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Envisioning a “Slavic” Humanity

Janko Lavrin between Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

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Acknowledgements

In November 2015 I started my six year journey with Janko Lavrin. The word “journey” may be taken quite literally. My study of Lavrin brought me to the wonderful cities Ljubljana and Nottingham, where the universities hold the largest collections of his works. At the same time, studying Lavrin took me on an intellectual journey through time and space. Our trip was not always easy. It has taken me some time to figure out who my travel companion actually was. Moreover, Lavrin’s many and wide interests have led to several detours and alterations in the road I had planned ahead. I have to admit that the journey did not bring me where I expected it would. At first I thought I would get to know Lavrin best through our common interest in the Slavic world. I believed that studying Lavrin would lead to an immersion in the world of the Slavic Idea and more exactly in the spectrum of Pan-Slavism. After a while, however, I discovered that I did not really got through to him when I focused on that one specific characteristic. I learned that travelling with Lavrin does not benefit from a focus on one of his interests, but only reaches its full potential by zooming out, by getting on a plane (or rather on a slow hot air balloon) and looking at his creative traces in bird’s-eye view.

In hindsight, I have to say that I am glad that my travel plans were altered. On the one hand, the bird’s eye view allowed me to uncover and avoid the traps other students of Lavrin had fallen into. On the other hand, looking at Lavrin from an aerial perspective helped me to come out of my comfort zone and complement my knowledge of Slavic cultures, with insights from other domains. Lavrin and his works took me on a colourful journey to the new areas of Europeanism, Cosmopolitanism and British Modernism. Lavrin and his works even made me stop briefly in the mysterious realm of theosophy.

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Summary

This dissertation studies the work of Janko Lavrin (1887-1986). He was a Slovene expat who started his career as a journalist, literary critic and editor in pre-revolutionary Russia and later moved to Great Britain where he worked for several modernist periodicals and was soon appointed as a professor in Russian literature at Nottingham University. Throughout his career Lavrin engaged through various channels in debates about the future of the Slavic world and Europe. The image that currently exists of Lavrin’s views on the topic is remarkably fragmented: Lavrin has gotten labels that vary between reactionary Russian nationalist and dreamer of an integrated Europe. Scholars are most often inspired either by Lavrin’s apparent focus on the nation or by his alleged cosmopolitan interest for supra-national constellations, two positions that could hardly lie further apart. This fragmented image can be directly related to the nature of most Lavrin research. Most scholars focus on just one period of his career (Russian or British) and equally often on just one specific work, without taking the characteristics of his other works into account. The label scholars attribute to Lavrin often depends on the part of his oeuvre they use as their primary source. Because of this compartmentalized attention to Lavrin’s oeuvre, the image of an alleged Russian nationalist has coexisted with the image of an advocate for European integration without any questions being asked. Arguably, the compartmentalized approach to his work also makes it hard to get a proper understanding of Lavrin, his views on the Slavic world and Europe, and his engagement with nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

In contrast to the fragmented approach of the existing Lavrin research, I have addressed Lavrin’s Russian and British oeuvre in its entirety. Through an in-depth close-reading I tackled his publications chronologically, and this in order to map his engagement with questions of nationalism and cosmopolitanism throughout his whole career. Building further on recent research in cosmopolitanism studies on the grey zone between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, I have investigated which images and
attitudes towards nationality and supra-national constellations are elaborated by Lavrin, how they evolve over time and how they relate to each other.

This study has allowed to conclude that the fragmented, and seemingly contradictory or even mutually exclusive perceptions of Lavrin’s view of the (Slavic) world and Europe actually are different sides of the same systematic ideas about the development of humanity. For Lavrin national and supra-national development are inherently connected to each other. This informs the way in which he envisions the future of humanity, and determines his ideas about cultural development. Throughout his career Lavrin underlines the need to pursue a balance between difference and unity, preservationism and cultural openness, and cultural and civilizational development. And at the same time, Lavrin uses this idea as a base to challenge the then state of the Slavic world and Europe, to redefine these supra-national constellations.
Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift bestudeert het werk van Janko Lavrin (1887-1986). Hij was een Sloveense expat die zijn carrière startte als journalist, literair criticus en uitgever in prerevolutionair Rusland. Later verhuisde hij naar Groot Brittannië waar hij werkte voor verschillende modernistische tijdschriften en snel werd aangesteld als professor Russische literatuur aan de universiteit van Nottingham. Doorheen zijn carrière mengde Lavrin zich op verschillende manieren in debatten over de toekomst van de Slavische wereld en Europa. Het beeld dat momenteel bestaat over Lavrins bijdrage aan die debatten is opvallend gefragmenteerd: de labels die Lavrin kreeg variëren tussen reactionaire Russische nationalist en dromer van een verenigd Europa. Onderzoekers kijken meestal naar Lavrins schijnbare focus op de natie of naar zijn zogenaamde kosmopolitische interesse in supranationale structuren, twee opvattingen die niet verder uit elkaar kunnen liggen. Dit gefragmenteerde beeld kan worden verbonden met de aard van het meeste onderzoek dat naar Lavrin werd gevoerd. De meerderheid van de onderzoekers concentreert zich op slechts een periode van zijn carrière (Russisch of Brits) en even vaak slechts op een specifiek werk, zonder rekening te houden met de kenmerken van de rest van zijn oeuvre. Het label dat Lavrin opgeplakt krijgt, hangt vaak af het werk dat onderzoekers als basis nemen voor hun studie. Door deze versnipperde aandacht voor Lavrins oeuvre kon het beeld van een vermeende Russische nationalist zonder probleem samengaan met het beeld van een voorstander van Europese integratie. Daarenboven maakt de versnipperde aanpak van zijn werk het moeilijker om vat te krijgen op Lavrin, zijn ideeën over de Slavische wereld en Europa, en zijn visie op nationalisme en kosmopolitisme.

In tegenstelling tot de gefragmenteerde aanpak van bestaande studies over Lavrin, heb ik Lavrins Russische en Britse oeuvre in zijn geheel onder de loep genomen. Aan de hand van diepgaande close-reading heb ik zijn publicaties chronologisch aangepakt om zo zijn houding ten opzichte van nationalisme en kosmopolitisme doorheen zijn hele carrière in kaart te brengen. Verder bouwend op de recente aandacht in kosmopolitismestudies voor
de grijze zone tussen nationalisme en kosmopolitisme, heb ik onderzocht welke beelden en houdingen ten opzichte van nationaliteit en supranationale structuren daadwerkelijk naar voor komen in Lavrins werk, hoe ze evolueren in de tijd en hoe ze zich tot elkaar verhouden.

Dit onderzoek laat toe te concluderen dat de gefragmenteerde en schijnbaar tegengestelde percepties over Lavrins ideeën over de Slavische wereld en Europa eigenlijk verschillende onderdelen zijn van dezelfde consistente visie op de ontwikkeling van de mensheid. Voor Lavrin zijn nationale en supranationale ontwikkeling inherent met elkaar verbonden. Dit stuurt de manier waarop hij zich de toekomst van de mensheid voorstelt en bepaalt zijn ideeën over culturele ontwikkeling. Doorheen zijn carrière benadrukt Lavrin de nood om een balans na te streven tussen verschil en eenheid, preservationisme en culturele openheid, en de ontwikkeling van beschaving en cultuur. Tegelijkertijd gebruikt Lavrin dit idee als basis om de toenmalige staat van de Slavische wereld en Europa in vraag te stellen en om deze supranationale structuren te herdefiniëren.
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Part 1 – Introducing Lavrin
Chapter 1  London 2020 – London 1920: Beyond and Before European Integration

1.1 The 2020 European Union under Pressure

London, spring 2020. Just as in the rest of the world, the streets of London are characterized by social distancing, multi-colored facemasks and sanitizers in front of shops. The Covid-19 pandemic not only dominates the 2020 street view, it takes over the national and global news, and overshadows and slows down the pressing issues that previously promised to define the course of events in the United Kingdom. Normally, 2020 would have revolved around the final stages of Brexit, the period of transition after the country’s definitive withdrawal from the European Union in January of that year, during which the future relationship between island and continent had to be negotiated and streamlined.

Although Brexit seems to have disappeared between daily updates on herd immunity, contamination statistics and vaccine development, it obviously still constitutes a major watershed in the history of the European Union. The British referendum in 2016 and the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the EU in 2020 mark the end of a continuous process of European integration since 1957 and the potential beginning of an actual European disintegration, which seemed unthinkable up to a couple of years ago (Trondal, Gänzle & Leruth 2019). What is more, London’s decision to leave the EU is not an isolated case. On the contrary, it can be considered symptomatic for the ongoing struggle between the supra-national EU authorities and the national governments of its member states while looking for legitimate solutions for the challenges of the twenty-first century (de Witte 2019). The continuous disharmony between the Union and its member states (but also among the separate member states) has prevented the national and supra-national authorities to formulate adequate answers to new and far-reaching crises, such as the financial crisis in 2008 and the refugee crisis in 2015. As a consequence, discontented
European citizens increasingly vote for Eurosceptic parties, often with an outspoken nationalist agenda, such as UKIP in the UK, Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, Rassemblement National in France and Fidesz in Hungary.

The growing concern and dissatisfaction of European citizens not only resonate in the results of national elections or referenda. The anxiety about the European Union and its future was also reflected in the exceptionally high turnout during the European elections in May 2019 – the highest in twenty years. Despite the growing eurosceptic climate, the elections can paradoxically be called the “most ‘European’ European elections” ever (Bruter & Harrison 2019). For the first time in forty years – before 1979 the national governments appointed the members of the European parliament themselves, – the voting trends were less determined by national concerns, as was usually the case, but significantly transcended national borders (Bruter & Harisson 2019; Wiebrecht & Downes 2019). Although the electoral results are generated in twenty-eight different national contexts, a couple of “pan-European” trends can be discerned. These trends lay bare a fault line among the European electorate. Not only the Eurosceptic, nationalist radical right had acquired a lot of European votes, also the europhilic Green and Liberal parties, which put ‘more Europe’ high on the political agenda, had made significant electoral gains (albeit smaller compared to their Eurosceptic colleagues) at the expense of the traditional parties, which did not pay a lot of attention to European change (Bruter & Harisson 2019; Wiebrecht & Downes 2019). The European electorate is thus increasingly divided about which Europe could best face future crises: a more fragmented Europe with more power for the member states or a Europe that is more united and gets more supra-national authority.

The concerns about the future of the European Union of both nationalists and europhils are mirrored in the intellectual debate as well. The series of interviews entitled ‘Oh Europe!’ (‘Ach Europa!’), published by the Dutch investigative magazine De Groene Amsterdammer, gives a good cross-section of this discourse. In the months before and after the latest EU-elections (February-July 2019), the magazine interviewed about ten thinkers and writers about the discrepancy between the European ideal and the current European reality. Political scientists such as Michael Ignatieff and Ivan Krastev, philosophers on ideas of nationality and transnationality such as Etienne Balibar and Susan Neiman, and novelists with a particular interest in Europe and the European Union like John Lanchester, Robert Menasse and Dubravka Ugrešić were given the floor. The main point of critique the interviews reveal, is the lack of a shared story within the European Union. Most interviewees point out that Europe focuses on its common economic interests instead of on shared values. Ignatieff, Lanchester and Balibar claim this has resulted in Europe acting like a mere monitary union (van der Hoeven 2019a; Postma 2019; Tielbeke 2019). Paradoxically, they maintain, the emphasis on safeguarding common European
financial interests has diminished the overall sense of unity and increased the gap between the member states, especially between the wealthy North and the struggling South. The exorbitant measures the EU enforced in Greece during the financial crisis in 2008 epitomize this. Citizens of nations that are not allowed to find their own way out of financial problems, add Lanchester, Menasse and Krastev, experience a growing sense of loss of agency vis-à-vis the large economic processes (Postma 2019; van der Hoeven 2019b; van de Ven 2019). They warn that the current policy therefore convinces European citizens of the bankruptcy of supra-national cooperation and the need for more national protection. Ignatieff, Lanchester and Ugrešić add to this warning that Europe’s focus on economic interests fosters the image of the Union and its high-ranking officials as an alienated, economic elite pursuing abstract goals (van der Hoeven 2019a; Postma 2019; Bogdanović & van der Linde 2019). They point out that many European citizens fear that an abstract European policy upstages tangible national interests and, therefore, national identity.

The interviewees of De Groene Amsterdammer are not enthusiastic about the way in which europhilic politicians try to counter the discourse of nationalist parties who play on the feelings of powerlessness and alienation that grow among many European citizens. Balibar summarizes it as follows: europhilic politicians only warn for the danger of populism, but do not successfully formulate an engaging alternative for the nationalism of the eurosceptics (Tielbeke 2019). Moreover, Ignatieff and Ugrešić draw attention to the fact that many values the Union promotes as shared values – be it academic liberty, the democratic state, or human rights, to name but a few, – actually are not carried out or supported in all the member states. Ugrešić gives a telling example of the discrepancy between ideal and reality in the interview:

If you say: we have risen like a phoenix from the ashes after the war and have adopted a certain value system – no more war on European ground, no more fascism [...] – then put it in the constitution and live up to it. [...] Every year this promise is broken when Croats travel to Bleiburg in Austria to celebrate their ustaša movement\(^1\). This yearly meeting is organized by the Croatian catholic church and

\(^1\) At the end of World War II in 1945, Wehrmacht soldiers, Croatian Ustaša (members of the fascist party, leading the country as a Nazi satellite state during the war), collaborators from Slovenia, Serbian royalists, but also common soldiers and civilians, fled to Austria to surrender to the British Army. The British army refused this surrender and repatriated them to Yugoslavia. The first repatriation left from Bleiburg. During the forced marches back, tens of thousands were killed by the Yugoslav Partisans. The Bleiburg repatriations have been a taboo until the end Yugoslavia. In 1995, Croatia started the official commemoration of the Bleiberg tragedy. In official discourse the emphasis is on the innocent victims of the partisan forces, without naming the fact that
is subsidized by the Croatian government. [...] The European Commission has never reacted to what happens there, even though Croatia is a member of the Union. Brussels does not intervene when a member state does not live up to its own values.² (Bogdanović & van der Linde 2019)

Nevertheless, Ugrešić not only pleads for defending and reinforcing ‘old’ values, but also advocates for more dialogue among Europeans. Only through mutual respect and openness, she poses, it is possible to create a story that can make the continent feel more like home for all its citizens (Bogdanović & van der Linde 2019).

Some of the interviewees, like Ignatieff, Krastev and Neiman, argue that a solution only can be found in the grey zone between the liberal, cosmopolitan side of the spectrum and the nationalist one. The three for example appeal to progressive and liberal parties to drop their usual contempt and shame for their national (cultural) histories (van der Hoeven 2019a; van de Ven 2019; Hendriks 2019). Ignatieff and Neiman argue that an open attitude to the national past allows to judge what went wrong, but also to embrace those cultural elements that excite national pride, a strong emotion that should not be monopolized by populists. Krastev speaks even more explicitly of a (re)conciliation between liberalism/Europeanism and nationalism:

Liberals only see the individual and humanity, but seldomly they observe what lies in between: communities, families, nations. You can knock heroes of their horses, but populists will fill the empty seats. [...] If liberals have to do anything, it is reassessing their attitude towards nationalism. They can no longer deny it, but have to put forward a good kind of nationalism instead. I know how crazy it sounds. There is a justified aversion to nationalism, but there are other valid experiences. In our part of Europe, nationalism was an ally of the liberals in their fight against communism. Here it was a progressive and liberating force. It can be like that again.³ (van de Ven 2019)

many of them were Ustaša or Nazi perpetrators. This often allows the commemoration to go hand in hand with historical revisionism of the Ustaša crimes.

² Als je zegt: we verrezen als een feniks uit de as na de oorlog met een bepaald waardensysteem – nooit meer oorlog op Europese grond, nooit meer fascisme [...] – zet het in de grondwet en handhaaf dat! [...] [D]ie belofte wordt elk jaar verbroken in het Oostenrijkse Bleiburg als Kroaten daar hun ustaša-beweging vieren. Deze jaarlijkse bijeenkomst wordt georganiseerd door de Kroatische katholieke kerk en gesubsidieerd door de Kroatische regering. [...] De Europese Commissie heeft nog nooit gereageerd op wat hier gebeurt, hoewel Kroatië lid is van de Unie. Brussel grijpt niet in als een lidstaat zich niet houdt aan de eigen waarden.

³ LiberaLEN zien uiteindelijk alleen het individu en de mensheid, maar zelden waat daartussen ligt: gemeenschappen, families, naties. ‘Je kunt de helden wel van hun paarden tillen, maar in die lege zadels zullen
The way Krastev frames his vision – “I know how crazy it sounds,” – shows how atypical his opinion seems to be for a liberal thinker in the current political climate of the European Union. After all, the institution came into being after thirty years of chaos caused by extreme nationalism. Nevertheless, Krastev’s proposal can be a fruitful alternative for the current perpetuation of the cleavage between euro sceptic nationalists yelling “down with the EU!” and europhils who continue to stress the dangers of nationalism, but neglect the worries of many Europeans. Moreover, it can allow the European Union to revitalize its motto, In Varietate Concordia, which it currently seems to use as a mere catchphrase.

1.2 An Early Search for European Unity in 1920

London, spring 1920. Janko Lavrin (1887-1986), a Slovene expat, former journalist in Russia, literary critic and recently appointed lecturer – later professor – of Russian literature at Nottingham University, starts to write a series of five articles entitled ‘Contemporary Fragments’ for the prominent British modernist periodical The New Age (Lavrin NA 1920(26/9), NA 1920(26/12), NA 1920(26/19), NA 1920(26/24), NA 1921(28/22)). In this series of articles Lavrin criticizes the state of Europe a couple of years after the First World War, when the initial euphoria after the end of the war has faded away. In doing this, Lavrin not only participates in the periodical’s debate on the obsolescence of the old Europe and the possibilities of the new, but engages in an exchange of ideas that occupies the minds of many an intellectual at the time. Editor A.R. Orage envisions the periodical as an open political-cultural platform and welcomes a diversity of competing opinions. In this way, he attracts a wide variety of views on Europe’s future, both of established modernist voices and newcomers (Garver 2011: 90). This variety for example shows in the many different opinions on the impact and the
meaning of the war for the continent. The contributors fluctuate between advocating the idea of the war as creative destruction, a \textit{tabula rasa} from which a new Europe can rise, expressing the hope that the war would be at least a sociological and political watershed, and merely interpreting the war as the climax of the decadence of the age (Jackson 2012: 2).

\textit{The New Age} disseminates an equally varied number of visions on what the new Europe should become. Some contributors express ideas that can be connected to what Jay Winter calls major utopias, the totalitarian twentieth-century visions, like Fascism and Communism, that aimed to reshape the world by removing elements that blocked the path to a better future. Other contributors, like Janko Lavrin, do not really follow the solutions offered by these upcoming ‘isms’. Instead, they envision their own idiosyncratic solution to the European problem. In a reaction to the discontinuity between past and future caused by the war, they imagine what Winter calls minor utopias – small(er) visions of peace and a better world, without “the grandiose pretentions or [...] cruelties of the “major” utopian projects” (2008: 9). Although these minor utopias rarely have been realized, and sometimes have become forgotten, they make up an integral, often neglected part of the intellectual history of the twentieth century (Ibid.: 1-10).

Lavrin’s “minor utopia” surfaces in his series ‘Contemporary Fragments’. The basics for his longing for transformation is formed by the disappointment in the contemporary European initiatives after the First World War:

\begin{quote}
And, truly, is it possible to imagine a spectacle more sadly ironical than a dozen “old gentlemen,” [...] creating a “new world” at the banquets of Paris, covering their bartering with lofty phrases of brotherhood, of justice, of culture; and hiding behind the still-born cripple called the League of Nations, in which no one believes, although everybody pretends to believe? [...] there is no vital leading idea which could, after all their [of humanity – T.G.] terrible lessons, unite humanity in a common creative effort towards a new future [...]. (Lavrin NA 1920(26/19): 307)
\end{quote}

Lavrin criticizes the failure of the arrangements at Versailles, which in his eyes have resulted in a confirmation of the explosive situation of the pre-war period. Instead, the series signals that Lavrin longs for a shared story, “a vital leading idea” that could counter the nationalist tendencies on the continent and simultaneously encourage positive national development. Throughout his series, Lavrin challenges the tendency of many old and new European nations falling back on protective politics and emphasizing local distinctness and, often, superiority. He for instance regrets that many recently liberated nations, mainly in his home region, the Balkans, have corrupted their emancipation by developing “chauvinistic self-assertiveness, [...] national intolerance, [...] and petty political quarrels” (NA 1921(28/22): 257-258). Alternately, he points to the creative
potential of national difference for the building of a new Europe. Seeing a strong connection between cultural and political attitudes, Lavrin makes a distinction between the then dominant superficial, exclusive, “nationalistic” forms of art, which are – in his view – above all used to set nations apart, and creative, inclusive, “national” forms of art, which complement each other and together contribute to the whole of humanity (Ibid.: 258). In the same vein, in yet another article of the series Lavrin calls on the readership to remain respectful of the national integrity of those who lost the war. He foretells that keeping Weimar Germany on a strict leash, as was decided in the peace conferences in the days after the war, prevents it from playing a valuable role in Europe and will lead the country “to persist in the spirit of Bismarck” and to maintain a revengeful – nationalistic – exclusiveness (NA 1920(26/24): 385). Contrarily, Lavrin believes that respecting the nation as an important part of Europe will allow it to return to “the spirit of Goethe”, making it a vital instead of a weak link in the creation of “the spirit of Europe” (Ibid.).

In ‘Contemporary Fragments’ Lavrin expresses the hope to find a solution that can (re)align the separate European nations and enable supra-national European unity (NA 1920(26/19): 307). He speaks of Europe’s need for “a new guiding principle” – a new shared story, if one uses the vocabulary of De Groene Amsterdammer. His discussion of the problems related to nationality and supra-nationality in the series provides a rare, but revealing glimpse on the two central lines in what one could call Lavrin’s European project. Similar to the solution Ivan Krastev proposes for the disintegration of Europe in the twenty-first century, Lavrin dreams of a “good kind of nationalism”, not opposed to, but complementary to an overarching whole, as a way to regenerate Europe after the First World War. His minor utopia aims for a combination of locality and universality, of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Considering the emphasis of modern nation-builders on homogeneity in their newly liberated nation-states and the vehement irredentism of the defeated empires – and the many territorial conflicts that were caused by clashes between them (Zimmer 2003: 60-62), – this combination must have sounded equally “crazy” as Krastev’s proposal may sound nowadays.

Lavrin’s ‘Contemporary Fragments’ allow to consider him as an early advocate for European integration. However, other works of Lavrin definitely give a different impression, as shown in the following examples. It is quite likely that getting to know Lavrin via the periodical Slavyansky mir⁵ (Славянский мир, The Slavic World, 1908-1911), which he edited during his early career in Russia, would make one categorize him as an advocate of cultural Slavic solidarity. The periodical’s selection of cultural criticism and

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⁵ Generally, I will use the English translation of the titles of Lavrin’s works. In the case of Slavyansky mir and Albanskiye eskizy, two core works in Lavrin’s oeuvre, however, I have chosen to transcribe the title instead.
translations of Slavic literature is used to acquaint the Russian readership with the literatures and cultures of their Slavic ‘little brothers’. Moreover, the periodical regularly reports of activities on the Neo-Slavic movement, a short-lived movement that aimed at cultural rapprochement in the Slavic world. It is equally likely that getting to know Lavrin via Albanskiye eskizy (Original title: В стране вечной войны. Албанские эскизы, In the Land of Eternal War. Albanian Sketches, 1916), a travelogue based on his adventures as a war-correspondent for the state-oriented, conservative Saint-Peterburg daily The New Time (Новое время), would inspire one to give him the label of a Russian nationalist. The events, which are told from the perspective of a Russian journalist, address the peoples in the Balkans through an apparent Orientalizing lens and seem to portray a belief in Russian superiority.

Meeting Lavrin through one of his later, British works would, then, probably lead to contradictory results as well. When one would learn about Lavrin via The European Quarterly, a little magazine he co-edited in the early 1930s, and see its emphasis on the idea that “literature, art and thought should transcend all national and political boundaries” (N.N. 1973 [EQ 1934(1/1)]: 2), one would intuitively think of Lavrin as a cosmopolitan. Conversely, yet again, reading Lavrin’s overviews of Russian literature, like An Introduction to the Russian Novel (1947a), From Pushkin to Mayakovsky (1949) and Russian Writers: Their Lives and Literatures (1954), which start from the essential difference between Russia and the West and alude to the exemplary and even messianic role Russia should play in the world, would make one pigeonhole Lavrin as a then modern-day Slavophile.

As the following chapter will show, this plurality of impressions also prevails among students of Lavrin and his work. What is more, it is maintained by the fragmented, even atomized way in which scholars address the life and work of Lavrin. In this way it is impossible to understand why a seemingly Slavophile author suddenly, in an entirely different context starts to advocate for European integration. As a counterweight to the dominant trend in Lavrin studies, I start my dissertation from the following question: Does an integral study of Lavrin’s career, which takes his complete Russian and British oeuvre account, confirm the contradictions in his work, or does it show that the paradoxical strands in Lavrin’s work actually are snapshots of a systematic dissemination of one idiosyncratic world view, possibly the “crazy combination” that is hinted at in the series ‘Contemporary Fragments’?

In the following two chapters, I further introduce the aim of my dissertation. First, I address the state of the art of Lavrin studies to reveal the contradictory conclusions they foster and perpetuate, mostly because of their fragmented approach. Based on these lacunae, I formulate the questions that will guide this dissertation. Second, I elaborate on the ways in which I will approach this integral and systematic study of Lavrin’s oeuvre. I end this introduction with an outline of the body of my dissertation.
Chapter 2  The Fragmentation of Lavrin Studies

2.1  Lavrin’s Life and Work in a Nutshell

Before starting with the state of the art in Lavrin studies, it is appropriate to give a quick overview of the life and career of the main character in these studies. Janko Lavrin is born in the small Slovenian town Krupa in Austria-Hungary in 1887. As a young adult he moves to Russia where he quickly finds his way in the cultural circles of Saint-Petersburg. Between 1908 and 1911, Lavrin edits and publishes Slavyansky mir, a periodical which he envisions as an intermediary between the Russian public and other Slavic peoples in order to foster mutual respect and cultural rapprochement (“От редакции” SM 1908-1: 1). In the periodical, he for the first time explores and presents his vision of the societal and cultural challenges within Slavic nations and the Slavic world as a whole.

During the First World War, Lavrin starts working as a war-correspondent on the Balkans for the reactionary newspaper The New Time. In 1916, he publishes his travelogue Albanskiye eskizy based on his experiences during the war. In the meantime, Lavrin gets acquainted with – and even befriends – several Futurists, such as Velimir Khlebnikov and Ilya Zdanevich (Lavrin 1985: 98; Парнис 1992: 139; Jones 2009: 25). Lavrin is mainly involved in Bloodless Murder (Бескровное Убийство, 1911-1917) an avant-garde collective led by Olga Leshkova and Mikhail Le Dentu. At irregular intervals Bloodless Murder publishes an eponymous satirical journal in which it each time commits a satirical (hence, bloodless) character assassination of one of its members, including Lavrin. In the so-called ‘Albanian Issue’ (‘Албанский выпуск’ 2011 [1916]), the progressive avant-gardists ridicule Lavrin’s association with the conservative newspaper The New Time and his travelogue Albanskiye eskizy. Lavrin’s involvement with The New Time is further lampooned in Zdanevich’s first zaum play Janko, King of the Albanians (Янко Круль Албанской, 2008 [1918]).
In 1917, Lavrin moves to Great-Britain, where he decides to stay when the situation in Russia quickly deteriorates after the Russian Revolution. He soon starts to work as a contributor for The New Age, an influential modernist periodical at the time. Between 1918 and 1921, Lavrin writes both literary criticism – three series of articles on respectively Dostoyevsky, Ibsen and Nietzsche – and society criticism, focused on the state of Europe after the First World War. In the early 1930s, I have discovered, Lavrin contributes to another modernist periodical, the weekly New Britain (1933-1934), which combines a focus on national development with an appeal for European integration. A year later, Lavrin establishes and co-edits with Edwin Muir the literary periodical The European Quarterly (1934-1935), which, like The New Britain, pursues a more unified Europe.

In the meantime, Lavrin is appointed as lecturer and later, already in 1921, as professor in Russian literature at Nottingham University. As an academic, he publishes both comparative studies about European literature and monographs focused on Russian literature, mainly on nineteenth-century cardinal writers such as Gogol, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy. Also after his retirement in 1952, Lavrin continues to publish several studies about Russian literature. Finally, Lavrin concludes his career with the monograph Russia, Slavdom and the Western World which appears in 1969. In this monograph, he gives an overview of the history of the Slavic Idea and thus returns to his interest in Slavic rapprochement which was a dominant theme in his very first work, Slavyansky mir. Different than before, Lavrin mainly focuses on the fault line between Russia and Western Europe.

2.2 Studies on Lavrin’s Russian Career

Comparing research about Lavrin’s ‘Russian oeuvre’ – the part of his career that has received most (yet still limited) scholarly attention up to now – results in the most contradictory perceptions about his views. Several scholars focus on one specific, isolated aspect of Lavrin’s Russian career: his work for the periodical Slavyansky mir or the history around his travelogue Albanskiye eskiyz. As the following overview will show, this

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6 Lavrin’s ‘Russian oeuvre’ has been addressed most extensively in the volume Lavrin and Russia (Лаврин и Россия) edited by Yuliya Sozina. The work brings together the main research about Lavrin and holds several primary sources that have been annotated and published for the first time. Because of the heterogeneity of the volume – each author addresses another ‘chapter’ of Lavrin’s career and deals with other aspects of his work – the contributions are addressed as independent studies in the state of the art.
A fragmented approach has resulted in a fragmented, and for this reason distorted image of Lavrin and his views. Similar to the portrait of Lavrin on the cover of this dissertation, the current perception of his views is a compilation of different separate pieces: accounts of Lavrin as a nationalist, Lavrin as a promotor of unity, Lavrin as a minority advocate, and Lavrin as a hardline imperialist exist independently of each other.

Studies about Lavrin’s Russian career roughly can be divided into three groups, based on the part of his career they address. Remarkably, each group draws a different conclusion of Lavrin’s vision of the Slavic world. The first small group consists of scholars who focus on the literary periodical Slavyansky mir. They generally conclude that Lavrin pursued an inclusive Slavic world. Olga Mudrova is the first to describe Slavyansky mir and chiefly tackles the periodical’s articles on South Slavic literature and culture. Based on comparative research, she concludes that many of these articles, most of them published anonymously or under a pen name, are actually written by Lavrin. Moreover, she identifies him as the periodical’s main ideologist (Мудрова 1981: 41-42). Mudrova classifies Slavyansky mir as a vehicle for the left democratic wing of the Neo-Slav movement, which pursued democratic freedom and equal rights for all Slavic peoples in a united Slavic world (Мудрова 1981: 35). The idea that Lavrin is a promotor of a kind of Slavic federation is supported a couple of years later by Iskra Churkina. She uses Mudrova’s work as the starting point for her overview of Lavrin’s attitudes towards the Slavic idea in his early Russian career (1989, 2011, 2014). Churkina confirms Mudrova’s classification of the periodical – and its editor – as a Neo-Slav voice. The same categorization recurs in Manica Maver’s biographical study of Lavrin. Although Maver addresses several aspects of his Russian work, including Albanskiye eskizy, she nevertheless can be related to this first group: she bases her assessment of his vision of the Slavic world on Slavyansky mir, and treats Albanskiye eskizy as a literary work without any additional meaning (Maver 1996: 88-89).

A second, larger group of scholars approaches Lavrin as a part of the avant-garde network in pre-revolutionary Saint-Petersburg. Many of these scholars do not take Lavrin’s vision of the Slavic world into consideration. They generally address the Slovene as an influential passer-by in a larger collective or network. Lavrin’s connection with Khlebnikov is well documented in the work of Aleksandr Parnis (Парнис 1976, 1978, 1992, 2009). In particular Parnis’s research on the Yugoslav theme in Khlebnikov’s work contributes to the understanding of Lavrin’s role in the poet’s life (1978: 223-251; 1992: 137-143). As a member of Bloodless Murder, then, Lavrin also appears in the research on the avant-garde group and its members (а.о. Гурьянова 1989; Марочкина 2001; Заинчковская 2008; Струкова 2018). Lavrin’s vision of the Slavic world does play a central role in studies that address his relationship with Ilya Zdanevich, in particular those studies that focus on Janko, King of the Albanians, the parody of Lavrin’s Albanskiye
eskizy. In these works the contradiction between Lavrin’s experiences as a war-correspondent and the pacifism of his avant-gardist friends incites scholars to pigeonhole him as a reactionary voice. In 1990, Marzio Marzaduri maps the genesis of Zdanevich’s first transrational play through the correspondence between Olga Leshkova and Mikhail Le Dentu (Марцадури 1990). By calling Lavrin a “convinced Pan-Slavist” (“ярый панславянофил”, ibid.: 24), Marzaduri (unintentionally) inspires other scholars of avant-garde literature to address Lavrin as a Russian imperialist. This is chiefly the case with Mikhail Odessky, who aims to place Janko, King of the Albanians in its historical, ideological and political context (Одесский 2010) and Leonid Katsis, who addresses the semantics of the transrational language in the play against its historical background (Кацис 2010). By zooming in on the contradiction between the progressive and pacifist outlook of the members of Bloodless Murder and Lavrin’s ties with the conservative, state-oriented newspaper The New Time, both Odessky and Katsis categorize Lavrin as a reactionary, right-wing Pan-Slavist (Кацис 2010: 446-447, 464; Одесский 2010: 488, 490).

In 2011 Tatyana Chepelevskaya publishes an investigation of Lavrin’s world view as it is depicted in Albanskiye eskizy (Чепелевская 2011a, 2011b). In her study, Chepelevskaya explicitly connects Lavrin’s writings as a war correspondent to his earlier publications in Slavyansky mir – and not to his affiliation with The New Time. Her work focuses on Lavrin’s representation of the Serbs and Albanians in the travelogue. In the travelogue Chepelevskaya observes a shift from a eurocentric, nationalist outlook to a more universal or even ecumenical one (Чепелевская 2011a: 294, 2011b: 252). Drawing on Lavrin’s earlier work for Slavyansky mir, Chepelevskaya claims that the representation of the Slavic world in the travelogue serves as a “spiritual lesson” (“духовный урок”) for the West. Different than Odessky and Katsis, who read Albanskiye eskizy as the work of a Russian imperialist, Chepelevskaya, who does not refer to, nor disproves the studies of the former, considers it the work of someone with a more cosmopolitan outlook. This clearly shows that depending on the works and the context scholars take into account, the perception about Lavrin’s work changes significantly.

The fact that two works that have been written only a couple of years apart have led to the contradictory assessment of Lavrin as a left-wing promotor of an inclusive Slavic federation and of Lavrin as a conservative Russian imperialist shows that it is difficult to pinpoint his take on the (Slavic) world. At the same time, Chepelevskaya’s work shows that combining different projects of Lavrin can lead to a different image of the views the Slovene incorporated in his works.

This difficult categorization of Lavrin also comes to the fore in the work of a third group of scholars, which has a more comprehensive take on Lavrin’s Russian oeuvre. Although this comprehensive approach creates opportunities to address or problematize the apparent contradictions in Lavrin’s oeuvre, many scholars in this group do not
explicitly address or problematize them. This is for example the case with Janko Pleterski. He gives a chronological account of Lavrin’s early career and focuses on his attention to the Yugoslav cause (2001). Even though he shortly touches upon Lavrin’s engagement with aspects of Slavic unity like Yugoslavism and the relationship between Russia and the Balkans, Pleterski mitigates Lavrin’s agency by presenting him as an uncritical plaything of political actors and circumstances (2001: 185-189). Also Churkina, who recently published a detailed chronological overview of Lavrin’s work throughout his whole Russian career, does not engage with the contradictory lines in his oeuvre. Her article contains a considerable recapitulation of her previous findings on Lavrin’s association with Neo-Slavism (Чуркина 2014: 1-5), which is followed by an overview of his life and relations as a war correspondent on the Balkans. Although Churkina does address Lavrin’s world view in the first part of the article, she does not extend this line to her account of his journalistic career. Several parts of her narrative – e.g. Lavrin’s involvement in the Yugoslav cause, his alleged work for the Russian intelligence, his personal account of the events in Albanskiye eskizy – have the potential to give more insight in Lavrin’s world view during the First World War. Nonetheless, she does not examine them any further. Moreover, Churkina hardly mentions Lavrin’s involvement with Bloodless Murder and other avant-garde artists (ibid.: 6) and as such passes over the contradictory lines in Lavrin’s early career. A third example is Malcolm Jones, who has published extensively on Lavrin’s academic career at Nottingham university (Jones 1996, 2001, 2009, 2015; Джоунс 2011). Jones’s detailed biographical overview addresses all the different ‘episodes’ of Lavrin’s Russian career, but as a biography it does not have the intention to assess the Slovene’s alleged ideological views.

The few authors who do pay attention to parallels and contradictions throughout Lavrin’s entire Russian career, refrain from putting Lavrin in the Neo-Slav or imperialist camp. Instead, they attribute a more neutral position to his ideas. Magnus Ljunggren, for example, who addresses the different ways in which Pan-Slavism plays a role throughout Lavrin’s Russian oeuvre (2014) starts his essay with a disclaimer in order to explain the kind of Pan-Slavism Lavrin, according to him, adhered to:

[H]e was inspired by the new Pan-Slavic ideas that had taken shape around the turn of the century – dreams of liberation from the Viennese yoke and the creation of a Slavic cultural community. This was a radical Pan-Slavism, not a variant of the grandiose old Russian dream of Slavic subjects led by a tsarist power. (Ljunggren 2014: 54)

This interpretation closely resembles the Neo-Slavic categorization of Mudrova and Churkina, but Ljunggren more explicitly emphasizes the combination of minority emancipation and Slavic unity. In this way he remarkably suggests a compromise
between national interests and supra-national unity. In his short six-page account of the
different relationships Lavrin maintained during his Russian career, Ljunggren
systematically zooms in on how these relationships actually tell more about Lavrin’s
world view. He also shortly touches upon Lavrin’s association with both The New Time and
Bloodless Murder and describes it as a “unique position” (Ljunggren 2014: 58). Ljunggren
does not use the affiliation with The New Time to categorize Lavrin in the Pan-Slavic camp,
but uses it instead to nuance the Slovene’s leftist position that appeared from his
involvement in Slavyansky mir and ascribes to him a more central, moderate position.

Finally, also Viktor Baranovskiy and Irina Khlebnikova suggest to interpret Lavrin’s
position as intermediary when they tackle Lavrin’s connection to visual artists like Boris
Kustodiyev, who provided the art-work for Slavyansky mir, and Le Dentu and the other
members of Bloodless Murder, who made the hectographs and drawings for their little
magazine (2009). Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova explain the contradictory elements in
Lavrin’s oeuvre as a consequence of the ways in which he avoids extreme opinions and
“has been able to maintain a balance in communicating with members of various artistic
and political backgrounds” (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 128). Put differently, like
Ljunggren, they consider the position of Lavrin as politically neutral. What is more, a
couple of years later, in a second article on Lavrin’s ties with Russian visual artists,
Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova explicitly problematize the labels Lavrin has received over
the years. They regret the “annoying tendency” (“неприятная тенденция”) of some
scholars to repeat assumptions on Lavrin’s ideological convictions (Барановский &
Хлебникова 2011b: 56). Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova underline that “the vision of
Lavrin on the question of Slavic Unity, Pan-Slavism and Slavophilism has not yet received
special attention, even though it has been touched upon in many works” (Барановский
& Хлебникова 2011b: 56).

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7 [...] znal vzdrževati ravnotežje v komuniciranju s pripadniki različnih umetniških in političnih nazorov.
8 Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova add that the misjudgement of Lavrin’s world view has caused some works,
especially Albanskiye eskizy, to become forgotten and receive too little scholarly attention. (2011b: 63).
9 Следует почеркнуть, что взгляды Лаврина по вопросу славянского единения, панславизма и
славянофильства специально до сих пор не исследовались, хотя и затрагивались в некоторых работах.
2.3 Studies on Lavrin’s British Career

While Lavrin’s Russian career has received quite some attention over the years, his British career – both his work for modernist periodicals like *The New Age* and his scholarly publications on nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Russian and European literature, – has stayed largely of the radar or has only been considered superficially. Most attention comes from Lavrin’s native Slovenia, where he is celebrated as a successful popularizer of Slavic (especially Slovene) literature and culture. Already in 1971, Lavrin received the renowned Prešeren prize for his oeuvre and for promoting Slovene literature in the world. Nowadays, the Slovenes primarily perceive Lavrin as an ambassador of Slovenian literature, both in Russia and in Europe (Dragan & Živec 2007). He is also remembered as one of the founding members of the PEN-club in Slovenia. Regarded as a successful promotor of the country’s culture, Lavrin’s popularity particularly grows outside of academia. Over the past twenty years for example the following popularising publications have appeared: an edition of the diary of Janko and Nora Lavrin’s honeymoon, illustrated by his wife (2004), several popularizing articles in Slovene newspapers (e.g. Babnik 2013; Bratož 2013 & 2018; Štaudohar 2016 & 2018) and the documentary *Janko Lavrin, Slovene, Russian, English, Cosmopolitan* (*Janko Lavrin: ves slovenski, ves ruski, ves angleški, ves svetovljanski*, Dragan & Živec 2006) for the Slovene television channel TRV SLO. Translations of his works are still being published in Ljubljana (Jones 2009: 41). Considering that there is hardly any Slovene academic attention to his oeuvre, also this seems above all connected to his status as a famous Slovene, and less to his academic merits.

There are but few scholars, both in Slovenia and elsewhere, who (directly or indirectly) have addressed (some of) the roles Lavrin played during his British career. Dušan Moravec has edited two volumes of Lavrin’s correspondence with Slovene authors and thinkers (2002, 2004) and has addressed his role as an ambassador of Russian and Slovene culture in Great-Britain (Моравец 2011). Manica Maver has written a descriptive survey on Lavrin’s society and literary criticism (1996). Malcolm Jones, then, has authored the most comprehensive work about the roles Lavrin played during his time in Great Britain. After an introduction about Lavrin’s time in Russia, Jones addresses his teaching activities at Nottingham University, his scholarly work, his connection to the British cultural scene, and his attention to Yugoslav, especially Slovene literature (Jones 1996, 2001, 2009, 2015; Джоунс 2011). Although these scholars focus on Lavrin’s academic career and underline his influence in the British academic and cultural scene, Moravec, Maver and Jones nonetheless mainly stress his capacity as a popular and successful Slovene, and focus less on the actual content and the ideas he developed in his academic work.
Despite the fact that Lavrin has substantially contributed to Slavonic studies in Britain, has played an important role as a popularizer of Slavic literature, and was connected to several literary networks, he does not receive the same attention as other Slavic émigré scholars who played a similar role at the time, like Dmitry Svyatopolk-Mirsky and Samuel Koteliansky. In recent years two biographies of Mirsky, the main popularizer of Russian literature in Britain, appeared (Smith 2000, Ефимов 2019). Jean Mills addressed Mirsky’s connection to the Bloomsbury Circle and the Hogarth Press (2010), while Kathleen Macfie explored Mirsky’s shifting discourse on identity and nationality in the transcultural space of the emigration (2009). Also the role Koteliansky played in the Bloomsbury circle and his part in the reception of Chekhov was (re-)assessed lately. He has received increasing scholarly attention since Andrey Rogatchevsky treated the impact he had on a number of major authors (2000). Laura Marcus underlined Koteliansky’s key role in the network of British and European modernism through his position in the Hogarth Press (2002). More recently, Claire Davison-Pégon (2011) and above all Galya Diment, who devoted a monograph to Koteliansky’s life (2011), investigated how Koteliansky not only was an intermediary in British modernist networks, but also helped shape modernist practices in Britain. Mirsky and Koteliansky also received quite a lot of attention in works that treat the reception of Russian literature in Great-Britain and Russian-British relations in literature and art during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (a.o. Казнина 1997; Beasley & Bullock 2011, 2014; Beasley 2020). Lavrin, however, is hardly addressed in this context at all. One cannot but agree with Jones, who says it is “surprising to find that Lavrin receives no mention” in such overviews (2015: 529). Especially with regard to Beasley’s work on Russian Studies in Britain, Jones considers the lack of attention to Lavrin “an untypical lacuna” (ibid.).

The little attention to Lavrin’s British career is directly related to the reception of his works by contemporaries. During the interwar period, the reception of Lavrin’s work was overall positive (Mirsky 1924; Mirsky 1926; McWilliams 1931; Struve 1936). After the Second World War, however, Lavrin’s peers considered his monographs to be no more than sheer introductory works (a.o. Einarsson 1951: 386; Brodiansky 1955: 270; Von Mohrenschildt 1960: 299-300; Fuelop-Miller 1962: 392). Although Jones states that Lavrin’s books “were for many years as much a part of every undergraduate student’s armory as the more substantial work of D.S. Mirsky” (Jones 2009: 41), Lavrin lost his authority as a literary critic in the 1950s and 1960s when his peers started to pay attention to the fact that his scholarly work did not seem to have the same thorough, analytical and innovative qualities as those by Mirsky and others (Struve 1948: 595; Friedberg 1955: 426; Richards: 1974).

In his works Lavrin did not focus on detailed literary history or on fine-grained literary analysis. Instead, he preferred a so-called “psycho-critical” approach: he believed that the
understanding of a writer's life and psychology is the key to understanding and evaluating his work and the \textit{zeitgeist} that it reflects. Initially, in the first half of the twentieth century, when the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung still played an important role in the attempt to breach the traditional walls between life and art (Lewis 2011: 3), the reactions to Lavrin’s idiosyncratic, “psycho-critical” application of psychoanalysis to literature were balanced and chiefly positive. Apart from one exceptional critical voice (Leben 1930: 57-58), most reviewers praised Lavrin for his “fresh standpoint” (Mirsky 1924: 207); and for showing an innovative and well-executed analytical approach to literature and the biographical genre (Mirsky 1924: 207-209; Mirsky 1926: 223; McWilliams 1931: 247-250). McWilliams even called him “the most brilliant and successful practitioner [...] of this type of biographical writing” (1931: 247).

After the Second World War, Lavrin’s psycho-critical approach is no longer considered fresh nor innovative, but instead is increasingly considered flawed and obsolete. This appears explicitly from a review by W.D. Williams, who pointed out the “oversimplifications which spring from the applications of a rigidly ‘psychological’ approach to Nietzsche” (1949: 433). Implicitly, the obsolescence of Lavrin’s approach comes to the fore from the fact that his peers eventually stopped paying attention to his “psycho-critical” method and regularly described his works as unoriginal, or as Richards wrote in his review of Lavrin’s method in \textit{A Panorama of Russian Literature}: “far from fresh” (1974: 713). This needs also to be connected to the quick maturation of Slavic studies in the late 1940s and 1950s when more analytical and structural approaches to literature became the norm. This can also be connected, however, to Lavrin’s very own tendency to repeat and republish a lot of his work. Many critics problematized this feature of Lavrin’s oeuvre: he republished the same analyses multiple times, often without (or with only a few) significant changes (Muchnic 1947: 91; Purinton 1947: 236; Spector 1955: 17; Richards 1974: 713). This is apparent in how Lavrin repeatedly discussed Mayakovsky and Esenin (1935, 1949, 1954, 1974), who were relatively new for British readers in the interwar period, but at the same time failed to address other important Soviet writers in his later work. He even scarcely mentioned Khlebnikov, one of the futurists he arguably knew best (Jones 2001: 79).

A second ‘flaw’ of Lavrin’s work is that many of his writings contain what Friedberg fretfully called “many irrelevant political excursions” (1955: 426). This is especially tangible in Lavrin’s writings of the 1950s and 1960s, when Soviet Russia had become a world power and had “acquired” the whole Slavic world. Sometimes even the looks of his books seem to entail a political message. Lavrin’s \textit{Russian writers, Their Lives and Literatures} (1954), for example, sports a yellow jacket with the double headed Russian imperial eagle – quite a controversial choice for that time. It evokes memories of a pre-revolutionary Russian past during a period of relatively relaxed relations between the Soviet Union and
the West. Lavrin also disseminated an outspoken opinion on the role of the Slavic world in Europe. This is most notable in his work on the ‘Slavic Idea’ and its lingering impact in contemporary Russia written during the 1960s. Lavrin, for instance, regularly stressed the intermediary role the non-Russian Slavs could play between Soviet Russia and the West (e.g. 1962b: 24; 1969).

What is more, the Slovene’s political digressions were not always agreed upon. Ante Kadić, for example, subtly reproached Lavrin for his overly positive presentation of the Yugoslav partisans (1964: 209). Also Lavrin’s sometimes divergent interpretations of important figures / events in the Slavic movement were once in while met with a frown. This is among others illustrated by Raymond McNally, who called Lavrin’s remark that Chaadayev eventually replaced his idea of Russian inferiority with a belief in the equality of Russia and Europe, obsolete and based on shaky grounds (1964: 352-353).

