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## THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ARTIST

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## THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ARTIST

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THE DOCTRINE THAT the artist is socially responsible – responsible to society for what he does – is of course a very ancient doctrine. Plato, who is, I suppose, the first European writer to raise the issue – as he was the first to raise almost every issue of permanent interest to mankind from his day to ours – took this for granted. In the *Ion* the poet is the inspired visionary who knows the truth and speaks it with supernatural aid; in the *Republic* he is a gifted liar who does damage. In either case his social influence, his social responsibility, his social importance, are not denied; nor did anyone explicitly deny it or minimise it during the decadence of Greece, nor in Rome, nor in the ages of faith. Writers are acclaimed or denounced, but the importance of their gifts, whether for good or ill, is assumed, or at worst ignored, surely never denied. Nobody, so far as I know, said that the writer – or any artist – need be neither a teacher of virtue nor a provider of delight nor a craftsman making useful things or uttering useful words.

Even in the Renaissance, when the true creator was compared to God – *sicut deus* – divine because he created a world alongside God's world and was at one with his object, and 'informed' it with his creative soul, as God informs the real world – even in the Renaissance there is no doctrine of art for art's sake. Creation is marvellous because it entails union with, co-operation with, the spirit that animates the universe, however conceived. That is why great creative writers are conceived as prophets – Dante, Tasso, Milton – and see themselves as such; or as purveyors, givers of pleasure – Boccaccio, Politian, Rabelais, Shakespeare. The true source of delight – the beauty of the work of art – is in the revelation of reality, spiritual or material, transcendental or terrestrial. Art has a purpose beyond itself: to instruct, or please, or inspire men; or to serve God by moving men.

The doctrine of art for art's sake, and the corresponding denial of the social obligation or function of the artist; the doctrine that

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the artist creates as the bird sings, as the lily grows in the field, naturally or because he wishes to, for no ulterior purpose, and that he is entitled to do so because he can be oblivious of all that is around him if he so chooses, that art is justified by the mere fact that this is what the artist wants to do; the notion that the justification of art is in itself, that it is what it is and need not serve any end beyond itself – this is a late doctrine. It is the reply to the opposite view, which in its turn is a reaction against the irresponsibility of artists – the alleged irresponsibility of the frivolous, hedonistic eighteenth century.

The doctrine to which ‘art for art’s sake’ was the answer, historically, is the social philosophy of Saint-Simon and his followers, and before him of Schiller and his disciples. For Schiller, some poets find themselves in a divided society, where men have wandered from their true, integral selves, which once upon a time were whole, in paradise. In such a society writers (whom Schiller calls *sentimentalisch*) avenge broken, insulted nature, seek to restore men and societies to themselves, to heal the wounds inflicted by the division of labour, by the specialisation of function, by the growth of dehumanised mass society, by the beginning of the mechanisation of men. The purpose of art is therefore therapeutic, in the highest sense of the word, educational, to do with *Bildung* – the forming of unbroken men. Even Goethe, with all his passionate hatred of anything faintly utilitarian, tends towards this Rousseauish view.

Saint-Simon went much further. Stupidity, ignorance, irresponsibility, idleness caused the great disaster of the French Revolution, and duly caused it to fail. Society must be rebuilt on new foundations, and artists must play an essential part in this. It is not that they must betray their natural function, or divert it towards some alien goal: for this *is* their proper goal. The Saint-Simonians are the first group of thinkers to develop out of eighteenth-century empirical sociology a coherent doctrine of ideology. All that a man says, communicates as a painter, as a writer, as a composer, expresses an identifiable attitude towards life, conveys, whether he intends it to or not, a judgement; resting on a particular scale of values. If this is founded on delusions induced by some failure to face reality, then his judgement is false and misleads others. But whether false or true, whether brave or cowardly, art is communication, and springs from, and is the expression of, a man’s consciousness of his needs and his ideals,

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his loves and hatreds; it is an act intended to forward one cause, retard another, which automatically ranges a man on this or that side in the conflict of classes and groups and generations which constitute the historical process. Since all expression in words or other media is, in any case, an attempt to do something, to convince someone, to put forward a particular vision, this had best be rendered conscious, and used to serve a coherent ideal of life founded upon true knowledge of the historical process, upon the proper goals of a given society, and the proper part to be played by this or that individual or body of men in the social context, in which they cannot in any case help living and acting. This led to the Marxist doctrine of art as in some sense inevitably propaganda, of which rational men will wish to be made conscious. If it is left unexplored it may remain destructive, and perhaps self-destructive, as irrational beliefs and anti-social outlooks have proved to be in the past. For Leroux, George Sand and other Saint-Simonian social preachers social neutrality, still more frivolity, is not simply avoidance of an ethical position or of social action. It is itself an ethical attitude, disdain for values which the artist mocks at because he does not understand them, or is too weak or cowardly or ill-natured to face the social reality of his time.

