also, Zamorij believes that a great similarity to Čexov lies in Nagibin's poetic

¹⁰⁷Richards, p. xvi.

¹⁰⁸Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, I, 198-99.

¹⁰⁹Zamorij, p. 95.

descriptions of purity, the uniqueness of the child's inner world, and in Nagibin's respect for the child's spiritual life. In contrasting Čexov to Nagibin, Zamorij includes some political considerations as well. Whereas Čexov juxtaposed the inner beauty and purity of children to the false, inhuman world laws in which he lived, Nagibin depicts how the new laws of personal interactions work together to encourage the development of the lofty and beautiful in the child, the formation of an integrated personality.¹¹⁰

Criticism of Cyclicity in Nagibin's Stories

Critics have also addressed themselves to another trait of Nagibin's poetics: Nagibin's love for a cyclic narrative. In Nagibin's collection *Leto moego detstva*, fourteen short stories make up a long narrative, and yet each of the stories has not only its own topic, but completed characters as well, and each story reads like an independent work. Yet taken together, these stories compose a philosophically meaningful story about Moscow boys. One critic, Brjabina,¹¹¹ comments that cyclicity is evidence of Nagibin's aspirations toward epic writing because in their totality, these stories reveal different aspects of life with epic breadth; the characters in these stories are the same and the setting is in the same locale.

Kristó Nagy adds that in the portraiture of his generation, Nagibin employs the same "mosaic method" J. D. Salinger uses in his short stories. Nagibin keeps to the frame of short-story writing better suited to his own literary style, but by connecting his short stories, he makes his long narrative more complete.¹¹²

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹¹N. Brjabina, p. 115.

¹¹²Kristó Nagy, p. 264.

But the significance of many of Nagibin's cycles of stories, I think, does not lie in the bright colors Nagibin uses to describe what is happening but in the search for social and philosophical problems. In this light, one may be able to determine the new aspects Nagibin has contributed to the contemporary short story. The composition of these stories, for example, is new. The stories are linked by a unity of place, the same narrator and an interdependence and chronology of events. The plot of the stories is based on Nagibin's personal experiences which he recounts factually. Nagibin does not change the names of places and includes actual occurrences. In addition, some characters have prototypes in real life.

The place where the action of the stories is carried out is often seen anew; Nagibin notices different values in the Meščera from descriptions of other writers, Paustovskij, for example. Nagibin is fascinated by the stern wisdom of its people and their life close to nature, their system of values which differs from that of their visitors from the city. This is evident from Nagibin's descriptions of their old world "byt" based on strict requirements and just appraisal.

Criticism of the Role of Nature in Nagibin's Short Stories

As has been shown in Chapter Two, in discussions of Nagibin's Meščera stories, the landscape descriptions play an important role in Nagibin's stories. Indeed, we would be hard put to find a Nagibin story where the pictures of the native countryside are not organically interwoven with the composition of the work. As has been likewise displayed, Nagibin follows the tradition of the great Russian landscape writers. For him, in fact, "Русская литература как ни одна в мире, сильна пейзажной живописью."¹¹³

¹¹³Nagibin, *Razmyslenie o rasskaze*, p. 92.

The most reliable criticism of the role of nature in Nagibin's works is given by Inna Borisova in her 1959 study.¹¹⁴ Borisova seems to have relied on Nagibin's views that nature is a full-fledged and active character in his stories. One may call Nagibin a landscape painter, she argues, but even the most detailed analysis of his landscape and nature descriptions would not suffice if one failed to take into consideration nature's special role in the plot. It is not the role of the background that makes nature descriptions so important for Nagibin, or the picturesque vignettes, it is not Nagibin's store of metaphors or personifications, nor is it a means of elucidating or ascertaining the inner implications of the characters. Nagibin's nature, continues Borisova, enters into his stories as a strict judge of persons. His heroes not only feel nature differently, and in so doing express the breadth and poetry of life; they enter into mutual relations with nature as though nature were a living thing capable of thoughts, feelings, and actions. "Поведение человека на природе во многом определяет его поведение и среди людей."

This aphorism of Anatolij Ivanovič, (the hero of *Podsadnaja utka*, *Pogonja*, *Kogda utki v pore*) contends Borisova, explains the composition and meaning of many Nagibin stories. The test of humaneness, and the fullness of humanity to which Nagibin invariably subjects his heroes, rightfully observes Borisova, not only spiritualized his nature descriptions but saturated the very interrelations of his heroes and nature with a special effectively humane meaning. Those Nagibin heroes whose attitude toward nature and people is effectively and actively humane, concludes Borisova, seem to possess a greater vital capacity and fortitude.

¹¹⁴Borisova, "Put' na perednij kraj," pp. 233-37.

This elementary natural law, not invented by Nagibin but newly examined and exalted by him, gives him the key to the understanding of the most divergent aspects of man's being from the very personal to the widely societal.¹¹⁵

Some of Borisova's views, particularly the one that nature in Nagibin's stories serves as a device for character delineations, can be easily applied to Nagibin's *Meščerskie storoža*, for example. In this work thoughts about a humane attitude toward nature are inextricably interwoven with the thoughts of a humane attitude towards people. It would seem that the story could have taken place in any region and have concerned itself with any other problem not having to do with nature protection. But Nagibin found it necessary to show this conflict precisely in nature and, notably in his beloved Meščera. The inhumane power of one of the rangers, Pavluša Staršinov, had the frightening consequence of dehumanizing the people which in the final analysis adversely affected the increasing impoverishment of nature.

In another Meščera story, *Ispytanie*, a hero, Anatolij Ivanovič, seems to expound Nagibin's own sentiments about the man-nature conflict:

Мир животных, птиц, рыб и растений беззащитен
и полон искушения для человека. Ничего не
стоит попустить себя, дать волю низким и жад-
ным чувствам и потерять устой в душе.¹¹⁶

Significant in Anatolij Ivanovič's confession is the mature reflection of the forest rangers' coeval, a man possessing a broad analytical view of things, deeply sensing his responsibility for the fate of his country. Having learned to appraise all that helps or hinders the best interests for his Meščera, he lets no opportunity slip by to defend a humane

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

¹¹⁶ Nagibin, *Na tixom ozere*, p. 55.

approach toward nature and people. Not always the main hero in these stories, Anatolij Ivanovič, nevertheless, becomes one of the central characters and one of the most fascinating protagonists in Nagibin's stories. His fascination is attributed to his moral fiber as protector of nature and to the "nakal" of moral exactingness. All these qualities make Anatolij Ivanovič, as Borisova noted,--one of Nagibin's most characteristic and favorite characters.¹¹⁷ In addition to Borisova's analysis, Atarov's¹¹⁸ views are noteworthy. Since the action of the Meščera stories takes place in the open countryside, these stories more than any others, observes Atarov, are rich in nature descriptions, which are equal in importance to the depiction of man. Also important in the landscape descriptions is, as von Ssachno notes, "a deeper social coloring."¹¹⁹ Von Ssachno adds that although Nagibin's admiration of the natural beauty of this region finds expression in the many-tonal nature descriptions, the hunter narrator, while pursuing his favorite sport and interacting with the simple hunters and fishermen is not blind to the social ills that plague the Meščera. As he becomes better acquainted with the land and people, Nagibin's stories go deeper into a social analysis until the social significance, notes von Ssachno, equals that of the moral and ethical content, and on occasion surpasses it.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Borisova, p. 236.

¹¹⁸ Atarov, "Navstreču....," p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Von Ssachno, p. 323; see also A. Ognev, "Preblemnyj rasskaz," *Sibirskie ogni*, No. 2 (1967), pp. 170-76.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

Criticism of Nagibin's Use of the Language

Critics seem to be unanimous when noting the excellence of Nagibin's language, as Ćerkasskij illustrates:

Чем же привлекают рассказы Нагибина? Прежде всего великолепным языком. Гибкость и емкость слова Нагибина достойны самой высокой похвалы... Один пример: "Вошел старик, сломленный в пояснице." Не стершиеся "сутулый" или "сгорбленный," а "сломленный." Как точно, свежо и зримо.¹²¹

Perhaps it is this aspect of Nagibin's stories that first attracted publishers in the West to seek translations of his works. "If a London or New York publisher asked me to recommend living Soviet writers," comments G. Gibian, "whose works, translated into English, could pass scrutiny by literary criteria as severe as those we apply to British or American writing, Kazakov and Nagibin would be those I should name first."¹²²

Nagibin's language is well-suited to his quiet, restrained stories. He does not hesitate to use technical words and phrases, colloquialisms or dialect speech, but he rarely indulges in bizarre images. He obtains the desired effects by his thoughtful choice of words and selection of precise details in description:

Он владеет речью свободной и раскованной,
он очарован звуком прелестных русских слов,
столь новых и свежих в его контекстах.¹²³

Nagibin's peculiar use of the language prompted another critic,

¹²¹ M. Ćerkasskij, "Detaili i mysl'," *Neva* No. 5 (1957), p. 178.

¹²² Gibian, "New Trends....," pp. 49-50.

¹²³ A. Pistunova, "Dorogi....," p. 6.

I. Kozlov,¹²⁴ to better classify Nagibin's style, finding that the dominant aspect in Nagibin's artistic prose is "aristocratism"

("аристократизм слога") where words are so selected, played up and set in a sentence as to produce, as Kozlov put it, "blue-blooded," i.e., "noble," sentences. Kozlov duly concludes that the main characteristic of Nagibin's language is, nevertheless, "artistism" for Nagibin primarily strives to achieve an exact expression of content and a greater conformity to "that corner of life" which he happens to be describing, as well as to produce a more perfect expression of reality, rather than a "slovesnaja izyskannost'" implied by the word "aristocratism."¹²⁵

But beyond Nagibin's mastery of the language which contributes to an unobtrusive, smooth-flowing narrative prose, lies Nagibin's skill at selecting a detail to evoke the reader's amusement, grief or merely a suspense. One of the most pronounced examples of Nagibin's eye for detail is Vas'ka's helpless hand gesticulation when he is at a loss for words: "Знакомым недоумевающим жестом Васька развел руками"¹²⁶ (*Molodožen*).

And Nagibin's "smooth narrative style," writes Iof'ev,¹²⁷ "misleads" the reader or critic who overlooks the implication and metaphors. In his review of Nagibin's collection *Čelovek i doroga*, Iof'ev comments that Nagibin's stories seem to lack the dramatic and amusing aspects.

¹²⁴I. Kozlov, "Po raznym stranam," *Znamja*, No. 9 (1968), p. 244.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*

¹²⁶Nagibin, *Izbrannye...*, I, p. 119.

¹²⁷Iof'ev, p. 237.