The dominant perception of Lavrin’s work as introductory and the two main flaws that contemporaries observe in his work are at the root of the little attention Lavrin’s British career receives nowadays, and rightly so. Or is it? Recently, a couple of studies have appeared that approach Lavrin’s British work from other angles, namely European studies, modernism studies and Slavonic studies in Russia. None of the scholars conducting these studies were particularly familiar with how Lavrin’s work was once received – some of them hardly knew Lavrin when they came across his work during their research – and therefore they were not held back by older prejudices about Lavrin’s academic career. The observations made in some of these studies indicate that there may be more behind Lavrin’s allegedly flawed criticism than often is assumed. Moreover, these studies suggest that Lavrin’s British work may hold more information about his view on the development of the world than usually is expected.

Russian Slavists Irina Stakhanova and Yuliya Sozina, for example, have looked into Lavrin’s literary criticism as they were curious about the further career of a cultural actor in Saint-Petersburg who, like so many others, disappeared during the Russian Revolution.¹⁰ They respectively have addressed his work on Dostoyevsky (Стаханова 2011) and his interpretation of Tolstoy’s world view (Созина 2011). Sozina’s work stands out as she is the only scholar who connects Lavrin’s literary criticism to his world view. Looking past the fact that the unusual “psycho-critical” approach might be flawed, Sozina underlines that Lavrin’s interest in the unconscious of authors and their characters is connected to the way in which he envisions his ideal world. She highlights how Lavrin’s

¹⁰ Mudrova (writing as Kosik), for many years the main specialist about Lavrin in Russia, admits in her memoirs that she only learned about Lavrin’s academic work when she came across his name in Parnis’ work on Khlebnikov many years later (Косик 2011: 174).
literary assessments are often inspired by or even subservient to his aim to find a “universal spiritual imperative” (“общечеловеческий духовный императив”) and the “ideal human society” (“идеальное человеческое общество”) (Созина 2011: 128-129). By doing so, she implicitly endorses Mudrova and Churkina who also took Lavrin’s attention to the supra-national into account.

Paul Jackson stumbled upon Lavrin during his research about the war-time Modernism of The New Age (2012). In his monograph, which mainly tackles prominent voices of British Modernism, he briefly addresses Lavrin as one of the periodical’s few Eastern-European contributors who showed a deep longing for a different Europe after the First World War. Based on a couple of Lavrin’s socially critical articles for The New Age, Jackson points to Lavrin’s hope that the First World War can redeem the decadency that had disintegrated the old continent (2012: 84). Lavrin’s longing for a different Europe also comes to the fore in the work of Luisa Passerini, who has investigated the British discourse on the ‘myth of Europe’ during the interwar period (1999). In a two-page inquiry, she discusses The European Quarterly, the short-lived little magazine that Lavrin and Muir established in 1934. Passerini explicitly points out the periodical’s interest in the supra-national, and speaks of the editors’ hope to develop “a broad cosmopolitanism” in Britain to “reconcile the nationalist passions of Europe” (1999: 232). Also Peter Marks, who wrote an article about the left orientation of three British modernist magazines in the 1930s and pigeonholes The European Quarterly as a Socialist almost Communist periodical, underlines the Quarterly’s transnational orientation (2009: 626-627, 632).

Independently from each other, and starting from different works, Sozina, Jackson, Passerini and Marks actually show that at least one of the contradictory lines of Lavrin’s Russian oeuvre still recurs after his move to Great Britain: his interest in a unified world. None of their assessments indicate that the nationalist thread of his Russian career is maintained. It is important to note, however, that all these studies engage only briefly with Lavrin’s work, and, additionally, address but one episode of his prolific British career. Therefore it is questionable whether these studies can give ample insight in the ideas that Lavrin developed at the time. This impression is reinforced by the fact that the lion’s share of the work he published during and after his academic career has not received any scholarly attention at all.
2.4 Persistent Lacunae and Research Questions

The fragmented approach – the limited scope and focus – of existing Lavrin research have led to contradictory or even distorted conclusions about Lavrin’s work and the ideas that are put forward in them. In turn, these contradictory conclusions seem to perpetuate the fragmentation as newer research seldom questions or transcends the different boxes Lavrin was put into. Thus, accounts of Lavrin as nationalist, Lavrin as flawed literary critic, Lavrin as a promoter of unity, Lavrin as populariser of Slavic literature, Lavrin as minority advocate, Lavrin as hard-line imperialist, and Lavrin as a dreamer of a new integrated Europe,... continue to exist independently of each other. Three incongruencies in particular make it hard – or even impossible – to understand the connection between these different perceptions or to take overarching themes into consideration.

First and foremost, scholarly attention to Lavrin’s oeuvre reinforces a seemingly paradoxical interplay of locality, nationality, supra-nationality and universality. This surfaces most clearly in the research on Lavrin’s early, Russian career. There seems to be a significant correlation between which aspect, period and environment of Lavrin’s career that is being addressed and the way in which his ideas are interpreted. Particularly the discrepancy between assessments of his work as editor for Slavyansky mir and his work as a war correspondent for The New Age, which he later described in Albanskiye eskizy is striking: Lavrin’s vision of the Slavic world is both categorized as progressive, federative and inclusive, and as reactionary, imperialist and exclusive. However, as Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova already pointed out, up to now not a single study has addressed Lavrin’s conception of the world in a comprehensive and integral way, which makes it impossible to understand or interpret the apparent contradictions – or are they mere fluctuations? – in his work. The research on Lavrin’s British oeuvre does not help to clarify matters, quite on the contrary. On the one hand, the image of a tolerant cosmopolitan critic that comes to the fore in the work of Passerini and Marks adds to the confusion about Lavrin’s ideas. On the other hand, his view on society and the world has only been addressed in a small part of his British work which makes the understanding of this period far from complete.

The second problem in Lavrin research is how it involuntarily creates and/or emphasizes a gap between the career Lavrin built in Russia and the one he had in Great Britain. It is telling that some scholars who focused on Lavrin’s Russian work, as Kosik (née Mudrova) admits in a short reflection on her own early scholarly work (Косик 2011: 174), for a long time did not know and did not take into account that Lavrin built an academic career after his departure from Russia. Others claim that themes that were prevalent during Lavrin’s Russian career, such as his interest in the (Pan-)Slavic cause,
played no part in his later academic work (a.o. Ljunggren 2014: 60; Чуркина 2014: 193). Scholars who have tackled Lavrin’s British career, then, generally refer to his Russian past by way of introduction, but make no connection between the works he publishes in both periods. In the analyses of Passerini, Marks and Jackson, who “coincidentally” bumped into Lavrin while doing other research, Lavrin’s Russian past is not mentioned at all, which seems to indicate that the scholars have no knowledge of his early work. The tendency to only (partly) address one period of Lavrin’s career suggests that his move from Russia to Great Britain caused a major rupture in his work. There are, however, several indications that suggest that this rupture may be, to say at least partly artificial or even non-existent. First, it is reasonable to assume that this rupture is (partly) informed by a couple of practical issues, like the knowledge of languages of the scholars and Lavrin’s relatively minor and hence invisible position in both cultural landscapes. Second, there are a couple of characteristics of Lavrin’s British work that already suggest that it is worthwhile to look for parallels between the two parts of the Slovene’s career: the lion’s share of Lavrin’s British work engages with the culture and literature of the Slavic world, and certain motives that are typical for some of his Russian works, e.g. unity and rapprochement, also pop up in the work of scholars who tackled his engagement with the state of Europe.

Finally, the existing research on Lavrin’s oeuvre seems to compartmentalize the different roles Lavrin plays. His work as an editor, as a social critic, as a journalist and as a literary critic are hardly ever linked to each other. Even though Lavrin fulfils several of these roles simultaneously (his involvement in *The New Age*, *The New Britain* and *The European Quarterly* for example coincides with the most prolific period of his scholarly career), sometimes even within the same medium (Lavrin is editor of and contributor to *Slavyansky mir* and works as a literary and social critic for *The New Age*), most scholars single out one of these roles and at best (briefly) mention that he also disseminated his ideas on a different platform or in a different context. Up to now, only few studies have compared or connected the ideas Lavrin spreads in his different roles – e.g. the connection Chepelevskaya and Sozina make between *Slavyansky mir* and respectively *Albanskiye eskiy* and Lavrin’s work on Tolstoy – and the similarities they observe show that it is clearly opportune to do so.

Lavrin’s interest in the relation between the national and the supra-national is the thread that connects the different perceptions about Lavrin’s work. Current research reveals scattered pieces of that thread: cut off from the rest (chronologically, geographically and/or depending on the role Lavrin played), sometimes no more than a couple of loose fibres, sometimes having a seemingly different colour because of the light or the shade that falls on it. In other words, with these pieces it is difficult to reconstruct the original thread. So, what if one follows that thread – Lavrin’s attitude towards the
relation between the national and the supra-national - from the very beginning of Lavrin’s career to its very end and to use it it as a guideline during this trip? Does the thread split or even break at certain moments and does Lavrin indeed deviate from his original views? Are there different threads that are tied and knitted to the original thread, because of which it becomes richer and more nuanced, or starts to show a slightly different shade? Is it possible that certain loose ends are eventually reintegrated in the original thread? Or is the fragmented perception of Lavrin’s views actually an accurate representation and does a systematic exploration of the original thread indeed show several (loose) ends and new beginnings?

Embracing the contradictory perceptions that exist about Lavrin’s work can help to follow the thread throughout his oeuvre and to identify the disruptions and continuities that actually characterize it. They prompt three sets of questions:

(1) **How does Lavrin actually engage with nationality and supra-national unity throughout his entire career?**

- Which interpretations of and attitudes towards the nation – as a concept (ideas of exclusion and inclusion, national culture, emancipation, borders,...) and as a reality (Slovenia, Russia, Great Britain,...) – come to the fore?
- Which interpretations of and attitudes towards supra-national constellations – as a concept (ideas of unification, rapprochement, cultural practice, crossing borders ...) and as a reality (The Slavic world, Europe, the Russian Empire, Austria-Hungary, but also humanity and the universe) – come to the fore?
- Do these interpretations and attitudes evolve over time and, if so, how? Are they related to each other and, if so, how?

(2) **How does Lavrin’s work reflect his changing personal and geo-political context?**

- Do Lavrin’s ideas travel across the boundaries of time and space? If that is the case, how has Lavrin further developed and / or even adapted them to his changing context?
- Do Lavrin’s works reflect and / or engage with the geopolitical events and changes that take place during his long life and significantly test ideas of nation and international unity (the World Wars, the chaotic interwar period, the rise of Communism and Fascism, the Cold War,...)? If that is the case, how does Lavrin react to these events and changes? Does he, and if so, how does he instrumentalize them to endorse his own views?
- Does Lavrin engage with his perpetual outsider position – as a South Slav in Austria-Hungary, a Slovene in Russia and an Eastern European in Great Britain, but also as a member of the periphery engaging in centrum debates? If that is the
case, how does he react to this position? Is this reflected in his views on nationality and supra-nationality?

(3) Does Lavrin adapt the way in which he spreads his views depending on the different media he uses or the different roles he plays?

- Which strategies (compilatory interventions, selection, agenda-setting, assessment criteria, ...) do Lavrin-the-editor, Lavrin-the-society-critic and Lavrin-the-literary-scholar use to spread his views?
- How does he engage with and / or react to the dominant narrative in the media he uses or contributes to?
- Do these strategies and narratives alter the message he brings?
Chapter 3  Method

In order to follow the thread of Lavrin’s views on nationality and supra-national unity from the very beginning until the very end of his career, to map the continuities and discontinuities that possibly characterize it, and to answer the aforementioned research questions, the first simple, but essential methodological choice I make is to address his oeuvre in its entirety in a chronological, systematic way. Starting with Slavyansky mir (1908) and ending with Russia, Slavdom and the Western World (1969), I aim to map all elements in Lavrin’s texts – be they explicit, implicit, subtle or counterintuitive – that can shed a light on his attitude towards the relationship between nationality (locality) and supra-national unity. I want to do this without making premature assumptions about the orientation or validity of the different texts he has published in the course of his career. In my opinion, this is the only way to transcend the compartmentalization which appears to be an inherent characteristic of Lavrin’s oeuvre (e.g. the apparent rupture between his Russian and British career, and the apparent disconnection of his publicist and scholarly work) and which has been magnified by the fragmented (and, hence, possibly distorting) approach adopted by most students of his work.

In order to obtain a deeper and simultaneously more nuanced understanding of Lavrin’s views, I have adopted close reading as the main analytical tool in this dissertation. Indications of Lavrin’s world view can occupy logical places like his explicit texts about the state of Russia and Europe, or his frequent ‘political excursions’, but they can also occupy, and maybe even more often, less obvious and conspicuous parts of his texts, like the particular retelling of a story’s plot, remarks framing the world view of a writer, musings about the function of art or even footnotes explaining the selection of a work. Therefore, it is key to carefully and meticulously approach the wording in his texts, his remarks and their potential connection to each other.

There are couple of reasons why I believe a close reading approach will better serve the purpose of this dissertation than a distant reading approach, even though the latter at first glance seems to be most appropriate to lay bare certain lines in such an extensive
corpus. First and foremost, chances are that distant reading would help reveal the obvious part of the iceberg that is Lavrin’s world view, but would grope in the dark about the bulk of the iceberg hiding underneath the surface which could considerably nuance the image that meets the eye. A distant reading approach would enable a systematic exploration of certain terms or concepts that relate to Lavrin’s views – think for example of ‘chauvinism’, ‘universality’, ‘Slavdom’, ‘Europe’, ‘rapprochement’, ‘national emancipation’, ‘nationalism’ or ‘cosmopolitanism’, – but this may result in passing over indications of Lavrin’s views that are not stated in clear terms. A close reading approach, however, does allow me to take into account information that comes to the fore in a more implicit way and can for example be discerned from the ways in which Lavrin compiles an overview of Slavic or European literature; from his assessments of cultural practices like imitation or translation; or from his use of psychoanalysis in his academic career.

Second, it is possible that the importance of certain themes in Lavrin’s work will only catch the eye after attentively reading multiple texts. Lavrin’s views do not always play a prominent role in his work. This can simply be related to the different angles and discourses of the vehicles he uses, but it can also be informed by changes in Lavrin’s life or the geo-political situation at that moment. Related to this, it is possible that Lavrin uses a different vocabulary (sometimes a different language) to address the same theme within a different context. In such cases, a more distant approach engenders the risk of missing certain recurring themes, or of never knowing that two different themes are actually two sides of the same coin. A good example is Albanskiye eskizy. In a first reading of the travelogue, I noticed that Lavrin sometimes puts egoist behaviour in the spotlight, but it did not seem to play a decisive role in the world view Lavrin brings to the fore. It was not until later, after reading Lavrin’s British articles in which egoism and the tension between the individual and the collective are a more prominent theme, that it was possible to re-evaluate this line in Albanskiye eskizy. Thus, it is not only likely that a distant reading approach will let one pass over the bulk of the iceberg underneath, it is also possible that it would lead one to address two visible icebergs as two distinctly different entities without realizing that they are actually connected to one and the same body of ice underneath the surface. Moreover, a distant reading approach may incite one to neglect the tiny, apparently meaningless pieces of ice one passes on the way to the remarkable glacier in the distance, even though they broke of that same glacier and contain valuable data about its development. During my analysis I have mapped the tiny, mediocre, remarkable and giant pieces of ice that show Lavrin’s view on aspects of nationality and supra-national unity, but I have not used every single one of them in my argumentation. In the main body of this dissertation I have incorporated the best and most clear examples to represent Lavrin’s views. This means that, unless explicitly mentioned otherwise, there are other examples in Lavrin’s works that attest of the aspects discussed.
To make the analysis more feasible, and because Lavrin’s move from Saint-Petersburg to London during the First World War forms a logical pause in his oeuvre, I have chosen to split the analysis in a Russian and a British part. Even though this can appear as a continuation of the gap between these periods that is typical for the fragmented approach to Lavrin studies, it should not be interpreted as such. The pause serves as a conscious halting place to wrap up the strands of Lavrin’s views that the close reading of his Russian works bring forward. Moreover, it allows me to introduce the characteristics of Lavrin’s changed environment after his move to Great Britain which is necessary to understand how the strands from his Russian work are continued or discontinued in his British work.

Although the chronological approach of this dissertation may raise the expectation that I aim to make an intellectual biography that will situate Lavrin within the networks he participated in or the movements he adhered to, that is not intention of this dissertation. I believe that before it is possible to situate Lavrin and his views within a cultural or intellectual context / networks, it is important to understand how his views develop throughout his entire oeuvre. The existing research actually shows that starting with situating Lavrin, instead of interpreting the content of his work does not necessarily result in an adequate or nuanced assessment, let alone an exhaustive one that actually captures the contradictions that are attributed to his views. This is for example the case with Marzaduri and Odessky who address the historical and intellectual context of Albanskiye eskizy (1990, 2010). Their lack of attention to the rest of Lavrin’s oeuvre, for example his earlier work for the liberal Slavyansky mir, makes them connect it only to Lavrin’s work for The New Time and the satire about his work by Bloodless Murder and Zdanevich. This angle puts a distorting emphasis on the contrast between the reactionary, imperialist attitude of The New Time, and thus purportedly also of Lavrin, and the progressive, anti-Russian attitude of the avant-gardists. Subsequently, this angle influences Marzaduri’s and Katsis’s assessment of Lavrin’s Albanskiye eskizy. Another example is Peter Marks’s assessment of Lavrin’s European Quarterly (2009). Marks presents Lavrin as a leftist, internationally oriented publicist because his study of the Quarterly investigates it only within a context of other leftist modernist British little magazines. Connecting the content of the Quarterly to other work of Lavrin during the interwar period – think for example of the articles he writes for New Britain, a periodical with the subtitle “a weekly organ of national resistance” – may in fact nuance the emphasis on Lavrin’s alleged internationalism. In my opinion these two examples show that before it is opportune to study Lavrin within the networks he participated in and the movements he adhered to, it is important to first focus on the actual content of his work. That does not mean I will divorce Lavrin’s work from its historical, cultural or intellectual context. It means that I will use it as background information, and not as a goal in itself. This will
provide a solid basis for future research that wants to situate his work within larger intellectual networks.

3.1 Corpus

As mentioned above, the aim of this dissertation requires to address Lavrin’s work published in Russia and Great Britain in its entirety. The works Lavrin has published during the two phases of his life, can be divided in four categories: Lavrin’s work for periodicals, his scholarly publications, his literary anthologies and a couple of miscellaneous publications. A complete list of the works used in this dissertation can be found in the bibliography\(^\text{11}\) (Bibliography: 343-355).

Periodicals

The first category is formed by Lavrin’s prolific contributions to periodicals, which often combined an interest in the arts, often literature, with political or societal criticism. Lavrin contributed to them both as an editor and as an author of critical articles. During his career, Lavrin has been involved in the periodicals and little magazines that are listed in Table 1.

\(^{11}\) Of a couple of articles that are addressed in this dissertation there is no information about the author of the article. In that case the author will be designated with the letters N.N. in citations and in the bibliography.
Table 1  Periodicals Lavrin contributed to throughout his career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periodical</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>First/Last edition</th>
<th>Role Lavrin</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Russia 1908-17</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Slavyansky mir</td>
<td>literary periodical</td>
<td>1908-1911</td>
<td>editor (1908-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayan</td>
<td>literary periodical</td>
<td>1905-1912</td>
<td>contributor (1911-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Slav</td>
<td>the first “all Slavic journal”</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>contributor (1913)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Great Britain 1918-86</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The New Age</td>
<td>modernist periodical</td>
<td>1907-1921</td>
<td>contributor (1918-21)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The New Britain</td>
<td>“weekly organ of national resistance”</td>
<td>1933-1934</td>
<td>contributor (1933-34)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The European Quarterly</td>
<td>little modernist magazine</td>
<td>1934-1935</td>
<td>editor (1934-35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first and last periodical Lavrin was involved in, *Slavyansky mir* and *The European Quarterly*, he was one of the founding members and a steering member of the editorial board. Therefore, I choose to address these periodicals in their entirety and not only the articles and items that are from Lavrin’s hand. The literary periodical *Slavyansky mir* was dedicated to rapprochement within the Slavic world through “cultural communication and mutual acquaintance” (N.N. SM 1908-1: 1). The colophons of the fourteen issues mention its sponsors, Matryona Shilder (1908-09) and Maria Chrucka (1910-11) as the editors-in-chief. Nevertheless, it was Lavrin who was the main driving force behind the periodical, which is generally considered as his brainchild (Мудрова 1981: 40-43; Чуркина 1989: 89, 2001: 31). *The European Quarterly*, then, was a little magazine that made it its mission to overcome the obstacles that existed among European countries (N.N. EQ 1934(1/1): 2). Lavrin established the periodical together with Edwin Muir. They both remained solely responsible for the organization and selection of the content of the four issues that came out.

In the other periodicals mentioned in Table 1, Lavrin played a less directive role. Therefore, I only tackle those items Lavrin himself has written in a detailed manner. The characteristics of the periodicals are used merely as background information. In 1912-1913, after the discontinuation of *Slavyansky mir*, Lavrin published a couple of critical articles and translations in periodicals like *Bayan* (named after a Slavic mythical bard) and *The Slav* (Славянин), which dubbed itself the first “all-Slavic journal” (“первый всеславянский журнал”, 1913) (Мудрова 1981: 43; Барановский & Хлебников 2011а: 316-320). Due to Covid-19, I was not able to travel to Russia to consult these periodicals in person. I was only able to consult *Bayan*. Even though I planned to incorporate all articles Lavrin has written for these Russian periodicals, I had to limit myself to his contributions to *Bayan*.
Lastly, during the interwar period Lavrin was active as a contributor and editor in several British modernist periodicals. I address Lavrin’s series (ten articles each) on the work of respectively Dostoyevsky (1918), Ibsen (1918-19) and Nietzsche (1921), and the approximately fourteen articles addressing the state of Europe and European culture after the First World War. Moreover, I am the first to tackle Lavrin’s contributions to the weekly *New Britain*. This short-lived vehicle of the New Britain Movement combined British nationalist thought with ideas of European integration. Even though Lavrin published about twenty articles about the state of European culture in *The New Britain*, it has never been addressed in studies about him. Only David Graham Page has briefly touched upon Lavrin’s contributions to the weekly in his thesis on the New Europe Group and the New Britain Movement (2016).

**Scholarly Work**

The second category consists of Lavrin’s scholarly work, written during his academic career, but also after his retirement in 1952. In total, Lavrin published twenty English-language monographs, some of which have been translated in other languages, and about fifty scholarly articles in English and Slovene. Building on his series in *The New Age*, Lavrin first published a series of four monographs on four representatives of modern European literature – Dostoyevsky, Ibsen, Nietzsche and Tolstoy (1920a, 1972 [1921], 1973 [1922], 1924a). Later, he devoted a couple of monographs to comparative literature. In *Studies in European Literature* (1929a) and *Aspects of Modernism* (1935), Lavrin explored how European literature from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reflected “modernity”. In these works he displays a broad interpretation of ‘Europe’ and includes works from both Western and Eastern European writers. Several of the chapters of *Studies in European Literature* and *Aspects of Modernism* first appeared as articles, for example in *The European Quarterly*. Lavrin did not significantly alter them before he republished them in book form, therefore only one version will be addressed in the analysis.

In the rest of his career, Lavrin focuses less on European literature as a whole, but more on Slavic, mostly Russian literature. Lavrin devoted several monographs to cardinal Russian writers, like Gogol (1925a), *Pushkin and Russian Literature* (1947b), Goncharov (1953), *Lermontov* (1959) and the posthumously published *Anton Chekhov: An Introduction to his Life and Work* (2005, originally written in the 1970s). He also wrote several overviews of Russian literature, such as *Russian Literature* (1927b), *From Pushkin to Mayakovsky* (1949), and *Russian Writers: Their Lives and Literature* (1954). Besides, Lavrin regularly published his work in scholarly journals like *The Slavonic and Eastern European Review*. Several chapters that later are included in his overviews of Russian literature first appeared as articles.
Additionally, he devoted a couple of articles to broader Slavic culture, for example to Bogomilism on the Balkans (1929b) and Slovene literature (1955).

As some of Lavrin’s contemporary reviewers have pointed out (cf. 2.3), Lavrin tended to address the same authors a couple of times during his career, without adding significant updates to his analyses. This is for example the case with Lavrin’s analyses on Dostoyevsky, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Tolstoy and Gogol which all appeared at least two times. Although there is a significant overlap between the different versions, it is nevertheless opportune to include them in the analysis. Even though Lavrin did not update his analysis of these authors, he did make an effort to update the used material and, more importantly, the geo-political references. In these monographs Lavrin often incorporated “political excursions” in which he engaged with the contemporary geo-political situation. Because of the significant timespan between the different versions – the first edition of these works appeared in the early interwar period, while the second editions appeared after the Second World War, – it is probable that they can shed light on Lavrin’s reaction to the changing political situation in Europe.

Although Lavrin has published a significant share of his critical and scholarly work in Slovenia, the corpus does not include works that appeared in his home country, but focuses on his English language work only. Lavrin’s Slovene language articles, which appeared chiefly between 1926 and 1941 in the literary journals The Ljubljana Bell (Ljubljanski Zvon, 1881-1941) and Blue Bird (Modra Ptica, 1929-1941), are translations or paraphrases of articles that were previously printed in journals in the Anglo-Saxon world. Upon inspection, it became clear that the articles do not contain any additional information. Also translations of his British work in other languages are almost exact copies and will not be included in the dissertation’s corpus.

**Literary Anthologies**

The third category of works that will be addressed in this dissertation are the literary anthologies Lavrin published in the course of his career: the introductions to these anthologies and their particular compilations can contain traces of his world view. After the discontinuation of Slavyansky mir, Lavrin published the anthology Veles in 1912, a collaboration with Acmeist Sergey Gorodetsky, one of the founders of The Guild of Poets

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12 Most translations are not by Lavrin’s hand, which means possible alterations in the texts cannot be attributed to him.

13 Lavrin took particular pride that his work on Tolstoy was translated into Japanese, トルストイ (Torusutoy).
Gorodetsky’s and Lavrin’s “first almanac of Russian and other-Slavic literature” was followed by the anthology *Perun* in 1915. Although Lavrin is not mentioned as one of the anthology’s editors, he was nevertheless involved in the selection of South Slavic literature and even added three fictional works from his own hand. Also during his British career, Lavrin prefaced and/or edited about fifteen anthologies of Slavic literature. He for example introduced several lyrical collections like *Kossovo. Heroic Songs of the Serbs* (1920b), *Pushkin’s Poems* (1945), and *The Parnassus of a Small Nation* (1957), and edited anthologies of Russian and South Slavic poetry and prose, like *Russian Humorous Stories* (1946c) and *An Anthology of Modern Yugoslav Poetry* (1962a).

**Miscellaneous**

A couple of the works that have to be addressed in this dissertation do not really fit within one of the previous categories. In 1913, Lavrin for example published an essay in an edited volume of the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Unification (Общество славянского научного единения) in which he addresses the role of culture and literature for rapprochement in the Slavic world. Also Lavrin’s journalistic work as a war-correspondent for *The New Time* during the First World War takes in a unique place in his oeuvre. Between 1915 and 1916, Lavrin temporarily left the literary and cultural path and published seventeen reports and interviews about the situation in the Balkans. In Autumn 1916, on commission of *The New Time*’s editor, Mikhail Suvorin, Lavrin published *Albanskiye eskiy*, a travelogue based on his adventures as a war-correspondent. Lastly, between 1960 and 1969, Lavrin published a series of eleven articles that, very uncharacteristic for his British oeuvre, address ideas of Slavic rapprochement and unification. These articles were followed by a monograph on the same topic, titled *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*, in 1969.

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14 The Guild of Poets, founded by Sergey Gorodecky and Nikolay Gumilev, united the acmeists, a group of poets that explicitly rejected symbolism – although they valued the symbolist heritage. They considered poetry as a metier, a craft, that needed practice and technique and wanted to revalue the beauty of reality, of everyday life. (Waegemans 2003: 224-225)
15 Первый альманах русских и инославянских писателей.
16 Jones uses a double translation for the word “научный” – Scientific and Scholarly – probably to underline the many different fields the members of the Society came from (2009: 25).
Ego-Documents and Fiction

Two parts of Lavrin’s oeuvre will not be included in the corpus: his fictional works and his ego-documents held at the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (sign. 37/302), the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (sign. R 87) and the Manuscripts and Special Collections Department of Nottingham University (ACC 676, ACC 1547). During his career, Lavrin published several short stories. Most remarkable are the stories that appeared in Perun, and a collection of short stories Lavrin wrote during his British career, the posthumously published Between Eight and Eighty (Med Osem in Osemdeset, 1987). Although these works may comprise implicit markers of Lavrin’s world view, analyzing fiction requires a very different approach than non-fictional texts, and this would lead to far from the original aim of this dissertation.

The ego-documents of Lavrin that have been preserved consist of correspondence with family, friends and colleagues, manuscripts of his publications, and a couple of diaries. The lion’s share of Lavrin’s correspondence concerns his relations with Slovenia: letters between Lavrin and his Slovene colleagues and friends. Most of them address the practical aspects of the promotion of Slovene literature in Europe, or bear upon the publication of his work in Slovenia (Moravec 2002: xvii-xviii). This correspondence could help shed light on the cultural network(s) Lavrin was involved in or on his career in Slovenia, but that is not the aim of my dissertation. Moreover, there has been ample attention to Lavrin as a promotor of Slavic literature and culture in Western Europe, even more attention to this aspect is obsolete. Of Lavrin’s correspondence with Russian and Western European peers, held at Nottingham University, unfortunately only a smaller number of letters has been preserved. Contrary to Lavrin’s Slovene correspondence, some of these letters contain valuable information regarding the contextualization of Lavrin’s British oeuvre. They will be used as background information. Lavrin’s diaries will not be included in the analysis because they mainly contain travel impressions of a personal nature, which do not really shed light on his views on culture and society.

Lastly, I have decided not to include the drafts of Lavrin’s publications held at Nottingham University. Bringing the different manuscripts together and reconstructing the textual genesis of Lavrin’s works could provide valuable insight about his thinking process, about the books he read and the authors that influenced him. However, this would constitute a whole new research project that requires a wholly different set of analytical tools.
3.2 Theoretical Background

Considering the multifaceted nature of Lavrin's oeuvre, several disciplines can be used to guide and feed the close reading approach and to help explore his engagement with national loyalty and supra-national unity. The many periodicals Lavrin is involved in could inspire one to choose a theoretical framework from periodical studies. His ties with British modernism could motivate one to conduct the analysis through a modernist studies lens. His engagement with the Slavic world, then, could make one look at studies about the Slavic idea, whereas his interest in European integration could incite one to embed the analysis in studies about Europeanism. The challenge each of these angles poses is that they actually encourage a more fragmented look at Lavrin's oeuvre and his views. As it is the aim of this dissertation to investigate whether there are continuities that lay at the basis of Lavrin's work and, if possible, to overcome the fragmented approach of Lavrin studies, it is better to adopt a theoretical background that allows to address the entire corpus through one neutral lens. The lens I have adopted is inspired by a relatively recent development in cosmopolitanism studies, namely its attention to the overlap between cosmopolitanism, nationalism and locality. This angle allows for a systematic exploration of national loyalty, supra-national unity and the grey zone in between. Besides, as Lavrin's ideas about nation and supra-national constellations are connected to the Slavic Idea and the European Idea, I believe it is opportune to nonetheless refer to the recent scholarship on these ideas, because they can help situate certain aspects of Lavrin's work. The main analytical angle from cosmopolitanism studies will prevent the fragmentation that would be encouraged if one would only look at Lavrin from the study of the Slavic or the European Idea.

When Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism Meet

Until the 1980s, nationalism and cosmopolitanism have been considered paradoxical and incompatible terms. The emphasis on the gap between nationalism and cosmopolitanism is not surprising as the second half of the twentieth century was characterized by the pursuit of different kinds of supra-national unity as a counterweight to the excesses of nationalism in the first half of the century. Also the frequent conflicts between the interest of the nation-state and political freedom affected the focus on the contrast between the two (Larsen 2018: 10). Nevertheless, since the late 1980s, scholars have started to explore the possible coexistence and complementarity of cosmopolitanism and nationalism. A shift in the interpretation of, and the attitude towards the concept of
cosmopolitanism has occurred. Bruce Robbins and Paulo Lemos Horta describe the difference between the traditional and new approach to cosmopolitanism in the introduction to their *Cosmopolitanisms* (2017):

Traditional definitions [...] usually agree on some degree of synthesis: cosmopolitanism as a commitment to the good of humans as a whole that overrides all smaller commitments and creates a habitual detachment from the values of the locality. [...] This singular, normative account has been gradually if only partially displaced since the late 1980s by a plural, descriptive understanding. According to the new understanding, cosmopolitanism can be defined as any one of many possible modes of life, thought and sensibility that are produced when commitments and loyalties are multiple and overlapping, no one of them necessarily trumping the others. (Robbins & Horta 2017: 8-9)

In this new approach, cosmopolitanism is no longer considered a singular concept that only implies loyalty to an overarching, uniform or universal set of values\(^\text{17}\). The concept is now considered plural. Depending on the different loyalties one combines – to the sports club, hometown, gender, class, nation, political party, ethnic group, the continent, the world – several cosmopolitanisms can be observed and explored. This also allows for combinations of cosmopolitanism and nationalism: citizens of Flanders can – depending on the situation – alternately (or simultaneously) feel Flemish, Belgian and European; globetrotters can feel like citizens of the world and simultaneously cherish their ties with the homeland; or a migrant can maintain different connections to both her/his old and new homelands and simultaneously connect to a trans-national religious community. Nonetheless, contemporary research shows that it remains challenging to reconcile the belief in a united humanity with the love for a particular nation or region, because the first is often associated with uniformity and a lack of roots, while the latter seems to exalt one nation above all others.

Many scholars have articulated their own views on bridging the gap between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Martha Nussbaum’s *For Love of Country?* (1996) is a collection of essays by different contributors that react to Nussbaum’s plea against patriotism and her call to consider ourselves “citizens of the world”. Most essays in the collection try to bring “love of country” and “love of humanity” together and defend the importance of certain patriotisms and local commitments. Nussbaum herself proposes an

\(^{17}\) The association between cosmopolitanism and universalism is not adopted by all scholars in cosmopolitan studies. Tihanov for example argues against it as he considers the acceptance of difference as the base of cosmopolitanism (Tihanov 2021: 13-14). Most scholars featuring in this section, however, address universalism as one possible form of cosmopolitanism.
image of the self at the centre of a series of concentric circles, encompassing the family, ethnic group, the nation and eventually humanity. Homi Bhabha reacts to Nussbaum’s interpretation, deeming it a cosmopolitanism of prosperity and privilege. Instead, he suggests a vernacular cosmopolitanism “which measures global progress from a minoritarian perspective [...] striving for a ‘right to difference in equality’” (Bhabha 1994: xvi-xvii). He contrasts this vernacular cosmopolitanism, often related to refugees and oppressed minorities, to “a decadent class of young professional global cosmopolitans” (Ibid.: xiv) whose continuous belief in the free market and progress perpetuates unequal and uneven development. Kwame Anthony Appiah, then, advocates a rooted cosmopolitanism practiced by a cosmopolitan patriot (2005). He interprets cosmopolitanism as a worldview that values different ways of life, openness to different communities, and intercultural dialogue. Another interpretation of the combination of nationalism and cosmopolitanism is provided by Ulrich Beck, who describes the contemporary cosmopolitan outlook as banal cosmopolitanism, because it is a pragmatic way of looking at and accepting the actual diversity of reality, instead of hoping for a utopian uniformity (2004: 10).

Contemporary attempts to reconcile cosmopolitanism and nationalism are criticized by Daniel Malachuk. He regrets that many who say to address the grey zone between the two – he explicitly targets Nussbaum’s bundle of essays, – still consider one of both attachments more valuable than the other (2007: 140-141). It occurs to him that the rhetoric used for these reconstructions often shows that nationalism, no matter how sophisticated, seems still to impress many as always threatening to devolve into bloody tribal prejudice, whereas cosmopolitanism for others apparently remains little more than bloodless, artificial pose. (Malachuk 2007: 141)

Following Malachuk’s criticism, one may consider the concentric circles of Nussbaum, which in fact privilege universal liberal values above ‘smaller’ attachments, as an example of a rhetoric that puts cosmopolitanism above nationalism. Similarly, one can regard Beck’s doubts about “utopian uniformity” as a moderate example of discourse that depicts (features of) cosmopolitanism as bloodless and artificial.

Instead of these in his view unconvincing reconstructions, Malachuk prefers to explore combinations of nationalism – locality – and cosmopolitanism in history. He argues that such an approach shows that there were times when nationalism and cosmopolitanism did not need reconciliation (2007: 139). Similarly, Myles Lavan, Richard Payne and John Weisweiler for example address the occurrence of cosmopolitanism in the ancient empires of Eurasia (2016). The central focus of their edited volume Cosmopolitanism and Empire is the way in which enormous empires like the Roman Empire or Han China
succeeded in managing cultural differences among the different local peoples. They argue that the imperial elites of ancient Eurasia “developed practices that transcended – rather than erased – difference and drew strength from diversity” (2016: 2).

Other scholars address the historical coexistence of locality and supra-national unity after the rise of nationalism. Although it was long time assumed that nationalism supplanted cosmopolitanism completely in the nineteenth century these scholars show that there occasionally were significant overlaps between the two. Pheng Cheah upholds that early nationalists considered themselves allies rather than opponents of advocates of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism (and vice versa) (1998). As Cheah puts it, before these early nationalists found their states, “the ideals of cosmopolitanism and European nationalism in its early stirrings [were] almost undistinguishable,” (1998: 25). Esther Wohlgemut addresses Enlightenment cosmopolitanism and Romantic nationalism in nineteenth century British writing. She coins the term romantic cosmopolitanism (2009) to denote the continuity between them. In 2010, the scholarly journal Victorian Literature and Culture devoted a complete issue to ‘Victorian cosmopolitanisms’, which explores the usages of cosmopolitanism in nineteenth-century British literature (Agathocleous & Rudy 2010: 389-397). The contributors to the issue observe different kinds of cosmopolitanisms that often border with the acceptance of empire, locality and nationalism – both with positive (e.g. human rights) and pejorative connotations (e.g. colonialism). Malachuk himself, then, speaks of nationalist cosmopolitans (2007). He points out that major proponents of the national idea in the mid-nineteenth century, i.e. Giuseppe Mazzini, George Eliot, Walt Whitman and Ernest Renan, saw nationalism and cosmopolitanism as “ultimately allied means to the realisation of our universal human essence,” (Malachuk 2007: 142) and considered locality as a prerequisite for universalism.

Most informative for this dissertation are the fields of tension that students of the grey zone between nationalism and cosmopolitanism encounter. In fact, these fields of tension serve as a kind of thematical guideline to tackle the relationship between national and supra-national loyalties in Lavrin’s œuvre.

(1) The first field of tension that will guide the close reading approach in this dissertation can be found between different interpretations of ‘unity’. In general, visions and ideas of unity can be divided into two contrasting interpretations: unity can be considered homogeneous or heterogeneous. As Craig Calhoun puts it: “Does it [cosmopolitanism] refer to what is common to the whole world and unites humanity? Or does it refer to appreciation of the differences among different groups and places?” (2008: 429). The conference Mapping Cosmopolitanism (RELICS 2018) explored how the two interpretations of unity can come to the fore in the desired or actual construction of different cultural spheres. In the linguistic sphere, for example, one can interpret unity as the shared use of a dominant lingua franca – think of the current state of English in the
world. Contrastingly, linguistic unity can be interpreted as something heterogeneous, for example in the plurilingual reality of Indian literature in which different languages and vernaculars are used. In the religious sphere, then, one can interpret unity as a shared common religion, sometimes endorsed by missionaries (or crusades) or one can pursue the wealth of religious tolerance and the coexistence of several religions as is attempted in contemporary Jerusalem.

By breaking down unity in different spheres, this approach allows for a more nuanced and complex understanding of unity and difference. Moreover, this approach sometimes shows that the tension between unity and difference is not absolute. Helena Bodin, for example, who addressed Byzantine cosmopolitanism, suggests that supra-national constellations can oscillate between homogeneity and heterogeneity, thus implying a fluctuating meaning, interacting with the fluctuating contexts in which they develop (2018). Other scholars, like Myles Lavan and his colleagues, explored homogeneous and heterogeneous interpretations of unity in vast ancient empires and explain how these empires often simultaneously promoted uniformity and diversity among the local elites (2016: 6-7). They for example show how the Roman empire combined an emphasis on cultural uniformity with the recognition and preservation of Greek elites in the East of the empire, and how the urban elites of the Babylonian and Hellenistic empires preserved their cultural diversity, but had to subscribe to the central political imperial order (Ibid.: 7). Arguably, an approach that can reveal that heterogeneous and homogeneous interpretations of unity can coexist, sometimes even within the same cultural sphere can also help to break down cases in which the gap between unity and difference appears to be ambiguous to begin with, as is the case with Lavrin who has been associated with minority emancipation as well as with federalism and imperialism throughout his career.

(2) The second field of tension that will guide the close reading approach of Lavrin’s work is the one scholars discern between cultural nationalism and/or cosmopolitanism and political nationalism and/or cosmopolitanism (e.g. Kaufmann 2003, Keohane 2018, Tihanov 2021). These scholars generally hold that it is key to address nationalism and/or cosmopolitanism as heterogeneous concepts which have a cultural and political variant that are not necessarily connected to each other. Kaufmann, for example, defines the cultural variant of nationalism and cosmopolitanism as contrasting – closed and open – attitudes towards cultural practices (2003: 9-10). The political variant, then, he understands as contrasting practices and visions on the distribution of institutional and administrative power (Ibid.: 6-7). What makes Kaufmann’s distinction interesting is that it enables him to determine why there is – or why there is no – compatibility and complementarity between the two “isms” (2003: 6). He holds that cosmopolitanism and nationalism can be compatible when they manifest themselves on a different level: he considers that the wish of cultural nationalists to preserve or revive ethnical or national
traditions can perfectly go hand in hand with the ambition of political cosmopolitans to replace the institutional and administrative boundaries of the state with a relevant supranational body (Ibid.). He for example refers to the European Union, that stipulates legislation and taxes, and can leave plenty of space for thriving national cultures (Kaufmann 2003: 6-7). Reversely, he states that the “isms” cannot be not compatible when they manifest themselves on the same level: the confrontation of a political supranational entity like the European union with the wish of one of its member states to (re)claim its national institutional power poses a large challenge (Ibid.: 9-10). The recent Brexit can be considered as a case in point. Cultural cosmopolitanism also forms a possible danger for cultural nationalism, Kaufman argues: there are several historical examples of the decline of small ethnic minorities because the elite preferred other cultures and looked down on or despised their own (Ibid.: 9-10).

Kaufmann points out that his approach leads to one ambiguity: there namely are many historical examples, especially in the long nineteenth century, of the combination of nationalism and cosmopolitanism on the same political or cultural level. He for example refers to Mazzini’s pursuit of Italian unity as a prelude to a United States of Europe (2003: 16), and to the idea of Christian Garve, a German fashion writer, who argued that German fashion would benefit from cross-fertilisation – a cosmopolitan practice – because it would “help to reduce the German’s fetishism of the foreign” (Ibid.: 18). Kaufmann dismisses this dual mindset and the “tendency to conflate irreconcilable elements”, and frames them as schizophrenic, unrealistic and sometimes even unbelievable (Ibid.: 16-20).

Others, like Oisín Keohane, suggest to use the distinction between cultural and political nationalism and cosmopolitanism to explore how the alleged “schizophrenic” combination of the same variant actually works. Keohane, who uses the same definition as Kaufmann, focuses on the political variant in particular. His more open approach towards the alleged ambiguous combination allows him to reveal a “cosmo-national discourse”, that enabled nineteenth-century political thinkers to present nationalism and cosmopolitanism as genuinely reinforcing concepts. Keohane for example points to discourses that use a nation’s cosmopolitanism for its national superiority, but also at the representation of the nation as a vehicle for cosmopolitan aims (Keohane 2018: 5). Tihanov, then, warns students of cosmopolitanism that one should not take for granted that the cultural and political variant of cosmopolitanism always go together (2021). He bases his warning on a different definition of the two variants: the first, cultural variant, Tihanov considers as a more situational cosmopolitanism, an emphasis on the uniqueness of different cultures, for example by speaking different languages and reading different literatures. The latter cultural variant he considers as more normative, a search for conciliation regardless of those differences, for example through universal human rights. For Tihanov, cultural and political cosmopolitanism do not necessarily go together:
We know many examples of accomplished cultural cosmopolitans functioning well in totalitarian societies that despise, hamper, and reject the values of political cosmopolitanism; and vice versa, one can be a political cosmopolitan (in the Kantian sense of extending universal respect, hospitality, and tolerance [...]) without being a cultural cosmopolitan. (Tihanov 2021: 15)

Despite the differences in their approach and definitions, Kaufmann, Keohane and Tihanov all show that making the distinction between cultural and political nationalisms and / or cosmopolitanisms helps to be aware of the different lines in one’s (reaction to) cultural and political practices and attitudes. Moreover, it serves as a valuable tool to get a better understanding of their possible complementarity or of their essential difference. In the case of someone like Lavrin, who makes “political excursions” in his literary criticism and who contributes to periodicals who connect politics and arts like *The New Age* it is no luxury to incorporate this distinction in the analysis.

(3) Finally, the third field of tension that will guide the close reading approach in this dissertation, is the one between centre and periphery. Several scholars suggest that a study of attitudes and interpretations of supra-national constellations should take into consideration what position the subject takes in within the cultural and political landscape (e.g. Milutinović 2010, Reddy 2010, Sorrels 2016). They indicate that a (perceived) peripheral position can result in a different take on nationalism or cosmopolitanism. Zoran Milutinović, for example, explored the attitude towards Europe of a couple of Eastern European intellectuals and politicians in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century. He concluded that it is an over-simplification to assume that openness towards the Western centre is a sign of a cosmopolitan attitude and vice versa (2010: 2).

Sheshalatha Reddy, then, addressed the poetry of the Indian poetess and politician Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949) (2010). She explored how the English-language poetess both had the reputation of a cosmopolitan among her international readership and was perceived as a nationalist writer in her homeland. She argues that Naidu as an English-language Indian poetess fulfilled an intermediary function and that her oratory and poetry present her as a promoter of cosmopolitan nationalism, wanting to “accommodate both home and the world”. Playing with the two-fold effect of nationalism and exoticism, the symbols and imagery in her poetry confirmed the image of a colony within the British empire for an international audience and simultaneously promoted Indian nationalism among her fellow countrymen (2010: 571). A last example is a suggestion Katherine Sorrels makes in her work about the cosmopolitanism and transnational Europeanism of Jewish outsiders in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century (2016: 4). She investigated how the pursuit of self-preservation of these marginal figures is reflected in their attitude towards supra-national constellations. Sorrels holds that such
constellations, like Europe, are continuously (re-)defined by marginal figures and nations within its borders. The most innovative thinking about transnational constellations, she argues, is often done by those at the border who want to be included but whose membership is contested (Ibid.).

The work of the above three scholars confirms and underlines that it is valuable to explore whether and how Lavrin’s outsider position is reflected in his work and in his views on nationality and supra-nationality. What is more, they suggest that mapping Lavrin’s perception of the relationship between centre and periphery may actually help understand his perception of the Slavic world and Europe, and, more importantly, may help explain and reconcile existing prejudice(s) about his views.

Ideas of Slavdom and Europe

As I mentioned before, I believe that approaching Lavrin only within the framework of studies on the Slavic Idea or the European Idea would perpetuate the fragmented nature of Lavrin studies: it would encourage one to approach Lavrin’s Russian and British career as two separate entities instead of two parts of one and the same career. Using studies on the Slavic Idea and Europeanism in a subservient role, as a way to situate the continuities or discontinuities that will be brought to the fore by the close reading approach through a nationalist-cosmopolitan lens, however, diminishes the risk of fragmentation. In this way, the recently growing interest in alternative constructs and peripheral voices in the debates about the Slavic world and Europe can nevertheless play a supporting role in the analysis of Lavrin’s views on national loyalty and supra-national unity.

Studies on the conception of the Slavic world went through a considerable evolution. This is particularly the case with the study of Slavophilism. “Early” studies on the topic, like Peter Christoff’s seminal four-volume overview of Slavophile thought, mostly have a biographical approach within which they lay bare the specificities of Slavophilism vis-à-vis other contemporary trends (Christoff 1961; Gleason 1972; Walicki 1975; Rouleau & Besançon 1990; Янковский 1981; Цимбаев 1986). Usually these studies categorize the Slavophiles as conservative dreamers, and emphasize their mythology of a pre-industrial past (Gleason 1972; Walicki 1975), their opposition of the Slavic world against the West and Western ideas (Rouleau & Besançon 1990; Walicki 1975) or the top-down orientation of their ideas (Янковский 1981). This focus on the Slavophiles’ conservatism and opposition to the West still occurs in some more recent studies, like Aleksandr Kaplin’s assessment of Slavophile values as possible alternatives to the still tangible influence of the West in Russia (Каплин 2011, 2016), or Marlène Laruelle’s tracing of historical and contemporary connections between Russia and the European far right (2018). Most
contemporary research on Slavophilism, however, distances itself from the idea of Slavophiles as conservative dreamers, and rather addresses them as (moderate) advocates of change in the nineteenth-century Russian empire. This is both the case in historical research that aims to situate Slavophilism within the specific circumstances that led to its establishment (Rabow-Edling 2006; Engelstein 2009; Дудзинская 1994) and more philosophically oriented research that shows how allegedly conservative Slavophile thought allows for certain liberal ideas (Suslov 2011; Wortman 2013) or different, less authoritarian interpretations of the role of the state (Hughes 2000).

