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**In Search of a Perfect Form and Style: The Impact of Music and Painting on Turgenev and Conrad's Art**

While various personal factors often affected Conrad's valuations of his own novels, a careful reading of his letters, prefaces and autobiographical essays indicates that he devoted much thought both to his own artistic means and to the art of the novel in general. This can also be applied to Turgenev who in his correspondence and *Literary Reminiscences* revealed much about himself that is of value in determining his own attitude to his art and literature in general. Many of Turgenev's letters, and particularly those written to aspiring authors who had sent him their manuscripts, are full of sensitive and thoughtful observations on literature and art, both particular and general, relating to problems of literary craftsmanship.

In the "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, in which the author set out his view of the poetic potentialities of prose language, Conrad asserts that art is a form of knowledge superior to philosophy and science although the scientist and thinker "speaks authoritatively to our common sense."<sup>1</sup> Conrad, like all modern writers, was keenly, and frequently painfully, aware that the truly creative process of writing fiction involves dealing in some way with one's unconscious conflicts as we can infer from his "Preface" to *The Nigger* in which he describes the unconscious as "that lonely region of stress and strife where the artist", "if he be deserving and fortunate... finds the terms of his appeal."<sup>2</sup> Conrad was aware of the implications of the relationship between reality and fiction. In the preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* he describes the aim of the work of art as:

a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect. It is an attempt to find in its forms, in its colours, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of matter, and in the facts of life, what of each is fundamental, what is enduring and essential – their one illuminating and convincing quality – the very truth of their existence.<sup>3</sup>

Conrad obviously meant that writing literary fiction could not be limited to the mere jotting down of words on a page. These words had to be produced out of some state of urgency, which alone could guarantee their truthfulness, and this guarantee of truthfulness could only be won through a process of inter-subjective dialectics between the imaginary and symbolic. It must be strongly emphasised that creative writing could no more be pouring forth of supposedly unconscious fantasies than it could be verbal juggling. Thus the process of creative writing can be defined as the locus of the relationship established between a subject

and his discourse in so far as his unconscious desires and conflicts are taken into account, that is to say expressed in an oblique way in the signifying chain, and are not allowed to overrule him. In the process of creative writing it is the writer himself who is ultimately created.

That for Conrad the arrangement of words was very important to work out the meaning and speak to the readers' imagination is visible in a letter to Sir Hugh Clifford written on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1899 where, when analysing Mrs Blake's story Conrad outlined a reading model based on "the power of the written word":

True a man who knows so much (without taking into account the manner in which his knowledge was acquired) may well spare himself the trouble of meditating over the words, only that words, groups of words, words standing alone, are symbols of life, have the power in their sound of their aspect to present the very thing you wish to hold up before the mental vision of your readers. The things "as they are" exist in words; therefore words should be handled with care lest the picture, the image of truth abiding in facts should become distorted – or blurred.<sup>4</sup>

Conrad highlights here the care a writer must take in his handling of words if he is to use their symbolic power to bring out the "image of truth abiding in facts." He adds that "The *whole* of the truth lies in the presentation; therefore the expression should be studied in the interest of veracity. This is the only morality of *art* apart from *subject*."<sup>5</sup> Conrad remarks that to search out the fundamental, the essential and the enduring are the work of the artist. All art, according to Conrad, appeals emotionally to our senses of pity and beauty, pain and mystery. And how, Conrad asks, can art – particularly fiction – catch this air of sensory reality; how does it penetrate to the colours of life's complexities? Art must, he says, "strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music".<sup>6</sup>

One of the most distinctive qualities of Turgenev and Conrad's writing is their strong visual sense. On 16 March 1863 Flaubert wrote to Turgenev that he was happy to make his acquaintance a fortnight ago and admitted that many things he had felt and experienced himself he had found and recognised in Turgenev:

For me, you have long been a Master. But the more I study you, the more I marvel at your talent. I admire your manner, at once intense and restrained: that sympathy which extends even to the humblest beings and endows landscapes with reflection. We see, and we dream. ... What art you possess! What a mixture of tenderness, irony, observation, and colour! And how they are combined! How you bring off your effects! What sureness of touch!<sup>7</sup>

Henry James also admired the sharpness of Turgenev's sight as a writer and "a recorder of social and political scene who is universally sensitive... to colours and odours"<sup>8</sup> and all forms of beauty, whose "works savour strongly of his native soil."<sup>9</sup>

It was also noticed by Conrad who described Turgenev as:

the incomparable artist of humanity who lays his colours and forms in the great light and the free air of the world. Had he invented them all and also every stick and stone, brook and hill and field in which they move, his personages would have been just as true and as poignant in their perplexed lives. They are his own and also universal.<sup>10</sup>