Furthermore, he insists, Nagibin's stories do not portray a poetic image, thereby merely serving the purpose of getting to know the character.¹²⁸

Although there is a grain of truth in Iof'ev's view, he fails to notice the most important aspect: the unifying force of Nagibin's capacious characters who represent the author's attitude toward the world and Nagibin's sensitivity to social problems. For the merit of Nagibin's prose, contends Szymak,¹²⁹ is his personal tone and Nagibin's similarity to his literary "I". In such stories where Nagibin presents an unbiased portrait of his contemporary Pavlik, for example, Nagibin creates the image of a writer, using himself as prototype, to tell of a young man's life at the front which is close to his own personal experiences of that period. The material of such stories is a blend of literary fiction and personal experiences.

Apart from the positive reception surveyed above, Nagibin has had his share of defeats. As noted in Chapter One, the majority of his weak stories belong to the Kolkhoz village theme of the post-war years. But in my view, there have been other stories in Nagibin's literary output that seem rather trivial. One may argue, however, that even these trivial stories have an important place in Nagibin's works, if not for other reasons than for the extent of Nagibin's preoccupation with thematic variety, and for his insatiable desire to create a story from everything "the eyes can see and the ears hear."¹³⁰ Some of Nagibin's shortcomings are summed up best by Vasil'eva:

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Szymak, p. 299.

¹³⁰ ^YCerkasskij, "Detali i mysl'," *Neva*, No. 5 (1957), p. 180.

Есть в творчестве Нагибина и недостатки, которые являются как бы продолжением его достоинств. То, что так притягательно в лучших произведениях: жизнеутверждающий пафос, умение подметить в человеке хорошие качества и побуждения, - иногда переходит в свою противоположность - прекрасноту и слащавую умиленность.¹³¹

Some of these imperfections notwithstanding, Nagibin's literary reception, as displayed earlier, has been utterly positive. Moreover, the Russian and foreign critics alike have stressed again and again those refined literary qualities of Nagibin's inherent in the Russian classic literature. One concurs with Atarov,¹³² who underlines Nagibin's professionalism, his uninterrupted daily training. But, in addition to that "svjatoe remeslo," one should underscore, as Fomenko did, Nagibin's omnipresent talent:

Буйное пиршество образов, красок, каскад слов, часто - словообразований. Талант захлестывает писателя и, бывает, теснит его профессиональную натренированность.¹³³

But his professionalism, apart from that *natrenirovannost'*, notes Fomenko, consists, too, of a certain curbing of colors and images, of an ability to cope with the raging elements of his figurative style; and then, his unfettered imagery is controlled by an inspired aim: producing a genuine "xudožestvennoe proizvedenie."

¹³¹Vasil'eva, p. 216.

¹³²Atarov, "Navstreču...", p. 3.

¹³³Fomenko, "Pobeždaet...", p. 23.

CONCLUSION

Nagibin's thematic dispersedness, or *многотемье*, as displayed in my study, is an integral part of his short stories. His themes embrace a broad spectrum of human life; some of them are typically Russian, many others go beyond a Russian setting. Hunting, fishing, school, man's awakening, love, illness, death, pride, courage, honor, sorrow, faithfulness, betrayal, and many other themes in Nagibin's short stories are universal. Some of his "na zlobu dnja" themes, or the themes on societal ills, and his beloved war theme are somewhat more contiguous to a Russian milieu.

Parallel to this variety of themes is a variety of characters. Nagibin's types are men, women, and children who hail from all walks of life. They include hunters, soldiers, teachers, high school students, writers, poets, composers; explorers, astronauts, and kolkhoz chairmen.

Although Nagibin prefers to write about strong heroes who become masters of a given situation, he has limited his strong characters to a very few. Two of them, Egor Trubnikov and Nadežda Petrovna Kostenko, have been presented in this study. Nagibin has his favorite characters among the many types he describes: in the *Meščera* stories, it is the one-legged forest warden who sympathizes with nature and protects it against poachers. In the love theme stories, it is Egor (in *Ljubov'*) who loves in Nastja not his boyhood sweetheart whom he has lost, but the strange new person she has become after a love-affair with another man.

In the "*Na zlobu dnja*" theme, it is Nastja, the symbol of an invariably deceived person, who invites the sanatorium guard and his children to watch television with her in an empty suite reserved for a certain "someone."

Nagibin, too, has his favorite negative characters. In the stories with the theme of man's awakening, it is Pal Palyč, the egoist and vacillating charmer; one day he is genuinely interested in the members of Babka Jul'ja's family, but the very next day is ready to accuse one of them of stealing his penknife. In the Meščera stories, it is Burenkov, the power-hungry incompetent, who likes to assume a Napoleonic stance and pretend to be master of a situation. In the children's stories, it is Fenička, whose insensitive treatment of little Saša prompts Bajkov to leave her.

Nagibin frequently juxtaposes the world of children to that of the adults. In regarding children as more spontaneous, enthusiastic, and truthful, he concedes that "they will be better than we are." In *Rannej vesnoj*, the importance of a child's reaction to injustice is used as an artistic device to reveal the meaning of an event. In *Deti lepjat iz snega*, a child's creative awareness is used to evoke a similar creative awareness in the adult. Some teacher-heroines, who are described as stern and callous with children, are used as a device for illustrating unnecessary bureaucracy.

In all of Nagibin's stories, nature plays an important role. The changes in nature are attuned to the physiological changes in his characters. The change from girlhood to womanhood in Nataša occurs against a setting of nature description (*Pered prazdnikom*). According to Nagibin, children understand nature better than adults, and for this reason

nature is frequently used as contrast to the rationally-ordered world of civilization; for example, in *Zimnij dub*, the forest is contrasted to the school.

Nagibin uses nature as a device to determine a character's moral worth, or he may leave it up to the reader's perception whether or not nature is to be viewed independently, or be psychologically linked with the action of a story. Nagibin's nature may frequently become an active element in the story. His heroes perceive nature in different ways, but they enter into interactions with her as though she were a living center of consciousness.

For Nagibin, descriptions of nature may take on a deep lyrical coloration. But even when he is deeply lyrical, his poetic tension remains on a realistic plane.

Nagibin's autobiographical cycles of children's stories open up a wealth of information on his formative years and his youth. In focusing upon his childhood, he contends that the past is not a runway for a flight into a future reality. The past is already a reality, a life to which everything is linked: the distant past is bonded to the present, and the future will be intricately interwoven with the past; nothing fades without a trace, and man's soul is a sanctuary where images of the past live forever. Such passages imbued with philosophic tension occur in Nagibin's autobiographical cycles more often than in any other of his stories.

In his children's stories, Nagibin shows that the child's inner world is much more complex than adults generally realize. He believes that we must recognize the outstanding tendencies of our children early and protect and nourish them constantly. For this reason, states

Nagibin, he has frequently written about children.

The high value he places on naturalness and spontaneity may explain why his children's stories are better written than his other stories. As a rule, Nagibin ruins an otherwise excellent story by preaching. Whenever he writes about children or teenagers, however, every trace of didacticism disappears. Nagibin fills a traditional theme in Russian literature--childhood, boyhood, youth--with a new content: he uses it as the setting in which the awakening of the inner spiritual man occurs in the hearts of children.

In stories with a psychological analysis, Nagibin develops a method of hero characterization in which he strips the hero of every mask until only the bare essence of the character remains. The core of the character is then tested for humaneness. In some stories, this is done gradually. In others, the essence of the character is shown at the outset; the subsequent events in the plot of the stories deepen and further substantiate the presence or lack of humane qualities.

The love for a cyclic narrative reveals Nagibin's desire to write long epic narratives. But Nagibin confesses he cannot do this. His talent is best suited for short story writing. Taken together, his short stories comprise a long and philosophically meaningful story.

From 1945 through 1954, when he was making the transition from war stories to a variety of themes, Nagibin had his share of shortcomings. Artificiality, sketchiness, lack of artistic generalization, happy endings contrary to logic, choice of insignificant detail, unconvincingness, and an automatic optimism plagued his kolkhoz stories especially.

Nagibin's language is characterized by quiet, rhythmic narration; it is well-suited to his restrained stories. He uses simple syntactic

structures, rich in color words, gerundive phrases, compound adjectives, descriptive similes, and metaphors. He does not avoid technical words and phrases, colloquialisms, and dialect speech, but he does refrain from bizarre images. He achieves the desired effects by his thoughtful choice of words and selection of a precise detail. Nagibin primarily strives to achieve exact expression of content.

When contrasting Nagibin's work to Russian literary tradition, we find that in different aspects of his writing he has followed in the steps of Puškin, Lermontov, Tolstoj, Turgenev, Čexov, Prišvin, Bunin, and Paustovskij.

The strongest parallels to Turgenev and Paustovskij occur in Nagibin's Meščera stories. The links to Turgenev's *Zapiski oxotnika* are so obvious that one is prone to label Nagibin's Meščera stories a *Zapiski oxotnika* of the twentieth century. Both of these writers based the plots of their stories on their own experiences; both of them were attracted to the customs and mores of the peasant; both of them enjoyed the company of talented native hunters and guides; both used the compositional device of contrasting the peasants with the intellectuals while remaining sympathetic to the former; both of them used real names of places; and both of them exposed societal ills.

Parallels with Turgenev are likewise evident in the comparison of Nagibin's *Šurik* to Turgenev's *Bežin lug*, notably in the fate of their heroes.

The parallel to Tolstoj is apparent in the first person narrative and tone of Nagibin's *Leto moego detstva*, which is reminiscent of Tolstoj's *Detstvo*, *Otročestvo*, and *Junost'*. Nagibin's interest in man's inner world, especially the world of ordinary people, may be attributed

to Čexov's influence. In some stories, Nagibin has borrowed situations close to those Čexov has used, for example, the great love drama in *Škola dlja vzroslyx*, where Nagibin consciously evokes associations with Čexov's *Dama s sobačkoj*.

Nagibin's landscape descriptions adhere to two of Čexov's literary formulas: a writer should see himself in constant contact with nature and should limit himself to one or two significant details. The main similarity between the two writers, however, is their ability to create a composite portrait of society from numerous character-types.

As a contemporary writer, Nagibin has been one of the first to minimize the prescripts of Socialist Realism by avoiding dogmatism and mellowing didacticism. In his writing, he has focused on self-expression and a sincere attitude toward life and his fellow man. A prose writer with a lyrical undercurrent, Nagibin has combined, in his own way, a realistic method of narration with drama and irony.

Nagibin's well-composed *paccka3* is a distinguished literary type. In his struggle for conciseness in the short story, Nagibin has become a thunderbolt of verbal economy. Due to this compact form of his short story, its succinctness and lack of superfluousness, and the "aristocratism" of his style, Nagibin has been acclaimed one of the foremost short story writers in the Soviet Union today.

