
The Soviet Novel

History as Ritual

KATERINA CLARK

With a new Afterword
by the Author

The University of Chicago Press • Chicago and London

What is Socialist Realism? It is not, first of all, a *single* doctrine. We now recognize that that old bogey, "monolithic communism," does not exist—that there are, instead, many different communisms. In much the same way, there are many different Socialist Realisms. Different countries, different political parties, and critics with different *partis pris* have each evolved different definitions of it.

Even if Socialist Realism is confined to the meaning "officially sponsored Soviet literature," it soon becomes apparent that among the various canonical accounts of it there is no *one* that is incontrovertible or in any sense comprehensive. Some official pronouncements on the theory of Socialist Realism have been important (e.g., that literature should be "optimistic," that it should be accessible to the masses, that it should be "party-minded"), but they are too general to have guided such a distinctive practice.

It is not in theoretical writings but in practical examples that one should look for an answer to the question What is Socialist Realism? Soviet scholars have been arguing since the term was coined in 1932 over what it means, and their debates are, in essence, mere academic hairsplitting. Scholars still argue, for instance, as to how much "realism" and how much "romanticism" it should entail.¹ In the meantime, Socialist Realism has long since evolved into a highly conventionalized literary practice. Consequently, instead of going into the Byzantine arguments that surround the question What is Socialist Realism?, I shall use a strictly pragmatic approach and define Soviet Socialist Realism as a canonical doctrine defined by its patristic texts.

Nowhere has Soviet Socialist Realism been more conventionalized than in the subject of this inquiry, the novel. Although the clichés of the novel are in some measure officially fostered, the source for them has not been theoretical pronouncements but, rather, official "model" novels. Ever since 1932, when the

Writers' Union was formed and Socialist Realism was declared the sole method appropriate for Soviet literature, most official pronouncements on literature, and especially the addresses that open every Writers' Congress, have contained a short list of exemplars (*obrazcy*) that are to guide the writers in their future work (see Appendix B). Each new version of the list contains as its core the official classics of Socialist Realism; a few recently published works are then added on. No two lists are exactly the same, and additions to earlier lists tend to be left out in later versions. However, there is a core group of novels that are cited with sufficient regularity to be considered a canon. These include M. Gorky's *Mother* and *Klim Samgin*; D. Furmanov's *Chapaev*; A. Serafimovich's *The Iron Flood*; F. Gladkov's *Cement*; M. Sholokhov's *Quiet Flows the Don* and *Virgin Soil Uplifted*; A. Tolstoy's *The Road to Calvary* and *Peter the First*; N. Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered*; and A. Fadeev's *The Rout* and *The Young Guard*.

These canonical works have been a crucial factor in determining the shape of the Soviet novel. There was a good deal of external stimulus for following these exemplars besides the mere fact that they were cited by authoritative voices. In the early thirties a literary institute was founded to train new writers to follow the models. A preferential scale of royalty payments and other positive inducements, such as dachas and "creative" stays at writers' Houses of Rest, were dangled before the writer as positive inducements to follow the developing official traditions of the Soviet novel. In other words, when authoritative voices cried out "Give us more heroes like X [the hero of some model novel]," the cry did not fall on entirely deaf ears.

As a result, the business of writing novels soon became comparable to the procedure followed by medieval icon painters. Just as the icon painter looked to his original to find the correct angle for a particular saint's hands, the correct colors for a given theme, and so on, so the Soviet novelist could copy the gestures, facial expressions, actions, symbols, etc., used in the various canonical texts.

The Soviet writer did not merely copy isolated tropes, characters, and incidents from the exemplars; he organized the entire plot structure of his novel on the basis of patterns present in the exemplars. From the mid-thirties on, most novels were, *de facto*, written

to a single master plot, which itself represents a synthesis of the plots of several of the official models (primarily Gorky's *Mother* and Gladkov's *Cement*).

This shaping pattern does not account for everything in a given Soviet novel. Despite the frequent Western charge that the Soviet novel is clichéd and repetitive, it is not actually true that every novel is nothing more than a reworking of a single formula. In any given novel one must distinguish between, on the one hand, its overarching plot or macrostructure and, on the other, the microstructures, the smaller units, which are threaded together by this shaping formula—the digressions, subplots, and so on. If a novel is looked at in terms of these smaller units, much of it will be found to be somewhat journalistic and topical; it may, for instance, be geared to praising a recent Soviet achievement or to broadcasting or rationalizing a new decree or official policy. In other words, much of it is based on ephemeral material.

The overarching plot of a given novel is not ephemeral—that is, it is not tied to a particular time. If its plot were stripped of all references to a specific time or place or to a particular theme of the novel, it could be distilled to a highly generalized essence. This abstract version of a given novel's plot is the element that is, in effect, shaped by the master plot.

If a novel is to be written to the canon, this master plot controls the most crucial moments of the novel—its beginning, climax, and end. For the rest it may provide no more than general guidelines, together with a range of symbols, motifs, etc., to be used in certain formulaic situations. However, the most common variety of Soviet novel, the production novel, uses the full version of the master plot (see Appendix A): canonical functions in this case determine the whole course of the novel.

Not all Soviet novels follow the master plot. Not even all novels listed in the canon follow it completely. That official classic, Sholokhov's *Quiet Flows the Don*, for example, shows only occasional traces of the master plot, and these primarily in connection with lesser characters.² Thus, even though statistically my hypothetical master plot has been followed to a greater or lesser degree by the overwhelming majority of Soviet novels (or Stalinist novels, at any rate), its status as a defining trait of the novel tradition does not depend on the actual percentage of novels patterned

on it, for the master plot is not random or arbitrary in the sequence it sets up: it illustrates major tenets of ideology.

The master plot is the one constant that links most novels of the Stalin period and, to a lesser extent, those of the post-Stalin era as well. I would go so far as to say that it *is* Socialist Realism: in order for a Soviet novel to be Socialist Realist, it must replicate the master plot.

What are the sources of the master plot? Surely it did not evolve *in vacuo*? Did Soviet writers of the thirties know *which* gestures, tropes, etc., to copy from the disparate novels assigned as models? Did they know how to put all the pieces together to make a coherent narrative frame, and, if so, *how* did they know these things?