The specific nature of influence is often problematic, but there can be little doubt that Conrad used the Jamesian impressionistic manner of communicating action, images and emotions through each character's individual consciousness. Both James and Conrad valued fiction, a personal, direct impression of life, to be analysed as the expression of the writer's mind and history. They also fully acknowledged the spontaneous or unconscious nature of art; at the same time, they repeatedly described their novels as the result not merely of conscious decisions, but of a system or a method. As often as James compared the novel to an organism – to a tree or a plant that seemingly forms itself, he figured the novel as a building or a tapestry which the novelist creates. In "The Art of Fiction" James asserts: "A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression."<sup>11</sup> According to James the novel "is of all pictures the most comprehensive and the most elastic. All it needs is a subject and a painter. But for its subject, magnificently, it has the whole human consciousness."<sup>12</sup>

Conrad says nothing about his methods of constructing his novels. Methods he regarded as essential in producing the illusion of life. In contrast James, who emphasises the kind of truth achieved by the writer's fidelity to his own sensations and expressed through precision in style. Repeatedly, Conrad asserts that the novelist's first task is to discover the words which will express without distortion the emotions evoked for him by the events and characters he portrays. To Hugh Clifford, Conrad advised the utmost care in the use of words lest "the picture, the image of truth abiding in facts, should be distorted – or blurred."<sup>13</sup>

Repeatedly, Conrad asserts that the novelist's first task is to discover the words which will express without distortion the emotions evoked for him by the events and characters he portrays. To Hugh Clifford, Conrad advised the utmost care in the use of words lest "the picture, the image of truth abiding in facts, should be distorted – or blurred."<sup>14</sup> Whereas James suggests that the truth he defines as intensity is a quality brought into being when the values of the subject are fully expressed. Conrad suggests here that the truth the artist seeks is the core of an experience. The artist must penetrate the truth and disclose it through the resources of language. It requires the search for the precise figure and the exact word. In the opening

paragraph of the “Preface” to *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* Conrad states that the purpose of art is “to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect”, and then proceeds to claim that art differs from other truth-seeking endeavours, such as science. While both confront the same “enigmatical spectacle” of life, it is the artist who “speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives.” The concern of art – and indeed its appeal – is communal: it reflects a human rather than a scientific truth which has its basis in such ties of fellowship as “the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity.”<sup>15</sup> Developing this idea of fellowship, Conrad goes on to define fiction as “the appeal of one temperament to all the other innumerable temperaments whose subtle and resistless power endows passing events with their true meaning.”<sup>16</sup> While art’s appeal may be to the senses, its means are necessarily grounded in practicalities since, given the author’s tools, “the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage”, it is only through his dedication to craftsmanship, to the “perfect blending of form and substance” and the “unremitting never-discouraged care for the shape and ring of sentences”, that his appeal can succeed.<sup>17</sup>

It is a fact that Turgenev had always shown a great appetite for painting and, in fact his writing may be comparable to painting. Turgenev, who is often compared to Corot, stimulates the visual sense through the verbal medium in the way that colour and line in a painting affect visual perception. In fact, the “touch” of Corot, who is regarded as the precursor of the Impressionists, is important in the history of art. Turgenev’s other great enthusiasm was for the Dutch seventeenth-century masters, Rembrandt above all, but also the landscape painters, and the domestic painters like Ostade and Pieter de Hooch. Except for the portrait painter Kharlamov, Russian artists did not arouse any particular interest in him.<sup>18</sup>

When Turgenev describes nature he seeks to place himself at the just distance whence the character of his subject falls into relation with the mother earth and with the infinite sky over his head, and, again like Corot, draws his pictures from nature, only by means of “those lines and tones, those harmonies and contrasts, to which every generation of men must respond.”<sup>19</sup> Turgenev vigorously defended the painter’s duty to portray what is characteristic in nature rather than to indulge in lifeless photographic realism.

Arthur Symons, a poet whose work Conrad read and admired, in a moving tribute after the novelist’s death linked Conrad’s “look to the darkness at the end of the long avenue” to that of Shakespeare, Balzac and Rodin, explaining that “[o]nly great painters have created

atmosphere to the extent that Conrad has.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, it is quite easy to draw an analogy between Conrad’s art and painting, especially because the visual image is one of the most basic grounds between the novel and painting. And Conrad, from the very start, was concerned with images. In 1899, he wrote to Cunninghame Graham, referring to *Heart of Darkness*: “I don’t start with an abstract notion. I start with *definite images* and as their rendering is true some little effect is produced.”<sup>21</sup> Painting – “the highest achievement of taste and skill”<sup>22</sup>, was one of the arts Conrad had in mind when stating his artistic credo in the preface to *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’*:

Fiction – if it at all aspires to be art – appeals to temperament. And in truth it must be, like painting, like music, like all art. ... Such an appeal to be effective must be an impression conveyed through all senses. ... It must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music – which is the art of arts.<sup>23</sup>