Critics all over the world have warmly responded to Nagibin's literary output. Many of these critics, the writer of this dissertation included, have repeatedly emphasized his professional dexterity and incessant devotion to his calling.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introductory Note:

The following bibliography is divided into two principal sections:

SECTION ONE - Primary Sources; and

SECTION TWO - Secondary Sources.

The first section is grouped according to the following subdivisions:

(1) *Bibliography of Nagibin's Original Works:*

(a) *Short Stories;*

(b) *Povesti;*

(c) *Travelogues;*

(d) *Collections and Collected Works;*

(e) *Očerki;*

(f) *Scenarios;*

(g) *Communiqués;* and

(h) *Criticism* (Articles, Reviews, Introductions, Forewords, and Books).

(2) *Bibliography of Nagibin's Translations*

(3) *Bibliography of Nagibin's Works Written/Translated in Collaboration with Others.*

The second section includes a bibliography of criticism of Nagibin and the bibliography of auxiliary works consulted in the process of writing the dissertation.

All entries in the first section are arranged chronologically by

date and then alphabetically by title within any given year. The entries in the second section are classified alphabetically only.

All items (short stories, *povesti*, or travelogues) contained in a collection or collected works are listed individually under the collection/collected works they comprise.



SECTION ONE

(1) *Bibliography of Nagibin's Original Works*

(a) *Short Stories*

- Nagibin, Ju. M. "Dvojnaja ošibka." *Ogonek*, No. 11 (1940), p. 3.
- "Besstrašie." *Krasnoflotec*, No. 19 (1941), pp. 4-5.
- "Knut." *Moskovskij al'manax*, II (1941), 317-21.
- "Pravdivoe gadanie." *Moskovskij al'manax*, II (1941), 332-26.
- "Soldatskaja duša." *Sovetskaja Kolyma*, (1943).
- "Tatarinov priexal." *Znamja*, No. 5 (1946), pp. 78-81.
- "V storone ot železnoj dorogi." *Znamja*, No. 5 (1947), pp. 118-36.
- "Na odnoj ulice." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (June 3, 1950).
- "Pokupka konja." *Novyj mir*, No. 9 (1950), p. 109.
- "Sročnyj zakaz." *Večernjaja Moskva* (April 30, 1951).
- "Nočnoj gost'." *Ogonek*, No. 4 (1955).
- "Poslednij lov." *Znamja*, No. 5 (1955).
- "Real'naja mečta." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (February 1, 1955).
- "Syn." *Ogonek*, No. 2 (1955).
- "Xazarskij ornament." *Literaturnaja Moskva*, II (1956).
- "Molodožen." *Znamja*, No. 10 (1956).
- "Svet v okne." *Literaturnaja Moskva*, II (1956), 396-403.
- "Rannej vesnoj." *Znamja*, No. 9 (1957).
- "Boj za vysotu." *Znamja*, No. 2 (1958), pp. 3-42.

- . "Madam Dajan." *Znamja*, No. 11 (1958).
- . "Pered prazdnikom." *Znamja*, No. 11 (1959).
- . "Babočki." *Smena*, No. 7 (1960), pp. 25-27.
- . "Èxo." *Ogonek*, No. 37 (1960).
- . "Novyj dom." *Ogonek*, No. 15 (1960), pp. 10-13.
- . "Pri doroge." *Ogonek*, No. 18 (1960), pp. 15-16.
- . "Razgovor." *Oktjabr'*, No. 1 (1960), pp. 86-91.
- . "Tuman." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 2 (1960), pp. 158-71.
- . "Žarkim ijul'skim dnevom." *Ogonek*, No. 5 (1960), pp. 19-22.
- . "Čistye prudy." *Znamja*, No. 1 (1961), pp. 7-38.
- . "Naš tovarišč." *Večernjaja Moskva* (April 12, 1961).
- . "Zanovo perežitaja junost'." *Ogonek*, No. 21 (1961), p. 25.
- . "Obormot." *Ogonek*, No. 40 (1962), pp. 14-15.
- . "Pogonja." *Moskva*, No. 9 (1962), pp. 3-22.
- . "Rasskazy o Gruzii." *Literaturnaja Gruzija*, No. 12 (1962), pp. 3-9.
- . *Stranicy žizni Trubnikova.* *Smena*, Nos. 1-3 (1962), pp. 13-18; 18-21; and 4-8.
- . "Kogda utki v pore." *Moskva*, No. 3 (1963), pp. 114-26.
- . "Na tixom ozere." *Ogonek*, Nos. 15-16 (1963), pp. 20-24 and 18-22.
- . "Vstreča na zare." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (March 5, 1963).
- . "Na četerevov." *Neva*, No. 5 (1964), pp. 94-113.
- . "Ženja Rumjanceva." *Kul'tura i žizn'*, No. 2 (1964), pp. 18-20.
- . "Brakon'er." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 12 (1965), pp. 20-39.
- . "Dva rasskaza. Šestnadcat' procentov. Oležka ženilsja." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 2 (1965), pp. 17-40.
- . "Bessročnaja vaxta." *Ogonek*, No. 4 (1966), pp. 24-25.

- . "Krasota zemli." *Komsomol'skaja pravda* (September 2, 1966).
- . "Neostyvšij pepel." *Novoe vremja*, No. 31 (1966), pp. 24-26.
- . "Po sledam odnoj `ekspedicii." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (May 27, 1966).
- . "V strane Amundsena." *Ogonek*, No. 30 (1966), pp. 22-25.
- . "Ataman." *Smena*, No. 20 (1967), pp. 24-26.
- . "Ja zarabatyvaju na žizn'." *Učitel'skaja gazeta* (December 19, 1967).
- . "Na kordone." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (September 15, 1967), pp. 12-13.
- . "Rycar' i pastuška." *Učitel'skaja gazeta* (December 28, 1967).
- . "Sed ye volosy." *Pravda* (December 31, 1967).
- . "Tainstvennyj dom." *Ogonek*, No. 3 (1967), pp. 10-12.
- . "Ulybka Džokondy." *Ogonek*, No. 47 (1967), pp. 25-27.
- . "Zabrošennaja doroga." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (October 11, 1967).
- . "Čužoe serdce." *Znamja*, No. 6 (1968), pp. 105-14.
- . "Danilyč; Kak byl spasen Mal'mgren." *Učitel'skaja gazeta*, No. 19 (December 26, 1968).
- . "Dva rasskaza. Šurik. Šokolad." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 6 (1968), pp. 52-61.
- . "Edinstvennyj postupok." *Ogonek*, No. 12 (1968), pp. 18-21.
- . "Sročno trebujutsja sedye čelovečeskie volosy." *Znamja*, No. 3 (1968), pp. 70-87.
- . "Delo kapitana Solov'eva." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 1 (1969), pp. 70-82.
- . "Oni ljubili svoix detej." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (October 17, 1969), pp. 12, 13, 19.
- . "Ivan." *Ogonek*, No. 30 (1970), pp. 18-21.
- . "I vsja posledujuščaja žizn'." *Znamja*, No. 2 (1970), pp. 67-93.
- . "Nepobedimyj Arsenov." *Ogonek*, No. 37 (1970), pp. 9-12.

- . "Osennij sad." *Izvestija* (October 17, 1970).
- . "Pik udači." *Znamja*, No. 9 (1970).
- . "V beskrajnom nebe." *Izvestija* (December 31, 1970).
- . "Kak trudno byt' učitelem!" *Junost'*, No. 11 (1971), pp. 53-61.
- . "Mašinistka živet na šestom ètaže." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 8 (1971), pp. 74-102.
- . *Pereulki moego detstva.* *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (January 29, 1971), pp. 12, 14, 23.
- . "Poezdka s drugim." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 4 (1971), pp. 3-23.
- . "Rasskazy xranitelja lukomor'ja." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 11 (1971), pp. 102-5.
- . "Xranitel' lukomor'ja." *Sovetskaja Rossiya* (June 6, 1971).
- . "Čelovek iz restorana." *Moskva*, No. 7 (1972), pp. 197-204.
- . "Il'in den'." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (August 4, 1972), pp. 14-15; 22-23.
- . "Iz knigi detstva." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 10 (1972), pp. 6-32.
- . "Kapel'noe serdce." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (February 18, 1972).
- . "Nemota." *Znamja*, No. 1 (1972), pp. 52-71.
- . "Polet s prezidentom." *Znamja*, No. 5 (1972), pp. 140-46.
- . "Sredi noči." *Znamja*, No. 3 (1972), pp. 53-61.
- . "U Larinyx." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (November 3, 1972).
- . "Ulybka Gagarina." *Ogonek*, No. 45 (1972), pp. 10-15.
- . "Gde-to vozle konservatorii." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 6 (1973), pp. 90-123.
- . "Moj pervyj drug, mor drug bescennyj." *Vospitanie škol'nikov*, No. 2 (1973), pp. 60-65.
- . "Nadgrob'e Kristofera Marloù." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (September 14, 1973), pp. 18-20.
- . "Sentimental'noe putešestvie." *Znamja*, No. 2 (1973), pp. 112-28.

----- . "Son o Tjutčeve." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (March 23, 1973), pp. 8-10.

----- . "Den' krutogo čeloveka." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (February 15, 1974), pp. 12-14, 22, 23.

(b) *Povesti*

Nagibin, Ju. M. *Trudnoe ščast'e. Družba narodov*, Nos. 3-4 (1956), pp. 10-53 and 52-92.

----- . *Trudnoe ščast'e*. Moscow: "DETGIZ," 1956.

----- . *Pavlik*. Moscow: "VOENIZDAT," 1960.

----- . *Stranicy žizni Trubnikova. Smena*, Nos. 1-3 (1962), pp. 13-18; 18-21; and 4-8.

----- . *Daleko ot vojny. Naš Sovremennik*, No. 5 (1964), pp. 3-63.

----- . *Daleko ot vojny*. Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1964.

----- . *Bab'e carstvo. Literaturnaja Rossiya* (January 6, 1967), pp. 6-8.

----- . *Na kordone. Naš sovremennik*, No. 3 (1968), pp. 4-50.

----- . *Perekur. Naš sovremennik*, No. 4 (1969), pp. 16-65.

----- . "Ne perestupiv poroga." *Učitel'skaja gazeta* (February 14, 1970).

----- . *Kak byl kuplen les. Znamja*, No. 10 (1972), pp. 63-100.

----- . *Kogda pogas fejerwerk. Družba narodov*, No. 3 (1974), pp. 106-32.

(c) *Travelogues*

Nagibin, Ju. M. "Iskateli." *Vokrug sveta*, No. 5 (1951), pp. 52-57.

----- . "Debrecen-Budapešt." *Znamja*, No. 5 (1961), pp. 36-55.

----- . "Iz cikla marokkanskix rasskazov." *Smena*, No. 15 (1961), pp. 20-21.

----- . "Marokkanskije novelly." *Novoe vremja*, No. 27 (1961), pp. 25-28.