The evolution of the Socialist Realist tradition owes some debt to artistic ingenuity on the part of the writers themselves, but the process was larger in scope than its purely literary context. Obviously, politics played some part. One cannot analyze either the dynamic of the master plot's evolution or the meanings of its formulaic components without looking at its relations both to politics and ideology, on the one hand, and to literary traditions on the other. On the whole, the Western approach has been to assume that the contents of Soviet novels have in some way been "handed down" by the authorities or else have slavishly been designed to be pleasing to them. Westerners see this as an unnatural state of affairs, since they conceive it as normal for literature to be fairly autonomous; in this view, Soviet literature, if it achieves the lofty role the Russian intelligentsia has *traditionally* prescribed for it, should itself "hand down" ideas to society. Of course this "unnatural state of affairs" did not come into being without resistance. Western observers tend to see Soviet intellectual history as a long, epic struggle between "the regime" and "the intellectuals" or, among Soviet intellectuals, between the "diehards" or "conservatives," who support the regime, and the "liberals," who want less "straitjacketing" (e.g., being obliged to follow the master plot)—who want, perhaps, to express a more complex, even Western, account of reality. But the prominence of ultrarightist views among the most recent crop of Soviet dissidents should give us pause.

The trouble with this historical model is not that its categories are inaccurate but that it is an illusion to think that the two parties—

the "regime" versus "the intellectuals"—could in any circumstances be completely autonomous and free systems. They are implicated with each other more closely than in most other cultures. Moreover, in the Soviet Union there is not something extra-historical called "the government" or "the Party." Both are sub-functions of the larger system of the complete culture to which they belong. Indeed, the Party itself is in a sense only one group of that larger class called the intelligentsia. Moreover, it houses within its confines much internal debate and has been known on occasion to adopt values previously held by a dissident group. Likewise, there is no such thing as an independent literary system, as we are increasingly beginning to suspect.

Thus, the master plot was not merely "handed down" to the Soviet writers from above. It is of course true that the leadership fostered the canonization of the master plot, and it is also true that they saw to it that the spectrum of possible literary approaches became very narrow. Nevertheless, the movement from politics and ideology to literature was far from being a one-way street.

The relationship of literary to extraliterary factors is always a complex one. Literature is, on the one hand, an autonomous series, having its own traditions and generating new forms within those traditions; on the other hand, it can never be completely independent of the extraliterary aspects of its own culture, for, if it were, its signs would have no meanings. Literature interacts with *many* other aspects of culture, not just with politics and ideology. I say "interacts with," because literature never merely "reflects" extraliterary matter; it always adapts it to fit its own traditions. Bakhtin ("Medvedev") sees the process of interaction as dialectical:

The artistic work is . . . drawn into the . . . conflicts and contradictions [within the ideological horizon]. It is penetrated by and absorbs some elements of the ideological environment and turns away other elements external to it. Therefore, in the process of history, "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" dialectically change places, and, of course, do not remain unchanged as they do so. That which is extrinsic to literature today, is an extra-literary reality, can enter literature as an intrinsic, constructive factor tomorrow. And that which is literary today can turn out to be an extra-literary reality tomorrow.³

In the Soviet Union the interaction between literary and nonliterary

worlds has been even closer than is generally the case; the borders between literature and journalism, for instance, are often difficult to perceive. This is so because modern Russian literature and the functions of the forum have traditionally been close, and the political powers have actively promoted an intensification of this relationship. Still, "politics" or "ideology" should not be identified as some monolithic entity with which literature has interacted. Not only has the process of interaction been dialectical rather than a one-way street, but the "extraliterary" pole of the dialectic has been made up of several distinct components, each of which has in turn interacted with the others—and again dialectically.

There are at least six major elements in Soviet society and culture that play a part in the generative process of literature. First, there is literature itself; second, there is Marxism-Leninism; third, there are the Russian radical intelligentsia's traditional myths and hero images, which the Bolsheviks brought with them when they took power in Russia in 1917; fourth, there are the various nonliterary forums through which the official viewpoint is disseminated (the press, the political platform, theoretical writings, official histories, and the like), which I shall refer to in this book by the general term "rhetoric"; fifth come political events and policies; and, sixth, there are the individual persons who are the principal actors in these political events, together with their roles and values. In some respects, any change in any one of these elements is the product of ongoing trends within its own "series"; but for the most part they are interdependent, and change in any one of them *potentially* affects changes in any or all five of the others (even Marxism-Leninism can be changed).

In short, it is too much of a simplification to see the symbols or master plot of Soviet literature as having come from politics via the refracting medium of rhetoric. The principal actors on the political scene were themselves caught up in acting out roles suggested to them by revolutionary lore, and much of that lore, in turn, originated in literature. Ultimately, the question What caused what? must be a chicken-and-egg question.

The elements that make up the master plot come, at one level, from within literature itself. In general the master plot continues one strand of prerevolutionary literature: it reworks the prevailing myths and tropes of Russian radical fiction and rhetoric of the

second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Also carried over has been some influence from folk and religious literature (though pre-Soviet radical texts used these sources, too).

But the master plot is by no means an isolated or purely literary phenomenon. Indeed, it could not have survived solely on its literary merits or role. The master plot plays a distinctive role for the entire Soviet culture.

Socialist Realism is essentially a name applied to Soviet culture's literary system rather than to a way of writing that is particularly "socialist" or "realist." Indeed, the "socialist" aspects and "realist" aspects of Soviet literature are more functions of the "superstructure" than they are of the "base." The "base" is the master plot.

The one invariant feature of all Soviet novels is that they are ritualized, that is, they repeat the master plot, which is itself a codification of major cultural categories. Here I mean "ritual" in the same sense as it is used by anthropologists. Ritual is a term for those social acts that are felt by the participants to concentrate the greatest amount of cultural meaning in them (with respect to the Soviet novel's master plot, this does not, of course, necessarily mean that the participants are personally in accord with these "meanings"). Rituals are that part of the language of culture in which signs achieve the lowest degree of arbitrariness. This is somewhat paradoxical, because they are, at the same time, the most conventionalized. All rituals have form, and they are successful in focusing otherwise diffuse cultural energies precisely in the degree to which they are formulaic. They provide a kind of shaping force to the energies that are most powerfully abroad in the society; they are a focusing lens for cultural forces.

The one thing that rituals have in common in any culture, as anthropologists from Van Gennep to Victor Turner have pointed out, is a concern for transformation of various kinds. Rituals personalize abstract cultural meanings and turn them into comprehensible narrative. This is the way they make specific meanings that would otherwise be general. The subject of the ritual "passes" from one state into another, well-known examples being the progression from boyhood to manhood or from foreigner to citizen.