This is what all the young nineteenth-century radicals believed, as against the hedonism, the unpolitical attitudes of their predecessors. Hence the attacks on eighteenth-century literature, of which Carlyle's denunciations were only the most violent and notorious. Young France, young Germany, young Italy, even Wordsworth and Coleridge in England, and of course Shelley, were steeped in faith in art as a form of salvation, personal or political, public or private. Art is a sacred function of a being spiritually gifted, possessing deeper insight into social reality than other men.

It is against this conception of the artist as a priest or a prophet, as well as against the cruder pressure for social conformity on the part of supporters of traditional values, or the demands of the organised Churches, or the champions of social utility, or simply of the commercial market, that the violent diatribe of the most eloquent defender of art for art's sake, Theophile Gautier, were directed:

You cannot make a hat out of a metonymy, and you cannot make a simile in the form of a bedroom slipper, and you cannot use an antithesis

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as an umbrella. An ode is, I have a feeling, too light a garment for the winter. I don't think a strophe or an antistrophe or an epode will do much more to protect you against the elements than the chemise of the Cynic's wife, who, history tells us, went about nude, using her virtue as her sole garment. No, imbeciles! No! Fools and cretins that you are, a book will not make a plate of soup; a novel is not a pair of boots; a sonnet is *not* a syringe; a drama is *not* a railroad – they are not these forms of civilisation which have made humanity march on the road to progress. By all the bowels of all Popes, past, present and future, no, ten thousand times, no!<sup>1</sup>

Gautier's fierce words, directed though they may have been against all forms of positivism, utilitarianism and socialism; and in particular against what in his day was called realism, and later naturalism, was the opening shot in a controversy which has from that day never ceased. Gautier's insistence on the uselessness of art – on beauty as an end in itself – on ugliness too, for that matter – was echoed by Flaubert, by Maupassant, by symbolists and aesthetes against naturalists, socialists, realists, against Zola, Ibsen, Hauptmann. But the most passionate and influential counter-attack came from the barbarians beyond the Eastern marches: the untutored Russians. The critic Belinsky, whatever else may be thought of him, spoke for a whole social stratum in Russia when he said, 'Every intelligent man has the right to demand that poetry [...] be filled with the torment of the agonising questions of our day.' Turgenev gives a touching and amusing description of Belinsky's reading of Pushkin's celebrated disdainful lines addressed by the poet to the mob: 'The kitchen pot is dearer to you / Because in it you cook your food.'<sup>2</sup>

'Yes,' said Belinsky, glaring and striding rapidly from corner to corner; 'yes, I do cook my food in it, and my family's food and another pauper's food. I must feed them before bowing down before stone effigies, even if they are carved by some marvellous super-Phidias; as for all our well-born young versifiers – let them hang, the lot of them.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mademoiselle de Maupin: Double Amour* (Paris, 1835), 41–2 (the Preface is dated May 1834).

<sup>2</sup> 'Poet i tolpa' (1828), lines 24–5, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1959–62) ii 234–5 at 235.

<sup>3</sup> 'Vospominaniya o Belinskom': I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem* (Moscow/Leningrad, 1960–8), *Sochineniya* xiv 45–6

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This is an extreme expression of anti-aestheticism.

But it was symptomatic not only of the attitude of the young radicals of the 1840s, but of that of virtually every major Russian writer in the nineteenth century, although not, of course, of Russian literature in general. What maddened Belinsky was the doctrine according to which the writer was a pure purveyor, and all that the public and the critic had the right to do was to accept or reject the commodity that he supplied; while his character and motives and private life – his ‘social direction’ – were none of the public’s business. After all, you buy a table without enquiring into whether the carpenter is a good husband, or a good citizen, or what his motives are for making tables. What right, then, have you to pry into the individual character of the novelist or the painter? He supplies you – the public – with a story, a poem. A critic can praise it for what it is, for that is on public view. Look at the book and judge it as you would a rose, a glass of wine, a jewel, which you have acquired for the pleasure which you think that they will give you. The artist’s life is not relevant. A man’s life and his motives are his own affair. Let the critics and the public keep out.