----- . "Na zemle Marokko." *Znamja*, No. 8 (1961), pp. 9-46.

----- . "Pod sen'ju Akropolja." *Literaturnaja Gruzija*, No. 10 (1963), pp. 12-14.

- . "Lukorskij izvozčik; Aja Sofija." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (May, 1963), pp. 18-19.
- . "Xoždenija za četyre morja." *Moskva*, No. 2 (1964), pp. 130-47.
- . "Na beregax Adriatiki." *Novoe vremja*, Nos. 49-50 (1964), pp. 25-27 and 32-34.
- . "Moja Venecija." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (January 1, 1966).
- . "Videnie Azii." *Literaturnaja Rossiya*, No. 10 (March 17, 1967).
- . "Afrikanske očerki." *Novoe vremja*, Nos. 8-9 (1968), pp. 26-28 and 28-30.
- . "Ot biblii do našix dnejj; Putešestvie po Sibiri." *Novoe vremja*, No. 32 (1968), pp. 23-25.
- . "Strana dobryx ljudej. Sudanske očerki." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 12 (1968), pp. 88-105.
- . "Na den' v Dagomeju." *Naš sovremennik*, Nos 5 (1970), pp. 103-7.
- . "Kogda cvetut flambujany." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 5 (1972), pp. 106-16.
- . *Moja Afrika*. Moscow: "Nauka," 1973.
- . "Tovarišč Varšava. Iz pol'skogo dnevnika." *Izvestija* (July 18, 1974).

(d) *Collections and Collected Works*

- Nagibin, Ju. M. *Čelovek s fronta. Rasskazy*. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1943. Containing: Perevodčik; Svjazist Vasil'ev [was also reprinted under the name "Linija"]; Domik u dorogi; Doroga; Predatel'; V izbe; Žena politruka; Čelovek s fronta.
- . *Bol'soe serdce. Rasskazy*. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1944. Containing: Soldatskaja duša; Zerno žizni; Mat'; Stariki; Perevodčik; Svjazist Vasil'ev; Poslednij šturm; Pexotinec; Bol'soe serdce; Noč'pered boem; Vozvraščenie mastera; Škiper uxodit v plavanie; Čelovek s fronta.
- . *Zerno žizni. Rasskazy*. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1948. Containing: Perevodčik; Sofer; Svjazist Vasil'ev; V izbe; Igra; Vaganov [was also reprinted under the name "Vsegda v stroju"]; Zerno žizni; Drug-saper; Tri dnja Sergeja Sersavina; Vozvraščenie; Noč'pered boem; Na xortice; Radiosoldat; Puti dorogi; Karlavač; "Nas bylo četvero."

- . *Gosudarstvennoe delo. Rasskazy.* Moscow: "Pravda," 1950. Containing: Gosudarstvennoe delo; Deljagi.
- . *Dve sily. Rasskazy.* Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1944. Containing: Dve sily; Drug-saper; Bol'šoj urok; Tri dnja Sergeja Šeršavina [was also reprinted under the name "Troje sutok"]; Profes-sija tvoego otca; Goluboe derevo; Partizany prihodjat na otdyx.
- . *Gospodstvujuščaja vysota. Rasskazy.* Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1951. Containing: Gospodstvujuščaja vysota; Puti-dorogi; Čužie berega; Svet v noči; Naslednik; Novaja professija; Partijnoe poručenie; Pokupka konja; Na pokoe.
- . *Partijnoe poručenie.* Moscow: "VOENIZDAT," 1951. Containing: Partijnoe poručenie; Na xortice.
- . *Rasskazy.* Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1953. Containing: Vaganov; Noč pered boem; Perevodčik; Radiosoldat; Svjazist Vasil'ev; Čužie berega; Puti-dorogi; Nas bylo četvero ; Tonkaja rjabina; Partijnoe poručenie; Pokupka konja; Na pokoe; Korbajnjery; Pozdnjaja osen'; V Sinegorii; Junje gody; Pobeditel'; Ličnoe pervenstvo; Trubka.
- . *Trubka. Rasskazy.* Moscow: "Pravda," 1953. Containing: Pozdnjaja osen'; Zimnij dub.
- . *Vsegda v stroju.* Moscow: "VOENIZDAT," 1953. Containing: Svjazist Vasil'ev; Drug-saper; Noč'pered boem.
- . *Rasskazy o vojne.* Moscow: "VOENIZDAT," 1954. Containing: Čelovek s fronta; Šofer; Zerno žizni; Drug-saper; Svjazist Vasil'ev; Tri dnja Sergeja Šeršavina; Noč'pered boem; V izbe; Vtoroj ešelon; Perevodčik; Radiosoldat; Vaganov; Na xortice; Vtoroe vozvraščenie.
- . *Mal'čiki.* Moscow: "DETGIZ," 1955. Containing: Novyj drug; Mal'čiki; V školu; Staraja čerepaxa; Zimnij dub; Novaja Gvineja; Nas bylo četvero.
- . *Rasskazy.* Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1955. Containing: Čempion mira; Vaganov; Na xortice; Nas bylo četvero ; Trudnaja doroga; Slezaj, priexali...; Sovremennik Ščepkina; Četunov, syn Četunova; Nočnoj gost'; Poslednij lov; Syn; Vasilij Nikolaevič i Vasja [was also reprinted under the name "Živoj medvežonok"]; Sny; Komarov; Nožnicy; Karavaj; Zimnij dub.
- . *Skalistyj porog. Rasskazy.* Moscow: "Pravda," 1955. Containing: Komarov; Staraja čerepaxa; V školu; V noči; Skalistyj porog; Slezaj, priexali...
- . *Zimnij dub. Rasskazy.* "Molodaja gvardija," 1955. Containing: Trubka; Vaganov; Radiosoldat; Deljagi; Nas bylo četvero ; Mat' kolchoza; Pokupka konja; Na pokoe; Pozdnjaja osen'; Slezaj, priexali...; Pobeditel'; Pauk; Komarov; Staraja čerepaxa; V školu;

Mal'čiki; V noči; Ljubov'; Skalistyj porog; Pustynja [co-authored with L. Tisov, this story in later reprints is known as "Četunov, syn Četunova"]; Zimnij dub.

----- . *Mal'čiki*. Moscow: "DETGIZ," 1955. Containing: Novyj drug; Mal'čiki; V školu; Staraja čerepaxa; Zimnij dub; Novaja Gvineja; Nas bylo četvero.

----- . *Mal'čiki*. Moscow: "DETGIZ," 1956. [Contents same as above]

----- . *Na ozerax. Rasskazy*. Moscow: "Pravda," 1957. Containing: Nočnoj gost'; Molodožen; Podsadnaja utka.

----- . *Rasskazy*. Moscow: "GOSLITIZDAT," 1957. Containing: Komarov; Molodožen; Vaganov; Trubka; Slezaj, priexali...; Četunov, syn Četunova; Skalistyj porog; Nočnoj gost'; Xazarskij ornament; Vejmar i okresnosti; Zimnij dub.

----- . *Boj za vysotu*. Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossija," 1958.

----- . *Čelovek i doroga. Rasskazy*. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1958. Containing: Boj za vysotu; Vtoroj ešelon; Put' na perednij kraj; Rannej vesnoj; Čelovek i doroga; Kostyli; Škola dlja vzroslyx; Vejmar i okresnosti; Večer v Xel'sinki; Na plotu; V aprel'skom lesu.

----- . *Na ozere Velikom*. Moscow: "DETGIZ," 1958. Containing: Papa, mama, sobaka i ja; Pjaterki i edinicy; Sny; Knut; Igra; Na ozere Velikom.

----- . *Skalistyj porog. Rasskazy*. Moscow: "VOENIZDAT," 1959. Containing: Boj za vysotu; Vaganov; Perevodčik; Čelovek s fronta; V izbe; Svjazist Vasil'ev; Noč pered boem; Poslednij sturm; Put' na perednij kraj; Na xortice; Rubikon; Rannej vesnoj; V aprel'skom lesu.

----- . *Pered prazdnikom. Rasskazy i povest'*. Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1960. Containing: Pesn' pesnej; Madam Dajan; Stjuardessa; Četvertyj papa; Pered prazdnikom; Razgovor; Novyj dom; Deti lepjat iz snega; Tuman; Pri doroge; Babočki; Trudnoe scast'e: povest'.

----- . *Druz'ja moi ljudi. Rasskazy*. Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossija," 1961. Containing: Vejmar i okresnosti; Madam Dajan; Večer v Xel'sinki; Pesn' pesnej; Lukovyj sup; Debrecen-Budapešt; My govorim povengerski; Sleva truba sprava truba; Čudo pod zemlej; Svad'ba; Stalaktitovyje peščery; Eržbet; Ja edu v cirk; Proščanie s Budapeštom; Na zemle Morokko; Durnoj glaz; Mimozy; Na doroge; Remeslo; Niščij; Pokupka velosipeda; O prostote; Voljubilis - mertvyj gorod; Sokrovišče korolevskogo dvorca; V berberskom sadu; Na verbljužem toržišče; Dve vstreči; Sodom i Gomorra; Šofer Xuan; Plata za vxod; Soldát; Kozy; Antuan; V pal'movoj rošče; Kumuški.

----- . *Rannej vesnoj. Rasskazy*. Moscow: "GOSLITIZDAT," 1961.

Containing: "Nas bylo četvero"; Svjazist Vasil'ev; Perevodčik; Vaganov; Trubka; Komarov; Zimnij dub; Slezaj, priexali...; Nočnoj gost'; Četunov, syn Četunova; Poslednjaja oxota; Molodožen; Vejmar i okresnosti; Večer v Xel'sinki; Boj za vysotu; Put' na perednij kraj; Rannej vesnoj; V aprel'skom lesu; Čelovek i doroga; Tuman; Ėxo.

----- *Čistye prudy. Rasskazy raznyx let. Povest'. Dorogi. Vstreči.* Moscow: "Moskovskij rabočij," 1962. Containing: Čistye prudy; Ščedryj podarok; Velosiped; Babočki; Ėxo; Kotjat topjat slepymi; Ja izučaju jazyki; Tixon Petrovič; Torpednyj kater; Šampinjony; Ženja Rumjanceva; Čerez dvadcat' let; povest': *Pavlik*; Škola dlja vzroslyx; Pered prezdnikom; Žarkim i jul'skim dnevem; Staraja čerepaxa; Deti lepjat iz snega; Novyj dom; Poslednij lov; My govorim po-vengerski; Sleva truba, sprava truba...: Čudo pod zemlej; Svad'ba; Stalaktitovy peščery; Eržbet; Ja edu v cirk; Proščanie s Budapeštom; Plata za vxod; Sodom i Gomorra; Sofer Xuan.