The primary function of the master plot is very similar to that of ritual understood in these terms. It shapes the novel as a sort of parable for the working-out of Marxism-Leninism in history. The

novel takes as its focus a relatively modest figure, usually a Soviet worker, administrator, or soldier. This subject is known as the "positive hero." However modest he may be, the phases of his life symbolically recapitulate the stages of historical progress as described in Marxist-Leninist theory. The novel's climax ritually reenacts the climax of history in communism. This crucial role played by the positive hero is, indeed, the reason he has received so much attention from critics. When the cry goes out "Give us more heroes like X!" one may be sure that the novel in which the stages of X's life are portrayed shows skillful use of the master plot.

The ritual form of conventional Soviet novels comprises both iconic signs for positive heroes and a catalogue of plot functions they normally perform. Both the signs and the plot functions are encoded symbols, derived largely from prerevolutionary lore but with meanings that ultimately derive from Marxism-Leninism. The master plot is, however, much broader in the range of meanings it encompasses and is not confined to Marxism-Leninism for its subtext.

It is by now a commonplace of Western histories of the Soviet Union that during the thirties all public activity became more highly ritualized and that much of it was geared to legitimizing the hegemony of the Stalinist leadership by identifying its links with Lenin and Leninism. This development more or less coincided with the institutionalization of Socialist Realism (which occurred between 1932 and 1934). Not surprisingly, therefore, the signs and functions of the master plot that had meanings in Marxist-Leninist historiography also acquired established associations with the Soviet leadership and its connection to Lenin. Soviet novels became simultaneously parables of Marxism-Leninism and myths for maintaining the status quo.

In view of the novel's role as repository of official myths, extraordinary measures were taken to ensure that the purity of the formulas be preserved from book to book. It was, for instance, not merely political caprice that motivated the Party's spokesman Zhdanov, in 1946, when he called for strict adherence to doxology.⁴

In Stalinist novels, whatever the context, whatever the year, events can be relied upon to follow the prescribed pattern. The symbolic forms of literature are remarkably constant because this very constancy affirms "Leninist" continuity.

Thus it would seem that the Soviet novel offers perfect material for making a structural analysis of the master plot in terms of its formulaic phases, somewhat as Propp has done for the Russian folktale.⁵ That is, one could adduce a "grammar" of the Soviet novel. I have, in fact, provided something like a "grammar" of this kind in Appendix A. I have relegated it to this peripheral position because to provide a mere "grammar" of forms, an unvarying structural pattern in Soviet novels, ignoring contextual considerations, is to ride roughshod over the dimension of meaning, which, in the Soviet context, is all important.

The constancy with which the same signs recur in Soviet novels is in part deceptive. Continuity in the use of symbols need not be an accurate index to continuity of values. If, as most linguists now agree, the relationship between sign and meaning in ordinary language is not fixed but dynamic, then, surely, when language is used symbolically, this potential for change is increased. And in fact in the Soviet novel many of the formulaic tropes have, over time, changed or have at least been modified in their meanings.

The political anthropologist Abner Cohen has written about the relationship between political symbols (using "political symbols" in the extended sense as objects, concepts, or linguistic formations) and the changing world and power structure they are meant to support. Cohen cautions against seeing symbols as "mechanical reflections, or representations, of political reality" or of thinking that "Power relations and symbolic formations are . . . reducible one to the other." As he points out, power relations and symbolic formations are relatively autonomous, and the relations between the two are complex. "Symbols . . . stand *ambiguously* for a multiplicity of disparate meanings," and the same symbol can thus be used in different contexts to mean the same thing; we must "distinguish between symbolic *forms* and symbolic *functions*" or meanings. He continues:

Symbols achieve a measure of continuity-in-change by their ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings. A ceremonial may be repeated over and over again in the same form though its symbols may be charged with different meanings to accommodate new developments. Thus there is a continuous process of action and counteraction between the symbolic order and the power order even when there is no significant structural change.⁶

In other words language—and highly symbolic language *a fortiori*—is multivalent. Symbols can have several meanings, even at the same time, and they can often be used ambiguously.

Shalom Spiegel has shown how a major symbolic text of the Jewish people, the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, or Akedah, has been variously interpreted. Although the events of the story have remained substantially the same in each retelling, at various points in the history of the Jews the story has been interpreted in new ways, colored by their current aspirations and experiences.⁷ Something like this occurred with the Soviet novel. During the different phases of the Stalin era various clichés of the novel were interpreted in different ways. Some changes were made in the master plot, too, but these changes were on the whole semantic rather than formal.

The symbolic forms of Socialist Realism have not been used as a medium of expression for the official viewpoint alone. The intellectuals are, after all, more immediately involved in the business of literature than the leadership is, and they have also been able to profit from the multivalence of literature's iconic signs.

The traditional role of Russian literature has been, since at least Belinsky,⁸ to provide a forum for the most advanced ideas of the age, to bear witness to the grim realities of Russian life not admitted to in official sources; the self-image of Solzhenitsyn in our time provides a good example of this tradition. Most people in the West would contend that the various institutional controls placed on Soviet literature have all but robbed creative writing and criticism (at least that published through official channels) of this particular dimension. But they have certainly not done so entirely, and there is an incipient tension in fiction between its function as occasional writing and propagator of official myths and values, on the one hand, and, on the other, its more traditional role in modern Russia of standing in the forefront of intellectual life. This tension is not readily apparent, for it is expressed in the most delicate nuances.

When the formulaic patterns of the Soviet novel became fixed in the thirties, a system of signs became the core of the Socialist Realist system. These signs are polysemic in themselves, but, when incorporated in the master plot, they take on very definite, specific meanings. Nevertheless, as words, they must retain the potential for other meanings, and a skillful writer can play on this.

If a writer wanted his novel to be published, he had to use the proper language (epithets, catch phrases, stock images, etc.) and syntax (conventional ordering of events in accordance with the master plot). To do so was effectively a ritual act of affirmation of loyalty to the state. Once the writer had accomplished this, his novel could be called "party-minded." But he had room for play in the ideas these phenomena expressed because of the latent ambiguities of the signs themselves.

Each novel was written in a context affected by change, controversy, and even the author's own position. All these factors bear upon the individual work and have the power to change its meanings. New meanings can come from within the system of signs by the slightest rearrangement or emphasis or shading—metaphasis—of the standard signs and sequences. Such changes may be scarcely perceptible to an outsider not schooled in the tradition, but they would be striking to most Soviet readers. The system of signs is, simultaneously, the components of a ritual and a surrogate for the Aesopean language to which writers resorted in tsarist times when they wanted to outwit the censors. Thus, paradoxically, the very rigidity of Socialist Realism's formations permits freer expression than would be possible if the novel were less ritualized.