Also studies on Pan-Slavism have evolved from more general overview studies to more targeted research. The first studies on Pan-Slavism, like those by Kohn (1953) or Fadner (1962), are still considered good overviews of the development of this interpretation of over-arching unity in the Slavic world. They emphasize the Central European origins of the idea and take into account that not all Pan-Slavisms had a pro-Russian orientation and often even were aimed against Russian hegemony in the region. More recent overviews generally start from a Pan-Russianist interpretation of Pan-Slavism, with a leading role for Russia in the Slavic world. Some of them have addressed the impact of different actors in society on the popularity of a possible Russian interference within the Slavic world, think of the influence of the press or the public opinion (Tuminez 2000; Boeckh 2010). Also the impact of Pan-Slavic thought on international and diplomatic relations between Russia and other Slavs – often South Slavs – has received considerable scholarly attention. The scholars usually discuss both the Russian and South Slavic perception on these relations (Milojković-Djurić 1994; Milojković-Djuric 2006; Романенко 2004; Чуркина 2016).

There has been a lot less attention to other ideas of Slavic unity. Paul Višný has studied the origins and development of Neo-Slavism in Czechia, a project aimed at improving inter-Slav relations and more cooperation among Slavs within and without the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1977). Another, more recent project on alternative takes on the Slavic world is Inventing Slavia. The project aimed to bring together different ways to construct or imagine the Slavic world throughout history, so-called “Slavonicisms” (Glanc, Meyer & Velmezova, 2005). The contributions to Inventing Slavia discuss how several versions of the idea that the Slavs belong to one people or race have affected discourses around them, and vice versa. Among others the influence of the Illyrian movement on South-Slavic literature, the effect of Russian interference in the East on the discourse on the borders of the Slavic world, and the discourses on Slavic Mutuality are addressed.

The interest in the history of the European Idea has been increasing in recent years. This is largely due to the many changes and challenges the European Union is facing today. Many scholars have tried to map the evolution of certain attitudes towards European unity throughout (a large part of) the twentieth century. Louisa Passerini has
addressed the different ways in which historians, politicians, psycho-analysts and psychologists in interwar Britain have analysed crises of European civilization (1999). Also Vittorio Dini and Matthew D’Auria have explored notions of crisis and perceptions of space in Europe (2013). By examining how these affected how Europeans imagined themselves, they have challenged the traditional interpretations of Europe’s crisis during the interwar period. Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin have investigated the rise of internationalism as a mainstream political idea through the development of several intergovernmental organizations (2017). John McCormick, then, has addressed several interpretations of Europeanism starting from its historical development to different contemporary attitudes towards ideas of state, integration, international relations and multiculturalism (2010).

The attention to larger tendencies and evolutions is flanked by studies that tackle individual histories and/or histories of networks of ideas. Often, they address the “usual suspects” in discussions on European unity, think of the pioneer of European integration, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi (e.g. Villanueva 2005; Sorrels 2016), the French and German interwar Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann, (e.g. Fischer 2012; Boterman, Labrie & Melching 2014), or the Czech thinker and president Tomáš Masaryk (e.g. Baer 2000; Berglund 2017). There is an ongoing tendency, however, to add more peripheral voices to investigations of Europeanism. Although most peripheral projects never came to be they interacted with and significantly affected the federalist and Europeanist movements that lay at the basis of the European Union today. Several edited volumes have brought together research on the personal engagements with the European dream by artists like Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Piet Mondriaan, and Stefan Zweig, or by cultural figures and thinkers like Frederik van Eeden, Dimitrije Mitrinović, and Otto Neurath (Wistrich 2007; Boterman, Labrie & Melching 2014; Lobbes 2015; Reijnen & Rensen 2017; van Hengel 2018). Some scholars have paid more attention to the cultural and political networks and encounters furthering ideas for the transformation of the continent both within broader European and more narrow national contexts (Dard & Deschamps 2005; Duchenne 2011; Gusejnova 2016; Gelbin & Gilman 2017; Reijnen & Rensen 2017; van Hengel 2018). Also several periodicals that were established to construct and negotiate the idea of Europe, like The Dial, Die Neuen Deutschen Beiträge, New Britain and New Europe, have received scholarly attention (Le Dréau 2005; Wagner-Zoelly 2010; George 2015).
3.3 Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of three parts: this introductory part (Part 1, Ch. 1-3), and two parts in which I tackle Lavrin’s oeuvre. In the second part (Ch. 4-9) I tackle Lavrin’s Russian output and aim to uncover the start of the thread(s) of national loyalty and supranational unity that run through his career. In the third part (Ch. 10-14) I investigate whether and how these threads run further through Lavrin’s British work. These two parts cover an unequal portion of Lavrin’s career: his Russian career lasted about ten years (1908-1917), while his British career lasted about fifty (1918-1969). Nevertheless, both parts have approximately the same length. This may come across as unbalanced, but there are two important reasons for this. First and foremost, although Lavrin’s British career lasts five times as long as his Russian career, in reality, his original output – i.e. the publication of completely new and original material – decreases significantly after 1935. Because of this, the main period that is covered in the second part is (more) comparable to the timespan of his Russian career (ten versus seventeen years instead of fifty). Second, the nature of Lavrin’s publications in Russia and Great Britain is very different. In Lavrin’s Russian output, engaging with societal and cultural problems of the nation, the world and humanity at large is the main goal which provides a lot of material to work with. In his British work, however, Lavrin’s engagement with cultural and societal problems is – most of the time – a by-product of his academic work as a literary critic. Therefore, the signals about his engagement with the national and the supra-national are fewer and often less explicit. Because of these reasons, the parts are not as unbalanced as appears at first sight.

Part 2, “Lavrin in Russia”, opens with a background chapter (Ch. 4) which is intended to help situate Lavrin’s work as a Slovene expat in Russia between 1908 and 1917. It gives an overview of Lavrin’s Russian career and also engages – to a certain extent – with the geo-political and cultural background that determines the events Lavrin reacts to. This part further consists of five chapters. In Chapter Five, I introduce the concept, program and collective behind Slavyansky mir. Subsequently, in Chapters Six to Eight, I engage with three themes that come to the fore while mapping images of nationality and supranationality in Lavrin’s output between 1908 and 1913: the relationship between emancipation and imitation (Ch. 6), between diversity and unity (Ch. 7), and between artist and nation/empire (Ch. 8). The chapters always open with an analysis of how Slavyansky mir engages with the respective theme and close with an investigation of the same theme in the few works Lavrin publishes after the discontinuation of the periodical. Part 2 concludes with chapter Nine, in which I tackle the apparently most ambiguous period from Lavrin’s career, namely his participation in the leftist avant-garde collective Bloodless Murder, his work for the reactionary newspaper The New Times, and the unlikely
combination of these two strands in the travelogue *Albanskiye eskizy*. The chapter mainly explores how the orientalising representation of the different peoples in the travelogue constitutes an assessment of different attitudes towards cultural development.

Just like Part 2, the last part of this dissertation, Part 3, “Lavrin in Great Britain” opens with a contextualizing background chapter (Ch. 10) which addresses the different roles Lavrin plays during his British career. In Chapter Eleven, I engage with Lavrin’s society and cultural criticism in the modernist periodicals *The New Age*, the weekly *New Britain* and *The European Quarterly*. This chapter mainly investigates whether and how his assessment of the chaotic state of Europe after the First World War and the Russian Revolution dialogues with ideas of nationalism and supra-nationalism, and whether and how they relate to strands of his earlier career. In chapters Twelve and Thirteen, I explore whether and how Lavrin uses his literary criticism as a vehicle for his ideas about societal and cultural development. First, I show how his particular application of psychoanalysis provides opportunities to incorporate ideas about the relationship between nation, supra-national constellations and humanity as a whole (Ch. 12). Second, I explore another particular aspect of Lavrin’s literary criticism, namely his attention to and evaluation of ideas about individualism and collectivism (Ch. 13). The last chapter of the third part, Chapter Fourteen, goes deeper into Lavrin’s last project, a series of articles on the Slavic Idea and his monograph *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*. It explores how Lavrin intervenes in and frames this overview of the Slavic Idea to incorporate his own views on a better humanity.
Part 2 – Lavrin in Russia
Chapter 4  Background and Context of Lavrin’s Early Russian Career

4.1  Krùpa – Oslo – Paris – Prague

Janko Lavrin (1887-1986) grew up in the small village Krùpa in the South East of Slovenia in the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy, Austria-Hungary. When Lavrin was a high school student in the early twentieth century, the Slovenes had acquired a certain degree of autonomy within the Empire. Nevertheless, the position of small Slavic minorities in Austria-Hungary was still precarious, and Lavrin devoted himself, together with many other students, to Slovene, or rather South Slavic independence. To better understand his activity, a short overview of the emancipatory struggle of the Austrian Slavs is imperative.

During the nineteenth century, often dubbed the age of nationalism, the minority policy in the Habsburg Empire was increasingly used to divide the minorities and to set them against each other as a means of political control. During the year of revolution 1848, for example, Emperor Ferdinand encouraged the Croatian struggle for emancipation in order to complicate the hitherto successful Hungarian uprising (Detrez 2013: 228). Attracted by the promise of institutional reform, the Croatians helped the Habsburgs to repress the Hungarians. In the end, the emperor did not honour his commitment, thus thwarting both the Hungarian and Croatian ambitions and maximizing his own profit (Ibid.: 232).
After the *Ausgleich* in 1867, the minorities in Austria enjoyed a relative freedom compared to those in Hungary, where minorities were subjected to extensive Hungarianisation. Minorities in Austria were allowed certain language and cultural rights, but only a small portion of the population (in 1873 only six percent) was represented in the *Reichsrat*, where mainly German or Germanised large landowners participated (Detrez 2013: 219). Moreover, many minorities, among others the Slovenes, were scattered over different Austrian crownlands, where they formed even smaller, and thus weaker minorities. This made them more susceptible to acculturative practices by the larger minorities in the crownlands. The Slovenes, for example, experienced a constant threat of Germanisation and Italianisation (Ibid.: 234). Most minorities therefore continued their struggle for emancipation.

The nineteenth-century emancipatory struggle of most Slavic minorities in Austria was inspired by many forms of Pan-Slavism because they felt too weak to defend their territory and rights by themselves. In the 1810s and 1820s, the Slovene linguist Jernej Kopitar for example developed an early form of Austro-Slavism, which regarded the Austrian Empire as the ‘maison commune’ of the different peoples within its borders (Bernard 1992, cited in Merchiers 2006: 134). Kopitar aimed his mainly cultural movement at a Slavic unification within the Austrian Empire, which he envisioned as the protector and caretaker of the Slavs (Merchiers 2006: 136-147). A couple of decades later in 1848, a more political form of Austro-Slavism surfaced during the Prague Slav Congress. The Czech František Palacký advocated for a consolidation of the Austrian Slavs, including Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ruthenians, Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, as a political unit under the protective roof of the Austrian Empire (Kohn 1961: 325-326). The Congress prematurely came to an end when an uprising (allegedly provoked by the Austrian authorities) started in the Czech capital (Detrez 2013: 242). Therefore Palacký’s Austro-Slavism remained without consequence.

Another strand of Slavic unity that took form among Austrian Slavs in the early nineteenth century was specifically aimed at South Slavic unity. Initially it was conceived as a unity within the Austrian Empire, but later it got a secessionist character. In the 1830s and 1840s the Zagreb-based Illyrian Movement considered the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes as one South Slavic people. An important feature of the movement was its aspiration to establish a Croat-Serb linguistic unity (Detrez 2013: 232; Troch 2015: 2). In the 1850s, the

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18 After a long time of repressive measurements vis-à-vis the many minorities in the Habsburg Empire, the Emperor offered a settlement to the largest – and most threatening – minority, the Hungarians. The 1867 *Ausgleich* (agreement) stipulated that from then onwards the Austrian Empire would become the Dual Monarchy Austria-Hungary, with two separate constitutions.
Croatian bishop and politician Josip Strossmayer and his People’s Party gave new impetus to Illyrism, now named Yugoslavism. In order to bring the different South Slavic peoples closer together, Strossmayer emphasized the idea of a shared culture and a shared ecumenic Christian faith (Detrez 2013: 233). Also the mid-nineteenth-century pursuit of an independent Serbian state by the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilija Garašanin, and the struggle for an independent Croatia by Ante Starčević, starting in the 1860s, can be considered forms of Yugoslavism. Both Garašanin and Starčević wanted to include other South Slavic peoples in their states. Their national concepts therefore also promoted a form of Slavic unity (Troch 2015: 2).

Both the Austro-Slavist and Yugoslavist takes on Slavic unity were reflected in the political debate among the Slovenes in the second half of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the conservative, Catholic Old-Slovenes (Staroslovenci) supported the Croatian idea of trialism, the organisation of a tripartite Empire, with a third (South) Slavic part, instead of the then bipartite Empire (Detrez 2013: 235-236; Seewann 2004: 688-690). This idea echoed the Austro-Slav aim to create an autonomous Slavic region within the Austrian Empire. On the other hand, the liberal Young-Slovenes (Mladoslovenci) enthusiastically supported the secessionist idea of an independent Yugoslav state of Slovenes, Croatians and Serbs (Detrez 2013: 233-236).

At the turn of the century, when Lavrin was a secondary school student, the Mladoslovenci no longer existed, but the idea of Yugoslavism was still popular among young progressive intellectuals. Also Lavrin supported the emancipation of the Slavic minorities and was attracted by the idea of independence from the Dual Monarchy. In his personal reminiscences, he recalls that he joined a group of anti-Austrian pro-Yugoslav students called Youth (Omladina)19. At the time, omladina was an umbrella term for several student organizations in all South Slavic regions. Although they had slightly varying programs, all omladinas strove for an independent Yugoslav state outside of Austria-Hungary (Sundhausen 2004: 487-488).

The anti-Austrian sentiments Lavrin harboured were an important reason to leave his homeland after finishing secondary education in 190720. He wanted to avoid state service or conscription in the Austrian military, as this would force him to fight or repress other...

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19 Obtained from the manuscript The World War I – Some Personal Reminiscences of a War Correspondent in the Balkans which is kept in the Lavrin archive in the Special Collections and Manuscripts Department at the University of Nottingham at location ACC 1547/21: 1. The manuscript is not dated but elements in the text indicate it was written shortly after the Second World War.

20 Jones states that Lavrin left Slovenia already in 1905 (Jones 2009: 23). Slovene data, however, show that Lavrin graduated from a high school in Sušak (a village on the border with Croatia) in 1907 (Баравовский & Хлебникова 2011: 309; Glonar 2013).
Slavs in the border region (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 308-309). After having left, Lavrin travelled Europe for a year “picking up languages as he went” and “following literary and artistic trails” (Jones 2009: 23). He for example visited Oslo (then Kristiania) because he was fascinated by the work of Henrik Ibsen. Jones adds that Lavrin also stayed in Paris and Prague for a while where he followed some courses at the university (2009: 23). The information about this “gap year” is unfortunately quite limited.

In the second half of 1908, Lavrin eventually departed for Russia, where he, as he would later write in his reminiscences of his time there,

hoped to do – whether in press or otherwise – at least something to explain the case of the menaced Slavs in the Habsburg Empire, where they formed by far the majority of the population.²¹ (Lavrin n.d.)

In an interview in 1972 Lavrin explained that when he arrived in Russia he wanted to “enhance the role of the literature of other Slavic peoples in Russia, especially the Slovenian and South Slavic ones” (Pleterski 2001: 185). Lavrin formulated these explanations in hindsight, therefore it is uncertain whether he truly left Europe with these goals in mind. Nevertheless, both explanations give a glimpse of how Lavrin framed his worries about the oppressed position of Slavic minorities in the early twentieth century, both from a political and a cultural point of view.

What is more, the two explanations touch upon different factors that impacted that position. The first explanation, emphasizing the tragic fate of the Habsburg Slavs, appeals to the compassion (or indignation) of the Russian public for the tragic fate of their “little Slavic brothers”. It shows a triangular relationship between the Slavic minorities as helpless victims, the Habsburg Empire as the Western perpetrator, and Russia as the Slavic ally and potential saviour/liberator of the Austrian Slavs. The second explanation, underlining the quality of (South) Slavic literature, targets the Russian ignorance of other Slavic cultures and thus questions the superiority of Russian culture that is often taken for granted. Instead of a triangular relationship between unequal parties, the second aim suggests a potential direct relationship between equals. The explanations give a foretaste of how Lavrin uses his Russian work to explore the (potential) position of the “menaced Slavs” among the great powers surrounding them.

²¹ According to a census held in 1911, 23% of the population in the Double Monarchy was German and 19% was Hungarian. When observed separately, all Slavic minorities in Austria-Hungary where a lot smaller, but added together they made up 47% of the population (Freytag & Berndt).
²² […] свои идеи заключались […] направленной на повышение роли литератур других славянских народов в России, особенно словенской и южнославянских.
4.2 Saint-Petersburg

Once Lavrin arrived in Russia, he soon settled in Saint-Petersburg. In order to cover his expenses, he started to work as a foreign language teacher and tutor for a couple of well-to-do families (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 310). Lavrin intended to combine his work with higher education. The cover letter he used during his application at Nottingham University-College a decade later suggests that he obtained a degree at the Archaeological Institute in Saint-Petersburg (Jones 2009: 23). However, according to its conditions for registration, the Institute only accepted students who had already obtained an academic degree. As a graduated gymnasium student Lavrin did not qualify for enrolment (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 310-312). The archives of the Institute show that he took a couple of courses as a voluntary, external student, but he actually never obtained an academic qualification (Ibid.: 312). Only in 1948, Lavrin received an academic degree when Nottingham University awarded him an MA, probably, as Jones suggests, because the university felt ashamed that one of their professors did not have a degree at all (2009: 23).

Apart from sporadically taking university courses, Lavrin quenched his thirst for knowledge by combining a career in (literary) journalism and a vivid social life in the many cultural circles of Saint Petersburg. Both Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova, and Jones admire the speed and ease with which Lavrin “gained entrée into the intellectual and cultural life of the Russian capital” (Jones 2009: 23; Барановский & Хлебникова 2011: 312). In an interview in 1972, Lavrin himself explains that many Russian intellectuals were interested in meeting someone with South Slavic roots because of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Dual Monarchy in October 1908 (Pleterski 2001: 185). This annexation was a hot topic in Russia at the time, because it formed a recent and painful climax in the struggle between Russia and Austria-Hungary to increase their sphere of influence in the Balkans. A short overview of their conflicting interests in regard to Bosnia-Herzegovina will help explain the interest of many intellectuals for Lavrin’s advocacy for oppressed Slavic minorities.

The Habsburg Empire had its eye on Bosnia-Herzegovina for a long time already. The Ottoman province with a large Slavic Muslim population formed a significant threat for the Empire’s southern borders, as it formed a geographical wedge between two Austrian crownlands, Slavonia and Dalmatia (Detrez 2013: 236). The region also had strategical value: if Serbia, which was supported by rivalling Russia, could claim Bosnia-Herzegovina it would acquire access to the Dalmatian Sea and increase its power (and Russia’s) in the area substantially. In the late 1870s, the conflicting interests of Russia and Austria-Hungary were accentuated when the great European powers negotiated the conclusion
of the uprisings of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro against the Ottoman Empire. Initially the great powers agreed in February 1878, with the Treaty of San Stefano, to grant Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria significant autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. This would have been beneficial for Russia and unfavourable for Austria-Hungary, as it created a large Slavic autonomous region at the southern border of the Dual Monarchy (Detrez 2013: 236-237). The Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs succeeded to enforce a renegotiation of the initial agreement. The new agreement, concluded with the Treaty of Berlin, reduced the territory of autonomous Bulgaria by half and made Bosnia-Herzegovina an Austro-Hungarian military and civic protectorate, thus significantly reducing Russia’s potential influence in the region (Detrez 2015: 235).

Claiming Bosnia-Herzegovina as a protectorate was more interesting than a full-blown annexation of the territory at the time: it meant a smaller loss of face for the Ottoman Empire and, what is more, it did not lead to an increase of the Slavic population within the Dual Monarchy, which would have impaired the fragile internal balance of the Empire (Detrez 2013: 236-237).

During the next twenty-five years, Austria-Hungary and Russia were able to balance their interests and influence in the Balkans. This changed when in 1904 the Austria-Hungary-supported Obrenović dynasty in Serbia – the last Obrenović, the unpopular Aleksandar I, was murdered in 1903 – was replaced by a new king, the nationalist and pro-Russian Petar Karadorđević. The new Serbian ruler no longer did Austria’s bidding, and, dreaming of a larger Serbia, supported (among other things) the separatism of the Bosnian Serbs in the protectorate (Detrez 2019: 206). In 1908, the Dual Monarchy seized the revolution of the Young Turks and their decision to grant Bosnia-Herzegovina a vote in the Turkish parliament as a reason to fully annex the protectorate, thus frustrating the Serbian ambitions. During secret negotiations preceding the annexation, the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and his Russian colleague had arranged that Russia would allow the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in exchange for military access to the Bosporus and the Dardanelles (Ibid.). Austria-Hungary went over to the annexation very swiftly, however, and left no time for diplomatic talks with the other European great powers. The agreement between Austria-Hungary and Russia angered France and Great Britain, who did not want to support Russia’s part of the deal (Moss 1997: 497). Remembering the adverse renegotiation of the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878, the Russians experienced Austria-Hungary’s behaviour as a repeated betrayal. Although the Russian Foreign Minister had been willing to hand over Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Dual Monarchy, pressure by Serbian and Russian nationalists now made him resist the annexation (Detrez 2015: 292). The annexation also resulted in a wave of indignation among the Russian public, which coincided with a rekindled interest in Slavic solidarity and Slavdom (Мудрова 1981: 35; Višný 1977: 40).
It was in this atmosphere that Lavrin set foot in the literary salons that were organized by Matryona Shilder, a society figure who was married to peredvizhnik Andrey Shilder (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 108; Косик 2011: 175). A colleague of her husband described her salons as follows:

Around Shilder’s wife a different [in comparison to the artists her husband received – T.G.] company gathered, more from the scholarly world, literary men and people of politics. Complex world issues were discussed there and the publication of periodicals was planned (Минчеков 2010: 99).

Inspired by these contacts and financially supported by Matryona Shilder, Lavrin started the literary periodical Slavyansky mir already in December 1908. Its aim was to acquaint the Russian public with literary and cultural achievements of other Slavic peoples in order to encourage a rapprochement between them.

Acquainting the Russian readership with other Slavic peoples was not new in pre-revolutionary journalism (Мудрова 1981: 34). Since the Russian intervention in the Balkans in 1878, several periodicals with that aim had been established with titles such as Slavic Review (Славянское обозрение), Slavic Tidings (Славянские известия), or The Slavic Age (Славянский век). Unlike these periodicals with an overall conservative orientation, Lavrin’s Slavyansky mir addressed the Slavic World from a liberal and progressive perspective (Ibid.).

Lavrin ended the cooperation with Shilder because he believed that she merely used the periodical to increase her own social prestige (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 108; Лаврин 2011 [1980]: 265). Like her salon, the periodical seemed to be for her – good intentions aside – nothing more than “intellectual idle pastime” (“интеллигентски праздное времяпрепровождение”, Минчеков 2010: 100). Only in 1910, Lavrin found a new sponsor in the Polish pianist Maria Chrucka (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 108; Косик 2011: 176). Due to her more modest financial support, the periodical appeared in a smaller and less expensive version from then on. Until the discontinuation of the journal in 1911 (because of financial problems), Chrucka herself and an international group of critics and translators contributed to the journal under Lavrin’s lead.

Slavyansky mir was Lavrin’s first and most extensive project to “explain the case of the menaced Slavs” and to “enhance the role of other Slavic literatures in Russia”. Also in the years after its discontinuation and before the First World War, Lavrin paid ample attention to the emancipation of the Slavic minorities. More often than not, this pursuit

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23 У жены Шильдера собиралось другое общество, больше из ученого мира, литераторы и люди политики. Там обсуждались сложные мирово вопросы и намечалось издание журналов.
of emancipation went hand in hand with the pursuit of Slavic unity. This is not only suggested by the angle of *Slavyansky mir*, but also surfaces in other projects Lavrin was involved in during the next three years.

While Lavrin spent a lot of time travelling and studying abroad in the next three years – he often visited Norway to take university courses and to learn more about the native country of Henrik Ibsen, – he remained active as a literary critic and publisher in Russia (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 315-320). In a letter to one of his friends, he mentions that he earned his living by working for three periodicals – he does not mention which. He states that he writes the majority of his contributions on commission and therefore “of course does not use his own name” (Лаврин 2011 [1912]: 248). One of these periodicals is *Bayan* (Баян). In the course of 1912, Lavrin allegedly helped establish *The Slavic Section* (Славянский отдел, Мудрова 1981: 43), which was aimed at Slavic acquaintance and rapprochement (N.N. 1912(6/6): 335). In this section, he published three articles under his own name in the course of the same year (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 316-318). Assumedly he wrote a number of articles for the periodical using a pseudonym as well. Lavrin also worked for the short-lived *Slavyanin* (Славянин), which dubbed itself the first all-Slavic newspaper in Russia. Using his own name, he published a short story in the newspaper (‘At Mountain Heights’; ‘На горных высотах’) and contributed to several articles on Slovene literature and culture (Ibid.: 320). The third periodical Lavrin worked for probably was *Argus* (Аргус, Парнис 1976), a periodical that wanted to ameliorate the relationship between Russia and Great Britain, to which many modernists like Akhmatova, Merezhkovsky, Hippius and Teffi contributed. However, there are no primary sources that actually confirm Lavrin’s involvement in *Argus*.

In the meantime, Lavrin got acquainted with the Acmeist Sergey Gorodetsky, with whom he shared an interest in Slavic folklore and different Slavic cultures in general. In an interview in 1974, Lavrin claimed that Gorodetsky introduced him to other Acmeists like Osip Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova and Nikolay Gumilyov (Smith 1974, cited in Jones 2009: 25). It is however uncertain if Lavrin’s relationship with the other Acmeists was real or more than superficial. In any case, in the summer of 1911, Lavrin and Gorodetsky made plans for the publication of *Veles* (Велес), an anthology of Russian and other Slavic literatures. The anthology, which was eventually published in 1912, was yet another step to acquaint the Russian public with the culture of other Slavic peoples (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 315). Around the time *Veles* came out, Lavrin started with the

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24 [...] конечно не под своей фамилией.
25 This remark may suggest that the content of these commissioned works did not necessarily fit with his own ideas.
preparations for a periodical that would continue the anthology’s mission (Лаврин 2011 [1912]: 250-251). Despite these aspirations, the periodical never appeared. In 1915, though, Gorodetsky published a sequel to the anthology: *Perun* (Перун), a collection of Russian and South Slavic literature. Although Lavrin is no longer mentioned as an editor, he did contribute to the anthology in a considerable way. He selected the South-Slavic works for the collection and included three of his own short stories.

Lavrin’s mission to acquaint the Russian public with other Slavic minorities and their literatures surfaced once more in his involvement in the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Unification (Общество славянского научного единения)26. More than his work for the periodicals or the anthologies, the connection with the Society points to Lavrin’s belief in mutual (literary) knowledge as a means for Slavic rapprochement. The organization, which Lavrin helped found in 1912, was led by Vladimir Bekhterev, a veteran of the Bulgarian liberation war in 1877-1878, a famous neurology professor and a former contributor to *Slavyansky mir*27. Lavrin was appointed as the Society’s secretary28. On June 13, the Ministry of Internal Affairs approved the charter of the Society. The first paragraph of the charter summarizes its mission – in a way similar to the mission of *Slavyansky mir* – as an intermediary between Slavic scholars as follows:

The Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Unification sets itself the goal of: a) promoting the acquaintance of Slavic scholars with various specialties and the mutual acquaintance of their works; b) facilitating communication for joint scientific work and c) the dissemination in [Russian] society of information about the scientific-cultural and artistic life of the Slavs29. (Charter Society 1913, cited in Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 316)

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26 Jones uses a double translation for the word научный – scientific and scholarly – probably to underline the many different fields the members of the Society came from.

27 Bekhterev was able to maintain his position as a neurology professor under Soviet rule. He even co-founded the First All-Russian Congress of Neurologists and Psychiatry held in December 1927. In the same month, Bekhterev suddenly died in mysterious circumstances the day after he diagnosed Stalin as a paranoid, which caused many rumours and much speculation. There are several indications that Stalin ordered the state intelligence to poison the doctor. The fact that the Minister of Health instructed that there should be no autopsy and the fact that Stalin ordered to delete his name and works from Soviet textbooks and scientific literature support the claim that Bekhterev’s death was orchestrated (Lerner, Margolin & Witztum 2005: 222-225)

28 According to Galina Shevtsova, Dushan Semiz, another founding member of the Society, was appointed as its secretary (Шевцова 2016: 166).

29 Общество славянского научного единения ставит себе целью: а) способствовать знакомству между собою славянских учёных различных специальностей и взаимному ознакомлению с их трудами; б) содействовать их общениею для совместной научной работы и в) распространению в обществе сведений о научно-культурной и художественной жизни славянства.
The Society mainly organized lectures on topical themes that touched upon Slavic cooperation (Шевцова 2016: 166). In 1913, it published an edited volume dedicated to the contemporary meaning of the Slavic Idea. Lavrin contributed to the volume with an article on the importance of literature and art for Slavic unification (2011 [1913]: 128-139).

The Society was originally envisioned as a politically neutral organization (Шевцова 2016: 166). Nevertheless, the liberal orientation of most of its members occasionally influenced its activities. This for example surfaced in the organization of a fund raiser in support of the mainly Slavic peoples (also the Greeks participated) fighting in the first Balkan War (1912-1913). Bekhterev argued that this war should be seen as the self-defence of a liberating movement on the Balkans, and therefore deserved the Society’s support (Бехтерев 1912, cited in Шевцова 2016: 166). The Society’s main feat was the organization of The Day of Slavic Flags (День славянских флагов) on December 12 1912, during which all inhabitants of Saint-Petersburg were asked to buy and display flags of Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Bulgaria. During the build-up to the Day, the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Unification clearly disassociated itself from the “old type” (“старий тип”) of Slavic organizations that associated Slavic unity with Orthodoxy and nationalism (Шевцова 2016: 167). For the organization the Society collaborated with Pavel Milyukov, the leader of the Cadets, the liberal party. It also wanted to attract the young Social Democrats for its cause, but the latter criticized the initiative because of their opposition to war in general. Despite their intended neutrality, the members of the Society clearly saw themselves as more progressive advocates of Slavic unity.

Lavrin’s political involvement/interest in the Slavic world before the First World War was not limited to the occasional politically inspired activity of the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Unification. In the summer of 1913, Lavrin got involved in the Slovene movement Rebirth (Preporod), devoted to the Yugoslav cause (Pleterski 2001: 185). The young members of the movement (mainly high school and university students) were not only attracted by legal political agitation, but also considered more violent means. Different than similar movements like Young Bosnia (Mlada Bosna), the actions of Preporod largely remained on a declarative level (Trenčsényi et al. 2016: 538). The movement lacked a clear program, but Lavrin later claimed that he sympathized with the Preporodovci because they were “full of sincere enthusiasm, readiness to work and some political naivety” (Pleterski 2001: 185). Lavrin was asked to write some articles for Preporod’s eponymous monthly and to become a spokesman for their Yugoslav cause in Russia (Ibid.: 185). Despite this request, Lavrin probably never published his opinion in Preporod as it was discontinued in the very summer the organization contacted him. In his

30 [...] polni iskrenega entuziazma, pripravljenosti za delo, a tudi neke politične naivnosti.
interview with Pleterski, Lavrin suggests that his later work for *The New Time* was inspired by Preporod’s question to disseminate its cause in Russia (Ibid.: 185).
Chapter 5  Discovering Slavyansky mir

In the salons of Matryona Shilder, Lavrin gathered a small international, Saint-Petersburg-based group of intellectuals that shared a dream of a Slavic union of equals, not based on vague, romantic ideas, but on actual mutual knowledge. Slavyansky mir was the vehicle to put this idiosyncratic dream into practice. At first glance, the periodical appears to combine a random selection of literary translations with a hotchpotch of publicist articles with a diverse range of topics related to the Slavic world (literature, (cultural) history, trade, politics,...). In this and the following chapters I aim to reveal the order underlying Slavyansky mir's chaos and show that the periodical was actually composed in such a way that it gave the Russian readership several tools to explore the similarities among the different Slavic nationalities and to thus obtain a sense of unity. Critical articles challenged the readers to look with fresh eyes to the qualities of other, non-Russian Slavic cultures and to find worthy partners in them. Literary translations of what the contributors considered qualitative Slavic poetry and prose enabled the readers to explore those cultures themselves. All parts of the periodical, both explicitly and implicitly, informed the readership about the group's vision of the (future) Slavic world and showed it different paths to reach that ideal.

Given that the conception of the periodical was subservient to one overarching goal, the creation of a united Slavic world, Slavyansky mir can be called programmatic. Due to its programmatic nature, the study of the periodical needs to be a comprehensive one. The pursuit of a Slavic union of equals has penetrated all aspects of Slavyansky mir. Understanding the way in which Lavrin exactly imagines that union and how he uses the periodical to engage with nationalist and cosmopolitan concepts and imagery requires an in-depth study of all those aspects. This chapter serves as an introduction to Slavyansky mir and its program by going deeper into its mission, conception and the collective behind it. It is the first chapter in a series of four that investigates the ideas of national and supra-national unity that are disseminated in the periodical and are maintained in the rest of Lavrin's early Russian career. The periodical will prove to be the base for a better
understanding of all ideas of unity – Slavic and European – Lavrin spreads in his later career.

5.1 The Mission

Over the years, the editorial board of Slavyansky mir publishes four editorials – two in the first (short) volume in 1908-1909 and one in each of the following two volumes – to explain the periodical’s mission and vision (SM 1908(1/1); SM 1909(1/2); SM 1910(2/12); SM 1911(3/2-3)). The fact that the editorials are never signed contributes to the idea that all items in the periodical are subservient to this mission and vision. The short, half-page editorial, ‘From the Editors’ (N.N. SM 1908(1/1)), which opens the first issue, describes Slavyansky mir’s role as follows:

To those modest initiatives that aspire, if possible, to realize the idea of cultural communication and mutual acquaintance of the Slavs, belongs also our journal.31
(N.N. SM 1908(1/1):1)

The preface does not elaborate to which “modest initiatives” exactly the periodical belongs. Also later editorials bring little clarity. Apart from a firmly worded rejection of conservative ideas like “obsolete Slavophilism” (“отжившее славянофильство”, N.N. SM 1909(1/2): 2), and an emphasis on the support for “all appearances of progressive nature in the life of Slavic nations”32” (N.N. SM 1910(2/12): 27), the editorials do not refer to existing interpretations of Slavic unity. The claim by Churkina and Mudrova that Slavyansky mir was a vehicle for the left wing of the Neo-Slavic movement may be plausible, but is not (explicitly) supported by the mission statements of the periodical. This makes one wonder what mission the editorial board had in mind instead. A closer look at the content of the mission statements helps to answer this question.

On a very basic level, Slavyansky mir’s mission is to enhance the Russians’ poor knowledge of other Slavic literatures and cultures (N.N. SM 1908-1:1). The periodical supports this with a dual approach:

31 К числу тех скромных начинаний, которые стремятся, по возможности, реализовать идею культурного общения и взаимного ознакомления славян между собою, принадлежит и наш журнал.
32 [...] все явления прогressiveвного характера в жизни славянских наций.
each issue will contain translations of selected works, mainly of modern authors of all Slavic nationalities (Czechs, Poles, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Bulgarians). [...] With the help of critical and journalistic articles, our periodical intends to acquaint Russians with the cultural life of the Slavs in general.\(^{37}\) (N.N. SM 1908(1/1): 1)

The editorial board decides to open the second issue with a new, more elaborate editorial because, so it states, newspaper reviewers mainly reacted to this basic mission. In this second editorial – also entitled ‘From the Editors’ – the board emphasizes that acquainting the Russian readership with other Slavic literatures and cultures fits into a much larger project, namely the unification of the whole Slavic world (N.N. SM 1909(1/2): 1). It explains that this higher purpose is also the reason why it chose to name the periodical Slavyansky mir – the Slavic world – in the first place: “it is the periodical’s centre of gravity, the symbol of its essence\(^{34}\)” (Ibid.).

Over the years, the mission statements generally point out the same two reasons why “the unification of the scattered Slavic nationalities\(^{35}\)” (N.N. SM 1909(1/2): 2) is necessary. The statements present a unified Slavic world as a bulwark against oppression and dependence of the strongest neighbours, on the one hand, and as a counterweight to the suffering from a lack of culture and energy in the home life, on the other.\(^{36}\) (N.N. SM 1908-1:1)

In other words, a more united Slavic world could enable a shift in the power balance in the region and thus could serve as (1) a protector of the national integrity of the different Slavic peoples and as (2) a facilitator of cultural growth in the region.

The most obvious “strong neighbour” against whom the Slavic world has to be protected is the Western world. The editorial in 1909 explicitly points to the problematic influence by “Western-European outlanders” (“иноплеменники Западной Европы”, N.N. SM 1909(1/2): 2). The threats coming from the West that are mentioned or referred to in the editorials are both cultural and political. The 1909 editorial for example mainly problematizes that Slavic nations adopt cultural dogmas from the West instead of looking

\(^{33}\) [...] в каждом номере будут печататься переводы произведений избранных, преимущественно современных авторов всех славянских национальностей (чехов, поляков, словаков, сербов, хорватов, словенцев и болгар). [...] Помощь критических и публицистических статей наш журнал намерен знакомить русских с культурой жизнью славян вообще.

\(^{34}\) [...] это центр тяжести журнала, символ его сущности [...].

\(^{35}\) [...] объединение разрозненных славянских национальностей.

\(^{36}\) [...] как оплот против притеснений и зависимости от сильнейших соседей - с одной стороны, и как противовес страданиям от недостатка культурности и энергии в своей домашней жизни - с другой.
to each other for cultural inspiration (N.N. SM 1909(1/2): 2). By describing this cultural adoption as “a forced graft” (“насильное прививание”, Ibid.), the statement implies that the loss of Slavic cultures is largely caused by assimilatory practices by Western great powers.

That the editorial board also sees a need for protection against the West on the political level is implied by the wording it uses to describe the protective function: “a bulwark against oppression and dependence”. Given that Slavyansky mir was established in late 1908, not long after the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, which is regarded as a significant violation of Slavic integrity, it is reasonable to assume that this description also alludes to the ever growing political dominance of the Dual Monarchy in Central Europe.

Western Europe is, however, not the only “strong neighbour” the editorial board has in mind, it appears. The integrity of Slavic nations also has to be protected against the largest member of the Slavic world, the Russian empire. In the first editorial this is expressed in covert terms by citing a motto, wrongly attributed to the Czech Karel Havlíček, a nineteenth-century liberal nationalist:

The motto that we set for ourselves, is the motto of the Czech publisher Havlíček: “When someone calls on a Slav, hopefully a MAN answers.”37 (N.N. SM 1908(1/1): 1)

The quote actually comes from the Slovak, Ján Kollár, the author of the Pan-Slavist (in a non-imperialist sense) The Daughter of Slava (Slávy dcera, 1824). Kollár uses this quote to admonish the Slavs to consider humanity, and human behaviour more important than nationality (Kohn 1952: 31). Arguably, the periodical uses this quote to subtly reproach Russia’s nationalistic and imperialistic behaviour. Also the reference to Havlíček suits this interpretation. Havlíček, once a convinced Russophile, was disgusted by Russia’s autocratic behaviour which he encountered during his travels in the Russian Empire. He sympathized with the idea of a Slavic union, but he deemed it unachievable at the time because of the Russian attitude (Mann 1961: 419): as long as Russia, the largest Slavic state, would maintain its “despotic regime”, other Slavs would face subjugation or national extinction when in a union with it. (Therefore, Havlíček considered the Austro-Slavic pursuit of a federative Austrian Empire more realistic (Ibid.)). While Slavyansky mir expresses its rejection of Russian politics rather subtly in 1908, it takes in a bolder and more provocative stance in 1910 (which it repeats in 1911), maybe because Matryona

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37 [...] девиз, который мы ставим перед собой – это девиз чешского публициста Гавличка: “Когда кто-нибудь призывает славянина, пусть отзовется – ЧЕЛОВЕК”.
Shilder is replaced by Maria Chrucka who is less of a society figure. The board explicitly sets itself the goal to struggle against various kinds of ultranationalist and chauvinist tendencies in these or other national groups, both Slavic as well as those who are geographically and politically connected to them.\textsuperscript{38} (N.N. SM 1910(2/12): 27)

Thus Slavyansky mir appoints itself mainly as a protector of the Slavic minorities in Central and Southern Europe squeezed in between the imperial ambitions of both the Austrian and the Russian empires.

The second function the editorial board ascribes to Slavic unification is to serve as a facilitator of cultural growth in the region. It believes that the basis for cultural growth and riches is the diversity of the Slavic world. In the editorial in 1908, this can also be connected to Kollár’s quote and to Havlíček. First, the connection with Kollár is straightforward as the call for unity in his Daughter of Slava is aimed at creating a highly cultured Slavic world. Second, the connection with Havlíček is less obvious, but can be related to the reason why the quote was wrongly attributed to him. The Czech editor has written an epigram If you are not Slavic, you are not Czech! (Nejsi-li Slovan, nejsi Čech, 1846) which uses very similar wording and disseminates a similar message as Kollár\textsuperscript{39}. More explicitly than his compatriot, however, Havlíček points to the compatibility of identifying oneself both as Slavic and Czech\textsuperscript{40}, thus underlining a conception of the Slavic world that is essentially heterogeneous: a supra-national whole that benefits from its diversity.

In 1910, Slavyansky mir addresses the importance of diversity more explicitly. The mission statement of that year stresses the need to respect “the individuality of all

\textsuperscript{38} разного рода ультранационалистических и шовинистических тенденций у тех или других национальных групп, как славянских, так и связанных с ними географически и политически.


If you are not Slavic, you are not Czech! // Whether I am Slavic or Czech,/ why do you ask? / Whether I am with you or against you,/ why do you care? // I express a firm thought here: / I never want to be your equal in anything / and if the name “man” belongs to you, / I gladly renounce “being human”.

\textsuperscript{40} Havlíček wrote the epigram in response to the controversy following his article ‘The Slav and the Czech’ (Slovan a Čech) from 1846. In the article he criticized the argument of linguistic kinship which the Pan-Slavists generally used to present the Slavs as one people. He compared the Slavic situation to the kinship between German and Dutch, which was not considered as an argument to treat the speakers of these languages as a monolithic cultural or ethnic unity.
existing and developing national Slavic cultures" (N.N. SM 1910(2/12): 27). The statement also emphasizes that the periodical wants to acquaint its Russian readership with the literature and culture of “all Slavic languages” (“все славянские языки”, Ibid.). To underline the diversity and richness of the Slavic world, the editorial board also explicitly names the languages it has in mind: “Bulgarian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian, Slovene etc.” (Ibid.) Since the Russian authorities do not recognize the Ukrainians as a different national group and describe the Ukrainian language as a Russian dialect, the explicit mentioning of Ukrainian in this list is probably intended as another lash at Russia’s imperialism.

The two functions Slavyansky mir attributes to Slavic unity, protecting national integrity and facilitating cultural growth, are inherently connected to each other. In the 1909 mission statement, the editorial board contrasts the forced assimilation of Western dogma’s with its own conviction that cultural development should be based on “a living and free exchange among the nations belonging to the same Slavic tribe” (N.N. SM 1909(1/2): 2). Slavyansky mir therefore wants to acquaint its readership with the already existing cultural diversity in the Slavic world and convince it that this diversity has to be cherished, supported and further developed to enable free cultural exchange.

5.2 The Manifesto

The combination of essential difference and an over-arching unity based on respect for human dignity also recurs in the manifesto that is published in Slavyansky mir. The first issue of 1911 opens with the article ‘The Slavic Idea and Us’ (‘Славянская идея и мы’) in which the editorial board proposes its own take on Slavic unity (SM 1911(3/1) 1-7). Just like the editorials, the article is the product of collective authorship: the article is unsigned and is written in the first person plural. What is more, the way the collective frames its vision for the Slavic world – the article constantly speaks of “our idea” (“наша

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41 [...] самобытность всех существующих и развивающихся национальных славянских культур.
42 [...] болгарский, польский, сербо-хорватский, чешский, словацкий, украинский, словенский и др.
43 Robert Geraci writes about the policies of the Russian Empire vis-à-vis its minorities in ‘Russia: Minorities and Empire’ (2009).
44 [...] живой и свободный обмен среди единоплеменных славянских национальностей [...].
идея”), and sometimes even of “our creed” (“наше кредо”) – gives it the allure of a manifesto.

More extensively than in the editorials, the collective dissociates itself from other visions on Slavic unity. It chiefly wants to break away from what it coins the “negative layer” obscuring the pursuit of a united Slavic world:

“Slavophilism”... “Pan-Slavism”... all those terms, that were once used with the best intentions, their authors placed very great hopes in them, but time passed by, and a layer of negative misunderstandings pressed on them... And, as usual, not only enemies harmed them, but also friends.45 (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 1-2)

The article adds that it has become difficult to dissociate the kernel of “Slavism” (“славизм”) from the negative layers now attached to it (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 1-2). For the collective these negative layers consist for large part in their association with Russian hegemony. Slavophilism, for example, the article claims, has been corrupted by Russian nationalists, who have changed Slavophilism in actual “Moscophilism” (“москвофильство”) by putting Russia’s interests before those of the other Slavs (Ibid.: 2). Pan-Slavism, the collective explains, was quickly interpreted by Western-European nations as an “aggressive wave pressing from the East46, an idea that – once more – had been fed by (Russian) nationalistic supporters of the movement (Ibid.: 1).

Also the more recent Neo-Slavic movement, an originally Czech-based project aimed at improving the cultural and economic inter-Slav relations among the Slavs within and without Austria-Hungary (Višný 1977), is weighed and found wanting. The collective indicates that it had high hopes for this new Slavic idea, but that it “did not give what we expected from it”47 (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 2):

True, it freed itself from some passions, from some of the most naïve extremes of the Pan-Slavists and Moscophils, and with this it made an unquestionable step forward, but this step was neither big enough, nor systematic enough, nor – most

45 “Славянофильство”... “панславизм”... все это термины, которые когда-то были произнесены с наилучшими намерениями, их авторы возлагали на них очень большие надежды, но время шло, и на них наседал слой недоразумений отрицательного свойства... И им вредили, как водится, не только враги, но и друзья.
46 [...] агрессивная волна, напирающая с востока [...].
47 [...] не дал того, чего от него ждали.
importantly – spontaneous enough, it looked like a “concession to the spirit of the times”.\(^{48}\) (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 2).

Although the collective disappointedly turns away from Neo-Slavism, the short fragment nonetheless confirms that there was a certain connection between Slavyansky mir and the Neo-Slavs – albeit only the hope that this new movement could help to create a Slavic world that corresponded with the collective’s ideals.

At the core of the alternative creed articulated in the manifesto ‘The Slavic Idea’ is the idea of an inclusive Slavic world. The collective observes that history shows a teleological “process of ‘gathering’” (“процесс ‘собирания’”) shaping the world:

We recognize as our basic historiosophical principle, that history presents us a picture of a process of slow, often agonizing, often hesitating and even temporarily halting, but nonetheless invariable ‘gathering’ of humanity into one organized whole. From this point of view and from this angle, we regard all local (sometimes only partial) processes of ‘gathering’ this or another ‘land’, this or another people, be it ‘the gathering of Rus’ by the muscovite Ivan III or the gathering of Germany by the Berliner Wilhelm I. All this is only a partial manifestation of one general process, only individual currents of one common stream.\(^{49}\) (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 4-5)

The choice to use Ivan III and Wilhelm I as examples of this teleological process is no coincidence. The collective refers to two of the most famous organizers of the unification of European regions to substantiate its observation. Moreover, the examples show that “the process of gathering” is of all times: Ivan III worked on the gathering of the Russian lands in the fifteenth century, whereas Wilhelm I unified Germany very recently in the second half of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the rulers represent the process of unification within the Slavic world and the West, two different groups of peoples, or using Slavyansky mir’s lingo: two different “tribes”. As such ‘The Slavic Idea and Us’ stresses that

\(^{48}\) Он, правда, освободился от некоторых увлечении, от некоторых наиболее наивных крайностей панславистов и москвофилов, и этим он сделал несомненный шаг вперед, но этот шаг не был ни достаточно велик, ни достаточно планомерен, ни –главное – достаточно спонтанен, он походил на “уступку духу времени”.