----- *Mitja. Molodaja gvardija*, No. 3 (1963), pp. 42-63. Containing: Nočju; Zagadočnye kartinki; Pesni; Vzroslye umejut igrat'; Izba.

----- *Pogonja. Meščerskie byli.* Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1963. Containing: Podsadnaja utka; Molodožen; V rasputicu [was also reprinted under the name "Xazarskij ornament"]; Ispytanie; Petrak i Val'ka; Razgovor; Poslednjaja oxota; Novyj dom; Obormot; Pogonja; Kogda utki v pore; Na tixom ozere.

----- *Selected Short Stories.* With an Introduction and Notes by D. J. Richards. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963. Containing: "Nas bylo četvero"; Vaganov; Zimnij dub; Slezaj, priexali...; Svet v okne; Večer v Xel'sinki; Poslednjaja oxota; Četvertyj papa; Razgovor; Ėxo.

----- *Stranicy žizni Trubnikova.* Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1963. Containing: Vozvraščenie; Knut i žalejka; Vybery; Večer i noč'; Čudotvorec; Uragan; Bor'kiny risunki; Perevybery.

----- *Dalekoe i blizkoe. Povest' i rasskazy.* Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1965. Containing: Povest': *Stranicy žizni Trubnikova*. Malen'kie rasskazy: Noč'ju; Zagadočnye kartinki; Vzroslye umejut igrat' Pesni; Izba. Rasskazy: Šestnadcat' procentov; Gibel' pilota; Kak skažeš, Aurelio...; Na teterevov; Oležka ženilsja; Neringa. Putevyje zarisovki: Xoždenija za četyre morja; Roza v zubax; Videnie Varny; Aja Sofija; Pod senju Akropolja; Lukorskij izvozčik; Axmad neiščerpaemyj; Adriatika zelenaja, prost.

----- *Zelenaja ptica s krasnoj golovoj.* Moscow: "Moskovskij rabočij," 1966. Containing: Čistye prudy; Zelenaja ptica s krasnoj golovoj.

----- *Ne daj emu pogibnut'.* Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1968. Containing: Ne daj emu pogibnut'; Po sledam odnoj èkspedicii; Bessročnaja vaxta; U majora Ejnara Kristelja; V strane Amundsena;

Arxiv Samojloviča; Glaza Šelagina; Momental'nye fotografii; Mademuazel'; Xudožnik; Sredi xiščnikov; Čajki umirajut v gavani; I vsjudu strasti rokove; Aleksandr I; Nesčastnyj slučaj; Istoričeskaja tumba; Začem mne takaja žena?; Deti ne dolžny znat'; Ulybka Džokondy; Lukovyj sup; Neostyvšyj pepel; Videnie Azii: Rangun; Fudzi; Gonkong; Tainstvennyj dom.

- . *Nočnoj gost'. Fizkul'tura i sport*, 1968. Containing: Čempion mira; Zavoronok; Ličnoe pervenstvo; Junye gody; Pobeditel'; Nočnoj gost'; Podlednyj lov; Kogda utki v pore.
- . *Čužoe serdce. Povesti i Rasskazy*. Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1969. Containing: *Leto moego detstva*: Priezd; Ja zabatyvaju na žizn'; Šurik; Ataman; Pobeditel'; Pastuška i rycar'; Danilyč; Šokolad; Čerdak; Kak byl spasen Mal'mgren; Zabrošennaja doroga; Krasnyj kar'er; Samyj sčastlivyj den'; Špaga d'Artan'jana. *Bab'e carstvo*; *Na kordone*; Sročno trebujutsja sedye čelovečeskie volosy; Čužoe serdce.
- . *Perekur. Povest' i rasskazy*. Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossiya," 1970. Containing: *Perekur*; Delo kapitana Solov'eva; Malen'kie rasskazy o bol'šoj sud'be; Edinstvennyj postupok.
- , *Pereulki moego detstva. Povest' v rasskazax*. Moscow: "Sovremennik," 1971. Containing: Malen'kie rasskazy o bol'šoj sud'be; Semejnyj spor; V školu; Nočju; Jurina vojna; Staraja vetla; Snova za učebu; V beskrajnem nebe; Urok anatomii; Zvezdy; V surdokamere; Forel'; Drug detstva; Fotografija; V te poslednije mgnovenija. *Pereulki moego detstva*: Dom No. 7; Pesni; Strašnoe; Milye šutki žizni; Ne v tu storonu; Pervoe putešestvie; Ljubov' i znamja; Ivan; Nepobedimyj Arsenov; Moj pervyj drug, moj drug bescennyj; Melomany; Liven'; I vsja posledujuščaja žizn'; Pik udači; Oni ljubili svoix detej; Fejruz; Muzykal'naja korobka; Strana roslyx ljudej; Nigrijskaja tetrad'; Na den' v Dagomeju; Kennijskie zametki.
- . *Izbrannye proizvedeniya*. 2 vols. Moscow: "Xudožestvennaja literatura," 1973. Vol. 1 contains: Vaganov; Zimnij dub; Komarov; Četunov, syn Četunova; Nočnoj gost'; Molodožen; Petrak i Val'ka; Poslednjaja oxota; Rannej vesnoj; Pered prazdnikom; Exo; Pogonja; Kogda utki v pore; Na teterevov; Oležka ženilsja; Gibel' pilota; Neringa; Kak skažeš, Aurelio...; Zelenaja ptica s krasnoj golovoj; Brakon'er; Sročno trebujutsja sedye čelovečeskie volosy; Čužoe serdce; Delo kapitana Solov'eva. Vol. 2 contains: Trubka; Na tixom ozere; Na kordone; I vsja posledujuščaja žizn'...; Pik udačij; Vejmar i okresnosti; Večer v Xel'sinki; Tainstvennyj dom; Priezd; Šurik; Ataman; Pobeditel'; Pastuška i rycar'; Danilyč; Kak byl spasen Mal'mgren; Zabrošennaja doroga; Krasnyj kar'er; Samyj sčastlivyj den'; Dom No. 7; Drug doma; Strašnoe; Ne v tu storonu; Ljubov' i znamja; Ivan; Nepobedimyj Arsenov; Melomany; Liven'.
- . *Ty budeš' žit'. Povesti i rasskazy*. Moscow: "Sovremennik," 1974. Containing: Rasskazy o Gagarine: Bujanka; Vorota v nebo; V gorodskom sadu; Tost; Gibel' Dergunova; O čem dumał Geroj; Den' s Germanom Titovym, ili ešče raz ob ulybke Gagarina. *Kniga detstva*:

Jan'ka; Kak trudno byt' učitelem!; Počemu ja ne stal futbolistom; Kapel'noe serdce; Rasskazy: Mašinistka Živet na šestom etaže; Ty budeš' Žit'; Nemota; Vystrel; Sentimental'noe putešestvie; Polet s prezidentom; Son o Tjutčeve. Povesti: Gde-to vozle konservatorii; Kak byl kuplen les.

(e) Očerki

Nagibin, Ju. M. "Letčiki." *Krasnoflotec*, No. 20 (1941), pp. 16-18.

----- "Na klič Timura." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (June 29, 1941).

----- "Oxotniki spešat domoj." *Vokrug sveta*, No. 6 (1941), pp. 35-39.

----- "Posle velikoj bitvy"; "Vesna na traktornom"; "Vtoraja žizn' Ol'gi Kovalovej." *Trud* (April 10, 1943).

----- "Semja Sviridovyx." *Trud* (November 24, 1943), p. 3.

----- *Gvardejcy na Dnepre*. Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1944.

----- *Slava Nikolaja Čistova*. Moscow: "Moskovskij bol'ševik," 1945.

----- "Novaja ulica." *Smena*, No. 19 (1947), pp. 2-3.

----- "Podvig Ul'jany Bykovoy." *Socialističeskoe zemledelie* (August 15, 1948).

----- "V predmajskuju noč'." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (May 1, 1948).

----- "Xranitel' stepi." *Vokrug sveta*, No. 10 (1948), pp. 32-37.

----- "Aleksandra Mixajlovna Styrova." *Krasnyj flot* (February 28, 1950).

----- "Mirnyj den' na mirnoj zemle." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (August 8, 1950).

----- "Navstreču maju." *Socialističeskoe zemledelie* (April 30, 1950).

----- "Tri četverti kvadratnogo metra." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (April 8, 1950).

----- "Truženica mira." *Socialističeskoe zemledelie* (November 26, 1950).

----- "V kanun vsenarodnogo praznika." *Socialističeskoe zemledelie* (December 5, 1950).

----- "Xozjain zemli." *Socialističeskoe zemledelie* (March 7, 1950).

----- "Nemerкнуščij svet." *Socialističeskoe zemledelie* (January 30, 1951).

- . "Novyj predsedatel'." *Novyj mir*, No. 8 (1955), pp. 3-14.
- . "Na drejfujuščej stancii." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (November 30, 1957).
- . "Živye i ušedšie." *Moskovskij komsomolec* (November 7, 1959).
- . "Momental'nye fotografii." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (December 9, 1966).
- . "Momental'nye fotografii." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 4 (1967), pp. 70-75.
- . "V gorode Lenina." *Novoe vremja*, No. 45 (1968), pp. 8-10.
- . "Teper' Moskva. Olimpiada-76." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (March 25, 1970).

(f) *Scenarios*

- . "Direktor." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 9 (1965), pp. 125-168.
- . "Bab'e carstvo." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 3 (1967), pp. 26-27.
- . "Trudnyj put'." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 12 (1963), pp. 11-45.
- . "Trudnyj put'." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 11 (1963), pp. 25-67.
- . "Oktjabr' - 44." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 5 (1973), pp. 157-191.

(g) *Communiqués*

- . "Gorod, vstajuščij iz pepla." *Komsomol'skaja pravda* (May 7, 1943).
- . "Il'ičevcy." *Komsomol'skaja pravda* (January 21, 1943).
- . "Osvoboždenie Kubani." *Trud* (October 10, 1943), p. 2.
- . "Pobeda." *Trud* (August 7, 1943), p. 2.
- . "Sergej Simonov - konstruktor protivotankovogo ruž'ja." *Trud* (July 31, 1943), p. 2.
- . "V portu." *Trud* (June 1, 1943), p. 2.
- . "Vzjato v boju." *Trud* (June 22, 1943), p. 2.
- . "Xozjain sudna." *Trud* (June 4, 1943), p. 2.
- . "Zavodskie inženery na fronte." *Trud* (September 25, 1943), p. 2.
- . "Škola surovogo truda." *Trud* (June 18, 1944), p. 2.