The formulaic signs of the Soviet novel have been used as a medium for debates to this day. When Stalin died in 1953, many writers set about to criticize his legacy, including the stiltedness of Socialist Realist fiction. Yet when they produced fiction containing critiques of Stalinism, they often used the ready-made code or system of signs of the Socialist Realist tradition. Inevitably, the system of signs was modified as a result; some epithets, for instance, changed their value import from positive to negative. Nevertheless, the changes came from within the tradition the writers were opposing. In the post-Khrushchev era, literature became more variegated in style and approach, yet one can still sense the presence of the Socialist Realist tradition even in much unofficial literature (underground publications and literature published in the West).

It would be too glib to conclude that this lingering attachment to the tradition was due to Soviet citizens' having been inculcated in its language for so long that they could not throw it off. But then one must ask why the conventions of Socialist Realism have this power.

I would suggest that the reason so many of the symbols of Socialist Realism continue to resonate is that they ring not just for the Bolsheviks. They are sufficiently broad and flexible to contain most of the separate currents that make up Soviet culture.

When Socialist Realism was launched in the early thirties, it led to the homogenization of Soviet literature. A major effect of this homogenization was that all writers henceforth began to use the same language. However, just as all speakers of English can express differing views while using roughly the same language, so likewise (although of course to a more limited extent) all Soviet writers could express varying views via the "language" of Socialist Realism. The linguistic imperialism that occasioned the influx of so many new speakers into the language group of the Bolsheviks had an effect not uncommon in cases of linguistic imperialism: while the writers were being issued the "uniform" of the new power, the agents of this power were simultaneously receiving the "mufti" of their new subjects. The ideas and values of divergent groups within the intelligentsia began to color the associations of the various elements of the official language. The result was a dynamic of cross-fertilization that involved not just literature but also five other major elements of Soviet culture, which, as I said above, interacted with it to produce Socialist Realism: Marxism-Leninism, revolutionary lore, rhetoric, political policies, and historical events, together with the actors within them.

For this exchange to occur, there had to be an effective medium for focusing it. This brings us back to our earlier remarks about ritual. The formulaic signs of the Soviet novel have proved so tenacious over time because they catch some of the burning issues and beliefs of the entire culture, not just of the official culture. The master plot is not merely a literary plot or even the formula for a literary plot. It is the literary expression of the master categories that organize the entire culture.

The problem posed in this book is thus a variant of the perennial question of continuity and change. Because the Soviet government is ideologically conservative and anxious to establish a "Leninist" connection for the current leadership, the novels written during its regime have used, to a remarkable degree, the *same* signs over the years, signs whose origins can in fact be traced back to well before 1917. But when are these signs really the *same*, and when are they *different* (because differently deployed)?

The signs of Soviet literature do not remain the same just because, as a ready-made code, they can be used as pawns in the ongoing contest between "conservatives" and "liberals," nor do they represent empty affirmations of allegiance to the status quo. In this book I hope to show that the *same* signs are used with such frequency because they encapsulate the polemics and dilemmas of the Russian intelligentsia that have been constant from at least the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. Bolshevism made its contribution to these polemics, and it promised a way out of these dilemmas; but the debate continues. Bolshevism simply gave it a new focus and a new language.

The "Spontaneity"/"Consciousness" Dialectic as the Structuring Force That Shapes the Master Plot

Rituals, as pointed out above, always involve some kind of transformation: the subject of the ritual goes from one state to another, and his progress, or "passage," enacts some central idea of the culture. Since the master plot of the Soviet novel provides a ritualized account of the Marxist-Leninist idea of historical progress, one might expect that the transition charted would involve movement from a class society through proletarian hegemony and on into that ultimate state, the classless society, i.e., communism. Actually, however, the class struggle per se has not been a consistent theme of the Soviet novel and has certainly not provided the structuring force for the novel's master plot.

The subtext that does shape the master plot is another fundamental idea of Marxism-Leninism, one that is a somewhat déclassé and more abstract version of the class-struggle account of history. In this version, historical progress occurs not by resolving class conflict but through the working-out of the so-called spontaneity/consciousness dialectic. In this dialectical model, "consciousness" is taken to mean actions or political activities that are controlled, disciplined, and guided by politically aware bodies. "Spontaneity," on the other hand, means actions that are not guided by complete political awareness and are either sporadic, uncoordinated, even anarchic (such as wildcat strikes, mass uprisings, etc.), or can be attributed to the workings of vast impersonal historical forces rather than to deliberate actions.

According to the Leninist model for historical progress, society from its earliest days has been locked in a dialectical struggle between the forces of "spontaneity" (which predominate in the earliest, most primitive social forms) and the forces of "consciousness" (which are present from the very beginning, although largely only as a potential). This dialectic provides the driving force of progress and leads to history's end in communism. It affects a series of increasingly higher-order syntheses ("leaps forward," or revolutions) resulting in ever-higher forms of both "spontaneity" and "consciousness." The ultimate stage of historical development, communism, is reached in a final synthesis, which resolves the dialectic once and for all. That final synthesis or ultimate revolution will result in the triumph of "consciousness," but the form of "consciousness" will then be such that it will no longer be in opposition to "spontaneity"; there will no longer be conflict between the natural responses of the people and the best interests of society. In other words, the end synthesis will resolve the age-old conflict between the individual and society.

The task of literature as generator of official myths is to provide object lessons in the working-out of the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic. As is generally true of ritual forms, the master plot personalizes the general processes outlined in Marxist-Leninist historiography by encoding them in biographical terms: the positive hero passes in stages from a state of relative "spontaneity" to a higher degree of "consciousness," which he attains by some individual revolution.

It has been possible to allegorize the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic because of the range of meanings these two terms can encompass. In the narrower context of the individual human being, as distinct from society at large, "consciousness" means political awareness and the complete self-control that enables the individual to be guided in all his actions by his awareness, whereas "spontaneity" refers to purely visceral, willful, anarchic, or self-centered actions. The great historical drama of struggle between the forces of spontaneity and the forces of consciousness is unfolded in a tale of the way one individual mastered his willful self, became disciplined, and attained to an extrapersonal identity. Thus, if you discount such trappings as the factory or kolkhoz setting and the Party meeting, the Socialist Realist novel might in effect be seen as a

politicized variant of the *Bildungsroman*, in which the hero achieves greater harmony both within himself and in relation to his society. Such a comparison cannot be taken very far, however, because the Socialist Realist novel is so highly ritualized that the hero's progress is neither individual nor self-valuable.