This, for Belinsky, was an absurdity and a blasphemy. Art, and especially writing, is not the production of a silver box, it is the voice of a man speaking to other men, and when a man speaks he, *eo ipso*, willy-nilly, conveys an attitude to life, for which, as for everything else in his life, he is responsible. If what he says is false or shallow or insincere or trivial, then he, not it, is to be condemned. There is no region in which one can do as one pleases, protected from criticism. If you choose to close your eyes to this condition, to accept a hedonistic attitude, to escape into fantasies, or to distort reality, you alone are answerable for this. If you choose to suppress the truth, to adulterate your material, to play on human responses like an instrument, if you choose to excite, amuse, frighten, attract, you are using men as objects; you are manipulating them and thereby degrading them; you are turning your gifts into an instrument for the acquisition of power or pleasure or profit, and this is a betrayal of humanity to politics – politics in some base, odious sense, an unscrupulous trampling on what you and all men know to be the true goals of human beings as such. This is a betrayal, not simply of your calling as an artist – there are no separable functions – but of your human essence, and should be exposed as such. Art is not journalism, and it is not moral preaching. But the fact that it is a creative activity does not

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absolve it from social and moral commitment to serve fundamental human ends. No doubt simply to be sincere, genuine, painstakingly humane is not enough. 'Art gains nothing', said Belinsky, 'from being told that it is *intelligent, truthful, profound, but unpoetical*.'<sup>4</sup> If it is that, it is not nothing: but it is not art. Nevertheless, division of men into compartments, whereby I have one set of principles as a citizen and another as a poet – I feel this as a father, but ignore it, or set it aside, as a painter – the notion that art is some kind of *métier*, a special set of garments which I don for the occasion, is a monstrous denial of the fact that man is *one*, and that what he does he must do with his whole being, that to play a role is always squalid, that to distinguish one's professional capacity from one's inner or private or real life is a gratuitous act of self-mutilation. To be a great artist and a philistine or a venal or corrupt operator is not impossible: but it is not irrelevant to his art.

Goethe's moral and social conformism, his behaviour as a tactful court official, and his moral assumptions in *Hermann and Dorothea*, and *The Elective Affinities* – his self-protectiveness and his good manners – irritated Belinsky just as Pushkin's acceptance of a degrading position at court and his forcing of his heroine Tatiana into a loveless marriage did too; and later the poetess Akhmatova, our contemporary, attacked what she regarded as Tolstoy's monstrous morality in *Anna Karenina*, when he punished Anna for defying not what he, Tolstoy, knew to be the true morality, but for offending against what Akhmatova described as the morality of his Moscow aunts. Here there is a genuine point of collision of values: for Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and Mikhailovsky, no less than for the social critics of the 1840s, a work of art is nothing unless it is 'lived through'.<sup>5</sup> It 'must be not only in the head, but above all in the heart, in the blood',<sup>6</sup> otherwise it will be false and dead.

So Belinsky. And the worst, most pejorative word in Tolstoy's critical vocabulary is 'contrived', marking deviation from truth in order to give pleasure, excite, amuse – so much the worse when it is done with genius and brilliance (as, in his view, by Maupassant); the more superb the performance, the more disgusting the

<sup>4</sup> 'Sochineniya Aleksandra Pushkina' no. 5 (1844), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1953–9) (hereafter PSS) vii 319.

<sup>5</sup> 'Vzglyad na russkuyu literaturu 1847 goda' (1848) no. 2, PSS x 312. [Literally, an idea must be 'conveyed through your own nature, [...] imprinted on your soul']

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

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prostitution. This goes beyond Belinsky and his conception of the social function of the writer. In Belinsky's view Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens are true artists inasmuch as they express the central direction of their societies. Their private lives and opinions are not, however, directly relevant. What would Tolstoy's admired Stendhal and Dickens have said to this? If Stendhal had been accused of, say, receiving payments as a spy from Charles X, or Dickens of buying shares in an industrial enterprise which ground the faces of the poor, how telling, how relevant would they have considered such charges to be to their claims as artists? Would Mozart, would Delacroix have begun to understand what was meant by attributing this sacred status to them – that of confessors, testifying to the truth, whose lives must show forth the purity of their faith? The critics or the public are free to accept or reject the work of art; but what right have they to enquire into the private life of the craftsman? The work of art, as Eliot says, illuminates by its own radiance, and needs none from the poet's life and his biographer. Complaints of the artist's lack of sincerity, or of insufficient unity between his life and art, are vulgar and impertinent.