- . "Voin i stroitel'." *Trud* (May 15, 1945).
- . "Bessemer." *Trud* (February 13, 1944), p. 3.
- . "Boj za Kaunas." *Trud* (August 2, 1944), p. 2.
- . *Cenoju žizni*. Moscow: "Moskovskij bol'shevik," 1944.
- . "Dorogami nastuplenija; Vstreči; Tri goda v podvale; Surovy budni." *Trud* (August 10, 1944).
- . "Izobretatel'." *Trud* (June 30, 1944), p. 2.
- . "Komandir." *Trud* (April 6, 1944), p. 2.
- . "Zemlja litovskaja." *Trud* (August 1, 1944), p. 2.
- . "Živoj Stalingrad." *Trud* (July 7, 1944), p. 2.
- . "Doroga v žizn'." *Trud* (March 8, 1945).
- . "General polkovnik Vasilij Aleksandrovič Juškevič." *Krasnaja zvezda* (January 25, 1946).
- . "Novator." *Gudok* (January 22, 1947).
- . "Donbass - probeditel'." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (June 5, 1948).
- . "Im otdaem naši golosa...." *Socialističeskoe zemledelie* (December 17, 1950).

(h) *Criticism* (Articles, Reviews, Introductions, Forewords, and Books)

- . Review of G. Medynskij's *Devjatyj*, A., A. Donchenko's *Škola nad morem*, and N. Dmitrieva's *Družba*. *Detskaja literatura*, No. 9 (1940), pp. 6-9.
- . "Kleveta." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (October 26, 1950), p. 2.
- . "Snova Bullit!" *Literaturnaja gazeta* (September 28, 1954).
- . "Oxota iz-za ugla." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (May 15, 1956), p. 3.
- . "Poraženija i pobedy." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (September 29, 1956).
- . "Vysokaja zadača literatury." *Znamja*, No. 4 (1956), pp. 174-75.
- . "O rasskaze." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (February 16, 1957), p. 3.
- . "Glubže o sovremennosti!" *Literaturnaja gazeta* (March 25, 1958), p. 3.

- . "O proze Georgija Berezko." *Znamja*, No. 6 (1958), pp. 217-19.
- . "Detal' v rasskaze." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (August 29, 1959), p. 3.
- . "Masterstvo rasskazčika." *Literatura i žizn'* (November 13, 1959), p. 3.
- . "O Čexove." *Znamja*, No. 12 (1959), pp. 191-195.
- . "Pervyj sbornik." *Znamja*, No. 10 (1959), pp. 213-214.
- . "Replika, vvodjaščaja v zabluždenie." *Moskva*, No. 4 (1959), pp. 217-219.
- . "Svoe i čužoe." *Družba narodov*, No. 7 (1959), pp. 238-240.
- . "Žanr ne uslovnost'." *Literaturnaja gazeta*, No. 156 (December 22, 1959), p. 3.
- . "Čto sovremenno?" *Literaturnaja gazeta* (December 3, 1960).
- . "Na puti poiskov." *Smena*, No. 13 (1960), pp. 20-21.
- . "Novoe znakomstvo." *Znamja*, No. 6 (1960), pp. 217-218.
- . "Vmesto recenzii." *Literatura i žizn'* (May 18, 1960), p. 3.
- . "Žizn' Ippolita Myškina." *Znamja*, No. 1 (1960), pp. 220-222.
- . "Ščastlivogo puti!" *Sovetskij sport* (January 8, 1961).
- . "Esli ty pišeš rasskazy." *Molodaja gvardija*, No. 7 (1964), pp. 297-308.
- . "Otzyv myslej blagodarnyx" *Voprosy literatury*, No. 10 (1964), pp. 50-82.
- . *Razmušlenie o rasskaze*. Moscow: "Sovetskaja Rossija," 1964.
- . "Čelovek dejstvujuščij." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 2 (1965), pp. 50-52.
- . "L. P. Šejninu - 60 let." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (March 26, 1966).
- . "Iz zapisok scenarista." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 1 (1967), pp. 30-35.
- . Introduction to Grigorij Čikovani's *Odyšskie rasskazy*. *Družba narodov*, No. 12 (1968), pp. 64-76.
- . Review of Alla Beljakova's *Krasnoe nebo*. *Naš sovremennik*, No. 11 (1968), pp. 112-13.

- . Review of Boris Jampol'skij's *Volšebnyj fonar'*. *Literaturnaja gazeta* (January 31, 1968).
- . Review of Ivan Uxanov's "Mama, ne umiraj...." *Naš sovremenik*, No. 12 (1968), pp. 2-12.
- . "Vmesto predislovija." in his *Ne daj emu pogibnut'*. Moscow: "Molodaja gvardija," 1968.
- . "Avtobiografičeskie zametki pisatelja." *Detskaja literatura*, No. 12 (1969), p. 72.
- . "Fejruz." *Novoe vremja*, No. 33 (1969), pp. 29-32.
- . "Krugover't'...." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (September 17, 1969).
- . "Prazdnik Bloka." *Literaturnaja Rossija* (November 21, 1969), pp. 8-9.
- . Review of Semen Klebanov's *Tajna moego goroda*. *Naš sovremenik*, No. 12 (1969), pp. 121-22.
- . Review of V. A. Solouxin's *Zimnij den'*. *Literaturnaja gazeta* (September 3, 1969).
- . "A cel' vse ta že...." *Sovetskaja kul'tura* (June 6, 1970).
- . "Pobednyj fakel bleščet kak zarja!" *Sovetskaja kul'tura* (May 9, 1970).
- . Review of D. Ngugu's *Pšeničnoe zerno*. *Inostrannaja literatura*, No. 10 (1970), pp. 255-57.
- . "Uvy scenariev ne pišu." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (September 15, 1971), p. 8.
- . "Nezabyvaemoe." *Junost'*, No. 1 (1972), p. 71.
- . Review of Elken Xejli's short stories. *Družba narodov*, No. 5 (1972), pp. 161-71.
- . Review of Valerij Povoljaev's *My snimaemsja v kino*. *Pamir*, No. 2 (1972), pp. 36-45.
- . "V edinom rabočem stroju." *Literaturnaja Rossija* (January 1, 1972).
- . "Vesennjaja pesnja." *Ogonek*, No. 15 (1972), pp. 8-9.
- . Review of Akira Kurosava's *Dersu Uzala*. *Literaturnaja Rossija* (May 11, 1973), p. 20.
- . Review of *Pylajuščij kontinent*. *Sovetskaja kul'tura* (March 6, 1973).

- Review of V. Tublin's *Dokazatel'stva*. *Literaturnaja Rossija* (July 20, 1973), pp. 22-23.
- "Vybor geroja." *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, No. 8 (1973), pp. 89-91.
- "Vozvraščenie Akiry Kurosavy." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 8 (1974), pp. 159-76.

(2) *Bibliography of Nagibin's Translations*

- "Midega," by Grigol Čikovani. *Literaturnaja Gruzija*, No. 2 (1962), pp. 11-16.
- "Midega," by Grigol Čikovani. *Literaturnaja Armenija*, No. 2 (1964), p. 68-73.
- "Soni," by Grigol Čikovani. *Literaturnaja Gruzija*, No. 5 (1964), pp. 40-51.
- "Tagu," by Grigol Čikovani. *Literaturnaja Gruzija*, No. 11 (1964), pp. 31-35.
- "Mal'sekko," by Grigol Čikovani. *Literaturnaja Gruzija*, No. 4 (1965), pp. 23-29.
- "Žena oxotnika," by S. Ederne. *Znamja*, No. 11 (1972), pp. 158-178.

(3) *Bibliography of Nagibin's Works Written/Translated*

in Collaboration with Others

- and N. Mel'nikov. "K granicam Vostočnoj Prussii." *Trud* (August 4, 1944), p. 2.
- and N. Mel'nikov. "Inžener," *Trud* (January 9, 1945).
- and O. Rovinskij. "Bol'sie puti." *Večernjaja Moskva* (March 8, 1948).
- and L. Tisov. "Ščastlivyj god." *Socialističeskoe zemledelie*, (January 3, 1950).
- and L. Tisov. "Vstreča." *Sovetskij vojn*, No. 10 (1953), pp. 18-19.
- and Ja. Rykačev. *Velikoe posol'stvo*. Moscow: "DETGIZ," 1959.
- and Others. "Kak my pišem." *Voprosy literatury*, Nos. 5, 7, and 8 (1962), pp. 150-161, 162-172, and 162-177.

- and S. Serebrjakova, trans. "Gvanca," by Grigol Čikovani. *Literaturnaja Gruzija*, No. 6 (1967), pp. 42-57.
- and S. Serebrjakova, trans. "Doroga smerti," by Grigol Čikovani. *Literaturnaja Gruzija*, No. 4 (1968), pp. 9-26.
- and Others. "Glavnaja zadača." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 12 (1968), pp. 1-9.
- and S. Serebrjakova, trans. From "Odišskie rasskazy," by Grigol Čikovani. *Družba narodov*, No. 12 (1968), pp. 64-76.
- and C. Solodar'. "Koe - čto o Grenoble." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (February 14, 1968), p. 14.
- and C. Solodar'. "Posle Olimpiady - pered Olimpiadoj." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (February 21, 1968), p. 12.
- and Others. "Moj trud vliwaetsja v trud moej respubliky." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (February 17, 1971), pp. 4-7.
- and Others. "Vesna pjatiletki." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (April 28, 1971), p. 2.
- and Others. "Iz otzyvov sovetskix pisatelej o Bunine." *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, Kn. 84 (1973), pp. 365-74.