\(^{49}\) Мы признаем своим основным историософическим принципом, что история представляет нам картину процесса медленного, часто мучительного, часто колеблющегося, и даже временно останавливавшегося, но тем не менее неизменного “собирания” человечества в одно организованное целое. С этой точки зрения и под этим углом мы рассматриваем все местные (иногда лишь частичные) процессы “собирания” той или другой “земли”, того или другого народа, будь то “собирание Руси” московским Иваном III-им или собирание Германии берлинским Вильгельмом I-м. Все это лишь частичное проявления одного общего процесса, лишь частные струи одного общего потока.
the process of gathering is not an exclusively Slavic phenomenon, but is inherent to the development of humanity as a whole.

The use of the examples of Ivan III and Wilhelm I seems to be at odds with the emphasis on national integrity and the essential heterogeneity of the Slavic world underlined in the periodical’s mission statements. Both rulers pursued the ideal of a homogeneous and uniform empire and did not shy away from – often violent – oppression of minorities in the gathered lands. The manifesto, however, makes clear that an alternative approach to unification is imperative. The collective proposes to base unification on two fundamental tenets. First and foremost, the collective considers the ideal process of unification as a bottom-up evolution from one point to another:

We see at one end, the initial or starting point, the person, the individual, as something primary, irreducible and indivisible, like an atom in chemistry, - and at the other end, the final or concluding point, we see humanity, as something comprehensive, all-encompassing [...], although it also consists (like any organism) of distinguishable elements and parts.50 (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 5. Italics in original)

The collective uses this anthropomorphic world view to emphasize the value of all the parts, however small, constituting humanity. Contrary to most anthropomorphic world views, which are used to underline the superiority and/or inferiority of some of the body parts51, the manifesto stresses that the contribution of a small body part, like a Slavic minority, is equally valuable as those of larger, purportedly superior body parts, like Russia or Austria-Hungary. In other words, in the eyes of Slavyansky mir, the suppression of certain parts in an organism – as Ivan III and Wilhelm I did – will eventually harm the functioning of the organism as a whole.

The second tenet at the base of the collective’s approach to unification is the idea that all the midway stages between the individual and humanity, such as nations and tribes, are essential, but “conditional, random, inevitably arbitrary and unstable52” (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 5-6). This second tenet seems to minimize the importance of national emancipation or the importance of the Slavic world itself. The temporality of these

50 Этими точками на одном, начальном или исходном, пункте мы считаем личность, индивидуума, как нечто первичное, неразложимое и неделимое, подобно атому в химии, а на другом, – конечном или завершающем, пункте мы видим человечество, как нечто всеобъемлющее, всеобобщающее [...], хотя оно и состоит (подобно всякому организму) из различаемых элементов и частей.

51 Think for example of the representation of Rome as the heart of the Roman Empire or the Fascist discourse that depicted the “lower races” as elements that are foreign to and thus harmful for the body (Van Hengel 2018: 181).

52 [...] условные, случайные, неизбежно производные и неустойчивые.
midway stages is, however, mainly used to emphasize how each level of unification should be oriented at the creation of a rich, diverse humanity in the future. In other words, the Slavic world has to be united in such a way that it does not annul the essential contribution of the different Slavic nations, nor jeopardize future unions with other “tribes”. The Slavic nations and the Slavic world all are “essential, desirable and useful preparatory groupings on the way to aforesaid ideal result”\(^{53}\) (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 7). Both tenets make the emancipation of the Slavic nations and the protection of their national integrity an absolute prerequisite to the formation of a more cosmopolitan, supra-national unity.

_Slavyansky mir’s_ idea that humanity as a whole benefits from the development of the separate nations is very similar to the idea of universal essentialism Daniel Malachuk attributes to nineteenth-century thinkers like Giuseppe Mazzini, George Eliot, Walt Whitman and Ernest Renan. Instead of a particularist essentialism, that starts from the essential difference between peoples, he shows how these thinkers and writers start from a universal essence of humanity as a _telos_ for all the peoples to realise (Malachuk 2007: 142). The connection _Slavyansky mir_ sees between the protection of national identity (nationalism) and the development of one united humanity (cosmopolitanism) is very similar to the following quotes of George Eliot and Ernest Renan. In 1848, Eliot writes in a letter that

> the nations have been always kept apart until they have sufficiently developed their idiosyncrasies and then some great revolutionary force has been called into action by which the genius of a particular nation becomes a portion of the common mind of humanity. (Eliot 1848, cited in Malachuk 2007: 147)

During his lecture ‘Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?’ at the Sorbonne in 1882, Renan explains the universal mission of nations. He states that all nations participate in the common work of civilization, each sounds a note in the great concert of humanity, which, after all, is the highest ideal reality that we are capable of attaining. (Renan 1882, cited in Malachuk 2007: 156)

Importantly, this universal essentialism was also an important feature of Slavophilism. Susanna Rabow-Edling describes the Slavophile focus on the development of a separate Russian culture as “an attempt [...] to make a Russian contribution to universal enlightenment, that is, to the universal development of culture and learning” (2006: 136).

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\(^{53}\) [...] необходимые, желательные и полезные подготовительные группировки на пути к вышеозначенной идеальному результату.
While *Slavyansky mir* criticizes Slavophilism for its vagueness and alleged Moscophilism, it does have a similar vision of the cultural development of the Slavic world as a whole. However, there is an important difference between the way in which *Slavyansky mir* uses the idea of universal essentialism compared to those nineteenth century thinkers. The Slavophiles and the thinkers Malachuk addressed, mainly use this idea as an argument to legitimize the separate national development of their own nation. None of them has gone beyond the focus on the nation. For example, even though Mazzini presented the unification of Italy as the first step in the direction of a United States of Europe, he never actively pursued the latter. *Slavyansky mir*, however, focuses on the entire process from atom to organism. The collective uses the idea of universal essentialism as an argument for national development and as a base for stipulating rules for rapprochement and unification that benefit from and maintain national diversity.

In order to enable the Slavic nations to go beyond national development and actually come closer to each other, the manifesto stipulates the following guidelines for the (cultural) development and unification of the (Slavic) world:

> not to divide humanity in hostile and irreconcilable camps, but to unite the most related parts of humanity along the line of their greatest kinship and mutual understanding, this is the meaning of our Slavic idea. [...] This is why we sincerely and not “out of fear, but out of conscience” deny all political and military aspirations, aggression, revenge and the restauration of what has historically decayed, but raise even higher the demand for mutual respect, mutual knowledge and acquaintance, mutual justice and above all, equality for all without exception. Therefore, our enemy is not he who is a stranger, but he who is unjust.54 (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 2-3. Italics in original)

On the one hand, *Slavyansky mir* promotes a positive, non-violent approach to unification, where inclusivity forms the baseline. On the other hand, it pleads for the recognition of the uniqueness and equality of each individual or people. The collective strives for a Slavic world based on cultural exchange, formed by individuals and groups of individuals that respect and cherish each other’s differences. Just like the mission statements, the process of unification proposed in ‘The Slavic Idea and Us’ presents cultural exchange

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54 [...] не разделять человечество на враждебные и непримиримые лагерь, а объединять наиболее родственные части человечества по линии их наибольшего родства и взаимного понимания, вот смысл нашей славянской идеи. [...] Вот почему мы искренне и не “за страх, а за совесть” отрещиваемся от всяких политических и воинственных аспираций, от агрессии, от реваншей, от реставрации того, что исторически истлело, но за то тем выше поднимаем мы требование взаимного уважения, взаимного знания и знакомства, взаимной справедливости и прежде всего равенства для всех без исключения. Поэтому наш враг не тот, кто чужой, а тот, кто несправедлив.
among “nations belonging to the same Slavic tribe” as more natural and productive because they have the “greatest kinship”: it especially considers unions on a linguistic basis as an easy – intuitive – first step towards the unification of humanity. More importantly, however, the guidelines in the manifesto indicate that unification – both within the Slavic world and beyond – eventually should transcend ethnic or linguistic kinship and enter the domain of morality, where values like justice, mutual respect and equality are central.

The manifesto’s emphasis on these values is mainly used to condemn Russia’s imperial strategies. The collective exposes Russia’s behaviour with a reference to the Anglo-Boer war in South Africa (1899-1902):

If we read that in South Africa the English have defeated the Boers, but they retained for them [the Boers] all their national rights, that is, especially their language and their complete equality with the victors, only their privileged position and the right to exploit Kaffers and Uitlanders55 was taken from them, we say: honour the English, and let their action be an example for all!56 (N.N. SM 1911-1: 3)

The collective uses the emotional involvement of the Russian public in the Anglo-Boer war – the Russian public sympathized with the freedom-loving Boers who fought against the mightiest country on earth (Davidson 2013: 29) – to make an analogy with Russia’s position towards its own freedom-loving minorities. Indeed, how can Russia still violate the rights of minorities within its borders, such as the Ukrainians, the Belarusians or the Poles, if even Great-Britain, the perceived villain of the war, allows the Boers to retain their identity? (The collective’s take on humanity seems to be limited to Europe alone, it does not pay any attention to the disastrous consequences of both Dutch and British imperialism for the native African population57).

55 ‘Kaffer’ was the pejorative term the Boers used to name a member of the native population of South Africa. They used the word ‘Uitlander’ to address (mostly British) white migrants that worked in the gold mines on Boer territory.

56 Если мы читаем, что в Южной Африке англичане победили буров, но сохранили им все их национальные права, т.е. прежде всего их язык и их полное равноправие с победителями, отняв у них лишь их привилегированное положение и право на эксплуатацию кафров и уитлендеров, то мы говорим: честь англичанам, и да будет их поступок примером для всех!

57 The collective’s representation of the Boer Wars is in its entirety rather ignorant. First, it does not mention the atrocities both parties committed towards the native population, but rather normalizes their exploitation, which is, however, typical for the colonial attitude towards Africa at the time. Second, the Second Boer War ended with the Boers being driven away from ‘their’ land, being humiliated and being massacred by the British troops. Third, the rights the Boers retained were specifically used as a way to discriminate the native population even more and would be at the basis of the Apartheid a couple of decades later (Lapierre 2009: 43-45).
Eventually, the manifesto goes as far as calling the British behaviour “Slavic” and renouncing the Russian behaviour as “non-Slavic”:

If a non-Slav treated the Slavs as the British treated the Boers, we would pay tribute to his justice, and we say: he is not ours, he is not a Slav in language, but he is ours, he is a just man in spirit... If a Slav organizes the systematic persecution and oppression of other Slavs (and even non-Slavs), we say: this is a shame! We condemn him as an unjust person, we do not recognize him as ours in spirit, although he is ours in language. (N.N. SM 1911-1: 3)

For the collective being “Slavic” or belonging to a union of Slavs is not connected to geographical, ethnic or linguistic boundaries. No, being “Slavic” is presented as a cosmopolitan mindset that entails an inclusive and respectful attitude towards all the parts of the organism of (European) humanity. The way in which the collective envisions a united humanity in the manifesto comes close to the way in which Galin Tihanov defines political cosmopolitanism, which seeks to reconcile the difference between cultures through an over-arching respect for human dignity (Tihanov 2021: 15).

### 5.3 The Cover

When readers of *Slavyansky mir* held a copy of the periodical in their hands without opening it, the cover already informed them about the mission disseminated on its pages. The cover of the first two issues of *Slavyansky mir* in December 1908 and January 1909 (see Figure 1) was designed by the famous painter and illustrator Boris Kustodiyev. Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova argue that Kustodiyev, who at the time showed an increased interest in folk art and folklore motifs, probably felt attracted to Lavrin’s idea of inter-Slavic cultural interaction based on national art58 (2009: 108). Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova describe Kustodiyev’s cover illustration as follows:

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58 The relationship between Kustodiyev and Lavrin was more than professional. Lavrin told in an interview that they shared a warm friendship (Парнис 1985: 97). In 1909, Kustodiyev painted a portrait of the young Lavrin. Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova state that Lavrin was unable to pay the cost of a portrait by such a famous painter, therefore they argue that Kustodiyev made painting as a favor for his friend (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 114).
In the drawing, two female figures in rich national costumes are caught in a rondo, holding each other by the shoulder and leaning with their free hands on the edge of the circle, as if trying to expand the boundaries of the world around them (as if to open the curtains). [...] The women depicted are different in character: the right one, in Russian garb, acts somewhat passively – a dreamy image in the dark shade of trees. The woman on the left, standing in front of a background almost entirely covered by clouds, is much more lively and energetic, the tilt of her head and the position of her body give a sense of leaning forward, towards the viewer and at the same time towards the figure in Russian attire. Her outfit contains various elements of the Serbo-Bosnian national costume (the belt, the characteristic pinafore, ornaments on the braids, stripes at the ends of the scarf, the headgear). ¹⁰

Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova point out that Kustodiyev’s cover illustration hints to the political situation in the Balkans that prompted the establishment of Slaviansky mir in 1908. The two women in traditional clothes holding hands represent the bond between the Slavs in Russia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 111). Figure 2, which shows the traditional dress in Russia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, help to confirm their identity. (Especially the headgear, the Bosnian boška and the Russian kokoshnik, is indicative). The scholars add that the open attitude of both women shows that Kustodiyev attempted to incorporate the message of the mission of Slaviansky mir presented in the first mission statement: a call for more cultural communication and a better acquaintance of the Russian public with other Slavic cultures. What can be added to this interpretation of Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova is that the illustration can be seen to hint at the aspired relationship between different peoples. Two women are portrayed as equal dance partners in an open dance movement, symbolizing an equal relationship without the dynamic of a dominant leader and an obedient follower. In line with the periodical’s rejection of Russia’s dominant position in the region, this emphasizes the equality among different Slavic peoples. Finally, the fact that the women are dancing a rondo, a traditional round dance, can be interpreted in two ways. First, the way they hold their hands on the edge of the circle invites the reader to dance with them and to become part

¹⁰ Na risbi sta v rondo zajeti stoječi ženski figuri v bogati narodni noši, ki se držita objeti čez rame, s prostima rokama pa se opirata ob rob kroga, kakor bi hoteli razširiti meja seta okrog sebe (kakor da bi razgrinjali zavese). […] Upodobljeni ženski sta po značaju različni: desna, v ruski noši, deluje nekoliko pasivno – zasanjana podoba v temni senci dreves. Leva ženska, stoječa pred ozadjem, ki ga skoraj v celoti prekrivajo oblaki, je veliko bolj živahna in energična, naklon njene glave in položaj telesa dajeta občutek gibanja naprej, h gledalcu in istočasno k figuru v ruski noši. Njena oprava vsebuje razločne elemente srbsko-bosanske narodne noše (pas, značilni predpasnik, okraste na kitah, proge na koncne rute, pokrivalo).
of their diverse Slavic world. Second, the fact that the women seem to open the curtains suggests that they reveal a new world to the reader.

Figure 1 - Cover Slavyansky mir December 1908

Figure 2 - Left: Traditional Christian dress in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Topić 1890-1916). Right: Traditional Russian costume. Near Okolitsa (У Околитс; Makovsky 1893).
In 1910, after Lavrin stopped his collaboration with Matryona Shilder and engaged Maria Chrucka as the periodical’s main sponsor, Kustodiyev’s cover was replaced by a new one (cf. Figure 3). The cover is used for the nine issues that appear in that year (the issues appeared at irregular intervals, alternately monthly and bimonthly). The new cover illustration maintains the same circular shape as the first cover. The two women are replaced by a man with an impressive moustache, wearing a white embroidered tunic, which is clearly Slavic, but has no distinct national features. The man plays a multi-stringed _gusli_, a traditional Eastern-Slavic instrument (related to, but significantly different from the Balkan _gusle_, a one-stringed fiddle). In the background sails a ship with Varangian features, typical for the ships built in Kiev Rus.

Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova suggest that the _guslar_ (the Slavic name for bard) and the ship in the picture refer to the story of Sadko (2009: 112). Sadko is the main character in Rimsky-Korsakov’s eponymous opera, which is based on an ancient Russian _bylina_ (folk epic). The opera and the _bylina_ tell the story of the heroic bard Sadko of Novgorod who wins the heart of the Sea King’s daughter, Volkhova. She helps him to roam the world with his art. In the end of the story, Sadko marries Volkhova and she creates the river Volkhov, which from then on connects Lake Ilmen near Novgorod with the Finnish Gulf, and, thus, the rest of the world.

While this interpretation does make sense, it can only be loosely connected to _Slavyansky mir_’s general mission. It is more likely that the image of the bard does not refer to any famous bard in particular, but actually points to the general Slavic tradition of traveling bards acquainting the people they meet on the way with their music and culture. The illustration emphasizes rapprochement through cultural exchange – the main mission of the periodical – as a traditional aspect of Slavic culture. The fact that the guslar can be identified as Eastern-Slavic, can remind the readership that this tradition of cultural exchange (as opposed to cultural repression) is also typically Russian. The boat in the background of the illustration, then, can be seen as a symbol of the international range of this tradition, and of the connection between Russia and the rest of the (Slavic) world.
Slavyanskiy mir’s last three issues published in 1911 no longer have a cover illustration. This is probably due to the same financial problems that eventually caused the periodical’s discontinuation.

Figure 3 - Cover Slavyansky mir May-June 1910

5.4 The Concept

Also the concept of Slavyansky mir clearly ties up with the approach described in the mission statements of the periodical. As the statements indicate, each issue acquaints the Russian readership with different Slavic cultures through a two-fold approach (cf. 5.1). Each issue consists of two separate sections, one devoted to critical articles on the Slavic world in general and on the different national Slavic cultures, and a second one devoted to literary works, translated into Russian. The combination of literature and critical writings on literature and culture allows the collective to both show and discuss the state of the Slavic world.

Almost all fourteen issues of Slavyansky mir open with a publicist section with on average five critical articles on a variety of Slavic topics. (The issues of the first volume open with the literary section). The issues in 1908-1909 contain three critical sections: (1) Criticism and Journalism (Критика и публицистика), which consists of literary critical
articles and articles on the Slavic world in general; (2) *Living Thought* (Живая мысль), which contains work with a more essayistic nature, like opinion articles and book reviews; and (3) *News* (Известия), which informs the reader on recent initiatives to stimulate Slavic rapprochement. In 1910, the different subdivisions disappear. All critical articles, except for book reviews, are now included in one large, untitled publicist section. The topics range from cultural history, the history of the Slavic idea and literary analysis to more practical topics like education and trade. The book reviews become an appendix to the literary section, under the subheading *Slavic Bibliography* (Славянская библиография). Table 2, which shows the titles in the publicist sections in January 1910, illustrates their varied content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 2</strong></th>
<th>Publicist section and <em>Slavic Bibliography</em>, <em>Slavyansky mir</em> January 1910</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Untitled Publicist Section</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the XIX Century</td>
<td>L.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Культурное движение южных славян в XIX веке)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juliusz Słowacki. Anniversary review of his work</td>
<td>N. Kostezh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Юлий Словацкий. Юбилейный обзор его творчества)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian Literature</td>
<td>Mincho Dilyanov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Болгарская литература)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Russian-Balkan Trade”</td>
<td>Dragomir Bošnjaković</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(“Русско-Балканская торговля”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slavic Bibliography</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anton Aškerc. Acropolis and the Pyramids</td>
<td>Lev Savin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Anton Aškerc. Akropolis in piramide)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emanuel Lešehrad. Dreams and Pain</td>
<td>Yu. N. Kletsanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Emanuel z Lesehradu. Sny a bolesti)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rikard Katalinić-Jeretov. From the Adriatic</td>
<td>Lev Savin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rikard Katalinić-leretov. Sa Iadrana)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petar Zavoyev. The Crooked Pear.</td>
<td>A. Shishmanov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Петър Завоев. Кривата Круша)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The titles show that the publicist sections broach themes from all over the Slavic world. The selection of critical articles emphasize the diversity of the Slavic world. The diversity is accentuated even more in the *Slavic Bibliography* where, unlike in the rest of the periodical, the authors and the titles of the reviewed books are not translated into Russian, but are written in the original language.
Although the title of the literary section changes over time – in 1908-09 it is called Art Section (Художественный отдел), while in 1910-11 it is called Slavic Belles Lettres (Славянская беллетристика) – the content of the section generally remains the same. The literary sections in the periodical on average comprise seven works of poetry and prose. In the entire run of the periodical, the readership is acquainted with works of forty-seven different authors from all over the Slavic world. The literary section does not contain any Russian literary works, as the collective wants to expand the literary knowledge of its readers. Three quarters of the literary section contains (then) contemporary Slavic literature, written after 1890. The collective printed the work of well-known authors, such as Ivan Cankar, Jaroslav Vrchlický and Ivan Vazov. It also spotlighted upcoming talents. The literary section for example contains early work of the Bulgarian poet and painter Sirak-Skitnik, who lived in Saint-Petersburg from 1908 until 1912, and of the upcoming Belorussian author Maksim Bogdanovich, who debuted only in 1907. Slavyansky mir also featured the work of authors who, in hindsight, had a less successful literary career, like the now forgotten Slovene writer Sofija Jelovšek, the Czech writer I. Bezdek and the Serbian poet Dmitri Gligorić. About a quarter of the literary section consists of older nineteenth-century works, mainly of writers that already had achieved a canonical status at the time (at least in their home region) such as Ján Kollár and Franc Prešeren.

Table 3, which shows the content of the Art section in 1908, is a good example of the diversity of the literary section:

Table 3  
Art Section, Slavyansky mir December 1908

| The Ward of Mary, Help of Christians (В доме Марии Заступницы; Hiša Marija Pomočnice, 1904) | Ivan Cankar |
| The Harlot (Блудница; Pijaczka, 1906) | Jan Kasprowicz |
| The Vampire (Вампир; Vampyr, 1871) | Jan Neruda |
| The Thirteenth (Тринадцатый; Trinaesti, ?) | Branislav Nušić |
| Clouds (Вольные тучи; Oblaka, 1903) | Jaroslav Kvapil |
| The Future Literary “Circle” (Будущий Литературный Кружок; Бъдещият литературен “кружок”, 1895) | Ivan Vazov |

At first glance, the content in the literary sections seems to be arbitrary. The works seem to be related to each other only by the fact that they were originally written in a Slavic language. One could expect that the literary section would contain examples of the poetry
and prose of authors that are addressed in the publicist section of the periodical. Now and again this is indeed the case. The periodical’s first issues in 1908-09, for example, assess Cankar’s work in the article ‘Portraits of Slavic Authors. Ivan Cankar’ and each include three chapters of his novel *The Ward of Mary, Help of Christians* (SM 1908(1/1): 2-12, SM 1909(1/2): 9-18). Also the third issue in 1910 contains both an assessment of Prešeren’s oeuvre and the introduction of his canonical work *The Baptism on the Savica* (1836; Крещение при Савице, SM 1910(2/3): 27-29). In most cases, however, the literary section shows no direct connection with articles in the publicist section. It appears to be a largely autonomous part of the periodical.

In the following three chapters I go deeper into the works published in the publicist and literary sections. The chapters show how the seemingly random selection of articles and literary works actually can be boiled down to three facets of the ideal Slavic world *Slavyansky mir* pursues.

### 5.5 The Collective

Although the contributors to *Slavyansky mir* each introduce their own accents, their individual messages are subservient to the periodical’s program. Nevertheless, it is valuable to shortly zoom in on the body of contributors – critics and translators – associated with the periodical and on the place Lavrin occupies within the group.

#### The Editorial Board

The most noticeable members of the collective are those who are part of its small editorial board. Every issue of *Slavyansky mir* closes by mentioning the names of the editor-in-charge and the publisher at the bottom of the last page. Although Lavrin is the only constant in the editorial board, not Lavrin, but Matryona Shilder and Maria Chrucka are mentioned as editor-in-charge for 1908-09 and 1910-11 respectively. Still, it is generally accepted that the role Shilder and Chrucka played was limited to sponsorship and that Lavrin was responsible for the main editorial work (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 314). (The fact that Chrucka regularly contributed as a translator to *Slavyansky mir’s* literary section does indicate that her involvement in the periodical was more significant than Shilder’s, who is totally absent.) At the end of every issue Lavrin is consequently mentioned as the periodical’s publisher. Only his name can be connected to all the issues
of the periodical, and as such, it is safe to argue that he was one of the few members – if not the only member – who was able to leave his mark on the periodical in its totality.

Lavrin mainly left his mark on the periodical because of his role as publisher/editor. It is reasonable to assume that in this capacity he was an important voice in Slavyansky mir’s mission statements and the manifesto, and that he had the final say about the selection of the contributions to the publicist section and the compilation of the literary section. His name cannot be connected to one of the published articles or translations, except maybe for the translation of Cankar’s The Ward of Mary, Help of Christians (Hiša Marija Pomočnice, 1904). This translation, which was printed in the first two issues of the periodical, is signed with Lavrin’s initials.

Nonetheless, there are indications that Lavrin’s role in the periodical was more prominent. Olga Mudrova’s analysis of the South Slavic contributors to Slavyansky mir suggests that Lavrin’s part in the periodical is larger than at first glance appears. She states that Lavrin also actively contributed to the periodical using the pennames Lev Savin, L.S. and L. (1981: 40-43). As Lavrin himself indicated he regularly used pennames in other periodicals (cf. 4.2) this is plausible. Mudrova’s claim, then, would imply that Lavrin was one of the periodical’s most active contributors. In the first volume of the periodical, approximately half of the articles in Criticism and Journalism are signed with these pennames (see Table 2). In the second and third volumes of the periodical, the pennames show up in eight of the twelve issues, sometimes up to four times per issue. The person(s?) who wrote under the names Lev Savin, L.S and L. has contributed to the periodical in several ways. He translated, among others, poems of the Czech Josef Machar and the Belorussian Maksim Bogdanovich, and short stories by the Slovene Ivan Cankar (Цанкар SM 1910(2/2): 28-36; Богданович СМ 1910(2/4): 39; Махар SM 1910(2/7-8): 40-41; Цанкар SM 1911(3/1): 19-31; Цанкар SM 1911(3/2-3): 44-63). He was also active as a reviewer and literary critic of South Slavic, mainly Slovene literature, for example in the articles ‘Portraits of Slavic Authors. Ivan Cankar’ (Савин SM 1908(1/1): 31-34, SM 1909(1/2): 28-32, SM 1911(3/1): 12-19, SM 1911(3/2-3): 19-26) and ‘Anton Aškerc. Acropolis and the Pyramids’ (Савин SM 1910(2/1): 35-36). The names Lev Savin, L.S. and L. are also used to sign a couple of articles on the Slavic world in general, like ‘Russian Language and the Slavs’ (JL SM 1908(1/1): 43-45) and ‘The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the XIX century’ (JLС SM 1910(2/1): 1-4, SM 1910(2/2): 1-3, SM 1910(2/3): 13-17).

The arguments Mudrova puts forward to substantiate her claim that Lev Savin actually was Lavrin’s penname are plausible (but not always equally convincing). She first addresses Savin’s roots. Mudrova reasons that Savin must have been Slovene, basing herself on certain spelling mistakes – she only explicitly mentions Savin’s consequent
misspelling of Nietzsche’s name
—and Savin’s preference for and extensive knowledge of South Slavic and especially Slovene literature (1981: 42). Second, Mudrova questions whether Lev Savin is a real person. For her argumentation she refers to a list of the main contributors to Slavyansky mir published in 1911 (N.N. SM 1911-2/3: 64). The list, which is added to the 1911 editorial and which apparently has to serve as proof of the periodical’s diverse and international body of contributors, contains all names of regular contributors to the periodical and even adds some names that only appear once or twice. Mudrova problematizes that Savin, Slavyansky mir’s most prolific contributor, is not mentioned in the list (1981: 42). This argumentation needs to be nuanced however, as the pseudonym L.S. is added to a similar list that is published in 1910. Further she claims that the absence of Savin’s name in other contemporary periodicals with an interest in the Slavic world is remarkable at the least (Ibid.). Mudrova suggests that someone with this level of expertise on South Slavic culture would not have limited his contributions to one periodical only. Inversely, she deems it equally remarkable that Lavrin, who did contribute to several other periodicals did not write for his own Slavyansky mir (Ibid.: 40).

Apart from this circumstantial evidence, Mudrova points out a couple of striking similarities between two Savin articles in Slavyansky mir and two articles Lavrin published after the discontinuation of the periodical. She points to the, in her view, almost identical word choice in Savin’s ‘Anton Aškerc. Acropolis and the Pyramids’ (SM 1910(1/1): 35-36) and Lavrin’s obituary for the same author in Bayan (1912a: 340-342).

Savin: Aškerc was for the Slovenes the first fighter for free ideas, an advocate of social and individual freedom, fearless in his verses and in real life.61

Lavrin: [...] that his poetry played in her [Slovene literature] a great role not only aesthetically, but also ideologically, indeed Aškerc was both a poet and a tireless, fearless fighter for new ideals.62

Savin: Aškerc’s ballads and romances of the previous years were chef d’oeuvres of Slovene literature.63

60 Savin consequently transliterated Nietzsche as Нитче or Нитше instead of using the at the time generally accepted Russian spelling, Ницше (Мудрова 1981: 42).

61 Ашкерц у словенцев первый борец за свободные идеи, проповедник социальной и индивидуальной свободы, неустрашимый как в стихах, так и в жизни.

62 [...] что его поэзия сыграла в ней [словинской литературе] великую роль не только в смысле эстетическом, но и в идеином, ибо Ашкерц был и поэт, и неутомимый, неустрашимый борец за новые идеалы.

63 Баллады и романсы Ашкерца прежних лет — шедевры словинской литературы.
Lavrin: His first ballads were *chef d'oeuvres of Slovene poetry.*

Savin: The ideological side of the collection is sufficiently rich, but its *character* is mainly *tendentious,* satirical, sometimes even didactical, but all of it is too much of a cold, too *hackneyed wisdom.*

Lavrin: But these images do not have the previous clarity, the *form* is rather *hackneyed,* not intrinsically related with the content, the artificiality and *tendentiousness* manifest themselves very strongly.

(Mudrova 1981: 41-42)

Mudrova states that these similarities, which I have italicized to facilitate the comparison, combined with the other arguments prove that Lavrin and Savin were one and the same person. The fragments indeed show that Lavrin and Savin shared the same ideas on Aškerc’s oeuvre and worded them, despite the two year gap between the articles, in a remarkably similar way. The fact that Savin also had some knowledge of the Czech language – he has translated a poem of Machar – also forms a potential connection to Lavrin, who, as Jones claims, took some courses at Prague University when he travelled through Europe.

Mudrova points out a second set of similarities between Savin’s ‘The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the XIX Century’ (Л.С. SM 1910(2/1): 1-4, SM 1910(2/2): 1-3, SM 1910(2/3): 13-17) and Lavrin’s contribution to the edited volume of the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Unification (2011 [1913]: 128-139). Both articles use the same metaphor to describe the danger of civilization overtaking culture: respectively “civilization just eats all culture” and “civilization devours culture more every day” (Мудрова 1981: 41). Mudrova considers this an interesting parallel because the relationship between culture and civilization is not one of the central ideas of *Slavyansky mir*’s program, but does play an important role in Lavrin’s later Russian work. She points to the convergence with Bloodless Murder’s ‘Albanian Issue’ (1916), which is treated in Chapter 9, as it shortly touches upon Lavrin’s interest in the struggle between culture and civilization. Actually, the struggle between culture and civilization plays an

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64 Его первые баллады – это шедевры словинской поэзии.
65 Идейная сторона сборника довольно богата, так как характер его преимущественно тенденциозный, сатирический, местами даже дидактический, но все это уже слишком холодная, слишком шаблонная мудрость.
66 Но эти образы уже не имеют прежней яркости, форма довольно шаблонная, не связанная внутренне с содержанием, деланность и тенденциозность проявляются очень сильно.
67 [...] цивилизация просто сесть все культуры [...].
68 [...] цивилизация с каждым днем все больше съедает культуру [...].
even more significant role than Mudrova indicates: the theme for example returns in Lavrin’s travelogue Albanske eskizy, which is also addressed in Chapter 9. In Part 3 of this dissertation which covers Lavrin’s British career, I show how the works he writes during his academic career regularly touch upon the relationship between culture and civilization as well.

Mudrova indeed seems to have unveiled an important parallel between the work of Lev Savin and Janko Lavrin. It is perfectly plausible that Lavrin indeed has contributed to the periodical he edited under the pennames Lev Savin, L.S. and L. However, it is also plausible that Lavrin, as the editor of Slavyansky mir, was familiar with the work of Savin, L.S. and L. and recycled their ideas. Lavrin’s later work, however, not only comes back to issues Savin has addressed. The works Lavrin published in Russia and Great Britain also sometimes refer – sometimes almost verbatim – to articles written by other members of the collective, as this thesis will demonstrate on a couple of occasions. I deem it therefore less important to determine whether Savin and Lavrin were one and the same person – although they possibly are – than to show how Lavrin openly supported and disseminated the ideas of Slavyansky mir’s program after 1911.

Critics and Translators

As the driving force behind Slavyansky mir, Lavrin succeeded to engage about sixty critics and translators (most contributors were both) for the periodical. A small but – relatively speaking – productive part of the group consisted of Russian intellectuals, mainly academics, with an interest in other Slavic regions, such as historian, linguist and polonophile Aleksandr Pogodin, the neurologist Vladimir Bekhterev, and publisher Vasily Korablyev. Importantly, other activities of these men show that they were genuinely concerned with the pursuit of (a form of) Slavic unity at the time. Bekhterev actively tried to forge better connections between students and doctors from different Slavic countries (Мудрова 1981: 34; Щерцова 2016). Pogodin and Bekhterev participated in the Neo-Slav congresses in 1908 and 1910, about which they wrote several articles for Slavyansky mir. Korablyev, then, was the editor-in-chief of Slavic Tidings, another (but more conservative) periodical aimed at acquainting the Russian readers with other parts of the Slavic world.

The majority of the contributors, however, were non-Russian Slavs who lived in or had ties with Saint-Petersburg. Some of them were young, ambitious critics with an interest in the Slavic world such as the Bulgarian student Mincho Dilyanov and the Serbian official Dragomir Bošnjaković. Others, then, were more experienced activists, like the Czech-Ukrainian academic Ipolit Boczkowski, and the Slovene Lavrentij Leskovec, a retired army lieutenant who fled the Austrian Empire for political reasons (Lencek 1986 [1985]: 98). The
foreign contributors mostly acted as specialists on cultural aspects of their native
country. Dilyanov and Leskovec, for example, focused respectively on Bulgarian and
Slovene literature, while Boczkowski devoted most of his articles to education in Bohemia
and Ukraine. Some of those international members of the collective were affiliated with
similar periodicals abroad. Boczkowski, for example, was a regular contributor to *The
Slavic Review (Slovanský přehled)* a progressive, liberal Czech periodical that advocated the
importance of Slavic reciprocity (Višný 1975: 145). Also some of the translators who
worked for *Slavyansky mir*, like Andrey Sirotinin and N. Novich, have contributed to the
Czech review.

The contributors to *Slavyansky mir* seem to have been involved in a larger international
network of like-minded critics, who promoted the work of their colleagues in their
periodicals. *The Slavic Review* for example published a very positive review about
*Slavyansky mir*’s approach to and presentation of the Slavic world (1911: 289-290, cited in
Ефстифеев SM 1911(3/2-3): 3). In turn, *Slavyansky mir* advertised the Czech periodical in
a couple of issues. It also published several positive reviews on other periodicals aiming
at minority emancipation and Slavic reciprocity. It for example published a four-page
review on the Belorussian periodical *Our Grainfield (Haua Hiba)*, which stimulated
Belorussian emancipation and the creation of a distinct Belorussian literature (H.E. SM
1910(2/12): 16-19). Another example is the collective’s review of *Ukrainian Hut (Українська
Xama)*, a similar Ukrainian periodical with an interest in the Slavic world in general (H.E.
SM 1910(2/12): 19-22). In the reviews, the collective explicitly tries to convince its readers
of the significance of the mission of their counterparts.

It is important to note that the names of many authors and translators who published
in *Slavyansky mir* are inconsequential for today’s readers. Authors like Nikolay Kostezh,
who was a regular contributor to *Slavyansky mir* up to late 1910, are forgotten now.
Moreover, many contributors signed with their initials or a pseudonym only. This might
strike as unusual, but at the same time, the programmatic nature of the periodical made
authorship as such subservient to the central message the journal wanted to convey.

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69 Conversely, it can be in the periodical’s interest to explicitly mention the names of authors like Bekhterev and
Pogodin, academics with a liberal, pro-Slavic reputation.
Chapter 6  National Emancipation and the Problem (?) of Imitation

One of the two functions Slavyansky mir’s mission statements attribute to Slavic unification is to facilitate cultural growth based on the diverse and rich cultures in the Slavic world (cf. 5.1). This emphasis on diversity shows that the collective’s vision of cultural development starts from a cultural cosmopolitanism as it is defined by Galin Tihanov:

Cultural cosmopolitanism [...] has at its core the appreciation of difference, and language is central to its understanding of the world as the site of interaction between distinctive cultures which can be translated into one another but can never be entirely reduced to a denominator of commonality. [...] Cultural cosmopolitanism embraces, cultivates, and proactively encourages difference. (Tihanov 2021: 15)

As the manifesto ‘The Slavic Idea and Us’ shows, however, the collective not only stipulates an open attitude towards the other and towards difference(s). It also indicates that the particular way in which a nation develops can contribute to or jeopardize future unity (cf. 5.2). The importance the collective attaches to the “right” national development also appears from the content of the periodical’s publicist section, where a lot of space is devoted to historical and contemporary examples of Slavic minority emancipation and cultural development.

This chapter centres on the question what vision of cultural practice and development actually comes to the fore in the articles in Slavyansky mir’s publicist section. Do the selected articles promote a focus on distinct national development; or do they promote development based on cultural transfer with an open attitude towards other national cultures? To answer this question the distinction Kaufmann makes between different attitudes towards national development can be useful. In Kaufmann’s views, one can speak of cultural nationalism when cultural development is focused on the preservation
of the (mythical) homeland and cultural heritage (2003: 9-10). One can speak of cultural cosmopolitanism, then, when cultural development is aimed at transcending these boundaries and allows a more liberal attitude towards foreign influence. Exploring how the articles in Slavyansky mir engage with examples of cultural nationalism and cultural cosmopolitanism will help to get a better understanding how the collective implements its vision of cultural and national development in its analyses.

This chapter first zooms in on the attitudes towards cultural nationalism that come to the fore in Slavyansky mir’s publicist section. Second, it addresses how the articles in the publicist section react to different forms of cultural cosmopolitanism, especially regarding openness to cultural influence coming from the West. The chapter concludes with a look at how Lavrin himself reacts to these themes after the discontinuation of the periodical.

### 6.1 National Emancipation Guided by the “Fathers of Society”

The need for the development of a distinct national culture is an important thread that runs throughout all volumes of Slavyansky mir. Contributors devote articles to contemporary initiatives for education in the vernacular, tell of success stories of emancipatory struggle in the past and regularly point to the progress Slavic minorities have made since the relatively recent start of their national development.

Contributors who touch upon the theme of early national development often use the then common imagery of a dormant nation that was ‘awakened’. An overview of the cultural development of the Austrian and Balkan Slavs, entitled ‘The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the 19th Century’, for example tells of the “deep historical sleep” of the Slavic minorities in Central and South-Eastern Europe:

Almost until the beginning of the 19th century, the Austrian and Balkan Slavs were in a deep historical sleep. A very hard push was needed to wake them from the imminent death of lethargy towards a new political and cultural life. But when this
push was given, a sad image of cultural poverty appeared – all cultural work needed to be started anew.\(^{70}\) (Л.С. SM 1910(2/1): 1)

The literary overview of contemporary Bulgarian writers ‘Bulgarian Literature’ (‘Българска литература’), then, describes how the famous book Slavo-Bulgarian History by the monk Paisius of Hilendar was a plea for the use of Bulgarian as a cultural language and has started the Bulgarian National Revival (Диянов, SM 1910(2/1): 11). A third example can be found in a review of the Belorussian periodical Our Cornfield (H.E. SM 1910(2/12)). The review applauds how the periodical, since its establishment in 1905, “wakes up the Belorussian people”\(^{71}\) and stimulates it to create a national culture. The review supports Our Cornfield’s mission to convince every Belorussian “that also he is a man and a citizen of a great nation”\(^{72}\) (H.E. SM 1910(2/12): 18. Italics in original). The systematic use of the imagery of an awakening nation often combined with the stress on renewal and revival, underlines the need for preservation and continuation of the dormant national heritage. Also, this imagery shows that these articles promote a nationalist conception of cultural development. Moreover, it confers a form of legitimacy to the emancipatory struggle of minorities and represents it almost as something inevitable. At the same time, it subtly reproaches the supra-national constellations that stand in the way of this kind of national development.

Despite this air of inevitability, none of the three examples present national ‘awakening’ as an automatic process. Each example stresses the activism that lays at its basis, respectively described as a hard push, a famous book and the activating work of a periodical\(^{73}\). This suggests that the authors believe that after a history of oppression many Slavic individuals and peoples need(ed) to be reminded, informed and educated about

\(^{70}\) Почти до начала XIX века австрийские и балканские славяне находились в глубоком историческом сне. Нужен был очень сильный толчок, чтобы их пробудить из близкой смерти летаргии, к новой политической и культурной жизни. Но когда уже был тот толчок дан, явилась печальнейшая картина культурной бедноты – всю культурную работу нужно было начать с начала.

\(^{71}\) [...] будит белорусский народ.

\(^{72}\) [...] что и он человек и гражданин одной великой народности.

\(^{73}\) The ‘awakening’ that is described in these examples points to what Miroslav Hroch calls Phase B in his model for the development from national movement to fully-fledged nation (1993). After an initial period of exploration of linguistic, cultural and historical attributes by scholars and intellectuals (in the Balkans often foreign scholars and intellectuals) in Phase A, Phase B points to the period in which activists aim to persuade all members of their ethnic group of the need to create a future nation, by ‘awakening’ a national consciousness among them (Hroch 1993: 6-7). The contributors to Slavyansky mir are a little optimistic about the direct results of this nationalist agitation. Paisius of Hilendar’s call for the use of Bulgarian as a cultural language, for example, only impacted a handful of intellectuals. It took another fifty years before the Bulgarians started to prefer their own language (instead of Greek) (Detrez 2019: 143).
their national cultural heritage. This idea is dominant in the articles about national emancipation that appear in *Slavyansky mir*. Its general position on this guiding – educating – role, is first highlighted in the introduction to the section *Living Thought* in 1908. This section invites contributors and subscribers to share short texts – for example essays or aphorisms – to educate each other on universal truths. Using a larger font than elsewhere in the periodical, thus highlighting the importance of the message, the introduction states the following:

Knowledge, destroying all doubts, makes it possible to think only in set terms and therefore to be absolutely stable in life. Among people who are equally informed there cannot be no like-mindedness, and consequently no disunity. A society of like-minded people becomes stronger, when more people are equally informed. Nations and nationalities consisting of such societies are invincible.  

Figure 4 - Excerpt from the introduction to *The Living Thought* (Л.Д. SM 1908(1/1): 46); The text in smaller font is a little blurred to make the highlighted part stand out more.

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74 Знание, уничтожая всякие сомнения [*sic*], дает возможность мыслить только определенно, а потому и быть абсолютно устойчивым в жизни. Среди одинаково знающих людей не может не быть единомыслия, а следовательно нет разрозненности. Общество единомыслящих тем сильнее, чем больше в нем одинаково знающих. Нации и национальности, состоящая из таких обществ, непобедимы.
The belief in progress expressed in this introduction not only corresponds with the interests of national movements. The idea that knowledgeable individuals will positively affect the societies they live in is in line with the bottom-up development – from individual to humanity – proposed in Slavyansky mir’s “creed” ‘The Slavic Idea and Us’, as well. Cultural education and development creates informed individuals and (eventually) informed peoples/nations who can take up their rightful place within the overarching structures they adhere to.

Slavyansky mir attributes the responsibility for informing people to the intellectuals in society. This responsibility is first addressed in “‘The Children are the Workers of the Future” – The Human Family’ (“Дети работники будущего” – Человеческая семья’), a contribution to the section The Living Thought in 1909 (М.Л. SM 1909(1/2)). The essay sketches the image of the “human family” which consists of developed fathers “who are spiritually and intellectually rich”75, and undeveloped children “who are intellectually and spiritually poor”76 (М.Л., SM 1909(1/2): 36). The intellectuals should serve as awokeners and guide the ignorant masses, educate them and lead them to progress. The “fathers” are contrasted to those who move in a different direction, “some delay the mass, [...] subjugating them, forcing them to serve only their personal, material goals, others delay by instilling fear, doubt and distrust in others”77 (Ibid.). In other words, the masses should be educated in a way that ensures national progress without suppressing parts of the population and without creating a rift between groups, two evolutions which the collective’s manifesto has identified as harmful for future unification (cf. 5.2).

The essays in The Living Thought address the guiding role of the intellectual in a rather abstract way. Over the years, the collective complements them with several articles that contain real-life examples of “good and bad fathers” from all over the Slavic world. Most of these articles – explicitly or implicitly – contrast the effect of national education with the oppressive practices of dominant elites in order to underline the benefits and the potential of the first. It should not be surprising that Russia comes to the fore as a “bad father”. The travel report ‘Impressions from to Trip in Bulgaria and Reminiscences on the Events of the Liberation War in 1877-1878’ (‘Впечатления из поездки в Болгарию и воспоминания о событиях Освободительной войны 1877-1878 г.’, Бехтерев СМ

75 [...] кто богат духовно, умственно [...].
76 [...] кто умственно и духовно беден [...].
77 Одни – задерживают толпу, [...] подчиняя служить лишь своим личным, материальным целям, другие – задерживают, вселяя в окружающих страх, сомнение, недоверие друг к другу.
1911(3/4-5): 6-26) praises the extraordinary development of Bulgaria since its liberation and reproves Russia's emphasis on violence:

> When you see with your own eyes what education does in a country, what it means when education and culture go hand in hand, than you inevitably get convinced that the state does not grow nor get stronger by bayonets, as we [Russians – T.G.] like to think, but by education and culture, culture and education.\(^{78}\)

The positive force of cultural emancipation is thus juxtaposed to Russia's use of military repression to 'educate' the masses within its borders about their national (Russian) consciousness.

The article 'From the History of the Czech University' ('Из истории Чешского университета', Бочковский SM 1910(2/5-6): 3-17), then, implicitly problematizes Russia's attitude towards national education. The article applauds that Prague University (founded in 1348), which initially had a strong international orientation, gradually got a more Czech character in the late middle ages. The author focuses on the decree of Kutná Hora (1409) in particular, because it ended the dominance of the German representatives in the university's board of governors. Thus “the international character [of the university] is gradually smoothed out and [the university] becomes national in terms of the content of its cultural activity”\(^{79}\). The decree facilitated, the article states, the first steps of the nationalization not only of the university, but of the education of the Czech people in general. The article's positive representation of the role of Czech (university) education played in Czech emancipation can be interpreted as an implicit critique of Russia's minority policy. In the early twentieth century, the Russian authorities consequently misuse education to enforce the Russian language and culture on the minorities within its borders (Geraci 2009: 250-255). The article forms a counterweight to such an attitude towards education in two ways. First, its emphasis on the importance of nationally inspired education vis-à-vis (allegedly) too internationally oriented education problematizes the enforced Russian education of Ukrainian, Belorussian and Polish minorities. This threatens their national integrity and jeopardizes – in line with the universal essentialism displayed in Slayvansky mir's manifesto – their (future) contribution to the Slavic world. Second, the article uses the decree of Kutná

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\(^{78}\) Когда сам увидишь воочию, что делает просвещение в стране, что значит идущая вместе с просвещением культура, то поневоле проникаешься убеждением, что государство крепнет и растет не штыками, как у нас [Русских] принято думать, а просвещением и культурой, культурой и просвещением.

\(^{79}\) [...] этот интернациональный его [университета] характер постепенно сглаживается, и он в смысле содержания своей культурной деятельности становится национальным.
Hora as proof of old, even medieval forms of successful Czech – and thus general Slavic – ‘nationalist’ agitation via education. In this way the author suggests that national activism in education is a well-tried recipe, worth a try in the struggle against unwanted influence of great powers and for a diverse Slavic world.