Why did the Socialist Realist novel end up with the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic as its underlying subject rather than the class struggle? This outcome can scarcely be described as having been sought "consciously" (rather than arising "spontaneously"), yet it was far from random or arbitrary. The answer to this question—an answer that is actually twofold—explains why the Soviet novel is a key document in Soviet cultural history.

In the first place, the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic is itself not an innocent doctrine, for it has always been at the center of the main controversies within Russian Marxism. Initially, when the first Russian Marxist groups were formed in the 1890s, the debate centered around what is often described as the voluntarist/determinist controversy, that is, briefly stated, the question whether history is made by the conscious efforts of people, or whether historical change occurs of its own accord ("spontaneously") as a result of changes in such extrahuman factors as, for instance, the means of production.

In classical Marxism the voluntarist/determinist dichotomy was already problematical. In general, however, the Marxist sense of history favored the notion that historical change occurred as the result of vast, transpersonal forces rather than by the action of "self-consciousness," "spirit," or outstanding figures. In his accounts of history Marx emphasized the determining role of transpersonal material forces. Nevertheless, he did allow for some interaction—for the notion that not only do "circumstances make men" but that "men [also] make circumstances."⁹

For the Russian Marxists this question was more than a purely speculative one. It was central to the major issues of political practice. This was because Marx's observations were based on the relatively advanced industrial society of western Europe, where the notion of a "proletarian" revolution seemed more plausible. But Russia had not yet evolved to a point where it met the Marxist preconditions for a communist revolution. The country was at least four-fifths peasant, and even the relatively small working class

comprised largely persons of recent peasant origins. The educational level of both workers and peasants was poor; indeed, most were illiterate. In short, it was unlikely for a significant segment of the population to have revolutionary consciousness. Some Russian Marxists argued that a revolution would therefore have to wait until the proletariat was larger and more developed; others believed that there could be a shortcut to the revolution by raising worker consciousness and by other deliberate actions.

This debate came to a head in 1903, when Lenin's treatise *What Is to Be Done?* (1902) split the Social Democratic (Marxist) Party into the Bolshevik (Leninist) and Menshevik factions. In this treatise Lenin introduced his highly controversial departure from the original Marxist theory (or addition to it, depending on one's point of view): the doctrine of the "vanguard." Lenin contended that it was possible to get around the various ways in which contemporary Russia did not meet the canonical Marxist preconditions for communist revolution by forming a "vanguard of the proletariat," comprising a small group of highly "conscious," disciplined, and dedicated revolutionaries who would guide the less "conscious" masses first to greater "consciousness" and then to revolution. The division in the Russian Marxist movement over these issues became exacerbated once again in 1917, when Lenin returned from exile after the initial (February) revolution and declared, in his April Theses, that this first, "bourgeois," revolution should be pushed further into a communist revolution. Many opposed this view, including prominent Bolsheviks, because they felt Lenin was being too rash and impatient.

It might be expected that the success of the October Revolution would have put an end to this controversy. This was far from the case, however, and Soviet Russians are still debating whether the revolution was premature and whether history can be "made" to any significant degree. Moreover, once the revolution had occurred, the continued reliance on the "vanguard" as an agent of control, in the sense of a centralized controlling elite, made it difficult to reconcile Soviet practice with that central Marxist doctrine, the "withering away of the state." Lenin himself believed that, once the revolution had occurred and the masses had become even more "conscious" in the postrevolutionary environment, the need for the "vanguard" as an agent of control, discipline, and enlightenment

would end. The vanguard and the apparatus of state control (police and the like) would then progressively "wither away" as, Marx had stipulated, they should in a "classless" society.

Perhaps "circumstances" were against them, but the Bolsheviks fell somewhat short of realizing this prediction. In the early post-revolutionary years, various internal and external threats to Bolshevik hegemony (such as the Civil War and the Allied intervention) made it necessary for them to build up the institutions of state control rather more than they had envisioned. Later, under Stalin, there was less external threat (except during World War II) and, arguably, less internal threat as well; yet under him the state apparatus became larger and more powerful than before. Although public controversy over political questions was virtually impossible in those years, it is clear that the state's resistance to its scheduled "withering away" troubled even the leadership. One symptom of their discomfiture is the fact that in the thirties almost every issue of the Party's bimonthly theoretical organ, *Bolshevik*, contained an article that directly or indirectly tackled the questions of why the state had not begun to "wither away" and when it might be expected to do so.

Since the Bolsheviks were always more exercised by polemics with their detractors in the left-wing movement than they were by right-wing adversaries, it is not surprising that, instead of providing edifying tales about the class struggle, official Soviet literature generated myths for rationalizing the Bolshevik position in the perennial radical controversy over the roles of consciousness and spontaneity in history. Indeed, literature's de facto role as apologist increased over time. The Socialist Realist tradition began with parables (such as *Mother*) illustrating the workings of the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic, but, under Stalin, extra conventions were added to the master plot so that it also affirmed symbolically that the progress to communism was specifically assured under the present Soviet leadership.

While all this is true, it represents a somewhat limited explanation of the master plot's role in Soviet society. The role of the spontaneity/consciousness opposition as *the* subtext of Socialist Realism must not be viewed solely in the context of Russian Marxist controversies and the machinations of the Leninists or the Stalinists. Literature is not merely the handmaiden of politics, not

even in times of severe repression. Moreover, the Party did not have a fixed interpretation of the dialectic to impose on literature, even if it were possible to impose one.

If one follows Bolshevik discussions of the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic over time, one will be struck by three features: ambivalence, controversy, and polysemy. I would suggest that this semantic diffuseness results from the fact that the spontaneity/consciousness opposition is broader in resonance than its place in Marxist-Leninist doctrine would imply. It is one of the key binary oppositions in Russian culture, comparable to, for instance, the ideal/real opposition in Scholasticism or the subject/object distinction in nineteenth-century German thought.