SECTION TWO

- Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., 1958.
- Aizenštok, Jeremija, "Frontovye povesti Jurija Nagibina." *Zvezda*, No. 6 (1961), pp. 208-210.
- Alexandrova, Vera. *A History of Soviet Literature*. Trans. by Mirra Ginsburg. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1963.
- Amlinskij, Vladimir, "Jurij Nagibin. Literaturnyj portret." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (January 14, 1970), p. 6.
- . "Žizn' i smert' 'radiansdata.'" *Moskovskij Komsomolec* (December 17, 1959), p. 3.
- Aronov, A. "Za Šaternikovym i čut' dal'se." *Moskovskij komsomolec* (September 15, 1974).
- Atarov, Nikolaj. "Čelovek iz glubiny pejzaža." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 12 (1972), pp. 103-112.
- . Introduction to Ju. Nagibin's *Izbrannye proizvedenija*. 2 vols. Moscow: "Xudožestvennaja literatura." 1973, pp. 5-21.
- . "Navstreču sobstvennomu darovaniju." *Literaturnaja gazeta*, No. 122 (1960), p. 3.
- Axmadulina, Bella. "Čistye prudy. Literaturnyj scenarij po libretto Ju. Nagibina." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 1 (1964), pp. 18-67.
- Babočkina, Natalja. "Vgljadites' s ljubov'ju." *Literaturnaja Rossiya*. (August 7, 1970), p. 18.
- Baskakov, V. "Mir bol'six čuvstv." *Voprosy literatury*, No. 1 (1958), pp. 3-19.
- Belza, Igor'. "Žizn' v muzike." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (September 23, 1970), p. 8.
- Billington, J. H. *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966.
- Booth, W. C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

- Borisova, Inna. "Put' na perednij kraj." *Družba narodov*, No. 4 (1959), pp. 233-37.
- Borisov, B. and A. Ševčenko. "Replika kritiku Ju. Kusenko." *Znamja*, No. 2 (1959), pp. 232-33.
- Bowra, C. M. *The Creative Experiment*. New York: Grove Press, 1948.
- Brjabina, N. "Na tixom ozere i drugie rasskazy." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 9 (1967), p. 115.
- Brown, D. "The Očerok: Suggestions Toward a Redefinition." *In American Contributions to the Sixth International Congress of Slavists*. Vol. 2. Edited by W. E. Harkins. The Hague: Moulton, 1969, pp. 1-13.
- Brown, E. J. *Russian Literature Since the Revolution*. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1969.
- . *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature: 1928-1932*. New York: Octagon Books, 1971.
- Čerkasskij, M. "Detaili i mysl'." *Neva*, No. 5 (1957), pp. 178-84.
- Charques, Richard. *A Short History of Russia*. London: The English University Press, 1959.
- Čiževskij, D. "Čexov in the Development of Russian Literature." *In Čexov: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Edited by R. L. Jackson. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967, pp. 49-61.
- Cirlot, J. E. *A Dictionary of Symbols*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1962.
- Čudakova, M. and A. Čudakov. "Iskusstvo celogo. Zametki o sovremennom rasskaze." *Novyj mir*, No. 2 (1963), pp. 239-54.
- Dajredžiev, B. "Rasskaz v tolstom žurnale." *Večernjaja Moskva* (October 1, 1946).
- Dibahl, Erika. "The Theme of Man and Nature in the Works of Konstantin Paustovskij." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. New York University, 1974.
- Dmitriev, S. "Nagibin, Ju. M.," in Jurij Nagibin's *Čistye prudy*. Moscow: "Moskovskij rabočij," 1962, pp. 552-57.
- Dobin, E. S. *Geroj. Sjužet. Detal'*. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," (1962), pp. 131-45.
- Dolezel, L. "The Typology of the Narrator: Point of View Fiction." *In To Honor Roman Jakobson*. Vol. I. The Hague: Mouton, 1958.

- Dorofeev, S. V. "Rasskazy Nagibina," in *Ju. Nagibin, Rannej vesnoj*. Moscow: GOSLITIZDAT, 1961, pp. 457-62.
- Drobot, Galina. "Mudrost' detstva." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (February 27, 1970), p. 11.
- Durant, W. *The Story of Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953.
- Dyčko, D. "Tvoe orudie i oružie." *Znamja*, No. 9 (1972), pp. 238-42.
- Elberg, Miriam. "Children as Portrayed by Soviet Prose Writers During the Period of the 'Thaw.'" Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. New York University, 1971.
- El'jaševič, A. *Geroi istinnye i mnimye*. Leningrad: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1963, pp. 196-98.
- . "Xaraktery i sjužety." *Znamja*, No. 9 (1957), p. 105.
- . *Iskusstvo prinalležit narodu*. Leningrad, 1960, pp. 73-74.
- Ellman, R. and C. Feidelson, Jr., eds. *The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Ermolaev, H. *Soviet Literary Theories 1917-1934: The Genesis of Socialist Realism*. University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 1963.
- Fedotov, G. P. *The Russian Religious Mind*. New York: Harper and Row, 1960.
- Filippovskij, N. "Vozraščenie k žizni." *Moskovskij komsolec* (October 2, 1963), p. 3.
- Fomenko, L. N. *Obraz sovetskogo voina v xudožestvennoj literature*. Moscow: VOENIZDAT, 1963, pp. 85-87.
- . "Pobeždaet xudožnik." *Znamja*, No. 9 (1973), pp. 221-31.
- Friedman, N. "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept." *MLA*, LXXX, No. 5 (1955), 1160-1184.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Gedenkov, V. "Na derevenskie temy." *Junost'*, No. 10 (1955).
- Gibian, George. "New Trends in the Novel." *Survey*, No. 36 (April-June, 1961), pp. 49-55.
- . "Soviet Literature During the 'Thaw,'" in *Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia, 1917-62*. Edited by Max Hayward and Leopold Labedz. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.

- Glinkin, I. "Temy - geroi - konflikty." *Zvezda*, No. 3 (1963).
- Gor, G. "Jurij Nagibin - *Bolšoe serdce*." *Zvezda*, No. 1 (1945), pp. 147-48.
- Gromov, P. P. *Geroj i vremja*. Leningrad: "Sovetskij pisatel," 1961.
- . "Zametki o literature voennyx let." *Zvezda*, No. 2 (1945).
- Gubko, M. "Čelovek pobeždaet." *Zvezda*, No. 3 (1963).
- Hamilton, E. *Mythology*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1942.
- . *Mythology*. New York: The New American Library, 1963.
- Holiday, G. F. Review of *Echo: Short Stories by A. Grin, K. Fedin, Y. Kuranov, V. Lidin, Y. Nagibin, L. Panteleyev, E. Permyak, M. Prishvin, G. Skulsky*, in *Slavic and East European Journal*, X (1966), 208-210.
- Hunter Blair, Katherine. *Review of Soviet Literature*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966.
- Harkins, W. E. *Dictionary of Russian Literature*. New York: Philological Library, 1956.
- Haustov, L. "Poètičeskie rasskazy." *Neva*, No. 7 (1955), p. 179.
- Hayward, Max. "Conflict and Change in Literature." *Survey*, No. 46 (January, 1963), pp. 9-22.
- Holthusen, J. *Twentieth Century Russian Literature: A Critical History*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972.
- Ignat'eva, N. "Byt' čelovekom." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 4 (1963), pp. 97-99.
- Iof'ev, M. "Pisatel' v puti." *Novyj mir*, No. 3 (1959), pp. 235-40.
- Izuitov, A. *Problema psixologizma v èstetike i literature*. Leningrad: "Nauka," 1970, pp. 40-57.
- Janov, A. "Položitel'nyj geroj ili Don Kixot?" *Voprosy literatury*, No. 8 (August, 1966).
- Juzovskij, Ju. "O rasskazax Jurija Nagibina." *Oktjabr'*, No. 9 (1953), pp. 182-86.
- Kalinenko, O. "Madonny iz Sudži." *Moskovskaja pravda* (December 22, 1967).
- Kamjanov, V. "Uroki dostoinstva." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (September 10, 1971), p. 9.

- Karaganov, A. "Trubnikov snova pod obstrelom." *Voprosy literatury*, No. 8 (1966), pp. 22-31.
- Karetnikova, M. "Lirizm i lželirizm." *Molodaja gvardija*, No. 6 (1962), p. 263.
- Kedrina, Z. "Romantika i žizn'." *Smena*, No. 16 (1953), p. 18.
- Klado, N. "Pis'ma bez konvertov." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 12 (1959), pp. 116-22.
- Kogan, A. "Odin rasskaz." *Sibirskie ogni*, No. 9 (1964), pp. 183-86.
- Komissarov, A. "O psixologičeskoj dostovernosti." *Neva*, No. 3 (1960), p. 184.
- Konstantinov, Ju. "Soldaty velikoj vojny." *Zvezda*, No. 9 (1958), pp. 221-27.
- Kovalev, V. A., ed. *Russkij sovetskij rasskaz*. Leningrad: "Nauka," 1970.
- Kovalev, V. A. and A. I. Pavlovskij, eds. *Problemy psixologizma v sovetskoj literature*. Leningrad: "Nauka," 1970.
- Kozlov, I. "Čutkaja duša xudožnika." *Ogonek*, No. 20 (1966), p. 23.
- . "Po raznym stranam." *Znamja*, No. 9 (1968), pp. 242-45.
- Krasnova, L. "Sovremennyj sovetskij rasskaz. Tvorčestvo Ju. Nagibina." *Dopovidi ta povidomlenija*. Drogobič: Pedinstitut im I. Ja Franko, 1962, pp. 9-13.
- Kristó-Nagy, I. "Nagibin," in *Az úz szovjet irodalom*. Edited by János Elbert and László Kardos. Budapest: Gondolat, n.d.
- Kulešov, A. "Dobrota sporta." *Večernjaja Moskva* (March 21, 1973), p. 3.
- Kuprin, A. I. *Sobranie sočinenij*. Vol. 3. Moscow: "Xudožestvennaja literatura," 1971, 201-18.
- Kurova, K., ed. *Problemy psixologizma v sovetskoj literature*. Leningrad: "Nauka," 1970.
- Kusenko, Ju. "Ne v nogu so stroem." *Moskva*, No. 11 (1968), pp. 224-29.
- Kvašnin, V. "Klimov + Marusja = rokovaja ljubov'." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (August 12, 1970).
- Lapšin, M. "S ljubov'ju k čeloveku." *Moskovskij komsomolec* (April 4, 1970), p. 3.
- Lebedinskaja, L. "Nemota mnogoslovija." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (April 12, 1972).

- Levickij, Lev. *Konstantin Paustovskij. Očerki tvorčestva*. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1963.
- Levin, F. "Nado by po azimutu..." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (September 25, 1968).
- Lovejoy, A. O. *The Great Chain of Being*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- Lubbock, Percy. *The Craft of Fiction*. New York: Viking Press, 1957.
- Lukaševič, V. "Pogovorim o rasskaze." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (August 16, 1955), p. 3.
- Lutterbacher, Otto. *Die Landschaft in Gottfried Kellers Prosawerken*. "Sprache und Dichtung" Series, Heft 8. Tübingen, 1911.
- McLean, H. and W. Vickery, eds. *The Year of Protest, 1956*. New York: Vantage Books, 1961.
- Maevskaja, T. P. *Idei i obrazy russkogo narodničeskogo romana*. Kiev: "Naukova dumka," 1975.
- Magidoff, Robert. *Guide to Russian Literature*. New York: University Press, 1964.
- Maguire, R. A. *Red Virgin Soil: Soviet Literature in the 1920's*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- Makarov, A. "Rasskazy Jurija Nagibina." *Sovetskij vojn*, No. 21 (1953), p. 19.
- Makarova, M. "Sila duxa." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 9 (1968), pp. 37-41.
- Makina, M. "Na končike luča." *Moskva*, No. 6 (1972), pp. 207-13.
- Manaeva, D. "O vojne bez vojny." *Sovetskaja kul'tura* (November 15, 1969).
- Mannilov, P. "Rasskaz pooščrjajuščij brakon'erstvo." *Oxota i oxotnič'e xozjajstvo*, No. 1 (1958), p. 59.
- Mar, E. "Putešestvie v stranu detstva." *Večernjaja Moskva* (March 9, 1972).
- Maslennikov, V. "Ju. Nagibin. Momental'nye fotografii." *Literaturnaja Rossiya*, No. 36 (1966).
- Matin, G. "Truba zovet." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (December 3, 1965).
- Medvedeva, E. "Razbuženoe bespokojstvo." *Izvestija* (January 30, 1970).
- Meščerjakova, N. Ja. "Ju. M. Nagibin. Zimnij dub." *Literatura v škole*, No. 2 (1972), pp. 36-42.