The behaviour of the Polish gentry in Galicia, the part of Poland that was annexed by Austria-Hungary during the Polish Partitions (1772, 1793, 1795), is called out as another example of “bad parenthood”. In the article ‘The First Decennium of the Polish University Extension’ in Galicia (‘Первое десятилетие полской University Extension в Галиции’, Бочковский SM 1910(2/9): 25-32) – written by the same author as the article on Prague University – recounts how the szlachta stubbornly resisted the attempts of Kraków University to emancipate the common man in the region:

[...] the more outspoken of the Galician magnates directly speak out against educational activities among the masses; the less outspoken ones hypocritically speak of the prematurity (!) of systematic, cultural work for the people, fearing its undesirable consequences.⁸¹ (Бочковский SM 1910-9: 25. Exclamation mark in original)

The conservative reaction of the gentry is met with little understanding in the article. The bracketed exclamation mark expresses disbelief (or even shock) in regard to the suggestion that emancipation of the masses can be considered premature in the year 1910. To the author, the reaction of the szlachta is an example of how members of the same people can indeed delay the national progress, something Slavyansky mir wants to stimulate. Implicitly the attitude of the Polish gentry in this fragment is opposed to the minority policy of Austria-Hungary in the region. In Galicia, the Dual Monarchy (contrary to Prussia and Russia, who annexed the other parts of Poland during the Partitions) allows education in the Polish language and the further development of Polish culture (Nance 2008: 4). Following Slavyansky mir’s manifesto, the actions of the Austrian authorities may be described as “just” and thus “Slavic”, whereas the position of the Polish gentry is the proof of a different, “un-Slavic” set of values (5.2: 72).

The sequel of the article, which got a slightly different title ‘Ten years of Activity of the Kraków University Extension’ (‘Десять лет деятельности краковской University Extension’, Бочковский, SM 1910(2/10-11): 26-35), seizes the opportunity to list the

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⁸⁰ A university extension is a division of an institution of higher learning that conducts educational activities for persons (usually adults) who are generally not full-time students (Britannica 2017).
⁸¹ [...] более откровенные из галицийских магнатов, прямо высказываются против просветительной деятельности среди народных масс; менее откровенные – лицемерно говорят о преждевременности (!) систематической, культурной работы для народа, опасаясь от этого нежелательных последствий.
specific activities the university organizes as a very practical example of how universities – and, thus, intellectuals – can contribute to the education and the awakening of the common people:

The Kraków “University Extension” was not limited to the organisation of systematic general educational lectures for the people, but included in the program of its activities evening school classes, courses for illiterate people, popular-scientific talks for children, special general educational and practical courses for workers, further it began the organization of mobile libraries and founded a public library and a reading room in Kraków, special seminars for the preparation of lectors for the people’s university, and finally it founded a “social archive”, an “information bureau” giving advice for those interested and engaged in self-education.82 (Бочковский SM 1910(2/10-11): 27. Italics and quotation marks in original.)

Praise for pragmatic and practical approaches to Slavic emancipation regularly occurs in Slavyansky mir. The article ‘The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the 19th Century’ for example zooms in on the concrete practical activities of the Illyrian Movement, which helped establish the use of the vernacular in both cultural (publishing houses, libraries and theatres) and official institutions (I.J.C. SM 1910-2: 2-3). The article contrasts the actual progress achieved by the Illyrian approach with the unfeasibility of other more romantic and mystic approaches of, for example, the Polish Messianists or Russian Slavophiles (Ibid.: 2). Therefore, the article calls the Illyrian Movement “the brightest, most ideal and most interesting period in the cultural life of not only the Croats, but of the South Slavs in general”83 (Ibid.). In fact, the periodical’s very first mission statement already implicitly showed a preference for pragmatism. The Czech publicist Havlíček, who is misquoted at the end of the editorial, was known as a champion of a pragmatic approach to Slavic emancipation as opposed to the vague ideas of many Slavic idealists of his time, such as Ján Kollár and Adam Mickiewicz (Mann 1961: 413).

Explicitly positive assessments of initiatives for national education such as the University Extension and the Illyrian movement show that for Slavyansky mir (cultural)...

82 [...] краковская “University Extension” не ограничилась лишь организацией систематических общеобразовательных лекций для народа, но включила в программу своей деятельности вечерние школьные занятия, курсы для безграмотных, популярно-научные беседы для детей, специальные общеобразовательные и практические курсы для рабочих, далее занялась организацией передвижных библиотек и основала публичную библиотеку и читальню в Кракове, специальных семинарии для подготовки лекторов для народного университета, наконец – основала "социальный архив", "информационное бюро" советов для интересующийся и занимающийся самообразованием.

83 [...] самый светлый, самый идеальный, самый интересный период в культурной жизни не только хорватов, но и южных славян вообще [...].
education not only is a means of oppression monopolized by the great powers and / or the national elite. Overall, the articles on national education incite minorities to resist any enforced cultural identity and instead focus on (the further development of) their own national culture(s). At several occasions, however, it appears as if the articles show a preservative attitude that actually serves as a preparation of a more open attitude towards cultural development in the future. The articles do not want that national development stands in the way of future cultural rapprochement, but actually suggest that each nation develops in order to contribute to a diverse Slavic world.

6.2 The Problem of Imitation: Western-Europe as an Example for Cultural Development

Another aspect of national development that is regularly addressed in Slavyansky mir is the cosmopolitan tendency of developing Slavic peoples to try and emulate a region with a purportedly more advanced cultural development, mainly Western Europe. Only few of these articles point out that emulating the West has a positive effect on Slavic national development. The article ‘The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the 19th Century’ for example contains a passage that suggests that the long absence of European influence in regions where Bulgarians and Serbs lived had a negative impact on the peoples’ cultural development:

Bulgarians and Serbs, who were influenced by [...] Constantinople, had to feed on its rotten cultural goods, [...] because they were still too young to create something independent, something new. After the occupation of Constantinople by the Turks [Ottomans - TG] [...] they were doomed to complete cultural vegetation [...] They had no other place to learn from: Europe was too far away.84 (Л.С. SM 1910(2/3): 17)

The passage illustrates that (at least until they had reached a certain level of development) peoples were supposed and expected to learn from, or to imitate a more

84 Болгаре и сербы, попавшие под влияние [...] Царьграда, должны были питаться его изгнившим культурным товаром, [...] так как были еще слишком юными, чтобы создать что-нибудь самостоятельное, новое. После занятия Царьграда турками [...] они были обречены на полное культурное прозябание [...] Учиться дальше было не где: Европа была слишком далеко.
developed example. It implies that the cultural deficit the Bulgarians and the Serbs experienced when they “awakened” was partly caused by the degenerative influence of the Byzantine and Ottoman empire.

Nonetheless, the consensus among the majority of Slavyansky mir’s contributors is that national culture and national artists have to transcend the status of “imitators” (“подражатели”) and have to become the “highest manifestation of its [the nation’s] enigmatic, elemental power” (Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 20-21). Many articles in Slavyansky mir problematize the Western orientation of the (educated) Slavic elites, who actually should rather act as “fathers of society” and should take the lead in national and cultural development. Like the “bad fathers” in the previous section, these Westernized intellectuals stand in the way of national development, not by oppressing it, but by hiding the cultural deficit they experience under a foreign veneer. The introduction to the 1910 article ‘On the Slovenes and their First Poet Prešeren’ (‘О Словенцах и их первом поэте Преширне’, Лесковец SM 1910(2/3): 25-27) for example addresses the impact of the age-long foreign influence in the region. The passage on the nineteenth century exposes the close relationship of many Slovene intellectuals with Austria:

Slovene scholars: Kopitar, Miklošič (Slavists), Veha (the world-famous mathematician Vega ad sidera latus), the physicist Štefan, the geometrician Leskovnik (in German Lisganik) and others enriched the German literature by publishing their work in German. Only the simple people remains. [...] It is true, many intellectuals, especially those in public service, go over to the antinationalist camp, but there are also true sons of the people. Prešeren should be considered the first among them. (Лесковец SM 1910(2/3): 26)

On the one hand, the choice of scholars to publish their works in the lingua franca of their time and region can be considered rather pragmatical. On the other hand, the message in this fragment goes further than mere linguistic convenience. The article argues that the choice to write in German meant that the scholars chose to employ their talent to develop German culture (a culture of another tribe), instead of their own. What is more, the name changes added between brackets indicate that in some cases the choice

\[\text{85} [...] \text{высшее проявление ее загадочной, стихийной силы.}\]

\[\text{86} \text{The Slovene author of the article uses a phonetic spelling of Prešeren’s name in the title. Normally the author’s name is spelled Преширен in Russian.}\]

\[\text{87} \text{Словенские ученые: Копитар, Миклошич (слависты), Веха (всемирно известный математик Vega ad sideralatus), физик Стефан, геометр Лесковник (по немецки Лисганик) и др. обогащали немецкую литературу выпуская свои сочинения на немецком языке. Остается один простой народ. [...] Правда, многие интеллигенты, особенно поступающие на государственную службу, переходят в антинациональный лагерь, но есть и верные сыны народа. Первым из них должно считать Преширена.}\]
for the German language were perceived as a more thorough identification with Austrian-German nationality and maybe even a denial of Slovene identity. Instead of the intellectuals with an “antinationalist” cultural attitude, the article clearly prefers intellectuals like Prešeren, who are rooted in the national culture that is (unconsciously) safeguarded by the people.

A similar observation of the Westernization of the Czech elite incites the author of the article ‘Contemporary Art of the Czechs’ (‘Современное искусство у чехов’, Новачинский SM 1911(3/2-3)) to suggest that it is actually a good thing that the elite shuts itself off from the masses and does not play its father role. Because of the elite’s contempt for the common Czech and his traditional culture, the first pieces of foreign art have long time remained “locked up in the galleries of a predominantly Germanized aristocracy”88 (Ibid.: 11). Ironically, the isolation and the privileges of the gentry have formed a buffer between foreign influence and the common people during its early cultural development.

Another contributor criticizes the contempt for the national culture of the masses among the Ukrainian elite. The lengthy, two-part article ‘From the History of the Development of the Ukrainian People’ (‘Из истории возрождения украинского народа’, Бочковский SM 1911(3/2-3), SM 1911(3/4-5)) gives the example of the completely “denationalized” (“денационализированный”, Бочковский SM 1911(3/4-5): 33) elite in Austrian Ukraine. The author describes how the higher educated classes not only did not try to get closer to the national element [...] but quite on the contrary completely ignored the Ukrainian masses and treated their living language with contemptuous arrogance, and deemed it unworthy for use in literature and science. [...] [T]he then Ukrainian intellectuals started to use an old, dead, macaronic language understood by few people (the so called “yazychie89” – a kind of linguistic conglomerate of the mixture of Old Slavonic, Polish, Latin, etc. words) instead of the real living speech.90 (Бочковский SM 1911(3/4-5): 33)

88 […] старое, иностранное искусство заперто в галереях замков преимущественно онемеченной аристократии.
89 Yazychie is a derogatory term used to describe the literary language used among Carpatho-Rusyns in the nineteenth and twentieth century. It was a mix of Old Church Slavonic with Russian vocabulary and the vernacular. The language was supported by the Russophiles, while the Ukrainophiles, like Boczkowski, considered it a macaronic language “that no people in the world speak” (Magocsi 2002: 205). Boczkowski’s condemnation could therefore also be read as anti-Russian criticism.
90 […] не только не пытались сблизиться с народной стихией […] но как раз наоборот, совершенно игнорировали украинские народные массы и с презрительным высокомерием относились к их живому
The attitude of the Ukrainian elites is described as an almost intentional withdrawal from all things national. Different than the Slovene Germanized intellectuals, the Ukrainian upper classes did not compensate their denationalization with Westernization, instead they covered it with an artificial veneer. The choice for the reintroduction of an unnatural, macaronic language is presented as being worse than adopting a foreign, but living language. In this way, the Austrian Ukrainian elite not only cuts and disrespects its own roots, but completely withdraws itself from reality.

Over the years, the collective of Slavyansky mir uses several terms to describe the attitude of the alienated elite. “Antinational” (“антинациональный”, Лесковец SM 1910(2/3): 26) and “denationalized” (“денационализированный”, Бочковский SM 1911(3/4-5): 33) are two telling examples from the above paragraphs. In some instances a denial of national roots or rootlessness is also described with terms like “cosmopolitan” and “cosmopolitization” (“космополит”, Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 20; “космополитизм”, Л. SM 1908(1/1): 44). The article “The Russian Language and the Slavs’ (‘Русский язык и славяне’, Л. SM 1908(1/1)), for example argues that

the so-called cosmopolitanism of the Russian youth only is evidence of the lack of national pride, and such cosmopolitanism is regrettable.91 (Л. SM 1908(1/1): 44)

A rejection of cosmopolitanism as antinationalist and rootless is a classic anti-cosmopolitan argument used by many early twentieth-century nationalist theorists (Malachuk 2007: 141). The use of the words “so-called” and “such” in the fragment however underlines that cosmopolitanism an sich is not considered a problem. The article only rejects specific cultural cosmopolitan practices, such as the imitation of Western-Europe by the Russian youth, which the article believes to threaten the national integrity.

Reversely, the article indicates that cultural nationalism without cosmopolitanism is not a good option either. This is suggested by the following remark, which is added to the same paragraph on the Russian youth: “national pride (NB: not chauvinism, but pride)92” (Л. SM 1908(1/1): 44). This remark implies that an extreme emphasis on the nation inspired by a feeling of superiority also has a negative effect on national development. Neither cosmopolitanism nor nationalism as such are considered faulty, it is the

языку, который считали недостойным для употребления в литературе и науке. [...] тогдашняя украинская интеллигенция стала употреблять старый, мертвый, мало кому понятный, макаронический язык (т. наз. "язычие" – какой то лингвистический конгломерат из смеси старославянских, польских, латинских и т.д. слов) – вместо настоящей живой речи.

91 Так называемый космополитизм русской молодежи только свидетельство об отсутствии национальной гордости, и такой космополитизм очень печален...

92 [...] национальная гордость (NB: не шовинизм, но гордость).
occurrence of cosmopolitanism without nationalism, or vice versa, that is deemed questionable. In fact, the article rejects a singular interpretation of cosmopolitanism – “cosmopolitanism as a commitment to the good of humans as a whole that overrides all smaller commitments” (Robins & Lemos Horta 2017: 9), – in favour of a more plural understanding in which national and international elements can (and should) be combined. Kaufmann considers such a combination of cultural nationalism and cultural cosmopolitanism a “schizophrenic double-consciousness”, typical for the long nineteenth century (2003: 15-18). He describes it as schizophrenic because it has led to paradoxical combinations, for example the idea that Europe needs a universal language, and simultaneously considering the own national language as uniquely suited for this task. For Slavyansky mir, however, the combination of cultural nationalism and cosmopolitanism seems to be the only valid option.

The attitude towards the nation and foreign influence is also used to assess the quality of Slavic literature, which the collective considers an important educational and emancipatory tool (cf. 7.3). The article ‘Portraits of Slavic Authors. Ivan Cankar’ initially applauds Cankar because he

raised Slovene literature (novel, short story, drama) to a high level, not as a cosmpolitan, but as an original, authentic national talent, as a Slovene author par excellence...

(Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 20)

At first glance, the article praises Cankar’s focus on the nation and repeats the anti-cosmopolitan argument of rootlessness. Like in the previous example which describes the so-called cosmopolitanism of the Russian youth, the article on Cankar nuances his apparent anti-cosmopolitanism. In the preceding paragraph Cankar is praised because he succeeds to make a synthesis of the national and the universal: “When in his soul the national idea seriously collided with the universal, the latter did not eat the former, but only deepened and ennobled it...” (Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 20). This shows that the description “authentic national talent” does not mean that Cankar avoids foreign influence. On the contrary, Cankar’s national talent is considered the greater because his literature succeeds to fuse the national and the universal, because he is able to create a rooted kind of cosmopolitanism.

93 [...] поднял словенскую литературу (роман, новеллу, драму) на высокую степень не как космополит, а как оригинальный, самобытный национальный талант, как словенский писатель par excellence.

94 Когда в его душе серьезно столкнулась национальная идея с общечеловеческой, то последняя не села первой, а только углубила, облагородила ее...
The same approach to national literature surfaces in the article ‘Lermontov and Słowacki’ (‘Лермонтов и Словацкий’, Костеж SM 1909(1/2): 25-28). Kostezh compares the authors in the title with Aleksandr Pushkin and Adam Mickiewicz. The article pivots on the question why the latter are considered “gods, giants and patriarchs of poetry, geniuses, folk bards and national poets⁵⁵”, whereas Mikhail Lermontov and Juliusz Słowacki are often only leniently called “very talented” poets (“очень талантливые”, Ibid.: 26). Initially, the article claims that if being a national poet means that he or she sings for the people, revealing the national character or using the national epic style then the two “very talented” poets should be called national as well. It even states that

in this case, Słowacki's muse, passionate and impetuous, inconsistent and full of unexpected turns, is more in line with the Polish type, than the slow, calm and smooth poetry of “the singer of Lithuania”⁵⁶.⁷⁷ (Костеж SM 1909(1/2): 27)

Just like in Cankar’s case, the assessment of artistic genius not only depends on the attitude towards the nation. The article rules that the main difference between the two couples is their attitude towards foreign influence. It tells how all four poets have followed the example of Byron, but that only the “giants” Pushkin and Mickiewicz outgrew his influence and used him merely as a stepping stone after which they followed their own nationally inspired path. Lermontov and Słowacki, however,

immediately and forever gained the name of Byronists [...] Did society not continue to confuse their independent poetry with Byronism, even after the most extreme imitation came to an end, because of their essential proximity to Byronism?⁹⁸ (Костеж SM 1909(1/2): 27)

According to these assessments, truly national authors, such as Cankar, Mickiewicz and Pushkin, are actually those authors who are able to balance cultural openness with the preservation of national cultural identity.

⁵⁵ [...] боги, кумиры, патриархи поэзии, гении, народные барды, национальные поэты.
⁵⁶ Pushkin highly appreciated the talent of Adam Mickiewicz and dedicated one of his sonnets to him. He called Mickiewicz the singer of Lithuania (Певец Литвы) as not only Poland, but also Lithuania and Belarus consider him their national poet.
⁵⁷ в таком случае муза Словацкого, страстная и порывистая, непоследовательная, полна неожиданных оборотов, более отвечает польскому типу, чем медлительная, спокойная и ровная поэзия “певца Литвы”.
⁹⁸ Напротив, за Лермонтовым и Словацким сразу и навсегда утвердилась кличка байронистов [...] Не продолжало ли общество смешивать их самостоятельную поэзию с байронизмом и после того, как кончилось внешнее подражание, – по близости ее к байронизму по существу?
Not only the literary criticism in Slavyansky mir’s publicist section shows a preference for authors who are able to balance cultural openness and their national cultural identity. Also the selection of literary translations that (usually) concludes the journal regularly reminds of this balance. The editorial board included in every issue at least one literary translation that can be interpreted as a combination of roots and foreign influence. Two short stories of the Czech writer Jaroslav Vrchlický, for example, are obvious Slavic retellings of Western and universal stories or themes. In the short story The Rose (Růže, 1886), Vrchlický (who was the first to translate The Divine Comedy into Czech) imagines how the rejection by Beatrice inspires the young Dante Alighieri to write his magnum opus (Роза, SM 1910(2/10-11): 36-41). His short story Abisag (1886), then, gives a more human and flawed version of the biblical story of King David’s bed warmer Abisag (Абисага, SM 1910(2/2): 16-22, SM 1910(2/3): 36-40). Another example from the literary section is the prose-poem King Cophetua (Крól Kofetua, 1902; Король Кофетуа, SM 1910(2/1): 22-34) written by another Czech author, Julius Zeyer. The story is inspired by the painting King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid (1884) by the pre-Raphaelite Edward Burne-Jones (who in turn was inspired by the legend with the same name). This particular story not only is a practical example of the combination of Czech literature with foreign inspiration, but also contains an explicit reference to cultural transfer. In the beginning of the short story, Zeyer explicitly describes his inspirational process (SM 1910(2/1): 22).

Equally, if not more important than the content of the above works, is the background of the authors. Both Vrchlický and Zeyer are affiliated with literary movements which emphasize the positive impact of foreign inspiration: the Czech May School (Májovci) – named after the first yearbook of the group, Máj (1858), – and its successors the Lumírovci, which gathered around the periodical Lumír (named after a bard in a Czech legend) as from 1877. Almost all other Czech authors featured in the periodical (almost every issue contains a Czech work), like Jan Neruda, Jaroslav Kvapil and Josef Sládek, are affiliated with the Májovci and/or the Lumírovci.

Adherents of the May School, like Neruda and Kvapil, were determined to improve the status of Czech as a literary language (Voisine-Jechová 2001: 325-404). They were convinced that Czech literature had to open up to Western influences to reach the same level as European literature. They were mostly inspired by Anglo-Saxon examples, especially by Byron. The Lumírovci, then, maintained the May School’s focus on foreign influence. On the one hand, the Lumírovci wanted to introduce European trends in Czech literature by translating European (mostly French) works and writing original Czech poetry and prose inspired by foreign designs. On the other hand, the writers around Lumír were regularly inspired by Slavic examples too. Vrchlický and Sládek for example are known for their translations of other Slavic authors, especially of the work of Mickiewicz. Moreover, many Lumírovci were inspired by traditional Czech folk songs (Ibid.: 353-359).
In fact, they strove for a symbiosis of original Czech literature with Western and foreign Slavic influence. The similarities between the Lumírovci’s approach to literature and Slavyansky mir’s vision of the balance between cultural openness and preservation are so striking, that it can be no coincidence that so many of these authors have been published in the periodical.

6.3 Lavrin on Cultural Development

In the years following the discontinuation of Slavyansky mir in May 1911, Lavrin himself occasionally returns to the ideas about cultural development that were disseminated by the collective. The few articles Lavrin writes in this period broach similar aspects of this topic: both national emancipation and the balance between cultural openness and national preservation recur. In particular the article ‘Czech Literature’ which he published in Bayan in July 1912, goes into these themes. Similar to many articles in Slavyansky mir, the overview of contemporary Czech literature starts with the early cultural development of the people: the rise and demise of the medieval Czech culture and the more recent Czech revival which started in the eighteenth century (Лаврин 1912б: 416-418). By emphasizing the ancient roots of Czech culture, Lavrin contributes to the legitimacy of Czech culture and the Czech nation, “one of the most culturally developed nations of Europe” (1912б: 416).

In his overview, Lavrin regularly refers to Western-European influences in Czech literature. He does not condemn the imitation of Western-European literature in the early stages of the Czech revival. Lavrin describes the literary practice of the Czech revivalists as follows:

> From the rich and lush flower garden of European literature at the end of the 18\(^{th}\) and at the beginning of the 19\(^{th}\) century, the Czechs only translate and copy what can have practical success in the matter of revival.\(^{100}\) (Лаврин 1912б: 418)

\(^{99}\) [...] одна из культурнейших нации в Европе.

\(^{100}\) Из богатого и пышного цветника европейской литературы чехи в конце 18, и в начале 19 века переводят и копируют лишь то, что может иметь практический успех в деле возрождения. под
Lavrin’s word choice in a small overview of these imitative works: “fantastic chivalric romances with ghosts, wizards, witches and similar nonsense” seems to suggest that Lavrin, although he approves of the imitation, regrets that the Czechs did not copy other (less commercial, more literary) genres (Лаврин 1912б: 418). Also when he addresses the oeuvre of more contemporary Czech authors such as Julius Zeyer and Jaroslav Vrchlický, he applauds their attention to European literature and their efforts to enrich “the Czech poetry with excellent translations of the best poets of world literature” (Ibid.: 429).

Nevertheless, like the contributors to Slavyansky mir, Lavrin does not approve of mere imitation in later stages of cultural and literary development. When he describes the oeuvre of the aforementioned contemporary Czech authors, he each time emphasizes how their work transcends the practice of imitation and showcases a balance between foreign influence and national roots. Lavrin for example admits that Vrchlický has adopted some of the bad habits of his example Victor Hugo (e.g. verbosity and bombast), but he adds that “because of this the Czech language and the Czech verse reach under his pen an unprecedented virtuosity, sonority and elasticity” (Лаврин 1912б: 429). In some cases, Lavrin underlines that Czech literature no longer only functions as the receiving party, but actually has become an example influencing other literatures, thus pointing at forms of cultural reciprocity. When he describes Zeyer’s work, Lavrin points out that the author not only was inspired by Western-European literature, but in turn became an influence for Polish literature (Ibid.: 432). Also when he addresses Božena Nemcova, Lavrin underlines the influence of Czech literature on other, even Western-European literatures, by remarking that one of her books, The Grandmother (Babička, 1855) is translated “in almost all European languages” (Лаврин 1912б: 422).

Another practice of Slavyansky mir that recurs in the article ‘Czech Literature’ is observing the attitude of an author towards foreign influence as a way to assess literary quality. Using arguments that are almost identical to those in the article ‘Lermontov and Słowacki’ by Kostezh (SM 1909(1/2): 25-28) – which shows that he not only recycled the texts of Lev Savin, L.S., or L. – Lavrin compares the works of Jan Neruda and Vítěslav Hálek. Lavrin argues that contemporaries of Neruda and Hálek considered the latter the main Czech national poet of their time because of the clearly Czech themes in his works.

101 [...] фантастические рыцарские романы с привидениями, волшебниками, ведьмами и т.. Галиматьей [...].
102 [...] чешскую поэзию он обогатил прекрасными переводами лучших поэтов всемирной литературы.
103 [...] зато чешский язык и чешский стих под его пером достигают небывалой виртуозности, звучности и эластичности.
104 [...] почти на все европейские языки.
(1912: 425). Neruda, on the other hand, addressed more abstract, universal topics, which made him appear less Czech and more European in the eyes of contemporaries (ibid.). Lavrin has a different opinion. He tells how both Czech authors have been influenced by the works of Heinrich Heine: Neruda “soon overcame him and went further on his own path”\textsuperscript{105}, but Hálek was unable to “work out an independent, integral literary personality”\textsuperscript{106} (Лаврин 1912: 424). In Lavrin’s eyes, Neruda (like Mickiewicz and Pushkin in the article in \textit{Slavyansky mir}) succeeded to enrich the national literature with foreign influence, whereas Hálek’s style, never outgrowing Heine, is rather Westernized. Therefore Lavrin explicitly describes Neruda’s work as more authentically Czech:

Despite the “cosmopolitanism” of which Neruda was once accused, his work bears the imprint of racial typicality, which by an inner necessity escaped from his soul. He is much deeper, much more typical than Hálek.\textsuperscript{107} (Лаврин 1912: 424-425)

In 1913, Lavrin returns to the theme of cultural openness and preservation in his essay ‘The Slavic Problem and the Artistic-Literary Rapprochement’ (Лаврин 2011 [1913]: 128-139). In this essay he describes some guidelines for contemporary cultural exchange. Lavrin repeats \textit{Slavyansky mir}’s critique of the Westernized Slavic elite, now represented by the “Russian intelligent”:

The Russian intelligent is a cultural eunuch: in his servile courtship of Europe, he depersonalized himself so much, that he lost every organic, living connection to his people and thus made himself sterile, that is, he became “superfluous” not only for his nation, but also for humanity... Humanity does not need workers like that, it passes them by...\textsuperscript{108} (Лаврин 2011 [1913]: 190-191)

With this remark, Lavrin not only problematizes the practice of replacing national culture with a European veneer. He also repeats the universal essentialism and the need for a gradual development and rapprochement of the (Slavic) world that come to the fore in \textit{Slavyansky mir}’s manifesto. Lavrin maintains the idea of a (culturally) united humanity

\textsuperscript{105} [...] скоро преодолел его и пошел дальше собственным путем.
\textsuperscript{106} [...] выработать из себя самостоятельную и цельную литературную индивидуальность.
\textsuperscript{107} Не смотря на "космополитизм", в котором обвиняли Неруду одно время, его творчество по внутренней необходимости вырвалось из его души, носит на себе отпечаток расовой типичности. Он куда глубже, куда типичнее Галека.
\textsuperscript{108} Русский интеллигент - культурный евнух: в своем лакейском ухаживании за Европой он настолько обезличил себя, что утерял всякую органическую, живую связь со своим народом и этим обеспечил себя, т.е. стал "лишним" не только для своей нации, но и для человечества... Человечество в таких работниках не нуждается, оно проходит мимо них...
that becomes richer through national development. Just like *Slavyansky mir*, Lavrin considers what Kaufmann has labeled “schizophrenic double-consciousness” the only valid option for a cultural synthesis: cosmopolitanism without nationalism is deemed sterile. Because of this, Lavrin advises Slavic nations to only use other cultures as an inspiration – even other Slavic nations - when it will benefit their national development:

Every Slavic nation should ask itself outright: what is the benefit for me to participate in the all-Slavic rapprochement? Does it give anything to my culture? If yes, then it makes sense, otherwise it does not make any sense at all.109 (Лаврин 2011 [1913]: 190)

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Chapter 7  National Diversity and Supra-National Unity: The Problem of a ‘Universal Culture’

Slavyansky mir and Lavrin are critical of the Westernized intellectual elites because they deem them incapable to lead the Slavic masses towards a cultural development with respect for the national traditions (unconsciously) kept by those masses. Although the article ‘Contemporary Czech Art’ indicates that the distance between the elite(s) and the people(s) can sometimes serve as a protective buffer against westernization (cf. 6.2), Lavrin and the collective of Slavyansky mir in general believe that the lack of national leadership is a threat for the national integrity of each Slavic nation and of the diversity of the Slavic world as a whole. This chapter addresses yet another uniformizing trend in the Slavic world, which Lavrin and the periodical’s collective discern – a trend that is reinforced by the elite’s incapability to take up its leading role. Lavrin and Slavyansky mir claim that the lack of national leadership weakens the Slavic masses and leaves them more vulnerable for repression by the “strongest neighbours” about which the periodical’s 1909 mission statement warns (cf. 5.1).

In its pages, Slavyansky mir pays a lot of attention to the ways in which Russia, Austria-Hungary, and even Prussia manage the diversity within their supra-national states. Several articles in the periodical criticize the minority policies these neighbours have adopted. The articles point out aspects of the national and international policy of the European great powers that hinder both the national integrity and national development of the Slavic peoples and the solidarity among them (an important condition for Slavic unity, in Slavyansky mir’s eyes). By exploring the periodical’s reaction to different forms of diversity management, this chapter goes deeper into the interpretations of unity that prevail in the periodical. In the first two sections, the chapter investigates which minority policies Slavyansky mir criticizes. In the third section it tackles the alternative ways to manage cultural diversity that are suggested in the periodical. Just like the previous chapter, this chapter concludes with a closer look at how Lavrin comes back to this theme after the discontinuation of Slavyansky mir.
7.1 Illiberal Forms of Unity

The articles in *Slavyansky mir* that address the danger coming from the European great powers neighbouring the Slavic world at first glance make no difference between the danger coming from the East and the West\(^\text{110}\): both parties are dispraised because they repress and assimilate the Slavic minorities within their borders. However, the dispraise for the Western and the Eastern threat seems to be used differently. Articles that tackle the minority policy of Austria-Hungary and Prussia, generally appear to incite a feeling of Slavic unity vis-à-vis the Western-European tribe. The article ‘The Russian Language and the Slavs’ for example sketches a history in which the Slavs usually served as “nourishment” (“пища”) to feed “political octopuses like Austria\(^\text{111}\)” (Л. SM 1908(1/1): 44). The article points to the Prussian tactics to make the region of Poznan less Polish and at Austria-Hungary’s use of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a colony – even before the annexation (Ibid.). Opposite to this presentation of Slavic peoples as victims, the author places the idea of a bulwark of Slavic peoples that “reach out to each other in collaboration for the best future\(^\text{112}\)” (Л. SM 1908(1/1): 44).

The same happens in the article ‘The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century’. It uses historical examples to condemn how the Habsburg authorities have hampered Slavic emancipation at several occasions. The article for example points to the Counter-Reformation in the seventeenth century when “the Austrian gendarmes searched the Czech huts, burning every Czech book\(^\text{113}\)” (Л.С. SM 1910(2/1): 1). The article also calls out the detrimental effect of the ‘divide and rule’-strategy of the Austrian Empire. It explains how Austria pretended to support different Slavic national movements in order to prevent cooperation between them. Special attention goes to the ways in which this Austrian meddling has neutralized the success of the Illyrian movement after pitting the Croatians and the Hungarians against each other in 1848 (Л.С. SM 1910(2/2): 3). By reminding the readership of this behaviour in the past, and by emphasizing that “also now, Austria still tries to fire up the enmity among kin\(^\text{114}\)”, this article, just like the previous one, provokes a sense of Slavic solidarity.

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\(^{110}\) *Slavyansky mir* hardly ever mentions the influence of the Ottoman Empire on the Slavic minorities, and never really addresses it as a threat for Slavic identity. This may be related to the fact that several Slavic nations, like Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia, successfully seceded from the Empire in the nineteenth century.

\(^{111}\) […] политикеские спруты в роде Австрии [...].

\(^{112}\) протянут друг другу руки в совместной работе для лучшего будущего.

\(^{113}\) [...] австрийские жандармы обыскивали чешские хаты, сожигая всякую чешскую книгу.

\(^{114}\) Австрия и теперь все еще старается раздувать эту родственную вражду.
Slavyansky mir’s critique of the Russian minority policy, then, does not seem to stimulate Slavic unity, but, conversely, exposes how unity among kin can also be too far-reaching. The reference to Havlíček in the editorial of 1908, the critique of the unjust or “un-Slavic” behaviour of the Russian state in the 1911 manifesto and the objection against Russia’s misuse of education already (indirectly) problematized the uniformizing tendencies of the Russian Empire. In the same vein, several articles in the periodical elaborate on this problematic attitude of the largest member of the Slavic tribe. The topic plays an especially prominent role in the periodical’s assessment of the second Neo-Slavic congress, organized in Sofia in July 1910. (And this assessment probably significantly impacted the collective’s renunciation of Neo-Slavism in the manifesto, which was published a couple of months after the congress).

In 1910 and 1911, Slavyansky mir prints no less than seven items on the Neo-Slavic movement and the Sofia Congress. Some members of the collective, among others Pogodin and Bekhterev, have participated in the movement and the congress as progressive members of the Russian delegation and in these articles they give their account of the events. On the one hand, they explain why they believe in the Neo-Slavic take on Slavic unity which, it needs to be mentioned, was initially based on liberal tenets: “the Prague formula of Neo-Slavism: freedom, equality and brotherhood” (Бехтерев SM 1911(3/1): 10). Bekhterev and Pogodin applaud the very practical initiatives to stimulate Slavic rapprochement and exchange which they heard being discussed during the congress. Among other things, they mention the organisation of Slavic academic congresses and Slavic student associations, but also more ambitious plans like the

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116 The second Neo-Slavic congress was organized in an atmosphere of disunion. The pursuit of more Slavic rapprochement that dominated the first congress in 1908 was mitigated by friction among reactionary and progressive delegates, discord about the deterioration of Polish-Russian relations and different attitudes towards the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which could be interpreted both as an increase of the Slavic minority within the borders of Austria-Hungary and as a threat for the Slavic world (Višný 1977: 125-167).

117 [...] пражская формула неoslавизма: свобода, равенство и братство.
establishment of a Slavic book business or the building of a train trajectory connecting all Slavic countries (Погодин SM 1910(2/3): 2; Бехтерев SM 1910(2/10-11): 12-13). On the other hand, the accounts of both participants to the congress show that they see their dream of a liberal united Slavic world thwarted by ‘illiberal interpretations’ of Slavic unity, which, in their view, are being disseminated by the many conservative ‘chauvinistic’ members of the Russian delegation. Pogodin even explains that he attended the congress to show there are other Russian voices than those of the ‘ultranationalist’ “Purishkeviches and Markovs” (“Пуришкевичи и Марковы”) of the Russian state duma who took part in the movement and the congress (Погодин, SM 1910(2/9): 9).

Russia’s alleged illiberal interpretation of Slavic unity gets a lot of attention in the articles on the Sofia congress because of the absence of the Polish delegation. The Poles, who were initially attracted to the movement because it promised a normalization of the relations with Russia, announced in early 1910 that they would boycott the congress because of Russia’s increasingly repressive behaviour in the region (Višný 1977: 169). Both Bekhterev and Pogodin condemn Russia’s asocial and illiberal attitude in the pages of Slavyansky mir. Bekhterev blames Russia in a rather covert way by generally stating that “at congresses we must incessantly repeat that every violation of the rights of any of the Slavic peoples, […] only divides the Slavic peoples” (Бехтерев SM 1911(3/1): 10).

Pogodin is more explicit and specific in his remarks, for instance when he describes how many Russian Neo-Slavs in his view deliberately misinterpret the liberal tenets of the movement:

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118 Višný’s detailed overview of the Sofia Congress mentions the discord among the reactionary and progressive members of the Russian delegation, who especially quarrelled about the status of minorities within the Russian Empire (1977: 149).

119 Vladimir Purishkevich was a member of the State Duma. He was the leader of the Union of the Archangel Michael, one of the associations that formed the Black Hundred (Чёрная сотня) a reactionary, ultra-nationalist movement noted for an extremist promotion of Uvarov’s “Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality”. They were responsible for several anti-Semitic pogroms and were known for their anti-Ukrainian sentiment. Among contemporaries, Purishkevich was known for his offensive political style.

120 Nikolay Markov (Markov II) was the leader of the Union of the Russian People, another association that gathered under the banner of the Black Hundred. He is mentioned as one of the most gifted speakers in the State Duma. He is known for his advocacy for the leading role of the Russian people within the Russian empire, actively opposing the autonomy of other peoples within the Empire.

121 На съездах же мы должны неумолкаемо повторять, что всякое варушение прав кого-бы то ни было из славянских народов, [...] тем самым только разъединяет славянские народы.
[... they [members of the Russian delegation] indicated, that with this Prague programme everything can remain very quietly in place: Poles could be persecuted in Russia, when one refers to the fact that they persecute Russians in Galicia. The principle of equality of the Slavic peoples could not be applied to the Ukrainians, because, as the Galician members of the congress [all were Russians who lived in Galicia] repeated over and over again, 'Ukrainstvo' was invented by the Poles, and the Russian people represents a perfect unity.]

In the last sentence of the fragment, Pogodin criticizes how Russia’s imperialism obstructs the national development of other Slavic peoples by denying claims of minority identity like *Ukrainstvo*, by opposing this to the illiberal ideal of Russia’s “perfect unity”, which implies an alleged homogeneity and uniformity within the empire’s borders, and by clinging to the perceived superiority of the Russian culture. Pogodin’s description of Russia’s attitude actually shows an aversion of what Bodin would call a universalizing, normative interpretation of cosmopolitanism (2018: 13): in the vast Russian empire, the cultural and political norms emanating from the centre overshadow local differences.

Contributors to *Slavyansky mir* not only problematize how conservative members of Russian society justify the violation of minority rights on the grounds of an idealized homogenous unity. The collective notes – and condemns – a similar discourse among the progressive, internationally oriented actors in the country. A review of the periodical *Ukrainian Hut*, written by a certain N.E., who explicitly states he writes in the name of *Slavyansky mir*, for example eagerly cites a fragment that tackles Marxist cosmopolitan propaganda:

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122 [...] они показали, что с этой пражской программой все может остаться преспокойно на прежних местах: поляков можно было преследовать в России, ссылаясь на то, что они преследуют русских в Галиции. Принцип равноправия славянских народов можно было не применять к украинцам, потому что, как об этом твердили галицкие члены съезда, украинство было выдумано поляками, а русский народ представляет совершенное единство.

123 *Ukrainstvo* is the idea of an independent Ukrainian culture, history and state which grows and becomes well established by the end of the nineteenth century. It challenges Russia’s idea that Ukrainian history and culture – Ukraine was often dubbed ‘Little Russia’ at the time – is part of a common Russian culture. Russian authorities labelled the ideas as unfounded, artificial and treacherous and saw it as a threat for the cultural and territorial integrity of Russia (Miller 2003: 39).

124 The idea that the Russian empire had a conscious, consistent and long-lasting policy of Russification needs to be nuanced. The strategies used varied enormously and depended on the empire’s economic and political interests and needs. Nevertheless, the government did use language policies to establish Russian as a superior language and to maintain dominance in the region, especially in the Polish borderlands (Pavlenko 2011: 331).
Russian Marxist literature and activists, preaching “cosmopolitanism”, tell the Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Belarussian, etc. worker, *to give up anything native and to become imbued with universal culture*. But what is this universal culture? What does all of this mean? Here is what: throw away the native, the Ukrainian etc. and take up the Great Russian or the Polish. They could not say it otherwise, because, after all, *there is no such thing as culture outside of any nation.* [...] this whole “cosmopolitanism” is only a toga, in which the assimilators are dressed...¹²⁵ (H.E. SM 1910(2/12): 22. Italics in original)

This fragment unmasks the Marxist take on cosmopolitanism as a veil for cultural uniformization and assimilation, and therefore presents it as a form of imperialism (note the sartorial reference to the Roman empire). The use of quotation marks in the fragment again indicates that the author (and the collective) do not agree with this interpretation of cosmopolitanism. In fact, he does not agree with two different interpretations of cosmopolitanism. First and foremost, the author rejects the possibility of a rootless universal culture, which is in line with the periodical’s rejection of imitation as outlined in the previous chapter. Moreover, like Pogodin, N.E. does not support any forms of imperial universalizing cosmopolitanism as they emanate from a feeling of superiority. Regardless of political orientations, N.E., writing in name of the collective, rejects uniformizing practices that stem from the conviction that one’s own national culture is so superior that it has to be spread as a universal one by means of a kind of *mission civilatrice*.

### 7.2 When Imperialisms Meet

The criticism of *Slavyansky mir’s* collective on the way in which great powers manage their culturally and ethnically diverse states in the previous section shows an overall aversion to imposed homogeneity, whether it originates from a Western or from a Slavic neighbour. Other contributors pay attention to another aspect of the assimilatory

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¹²⁵ Российские марксистские литературы и деятели, проповедуя “космополитизм”, говорят украинскому, литовскому, белорусскому etc работнику, чтобы тот отказался от всего своего родного и пропитался обще человеческой культурой. А что же это за обще человеческая культура? Что все это значит? А вот что: бросай свое родное, украинское etc и берись за великорусское или польское. Иначе они и не могли-бы сказать, потому что, ведь, нет такой культуры, которая бы стояла вне всякой нации. [...] весь же “космополитизм” есть лишь тога, в которую облекаются подобные ассимиляторы...
practices of “the strongest neighbours”. They go deeper into the dynamics between the imperialist behaviour of both sides and the consequences for the Slavic minorities that are squeezed between them. This problem is mainly addressed in the article ‘Pan-Germanism in Russia and Congress Poland’ (‘Пангерманизм в России и в Царстве Польском’), by the now unknown author Grzybowski, that appeared in three parts between March and September 1910 (Гржибовский SM 1910(2/3): 3-7, SM 1910(2/4): 3-6, SM 1910(2/9): 19-25).

At first glance, it seems as if the author’s main intention is to map the influence of Austria and, mainly, Germany in the Slavic world and the empires’ strategies to expand their borders in Eastern direction: a foreign threat for the integrity of the Slavic world. The article opens with a short description of the German-speaking threat in Central Europe, which is strikingly similar to the introductory description in ‘The Russian Language and the Slavs’. The description refers to the assimilation of the Poles in Poznan and to the latest culmination of German expansionism “which ended with a magnificent final chord – from German point of view, of course, – the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Гржибовский SM 1910(2/3): 3). This and other explicit examples of German imperialism at the beginning of the article serve as a reminder of incidents that have caused public indignation in the (recent) past. With this image of Germany as the enemy the author sets the tone for the remainder of the article, which is devoted to the danger of German immigrants in the Russian empire. Using figures and anecdotes, the article illustrates how the German authorities support German emigration as a kind of colonisation of the Slavic lands and have succeeded to silently build an armed German corridor in Congress Poland (Гржибовский SM 1910(2/3): 4-5, SM 1910(2/4): 3-6).

Importantly, the author mainly ascribes the success of German expansionism (“Pan-Germanism”) to Russia’s own chauvinism and domestic policy. Grzybowski points to two “new” Russian flaws: ignorance caused by a feeling of superiority and a hypocritical attitude towards minorities. First, he contradicts the arrogant belief of many Russians that German immigrants have voluntarily adopted the Russian culture and have become “good Russian patriots” (“добрыми российскими патриотами”, Гржибовский SM 1910(2/3): 4). Instead, Grzybowski emphasizes the strong ties between the immigrants and the German authorities. He for example speaks of

126 [...] закончившегося великолепным с немецкой, конечно, точки зрения, финальным аккордом – аннексией Боснии и Герцеговины.

127 In 2005 the edited volume Heimat Abroad explored the role of Germans outside the homeland within German history. The editors to the volume argue “that Germans in the geographical periphery have remained at the centre of German territorial ambitions, foreign policy and even national identity” (O’Donnell et al. 2005: 3).
the unmistakeable connection of the German colonists with Berlin, which gives instructions, encourages and in every way possible supports the desire of the German colonists to turn the Kingdom of Poland and southwestern Russia into “Neudeutschland”! (Гржибовский SM 1910(2/4): 5)

The author describes the German immigrants as “colonists”, who not only establish an important German presence in Slavic territory, but also bring German culture and habits – “their own clubs, societies, theatres and their own press”, with them to their new homeland. The wish to turn the region into a new Germany, not only territorially but also culturally, shows how also colonization, next to assimilation and repression, can be considered as a form of normative universalising cosmopolitanism: the German immigrant crosses borders not to meet the cultures of other nations, but to give other nations the opportunity to meet the allegedly superior German culture. The author moreover suggests that Russia is blind for the imperialist behaviour of the German immigrants because of its own belief in the superiority and universality of Russian culture.

Second, the author illustrates that the success of the German colonists in the Russian borderlands is facilitated and encouraged by an ambiguous attitude of the Russian authorities towards different cultures in its sphere of influence. He mainly compares Russia’s repressive attitude towards the Poles and its tolerant attitude towards the German immigrants. One of the many illustrations the author puts forward concerns the different attitudes towards national education:

Here [in Congress Poland] German school develops completely free and blossoms a lush flower with many petals for the glory and benefit of “dear Germany”... [...] but let also the children of the Polish people in the Polish land be given the opportunity to learn the alphabet in their own language! (Гржибовский SM 1910(2/9): 19-21)
Moreover, Grzybowski tells how the German press is allowed to complain about the Poles, but how the Polish newspapers “are fined or suspended” (“штрафуется или приостанавливается”) when these do the same thing about the Germans (Гржибовский SM 1910(2/9): 22). What is more, he complains, while the Germans are allowed to sport national flags and insignias like the Prussian cross, the Poles are not even allowed to sing their national anthem (Ibid.: 24).

The accusations in the article correspond with Slavyansky mir’s general orientation. Russia’s minority policy in Congress Poland benefits German “outlanders” and hinders the Poles who actually belong to the very same Slavic tribe. In fact, the article suggests that the Germans are treated in ways that the collective of Slavyansky mir actually considers just. Like the Boers in South Africa, the Germans in Congress Poland are allowed to retain their own language and culture (5.2: 72). Using the same wording as the manifest ‘The Slavic Idea and Us’, one could say that the Russian policy towards the Germans could be called “Slavic”, whereas Russia’s attitude towards the Poles is not “Slavic” at all. In fact, the article is a practical example of how Slavyansky mir assesses the consequences of an illiberal, universalizing view on Slavic unity: (1) it jeopardizes a positive connection with the minority, in this case the Polish minority, (2) it hinders the development of minority culture and simultaneously the enrichment of Slavic culture as a whole, and (3) it makes a minority susceptible for and maybe even inclined towards unilateral influence by other, non-Slavic great powers. Although the main focus of the article is the threat of German imperialism, it nonetheless chiefly criticises Russia’s policy in the region. Implicitly, the article suggests that a policy aimed at establishing a positive relationship between Russia and Poland and at reinforcing the Polish identity, a policy based on mutual respect instead of repression, has the potential to create a stronger bulwark against Pan-Germanism.

The interplay between German and Russian expansionism is addressed in one more article. ‘Who is with Us’ (‘Кто с нами?’, Ефстифеев SM 1911(3/2-3): 1-3), written by a certain Efstifeyev, appeared a month after Slavyansky mir’s collective presented its “creed” in ‘The Slavic Idea and Us’. ‘Who is with Us?’ urges the readership to follow the periodical’s take on Slavic unity. The article (again) identifies the imperial ambitions coming from the East and the West as the main threats of that unity. Instead of merely rejecting them, the article invites supporters of these ambitions to transform them in other forms of unity that would contribute to the Slavic world and humanity in a positive way. First, it tackles Russia’s false sense of superiority:

Many Russians sincerely, though mistakenly, cultivate the conviction that “Russian” and “universalist” are synonyms. […] we are afraid that those of our Russian readers, who share this delusion and at the same time, as it happens,
despite their all-comprehensive “universality” know nothing or almost nothing about their closest geographical neighbours and linguistic relatives.\textsuperscript{132} (Ефстифеев SM 1911(2/2-3): 1-2)

In other words, as long as Russia’s ambitions are aimed at building an exclusive, homogeneous Russian empire and not at an inclusive, diverse Slavic world, as long as it willingly ignores and remains isolated from its Slavic ‘siblings’, Russia will never belong to the universal mankind it thinks to be leading. Instead, as the article implies, Russians who are “with Us”, i.e. who support Slavyansky mir’s call for diversity and adopt a minority policy that enables this, can positively contribute to the universal culture of the future.

Efstifeyev’s assessment of Pan-Germanism follows the same line. Instead of an aggressive, assimilatory German expansionism, the article pleads for a “noble” (“благородный”) kind of Pan-Germanism, a “spiritual unification of all Germans\textsuperscript{133}”, a cultural union which eventually “has a healthy ennobled union with the great Slavic world as its aim\textsuperscript{134}” (Ефстифеев, СМ 1911(3/2-3): 2). In other words, non-Slavic imperialism can be tolerated as long as it is “with Us”: aimed at an inclusive (in this case) German world, not jeopardizing unions of a higher union in the future.