When Conrad wrote of his favourite Russian writer, he clearly showed his preference for painting. Conrad stated that he admired Turgenev, but in truth Turgenev’s Russia was for the author no more “but a canvas on which the incomparable artist of humanity lays his colours and his forms in the great light and the free air of the world.”<sup>24</sup> In most of his works Conrad selects a principal colour scheme, often a dramatic contrast between the dark and the light, or focuses our vision upon a dominant image: a snakelike river in the Congo, white ivory, black, impenetrable forests, the immaculately white form of Jim, the shining buttons of Nostromo’s uniform, or the shining silver ingots. Even some of his non-visual descriptions of character reinforce the “colour scheme” of the intended portrait or draw our attention to the artist’s design. Thus Jim is excessively romantic and under a cloud, Razumov inspires confidence, Nostromo is the incorruptible Capataz de Cargadores, the indispensable man, Gould is the king of Sulaco, the darkness of Kurtz is impenetrable and deepening. In Conrad’s verbal portraits there is usually a predominance of one colour, either in the literal sense (as with Jim’s whiteness and Wait’s blackness) or its equivalent – a key word or phrase which defines the character through an instantaneous impression, for example, Jim’s boyish aspect, his bull-like pose of aggressiveness, or Singleton’s white beard. Of Mrs Haldin in *Under Western Eyes* Conrad says that “her hands, her whole figure had the stillness of a sombre painting.”<sup>25</sup> In *Lord Jim* Conrad says that a “seaman, even if a mere passenger, takes an interest in a ship, and looks at the sea-life around him with the critical enjoyment of a painter, for instance, looking at another man’s work.”<sup>26</sup> Marlow’s method of describing nature and men, like Conrad’s authorial description, is akin to painting. The wide range of visual impressions is presented in a contrasting image of light and dark to dazzle the reader with the brilliance of Jim’s light and to

shock him with the darkness of his irrevocable faith. The contrast is clearly visible in Marlow's description of Lord Jim:

I had never seen Jim look so grave, so self-possessed, in an impenetrable, impressive way. In the midst of these dark-faced men, his stalwart figure in white apparel, the gleaming clusters of his fair hair, seemed to catch all the sunshine that trickled through the cracks in the closed shutters of that dim hall, with its walls of mats and a roof of thatch. He appeared like a creature not only of another kind but of another essence.<sup>27</sup>

A shadowy picture of Jim is what Conrad had in mind, after all: a veritable gallery of pictures as well as reels of film, showing fragmentary glimpses, views, and movements of his protagonist and those who came in contact with him. According to Y. Lotman the notion of a point of view is analogous to a shoot in a film or a stroke of brush on a canvas.<sup>28</sup> At the end of his novel Conrad invites his reader to fit the fragments together to form his own intelligible picture. The central painting of the novel is done. The last visual glimpse of the hero is as equivocal as the first one, which is as it should be, for such was the artistic intent of the novelist-painter. The reality of his canvas must present Jim's shadowy ideal of conduct and his eternal constancy: the image of the inscrutable and forgotten Jim yet also the one so well remembered by Marlow; the young man under a cloud, but also one of us. If there is any doubt that Conrad intended these impressions to be paintings, perhaps these words might dispel it: sight of the *Patna* "like a picture created by fancy on a canvas... with its life arrested, in an unchanging light... for ever suspended in their expression... I am certain of them. They exist as if under an enchanter's wand."<sup>29</sup> Conrad, the artist, accomplished the task to arrest the visual aspects of living he set himself in the preface to "*The Nigger*". When this is done, "all truth of life is there".<sup>30</sup> The artistic lie of his canvases has made us see the truth of life.

Conrad in *The Mirror of the Sea* and Turgenev in *A Sportsman's Sketches* use truly impressionist techniques, and vividly present their love of nature through a sequence of minutely presented physical sensations. This realistic and impressionistic method of presentation is especially interesting in the case of Turgenev and makes him truly modern. In *The Mirror of the Sea* Conrad uses impressionist techniques to represent his characters' perception of objects and events, and to demonstrate that each perceptual experience is unique.<sup>31</sup> Another distinctly impressionist aspect of Conrad's narrative method concerns his approach to visual description. The relation of individual sense impressions to meaning is dealt with by giving direct narrative expression to the way in which the consciousness elicits meaning from its perceptions. One of the devices Conrad used was delayed decoding – a

verbal equivalent of the impressionist painter's attempt to render visual sensation directly, a technique to present a sense of impression and to withhold explaining its meaning until later.<sup>32</sup>

Turgenev's hunter, who looks at the endlessly stretching fields, at the steely reflections of water and follows cold-grey clouds with the white edges which are scattered in the sky, seeks impressions not game. Then, in a truly impressionistic manner, he gives these impressions shape and presents grace through nature. Nothing in nature escapes his true, poetic and inquisitive glance. This is another distinctly impressionist feature: the problematic relation of the individual sense impressions to meaning which is dealt by giving direct narrative expression to the way in which the consciousness elicits meaning from its perceptions. The event is made vividly real through a sequence of minutely presented physical sensations. It is so with the image of a bird, associated with the notions of fear, predator and victim, which very often appears in *A Sportsman's Sketches*.