The spontaneity/consciousness dichotomy was particularly well adapted to the ritual needs of the entire country. It is perhaps no accident that its scheme for historical progress is very like the Hegelian model for the working-out of *Geist* in history (Hegel had a profound influence on the Russian intelligentsia during its formative period in the mid-nineteenth century). More important, the opposition provides master tropes that focus major cultural energies and order the key dilemmas of the Russian intelligentsia. The dialectic is a natively Russian version of the dynamic known to Western thinking as the nature/culture opposition, which has attracted a great deal of attention among contemporary anthropologists. We can detect Russia's root ambivalence on modernization lurking behind the various controversies concerning the Leninist model of historical progress. The spontaneity/consciousness opposition was, in effect, an efficient formula for transcoding German Marxism into Russian culture.

The Leninist version of historical development did not differ from Marx merely in degree—by a change of emphasis, let us say, from Marx's view of historical change as effected 90 percent by necessity and 10 percent by deliberate actions, to ascribing the giant's share of the influence to the forces of "consciousness" (i.e., the vanguard). A more fundamental change had occurred.

The Russian Marxists began by adopting a *German* ideology to solve *Russia's* chronic social dilemmas (such as poverty, autocracy, and inequality). This ideology, once transplanted in Russian soil, became "russified." Marxism was an ideology that came out of an advanced industrial society. It was to be applied in a backward,

peasant society with very different political and intellectual conditions. Inevitably, Russia's culture colored its version of Marxist ideology; as a result, it became less and less a western European political program and more and more the ideology characterizing a certain branch of the Russian radical intelligentsia.

A surface indicator of the differences between the two views is the change in terminology. In classical Marxism the spontaneity/consciousness opposition does not exist *as such*. Marx did describe an analogous model for historical development, but he discussed it in terms of the dialectic between "freedom," where men rationally regulate their interchange with Nature, and "necessity," i.e., the circumstances that effect historical development.¹⁰ Marx also gave a central place in his theories to the concept of "consciousness" (*Bewusstsein*); but, though the concept "spontaneity" can be found in Marxist writings (as "*Spontanität*"), it is much less central than "consciousness" and is certainly not its explicit opposite.

When the Russian Marxists of the 1890s and the early twentieth century argued about the way forward for Russia, their debates centered not around the roles of "freedom" and "necessity" but on "consciousness" and "spontaneity," which, in Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), became the two poles of the primary dialectic of historical development. Moreover, whereas "consciousness" and "spontaneity" in classical Marxism were relatively technical terms (this is less so for "consciousness," *Bewusstsein*, which had Enlightenment connotations), the two words the Russian Marxist chose for rendering these concepts both had connotations that identified the terms with ongoing preoccupations of the Russian intelligentsia.¹¹ The word chosen for "consciousness," for instance, *soznatel'nost'*, has the coloration of something inspired by one's conscience and could hence be associated with the intelligentsia's tradition of assuming the role of Russian society's conscience.

The most striking instance of transcoding is the word chosen for "spontaneity," *stixijnost'*, which carries with it a vast range of connotations—both positive and negative—all of which were central to the existential dilemmas of the Russian intelligentsia. The root of *stixijnost'*, *stixija*, means "element" (as in "elemental"); the word can thus be used both in expressions like "in his element," with positive valorization, and to mean wild, uncontrollable "forces" (such as storms in nature and human rage). Thus it can

mean both what is natural and good, as distinct from something artificial, alien, or constricting, or, alternatively, it can connote what is wrong with what are termed the "blind forces of nature"; it can connote things that are out of control and even menacing.

When the word *stixijnost'* was placed together with *soz-natel'nost'* in a binary opposition, that opposition potentially embraced all the most obsessive dilemmas confronting the Russian intelligentsia. This was in large measure because of the rich and even contradictory associations that the word *stixijnost'* conjured up for them, associations that were all germane to its existential concerns. The opposition suggests, for instance, that much-celebrated gulf in Russia between the vast, uneducated peasant masses (the "spontaneous") and the educated elite (the "conscious") or, to put it slightly differently, between backward rural Russia (the realm of "spontaneity") and modern urban Russia (the realm of "consciousness"), or, again, between those seething masses, capable of spontaneous popular uprisings, and the autocratic, heavily bureaucratized, and hierarchical state, which seeks to control these masses and direct them.

The spontaneity/consciousness opposition can also be seen as a schematization of some aspects of the old Slavophile versus Westerner controversy, i.e., the question whether the way forward for Russia could be found in Western models and ideas, in bringing reason, organization, order, and technology to this backward, anarchic country, or whether Western civilization was sterile and spiritually impoverished as compared with the native Russian or Slavic ethos, which was antirational, spontaneous, instinctive, perhaps even antiurban and against state order. Many favored a return to the social order of traditional peasant Russia, based on the village commune or *mir*; others developed a cult of the folk rebel or *buntar'*. The latter maintained that the dry theorizing of the intellectuals was sterile and that the most potent and effective forces for bringing about positive change in Russia were contained in those broad, illiterate peasant masses (the "spontaneous"), who had not been corrupted by Westernized education or by working for the autocratic state and could therefore express that pure, gut "rage" of the Russians against the defilement of their land by alien forces. For every intellectual who favored a "folk" remedy for Russia's dilemmas (whether in the folk rebel or in the traditional way of

life) there was another who saw the way forward in terms of making those "spontaneous" masses more "conscious," in bringing enlightenment and culture to the darkness of the ignorant and wretched peasants.

Lenin himself was strongly on the side of "consciousness" in the sense of favoring reason, order, control, technology, and guidance and enlightenment for the masses. His rhetoric is full of imagery about bringing "light" to the "darkness" of the Russian people. Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, was to make her major contribution to the Soviet cause by dedicating herself to the literacy campaign and other programs for raising the cultural and educational level of the masses.

And yet, although Lenin favored "consciousness" over "spontaneity," he, like the intelligentsia class from which he came, was himself ambivalent about "spontaneity" and its role in history. Although "spontaneous" elements could, in his analysis, indeed be retrograde and dangerous if left unchecked or unguided, he did not see "spontaneity" as an essentially negative category. In *What Is to Be Done?* he maintained that, even in its most primitive expressions, "spontaneity" contains a sort of "embryonic" potential for "consciousness."¹² Moreover, being a shrewd tactician, Lenin was able to recognize the crucial role the peasantry would play in any Russian revolution; one therefore periodically finds in his speeches extremely flattering references to that "spontaneous" element.¹³

This equivocation did not end with Lenin, for it has continued in official rhetoric down to the present day. The terms "spontaneity" and "consciousness" and the meaning of their dialectic have been differently interpreted with each major change in political culture.