- Meyer, Priscilla Ann. "Aksënov and Soviet Prose of the 1950's and 1960's." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Princeton University, 1971.
- Mil', L. "Ljubov' v vakuume." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (May 1, 1968).
- Mirsky, D. S. *A History of Russian Literature*. Edited by F. J. Whitfield. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.
- Mitin, G. "V trex izmerenijax." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (February 14, 1968).
- Mixajlova, L. "Bol'soe v malom." *Moskva*, No. 12 (1959), pp. 179-94.
- Mixal'čenko, I. "The Theme of the Russian Village in the Soviet Prose of the Post-Stalinist Period." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. New York University, 1972.
- Mlynek, A. "Rasskaz o našix sovremennikax." *Moskovskij komsomolec* (October 19, 1955).
- Moffett, J. and K. McElheny, eds. *Points of View: An Anthology of Short Stoires*. New York: The New American Library, 1966.
- Muratov, L. "Ètot sportivnyj fil'm..." *Leningradskaja pravda* (January 6, 1971), p. 3.
- , "Ètot sportivnyj fil'm." *Leningradskaja pravda* (January 24, 1971).
- Nazarenko, V. *Jazyk iskusstva*. Leningrad: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1961.
- Nazarova, L. "Ščastie nužno zavoevat'." *Junost'*, No. 5 (1956), p. 71.
- Nikolin, Evgenij. "Polnoj dušoj." *Neva*, No. 7 (1963), pp. 171-76.
- Novikova, Ju. "Rasskazy o pervyx podvigax." *Pioner*, No. 7 (1956), pp. 77-78.
- Ognev, A. "Problemnyj rasskaz." *Sibirskie ogni*, No. 2 (1967), pp. 170-76.
- Osinin, V. "Malen'kie rasskazy o bol'soj sud'be." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (August 6, 1969).
- Ozerov, V. *Na putjax socialističeskogo realizma*. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1958.
- Pacira, Lydia. "Vladimir Tendrjakov: A Survey and Analysis of His Works." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Michigan State University, 1975.
- Parrott, Ray Jennings, Jr. "Mixail Mixajlovič Prišvin: Major Short Work 1924-1941." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of Michigan, 1974.

- Pankov, V. *Vremja i knigi*. Moscow: "Prosveščenie," 1964.
- Paustovskij, Konstantin. *Sobranie sočinenij v vos'mi tomach*. Vol. 8. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1969.
- Peckham, M. "Toward a Theory of Romanticism." in *Romanticism: Points of View*. Edited by R. F. Glecknew and G. E. Enscoe. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963, pp. 212-27.
- Pistunova, A. "Dorogi k ljudjam." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (August 17, 1973), p. 16.
- Pomorska, Krystyna. Introduction to *Fifty Years of Russian Prose*. Vol 2. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1971, 1-7.
- Povoljaev, V. "Načinaja s pereulkov detstva." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (September 27, 1972), p. 5.
- Pozdnyšev, A. "Bibliotečka sovetskogo voina." *Krasnaja zvezda* (June 6, 1951).
- Reavey, G. *Soviet Literature To-Day*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969.
- Richards, D. J. Introduction to *Yurii Nagibin: Selected Short Stories*. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1963, pp. vii, xxv.
- Rjabikina, S. "Pamjat' serdca." *Naš sovremennik*, No. 7 (1972), pp. 123-25.
- Romenec, M. *Problema gumanizma v sovremennom russkom rasskaze*. Kharkov: "Izdatel'stvo Xar'kovskogo universiteta," 1969.
- Ruhle, J. *Literature and Revolution: A Critical Study of the Writer and Communism in the Twentieth Century*. Translated by Jean Steinberg. New York: Frederick A. Raegar, 1969.
- Runes, D. D. *Dictionary of Philosophy*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1960.
- Rusakiev, Simeon, and others, eds. *Izobraženie čeloveka v russkoj klas-sičeskoj i sovetskoj literature*. Sofia: "Nauka i iskusstvo," 1973.
- Russkie sovetskie pisateli prozaiki. Bibliografičeskij ukazatel'*. Vol. 3. Leningrad, 1964, pp. 108-23.
- Rymačenko, Z. and G. Sevarov. "Istorija navsegda soxranit..." *Kom-somol'skaja pravda* (December 5, 1958).
- Salonen, H. *Die Landschaft bei I. S. Turgenev*. Helsingfors, 1915.
- Savvin, V. "Prizvanije." *Volga*, No. 4 (1972), pp. 182-84.
- Scholes, R. and R. Kellogg. *The Nature of Narrative*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

----- . "The Problem of Reality: Illustration and Representation."
In *The Theory of the Novel*. Edited by P. Stevick. New York:
The Free Press, 1967, pp. 371-84.

Sedova, N. P. "Iz otzyvov sovetskix pisatelej o Bunine. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, Kn. 84, No. 2 (1973).

Semanova, M. L. *K voprosu o tradicijax Čexova v sovetskoj proze*.
Moscow, 1955.

Semaško, T. "Èstafeta dobroty." *V mire knig*, No. 6 (1972), p. 24.

Šapošnikov, V. "Dela semejnye dela serdečnye." *Sibirskie ognj*, No. 9 (1974), pp. 157-73.

Šarov, A. "Sud." *Novyj mir*, No. 12 (1967).

Šubin, E. A. *Sovremennyj russkij rasskaz*. Leningrad: "Nauka," 1974.

Simmons, Ernest J. *Introduction to Russian Realism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965.

Slonim M. *From Chekhov to the Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.

----- . *Soviet Russian Literature, Writers, and Problems 1917-1967*.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Smirnov, O. "Vernost' žanru." *Novyj mir*, No. 11 (November, 1973), pp. 264-67.

Smirnova, V. "Xolodnen'kimi slovami..." *Znamja*, Nos. 9-10 (1943), p. 316.

Solodar', C. "Dejstivitel'no izbrannoe." *Ogonek*, No. 44 (1973), p. 15.

Soskin, A. "Vozmožnosti žanra." *Zvezda*, No. 3 (1953), pp. 145-58.

Ssachno, Helen von. *Aufstand der Person: Sowjetliteratur seit Stalins Tod*. Berlin: Argon Verlag, 1965.

Steininger, Alexander. *Literatur und Politik in der Sowjetunion nach Stalins Tod*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965.

Strauman, Heinrich. *The Literary Reputation of Hemingway in Europe*.
Edited by Roger Asselineau. New York: New York University Press, 1965.

Strelkova, I. "Pobeždaet mužestvo." *Literaturnaja Rossiya* (April 4, 1969).

Struve, G. *Soviet Russian Literature: 1917-1919*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951.

- Sukoncev, A. "Papy, mamy, Val'ka Kosoj i pisatel' Ju. Nagibin." *Komsomol'skaja pravda* (August 1, 1958).
- Surkov, E. "Cena pravdy." *Iskusstvo kino*, No. 2 (1965), pp. 18-28.
- Surocev, Ju. "Otkuda beretsa sxema." *Oktjabr'*, No. 6 (1975), pp. 197-202.
- Szymak, Jadwiga. "Opowiadanie myśliwskie Jurija Nagibina." *Slavia Orientalis*, No. 16 (1967), pp. 292-300.
- Tarasenkov, A. *Stat'i o literature*. Vol. 2. Moscow: GIXL, 1958, pp. 182-87.
- Thorpe, J., ed. *The Aims and Methods of Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1970.
- Tolčénova, N. "Čudo čudnoe - žizn'..." *Sovetskaja kul'tura* (January 13, 1968).
- , "Ne baby - madonny!" *Teatral'naja žizn'*, No. 13 (1968), pp. 4-5.
- Trifonova, T. "Literaturnaja Moskva." *Moskovskaja pravda* (February 10, 1957).
- Tunickij, A. "Rasskazy o sovetskix ljudjax." *Molodoj kolchoznik*, No. 4 (1954), p. 31.
- Van der Eng-Liedmeier, A. M. *Soviet Literary Characters: An Investigation into the Portrayal of Soviet Men in Russian Prose 1917-1953*. The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1959.
- Vasil'eva, N. "Jurij Nagibin." *Oktjabr'*, No. 12 (1958), pp. 212-16.
- Vaškevič, L. "Pravo na otkrovenie." *Put' Lenina* (April 2, 1969).
- Velexova, N. "Romantičeskaja legenda." *Moskovskaja pravda* (June 11, 1970).
- Vinokur, G. O. *The Russian Language: A Brief History*. Translated by M. A. Forsyth and edited by J. Forsyth. Cambridge: University Press, 1971.
- Vishnyakova, O., ed. *Echo: Short Stories by A. Grin, K. Fedin, Y. Kuranov, V. Ledin, Y. Nagibin, L. Pantelejev, E. Permyak, M. Prishvin, G. Skul'sky*. Translated by V. Korotky. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 196[?].
- Vorob'ev, Evgenij. "Vetvi zimnego duba." *Novyj mir*, No. 11 (1965), pp. 247-50.
- Voronov, V. "V razdumjax o derevne." *Literaturnaja gazeta* (December 26, 1964).

- Whitney, Thomas P., trans. *The New Writing in Russia*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, n.d.
- Xajlov, A. "Rasskazy o sovremennike." *Sibirskie ogni*, No. 4 (1961), pp. 173-79.
- Xmel'nickaja, T. *Golosa Vremeni. Stat'i o sovremennoj sovetskoj i zarubežnoj literature*. Moscow: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1963.
- Xolopova, V. F. "Iz nabljudenij nad poètikoj 'Poezdki s drugim.'" *Trudy Samarkandskogo universiteta*, No. 238 (1973), pp. 102-11.
- Xoxlov, N. Introduction to Ju. M. Nagibin's *Moja Afrika*. Moscow: "Nauka," 1973.
- Zamorij, T. P. *Sovremennij russkij rasskaz*. Kiev: "Naukova dumka," 1968.
- Žegalov, N. N. *Sovetskaja literatura v bor'be za novogo čeloveka*. Moscow: "Znamja," 1962.
- Zotov, M. "I nebo v almazax, i bezdna nebytja." *Znamja*, No. 12 (1974), pp. 248-50.
- . "Obyknovennye geroi." *Izvestija* (March 18, 1974).

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293101910275