The smells and sounds, the changing colours painted with lyrical precision which illustrate nature's indifference to man's grief at death are visible in the description of the funeral in "Prince Hamlet of Shchigrovo":

Turgenev's reader is struck by his extraordinary sensitivity to the landscape of Central Russia. The smells and sounds of its woods and meadows, the changing colours of its vast and moody skies had never before in Russian prose been painted with such lyrical precision. The description of the sky in "Kasyan from Fair Springs" which is a mirror of a "bottomless sea" is among the finest descriptions of nature in Russian literature:

It's a strangely enjoyable occupation to lie on one's back in the forest and look upwards. You seem to be looking into a bottomless sea, extending far and wide beneath you; the trees seem not to rise from the ground, but, like the roots of huge plants, to drop perpendicularly down into the glass-clear waves, and the leaves on the trees are now translucent as emeralds, now opaque with a goldish, almost blackish, green. Somewhere far, far away, at the end of its slender twig, a single leaf stands motionless against a blue patch of pellucid sky, and beside it another one sways with a movement like the play of the fish on a line, a movement that seems spontaneous and not produced by the wind. Like fairy islands under the sea, round wide clouds float quietly up and quietly away – and suddenly the whole sea, the radiant air, the sun-drenched branches and leaves, all begin to ripple and tremble with a transitory brilliance, and there comes a fresh, thrilling murmur, like the interminable faint splashing that follows the rising of a sudden swell. You gaze without stirring, and no words can express the gladness and peace and sweetness that catch at your heart.<sup>33</sup>

In this passage Turgenev provides rich visual stimulus for the reader. He uses a series of verbs which stimulate his visual sense: "You look," "You gaze," "you feel your gaze passing farther and farther." The author also puts emphasis on movement visually perceived. The rustle of the wind through the trees is compared to the splash of ripples lapping the beach.

Thus a leaf “sways with a movement,” “clouds float quietly,” “branches and leaves, all begin to ripple and tremble.” All this serves to reinforce the reader’s visual experiences suggested by the imagery. From the first metaphor – “bottomless sea” – emerge two types of images: one connected with water (“glass-clear waves,” “play of a fish on a line,” “fairy islands under the sea,” “interminable faint splashing”), and the other with infinity (“bottomless,” “far and wide beneath you,” “somewhere far, far away,” “height,” “depth”). Through his “picture” Turgenev stimulates a different mode of perception and with it, often a change in emotional intensity. The different mode of perception is crucial to Turgenev’s aesthetic and to a recurrent theme in his work: calm, shining infinity can be perceived through a contemplation of beauty (often as landscape), but perception only occurs within the frustrating restriction of the fleeting moment. The “pictures”, spatially perceived, break the flow of time and enable the moment to be grasped. The moment can also be expanded when separate pictures are linked. For example, through a simple repetition of colour. The structural colours are green, ranging from emerald to “almost blackish, green” and blue, and there is also the golden light of the sun, the flash of the silvery light, the translucent quality of leaves, and the radiant air. The painterly aspect of Turgenev’s prose is, then, an important means for the transmission of a fundamental part of his aesthetic.

Colour and light also play an important role in Conrad’s landscape. His insistence on making his readers hear, feel and see is evident throughout *The Mirror of the Sea*. Thus, the often excessive use of appositional phrases, no less than his “adjectival style” in descriptions of scenery, produces the result achieved by the painter with a bold stroke of his brush or chalk, often imbued with ironic connotation. It is obvious that the sea and the ocean have always been connected with infinity. Hence in *The Mirror* there “is infinite variety in the gales of wind at sea,”<sup>34</sup> the ocean looks “old, as if the immemorial ages had been stirred up from the undisturbed bottom of ooze,”<sup>35</sup> the sea has an “immense surface... as though it had been created before light itself,”<sup>36</sup> “the estuaries of great rivers have their fascination, the attractiveness of an open portal,”<sup>37</sup> a ship is free because there “is no restraint; there is space: clear water around her.”<sup>38</sup> Conrad, like Turgenev, stimulates the reader’s visual sense saying: “You encompass the earth with one particular spot of it in your eye;”<sup>39</sup> he also makes his reader “look upon the sea in a storm” if he wants to know the age of the earth.<sup>40</sup> Conrad’s emphasis on movement in *The Mirror of the Sea* also extends the reader’s visual experience:

It was a hard, long gale, grey clouds and green sea, heavy weather undoubtedly, but still what a sailor would call manageable. Under two lower topsails and a reefed foresail the barque seemed to race with a long, steady sea that did not becalm her in the troughs. The solemn thundering combers caught her up

from astern, passed her with a fierce boiling up of foam level with the bulwarks, swept on ahead with a swish and a roar: and the little vessel, dipping her jib-boom into the tumbling froth, would go on running in a smooth, glassy hollow, a deep valley between two ridges of the sea, hiding the horizon ahead and astern.<sup>41</sup>

The linguistic categories represented in these passages confirm Turgenev and Conrad's strong visual focus. Both authors use countless words and phrases with a visual connotation such as "glare", "star", "look", "glass-clear waves", "flashing seas". The impressionist function of these epithetic adjectives and adverbials – these separate fleeting impressions – seems to be to provide optional information. Translated into a painting metaphor, one could liken the function of these visual categories to touches of a painter's brush to heighten the colours, to intensify the impression, to make the reader "see".