7.3 Liberal forms of Unity

Slavyansky mir not only publishes articles that problematize the contemporary minority policy of the European great powers, but also several articles that propose alternative approaches to manage diversity within the Slavic world, i.e. in a liberal and inclusive way. Vis-à-vis the normative and universalizing cosmopolitanism – the idea of a homogeneous supra-national constellation – it ascribes to the empires at the borders of the Slavic world, the collective places what Bodin would call heterogenizing kinds of cosmopolitanism, which do not impose one cultural identity within the supra-national constellation, but allow and encourage diversity and transfer between the different cultures (2018). Central in these proposals is the idea that a unified Slavic world should both protect and empower

\textsuperscript{132} Многие русские искренне, хотя и ошибочно, воспитывают в себе убеждение, что “русский” и “всечеловек” – синонимы. […] мы опасаемся что те из наших русских читателей, которые разделяют это заблуждение и в то же время, как водится не смотря на свою всеобъемлющую “всечеловечность”, ничего или почти ничего не знают о своих ближайших соседях по территории и родственниках по языку.

\textsuperscript{133} […] духовное единение всех немцев.

\textsuperscript{134} […] с целью здорового, облагороженного союза с великим миром славянства.
the peoples that it encompasses. One of the contributors to Slavyansky mir expresses this strikingly in his description of the cultural growth stimulated by the Illyrian movement. The contributor points to the important connection between the struggle for national emancipation and the unification of the Slavic world:

[...] it is remarkable that parallel with the national consciousness of every people, also the tribal consciousness of all Slavs grew... The latter [tribal consciousness], as a matter of fact, was the beacon that shone during the persecution and victimization of those who worked for a happier future of the enslaved Slavic peoples.135 (J.L.C. SM 1910(2/2): 2)

According to the fragment, the development of a loyalty to the overarching Slavic world in whatever form, should not oppose national emancipation. Quite on the contrary, loyalty to Slavdom and to the nation are presented as equivalent, simultaneous and interacting processes. The contributor characterizes the effort of the Illyrian movement as a combination of cultural nationalism and cultural cosmopolitanism, a combination which Kaufmann, as we saw in the previous chapter, would label as “schizophrenic double-consciousness” (2003: 16-20). The question remains whether this double-consciousness really is schizophrenic for Slavyansky mir: (1) the collective believes that universal culture will be enriched by the development of all cultures. Moreover, (2) the collective supposes that Slavic groupness makes it more feasible for the separate Slavic minorities to resist the dominant great powers. It envisions a Slavic world that is pluralistic and that enables difference.

As Slavyansky mir in the first place is a literary periodical, the proposals for a pluralistic and enabling Slavic world in its pages are related first and foremost to literature and language. These proposals usually start from the periodical’s rather essentialist Herderian take on national consciousness. The collective maintains that the vernacular language is “the most valuable asset of each national group”136* (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 4). The review of the Belorussian periodical Our Grainfield puts this even more explicitly:

In name of the principle of democracy and in name of the principle of equality, [we believe that one has] the right to consider his language as a language, like any other people, one cannot declare to any people: your language is not a language, but only

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135 Но замечательно то, что параллельно с национальным сознанием каждой народности росло и племенное самосознание всех славян... Последнее, собственно говоря, явилось тем маяком, который светил во время всех гонений и преследовании тем, кто работали для более счастливого будущего закабаленных славянских народностей.
136* [...] наиболее ценным достоянием каждой национальной группы [...].
a “patois” which should disappear, you are not a people, but only a half-finished blank, from which you can become part of another people.\textsuperscript{137} (H.E. SM 1910(2/12): 17)

For the collective, respecting and/or encouraging linguistic diversity is a most important manifestation of respecting national identity.

**An Inter-Slavic Diplomatic Language**

*Slavyansky mir*’s promotion of pluralistic forms of unity comes first to the fore in discussions about the need for an international language in the Slavic world. In the very first issue of the periodical the article ‘The Russian Language and the Slavs’ problematizes that, quite ironically, international Slavic gatherings in practice often use German as *lingua franca* (Л. SM 1908(1/1): 44). This criticism is in line with the periodical’s disapproval of the Westernization of national Slavic elites (cf. 6.2). The use of German as an international language within the Slavic world, however, brings another dimension to the problem: the Slavic elites not only use a Western language in their pursuits for a better connection with the West, but also when they actually strive for the opposite (at least in their eyes), a rapprochement within the Slavic world. The article argues that the Slavic world urgently needs “an inter-Slavic diplomatic language\textsuperscript{138}” to bridge the differences between the Slavs and to show their unity vis-à-vis the Western world (Л. SM 1908(1/1): 44). The article assesses several contemporary attempts to select or even to create such an inter-Slavic language: it addresses among others Polish, Czech, Russian, Serbian, Church Slavonic, but also an artificial language created by the Czech Ignaz Hošek\textsuperscript{139} (Л. SM 1908(1/1): 45). Eventually, the article argues that Russian would be the most pragmatic choice because it already takes in an inter-Slavic position, which

\textsuperscript{137} [...] во имя принципа демократизма, во имя принципа равноправия, иметь такое же право считать свой язык языком, как и всякий другой народ, никакому народу нельзя заявить: твой язык не язык, а лишь "патуа", которое должно исчезнуть, ты сам не народ, а лишь полуобработанная болванка, из которой ты можешь стать частью другого народа [...].

\textsuperscript{138} [...] междуславянский дипломатический язык [...].

\textsuperscript{139} In 1907, Hošek wrote his *Grammatik der neuslavischen Sprache* in which he proposed an artificial language, like Esperanto, made to facilitate the communication among Slavs in the Dual Monarchy. He was the first to propose the use of the name “Interslavic”, the name that is currently used for new initiatives for the creation of a overarching Slavic language (Рупосова 2012: 55).
was proven by the last All-Slavic Congress [the first Neo-Slavic congress in 1908 – T.G.], where the delegates of all Slavic peoples spoke to each other almost exclusively in Russian. Does the lively attention to the Russian language, the Russian people and literature, which has begun to awaken among all Western and South-Slavic youth, not prove this as well?140 (I.I. SM 1908(1/1): 45)

This positive attitude towards Russian as an inter-Slavic language only occurs in the first volume of Slavyansky mir. As from 1910, when the collective takes in an openly anti-Russian position (cf. 5.1), Russian is no longer considered or mentioned as a possible inter-Slavic diplomatic language. In December 1910, Esperanto is briefly mentioned as a possible international language (H.E. SM 1910(2/12): 22). Importantly, the most significant argument for the use of this artificial language, is its harmlessness: it “does not at all claim to replace the native language, and therefore cannot do this”141” (Ibid.). The perceived harmlessness of Esperanto is what sets it apart from Yaziche in Ukraine, which is interpreted as a replacement of the vernacular language. It is also an important argument for no longer considering Russian as a potential inter-Slavic language. Given its harsh critique of Russia’s minority policy in the borderlands, the collective probably would no longer describe Russian as “harmless” at all: promoting Russian as an inter-Slavic language would be tantamount to supporting Russia’s alleged ideal of a uniform, homogeneous unity.

In 1911, the collective of Slavyansky mir formulates its final point of view on an inter-Slavic diplomatic language in ‘The Slavic Idea and Us’. The primary criteria for its assessment are pragmatism, harmlessness, and above all neutrality. First, mirroring Havlíček’s argument about linguistic diversity (cf. 5.1), the manifesto emphasizes that the Slavic languages, despite the many similarities discovered by linguists, are essentially different:

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140 доказал последний всеславянский съезд, где делегаты славянских народов объяснялись друг с другом почти исключительно на русском языке. Не доказывает ли этого и то живое внимание к русскому языку, русскому народу и литературе, которое стало пробуждаться у всей западной и южной-славянской молодежи за время последних лет?
141 [...] совсем не претендует заменить родной язык, так как и не может того сделать.
Slavic languages are relatively closer to each other than Roman or German languages, but their closeness is only visible and tangible for a specialist of Slavic linguistics, and by no means for the average Slav.\textsuperscript{142} (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 4)

In other words, the linguistic homogeneity as perceived by academics is too abstract: a Serbian farmer could easily understand his Slovene colleague, but would have a difficult time communicating with a Polish traveller, and vice versa. Second, the collective adds that “none of the Slavic languages can play the role of a common Slavic language without causing significant damage to entire significant groups of Slavdom\textsuperscript{143}” (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 4). This is related to the fact that some languages have closer linguistic ties, which would mean a practical disadvantage for some Slavic peoples, but it is also related to historical and contemporary tensions between some Slavic groups – here, first and foremost, the relationship between Russia and its minorities comes to mind.

Instead of choosing one inter-Slavic language, the collective draws up two practical guidelines for future inter-Slavic communication:

1) mutual acquaintance, linked to the study of each-other's languages and cultures,
2) the introduction of a neutral inter-Slavic language to use at meetings of persons of different nationalities, even if we [the participants – T.G.] belong to the same (Slavic) group.\textsuperscript{144} (N.N. SM 1911-1: 4. Italics in original)

Both measures allow to bridge the communication gap and to stimulate Slavic unification while respecting national diversity and thus promoting a heterogeneous unity. Additionally, also the second guideline, which suggests the need for a kind of linguistic homogeneity, actually proposes to adopt one neutral, artificial language (in certain situations) in order to safeguard the equality among the different, natural Slavic languages and the pluralistic character of the Slavic world.

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\textsuperscript{142} [...] славянские языки сравнительно ближе друг к другу, чем романские или германские, но эта их близость видна и чувствительна лишь специалисту по славянскому языкознанию, а никак не среднему славянину.

\textsuperscript{143} [...] ни один из славянских языков [...] не может играть роли общего славянского языка без существенного ущерба для целых значительных групп славянства.

\textsuperscript{144} 1) взаимным ознакомлением, связанным с взаимным изучением языков и литературу друг у друга, 2) введением в употребление при встречах лиц различных национальностей, хотя бы и общей нам всем (славянской) группы, нейтрального междуславянского языка.
A Pluricultural Literary Landscape

Another way in which Slavyansky mir shows its vision of a heterogeneous world appears in the literary criticism selected for the publicist section. These contributions underline the value of the many different national literatures written in the vernacular. By showing that all Slavic peoples have a cultural production in the vernacular, Slavyansky mir demonstrates that the Slavic world is not only essentially plurilingual, but is increasingly pluricultural as well. This cultural diversity comes to the fore in different ways. First, the editorial board presents its readership a very diverse selection of literary critical articles over the years. The selected articles address authors and literary works from all over the Slavic world. They treat among others the Croatians Silvije Kranjčević and Rikard Katalinić-Jeretov, the Slovenes Ivan Cankar and Anton Aškerč, the Bulgarians Petko Slaveykov and Lyuben Karavelov, the Poles Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki, the Russians Leonid Andreyev and Lev Tolstoy, but also more contested authors – in conservative Russia at least – like the Ukrainian Taras Shevchenko¹⁴⁵, or authors from very small Slavic regions, like the Sorbian author Jakub Bart-Čišinski.

Second, the periodical emphasises cultural diversity by its interpretation of “good” art. One of the main criteria the collective uses to determine whether art – usually literature – is qualitative, is the connection between the work of art and the national identity of the artist. This idea is first hinted at in Slavyansky mir’s first issue in 1908. This short item in the section The Living Thought briefly summarizes the collective’s vision of cultural – or creative – work:

¹⁴⁵ The Russian authority’s attitude towards Ukrainian literature was one of suspicion throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Ukrainian activists were repeatedly curtailed and banned, for example by the Ems Ukase in 1876 which de facto prohibited the print and distribution of Ukrainian-language publications in the Russian empire. The works of Shevchenko, which were used in pro-Ukrainian agitation thus could no longer (legally) circulate among Ukrainians in Russia. Even though the restrictions of the Ukase were alleviated now and again, Ukrainian literature was never allowed to develop entirely free. Moreover, the “deafness” Russian policy created vis-à-vis Ukrainian culture also resulted in a lack of appreciation for it (Grabowicz 2019: 247-248).
Creative work (art).

Creative work as a beginning is the pursuit to connect one’s inner image with the external. Creative work as a force is the realization of this pursuit in a real form. Creative work as criticism is the ability to maintain a harmonious realization or to reject (destroy) it as disharmonious.¹⁴⁶ (Цепн. SM 1908(1/1): 47. Italics in original)

The short text can be interpreted as a phased plan for artistic development in general, and for literary development – the periodical’s main topic – in particular. The plan starts from the premise that “good” art is the expression of the artist’s inner world. As the collective sees an essential connection between language and the national consciousness, it is reasonable to assume that it expects that “good” literature, the creative expression of language, serves as the expression of that national spirit. The first two phases of the plan – creative work as a beginning and as a force – seem to refer to cultural or literary emancipation, the creation of a nationally distinct literature. The third and final phase – creative work as criticism, – then, seems to betray the collective’s expectation that literature eventually not only reflects the national consciousness, but also evaluates its state. What this exactly entails will be addressed in the next chapter, in this chapter the expression of the national spirit is central.

In the literary criticism of Slavyansky mir the importance of the first two phases among others appears from the positive attention to artists who, instead of using the language of the dominant majority, (re)introduce the vernacular as the normal literary language. This is systematically underlined by the articles that address the early literary development of Slavic peoples – be it in the introduction or as the main topic of the article. The previous chapter, for instance, already showed how Prešeren is highlighted as a positive counterpart to contemporaries who wrote in German (Лесковец SM 1910(2/3): 26). Also other articles praise the efforts of authors to change the status of the vernacular language. The article ‘Bulgarian Literature’ praises the poet and national activist Petko Slaveykov for his successes as the “father of Bulgarian literature” and “Bulgarian literary language”¹⁴⁷ (Дилянов SM 1910(2/1): 11). The article ‘Čišinski and his

¹⁴⁶ Творчество (искусство).
Творчество как начало – есть стремление соединить свой внутренний образ с внешним.
Творчество как сила – есть осуществление этого стремления в реальной форме.
Творчество как критика – есть умение утвердить гармоническое осуществление или его отвергнуть (разрушить) как негармоническое.
¹⁴⁷ [...] отец болгарской литературы [...] болгарский литературный язык [...].
Sonnets’ (‘Тишинский и его сонеты’), then, highly esteems Ćišinski because his work expresses how “he loves the voice of the Lusitian [i.e. Sorbian – T.G.] language” (Сиротинин SM 1911(3/2-3): 28), which is spoken by a very small Slavic minority in Saxony.

These articles not only consistently highlight the use of the vernacular, but also the close connection between literary expression and national identity. This comes to the fore most explicitly in ‘Taras Shevchenko’ (‘Тарас Шевченко’, E.M. SM 1911(3/2-3): 9-10). This article characterizes Shevchenko, one of the first poets to write in Ukrainian, as follows:

He did not see his calling in [the life of a painter], he was drawn to his homeland, dear Ukraine, he wanted to glorify it, not with colours, but in songs. He devoted himself to literature. (E.M. SM 1911(3/2-3): 9)

By presenting Shevchenko’s switch from painting to literature not as a conscious choice, but rather as an irresistible, instinctive impulse, the natural connection between literature and the national consciousness is emphasized even more.

This natural and instinctive connection between literature and national identity also appears from the attention these articles pay to the (re)establishment of the bond between the intellectual elite – to which most authors belong – and the common people, whom the collective considers as the long-time keepers of national culture. The article ‘Bulgarian Literature’ underlines that Slaveykov’s literature succeeds to reflect “the depth of Bulgarian folk poetry” and its most characteristic traits (Дилянов SM 1910(2/1): 11-12). The same essentialist connection recurs in the article on Ćišinski, who uses the simple people of his village as an inspiration for his poetry:

Their hands are rough, their feelings are simple. And their poet is a singer of simple, uncomplicated feelings, although he clothes them in the most complex forms of poetry (Сиротинин SM 1911(3/2-3): 28).

The quality of Ćišinski’s poetry, claims the article, lays in the honest rendering of the beautiful ‘primitiveness’ of his people. This emphasis on literature as a natural account of

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148 [...] любит голос лужицкой речи.
149 [...] не в этом он видел свое призвание, его тянуло на родину, дорогую Украину, ее он хотел прославить не красками, а в песнях. Он посвятил себя литературе.
150 [...] глубину болгарской народной поэзии.
151 Их руки грубо, их чувства просто. И поэт их – певец простых, несложных чувств, хотя уже облекает он их в самые сложные формы поэзии и особенно любит голос лужицкой речи в изысканной отделке сонета.
the people’s soul is not used within a national context, but fits within a program aimed at rapprochement within the Slavic world. Therefore, it appears to be used mainly to instil the idea on the readership that reading another people’s literature not only contributes to a better understanding of its culture, but also of its national essence. Bearing in mind that the collective disseminates the idea that knowledgeable peoples make up knowledgeable societies (cf. 6.1), reading other literature is presented as a tool for rapprochement.

**Symbolic Space of Slavic Unity**

Finally, also the selection of literary translations in *Slavyansky mir*’s literary section reflects the collective’s vision of a liberal, diverse and inclusive Slavic world. The editorial board brings together poetry and prose that have originally been written in no less than eleven Slavic languages: Belorussian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Kashubian, Polish, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene and Ukrainian (cf. Figure 6). Most of these languages and literatures (and cultures in general) are broadly acknowledged within the Slavic world. Others, however, are suppressed or renounced as “patois” by more dominant Slavic peoples like the Russians. Belorussian and Ukrainian, for example, were long time commonly perceived as Russian dialects, and the Malorussy and Belorusy as dialect-speaking Russians (Pavlenko 2011: 335). The very organization of the literary section – it imposes no particular order or hierarchy – creates an impression of equality among all these languages. The section might give an impression of homogeneity because all the works are translated to make them accessible for the Russian readers. However, the design of the section actually emphasizes the heterogeneity: the source language is consistently highlighted under the title as appears in Figure 5. Thus, in the literary section, the different Slavic literatures, great and small, young and old, respected and shunned, symbolically stand shoulder to shoulder. In fact, the literary section can be considered a symbolical space of Slavic unity.

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152 At the time when *Slavyansky mir* came out, the existence of Belorussian and Ukrainian was no longer denied, but the languages were not approved to be used as official languages for education, because they allegedly had no distinct literature (Pavlenko 2011: 335).
As the bar chart in Figure 6 shows, Slavyansky mir proportionally contains more works from regions where Slavic peoples were (in general) more or less free to develop their own culture and literature. The (limited) freedom the Poles, Czechs, Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes experienced during the nineteenth century allowed them to create a larger and richer body of literary works. The stress on Slovenian literature is disproportional, but it is reasonable to assume that the roots of editor Lavrin played a role in this matter.

Although the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina initially formed the raison d'être of the periodical, ‘Bosnian’ literature is not mentioned in Slavyansky mir. This can be explained by the peculiar distinction among the Bosnian population. The Ottoman and later Habsburg administration in the region used the confessional affiliations of the population to divide it. Very soon, the rubric ‘confessional’ was often read and used as an indication of nationality. Orthodoxy was equated with Serbs, Catholicism with Croats and Islam with Bosniaks (Hajdarpasic 2015: 7–8). Authors from Bosnia-Herzegovina that are featured in the periodical, like Aleksa Šantić and Svetozar Ćorović, are therefore named Serbian.

In particular the works of Cankar are overrepresented, nine of the seventeen examples of Slovene literature in the literary section are his.
The share of works in the literary section that has originally been written in Belorussian, Kashubian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Slovak is significantly smaller. Like in the publicist section, the very inclusion of these works supports the periodical’s championing of the rights of all Slavic peoples. The disputed status of the Ukrainian and Belorussian minorities in Russia already surfaced in previous (sub)chapters. The Kashubs and the Ruthenes had a similar status within Polish territory. Especially the Polish clergy and szlachta felt threatened by their emancipation and generally treated Kashubian and Ruthenian as Polish dialects, thus in turn expressing their own imperialism and denying the possibility of a more autonomous status of smaller minorities. The small representation of Slovak literature seems odd, as it definitely was a threatened Slavic minority at the time. This can be connected, however, to the fact that throughout the nineteenth-century the existence of a separate Slovak language was disputed, also by Slovak thinkers and writers (Neubauer 2007: 11-12). Especially Slovak thinkers with an interest in Slavic unity, whom Slavyansky mir’s collective arguably knew best, promoted Czecho-Slovak as one language (Roberts 2007: 380-381).

For the general reader, the emphasis on the diversity of Slavic languages and literatures probably was the most obvious sign of a plurilingual and pluricultural Slavic world. The more informed reader, however, could have noticed that also the background of the authors featured in the literary section actually contributes to Slavyansky mir’s plea for a more inclusive and diverse Slavic world. Many works selected for inclusion are written by authors whom the collective would categorize as “fathers of society” who help
develop the national culture. In fact, about sixty per cent of the works published in the literary section are written by authors who were active in the cultural revival and emancipatory struggle of their people (the remaining forty per cent will be addressed in the next chapter (cf. 8.3)).

Just like the critical articles about Austria-Hungarian and Russian imperialism, the activist background of the selected literary works seems to incite Slavic cooperation when it is aimed at the first, whereas it warns for ideas of Slavic – Russian – homogeneity in case of the latter. Works that question Russia's illiberal take on unity mainly come from minorities within its borders. The publication of an untitled freedom song written by Maksim Bogdanovich (SM 1910(2/4): 39), for example refers to his pioneering work to change the status of the Belorussian language and culture. Of the four Ukrainian poets featured in the periodical, Oleksandr Konysky, Oleksandr Oles, Lidiya Sokhachevska and Valeriy Tarnogradsky (SM 1910(2/2): 16, SM 1910(2/10-11): 41, SM 1910(2/4): 39, SM 1910(2/2): 27-28), only Konysky was actively involved in the emancipatory struggle of his people (he was even exiled to Vologda due to his propagandist activities). Nevertheless, the work of all four poets refers to the pursuit for Ukrainian autonomy because they were all published in a well-discussed anthology of Ukrainian literature, published in 1908: Ukrainian Muse (Українська Муза). This anthology was the first relatively uncensored edition of contemporary Ukrainian literature in Ukrainian the Russian empire. It was envisioned as an artistic and political reaction to Russia's repressive attitude towards the Ukrainian language and culture (Digital Library of Historical and Cultural Heritage).

Attention to Slavic activists who aim at national emancipation from Austria-Hungary, then, implicitly supports the creation of Slavic groupness and solidarity vis-à-vis the Western world. The publication of works of the Bosnian-Serbs Aleksa Šantić, Svetozar Ćorović and Jovan Dučić (SM 1910(2/9): 35-36; SM 1910(2/1): 17-21, SM 1910(2/7-8): 41-45; SM 1911(3/4-5): 54-55, 55-56), for example, refers to their struggle for more (cultural) autonomy in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the turn of the century. The three authors edited the literary periodical Dawn (Zora, 1896-1901) which gathered Serbian intellectuals in the region who wanted to improve the level of education among the Serbian population in order to stimulate the region’s economic and political progress (Kolaković 2014: 236). Similarly, the choice to publish poems of the Polish Adam Asnyk can be connected to his efforts to emancipate the Polish masses in Galicia. Asnyk was the founder of the People’s University in Krakow, the same university that established the University Extension in the region (cf. 6.1).

155 Not all works passed the Russian censor, because of this some works are published in an abbreviated or retouched version (Ковалів 2007: 509).
Other works in the literary section implicitly refer to the empowering effect of Slavic cooperation. The publication of August Šenoa’s poem *To the Clouds* (Тучкам, SM 1909(1/2): 2) an excerpt from *Hrvatulje* (1865), in which Šenoa sings of his homeland Croatia, refers to the author’s national and supra-national activism. The poet, who is commonly called the father of modern Croatian literature, was the editor of the anti-Austrian periodical *The Wreath* (Vijenac). As editor he played a key role in the Matica foundation of Croatia, Matica Hrvatska. The privately funded Matica foundations, which were established in Slavic regions during the nineteenth century, publish fiction, dictionaries and scientific studies to promote the use of the native language in several domains (Neubauer 2007: 41). At the same time, the different foundations cultivate inter-Slavic cooperation in order to stimulate international relations and to generate more critical Slavic mass. Also some of the twentieth-century authors who are published in the literary section are involved in the Matica foundations. The Croatian author Rikard Katalinić-Jeretov, for example, whose sketches of his native region Istria are printed in five issues of the periodical (SM 1910-1: 35, SM 1910(2/4): 39-40, SM 1910(2/5-6):35-36 , SM 1910(2/12): 16, SM 1911(3/4-5): 47), worked as the president of the Matica Dalmatinska.

Another reference to empowering Slavic unity can be found in the poem *Sonnet* (Сонет, SM 1910-2: 14), an excerpt from Ján Kollár’s *Slava’s Daughter*. Kollár was one of the main early propagators of literary Pan-Slavism (which did not ascribe a leading role to Russia). In *Slava’s Daughter* he expresses both his Slovak patriotism and his new Pan-Slavic ideas. Although his ideas are described as nebulous and utopian in some of the contributions in the publicist section (cf. 6.1), the canonical work arguably speaks to the imagination of many contributors and readers.

A last work in the literary section explicitly refers to the need for Slavic cooperation against German expansionism, although it had not been written for that purpose: France Prešeren’s famous work *The Baptism on the Savica* (SM 1910(2/3): 27-29, SM 1910(2/4): 24-38). Usually, the work is seen as an account of the national tragedy of Slovenia as it describes an epic love story during the violent Christianization of Slovenia and the loss of Slovenian independence. The version that is included in *Slavyansky mir*, however, as the following paragraphs will show, is adapted in such a way that it gets a more universal Slavic meaning

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156 Despite the far-reaching interventions, Lavrin explicitly commends this translation by his fellow countryman Leskovec. During an exchange of correspondence at the end of his life, he boasts to a colleague that he published Leskovec’ “splendid translation” (“krasen prevod”) of the Baptism on the Savica in *Slavyansky mir* (Lencek 1986: 98)
As part of the in-depth approach to *Slavyansky mir*, every translation in the literary section has been compared to the original version. Overall, the modifications that could be discovered do not exceed adaptations typical for the process of translation. In the case of *Baptism of the Savica*, however, the alterations by translator Lavrentij Leskovec are plenty and far-reaching. The adaptations suggest that the struggle of the Slovenes against the Christianization described by Prešeren is in fact a general Slavic struggle. The translator for example regularly inserts the word “Slavic” or “Slav” in the text where originally no reference whatsoever to Slavdom is made. In the two-page ‘Introduction’ (Введение) of *The Baptism* alone, the words “Slav” or “Slavic” have been used nine times, whereas Prešeren uses the word “Slav” only once (SM 1910-3: 27-29). Leskovec for example alters “Slovene kills Slovene” (“Slovenec že mori Slovenca”, Prešeren 2001: 112) into “Slavs beat Slavs” (“славяне бьют славян”, SM 1910-3: 28). Another sign of this more universal Slavic framing of the text is the description of the pagan gods that should be defended in battle. The verses are changed thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prešeren:</th>
<th>Translation by Leskovec:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His fathers’ faith in Živa, gods and spirits, Beyond the clouds their lofty jurisdiction.</td>
<td>For the throne of the fathers, a sovereign gift from Perun, for the triumph of the gods of beautiful Love, for the triumph of Lel and glorious Živa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Translation by Priestly and Cooper, Prešeren 2001: 113. Italics in original)

In the original text, Prešeren refers to Živa, the West-Slavic goddess of life and fertility. One could argue that Leskovec adds the gods Perun, the equivalent of Zeus, especially in the East-Slavic world, and Lel, a Slavic deity of love that appeared in among others Pushkin’s *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, because they are more commonly known by the Russian public and make the passage more understandable for *Slavyansky mir*’s readership. As a side-effect of this alteration, the text not only refers to the Slovene (or general West-Slavic) pantheon, but to a pantheon of Slavic gods that unites a larger part of the Slavic world.

Additionally, Leskovec’ adaptation of the text alters the background of the antagonist in the epic. In Prešeren’s original, the leading motif is a battle between pagans, led by Črtomir, and Christians, under the rule of Valjhun, the duke of Carinthia, subject to the

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157 Za vero staršev, lepo bognjo Živo, za črte, za bogove nad oblaki.
158 За трон отцов, Перуна дар державный, за торжество богов Любви прелестной, за Леля торжество и Живи славной.
Bavarian throne (Paternu 2006: 284). Mainly the revolt of the Slovenes against the Christians – and thus implicitly against Western-Europe – is emphasized, the ties with Bavaria are not explicitly mentioned. In the translation, however, the antagonist is consistently and explicitly portrayed as a German. The eleventh stanza of the main body of the work, *The Baptism* (Крещение), aptly illustrates this:

Prešeren:

Already, Črtomir, it’s time to leave,  
Do you not hear the trumpets’ fanfare loud?  
*The hordes* massed by Valjhun with anger seethe  
Bent on destruction of this temple proud.  
*Meanwhile of those who to the old faith cleave*  
The shields are raised, for its defence unbowed –  
That childhood faith to which has pledged her troth  
Your sweetheart, now true love unites you both.  
(Translation by Priestly and Cooper, Prešeren 2001: 123. Author’s emphasis)

Translation by Leskovec:

Already, Črtomir, parting time is close!  
Don’t you hear, how the trumpet roars with thunder?  
Valjhun drove the *offspring of the cruel Germans*,  
he floods their road with blood and fire;  
for a moment the *dashing tribe of Slavs rose*,  
to stand up for freedom with their swords,  
to stand up for the faith she serves,  
she, who is forever united in love with you.  
(SM 1910(2/4): 27. Author’s emphasis)

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159 Že, Črtomír! je treba se ločiti, ne slišiš, kak glasnó trobenta poje? Pripodil s sabo je Valjhun srditi požigat božje veže divje roje; povsod vzdigujejo se vere ščiti, ki si prejel od matere jo svoje, té vere, ki ji deklica ta služi, ki zdaj te z njo ljubezen čista druži.

160 Уж, Чертомир, разлуки близко время! Не слышишь, как ревет труба громами? Вальхун пригнал жестоких Немцев семя, залит их путь и кровью, и огнями; в миг поднялось Славян лихое племя, чтоб за свободу постоять мечами, за веру постоять которой служит, та, что в любви с тобой на веки дружит.
The Russian version not only underlines that it is a fight between “the dashing tribe of Slavs” and “the cruel Germans”, but also tells how the Slavs fight for freedom and faith, whereas Prešeren speaks of faith alone. With similar adaptations in the whole body of the text, Slovenia’s national epic transforms into an epic story of the battle between Slavdom and the German world.

### 7.4 Lavrin on Emancipation and Supra-National Unity

The themes that have been addressed in this chapter – a critical attitude towards illiberal forms of unity and suggestions for alternative forms of unity that allow for national diversity – are continued in a couple of the works Lavrin publishes in the years after the discontinuation of *Slavyansky mir*. These themes come to the fore most explicitly in his cultural criticism. Lavrin chiefly engages with liberal and illiberal forms of unity in certain passages in the article ‘Czech Literature’ (1912), in which he briefly problematizes the minority policy of the German-speaking countries. Moreover, in the essay ‘The Slavic Problem and the Artistic-Literary Rapprochement’ ([1913]) he criticizes faulty minority policy in general and Russia’s minority policy in particular.

In his openly critical texts, Lavrin uses his critique of the assimilation efforts to which Slavic minorities are subjected as a contrasting introduction for his interpretation of a more diverse Slavic world. In ‘Czech Literature’, he condemns the Austrian attempts to germanise the Czech minority – while doing this he repeats the description of Austrian gendarmes visiting Czech huts and burning books that appeared in the article ‘Russian Language and the Slavs’ ([1912b]: 417; cf. 7.1), – and immediately implies that national identity is resilient and cannot be repressed forever. Lavrin states that “the great shadows of the past hovered, waiting for resurrection” and underlines that it were the very Germanising plans of Joseph II that eventually caused “the smouldering [...] spark of national identity [to] lit up” ([1912b]: 417). This does not mean that Lavrin rejects overarching constellations, on the contrary. In his description of the ensuing Czech emancipation, he underlines that this struggle has strongly benefited from a growing

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161 [...] витали великие тени прошлого, ожидая воскресения.
162 [...] загорелась, [...] тлеющая [...] искра национального самосознания.
feeling of Slavic groupness at the time and that many early Czech revivalists like Palacký and Kollár were also convinced Pan-Slavs:

Small Czechia feels strong not as a part of Austria, but as a part of the entire Slavic world that is related to him.\(^{163}\) (Лаврин 1912б: 419)

Lavrin thus shows an image of the Slavic world in which a feeling of supra-national belonging can be empowering on the national level. Thus the idea of empowering double consciousness that occurred in \textit{Slavyansky mir}, is continued in Lavrin’s later Russian work.

Also in his 1913 essay, Lavrin introduces his vision of Slavic unity with a critical note about illiberal forms of unity. He calls out “the offensive, official or so-called ‘zoological’ patriotism currently fashionable in Russia\(^{164}\). This can be interpreted as a kind of Darwinian understanding of the struggle between nations, because it leads “to the absorption of other nations\(^{165}\)” (Лаврин 2011 [1913]: 188). Lavrin firmly rejects the idea that one allegedly superior national culture, like “the arrogantly conceited German ‘Deutschland über alles’\(^{166}\)”, could be used as a universal one. He thus, like several contributors in \textit{Slavyansky mir}, rejects what Bodin calls universalizing normative interpretations of unity. As a contrast to this “zoological patriotism” of the Russians he speaks of a “defensive” (“оборонительный”) or “revolutionary” (“революционный”) kind of patriotism (or nationalism, Lavrin uses the terms interchangeably in this essay), which he observes among the majority of the other Slavs (Лаврин 2011 [1913]: 188). He believes this is the right take on patriotism because it does not lead to the survival of the fittest nation, but leads “to self-determination and self-affirmation in the name of humanity and justice\(^{167}\)” (Ibid.). In other words, national emancipation and development should not stand in the way of the emancipation and development of other nations, nor should they stand in the way of a rich and diverse supra-national unity – an interpretation of national development that comes close to the one disseminated in \textit{Slavyansky mir}’s manifesto.

In the essay, Lavrin not only gives the abstract recommendation to implement a defensive/revolutionary instead of a zoological kind of patriotism, but also shortly touches upon a practical approach to diversity within the Slavic world. He maintains

\(^{163}\) Маленькая Чехия чувствует себя сильной не как часть Австрии, а как часть родственного ей всего славянского мира.

\(^{164}\) [...] модный теперь в России наступательный, казенный или т.н. "зоологический" патриотизм.

\(^{165}\) [...] к поглощению других народностей [...].

\(^{166}\) [...] горделиво самодовольный германской ‘Deutschland über alles’.

\(^{167}\) [...] к собственному самоопределению, к самоутверждению – во имя гуманности и справедливости.
Slavyansky mir’s essentialist take on language and literature, and encourages plurilingualism as a sign of respect for linguistic, literary, and national diversity. This appears from this negative assessment of the Russian attitude towards other cultures:

The Russians, seeing right in front of them the Poles with their wonderful original literature, do not even consider it necessary to become familiar with the Polish language to such extent as to read their literary geniuses, who are untranslatable in any language, in the original. Such disregard is unforgivable [...] (Лаврин 2011 [1913]: 191)

The emphasis on the untranslatability of literature underlines the idea that literature in the vernacular is the most organic and natural expression of the people's essence. Lavrin thus repeats the idea that reading the literature of another nation – preferably in the vernacular – facilitates genuine cultural and national acquaintance. Further in the same passage, Lavrin compares the uninterested and seemingly arrogant behaviour of the Russians with the open attitude of other Slavic peoples. In contrast, he states, the other Slavs do an effort to get to know other literatures, they for example “have formed, wherever possible (the Czechs even in the villages) Russian circles with the aim of studying the Russian language and Russian literature [...]” (2011 [1913]: 193). It seems as if Lavrin simplifies the comparison in favour of his argumentation: he ignores the fact that Russian literature had acquired a different status than other Slavic literatures, and he does not question whether the other Slavic peoples actually read each other.

Considering Lavrin’s tendency to extend the strategies and motives from Slavyansky mir in the works he wrote after the discontinuation of the periodical, one might expect that Veles and Perun, the anthologies Lavrin published in collaboration with Gorodetsky, would show certain similarities with the literary section of the periodical. The compilation of the anthologies, the selection of literary translations from all over the Slavic world, at first glance reminds of Slavyansky mir’s literary section. Nevertheless, it appears that Veles and Perun are at best pale reflections, as the following paragraphs will show. This can of course be related to the fact that it is unclear whether Gorodetsky supported the lines originally set out in Slavyansky mir’s program, or that he and Lavrin only shared a general love for Slavic literature and culture. To demonstrate the difference

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168 Русские, имея у себя на глазах поляков с их чудной самобытной литературой, не считают даже нужным хоть настолько ознакомиться с польским языком, чтобы читать в оригинале их литературных гениев, непереводимых ни на какой язык. Такое игнорирование непростительно [...].
169 Австрийские и южные славяне за последние годы везде, где только возможно (чехи даже в деревнях), образуют русские кружки с целью изучения русского языка и русской литературы.
between Slavyansky mir and the anthologies, it can be fruitful to address a couple of apparent similarities.

First, the titles of the anthologies can be associated with the idea of Slavic unity. They refer to the Slavic pagan god of the underworld, Veles (or Volos), who was worshipped all over the Slavic world, and his adversary the god of thunder, Perun, the Slavic equivalent of Zeus and Thor in the Baltics, Bulgaria, Russia, Slovakia and the Czech lands (Dixon-Kennedy 1998: 217, 308). The choice to name anthologies of Slavic literature after two Slavic gods that were once worshipped in a large part of the Slavic world might refer to a common Slavic cultural heritage – similar to the function of the Slavic gods in the adaptation of The Baptism on the Savica that was published in Slavyansky mir. However, this reference to Slavic mythology might as well be an expression of Gorodetsky’s fascination with Russian antiquity and paganism (Машинский 1987).

Second, at first glance it seems possible to consider the anthologies – to a certain extent – as symbolic spaces of Slavic unity. Veles and Perun contain a small selection of respectively fourteen and twenty-four translated poems and short stories written by nineteen authors coming from all over the Slavic world: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Poland, Serbia and Slovenia, and, importantly, also from Russia. Because of the inclusion of Russian works, the symbolic spaces of unity that are created in the anthologies seem to give a more inclusive and diverse image of the Slavic world than the literary section in Slavyansky mir. As the works in the anthologies are presented in a random order, like in the literary section, the compilation gives an impression of equality among Russian and other Slavic works. Veles also continues Slavyansky mir’s habit to point out the original language of the works: every work is preceded by a page that centres the author and his nationality. In Perun this is no longer the case.

A closer look at the compilation of the anthologies, however, shows that they actually are but a poor man’s version of the diverse literary section in Slavyansky mir. With a share of fifty percent in Veles and a share of over thirty percent in Perun, the Russian works take in a dominant, rather than an equal position in the anthologies. Different than Slavyansky mir, the anthologies do not include literary works of peoples that are renounced by the Russian authorities, like the Ukrainians or the Belorussians, which reduces the enabling potential of the compilation. Moreover, Perun, which holds a selection of Russian and South Slavic literature, only seems to represent part of the Slavic world. The fact that the anthology was published to raise funds for the Serbian Red Cross, as appears from a note on the cover, reinforces the impression that it was mainly used to underline the connection between Russia and its threatened South Slavic “little brothers”.

Moreover, the compilation of the anthologies, especially of Perun, seems to be hasty rather than well thought-out compared to Slavyansky mir. Both anthologies contain works that have previously appeared in Slavyansky mir: Zeyer’s King Cophetua (Король Копфетуа)
and Cankar’s Wishbone (Ядац) in Veles, and Ćorović’s Party (Пирушка) and Nušić’s Maksim (Максим) in Perun (Городетский & Лаврин 1912: 37-62, 65-82; Городетский 1915: 43-48, 67-78). The editors use both anthologies to publish their own work: Gorodetsky publishes his cycle of poems Mourning Spring (Скорбящая Весна) in Veles, while Perun opens with Gorodetsky’s Pan Jesus (Пан Йезус) and concludes with three short stories by Lavrin. As Lavrin was not really known as a prose-writer at the time, it seems a little disproportional to fill a third (!) of the anthology with his work. The value of the anthologies decreases when you see that about forty per cent of Veles and sixty per cent of Perun is compiled in this way.

Also thematically the selected works in the anthologies do not really contribute to the symbolization of a diverse Slavic unity. The background of some of the authors may be connected with the emancipatory struggle of their people. The selection of a short story by Ćorović, for example, can refer to his involvement in the literary periodical Dawn that struggled to stimulate the economic and political progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also the inclusion of two poems of Zygmunt Krasiński in Veles (Городетский & Лаврин 1912: 135-136), then, might be connected to Polish emancipation, as Krasiński is considered to be one of the main Polish nationalist poets of the nineteenth century. As these are two isolated cases, however, Lavrin and Gorodetsky do not seem to have applied a consistent strategy to promote minority emancipation. Veles and Perun seem to be no more than regular anthologies in which Lavrin and Gorodetsky acquaint the readers with poetry and prose they consider worthwhile. The similarities with Slavyansky mir’s literary section are few and seem rather coincidental, which indicates that the periodical’s programme is not continued in to the anthologies.
Chapter 8  **The Author and the Ideal Nation: The Problem of an (Un)Patriotic Attitude**

In the previous chapters Lavrin’s and Slavyansky mir’s vision of the relationship between Slavic minorities, threatening empires and Slavdom was explored. Overall, balance appeared to be a key word. Chapter Six showed that Lavrin and the collective see the ideal cultural development as a balance between cultural preservation and cultural openness. Chapter Seven, then, demonstrated that they disseminate a heterogeneous understanding of unity that enables and empowers difference and is simultaneously enriched by that difference. In both chapters, what Slavyansky mir and Lavrin consider as good culture – mainly literature – is connected to this combination: (1) good literature should be able to transcend imitation and (2) it should be able to reflect the national spirit in order to contribute to a diverse world. In this chapter another function of literature that comes to the fore in the pages of Slavyansky mir and in Lavrin’s later Russian work is addressed: literature (and culture in general) should be able to fulfil a critical function towards national development. In the short text ‘Creative Work (Art)’, which already appeared in the previous chapter, this critical function is presented as the third phase of artistic development: after literature has become a truthful reflection of the national spirit – creative work as a beginning and as a force – the text stipulates that “Creative work as criticism is the ability to maintain a harmonious realization or to reject (destroy) it as disharmonious” (Серп. SM 1908(1/1): 47. Italics in original). This third phase seems to betray the collective’s expectation that good literature not only reflects the national spirit, but is also able, through an honest representation of the nation, to evaluate its state.

A couple of contributors to Slavyansky mir signal that this critical function of culture is threatened all over the continent because many nations make culture subservient to their political and economic ambitions. In the articles ‘The Russian Language and the Slavs’ and ‘The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the 19th Century’ they aim to show that these nations experience a cultural decline and even a moral degeneration because
culture can no longer provide the necessary checks and balances to the problems that rise as a consequence of the pursuit of political power and financial gain. These two articles frame this as a phenomenon typical for Western Europe: ‘The Russian Language and the Slavs’ points to Germany where culture allegedly has been replaced by “an external grandeur of so-called ‘culture’ and her main attribute, militarism” (J. SM 1908(1/1): 44). The article ‘The Cultural Movement of the Southern Slavs in the 19th Century’, then, brings the same message by contrasting the moral development of Eastern and Western Europe. It explains that Western Europe, “where civilisation devours culture more every day” will potentially be revived by Slavdom which has “a deep ethical, philanthropic character” and “which has much more cultural inclinations” (J.C. SM 1910(2/1): 2-3). Bearing Slavyansky mir’s belief in the necessary unification of humanity in mind, the contrast between East and West suggested in these articles attributes a (potential) remediating and messianic role to Slavic countries that comes very close to Slavophile ideology. Like the Slavophiles, who reframe the alleged backwardness of Russia as the only hope for the cultural decline in the West (Rabow-Edling 2006: 44), the collective reframes the alleged backwardness of the Slavic world as a whole as an advantage vis-à-vis the alleged decadence of the West. At the same time, however, as this chapter will show, several literary critics in Slavyansky mir problematize how also Slavic literatures often suffer from the same flaw and are subjected to the nation’s greater political or economic good. They indicate that in order to fulfil its redemptive role, Slavic writers have to safeguard the critical function of literature.

This chapter investigates how the periodical engages with the critical balancing function of national literature. First, it addresses how Slavyansky mir tackles the relationship between literature and the powers that be in national society – think of political parties, the church and the establishment. Then, the chapter examines which roles the collective attributes to critical literature in the pursuit of a better, more just nation and humanity. Finally, the chapter ends with Lavrin’s vision of the function of literature in the development of a better a society, which he disseminated after the discontinuation of the periodical.

170 [...] внешним блеском, так называемой "культурой" и ее главным атрибутом милитаризмом.
171 [...] где цивилизация с каждым днем больше съедает культуру.
172 [...] глубоко-этический, человелюбивый характер [...].
173 [...] у которого гораздо больше культурных задатков.
8.1 Literature as a Revolutionary Means: Balancing the Poet and the Rebel

Overall, Slavyansky mir’s contributors are critical of situations where culture is subservient to political and economic gain. Nevertheless, depending on the moment when a literary work is written – in the beginning of the national revival or later – the extent of this criticism differs. Contributors that assess nineteenth-century revival literature, for instance, show a certain leniency towards the fact that many of these writers have used their art as a vehicle for a political message. This appears for example from the evaluation of revolutionary literature in the first part of the article ‘Bulgarian Literature’ (Дилянов SM 1910(2/1): 11-14), which (among others things) addresses the work of Lyuben Karavelov, Khristo Botev and Petko Slaveykov, who were leading activists during the Bulgarian liberation in the 1870s and were among the first authors to write in Bulgarian (again). The author of the article, Dilyanov, equally values the three writers for their use of literature in the struggle for Bulgarian independency. Nevertheless, as the following paragraphs show, he suggests a ranking among the writers, which seems to depend chiefly on his perception of the balance between the political message and the artistic value of their works.

Dilyanov praises Karavelov, who was the chairman of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee between 1869 and 1874 (Detrez 2019: 225), because he used his poetry as “a revolutionary means” (“революционное средство”, Дилянов SM 1910(2/1): 12). In line with the program of Slavyansky mir, the author of the article approves of the fact that Karavelov warns for the assimilatory practices of the Ottomans and the Greeks, and for the “Bulgarian parasite” (“болгарин дармоед”), a reference to the denationalized Bulgarian elite, which complies with the oppression of Bulgarian rights for its own material gain and social position (Дилянов SM 1910(2/1): 12). Dilyanov is less positive – and that is an understatement – about the artistic quality of Karavelov’s work, which he calls “far from real poetry and often turns into newspaper swearing” (Ibid.). The negative assessment of Karavelov’s work seems to be strongly related to the fact that the Bulgarian activist used literature only as a revolutionary means, a medium for his nationalist message and nothing more.

Dilyanov’s assessment of Botev, a younger, more radical member of the Central Committee (Detrez 2019: 227), and Slaveykov, an older poet and activist who was involved

174 [...] далеко от настоящей поэзии и часто переходит в газетную брань.
in the drafting of the first Bulgarian constitution (Ibid.: 231), is completely different. These authors are not only applauded for their use of literature in their political activism, but also (especially) because of the artistic level of their work that transcends mere propaganda. It appears that the positive assessment of both content and form is connected to a different balance between their political and cultural ambitions. Dilyanov’s description of Botev’s work indicates a close connection between his activism and his art, without one of them taking in a dominant position:

Botev was a poet, a journalist and a rebel. These three fields are deeply connected with him, and the critic will in vain try to separate them and to examine them separately. Each of his lines cut into the soul, like a knife, with his social and artistic truth and deep indignation of the poet.175 (Дилянов SM 1910(2/1): 13)

Slaveykov, then, as was already highlighted in the previous chapter, is mainly remembered as “the father of Bulgarian literature” and his adequate representation of the Bulgarian people’s soul (cf. 7.3). The honorary title “father” implies a higher ranking than Botev, which seems to be informed by the fact that the artistic value of Slaveykov’s work outshines (but does not diminish) its political value.

The different assessment of Karavelov, Botev and Slaveykov suggests that although Dilyanov praises the close connection between political and cultural ambitions in emancipatory literature, he nevertheless endorses the idea that an exaggerated emphasis on the political message has a negative side. Other contributors to Slavyansky mir share this opinion and elaborate more about that negative effect on revival literature. L.S., for example, who addresses the achievements of the Illyrian movement, praises the “flaming patriotism” (“пламенный патриотизм”) of the movement’s poetry and its “call for awakening and a new spring”176 (Л.С. SM 1910(2/2): 2), but he regrets that

the poetry in itself was sometimes so much intertwined with politics, that it is difficult to say where one ends, and the other begins. Only Preradović succeeded to remain on the level of pure art the whole time.177 (Л.С. SM 1910(2/2): 2)

L.S.’s overall positive assessment of the Illyrian movement implies that sometimes it is acceptable to make literature temporarily subservient to a political goal. Simultaneously,

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175 Ботев был поэт, журналист, и бунтовщик. Эти три поприща являются у него глубоко связанными, и напрасно критик будет стараться разъединить и рассматривать их в отдельности. Каждая из его строк режет душу, как нож, своей социальной и художественной правдой и глубоким возмущением поэта.