What Russian writers would have defended themselves in such a way? The 'pure' poets, the symbolists, the formalists would, no doubt; and all the writers born in the eighteenth century – Pushkin and his generation. But the great novelists thought otherwise, even Turgenev (the purest of artists, for Henry James or Flaubert), when his *Fathers and Sons* was attacked by young radicals as a caricature of the angry young nihilists of his time, did not say, 'I am writing a work of fiction. I am not expressing my own political convictions. A work of art is not a pamphlet or a treatise. It should be judged in terms of its own goal, in terms of its own world.' On the contrary, he pleaded his case with pathetic anxiety, and declared that he was on the side of the *révolté* young men; he fully accepted the assumption that the political implications of a work of art were intrinsic to it, and needed justification; he thought the left-wing strictures were unjust, not irrelevant.

Tolstoy despised Belinsky, and thought him terribly boring; nevertheless his own views of what makes a work of art are not so very different. His first requirement is that the writer must be able to write. The second that he must be able to construct, to conceive the work of art in terms of an articulate pattern which alone gives it an independent life. The third criterion is that it must concern

itself with issues of central human importance, and not the trivial and the ephemeral. These, for Tolstoy, are individual and moral – and, in some large sense of the word, spiritual – not primarily social or political or historical. That view in its turn is based upon his metaphysical outlook: his conception of the nature of man and of man's relation to others and to the world. Belinsky, who held that man was intrinsically social, and unintelligible save in terms of his time and place and milieu, consequently held that to deal with central problems that concern men is necessarily a criticism of society; that serious questions are not intelligible apart from their social setting – indeed 'setting' is not the right term. A man and his relations to other men imply each other; society is not a setting that can be removed at will. The terms are intelligible only in their interrelations. Hence the observation I have already quoted: 'Every intelligent man has the right to demand that poetry [...] be filled with the torment of the agonising questions of our day.' Again, 'To deprive art of the right to serve social interests is not to raise it, but to degrade it: for it is to deprive it of the most vital of forces – thought – it is to make it a plaything of idle curiosity.' This is too social for Tolstoy, but the point of view is essentially the same, and incompatible with any doctrine of pure art and pure literature.

Tolstoy's last criterion – which Belinsky and all the radicals, not the utilitarians and the Marxists, accepted passionately – is that no man can write truthfully or artistically about anything that he has not lived through and experienced, either in fact or in imagination; that to write from a detached point of view, outside the periphery of the object described, is to condemn oneself to superficiality, to the trivialisation of life.

Characteristically, he proceeded to use these criteria to knock down the three writers who loomed largest on his and his readers' horizon: first, Turgenev. No doubt Turgenev could write and construct, and had lived only too intimately through the experiences and the society that he describes, but what is this society? Trivial persons and their trivial crises, remote from the things that man truly lives by; hence Turgenev makes small, and falsifies, life and the nature of man. As for Nekrasov, he writes about truly agonising problems, social and personal, and writes with artistic skill and force. But there is no *Erlebniss* – the appalling conditions of the peasants, which he laments so eloquently, mean nothing to him personally. He dines at the English Club without a thought of the conditions of his own serfs – the whole

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performance is conducted from some cold-hearted outside vantage-point. He has not suffered through the material of his verse; all is hollow, all is false. Finally Dostoevsky: he clearly deals with problems of the greatest depth and agonising importance. He is wholly and painfully involved in them; but alas, he cannot write, cannot construct. After two hundred pages of any one of his novels, the characters are all on the stage, all the situations are revealed, and the rest is mere mechanical iteration and infinitely tedious – the reader can predict it all, it adds nothing.