The fluid and the changeable power of water, which in itself is colourless while its colours are only apparent (they are caused by some accidental, changeable elements), all of whose colours are always reflections and nothing else, is wonderfully suitable for experiments with light and colour in a way not dissimilar to the Impressionist painters' use of light and shade. Light and light-effects in landscape were all-important for Corot, and choice of colour and tone was affected by consideration of them. In the presence of such emphasis is the power of the brush to suggest, to create the impression of the image which is crucial. Minute detail becomes less important. Turgenev always insists on the presentation of what is characteristic of a scene rather than on the agglomeration of detail.

The range of colours and the play of light also enhance the visual appeal of *The Mirror of the Sea*. In most of his works Conrad selects a principal colour scheme, often a dramatic contrast between the dark and the light, or focuses our vision upon a dominant image. Thus, in his descriptions of scenery Conrad, like Turgenev, produces the effect achieved by a painter.

The structural colours in Conrad's book are black and white, grey, yellow, blue and gold. The sea is "one empty wilderness of black and white hills,"<sup>42</sup> there are "black squalls, white squalls"<sup>43</sup> and "white-crested waves,"<sup>44</sup> the "black-browed," "dark-eyed," "grey-robbed"<sup>45</sup> East Wind has a "black and merciless heart,"<sup>46</sup> the "Westerly Wind clothed in a mantle of dazzling gold or draped in rags of black clouds,"<sup>47</sup> a ship has a "coal black shape upon the gloomy blueness of the air,"<sup>48</sup> there are "grey clouds,"<sup>49</sup> "grey curtains of mist,"<sup>50</sup> and an "olive hue of hurricane clouds presents an aspect peculiarly appalling,"<sup>51</sup> and "low grey sky, as if the world were a dungeon,"<sup>52</sup> the seamen in "oilskin coats."<sup>53</sup> There are also "flashing seas"<sup>54</sup> and "showers of crystals and pearls."<sup>55</sup>

The use of descriptive passages have a dual function: they can either be a mere pictorial description of a scene or of natural phenomena used to foreground the sense of beauty or corruption and provide a special dimension to action, or they can be a brooding spirit filling the whole nervous energy of the story, conceptualised in metaphorical terms to describe persons or situations in visual terms. In *The Mirror* there are frequent descriptions of the ship as it would have appeared to a distant observer – pictures of the sea as it appeared from the ship, of particular parts of the ship as seen from other parts on board, and of land as it appears from sight. We also have vignettes of the characters in thought about themselves, of the men as they appeared to the officers and vice-versa. Conrad's attempt to portray the characters and settings from the outside as well as from the inside: the "outside" pictures reinforce and complement the "inside" pictures by adding more colour or shading the picture. Conrad's is a dynamic painting that keeps growing and changing almost supernaturally. With each scene, each narrative point of view, a significant detail is added to the layer of colour upon the surface. These little additions, at first hardly noticeable, to the initial visual impression of the protagonist finally determine both his outward appearance and his inner essence.

The evocation and description of atmosphere also has a narrative function. The alteration between descriptive passages with a brooding or retrospective nature force the reader – in the words of Henry James – to create "stopping places" in the novella which foreground the preceding action, thereby necessitating a more "objective" examination and evaluation of the preceding action.

The above examples show that in their figurative language, in their depiction of the sympathetic relations of figures to landscape, visual impressions to fragmentary glimpses of objects, people, forms and movements both Conrad and Turgenev expressed their love for the natural world. Both writers in a clearly realistic and impressionistic manner constituted their universe – space, darkness, motion, atmosphere and mystery. As could be noted especially in its visual aspects which carry ontological as well as epistemological implications, many of the characteristics of modernism are explicitly impressionistic in form. In this respect Conrad, but above all Turgenev, can be regarded as modern writers.

The impact of one art upon another is always an interesting phenomenon, especially when the first is created essentially to be performed and heard whilst the other is written to be read. Music and literature engage two different senses yet each has served as an inspiration to the other. In *The World as Will and Representation* Schopenhauer states that music is "by no means like the other arts, namely a copy of the Ideas, but a copy of the Will itself."<sup>56</sup> Music is

thus empowered to transcend the epistemological limits already expanded by aesthetic contemplation.