176 [...] призыв к пробуждению к новой весне [...].

177 Поэзия сама иногда до того сплетается с политикой, что трудно сказать, где кончается одно, и где начинается другое. Один лишь Прерадович сумел оставаться все время на высоте чистого искусства.
however, he repeats that the political instrumentalization of literature often lowers its artistic quality. The fact that the art of the Croat poet Preradović, which is definitely not apolitical, is considered “pure” is probably related to the fact that he – in the eyes of the critic – maintained a balance between art and message contrary to other Illyrians who were often carried away by their political bias. This contrast seems to endorse Slavyansky mir’s vision about good literature that should give an accurate and thus assessible representation of the nation and its spirit, instead of, for example, an ideal image of the nation that fits a political agenda.

Another contributor, Savin, more explicitly returns to this idea in his assessment of Slovene literature, in which he tackles the lower artistic level of whom he calls “tendentious writers-propagandists178” (Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 20). In Savin’s eyes, authors who submit their literature to a political message

cannot aspire to more than local significance, but only those writers, who unconsciously penetrate to the most hidden secrets of the people’s spirit, who are themselves the highest manifestation of its mysterious, elemental power [can transcend local significance]...179 (Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 20-21)

In other words, Savin considers a dominant political message in literature as a filter that disturbs, clouds or limits a genuine and spontaneous representation of the nation’s essence. His view that literature only has an international – or universal – meaning when it represents this essence can be connected to Slavyansky mir’s take on a diverse humanity and its universal essentialism: only national literatures that reflect the actual people’s spirit and not a propagandistic idealized image of the nation can lend themselves for mutual acquaintance, knowledge and respect. Moreover, bearing in mind the potential exemplary role certain contributors attribute to the Slavic world, it is doubtful that a biased national culture may serve as a redeeming example for others.

178 [...] тенденциозные писатели пропагандисты [...].
179 Претендовать же на большее, чем местное значение могут [...] только те писатели, которые бессознательно для самих себя проникают в самые сокровенные тайники народной души, которые сами являются высшим проявлением ее загадочной, стихийной силы ...
8.2 (Un)patriotic Criticism: “Removing the Mask from a Rotten Corpse”

In assessments of (often more recent) literary works that are no longer related to the early national revivals, the relatively lenient attitude towards the subservience of culture to political or other ambitions of the nation disappears. Slavyansky mir’s contributors are especially critical of the expectation of the ruling class that literature should display an ideal image of the nation as if it does not have to cope with problems nations all over Europe are facing – think of social inequality and the effects of industrialization and capitalism. One article in particular devotes a lot of space to the relationship between author, literature and establishment: ‘Portraits of Slavic Authors. Ivan Cankar’ written by Savin (1908-09; 1911).

The article on the modernist Slovene writer appears for the first time in the first volume of Slavyansky mir in 1908-09 and is repeated again in 1911. This repetition is atypical for the periodical, usually each issue features new material. On the one hand, considering the periodical’s financial troubles in 1911, the repetition can be interpreted as an easy and cheap way to give the readership value for money. On the other hand, a footnote which explains the reiteration, “the majority of our subscribers is not familiar with it yet” (N.N. SM 1911(3/1): 12), strongly suggests that the editorial board deemed the article’s message important enough to repeat it. Moreover, part of the version that appeared in 1911 has been altered to incorporate some new work of Cankar that supports the collective’s take on the function of critical literature even better (I will address this alteration later in the section).

Savin’s position on what he considers the absurd expectations of the national establishment – not only in Slovenia but all over Europe – surfaces most clearly when he sarcastically explains how the establishment wants authors to ignore societal problems in order to help safeguard the “public digestion” ("общественное пищеварение", Савин SM 1909(1/2): 30) instead of tackling and possibly amending them:

> Literature is mostly looked upon as entertainment, as a dessert after a hearty dinner […]; if a writer does not belong to their camp, then – God be with him – he is no good. If, on the contrary, praise and clapping are heard, incense rises: the dessert is delicious, even if it was made by a dirty and incompetent cook. Of course, there are certain conditions that should be met: 1) The dessert should smell of patriotism. 2)

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180 […] большинству наших подписчиков она еще не знакома.
It should be moral, even a little instructive, because an immoral dessert is
dangerous for the soul and morality, and besides, it spoils the stomach of a decent
person. 3) Respect for Godly and human authority, and respect for all the traditional
popular “shrines”. 4) [It should] not touch upon high problems and important
matters: the latter always result in a bad dream, and the first virtue of a decent
person and an exemplary citizen is good digestion and good sleep.181 (Савин SM 
1911(3/2-3): 22)

The sarcastic passage exposes how the ruling class wants writers to adopt an ostrich-like
behaviour: criticizing society and its supposedly virtuous morality is considered
unpatriotic and disrespectful. A picture perfect representation of the nation on the other
hand is considered the summum of patriotism. The author condemns that the
valorisation of literature is all too often linked to its entertainment factor or to its level
of compliance to the wishes and ambitions of the ruling class, instead of its artistic quality
or its ability to serve as a critical reflection of society.

As a counterweight to the expectations of the establishment, the article presents
Cankar, who does not give in to societal pressure and uses his literary work to give an
accurate representation of the nation, in which he also addresses, criticizes and opposes
the problems and restrictions he observes around him182. Cankar is described as “a
rebellious and restless soul183” who yearns “for higher forms of life184” but is constantly
confronted with the limitations of tradition, “the cage in which the human beast was
imprisoned thousands of years ago185” (Савин SM 1908(1/1): 32, SM 1911(3/1): 14-15). The
article uses the image of the ancient cage to refer to a continuous sequence of idols –

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181 На литературу большей частью смотрят, как на развлечение как на десерт после плотного обеда [...];
если писатель не принадлежит к их лагерю, то – Бог с ним – он никуда не годится. Если же наоборот, то
раздаются похвалы, хлопанье, поднимается фимиам: десерт вкусен, даже если его изготовила
нечистоплотная и бездарная кухарка, конечно, есть некоторые условия, которые обязательно
предъявляются: 1) Десерт должен пахнуть патриотизмом. 2) Он должен быть моральным, даже немного
поучительным, ибо неморальный десерт опасен для души и нравственности, к тому же портить и
желудок порядочного человека. 3) Уважение власти, божьей, и человеческой, равнообраз и
уважение ко всем традиционным народным “святынями”. 4) Высоких проблем и материи важных не
касаться: от последних всегда бывает дурной сон, а первая добродетель порядочного человека и
образцового гражданина – это хорошее пищеварение и хороший сон.

182 Cankar indeed actively resisted the demand by the clerical-peasant political majority to use literature to
disseminate a conservative take on cultural and social issues. Instead he openly addressed the gap between the
fashionable society and the exploited workers (Slodnjak 1981: 187-188).

183 [...] душамятежная и беспокойная [...].

184 [...] по более высоким формам жизни [...].

185 [...] клетка, в которую заключили человека-зверя тысячи лет тому назад.
religion, the institution of the church, money, etc. – that keep humanity in their grip and disable men’s critical thinking and thus block the way to a better and freer future.

The contrast between the ideal “patriotic” image focused on a sense of superiority which is expected by the establishment and the more honest “rebellious” image of Cankar reminds of the contrast between zoological and defensive/revolutionary patriotism that comes to the fore in Lavrin’s later work. The idea that national development should be aimed at a better humanity, in the first place requires a critical attitude towards the nation itself. Savin applauds how Cankar’s work, in line with ‘Creative Work (Art)’, rejects the positive picture painted by the Slovene establishment as disharmonious: Cankar removes “the mask from a rotten corpse, and under it he sees one terrible, disgusting ulcer...” (Савин SM 1909(2/1): 29, similar in SM 1911(3/2-3): 21). Cankar’s attitude reveals, states the author, that keeping up the appearance of superiority actually leads to a reverse result as it prevents society’s further development and causes “spiritual and intellectual poverty” (SM 1911(3/2-3): 21). Savin interprets Cankar’s work as an accusation of everyone who cultivates the cage of tradition because it only serves personal interests:

Various ‘patriots’, saving the people with empty phrases and blind patriotism, ‘leaders of the people’ with an important bearing, whose ‘patriotic’ activity becomes the more zealous the more they need money. Hypocritical moralists, especially clerics. (Савин SM 1909(1/2): 30, SM 1911(3/2-3): 22)

As the quotation marks and the expression “blind patriotism” indicate, Savin does not interpret the patriotism of the establishment as love for the nation, but rather as a new idol used to maintain the same traditional interpretation of society, and especially its own comfortable position within it, in spite of the changing times.

Scraping of the veneer of virtuousness and exposing the problems in society should, however, according to Savin, never be the only goal of literature. The critical function of literature should be aimed at (cultural) growth and enable change:

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186 маска с гнилого трупа, и под нее видит он одну ужасную, отвратительную язву...
187 [...] душевное и интеллектуальное убожество [...].
188 Разные патриоты, спасающие народ трескучими фразами и квасным патриотизмом, вожди народа с важной осанкой, патриотическая деятельность которых тем усерднее, чем более нуждается их карман; лицемеры-моралисты, в особенности клирекалы.
The task of all creativity [...] is the creation of a new man, and truly give new strength, new hopes, and not take them away from him [man – T.G.].

This remark immediately shows the risk of critical art: when an author has revealed the ulcer that lies beneath the respectable mask of society, he should still be able to offer some perspective to the reader. This risk is inherently connected to the assessment of Cankar’s literary work in the periodical. The article describes the protagonists in Cankar’s prose – not very different from its description of the Slovene himself – as dreamers, adventurers and rebels who resist the cage around them (SM 1908(1/1): 33, SM 1911(3/1): 17). Despite (or maybe because of) their resistance, the protagonists typically succumb to the pressure of their surroundings. Their life is presented as “the way of the cross to Golgotha, were the only salvation – death – awaits them...” (Савин SM 1908(1/1): 34, SM 1911(1/1): 18). Such a pessimistic representation of the potential success of resistance makes Savin wonder whether Cankar’s critique actually can incite new strength and hope. The importance of this question appears from the significantly different answer in the two versions of the article: negative in 1909 and positive in 1911.

The 1909 version considers Cankar’s work as too pessimistic. The author argues that the fact that Cankar’s heroes systematically perish during their quest for a better world makes his work one of the many symptoms of an era and a society in decay, “the expression of confusion, lethargy, weakness, frustration and despair, unsuccessfully wandering through this labyrinth” (Савин SM 1909(1/1): 29). In the 1911 version, however, Savin rules that the pessimism of Cankar really needs to be interpreted as an inspiration for more creative and cultural work.

This new conclusion is based on the polemical essayistic work White Chrysanthemum (Bela Krizantema, 1910), in which Cankar himself engages with the alleged pessimism of his work. First, he refutes the criticism of many fellow countrymen that his tendency to address the problems in Slovene society is unpatriotic. Cankar answers them that it is his very love for Slovenia that makes him question its façade and search for the truth (Cankar 1910). One should not love the nation, he holds, “like a whiny child clinging to its mother’s lap”, but should embrace its “defiled beauty [...] with sorrow and anger at heart”.

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189 Задача всякого творчества [...] – созидание нового человека, а настоящему дать новые сила, новые надежды, а не отнимать их у него...
190 [...] выражение растерянности, вялости, немощи, разочарования и отчаяния бесплодно блуждающих по этому лабиринту.
191 [...] kakor cmerav otrok, ki se drži matere za krilo [...].
192 [...] oskrunjeno lepoto [...] z žalostjo in srdom v srcu.
(Cankar 1910: 57-58). Savin quotes one specific passage from Cankar’s essay that shows that the writer intends his negative depiction of Slovene society as a wake-up call, so as to make it long for a better future:

I pictured a night, empty, grey, full of shame and sorrow, so that my eyes would long more and more for pure light. Therefore, my word, however hard and cruel it may be, is the word of hope and faith...¹⁹³ (Cankar 1910, cited in Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 28)

In consequence of this confession, Savin changes his interpretation of the symbolic value of Cankar’s heroes. He no longer considers them as pitiful, but rather as admirable pioneers: “firstlings” (“первенцы”), the first who tried to overcome the hard way of the cross over Golgotha, not to find salvation in death, but to go “towards a bright dawn” (“светлой заре навстречу”) and to lay the way for “the distant generations who will see this dawn”¹⁹⁴ (Савин, SM 1911(3/2-3): 29). The Christian metaphor is thus used to underline that being critical may be difficult and hard, but is not futile.

The 1911 version of the article disseminates the idea that the double function of critical art – exposing reality and giving perspective, – is essential for the realization of a better future where nations and eventually humanity as a whole can rise above the problems of fin-de-siècle society. Savin does not specify which better future Cankar shapes in his work. He does emphasize however, that the strength of Cankar’s future-oriented art lays in his ability to tackle problems that are not typical for Slovenia but have a more European or even universal nature with an approach rooted in the nation:

The homeland for him [Cankar] is the soil where all the roots of his inspiration and his artistic talent grow, and it seems to those who investigate his works that without it he would be a branch cut off from the trunk that gives life-giving juices, constant growth and flower.¹⁹⁵ (Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 19-20)

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¹⁹³ Я изображал ночь, пустую, серую, полную стыда и горя, чтобы глаза тем сильнее затосковали по чистому свету. Поэтому мое слово, как оно ни твердо и жестоко – слово надежды и веры...

¹⁹⁴ [...] те далекие поколения, которые увидят эту зарю.

¹⁹⁵ Родина для него та почва, где растут все корни его вдохновения, его художественного таланта, и вникающему в его произведения кажется, что без нее он был бы веткой, отрезанной от ствола, дающего живительные соки, постоянный рост и расцвет.
When in his soul the national idea seriously collided with the universal, the latter did not eat the former, but only deepened and ennobled it...\footnote{Когда в его душе серьезно столкнулась национальная идея с общечеловеческой, то последняя не съела первой, а только углубила, облагородила ее...} (Савин SM 1911(3/2): 21)

This emphasis reinforces the idea of Slavyansky mir's universal essentialism. It suggests that the societal problems that occur everywhere in Europe will best be solved with a collective effort: every national society has to use its national art to develop its own particular approach to these problems. The article's presentation of Cankar seems to serve as a call to other artists, and specifically authors, to resist the cage perpetuated by the political and economic establishment and address the universal, perceivably unpatriotic themes in their nationally inspired works.

### 8.3 The “Firstlings” in Contemporary Slavic Literature

The two criteria that Savin uses to assess Cankar’s work – does the author provide a critical reflection of modern society and is s/he able to complement that criticism with the perspective of a different future – are an implicit but essential part of articles on contemporary literature in Slavyansky mir. The typical fin-de-siècle literature which indulges in the darkness of the times, or which, inversely, is used to flee such a life altogether, is consequently challenged. The negative assessments of Cankar’s all too gloomy depiction of the world around him in 1909 is a first example hereof. Another clear example is an evaluation of the oeuvre of the Russian modernist Leonid Andreyev (Костеж SM 1908(1/1)) which appears in 1908. The title of the article, “The Poet of “Horror and Abyss”” (‘Поэт “ужаса и бездны”’) is already telling. Andreyev is presented as an author who has a very dark outlook on life:

> He stripped man from his artificial clothes to the very bone, to the beast, and told the story, the tale, of the deeds of this monster, having brought the horrified reader immediately to the very edge of the abyss.\footnote{Он ободрал человека с его искусственных одежд до самого скелета, до зверя, и повел рассказ, повесть, деянний этого зверя, поставив ужаснувшегося читателя сразу на самый край пропасти.} (Костеж SM 1908(1/1): 42)
Andreyev, just like Cankar, reveals what hides beneath the mask of good appearances, and thus, one may argue, fulfils the first criterion of critical literature. Kostezh, the author of the article, however, implies that Andreyev’s work does not meet the second criterion at all because it reveals such a pessimistic world view that it deprives the reader of hope instead of suggesting a possibly better future. He is even happy to finalize the article and to get rid of his horrifying topic as the dramatic ending of the article conveys: “We are tired of re-experiencing all these horrors while writing this article... and we are happy to put an end to it” (Костеж SM 1908(1/1): 43).

The opposite tendency of many fin-de-siècle artists, namely to turn away from the darker aspects of modernity in escapist literature or aestheticism, is problematized as well. The article ‘Bulgarian Literature’ for instance contrasts Slaveykov’s exemplary rooted literature with “the new trend of ‘the decadents’, which is torn away from the people’s life” (Дилянов SM 1910(2/1): 12). Also an obituary for the Croatian author Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević condemns that the decadents got caught in a feeling of “despair” (“безысходность”) and reacted to it by trying to “separate themselves from life” (“отделиться от жизни”, Л.С. SM 1909(1/2): 32). Just like merely reflecting the sceptic and pessimistic atmosphere, indulging in escapist delights makes it impossible to propose positive, future-oriented ideas.

Contemporary authors whose perceived intention is to find a solution for the problems their literature addresses receive critical acclaim of Slavyansky mir’s contributors. An important element in the assessment of this search, as was already suggested in Savin’s article on Cankar, is the author’s ability to address these universal, allegedly unpatriotic problems from a national perspective. This comes explicitly to the fore in the assessment of Kranjčević’s oeuvre. The Croat is considered “one of those Southern Slavic poets who can be called European” (Л.С. SM 1909(1/2): 32). The Europeanness of Kranjčević is not used as a reference to imitative behaviour or Westernization. On the contrary, the article uses the adjective “European” to emphasize that his literature addresses universal problems from a Croatian perspective. It explains that Kranjčević goes beyond the Croatian Realists who

for the first time made a very successful attempt to Europeanize Croatian literature, i.e. to take away its narrow local colour, to destroy the Chinese wall that separated

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198 [...] мы уже устали от вторичного переживания всех этих ужасов при писание этой статьи... и с удовольствием ставим точку.
199 [...] новое направление ‘декадентов’, которое является оторванным от народной жизни.
200 [...] один из тех южно-славянских поэтов, которого можно назвать европейским [...].
the Croats from the intellectual and social life of Europe, to present modern problems before the eyes of society and try to resolve them as far as possible.\textsuperscript{201} (J.L.C. SM 1909(1/2): 32)

The wholly favourable review of Kranjčević’s approach to modern problems is rather exceptional. In most cases, the contributors to Slavyansky mir consider attempts to address universal problems with a rooted approach as inadequate. This does not mean that the authors that make these attempts are dismissed. Just like the protagonists in Cankar’s oeuvre, they are treated as “firstlings”, as pioneers in the pursuit of a better development of their national society and, by extension, humanity.

One of the pioneers that is addressed in the periodical is Anton Aškerc, another Slovene author who is active at the turn of the century. A review of his then recently published bundle of poems, \textit{Acropolis and the Pyramids} (1910), first presents the poet as an exemplary, unwavering author who, like Cankar, successfully resists the expectations of the national establishment (Савин SM 1910(2/1)). Aškerc is a former priest, who renounced several then dominant ideas within the Catholic church, like the infallibility of the Pope and the need to subordinate nationality to religion. The review applauds the critical and independent mindset that emanates from his early work, which is reflected in this description of Aškerc’ muse:

\textup{The muse of the best Slovene epic, Aškerc, distinguishes herself by directness, courage, vivacity and freshness. She does not know any posing, she is alien to the affectation that recently became in fashion; she does not look like the pale, city girl, tired of herself and life, but like a strong, cheerful and bellicose Montenegrin woman, – as the poet says himself.\textsuperscript{202} (Савин SM 1910(2/1): 35)}

The comparison between the sickly city girl and the healthy Montenegrin woman plays with the contrast between the degeneration of the city and the purity of the country side. The references to form and style in the fragment – the ennui associated with decadent literature versus the vivacity in the work of the Slovene poet, – reinforce this contrast

\textsuperscript{201} [...] впервые сделали очень удачную попытку европеизировать хорватскую литературу, т.е. отнять от неё узкую местную окраску, разрушить китайскую стену, которая отделяла хорватов от интеллектуальной и социальной жизни Европы, поставить перед глазами общества современные проблемы и пытаться по возможности их разрешить.

\textsuperscript{202} Муза лучшего словинского эпика Ашкерца отличается прямотой, смелостью, бодростью и свежестью. Она не знает никакой рисовки, ей чуждо кривлянье, вошедшее в последнее время везде так сильно в моду; она похожа не на бледную, от себя и от жизни усталую городскую барышню но на крепкую, жизнерадостную, воинственную черногорку, – как сам поэт говорит
and help to underline that Aškerc’s early critical work does not react to the problems of modernity by indulging in pessimism or by retreating into a subjective world like many decadents do, but on the contrary exposes these problems in a nationally inspired work. Put differently, it implies that Aškerc addresses universal problems from a standpoint firmly rooted in South Slavic soil.

The reviewer deems Aškerc’s approach to the problems of modernity in his later work less convincing. The less enthusiastic reception of Acropolis and the Pyramids seems to be related to Aškerc’s use of exotic themes: his presentation of Egypt allegedly shows “oriental colours, but no oriental brightness nor temperament” while his account of Greece does not represent “the real soul of the ancient Hellenes […] he only tried to weave contemporary ideas into Hellenistic and oriental motifs” (Савин SM 1910(2/1): 36). This suggests that the superficial appropriation of foreign form in the bundle is considered as a signal of a more detached approach to these contemporary ideas. Paradoxically, because of this vague international veneer, the message of Aškerc’s later work is considered simultaneously less national and less universal.

A similar assessment recurs in the periodical’s treatment of the work of the Polish poet Maria Konopnicka. The obituary ‘In Memory of Konopnicka’ (‘Памяти Конопницкой’, А. Я. SM 1910(2/10-11)) mainly focuses on the critical attitude of the poet: both in her daily life and in her work Konopnicka challenged the gap between the mighty few and the poor masses, and advocated for the rights of the common man (A. Я. SM 1910(2/10-11): 2-7). Like Aškerc, the Polish poet is applauded because her work exposes and “rejects what is disharmonious”. The obituary concludes with a false note, however, when its author, a certain A. Ya., assesses the style Konopnicka uses to disseminate her ideas:

And it is remarkable that the landscapes of Konopnicka still do not breath the breath of the Polish ‘wsi’ (-villages), like those of other Polish poets. She is too international, like all socialism, so akin to her in spirit. (A. Я. SM 1910(2/10-11): 7)

Even though Konopnicka was already recognized during her life as a nationalist poet (Stauter-Halsted 2004: 112), the author questions the rootedness of Konopnicka’s work.

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203 [...] восточные краски, но нет восточной яркости, темперамента.
204 [...] настоящая душа древнего эллина [...] только старался вплести современные мысли в эллинские и восточные мотивы.
205 И замечательно, что пейзажи Конопницкой все-таки не дышат дыханием польской “вси” (-деревни), как у других польских поэтов. Она – слишком интернациональна, как и весь социализм, столь родственный ей по духу.
206 Konopnicka’s depiction of the struggling peasant and the peasant village was and is commonly considered as a metaphor for national strength (Stauter-Halsted 2004: 112).
Whether his remark is right or wrong is not important for this analysis, it is significant, however, that the comment of A. Ya. is based on an allegedly unconvincing combination of international ideas and national form. Contrary to the assessment of the latest work of Aškerc which suggests that the adoption of a foreign aesthetic serves as a symbol of a decreased connection with life, the concluding remark about Konopnicka’s oeuvre suggests that the international character of the ideas she disseminates has prevented a form of art that is more rooted in the nation and life. The article suggests that the Polish motifs in her stories are mere decorations and could easily be replaced with the national traits of another people. In the collision of the national with the universal in Konopnicka’s work, the latter does not reinforce the first, as is the case in the work of Cankar, but overshadows it. Moreover, the reference to socialism implies that the (perceived) instrumentalization of literature for a political or economic ideology (even if it transcends the nation) is considered as a sign of unbalanced development.

Also Lev Tolstoy’s critical attitude towards modernity is evaluated in a similar way. In the two-part article ‘On the Problem of Tolstoy’ (‘О проблеме Толстого’, SM 1910(2/10-11): 23-26, SM 1910(2/12): 1-7), on the occasion of his death in November 1910, Kostezh explores the creative process of the writer. Especially the assessment of the relation of Tolstoy’s independent thinking and his art catches the eye. On the one hand, Kostezh presents Tolstoy’s ability to steer his own course as exemplary: “What a magnificent and classic example of individualism for the 19th century!”

In his searches, Tolstoy did not proceed from a concrete or an abstract reality, as a scientist or a thinker would have done, but from a world aesthetically prepared by himself. In his searches, Tolstoy did not proceed from a concrete or an abstract reality, as a scientist or a thinker would have done, but from a world aesthetically prepared by himself.

Kostezh seems to consider the alternative vision of society reflected in Tolstoy’s work (especially his later, more spiritually inspired work) less successful because it is built within an imagined world that meets Tolstoy’s own particular vision of beauty and what is good, and is no longer connected to actual life itself. The negative assessment of

207 Какой великолепный, классический образец индивидуализма для XIX века!
208 [...] отшельника, ушедшего от жизни, чтобы углубиться в свое личное дело духовного подвига.
209 В своих исканиях Толстой исходил не от конкретной или отвлеченной действительности, как это сделал бы ученый или мыслитель, а от мира, эстетически препарированного им самим.
Tolstoy’s imaginary world in a way resembles the periodical’s aversion to the escapism of the decadents. This isolated approach seems to cut Tolstoy’s vision of the future off from both the national and the universal. Nevertheless, Kostezh acknowledges the significance of Tolstoy’s achievements and commends his search as a good basis for cultural work:

Tolstoy was not an inspired visionary, he did not possess a prophetic gift, that timeless fiery word in which all the elements of life invisibly intertwine, nursing the germs of all kinds of seedlings for the future. [...] [He was] a selfless worker who cleared the cultural field of his time for the best crops of the future.210 (Костеж 1910(2/12): 7)

In other words, also Tolstoy is considered a “firstling”, an astonishing pioneer who critically addressed the problems of the fin-de-siècle society, but no more than a pioneer because his detached approach cannot lead to a solution for these problems.

Lastly, next to the literary criticism in the publicist section, also in the literary section there is attention to authors who are resisting the “cage of society”. About 40% of the selected works, mostly prose, are critical about the ‘universal’ problems of modern society and can potentially serve as a laboratory to find answers to these problems. Cankar’s work, for example, is regularly included. Although only the second version of ‘Portraits of Slavic Authors. Ivan Cankar’ in 1911 explicitly points out Cankar’s exemplary role, it is clear that the editors of Slavyansky mir esteemed his work throughout the periodical’s entire run. In nine (out of fourteen) issues of the periodical a fragment of Cankar’s work is added to the literary section211. The selected works mostly address the hypocrisy and ignorance of the elite and society in general.

Critique of the elite and the bourgeoisie, and specifically bureaucracy is also the central theme in the satiric short stories The Thirteenth (Тринадцатый, SM 1908(1/1): 14-21) and Maksim (Максим, SM 1909(1/2): 3-6) written by the then young Serbian playwright Branislav Nušić. Maksim for example tells the story of the transformation of a donkey into a human being who then starts to work as an official, in his eyes the most comfortable way of life. The literary section also contains works of Ivan Vazov that satirically address

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210 Толстой не был вдохновенным провидцем, не владел пророческим даром, тем непреходящим огненным словом, в котором незримо скрешиваются все элементы жизни, тая в себя зародыши всевозможных всходов для будущего. [...] [Он был] самоотверженным работником, очищавшим культурную ниву своего времени для лучших посевов будущего.

211 The Ward of Mary, Help of Christians (SM 1908(1/1) SM 1909(1/2)), Ada (SM 1910(2/1)), A Spring Night (SM 1910(2/2)), The Wishbone (SM 1910(2/5-6)), Autumn Nights (SM 1910(2/10-11)), King Malhus (SM 1911(3/1), SM 1911(3/2-3)), The Dead Do Not Want (SM 1911(3/4-5)).
similar problems: his *The Future Literary “Circle”* (Будущий Литературный “Кружок”, SM 1908(1/1): 28-31) lampoons the jealousy and gossip among a group of intellectuals, while *Mourning* (Траур, 1910(2/7-8): 49-52) satirizes the fashion addiction of a young woman.

The fact that the collective believes that unmasking the problems in society should go hand in hand with the search for a way to overcome those problems comes to the fore in the literary section as well. This seems to be implied by the selection of several works from members of the movement Young Poland (Młoda Polska). The literary section features works from among others the symbolist poet Jan Kasprowicz, the impressionist Maryla Wolska, and the society critical poet Włodzimierz Perzyński. At first glance, their presence in the literary section seems rather odd as the literary vision of the Young Poles has little in common with the collective of Slavyansky mir: the literary currents many representatives of Young Poland adhere to – l’art pour l’art, decadence, mysticism (Miłosz 1983: 322-325) – are escapist reactions to the problems of society. Young Poland is however more than a literary movement, its representatives shared certain ideas about the role of art in society that indeed show similarities with Slavyansky mir. First and foremost, Młoda Polska revived Polish patriotism: according to the movement the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 had proven that Russia was not invincible and that Polish independence could actually become a reality (Ibid.: 326). The poems of Kasprowicz for example regularly address problems on the Polish countryside in order to call the reader to action. A good example from the literary section is his poem *The Pilgrims* (Странники, SM 1911(3/2-3): 31), which tells of poor begging pilgrims passing through a village. Second, several members of the movement, like Perzyński, often targeted the philistine bourgeois, whom they perceived as an obstacle in the development of a better society (Miłosz 1983: 327). Third, and maybe most important, Young Poland believed, despite its rather pessimistic world view, that art can create new values in a world that is bereft of them (Ibid.). The combination of nationalism, a critical attitude towards modern societal problems and the belief that literature may help solve these problems explains the interest of the editorial board in their work.

### 8.4 Lavrin and Civilized Barbarism

The idea that culture in general and literature in particular should serve as a kind of moral checks and balances for the development of the nation plays a central role in the work Lavrin published after the discontinuation of Slavyansky mir. Whereas the collective of Slavyansky mir mainly focused on the role of critical literature for tackling societal
problems, Lavrin mostly addresses the role of culture as a whole, of which literature is but one, but nonetheless important aspect. This appears for example from Lavrin’s assessment of revival literature in his article ‘Czech Literature’ for Bayan. Just like some contributors to Slavyansky mir, Lavrin is lenient towards the instrumentalization of poetry by the revolutionaries. He even considers it necessary at that moment in time: “while the danger of national death loomed over them [the Czechs - TG], poetry did not even have the right to separate itself from politics" (Лаврин 1912б: 436). Nonetheless, Lavrin repeats the assessment that subservience of literature to political activism reduces its artistic quality, but, different than in Slavyansky mir, he frames it as a sacrifice for the greater good of culture as a whole:

So, at the very beginning it [literature – T.G.] becomes not the goal, but a means: it has its own mission, it is tendentious, it serves the idea of national self-awareness, national revival. For a very long time this remained a trait of Czech literature, partly until very recently. Literature itself has lost because of it, but therefore culture in general has won. (Лаврин 1912б: 418)

From a passage further down the article appears that Lavrin believes that this “sacrifice” of literature facilitated the re-emergence of a healthy Czech nation, both on a political and a cultural level, where political ambition was balanced by “philosophical, ethical and religious concerns” (Лаврин 1912б: 427).

For Lavrin it becomes a problem when not only literature, but culture as a whole is increasingly regarded as a means to support political and economic ambitions, an evolution he observes in fin-de-siècle Czechia where “flat liberalism, materialism and bourgeois-national opportunism” became the cultural norm (Лаврин 1912б: 427). In 1913, in the essay ‘The Slavic Question and Artistic-Literary Unification’ Lavrin coins the term “civilized barbarism” (“варварство цивилизованное”) to name the state of moral degeneration in highly civilized nations where political and economic ambitions hijack further cultural development (Лаврин 2011 [1913]: 189). Although the Czech example suggests that Lavrin observes this phenomenon in Eastern-Europe as well, he mainly uses

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212 Пока над ними висела опасность национальной смерти, поэзия даже не имела права отделиться от политики.
213 Итак, в самом начале она становится не целью, а средством; она имеет свою миссию, она тенденциозна, она служит идее национального самосознания, национального возрождения. Эта черта в чешской литературе осталась очень долго, отчасти до самого последнего времени. Сама литература этим проиграла, но за то выиграла культура вообще.
214 [...] философские, этические и религиозные задачи [...].
215 [...] плоский либерализм, материализм и буржуазно-национальный оппортунизм.
this term to contrast the development of Western-European societies to those in the Slavic world and to hint at a potentially messianic role for Slavic nations. This appears from his assessment of the two possible tracks he envisions for the future development of Slavic nations. (1) The easiest and most pleasant path for future development, Lavrin suggests, is copying European “culture” (between quotation marks in the text!) and becoming a slave of “hopeless, cosy and decent European philistinism” (2011 [1913]: 193). He believes this path would result not only in the loss of national (and group) identity, but especially in the loss of the critical reflection provided by culture that enables an ethical future (Ibid.). (2) The second path Lavrin sees – the most responsible, but at the same time unpleasant and difficult choice, – consists in developing Slavic nations that are guided by culture instead of politics or economics. By taking the second path, the Slavic world would be able to save Europe and humanity by “turning the wheel of history from fake to real culture” (Ibid.: 194).

Lavrin thus comes back to the idea of universal essentialism and underlines that the Slavic world should play its own distinctive role within humanity in order to achieve the best result and to set a different example for the “civilized barbaric” course many (Western-European) nations are steering. By suggesting that the Slavic world – if it avoids the pitfall of civilized barbarism – will play a more central role in the history of humanity, Lavrin in a way tries to reverse the idea of the Slavic world as Europe’s periphery. He suggests that the path Slavic nations will take will determine whether humanity will be governed by the pursuit of political and economic gain, or by the pursuit of higher ethics, morality and art. His enthusiastic assessment of Tomáš Masaryk in the article ‘Czech Literature’ suggests that he observes some hopeful signals that indicate that the Slavic world might be able to play such a role in the future (Лаврин 1912б: 433). Lavrin is particularly pleased by the choice of the Czech philosopher and politician to use his Realist Party to reconcile the cultural and political development of his people and to

216 [...] безнадёжное, уютное и приличное европейское мещанство [...].
217 [...] повернуть руль истории в стороны не поддельной, а действительной культуры.
218 Tomáš Masaryk indeed disseminated ideas that are similar and compatible to Lavrin’s. According to David Ayers, Masaryk used his cultural background to emphasize how the Czech nation always had developed in a transnational context. He adds that it was typical for Masaryk to project his idea of the nation within an international imagery (2018: 41).
When it comes to exposing and meeting these “contemporary requirements” Lavrin turns away from culture as a whole to literature in particular and its ability to critically reflect society. For Lavrin, like in Slavyansky mir, critical literature should break through the ideal image of the nation and enable an accurate representation of society, including the universal problems it is facing. In ‘Czech Literature’, he explains that the dominant “ideological-patriotic trend” (“идеино-патриотическое направление”) should shift its centre of gravity to the search of a synthesis of the people’s soul and the cosmopolitan [trend], which is still slightly misunderstood [...] This is where both trends can meet and create a “cosmopolitan” literature on a purely national basis... (Лаврин 1912б: 437)

This vision of a rooted cosmopolitan literature (earlier in the article, Lavrin explains that he uses the word cosmopolitanism to denote international, universal themes like social equality (1912б: 424)) is reminiscent of the description of Cankar’s oeuvre as a successful synthesis of national literature and universal themes in Slavyansky mir in 1911 (cf. 8.2).

In the above fragment, Lavrin underlines that national art should open up to universal problems and themes. At other instances, however, he warns not to take this too far. This appears for example from his assessments of the literature of Josef Machar and Anton Aškerc in Bayan. Lavrin values their independent literature because it exposes the societal problems caused and reinforced by the national establishment’s pursuit of political and economic gain (Лаврин 1912б: 435; Лаврин 1912а: 341). Simultaneously, however, he warns for the pitfall of such a critical attitude. In the case of Machar, Lavrin states that “Machar-the-publicist is the greatest enemy of Machar-the-poet” (1912б: 437). In his assessment of Aškerc’, then, he is less fond of the poet’s later work because the initially objective poetry becomes “more and more ideological” (“все более идейной”, Лаврин 1912а: 341). These remarks suggest that the critical function of literature should remain a side effect and should not become the author’s main goal. This is probably related to the fact that in the latter case, literature is reduced to an instrument of political or ideological...
activism. As is the case with literature that is written to keep up the appearance of the ideal nation, also ideological literature has lost its independence and cannot represent reality in an accurate and assessible way. Moreover, Lavrin warns in his 1913 essay about cultural rapprochement that universal themes might overshadow national authenticity:

Culture cannot be international, only civilization [and the problems related to it – TG] is international. [...] Racial individuality must either process, or remelt all extraneous influences, or succumb to them, disappear and give way to a more powerful racial organism.222 (Лаврин 2011 [1913]: 189. Italics in original.)

Central in Lavrin’s argumentation are synthesis and balance. Nations should be able to create a national culture that can form a counterweight for the degenerating influence of civilization, or make an amalgamation of national and universal themes.

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222 Культура не может быть интернациональной, интернациональной является лишь цивилизация. [...] Расовая индивидуальность должна или переработать, переплавить все посторонние влияния, или же поддаться им, исчезнуть и уступить место более сильному расовому организму.
Chapter 9  

*Albanskiye Eksizy – a Conservative Turn?*

When the First World War starts, what appears to be the most ambiguous period of Lavrin’s Russian career commences. On the one hand, Lavrin is still associated with progressive cultural circles. During the war he is especially involved in the small avant-garde collective Bloodless Murder which had a liberal, pacifist world view. On the other hand, Lavrin starts to work as a war correspondent in the Balkans for *The New Time*, one of the main state-oriented, conservative and antisemitic newspapers in Russia at the time. In the first years of the war the two different worlds in which Lavrin moves do not intersect. In 1916, the two worlds do collide after Lavrin published the travelogue *Albanskiye Eksizy* based on his experiences on the Balkan peninsula. Bloodless Murder reacts to it with a satirical issue of its eponymous periodical, entitled ‘Albanian Issue’ (‘Албанский выпуск’, 2011 [1916]). The issue contains a fictitious biography of Lavrin which ridicules his travelogue and his connection with *The New Time*. In turn, ‘The Albanian Issue’ inspires the Futurist Ilya Zdanevich to write his first transrational play *Yanko King of the Albanians* (Янко Круль Албанскай, 2008 [1918]) which further lampoons Lavrin’s activities in the first half of the First World War.

The confrontation between these two worlds has led several scholars to pigeonhole Lavrin as a reactionary Russophile. Scholars like Marzaduri (1990), Odessky (2010) and Katsis (2010), who have addressed the connection between *Albanskiye eksizy*, Bloodless Murder’s ‘Albanian Issue’ and Zdanevich’s transrational play, claim that it were the different positions of Lavrin and his avant-gardist friends that made him an object of derision. (This view recurs in the work of scholars such as Jones and Ljunggren, who have

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223 *Yanko King of the Albanians* premiered in December 1916 in the studio of Mikhail Bernstein, one of the members of Bloodless Murder. Although Zdanevich planned to publish the play soon afterwards, he was not allowed to publish it until 1918 due to war censorship.
based their account of this period on Marzaduri’s work (Jones 2009: 26-27, Ljunggren 2014: 59). Marzaduri, who was the first to address the three works, calls Lavrin a “passionate Pan-Slavist” (“ярый панславянофил”, 1990: 24) and adds that Bloodless Murder satirizes (among others) Lavrin’s alleged “megalomania” (“мания величия”, 1990: 39). Odessky and Katsis, then, who scrutinize Lavrin and the travelogue through the lens of Yanko King of the Albanians, emphasize the apparent dichotomy between the conservative world view of Lavrin and the liberal world view of his avant-gardist friends. In doing this, they mainly contrast Lavrin’s collaboration with the reactionary New Time with Zdanevich’s work for the newspaper Speech (Речь), the mouthpiece of the liberal Kadet party (Одесский 2010: 490; Кацис 2010: 446). Marzaduri, Odessky and Katsis attribute a world view to Lavrin that is diametrically opposed to the one he disseminated in the early years of his career. Paradoxically, Odessky even uses the following description, which very closely resembles (aspects of) the anti-Russian criticism disseminated in Slavyansky mir, to label Lavrin as a supporter of Russian imperialism:

in contrast to the Pan-Slavist Lavrin, Zdanevich acted as an ‘incorrigible Russophobe’, which, according to R. Gayraud, implied ‘an irritation with the state mentality of an incredibly huge country that humiliates its neighbours and does not understand that by doing so it is dooming itself to constant crises’.224 (Одесский 2010: 490)

Marzaduri, Odessky and Katsis are probably not aware of this paradox as they generally disregard or only briefly mention Lavrin’s early Russian years. They approach Lavrin and Albanskiye eskizy exclusively via the satirical works of Bloodless Murder and Zdanevich. Therefore, they base their assessment of Lavrin and his travelogue mainly on the Slovene’s connection with The New Time, which is explicitly ridiculed by the avant-gardists. Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova, however, do pay attention to Lavrin’s earlier Russian work in their analysis of Bloodless Murder’s ‘Albanian Issue’. They repeatedly criticize this biased approach (2009, 2011б). They warn that analyses based on the satirical image of Lavrin put forward by Bloodless Murder work with “a fictitious character” (“namisljena oseba”), which does not do justice to the multifaceted nature of Lavrin as a real person (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 132). Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova add that the label Lavrin has obtained in such studies is one of the main reasons why Albanskiye eskizy itself has hardly received any scholarly attention.

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224 [...] в противоположность панслависту Лаврину - выступал как ‘неисправимый русофоб’, что, согласно Р. Гейро, подразумевало ‘раздражение государственным менталитетом невероятно огромны страны, которая унижает своих соседей и не понимает, что тем самым обрекает себя на постоянные кризисы’.
In this chapter I address the different facets of Lavrin’s career during the First World War. First, I go deeper into the two contrastive worlds Lavrin adheres to, in order to nuance Lavrin’s relation with The New Time and Bloodless Murder. The lion’s share of this chapter is devoted to Lavrin’s own account of his activities as a war correspondent, as it is expressed in the travelogue Albanskiye eskiy. I investigate whether the travelogue indeed shows that Lavrin takes a conservative turn, as the ridicule by his avant-gardist friends and the conclusions of some contemporary scholars seem to suggest, or whether there are continuities with his earlier, more progressive work.

9.1 Lavrin and The New Time – Seizing Opportunities

Before Lavrin started working as a war correspondent for The New Time, he was sent to the Balkans a first time by the General Staff of the Russian army. In September 1914, he was asked to travel through Austria-Hungary to Italy to spread (or even smuggle) a proclamation of the General Staff to the Slavic minorities in the area (Pleterski 2001: 186). Although Lavrin was critical of the Russian regime, it is reasonable to assume that he saw this mission as an opportunity to contribute to a real rapprochement between Slavic nations. Moreover, the mission, which lasted from the end of September until the end of December 1914, was also meant to support the Yugoslav independence movement, with which Lavrin already came into contact via Preporod. Lavrin succeeded to work together with, a.o. the Croats Ante Trumbić and Ivan Meštrović, and the Slovene Niko Županič, future members of the Yugoslav Committee in London, an organisation of Serbian, Croatian and Slovene emigrants that lobbied for the independence of Yugoslavia during the war (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 324).

Upon his return to Saint-Petersburg in early 1915, Lavrin was contacted by Mikhail Suvorin, the editor-in-chief of The New Time, one of the largest newspapers in Saint-Petersburg at the time²²⁵ (Pleterski 2001: 186). Suvorin asked him to work as a war-correspondent in the Balkan region to follow the Serbian authorities which had moved from Belgrade to Niš. Considering Lavrin’s earlier affiliation with the Russian opposition

²²⁵ The New Time had a circulation of 80,000 issues daily in 1915. In comparison, other Saint-Petersburg based newspapers like the Petersburg Leaflet (Петербургский листок) had a similar circulation of 88,500 issues, while The Petersburg Gazette (Петербургская газета) and The Stock Exchange Gazette (Биржевые ведомости) – which originally was a trade newspaper, but has a comparable content to other newspapers – had a circulation of respectively 50,000 and 52,000 issues in the same year (McReynolds 1991: 298).
via the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Unification and the liberal angle of Slavyansky mir, Lavrin’s choice to work for the conservative New Time seems rather strange. Both the revolutionary and the oppositional left viewed the newspaper negatively (Costello 1978: 34). Speech, the Saint-Petersburg newspaper which supported the Kadets (the Russian liberals), called The New Time a focus for “hoorah patriotism and zoological nationalism” (Ibid.). The New Time was thus perceived by Lavrin’s peers as a vehicle of the very world view Lavrin himself opposed to in previous years.

By the time Lavrin started working for The New Time, however, the newspaper’s support for the Russian government was waning. In the early twentieth century it increasingly criticized the tsarist regime and many of its contributors called for (gradual) reforms. The allegation of zoological nationalism is nevertheless not unfounded: the newspaper displayed a xenophobic attitude towards minorities in Russia and its border regions (Costello 1978: 36-37). It would therefore appear that Lavrin at least set aside some of his convictions when he started working for The New Time. However, it is reasonable to assume that Lavrin’s and the newspaper’s interests aligned in regard to the Balkan region: Lavrin’s criticism on the relationship between great powers and minorities would be mainly directed to Russia’s opponents, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The New Time gave him a chance to plea for “the case of the menaced Southern Slavs” (cf. 5.1) for an enormous Russian public. Moreover, only nationalist newspapers like The New Time maintained a slavophile rhetoric throughout the entire war (Zhdanova 2017). Such an orientation gave Lavrin a chance to pay attention to Slavic solidarity and Slavdom as a whole.

Late February 1915; Lavrin travelled to the Balkans and stayed there for about a year (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 325-327). During that time he interviewed several members of the Serbian government, among others the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, and the Minister of Internal Affairs, Ljubomir Jovanović (Ibid.). In the meantime, Lavrin took the time to travel the region and to visit unoccupied parts of Serbia, Albania and Montenegro. Lavrin’s first mission as a war correspondent ended dramatically when Bulgarian troops, who fought on the side of the Central Powers, invaded Serbia on 15 October 1915. The following months Lavrin fled from Niš to the Kosovan city Prizren and from there he crossed the Albanian mountains to finally end up in Thessaloniki (Ibid.: 327). Via Paris and London – where Lavrin again contacted the members of the now established Yugoslav Committee – Lavrin travelled back to Saint-Petersburg in January 1916. In November 1916, Lavrin resumed his job as a war correspondent for The New Time. He travelled to the Balkans again to follow the Serbian government, which now resided in Corfu (Ibid.: 329).

In his capacity of war correspondent, Lavrin published about seventeen interviews and telegrams in The New Time. Considering the context of wartime alliances and enmities,
and The New Time’s Slavophile angle, it is not surprising that these texts are full of anti-German discourse and praise for Russia as the “liberator and protector of Slavdom” (Лаврин 2011г [1915]: 243). Nevertheless, while this discourse may be seen as pro-Russian, this type of discourse at the same time lends itself well for a continuation of a couple of threads from Lavrin’s previous work addressing not Russia in particular, but the Slavic world as a whole. In Lavrin’s rendering of the interviews with Serbian dignitaries, the fight between Germany and Slavdom is presented as the continued struggle against the age-long oppression of Slavs in Austria-Hungary (Лаврин 2011г [1916]: 245). Moreover, his interviews contrast the struggle of the more ethical – and thus cultural – Slavs which is inspired by “Slavic ideals” (“славянские идеалы”, Лаврин 2011г [1915]: 239) with the German struggle “not inspired by ideals” (“не одухотворена идеалами”), but by “brute force” (“грубая сила”) and “militarism” (“милитаризм”, Ibid.: 240). The passages on Bulgaria’s alliance with the Central Powers, then, remind of Lavrin’s universal essentialist belief that the progress of the nation and the supra-national whole can (and should) be attuned: an interview with Jovanović for example problematizes that “the new Bulgaria was never Slavic, but merely Bulgarian” (Лаврин 2011б [1915]: 242). In other words, Bulgaria’s collaboration with the Central Powers was blamed on the fact that it put its own national welfare above the welfare of the Slavic world. One might argue that Lavrin’s interviews rendered the vision and ideas of the Serbian dignitaries he interviewed. Nevertheless, it is clear that Lavrin supported (most) of the content he disseminated. This is not only suggested by the overlap with themes from his previous work. It also appears from his plans to remain an advocate for Pašić’s Yugoslav cause upon his return to Russia. In an interview in 1972, Lavrin tells that his contact with Pašić in Corfu inspired him to plan the establishment of a new periodical (supported by Pašić) to increase Russian interest in the Yugoslav cause (Pleterski 2001: 188). Because of the many changes before the end of the war – both personal and geo-political – these plans were never fully developed.