Whether these remarks are just or not (and on the whole they are not), they are the fruit of the brilliantly intelligent and amusing malice of an envious man of genius. They convey what is at the heart of the conception of art, criticism and society that agitated Russian writers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The writer is not a purveyor; nor is he a priest, nor an Olympian god looking down on daily life; not a detached analyst or interpreter of a world in which he is not personally involved. He is a moralist, because he has taken upon himself the obligation to tell the truth in public: not discursive truth like the philosophers, not abstract and general truth like the scientists, but individual truth, to be conveyed only by means of images, symbols and descriptions, as concrete and direct as possible, and springing from the artist's own real or imaginative experience. This is his material: himself; his own society – not neutral stuff. No man can avoid influencing the conduct of his neighbour: scientists do this with abstract symbols, artists by other means; both seek to lead men to self-understanding, the destruction of delusions, if need be by methods that upset them; and thereby promote truth, freedom, justice, love. This is what horrified Flaubert so deeply when he was reading *War and Peace*, with uncontrollable admiration. 'He digresses, he moralises, he philosophises,' he said about Tolstoy with bewildered indignation.<sup>7</sup>

But even Tolstoy did not believe in a direct utilitarian function of art, still less in art as propaganda, no matter how virtuous. Saint-Simonian sermons, Chernyshevsky's didactic novels seem to him vulgar and useless, like the plays of Bernard Shaw, whom he regarded as shallow, contrived, showy, morally empty. 'The reader', said Goethe [as cited by Belinsky], '*should forget me, himself, the world,*

<sup>7</sup> Flaubert wrote 'il se répète et il philosophe': *Lettres inédites à Tourguéneff* (Monaco, 1946), 218.]

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and live only in my work.<sup>8</sup> This is what Belinsky and Tolstoy hated equally: although it is exactly what Tolstoy, at his best, achieves. Belinsky went further, in at least one exasperated moment, when he said (in 1843), 'Art cannot, in a divided and broken age like ours, be master. It must be a slave. It must serve interests outside itself.'<sup>9</sup> But this is isolated. He never said it again. This solitary sentence constitutes his claim to be the father of that social realism which no artist has ever practised.

The central doctrine of artistic commitment is free from such exaggerations. What did enter the Russian and Western tradition was the notion that art is a form of engagement, willy-nilly, whether it is aware of what it is doing or not. It is so in the very act of seeking detachment or escape from reality; it is so even when, in a society that is in conflict, it acts as a factor which widens the gulf between the artist and society. Alienation, the problem of the artist in a divided society, is not new to the Russians. Let me quote from Belinsky again. The poet is 'an impressionable, irritable organism',<sup>10</sup> responsive to the categories of his time. In the twelfth century men wanted to ban those who thought differently from everyone else; in the nineteenth, to re-educate others and put them on the right path. Is there any escape from this?

If we cannot get out of our own time, so we shall be told, then there cannot exist poets who do not belong to the spirit of their own age; and therefore there is no point in fighting against something that cannot occur. 'No,' we reply, 'this not only can occur, but exists, and especially at present.' The cause of this phenomenon is the existence of societies which teach their children a morality for which, after they have left school, we proceed, today, to laugh at them. This happens when religious feeling vanishes, when there is disintegration, split personality, and – its inevitable consequence – self-centredness [...]. In this condition a society which lives by ancient traditions which are no longer really believed in, beliefs which are contradicted by new truths discovered by the sciences, beliefs which are swept away by the movement of history – in this state of society, even the noblest and most

<sup>8</sup> Goethe had written: 'Welchen Leser ich wünsche? Den unbefangenen, der mich, / Sich und die Welt vergisst und in dem Buche nur lebt' ('What kind of reader do I want? The most unbiased, who forgets me, himself and the world and lives only in the book'). 'Vier Jahreszeiten' no. 56, cited in 'Sochineniya Aleksandra Pushkina' no. 5, PSS vii 305.

<sup>9</sup> 'Tarantas', PSS ix 78.

<sup>10</sup> 'Stikhotvoreniya M. Lermontova', PSS iv 495.