Turgenev's of the author's role was also shaped by his early interest in German Romantic philosophy. During his studies in Germany in the late 1830's, which were mainly concentrated on history, classics and philosophy, and provided him with a monolithic concept of the world, Turgenev was under the influence of Hegel and Schelling.<sup>57</sup>

Subsequently Turgenev grew wary and became distrustful of Hegel and by the middle of the 1850's he was drawn to Hegel's fiercest critic, Schopenhauer, who became Turgenev's favourite philosopher till the end of his life. According to Leonard Schapiro the most striking influence of Schopenhauer's view is evident in Turgenev's assumption that in the hierarchy of art the supreme status belongs to music, which exhibits no ideas, only the will itself, so that in listening to it one obtains a direct revelation of the reality.<sup>58</sup> In Paris there were regular musical days at the Viardots' house in the rue de Douai, and visits to the opera, especially on the very rare occasions when Pauline Viardot appeared. Turgenev's taste in music changed little over the years. He liked Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven best. Of the moderns he approved of Bizet, Gounod and Saint-Saëns – perhaps more because of associations with Pauline's performances in their operas than for the intrinsic quality of their music. He was delighted with Schumann's music when he first heard it and had some praise for Wagner's *Meistersinger*. He was contemptuous of most of the modern school of Russian composers (Balakirev, Dargomyzhsky, even Glinka), but he admired Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov.<sup>59</sup> L. Schapiro writes that Russian music was a favourite subject of heated argument between Turgenev and the critic V.V. Stasov when they met, or when they exchanged lengthy letters.<sup>60</sup>

Turgenev uses music to amplify his own art; music ennobles, transfigures and links our relative existence to higher reality, to immortality. For Schopenhauer and Turgenev, art is partly a release from the tyranny of ordinary perception, partly a rescuing of knowledge from the flow of time. In the victorious force of passion the powerful sounds of music are expressions of the human soul. Love's joys and sorrows are declared through music. Music, which is mysterious and miraculous, occupies an important place in Turgenev's *The Song of Triumphant Love*. This notion of music as the expression of higher reality had a powerful attraction for Turgenev and he strove to communicate this notion by overcoming the difficulty of describing music in literary terms through the use of appropriate metaphors. Thus, when Muzzio began his final song of happy and satisfied love, a passionate melody "poured out in beautiful sinuous coils like that very snake whose skin covered the top of the violin; and the

melody burned with such fire, was radiant with such triumphant joy, that both Fabio and Valeria were pierced to their very hearts,” tears came into their eyes, and the diamond on the end of the “violin bow shed sparkling rays as it moved, as if it also had been ignited by the fire of the wondrous song.”<sup>61</sup>

Generally, however, music in Turgenev’s works serves to purify and ennoble human emotions, and his descriptions of music impart to his prose that lyrical enchantment and perfection which bring him close to the symbolists. It is clearly visible in the impression Yasha’s song in “The Singers” had on the listeners. Here beauty is the theme in the sense that it is the beauty of Yasha’s singing which so touches the hearts of his listeners that he is universally acknowledged to be a winner of a competition. Such beauty, though, is no more than momentary. Turgenev chanced upon it in taking refuge from the heat of the day and refused to idealize the episode by omitting the drunken scene at the end. Yasha’s song clearly impressed and ennobled the listeners: “the iron face of Wild Master, from under his deep overhanging brows, slowly rolled a heavy tear; the huckster had raised a clenched fist to his brow and never stirred...”<sup>62</sup> When he finished his song everyone started talking “loudly, joyfully,” Nikolay Ivanich announced that “he would add another quart of beer on his own account,” and the Wild Master “laughed a good-natured laugh” as nobody “expected to hear from him.”<sup>63</sup>

It should be noted that for Conrad music was also one of the arts which he appreciated most highly. Though Conrad’s main concern was to make us *see*, he was also concerned with making us hear. In the “Preface” to *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* Conrad, like Schopenhauer (and Turgenev), gives “the magic suggestiveness of music – which is the art of arts”<sup>64</sup> the supreme status among the arts. It should be noted that despite describing music as the “art of arts” in his “Preface”, the role of music in Conrad’s correspondence is a minor one. Only few composers are named. There are two passing references to Wagner and one appreciative mention of Meyerbeer of whom Conrad writes, “I suppose that I am now the only human being in these Isles who thinks Meyerbeer a great composer: and I am an alien at that and not to be wholly trusted.”<sup>65</sup> Jakob Meyerbeer, a German composer, was an important figure in French opera from 1831 till his death in 1864; Wagner, of course, was also a composer of operas. Otherwise there is a brief mention of Ravel, but only because Conrad met him once or twice, confessing that “[W]e got rather thick together last time he was there.”<sup>66</sup> There is nothing about his music, though. These letters at least suggest Conrad’s interest in opera, and he seems to confirm this when writing to Sir Hugh Clifford about the latter’s *Downfall of the Gods*:

What a tremendous subject for a great, a really great opera! And pray don't think it mean praise. No great poem for music has been written yet; subjects of course are lying about. What I mean to say is that here is a subject, the subject of *the* Great Oriental Opera, worked out. Absolutely done!<sup>67</sup>

Most of Conrad's references to music are operatic. After finishing *Almayer's Folly*, for instance, he wrote to Marguerite Poradowska: "I shall soon send you the last chapter. It begins with a *trio* – Nina, Dain, Almayer – and it ends with a *solo* for Almayer which is almost as long as the solo in Wagner's *Tristan*."<sup>68</sup> It is also opera that so impresses Lingard in *The Rescue*.