Thus the spontaneity/consciousness opposition is, on the one hand, a defining tenet of Leninism and the locus of the greatest controversies about how to put theory into practice. On the other hand, it catches some of the Russian intelligentsia's obsessive dilemmas. Indeed, Leninism, being itself in large measure a Russian ideology, also reflects the intelligentsia's own ambivalences.

This pattern of complexity is ramified when one looks at the role the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic plays in the Socialist Realist novel, i.e., as the shaping force behind the master plot. There it certainly serves the Party's interests by turning novels into ideological parables and, very often as well, into myths of maintenance for

the status quo. Yet, paradoxically, it also provides some sort of medium, however reduced, for discussion and even for self-expression. The richly evocative terms “spontaneity” and “consciousness” not only provided an umbrella under which that eternal debate about Russia’s way forward could continue; they also reverberated with some pervasive themes of Russian literature itself. These include such unlikely views—for Soviet literature—as the one commonly found in nineteenth-century literature, that surface reality is a mere semblance, a veneer; the notion that the underlying reality is in the grip of dark, elemental forces; and that cult of libidinous expression that one can find in literature from at least Appollon Grigoriev through Dostoevsky, Blok, and Bely, and on, even past the Revolution, into Scythianism. Although such views could of course never become actual themes of Socialist Realism, they often colored the symbols conventionally used for translating the spontaneity/consciousness opposition into novel form.

Thus, by studying the changing contours of the master plot and the complexity of forces that interact with it, this book will follow the broad patterns of Soviet culture through several transitions. Moreover, it will follow not only official culture but also, to a lesser extent, the dissident Russian voices that are in dialogue with it. In the finite context of the master plot, with its ideological underpinnings, the book will chart the vagaries of the dialectic between sign and meaning and the dialectic between what is intrinsic to literature and what is extrinsic to it. In this way it will provide a dynamic model of cultural change in the Soviet period.

I

Socialist Realism before 1932



There are several different types of Soviet novel. A possible thematic division would consist of the production novel plus five other basic types: the historical novel, the novel about a worthy intellectual or inventor, the novel of war or revolution, the villain or spy novel, and the novel about the West. The differences between these types are not as great as they might seem, since all involve, minimally, a "road to consciousness" pattern and usually a "task" as well. The historical novel, for instance, is usually a novel about leadership (as in A. Tolstoy's *Peter the First*) or, simply, political maturation (as in V. Kataev's *A Lonely White Sail Gleams*). The novel about a worthy intellectual or inventor usually follows much the same plot outline as a production novel (the hero's "task" being, in this instance, to write or invent something or to get a new idea approved), except that more attention is paid to the hero's struggles with the enemies of "truth" than to his encounters with the practical problems of task fulfillment or with natural disasters.

The three remaining categories—novels about war or revolution, novels about villains or spies, and novels about the West—are less conventionalized. Instead of being set in a single microcosm, they are often somewhat picaresque. Generally speaking, the novel of war or revolution combines a tale of moral and political growth with a tale of task fulfillment. Both the villain or spy novel and the novel about the West contain a higher proportion of negative material than is customary in a Soviet novel; nevertheless, they usually entail a positive hero who is learning to be sufficiently strong to combat the foe, i.e., Western decadence or his love for an alien. Since he must become aloof and "ruthless," he must, in terms of the conventions of the Socialist Realist novel, become more "conscious." In other words, these novels usually entail a "road to consciousness" also.

The Production Novel

The most common type of Stalinist novel *by far* is the production novel (the novel about how the plan was fulfilled or the project was constructed). It is also the most highly ritualized. Since it typically contains more formulaic stages in its plot than a novel like the one I analyzed in my account of the master plot in chapter 7, Fadeev's *The Young Guard* (a war novel), it deserves some attention here.

Below I have set out a general scheme for the plot stages of a typical production novel—the novel type that uses the master plot in its fullest version. My scheme is not as elaborate or finely differentiated as the one Propp presents in his *Morphology*;¹ instead of his thirty-one specific plot functions, I have provided only six broad divisions, designed to show how the production novel fuses the tale of task fulfillment with that of the hero's ritual maturation. These broad divisions are then further divided into their most customary components.

Propp asserts in his *Morphology* that any one of the thirty-one functions he lists in his table may be omitted in a given tale but that the *order* of functions is fixed. This is not so in the Stalinist novel, where not only is the sequence very flexible within a given section of the plot (Transition, Finale, etc.), but a particular function may occur in a section other than the one in which it is listed here (e.g., "death," which is listed below as function b of the Climax section, may occur in the Finale). The order in which I present them, although it is the most conventional and logical, is therefore not invariable.

The production novel more or less originated with *Cement*. It will be remembered, however, that *Cement* did not have as tightly organized a plot as the later, full-blown Socialist Realist novel; hence, some of the actions normally performed by either the positive hero or his mentor are, in *Cement*, performed by more peripheral characters of no clear moral and political identity, such as the purged bourgeois Party member, Sergey. To illustrate this divergence, the corresponding moment in *Cement*'s plot is indicated below in square brackets after each function listed.

▲ Prologue or "Separation"

The hero arrives in the microcosm, the small, fairly closed world of

the novel. This may be a factory, a kolkhoz, a machine tractor station, an army unit, or a provincial town. Often (as in *The Young Guard*) the hero's arrival in the microcosm is actually a return to a place he had been before, but it is now changed. [Gleb is demobilized from the army and returns to his factory town.]

Setting Up the Task

(a) The hero sees that all is not good in the microcosm. This most often means that the state-given plan is not being fulfilled or is being fulfilled at a lax "tempo." [*Cement* predates the era of the Five-Year plans, but the Party directive to step up post-Civil War reconstruction is equivalent to the Plan of later novels; Gleb sees the factory idle, petty-bourgeois values rampant, and the local officials insufficiently committed to reconstruction.]

(b) The hero concocts a scheme for righting the wrong, often—as it happens—thinking along somewhat the same lines as the state and local "people." [Gleb decides on a way of rebuilding the factory and solving the fuel-supply problems; his plan coincides with the deepest desires of all of the town's true workers (Brynza, Savchuk, etc.).]

(c) When the hero presents his plan to the local bureaucrats, they say it is "utopian"—that it would be impossible to fulfill it in terms of both technical feasibility and available manpower and supplies. Also, they commonly claim that the hero's plan runs counter to their orders from above. [In *Cement*, all these elements are present.]

(d) The hero mobilizes "the people" and inspires them to follow his plan by addressing them at a mass meeting, at which his powers as an orator are displayed, and/or by talking to them in smaller groups. Usually he also finds a minority group among the local bureaucrats (the noncareerists) who support his proposals [this is the pattern followed in *Cement*].