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gifted individuals feel themselves cut off from society, feel solitary, and the weaker characters among them drift peacefully into becoming preachers and priests of egoism, of all the vices of society, in the belief that evidently things must always be so, cannot be otherwise. 'After all,' they say to themselves, 'the situation did not start with us, and will not end with us either.' Then there are others, often, alas, the best men in the society, who escape into themselves and turn their backs in despair upon this reality which insults all feeling and reason. But this method of escape is false and egoistic: when there is a fire in our street we must run towards it, not away from it, in order to find means, together with others, for putting it out – we must work like brothers to extinguish it. But many, in our day, have elevated this egoistic and cowardly feeling into a principle and a doctrine, into a rule of life, and declare it to be a dogma of the highest wisdom. They take pride in it, they look with contempt on a world which, they make clear, is not worth their suffering or joy; they sit in the beautifully built castle of their imagination, and looking out through its many-coloured glass, they sing songs like birds.<sup>11</sup>

This is a kind of dying long before one is actually dead.

Freedom of creation is easily reconciled with serving contemporary needs: there is no need to force oneself to write in accordance with a doctrine, to do violence to the imagination. One need only be the child of one's society and one's time, a citizen of one's country, to enter into its interests, to make its cravings one's own – all that is needed is sympathy, love, good practical instincts, a sense of truth which does not separate conviction from action, or creative work from life itself. What enters the soul, and enters it deeply, will itself make its way into the light of day.<sup>12</sup>

These words could be repeated without much change by any socially conscious writer and critic in our own day, and would be denounced (as the Russian formalists denounced them) by any New Critic, in language not unlike that of the eminent contemporary who accused Belinsky of betraying the cause of criticism by taking it from the house of art into the house of journalism. The war between purveyors and moralists, the theory of art as *métier* and the self-illuminated work of art versus that of the undivided nature of man and art as its expression, a doctrine which was most eloquently stated by Herder – this war continues

<sup>11</sup> 'Rech' o kritike', PSS vi 285–6.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* 286.

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in our day. The issues have been distorted in totalitarian societies; but there too it is still a central issue. As for the West, the *nouveau roman* in France, the conflict between its protagonists and those of Sartre and the literary Left; the battle between the admirers of Edmund Wilson or F. R. Leavis or Georg Lukács on the one hand, and, on the other, the new aestheticism and the champions of elegance, charm, delight as such – these issues, which seem so contemporary and rooted in our own discontents, are, as a matter of history, the product of the violent impact of Russian amateurs, with their direct vision and apparently naïve, childish, brutally simple, sharp, unanswered questions.

The long passage which I have quoted from Belinsky is the central text of radical humanism, neither utilitarian or didactic, less fanatical than the social preaching of the positivists, equally opposed to the crude sociological strait-jackets of the Marxist critics and the fantasies, dreams and egomania of the self-absorbed and the alienated – that romantic or expressionist or symbolist rejection of social reality which makes Marxism seem a return to sanity and truth. It is, in effect, the manifesto of the body that in Russia came to be called the intelligentsia. Such bodies seem to come into being whenever the telling of the truth comes into conflict with prevalent morality or institutions, and involves those who tell it in resistance and, in some cases, martyrdom. This, in due course, welds such persons into a party, a sect, an order, with mutual solidarity, common ideals, and unswerving pursuit of truth and freedom against oppression and obscurantism, no matter from what quarter. It was Friedrich Schiller who enunciated the view that when a society is divided against itself, and when man is torn away from what he called nature, that is to say, his true essence, art is the revenge of nature against her desecrators, and the poet is the instrument whereby she seeks to restore the broken unity, to re-establish the common life. When Herzen said that Russian literature was one vast indictment of Russian life, or Korolenko, half a century later, declared, ‘Russian Literature became my homeland’<sup>13</sup> (not Russia herself) no one in Russia had any doubt of what was being said. In countries where such words are understood, the notion of the social responsibility of the artist – especially of the writer – is not obscure. It may be accepted or

<sup>13</sup> V. G. Korolenko, *Istoriya moego sovremennika* (1905), chapter 27: *Sobranie sochinenii v pyati tomakh* (Leningrad, 1989–91) iv 270.

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rejected, doubted and debated: but it is not obscure. Jane Austen would not have made sense of it: nor, perhaps, Trollope. I am not sure about Joyce, despite his early socialism. But no serious person today who is genuinely in contact with reality in London or Paris, New York or Rome or Moscow, or Asia or Africa, is ignorant of what it means. The intelligentsia, which started life, both as an idea and as a reality, in an almost wholly unregarded corner of the civilised world, is today a world-wide phenomenon. And it seems to me to be here for good.

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