Music is functional for Babalatchi in *An Outcast from the Islands*, where his song ensures that Aïssa and Willems will not doze while the blind and murderous Omar is about. For a talented and enthusiastic pianist Freya in *Freya of the Seven Isles* a piano is a means of proclaiming her passion for Jasper Allen, a defence against the unwelcome attentions of Heemskirk, and a weapon to drive the Lieutenant on his way when, in confusion, he takes his hasty leave. The role of music, however, is often negative in Conrad's work. The salesman from Baltimore in *The Rescue* considers that musical instruments would be a suitable label for a box containing firearms. Generally speaking, Conrad did not like mechanical renditions or bad performances. For example, the piano's mechanical jauntiness in *The Secret Agent*, exhibited on each of its appearances, is out of tone and the subjects of discussions it intrudes on. The piano is impertinent and dominant, just like science, producing not a music, but a deafening "din" that interrupts, and thus takes precedence over human communication.

An upright semi-grand piano near the door, flanked by two palms in pots, executed suddenly all by itself a false tune with aggressive virtuosity. The din it raised was deafening. When it ceased, as abruptly as it had started, the bespectacled, dingy little man who faced Ossipon behind a heavy glass mug full of beer emitted calmly what had the sound of a general proposition.<sup>69</sup>

Mechanical music (music subjected to science) acts as an encroachment rather than an accompaniment to human life. In *Nostramo* there are reminders that music is used to inspire and accompany violence. It is a military band that plays sometimes in the evenings before the revolutions. The band also plays the Sulaco garrison off to war, and Decoud directly connects music and the sound of trumpets – war trumpets, with violence. On the other hand, in *Nostramo* music also plays a defiant role, a positive force in the midst of suffering, still capable of rallying the people, or at least distracting some of them momentarily from their current woes:

In the patio littered with straw, a practicante, one of Dr. Monygham's native assistants, sat on the ground with his back against the rim of the fountain, fingering a guitar discreetly, while two girls of the lower class, standing up before him, shuffled their feet a little and waved their arms, humming a popular

dance tune. Most of the wounded during the two days of rioting had been taken away already by their friends and relations, but several figures could be seen sitting up balancing their bandaged heads in time to the music.<sup>70</sup>

Lastly, there seems to be an echo of the tonic sol-fa about the names Doramin in *Lord Jim* and Sofala in *The End of the Tether* which suggests that Conrad was able to appreciate music or, at least the attributes of good music.

Conrad's view of how precision must guide a novelist's craft rests on a paradox: only verbal and visual precision can bring out the symbolic value of physical reality. Thus, the implications of the concern with precision kept bringing Conrad back to the ideas set in his "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*. Visual precision remained the first requisite for a suggestive use of prose language, while verbal precision continued as the first condition for the effective evocation of the symbolic power of words. When Conrad expresses his belief in the "power of the written word"<sup>71</sup> he is careful to connect the notions of "impression" on the senses and "appeal" to temperament, so as to point out in what way the artist's descent into himself can uncover "the very truth" of the "visible universe."<sup>72</sup>

Turgenev is also suspicious about words. In *Spring Torrents*, for example, Sanin speaks German badly, and the Italians do not speak Russian. French is therefore used, but only Sanin handles it well. Words, in any case, are deceptive. By emphasising linguistic barriers Turgenev demonstrates that communication is based not only on words, but also on feelings. Thus in *Spring Torrents* Turgenev's reference to artists or their productions helps him define his characters. The following names are mentioned in the novel: Dante, Goethe, Pushkin, Hoffmann, Maltz, Virgil, Raphael, Correggio, Liszt, Glinka, Weber, Mozart, Bürger, the tenor Garcia and others. Sanin is shown as a product of Russian Romanticism by his reading and artistic preferences, Gemma, an idealised product of German Romanticism, with realistic Italian passion and southern gallantry, Signora Roselli, of a combination of Biedermeier and Italian opera. Each of these characters assumes that attitudes portrayed in art are indices of his own behaviour, and in each case this clashes with reality. Signor Roselli's portrait is painted in the style of Rinaldo Rinaldini and Gemma's hair is compared to that of Allori's *Judith*.

As it has been pointed above, Turgenev and Conrad's art is rich and complex, and it has many sources. Both writers valued visual and verbal precision in the novelist's craft, and they possessed extraordinary artistic skills of stimulating the readers' visual sense through the extensive use of arts – music and painting. Being suspicious about words, they proved that only verbal and visual precision can bring out the symbolic value of physical reality. We find

that Turgenev and Conrad's literary aesthetics reveal a remarkable degree of intellectual kinship, so that even if their tastes vary on the level of detail, their judgements on artistic matters are guided by similar principles.