Transition (Trials, etc.)

(a) Work on the hero's project begins.

(b) Work is hampered by a series of snags, which, like the "obstacles" of folk narrative, can occur in various forms and any number of times. Since the Stalinist novel is truly a combination of

“the most matter-of-fact, everyday reality and the most heroic prospects” (à la the Zhdanov formula presented in his speech to the First Writers’ Congress in 1934), these obstacles are usually of two orders:

- i. *Prosaic*: Problems with supplies, manpower, or equipment; bureaucratic corruption or slackness; worker apathy or discontent. [Gleb is faced by all of these.]
- ii. *Dramatic/heroic (mythic)*: Natural disasters, enemy invasions, class enemies, counterrevolutionary terrorists, struggle with an antagonistic bureaucrat. [Gleb is faced with all of these except the natural disaster. Also, it is never clear whether his bureaucratic antagonist, Badin, is a positive or negative figure.]

(c) The hero has a problem in his love life and/or in controlling his emotions. [Gleb is estranged from his wife, Dasha, and he cannot master his hatred of Badin.]

(d) The hero makes a journey (perhaps only by telephone) seeking help from more authoritative persons than are available in the microcosm; usually he goes either to Moscow or to the local “center.” [Gleb goes to the “center” to seek help and approval of his plans.]

Climax (Fulfillment of the Task Is Threatened)

(a) The hero’s task seems unfulfillable, usually when a “dramatic/heroic” obstacle appears to threaten its completion. [In *Cement*, counterrevolutionaries attack and destroy the ropeway set up for moving lumber. Also, work on the factory is halted while Gleb is away at the center, and this is partly due to the connivance of his enemies.]

(b) At some point, usually in the course of the hero’s encounter with a dramatic/heroic type of obstacle, an actual, symbolic, or near death occurs. This usually involves the hero. However, if an actual death occurs, some lesser figure may act as his surrogate. [In *Cement*, a local worker is killed in the counterrevolutionary raid.]

(c) The hero has a moment of grave self-doubt (“Perhaps my opponents were right, perhaps I pushed things too far, perhaps I have

lost touch with the people,” or even “I am responsible for X’s death; I should not have pushed things so far”). [In *Cement*, Gleb has such doubts after the ropeway is destroyed and a worker is killed.]

Incorporation (Initiation)

The hero has a talk with his local mentor, and this gives him the strength to carry on. [In *Cement*, the person Gleb talks to at this point is Sergey, the Party member of bourgeois origins who is soon to be purged by the Party and is therefore not appropriate for the role of mentor.]

Finale (or Celebration of Incorporation)

The finale is complex, since it involves several functions that occur more or less simultaneously but must of course be presented sequentially in the narrative. (The order in which the following elements are presented is not fixed.)

(a) Completion of task. [The factory is rebuilt.]

(b) A ceremony or celebration to mark the task’s completion. There are usually speeches and rejoicing. This event may provide a frame for the entire finale, since all of the other finale functions are interwoven with an account of the celebration. [Gleb speaks at a public ceremony marking the reopening of the factory.]

(c) Resolution of the love plot and other emotional problems. [Gleb’s wife, Dasha, leaves him, but he has learned to accept his pain; however, he has not mastered his hatred for Badin.]

(d) The hero transcends his selfish impulses and acquires an extrapersonal identity. [Gleb accepts the fact that his private life is unhappy by finding in the collective cause his source of self-fulfillment. However, this function is more powerfully realized when Sergey regards his being purged as a merely personal tragedy, insignificant in the greater context of History’s onward march.]

(e) A funeral is held for the tragic victim killed during the climax (this funeral may occur earlier, but it is often postponed, to enhance the finale). Alternatively, the protagonists may visit their fallen comrade’s grave and make speeches. [In *Cement* this function occurs during the climax sections: the comrades bear the victim’s body down the mountainside, and Gleb makes a speech.]

(f) There is a reshuffling of personnel in the microcosm; some may be purged or dismissed, some promoted or transferred. Often the hero is promoted to the post formerly held by his mentor. [In *Cement* there is a reshuffling, but the significance of the fact that various local officials are sent away to other posts is not clear, and Gleb himself is not involved.]

(g) In a speech marking the completion of the task, or in some tangible form, such as the birth of a child, the theme of regeneration and of the glorious time that awaits future generations is introduced as a thematic counterpoint to sacrifice and death. [In *Cement* this motif is introduced largely in Sergey's monologues, but it is also present in the speeches by Badin and Gleb that mark the factory's opening.]

Appendix B

The Official Short List of Model Novels as Inferred from Speeches to Writers' Union Congresses

The following novels appeared in the *short list* of exemplars cited, on the occasions indicated below, in official speeches made to congresses of the Writers' Union. Model novels were sometimes cited by author, sometimes by positive hero, and sometimes by the title itself. When only the author is cited, I have placed the bibliographic reference before the titles of the novels by the author in question and have indicated in square brackets the novels I assume the official speaker had in mind (other than those cited at other congresses and therefore listed without square brackets). When the positive hero only is cited, I have indicated that with an asterisk. I have not included model novels by non-Great Russians that did not have a major formative influence on the Socialist Realist tradition, nor have I included model examples of poetry or drama.

Key to the Bibliographical References

- II stands for A. Surkov's speech to the Second Writers' Congress ("Doklad A. A. Surkova 'O sostojanii i zadačax sovetskoj literatury.'," *Vtoroj vsesojuznyj s'ezd sovetskix pisatelej 15–26 dekabnja 1954 goda. Stenografičeskij otčet* [Moscow: Sovetskij pisatel', 1956]).
- III stands for A. Surkov's speech to the Third Writers' Congress ("Doklad A. A. Surkova 'Zadači sovetskoj literatury v komunističeskom stroitel'stve.'," *Tretij s'ezd pisatelej SSSR 18–23 maja 1959 g. Stenografičeskij otčet* [Moscow: Sovetskij pisatel', 1959]).
- IV stands for G. Markov's speech to the Fourth Writers' Congress ("Doklad G. M. Markova 'Sovremennost' i problemy prozy.'," *Četvertyj s'ezd pisatelej SSSR 22–26 maja 1967 goda. Stenografičeskij otčet* [Moscow: Sovetskij pisatel', 1968]).
- V stands for G. Markov's speech to the Fifth Writers' Congress