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<sup>1</sup> "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, in: Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus', Typhoon and Other Stories*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1986, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4 4</sup> *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, 9 vols., eds. Frederic R. Karl and Laurence Davies, et al, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983–2008, vol. 2, p. 200.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Gustave Flaubert, *Letters (Selected with an Introduction by Richard Rumbold)*, trans. J. M. Cohen, London, George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1950, p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Notes on Life and Letters*, London, Dent, 1921, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Henry James, *Literary Criticism. Essays on Literature. American Writers. English Writers*, Leon Edel, ed. New York, Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1984, p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Clifford of 9 October 1899, in: G. Jean-Aubry, *Joseph Conrad. Life and Letters*, 2 vols. London, Heinemann, 1927, vol. 1, p. 280.

<sup>14</sup> Letter to Clifford of 9 October 1899, in: G. Jean-Aubry, *Joseph Conrad. Life and Letters*, vol. 1, p. 280.

<sup>15</sup> "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. ix.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Leonard Schapiro, *Turgenev. His Life and Times*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 241-242.

<sup>19</sup> Cynthia Marsh, "Turgenev and Corot: An Analysis of the Comparison", *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 6, 1983, pp. 107-116.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Symons, *Notes on Joseph Conrad*, London, Meyers & Co., 1925, p. 28-29.

<sup>21</sup> G. Jean-Aubry, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 268.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Conrad, *The End of the Tether*, in *Heart of Darkness & Other Stories*, Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 1999, p. 113

<sup>23</sup> "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Notes on Life and Letters*, p. 46.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, London, Dent, 1923, p. 355.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*, Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 1993, p. 125.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>28</sup> Jurij Lotman, *Struktura tekstu literackiego*, Warszawa, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1984, p. 376.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*, p. 206.

<sup>30</sup> "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>32</sup> Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979, pp. 175-176.

<sup>33</sup> Ivan Turgenev, *A Sportsman's Notebook*, trans. Charles and Natasha Hepburn, London, David Campbell Publishers, 1992, p. 124.

In Russian, see И. С. Тургенев, *Записки охотника*, in *Собрание сочинений*, Москва, Правда, 1949, vol. 1, pp. 94-95.

Удивительно приятное занятие лежать на спине в лесу и глядеть вверх! Вам кажется, что вы смотрите в бездонное море, что оно широко расстилается *под* вами, что деревья не поднимаются от земли, но, словно корни огромных растений, спускаются, отвесно падают в те стеклянно-ясные волны; листья на деревьях то сквозят изумрудами, то сгущаются в золотистую, почти черную зелень. Где-нибудь, далеко, оканчивая собою тонкую ветку, неподвижно стоит отдельный листок на голубом клочке прозрачного неба, и рядом с ним качается другой, напоминая своим движением игру рыбьего плёса, как будто движение то самовольное и не производится ветром. Волшебными подводными островами тихо наплывают и тихо проходят белые круглые облака, - и вот, вдруг все это море, этот лучезарный воздух,

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эти ветки и листья, облитые солнцем, - все заструится, задрожит беллым блеском, и поднимется свежее, трепещущее лепетание, похожее на бесконечный мелкий плеск внезапно набежавшей зуби. Вы глядите – та глубокая, чистая лазурь возбуждает на устах ваших улыбку, невинную, как она сама; как облака по небу, и как будто вместе с ними, медлительной вереницей проходят по душе счастливые воспоминания и все вам кажется, что взор ваш уходит дальше и дальше и тянет вас самих за собой в ту спокойную, сияющую бездну, и невозможно оторваться от этой вышины, от этой глубины ...

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea & A Personal Record*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 35.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>56</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, 3 vols., London, Trübner, 1883-1886, vol. 1, p. 257.

<sup>57</sup> Leonard Schapiro, *Turgenev. His Life...*, p. 22.

<sup>58</sup> Leonard Schapiro, *Turgenev. His Life...*, p. 208.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 242-243.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 243.

<sup>61</sup> Ivan Turgenev, *First Love and Other Stories*, trans. Richard Freeborn, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 279.

<sup>62</sup> *A Sportsman's Notebook*, p. 241.

и по железному лицу Дикого Барина, из-под совершенно надвинувшихся бровей, медленно прокатилась тяжелая слеза; рядчик поднес сжатый кулак ко лбу и не шевелился... (*Записки охотника* 184)

<sup>63</sup> *Sportsman's Notebook*, p. 242.

все вдруг заговорили шумно, радостно. ... Дикий Барин посмеивался каким-то добрым смехом, которого я никак не ожидал встретить на его лице. (*Записки охотника* 184)

<sup>64</sup> "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, p. 12.

<sup>65</sup> *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, vol. 4, p. 338, letter to Galsworthy of 18 June 1910.

<sup>66</sup> G. Jean-Aubry, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 303, letter to Eric Pinker of 9 April 1923.

<sup>67</sup> *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, vol. 4, p. 451, letter to Sir Hugh Clifford of 22 June 1911.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, letter to Marguerite Poradowska of 2 May 1894.

<sup>69</sup> Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*, Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 2000, p.53.

<sup>70</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Nostramo*, Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 2000, p. 244.

<sup>71</sup> "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, p. 13.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 11.