In the nine months between his two missions as a war correspondent, Lavrin was asked by Suvorin to write down his adventures in the Balkans (Pleterski 2001: 187; Барановский & Хлебникова 2011а: 329). This resulted in Albanskiye eskizy, a travelogue of twelve chapters recounting his travels through the unoccupied parts of Albania, Montenegro and Serbia. In this travelogue, Lavrin hardly tells of his work as a war correspondent or his meetings with Serbian dignitaries, but instead focuses on the adventures he had along the way. The lion’s share of Albanskiye eskizy consists of his impressions of the “wild

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226 [...] освободительница и защитница славянства [...].

227 Новая Болгария никогда не была славянской, а всегда только болгарской.
9.2 Lavrin and Bloodless Murder – Ridicule as a Default Mode

Lavrin’s involvement with the Russian avant-garde already began in the years between the discontinuation of Slavyansky mir and the beginning of the First World War. In the previous chapters, Lavrin’s connection and collaboration with the Acmeist Gorodetsky has been discussed already. During this period, Lavrin got also acquainted with Velimir Khlebnikov. In the spring of 1913, the Futurist stayed in Lavrin’s apartment for about a month (Лаврин 1985: 98; Парнис 1992: 139; Jones 2009: 25). Just as was the case with Gorodetsky, the friendship between Khlebnikov and Lavrin was based on a shared interest in Slavic culture and folklore. The Futurist was enthused about Lavrin’s South Slavic origins and his knowledge of the cultural tradition of the region, which “was of considerable value to the poet in further developing his knowledge of non-Russian Slav cultures” (Jones 2009: 25). Allegedly, Lavrin even gave Khlebnikov the idea to change his first name Viktor to the South Slavic Velimir (Jones 2001: 75-76; Качис 2010: 446-447).

About a year earlier, Lavrin befriended Mikhail Le Dentu (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 314), a young painter who was involved with The Union of Youth (Союз молодежи, 1909-1914), the first society of the Russian avant-garde, and Donkey’s Tale (Ослиный хвост, 1912-1913), an association of Russian neo-primitive artists led by Mikhail Larionov and Natalya Goncharova. Via Le Dentu, Lavrin met the brothers Kirill and Ilya Zdanevich. Together they travelled through the Caucasus during the summer of 1912 (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 317-18). Like Le Dentu, the Zdanevich brothers were involved in several avant-garde groups. Kirill, the older of the two, was a painter and also contributed to Donkey’s Tail. Ilya, then, was a Futurist writer who became famous under the penname...
Illiazd and wrote, among others, several transrational zaum\textsuperscript{228} plays. Both brothers were active in Aleksey Kruchenykh’s Futurist group 41° (1918).

Le Dentu, Lavrin and Ilya Zdanevich were to larger or lesser extent involved in the small avant-garde collective Bloodless Murder. The collective was established by Le Dentu and the writer and musician Olga Leshkova. Apart from them, the nucleus of the group – some of them are depicted in the group portrait in Figure 7 – was formed by Lavrin and the visual artists Nikolay Lapshin, Vera Yermolayeva and Nikolay Yankin (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 117). Other active members were Mikhail Bernstein, Yekaterina Turova and Roza Levinson. Most of the members met while taking classes at the Archaeology Institute in Saint-Petersburg between 1911 and 1913 (Заинчковская 2008). Although Zdanevich was a close acquaintance of Le Dentu and Leshkova, and although it is sometimes suggested that Bloodless Murder revolved around him (e.g. Одесский 2010: 490), Zdanevich was only an occasional guest of the collective’s get-togethers and was not informed about all their creative activities (Марцадури 1990: 25).

\textsuperscript{228} Zaum, zaumny yazyk or transrational language are linguistic experiments by Russian Futurist poets like Velimir Khlebnikov, Aleksey Kruchenkh and Ilya Zdanevich. In these experiments they let go of the grammar and syntax rules that normally structure language and language creation. Instead they are guided by phonetic analogy and rhythm. In this way they aim to transcend the limitations of everyday language (Terras 1985: 530).
Figure 7 - Group portrait of the contributors to Bloodless Murder and their guests by Mikhail Le Dentu (1916). From left to right: Olga Leshkova, Janko Lavrin, Roza Levinson, Yekaterina Turova, Mikhail Le Dentu and Nikolay Lapshin talking in the background, and V.F. Lidtke and Nikolay Belotsvetov sharing a chair next to the piano (RGALI, f. 792, op. 3, ed. Khr. 15, l. 2).
Bloodless Murder published an eponymous hectographic periodical with absurd content which circulated among a limited readership (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 119). Each issue of Bloodless Murder is a satirical (bloodless) character assassination of one of the collective’s members. Most issues were a combination of illustrations by the visual artists in the group and an accompanying text, mostly written by Leshkova. The topics of Bloodless Murder were diverse. Leshkova wrote in a letter to the Saint-Petersburg archive, to which she donated most of her work\(^\text{229}\), that there were no thematical limitations for the periodical, as long as the issues could “annoy, take revenge or compromise someone\(^\text{230}\)” (Leshkova cited in Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 119). Leshkova added that whereas Bloodless Murder reflected real-life events, “as a rule, everything was exaggerated and perverted\(^\text{231}\)” (Ibid.).\(^\text{232}\)

Generally speaking, the artistic production of the collective hardly ever left the circle of friends in which it circulated. Nevertheless, the group did not act in a vacuum. In its issues, Bloodless Murder regularly dialogued with the content of satirical periodicals like Satirikon (Сатирикон) and The New Satirikon (Новый Сатирикон, Струкова 2018). The group even got an invitation to make a weekly contribution to The New Satirikon in 1916. This never happened because several of Bloodless Murder’s members were at the front when the group received this offer (Ibid.: 159).

From the material Leshkova donated to the archive it can be deducted that Bloodless Murder published more than eighteen issues of its little magazine. It is unclear how many issues have been created in total (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 119). The very first issue of Bloodless Murder got already published between 1911 and 1913. The issue, which has not been preserved in Leshkova’s archive, but is described in one of her texts, was titled ‘The Whore’ (‘Лахудра’), and was completely devoted to Lavrin. It allegedly focuses on his chaotic lifestyle and forgetfulness (Ibid.: 121). Leshkova’s description of ‘The Whore’ is a good illustration of the satirical tone of the collective. She hyperbolically states that the prosaic ‘The Whore’ was written “in order to compromise the reputation

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\(^{229}\) Currently Leshkova’s work and letters are held at the Russian State Archive for Literature and Art (RGALI) in Saint-Petersburg. It is not known to which archive she donated her archive at the time. RGALI’s predecessor, the Central State Archive for Literature and Art (TsGALI), was only established in 1941, while the donation was probably already made in 1935. Leshkova probably donated her work and letters to one of the older archives in the city which later were transferred to TsGALI.

\(^{230}\) […] кому-нибудь насолить, отомстить, кого-нибудь скомпрометировать.

\(^{231}\) […] но как правило — всё преувеличивалось, извращалось.

\(^{232}\) Marzaduri states that the work of Bloodless Murder in this sense anticipated the absurdist line which in the 1920s flourished in the works of among others the Oberiuty (1990: 23).
of the Serbian (! – T.G.) journalist Janko Lavrin and to poison his life” (Leshkova 1935, cited in Марцадури 1990: 120). Another illustration of the collective’s humoristic approach comes to the fore in the habit of its members to make fun of Lavrin’s name (to his dismay) by using the neuter form of the pronoun in referring to him – both in real life and in text – because his first name ends in an ‘o’ (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 120, Jones 2009: 27).

Bloodless Murder was most active during the First World War and published the majority of its issues between 1915 and 1916: among others an ‘Assyro-Babylonian Issue’ (‘Ассиро-Вавилонский выпуск’, 1916а), a ‘Fiji Island Issue’ (‘Выпуск Островов Фиджи’, 1916б), a ‘Dagestan Issue’ (‘Дагестанский выпуск’, 1916в), and an ‘Albanian Issue’ (‘Албанский выпуск’, 2011 [1916]) (see Figures 8-11). The contents of these issues clearly show that the assumption of Marzaduri and others that Lavrin was Bloodless Murder’s main object of derision has to be nuanced. The ‘Assyro-Babylonian Issue’, for example, gives an absurd historical overview of the artistic influence of Le Dentu on Yermolayeva’s work (Струкова 2018: 157-158). In the issue, Le Dentu is presented as an evil Assyrian deity and Yermolayeva gets two roles: she plays the part of archaeologist Yermolayevich Yermolayev and the part of an Assyro-Babylonian girl, whose ancient portrayal is discovered by said archaeologist (Ibid.: 158). The ‘Dagestan Issue’, then, ridicules Lapshin’s experiences as a voluntary soldier for the Caucasian Native Cavalry Division, nicknamed the Savage Division (Ibid.: 168). The issue tells how officer Magoma-Lapshi-Ogly has adopted the dubious morals of the Savage Division. He is for example depicted while steeling silver spoons from Leshkova’s apartment. The accompanying text explains Magoma-Lapshi-Ogly wants to use the spoons to pay a fee for participating in the collective’s publications (Ibid.). The ‘Fiji Islands Issue’ addresses a more abstract theme, namely the conflicting interpretations of art in bourgeois and avant-garde culture. Le Dentu is the main character in this issue and is presented as a man-eating beast, luring the bourgeois philistines into a trap in order to make sausages out of them (Марцадури 1990: 39). The grotesque ridicule in all issues gives reason to assume that Bloodless Murder’s mockery of Lavrin, contrary to what some scholars state, does not necessarily indicate that “the gap between the decorated war correspondent and the anti-aesthete of Bloodless Murder had become too wide” (Ljunggren 2014: 85).

233 Strukova suggests that the use of geographical names in the titles of the issues was inspired by the plurality of geographical points that were touched upon in the war time press (2018: 161).
Figure 8 - Vera Yermolayeva and Mikhail Le Dentu depicted in the illustration The evil Assyrian deity Maskim seeks to spoil good initiatives by Yermolayeva in the ‘Assyro-Babylonian Issue’, Bloodless Murder 1916a (RGALI, f. 792, op. 3, ed. khr. 15, l. 22).

Figure 9 - Mikhail Le Dentu (below the table) depicted in the illustration The Sausage Shop by Le Dentu in the ‘Fiji Islands Issue’, Bloodless Murder 1916b (RGALI, f. 792, op. 3, ed. khr. 15, l. 11).
Figure 10 - Nikolay Lapshin depicted in the illustration *Take, take, take...* by Le Dentu in the 'Dagestan Issue', Bloodless Murder 1916b (RGALI, f. 792, op. 3, ed. khr. 15, l. 16).

Figure 11 - Janko Lavrin depicted in the illustration *300 roubles for the capture...* by Le Dentu in the 'Albanian Issue', Bloodless Murder 1916 (RGALI, f. 792, op. 3, ed. khr. 15, l. 26).
Just like the other issues of Bloodless Murder, the ‘Albanian Issue’ is a satirical and even absurd character murder. It is conceived as a fictitious biography of His Highness the ex-King of Albania, Janko I, based on several fictitious ego-documents. In seven illustrations with accompanying text, Bloodless Murder gives an account of its quasi-scientific investigation of the background of the ex-King and an overview of his two-week reign. The issue combines attacks on Lavrin’s person and character – a.o. his, by Russian norms, “neuter” name, his sweet tooth, his flirtatious behaviour, his linguistic talent, his wanderlust, his hoarding,… – with an actual event, namely the flight of the Albanian King, Wilhelm Zu Wied, in September 1914 after a reign of no more than seven months. This combination results in a chain of absurd scenes. In the story the Albanians for example have adopted the habit – since Wied – of gluing their kings to the throne to prevent them from leaving (Бескровное убийство 2011 [1916]: 295). Another example are the reasons why Janko I allegedly had to flee the country: First, Janko I’s insatiable candy addiction leads to a conflict with Albania’s neighbouring countries which can no longer meet the high export demands (Ibid.: 296-297). Second, the King’s incontrollable hoarding behaviour makes him claim everything – both commodities, people, animals and even bugs – for himself which eventually culminates in a flea infestation (Ibid.). The combination of an unsatisfied need for candy with a constant itch is so unbearable that Janko I flees Albania, with the throne still glued to his trousers.

Although the ‘Albanian Issue’ is said to be inspired by Lavrin’s Albanskiye eskizy, the text and the illustrations in the issue contain only a few references to the travelogue and Lavrin’s experiences during the war234. (1) The main action of the fictitious biography, Janko I’s two-week reign and his escape from the throne, takes place in Albania and Montenegro, countries which Lavrin visited in his capacity of journalist in the Balkans and describes in the travelogue. (2) Both the travelogue and Bloodless Murder refer to the flight of King Wilhelm zu Wied. Lavrin briefly addresses the faith of the Albanian King when he describes his visit to Durazzo, the former capital of the Kingdom of Albania (Лаврин 1916: 68-73), but it does not play a significant part in the travelogue. What is more, Wied’s flight was a popular comical topic at the time. The King was laughingstock in the press all over Europe, also in Russia (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 126). The theme of Albania looking for a king was also a fashionable gag in the Saint-Petersburg cabaret (Марцадури 1990: 39). The interplay with Wied’s flight in the issue therefore can be interpreted as an example of Bloodless Murder’s dialogue with other humoristic media.

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234 Baranovskiy and Khlebnikova even suspect that Albanskiye eskizy did not come out before the ‘Albanian Issue’ was created (2009: 126). All the same, it is reasonable to assume that Lavrin told his friends of his adventures on the Balkans while he was writing the travelogue.
at the time. (3) The closest connection between the ‘Albanian Issue’ and *Albanskiye eskizy* is the collective’s critique of the genesis of the travelogue, more specifically its critique of Lavrin’s affiliation with *The New Time*. Like in the ‘Fiji Islands Issue’ featuring Le Dentu, the collective addresses the contradiction between the bourgeois and the avant-garde world. Different than Le Dentu, who is depicted as a monster deceiving the bourgeois critics, Lavrin is depicted as someone who is being seduced by a monster of the opposite “camp”. An illustration by Le Dentu (see Figure 12) for example portrays *The New Time* as a creature that swallows Lavrin, luring him into a bourgeois lifestyle (Бескровное убийство 2011 [1916]: 300-301). Another example of Bloodless Murder’s attitude towards the newspaper surfaces in a passage about Lavrin’s whereabouts after his return from the Balkans. It speaks of “The Shelter for Literary Poverty (Ertel Alley 6)“ (Ibid.: 299). The address between brackets is the then address of *The New Time*’s editorial office (editorial note by Baranovksy and Khlebnikova, Ibid.). Based on these three references, it is safe to assume that Bloodless Murder indeed uses the ‘Albanian Issue’ to question Lavrin’s choice to work for *The New Time*. The very few similarities between the actual contents of the travelogue and Bloodless Murder’s issue, however, suggest that describing *Albanskiye eskizy* on the basis of the criticism in the ‘Albanian Issue’, is like a blind man describing an elephant.

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235 Приют Литературных Убожеств (Эртелев переулок 6).
Figure 12 - Illustration by Le Dentu. A monster named The New Time threatens to eat Lavrin. In his stomach – where Lavrin will end up soon – is drawn a cosy living room with a gramophone and nice curtains as a symbol for a middle class life. ‘Albanian issue’, Bloodless Murder 1916r (RGALI, f. 792, op. 3, ed. khr. 15, l. 26).
On November 30, 1916, the “collision” between Lavrin’s work as a war correspondent for *The New Time* and his social life among the Saint-Petersburg avant-garde prompts a last creative reaction when Leshkova acquaints Ilya Zdanevich with the hectographic issues of Bloodless Murder (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011: 329). Zdanevich was especially triggered by the ‘Albanian Issue’ and immediately decided to use it as the base for his first zaum drama, which he finished after a day and a half of intense writing. *Yanko King of the Albanians* was performed with help of the members of Bloodless Murder on December 3 1916. Although Zdanevich intended to publish the play in Saint-Petersburg in 1917, he only managed to publish it in 1918 in Tbilisi.

*Yanko King of the Albanians* reiterates some of the main elements of the story in the ‘Albanian Issue’, like the Albanian habit to glue the king to the throne, Lavrin’s hoarding and the flea infestation. Zdanevich also exaggerates Bloodless Murder’s gimmick to treat Janko as a neuter character, and depicts him as an asexual creature. Different than the ‘Albanian Issue’, which engages more with Lavrin’s personality than with *Albanskiye eskiy* as such, there are some indications that there is a larger overlap between Zdanevich’s drama and Lavrin’s travelogue. Marzaduri for example points out that the Albanian characters in the ‘Albanian Issue’ are good-hearted fellows, whereas the Albanians in Zdanevich’s play are robbers and killers, which is more in line with Lavrin’s impressions in *Albanskiye eskiy* (1990: 24). Odessky adds some more similarities. After repeating how Lavrin’s attitude towards the Albanians is reflected in the zaum drama, he points to the short fragment in which Lavrin talks about Wilhelm zu Wied (2010: 490). Odessky also implies that Zdanevich’s choice to refer to the city Gusinje – a name that seems to allude to the word goose in Russian – is inspired by the strange-sounding Albanian tribe names in the travelogue (e.g. Klementy, Kastraty and Mertury). Lastly, he suggests that Zdanevich introduced the character Prenk Bib Doda in the second version of the play – Zdanevich altered the play before its official publication in 1918 – because Lavrin had mentioned the Albanian prince in *Albanskiye eskiy* (Ibid.: 491). On the one hand, these similarities – however superficial – indicate that Zdanevich must have been familiar with Lavrin’s travelogue. On the other hand, they show how Marzaduri and Odessky have been guided by *Yanko King of the Albanians* in their reading of *Albanskiye eskiy* and not the other

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236 Yermolayeva and Lapshin helped him with design of the costumes and the décor (Baranovskiy & Khlebnikova 2009: 131). Leshkova helped him in preparing the play for publication. She, among others, composed the musical accompaniment for the play (Марцадури 1990: 29).

237 Prenk (Prince) Bib Doda was the leader of the North-Albanian Catholic clan of the Mirdita. He contributed to the League of Prizren in 1878 which fought against the transfer of certain Albanian regions to Montenegrin rule. After the Albanian independence, Prenk Bib Doda and his army supported Wilhelm zu Wied (Detrez 2019: 247, 276).
way round: they focus on certain (mostly) explicit parallels, but do not include the lion’s share of the travelogue in their analysis. Although I will not perform a fine-grained comparison of Zdanevich’s complex drama and Lavrin’s travelogue (this would lead me to far from the subject of this project), my in-depth analysis of Albanskiye eskizy in connection to the rest of Lavrin’s Russian oeuvre, will show that there might be more to the travelogue (and to Lavrin), and thus to Zdanevich’s play, than the assessments of Marzaduri and Odessky suggest.

9.3 Albanskiye eskizy – The Balkans as a Mirror for Europe and Russia

In Albanskiye eskizy, Lavrin paints twelve sketches about his adventures as a war correspondent on the Balkan peninsula between February and November 1915. The lion’s share of the travelogue, the first nine chapters, focuses on the months before the Bulgarian invasion in October 1915. They are an account of Lavrin’s travels through the unoccupied parts of Serbia, Montenegro and Albania. In these chapters Lavrin acquaints the reader with the history, the culture and the way of life of the peoples he meets. In general, he does not go into detail about his work as a war correspondent. Lavrin does not tell of his contact with the Serbian government, nor does he pay a lot of attention to Yugoslav independence (he casually and briefly addresses the topic once (1916: 64-66)). The last three chapters of the travelogue, then, recount Lavrin’s flight from Niš to Thessaloniki.
Lavrin presents himself, the first person narrator of the story, as a Russian journalist (he does not reveal his personal ties with the Southern Slavs) and watches the Balkan region through a Eurocentric lens. Tatyana Chepelevskaya, who is the only scholar who has worked on Albanskiye eskizy as a self-contained work (2008, 2011a, 2011б), argues that Lavrin adopts this European lens in order to achieve a certain degree of objectivity to address the small and large events he witnesses during his travels (2011а: 71, 77). She mainly sees this lens as a sign of Lavrin’s effort to give a most complete image of the different people that live in the region and their mutual relationships (Ibid.: 85). At the same time, she nuances this impression of objectivity by adding that several passages in the work betray certain sympathies and antipathies (2011б: 292).

In my opinion, the air of objectivity that seems to emanate from Lavrin’s European lens is disputable in its entirety. The lens especially underlines the travelogue’s stereotypical early twentieth-century portrayal of what was perceived as the “backward and violent” Balkan region. Lavrin for example explains how the chaos in the cities attacks his “European nerves” (“европейские нервы”, 1916: 87). Another time he states that “it is difficult for a European to imagine Albanian life”238” (Ibid.: 15). Lavrin uses an orientalising

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238 Европейцу трудно вообразить албанскую жизнь.
discourse to describe the allegedly uncivilized traditions and folklore of the “primitive” (“примитивный”) Serbs, Montenegrins and Albanians. The remark “in short, it reeked of the Balkans” (“словом, пахло балканами”, Ibid.: 122) describing the nervous atmosphere after a violent encounter between Serbian and Bulgarian troops is telling. Considering that Lavrin wrote Albanskiye eskizy on commission of Suvorin, this orientalising discourse comes as no surprise. The presentation of the Balkans as a savage place undoubtedly appealed to the conservative readership of The New Time. Moreover, the image of the underdeveloped Balkans also fits well with the idea the newspaper disseminated of Russia as the protector and potential saviour of small (Slavic) peoples.

Lavrin writes his travelogue at a time when the stereotypical image of the violent Balkans was being formed (Todorova 2009 [1997]: 19). According to Maria Todorova, this representation of the Balkans, which she dubs Balkanism, differs from Orientalism because it typically oscillates between Europeanness and Oriental Otherness. The peoples on the Balkans are often considered as transitory, as an “incomplete self”, not different enough to be considered oriental, but too much tainted by the Orient to be European (Ibid.: 18-20). Todorova adds that because of the closeness of the Balkans to Europe, its image lacked mystery – in comparison to the intangible Orient – and therefore usually did not serve as an exotic, mysterious or even pure refuge from civilization (Ibid.: 13). Lavrin, however, does use different understandings of otherness in Albanskiye eskizy, and uses the whole spectrum of orientalising discourse, adopting exotic, primitive, mysterious and violent imagery. What is more, he uses them to challenge the perceptions of superiority and inferiority connected to such a discourse – which seems to be in line with the way in which Lavrin questioned Russia’s position as “big brother” in the Slavic world. Chepelevskaya already signals in the conclusion of her analysis how Lavrin uses the contrast between the standpoint of a civilized European and the primitiveness of the Balkan peoples to underline the cultural strength of the latter (2011: 294). I want to show how Lavrin not only uses the contrast between Balkans and West, but mainly compares the three Balkan-peoples to each other in order to imply a certain hierarchy among them. In the following sections, I show how Lavrin uses this hierarchy, which is mainly visible in his description of the appearance and character of the peoples discussed, to assess the respective peoples’ attitudes towards (national) cultural development. Moreover, I investigate whether and how these assessments are informed by Lavrin’s earlier ideas on national and supra-national development.

239 Maria Todorova addressed the transitory image of the Balkans in the West in travelogues and journalism (2009 [1997]). Vesna Goldsworthy studied the way in which British literature and film contributed to this ambiguous image (1998).
The Troglodyte, the Noble Savage and the Poet

As is typical for orientalising discourses, Lavrin builds large part of his presentation of the “primitive” Balkan peoples on external elements that highlight their otherness and alleged backwardness vis-à-vis his own culture, in casu Europe. His depiction of the physical traits and the nature of the Albanian, Montenegrin and Serbian characters and cities in the travelogue forms the clearest indication of the hierarchy among the three peoples. For each people Lavrin employs a different interpretation of backwardness.

The cliché image of the Balkans as violent, uncivilized and barbaric (Goldsworthy 1998: 5) is reserved for the Albanians in the travelogue. They are systematically depicted as ugly, unhygienic and ill-mannered clansmen: a village priest is clad in “a stained costume” (“засаленный костюм”), children are “half-naked and dishevelled” (“полуголые, растрепанные”) and the coat Lavrin borrows from one of his Albanian hosts is infested with “thousands of insects” (“тысячи насекомых”, Лаврин 1916: 47, 50, 110). In some cases the Albanians are even portrayed as less than human: Lavrin speaks of troglodytes (“троглодиты”) and sometimes attributes to them animalistic features like “beastly eyes” (“звериные глаза”), “the face of a raptor” (“лицо хищной птицы”) or a face that “reminds rather of a little monkey, than of a man”240 (Ibid.: 40, 108, 109).

The Albanian lifestyle is described as essentially violent, determined by the strict rules of blood feud and clan honour. To underline the central place of violence, Lavrin adds that only 30% of the Albanian men die of natural causes, a number he associates with prehistoric times (1916: 33). Violence and hostility also characterize most encounters with Albanians that are described in the travelogue. The Albanians are portrayed as a closed-mouthed people, distrustful towards strangers (a.o. Ibid.: 32, 39, 108-111). This violent and unwelcoming attitude is also reflected in the description of the Albanian homes, which according to Lavrin look like “tower-strongholds with loopholes” (“кулл-крепости с пушкарницами”, 1916: 29). The negative portrayal also extends to the Albanian villages and cities. The city Dakovica in Kosovo241 is portrayed as a “huge robbers’ den, consisting of chaos, dirty lairs and one-storied muddy houses full of bugs”242 (Лаврин 1916: 16). Elbasan, a city in central Albania, gets a similar treatment. The city’s

240 [...] напоминает скорее обезьянки, чем человека.
241 Kosovo was annexed by Serbia during the Balkan Wars, but the majority of the population was Albanian, even after attempts to establish Serbian dominance in the region through ethnic cleansing and colonisation.
242 [...] огромное разбойничье гнездо, состоящее из хаоса, грязных вертепов и одноэтажных илистых клоповников [...].
atmosphere is summarized with the following series of words: “Dust, noise, clatter, dirt and hustle” (Ibid.: 80).

Also the Serbs and the Montenegrins are presented as wild and primitive, but whereas the backwardness of the Albanians is associated with barbarism, which in some cases Lavrin’s “European nerves could not endure” (Лаврин 1916: 87), the lack of development of the Serbs and the Montenegrins is presented as refreshing compared to European civilization:

It is a delight to talk with a Montenegrin or Serbian villager, untouched by culture. You feel in him the beating and inexhaustible source of the people’s soul with all its brilliance, flavour and unconscious nobility. (Лаврин 1916: 27)

As a consequence the backwardness of the Serbs and the Montenegrins gets a positive interpretation. This is emphasized by the fact that Lavrin not only uses the adjective “primitive” (“примитивный”) to describe them, but also often uses the more biblical adjective “primordial” (“первобытный”) which highlights the originality and innocent or pure nature of these peoples.

From Lavrin’s descriptions of the Montenegrins and Serbs appears that their respective innocent “primitiveness” hides in different kinds of purity. The Montenegrins, according to Lavrin a strong and beautiful people (Лаврин 1916: 30), are presented as noble savages, “children of nature” (“дети природы”), naïve and kind men and women with a “childlike” (“детский”) good-hearted attitude to life and the world around them. Lavrin attributes the same innocent nature to the Montenegrin soldiers with whom he travels through Albania. He states that they remind him of the brave Cossacks from Gogol’s Sich, “naïve, very spontaneous fellows, but brave in battles” (Лаврин 1916: 26). Lavrin contrasts the bravery and cold-bloodedness of the soldiers to a naïve, almost childlike wonder for the world around them. He is touched by the childlike enthusiasm of the soldiers when they discover a toy windmill near one of their halting-places (Ibid.: 50). Another time, Lavrin is moved when the soldiers marvel at the sight of a little hare during a lunch break (Ibid.: 43). With this short passage about the hare Lavrin subtly

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241 Пыль, гам, гул, грязь, толкотня.
244 [...] европейские нервы не выдержали.
246 Разговаривать с нетронутым культурой черногорским или сербским селяком - одно наслаждение. Вы чувствуете в нем быщий, неизсякаемый родник народной души со всей ее красочностью, ароматом и бессознательным благородством.
246 [...] наивные, очень непосредственные малые, но зато храбрые в боях.
underlines the difference between the naïve primitiveness of the Montenegrins and the wild, predatory primitiveness of the Albanians.

Lavrin attributes the innocent primitiveness of the Serbs in the travelogue not to a naïve childlike attitude, but to their connection to and reverence for the Serbian past, which they allegedly kept alive during the agelong Ottoman rule in the region. This appears first from Lavrin’s lyrical exclamations about the architecture of Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries, which form a stark contrast with his contempt for the ugly and dirty Albanian cities. Lavrin calls the church of Gračanica “a miracle of Serbian medieval art” and applauds the “luxurious” (“роскошный”) interior of the ancient church of Deçan (Лаврин 1916: 10). The conservation of the grandeur of the medieval architecture appears as implicit proof of the Serbian reverence for the past. A more explicit example of the connection between the Serbs and their past Lavrin finds when he attends an Orthodox church festival near Pristina. He describes a group of Serbian citizens devoutly listening to a guslar who sings of the glorious Serbian history, and states:

They listen, as only citizens can listen who transformed their whole past into a wonderful poem, and love for the homeland and freedom into a cult, into a religion. (Лаврин 1916: 13)

Other proof of this reverence for Serbian history, Lavrin finds in the stories he hears about the Kosovo field. He for example retells how the soldiers of the Serbian army, when they reached the Kosovo field during the Balkan Wars, allegedly fell on their knees to pray and “instinctively tried to tiptoe” (Лаврин 1916: 8) trying not to disturb the graves of the young men who fell there ages ago during the Battle of Kosovo against the Ottoman Empire in 1389. Lavrin concludes the passage by underlining how this “unconscious nobility” of the Serbs differs from the European attitude to life and the past: he states that this pure devotion is only possible for “a people of children or even... a people of poets” and is not “imaginable anywhere in sober and ‘cultural’ Europe” (Лаврин 1916: 8).

247 [...] чудо сербского средневекового искусства.
248 Слушают, как умеют слушать только граждане, превратившие все свое прошлое в чудную поэму, а любовь к родине и свободе – в культ, в религию.
249 [...] инстинктивно старались ступать на цыпочках [...].
250 Народ – ребенок или же... Народ – поэт.
251 [...] мыслима где нибудь в трезвой и ‘культурной’ Европе.
The Imitator, the Anachronism and the Worthy Heir

The different ways of presenting the Balkan Other in the travelogue show that Albanskiye eskizy does not necessarily start from a belief in Europe’s superiority. The contrast between an overly civilized Europe and a more cultural Slavic world that comes to the fore in Lavrin’s earlier work (cf. Chapter 8), plays an important role in the travelogue, as Chepelevskaya rightly points out (2011: 294). From the contrast between the Montenegrin and Serbian primordiality in the previous section already appears that this, like in Slavyansky mir, is largely related to the extent to which a people and its culture are connected to the people’s unique spirit. A connection, as Lavrin suggests in the travelogue, that European nations, including Russia, with their “factory soot, offices and prostituted culture” have lost (Лаврин 1916: 42). In Albanskiye eskizy, however, Lavrin only occasionally contrasts the different attitudes towards national culture in Europe and the Balkans. The juxtaposition between the different attitudes towards national culture and Ottoman influence of the main characters in the travelogue, especially of the Serbs and the Albanians, takes in a more central position and appears to have a strong impact on the implied hierarchy between them.

The Montenegrins in the travelogue, presented as “children of nature”, are depicted as a people that remained a blank page. Lavrin considers them one-of-a-kind in contemporary Europe, a people that has never been confronted with foreign influence and allegedly maintained its essential national form up to today:

The Montenegrins, who have never known any foreign yoke, represent, maybe, the most beautiful and aristocratic stock (in sense of character) in Europe. (Лаврин 1916: 27)

Lavrin’s emphasis on the unique position of the Montenegrins is not unfounded. Contrary to the Serbs and the Albanians, the Montenegrins never came under direct Ottoman influence. They had a rather isolated position within the Ottoman Empire as a (fairly) independent principality (Detrez 2019: 195). Also vis-à-vis Europe Montenegro preserved

252 [...] фабричная копоть, конторы и проституированная культура.
253 This hierarchy in a way reminds of the ‘nesting orientalisms’ of Milica Bakić-Hayden, a concept she uses to show that there exists a “graduation of Orients” within the Balkans, where several constructed hierarchies are used to depict other peoples as more Eastern (1995: 917). (The comparison works only to a certain extent as the hierarchy in Albanskiye eskizy is constructed by Lavrin and not by the peoples themselves).
254 Черногорцы, не знавшие никогда чужого ига, представляют, может быть, самую красивую и самого аристократическую (в смысле характера) расу в Европе.
an independent position. Its borders were officially recognized by the great powers. Despite the relatively good relationship with these European powers and their economic influence, Montenegro for large part maintained its own traditions and remained a – by European standards – backward region (Ibid.: 207-212). The above quote suggests that Lavrin’s account idealizes the purity of the Montenegrins. At the same time, however, the travelogue problematizes that the isolation of the Montenegrins has made them “a remnant of the past, doomed to death, because they are not in the style of the era of airplanes and suffocating gasses” (Лаврин 1916: 28). Lavrin states that the life of these noble savages can feel like a breath of fresh air “in the fumes of modernity” (“в чаду современности”), but that it has become an “anachronism” (“анахронизм”) that will eventually be put in the archives (Ibid.). Lavrin dismisses the relative safety of isolation and suggests that confrontation with civilization and foreign cultures is necessary to help a people/nation to develop and grow (and to survive in the first place).

The depiction of the Serbs and the Albanians in the travelogue seem to showcase how confrontation with civilization and foreign influence can lead to very different paths of cultural development. Lavrin juxtaposes two extremes: the alleged preservative attitude towards national culture of the Serbs and the purported preference for foreign influence of the Albanians. In line with the universal essentialist ideas – the notion that every nation needs a distinct development in order to contribute to the over-arching culture of humanity – Lavrin disseminated earlier, the reactions of the Serbs and the Albanians are respectively presented as a model and a warning for the Russian reader.

In order to understand Lavrin’s presentation of the Serbian preservative attitude towards national culture, it is necessary to know what he considers the origin of that culture. Throughout the travelogue, Lavrin regularly refers to the Kosovo myth (1916: 3-15). This is an important element in the nation-building of modern Serbia, because it serves as proof of a glorious pre-Ottoman Serbian state. The myth is largely based on the Kosovo cycle, a collection of epic poems which tells of the battle on the Kosovo field between the Serbian King Lazar and the Ottoman Sultan Murad I (1389). According to the myth, Lazar eventually chose to lose the war and die as a martyr to grant the Serbs a place in the celestial, rather than in the mundane world.256

255 [...] они тоже пережиток прошлого, обреченный на гибель, ибо они не в стиле эпохи аэропланов и удушающих газов...
256 Lavrin’s use of the Kosovo myth shows that he builds his representation of Serbia on the way in which the nation builds its own identity and does not follow the common European representation at the time of Serbia as a Balkan nation that was too barbaric – the Second Balkan War (1912-1913) and start of the First World War were used as proof thereof – to become European (Todorova 2009 [1997]: 117).
In Lavrin’s travelogue, the Serbs are systematically presented as worthy heirs of Lazar and other medieval Serbian rulers. Lavrin does this for example by drawing parallels between the medieval Serbian state in 1389 and the modern Serbian nation in 1915. These parallels are most striking in the last chapters of Albanskiye eskizy, which tell of the Serbian reaction to the invasion by the Bulgarians. Lavrin for example starts his account of the invasion on the Kosovo field, where Lazar lost his epic battle (1916: 88). He even explicitly states: “Also this time the Kosovo field became Serbia’s grave” (Лаврин 1916: 90). Moreover, the Serbian King Peter I, who ruled Serbia from 1903 until 1918, is depicted as a new martyr, apparently following in Lazar’s footsteps. Lavrin does this figuratively, when he presents Peter as a king who actively partakes in the war despite his old age, who suffers with his people and is willing to go down with them (Ibid.: 95). But he does this also literally by including an anecdote of Peter I visiting the church of Gračanica, where Lazar has been buried. The king’s appeal to God a few days before Serbia’s official defeat mirrors Lazar’s conversation with God a couple of days before the deciding battle against the Ottomans. Lastly, the parallel between pre- and post-Ottoman Serbia is suggested by the almost religious character Lavrin attributes to the Serbian belief in the nation during those last days in October 1915. He often uses words like “resurrection” (“воскрешение”, Ibid.: 118, 129) and “salvation” (“спасение”, Ibid.: 112, 119) when he describes the Serbian attitude towards the precarious position of their nation. This religious theme also comes to the fore in the very last scene of Albanskiye eskizy, which describes how a group of Serbian refugees starts to sing the national anthem when they hear that Serbia has fallen:

in these words was not only a prayer. In them resounded living hope, clearly sparking from under the ashes of the survived terror and suffering. (Лаврин 1916: 125)

Thus Lavrin ends his book with the suggestion that the Serbian nation transcends the material world, and that this defeat will not end Serbian culture and identity.

The preservative attitude of the Serbs also appears from Lavrin’s regular references to traces of that allegedly age-old Serbian culture. He uses these traces as indirect evidence

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257 Косово поле стало и на этот раз могилой Сербии...
258 After the war he became the first King of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.
259 И в этих словах гимна была не только молитва. В них звучала живая надежда, ярко вспыхнувшая из-под пепла пережитого ужаса и страданий.
260 Milica Bakić-Hayden investigates the close relationship between the Kosovo Myth and Serbia’s national idea in “National Memory as Narrative Memory”. She pays particular attention to the ways in which Lazar’s story has been connected to the belief in the rebirth of the Serbian nation in times of foreign domination (2004: 25-40).
of how the Serbs have cherished and protected their national identity during the Ottoman rule. When Lavrin tells of the previously mentioned church of Deçan, for example, he devotes three pages to show to what lengths the Serbs went to protect the church and the adjacent monastery from destruction by the Ottomans (1916: 19-21). He also often refers to the important role epic poems play in contemporary Serbian culture. He even quotes excerpts from two poems, namely *The fall of the Serbian Empire* (Пропаст царства српскога, Лаврин 1916: 3-15) and *The Building of Skadar* (Зидање Скадра, Ibid.: 58-60), that sing of Serbia’s alleged pre-Ottoman golden age. Lavrin describes them as the expression of “everything [the Serbian people] suffered during the five-hundred-year slavery; everything it loved, believed and hoped” (Лаврин 1916: 5). He seems to suggest that the Ottoman rule in the region has incited the Serbs to cherish and protect their “celestial body”, their cultural heritage, and, thus, indirectly fostered the development of a stronger Serbian national awareness.

Very different is Lavrin’s description of the Albanian attitude towards cultural heritage. Nevertheless, he seems to suggest that the Albanians start from a similar “base” by referring to the idea that Albanians are descendants of the ancient Illyrians and Alexander the Great (1916: 32-33), a claim that was used by Albanian nationalists at the time. (The Illyrians and Alexander the Great can be connected to each other because the Albanians based their claims for national territory on the presence of their predecessors, the Illyrians, in the whole Western Balkans, which enabled them to consider Macedonia as Illyrian (Detrez 2019: 151)). Different than his account of the Serbs, Lavrin’s depiction of the Albanians shows an overall disregard for these Illyrian/Macedonian roots. He jests that it is remarkable that

the most backward, wildest and most primitive people in Europe represents one of the oldest stocks in the Balkans. [...] If Alexander the Great indeed was an Albanian, then his contemporary fellow tribesmen do him little honour...  

Whereas Lavrin accepts and underlines the Serbian connection with Lazar’s kingdom, the words “if... indeed” in the above quote suggest that he is less convinced of Albania’s roots. This reservation also appears from a couple of remarks about Albanian culture that

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261 […] ве, чем он страдал в течение пятисотлетняго рабства; все, что он любил, во что верил, на что надеялся.

262 […] самый отсталый, самый дикий и примитивный народ в Европе представляет одну из самых старых рас на Балканах. [...] если Александр Македонский и был Албанцем, то современные его одноплеменники делают ему мало чести...
suggest that, in fact, Lavrin does not see traces of an age-long over-arching Albanian idea. He for example refers to the fact that the Albanians have no shared body of folk epics and traditions, but that “each tribe has traditions and legends about its origins, which are passed down from generation to generation” (Лаврин 1916: 32). Another example is a discussion of Albanian folk songs, in which Lavrin explains that they hardly sing of a common past, nor express “an idea that internally unites them [the Albanians]” (Ibid.: 56). Also in his description of the structure of Albanian society, the lack of unity among the twenty-seven rivalling tribes dominates. Lavrin points out how this is reinforced by the alleged Albanian culture of violence, which “often leads to the mutual annihilation of several clans” (Ibid.: 32). Similar to Slavyansky mir’s disapproval of disunity within the Slavic world (cf. 7.1), Lavrin now condemns the lack of unity within one national group – which according to the periodical’s manifest has to be achieved before unification on a higher level is even possible (cf. 5.2).

What is striking, is the fact that signs that might indicate the existence of an over-arching Albanian identity are downplayed in the travelogue. This suggests that Lavrin tries to emphasize the contrast between the different kinds of primitiveness of the Serbs and the Albanians. He for example recounts how the national heroes that feature in the Albanian folk songs are not medieval kings and knights, but “modern brave men and bold half-scoundrels, like Isa Boletini”, who only had “to kill several dozen people or steal a herd of cattle” (Ibid.) to be called heroic. (The use of the colloquial “укокошить” to kill in the sentence gives the remark a jesting sound). In this way, Lavrin connects Albanian heroes to clan troubles and not to a national identity, although people like Isa Boletini actually played an important role in the Albanian uprising against the Ottomans in the late nineteenth century and during the First Balkan Wars. Another example of the downplay of Albanian identity, is Lavrin’s assessment of the nationalism advocated by the Albanian elite in Skadar. He suggests that the elite’s nationalism in fact is an imported idea. Lavrin presents it as a side-effect of the competition between Austrian and Italian missionaries in the city. He states that the Austrian clergy in the city tried to

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263 Каждое племя имеет традиции и легенды о своем происхождении, который передаются из рода в род.
264 [...] объединяющая их внутренне идея [...].
265 [...] часто доходит до полного взаимоистребления нескольких родов.
266 [...] современные храбрецы и удалые полуразбойники, вроде Исы Болетинца.
267 [...] укокошить несколько десятков человек или украсть стадо скота.
268 This judgement is not completely wrong, Detrez writes that it was difficult to tell Boletini and his troop of freedom fighters apart from regular brigands (2019: 275).
“incite Albanian nationalism” in an attempt to overtrump their Italian counterparts (Лаврин 1916: 63). Lavrin condescendingly adds that the Albanian nationalists he met were “made in Austria” (Ibid., English in original).

The label “made elsewhere” could well be used to categorize most of Lavrin’s examples of Albanian culture, which, contrary to Lavrin’s depiction of Serbian culture, do not appear to be a reflection of a nation with an age-long history. Lavrin sees three important influences on Albanian culture: Ottoman, Serbian and European. He describes the music he hears upon his arrival in Durazzo, the then capital of independent Albania, as “a random assortment of Eastern melodies” (Лаврин 1916: 68). According to Lavrin, many customs of the Albanians, like blood brotherhood, the depiction of cuckoos on graves and an extreme form of guest right, were originally Serbian (Ibid.: 40-42). The religious practice of the Albanians, then, he presents as a combination of several religious traditions. Lavrin explains that seventy per cent of the Albanians has been converted to Islam during the Ottoman rule, but that many of them still like to visit Christian churches (Ibid.: 23) or celebrate Serbian Orthodox patron saints (Ibid.: 40). Moreover, he adds that several tribes in the Albanian North have adopted Catholicism as a consequence of the Austrian and Italian missionary work (Ibid.: 60). Although Lavrin first explains that this openness to different religions could be a sign of religious tolerance, he soon alters his impression and states it is a result of “religious indifference” (“религиозный индифферентизм”, Ibid.: 23).

The framing of these Ottoman and Serbian influences stands out: the Eastern melodies are considered “random” and conversion is presented as a result of “religious indifference”. Lavrin uses a similar framing when he shows traces of European civilization in Albania. He for example points to the influence of the short reign of King Wilhelm zu Wied, which mainly resorted in the cities Skadar and Durazzo: foreign street names, European fashion and an attempt to install an orderly postal system. Lavrin adds, however, that this influence is not very profound. He states, while using similar wording as in Slavyansky mir’s first mission statement (cf. 5.1), that “Europe was and is only grafted on the outside” (Ibid.: 61). Also Lavrin’s visit to Esad Pasha, the then leader of independent Albania, shows (to his surprise) several signs of European influence: Esad Pasha lives in the house of King Wied and has not changed the Viennese interior of the place; the secretary and interpreter of the Albanian ruler addresses Lavrin in French; and

269 [...] разжигать Албанский национализм.
270 [...] случайный подбор восточных мелодий [...].
271 Европа привилась и прививается только внешне.
Esad Pasha tries to behave himself as (he believes) a European leader would (Ibid.: 74-79). Also in this case, Lavrin concludes that “the European costume is too large for him”. The framing of these foreign influences results in an image of Albanian culture and society as a hotchpotch of foreign influences, quickly and sometimes badly adopted, apparently without internalizing these influences. This interpretation of foreign influence as a thin, clumsily applied veneer, is similar to the description of the Europeanness of the Slavic elites described in Slavyansky mir or the so-called “cosmopolitanism” of the Russian intellectual Lavrin assessed in his 1913 essay ‘The Slavic Problem and Artistic-Literary Rapprochement’ (cf. 6.2, 6.3): the Albanians try to hide their lack of cultural development behind a mask of foreign culture and civilisation, but their attempt is not so successful.

The systematic contrast between Serbia’s emphasis on national integrity and Albania’s seemingly careless attitude towards foreign influence seems to suggest that the Serbs in the travelogue are exemplary because they have resisted foreign influence. Three passages in the travelogue, however, indicate that this is not entirely the case. In the first passage, the most explicit one, Lavrin even seems to shatter the image of the Serbs as an exemplary people. He attacks the Europeanization of the “Serbian intellectual” (“сербский интеллигент”), who seems to be as problematic as his Russian and Albanian counterpart:

The ‘education’ obtained according to the European template turned him either into a corrupt careerist or in an ordinary cultural eunuch, a smug philistine, who likes ‘to flaunt with his superficial decency’ and to hide his emptiness with pose and phrase [..] They are not the highest blossom of the people’s soul, but rather its denial... (Лаврин 1916: 27-28)

Lavrin contrasts the emptiness hiding behind the mask of the Serbian intellectual with the idea of the common people as the keeper of rooted national culture, similar as in Slavyansky mir. The discourse on the pure primitiveness of the Serbian people reinforces this: the soldiers who kneel near the Kosovo field are “from the common people” (“из простонародья”, Лаврин 1916: 8), the people who are devoutly listening to the guslar during the church festival are “old men and younglings” (“старики и молодые”, Ibid.: 272 Европейский костюм сидит на нем мешковато.
273 Полученная по европейскому шаблону "образованность" превратила его или в продажного карьериста или же в обыкновенного культурного евнуха, филистерски самодовольного, нередко любящего "рисоваться своей пошлой порядочностью" и прикрывать свою пустоту позой и фразой. [...] Они являются не высшим расцветом народной души, а вернее ее отрицанием...
13), and also the heroic Peter I, who is presented as Lazar’s heir, is described as a king “who came from the people” (вышедшим из народа”, Ibid.: 95).

The second passage subtly indicates that also the Serbian common people has a connection with Europe and that this is not necessarily a bad thing. When Lavrin describes the style of the church of Deçan, presented as an example of “old-Serbian architecture” (“древне-сербская архитектура”, 1916: 20) he states the following:

In general, the people from Deçan show in their style an interesting combination of Byzantinism with Gothic and Italian Renaissance. (Лаврин 1916: 20)

With this short remark Lavrin indicates that the pre-Ottoman Serbian culture which the people cherished and safeguarded at least partially owes its grandeur to cross-pollination with other cultures. The remark suggests that the exemplary Serbs, contrary to the Albanians presented in the travelogue, have internalized (certain) foreign influences and have been able to form a new symbiotic result.

The last passage adds to this that also a certain degree of European civilization is anchored in Lavrin’s perception of Serbian identity. In one of the last chapters, Lavrin recounts how he ends up in Prizren. Lavrin regrets that the Albanian city, which was annexed by Serbia during the Balkan wars, still is chaotic and unhygienic, without any facilities, despite the Serbian presence in the city. He explains that

the city with a predominantly Albanian population was in Serbian hands only for two and a half years, and in such a short time it was hard to ‘Europeanise’ it .

(Lаврин 1916: 99-100)

Lavrin’s expectation that a Serbian city should have a certain degree of urban development suggests that although the Serbs are part of the “primitive” Balkans, they nevertheless are considered a civilized people. The quotation marks used in the fragment appear to point out a certain similarity between European and Serbian civilization, but simultaneously nuance the degree of Europeanisation, and seem to suggest that its negative outgrowths have not infested it (except for the intellectual elite).

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274 Petar Karadordević has inherited the throne from his father Aleksandar Karadordević, so the statement that he “comes from the people” seems to be an exaggeration. His grandfather, Karadorde Petrović, however, was a pig merchant who ascended the throne after he led the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottomans in 1804 (Detrez 2019: 176).

275 Вообще, Дечаны представляют по своему стилю интересную комбинацию византизма с готикой и - с итальянским возрождением.

276 Преимущественно албанский по населению город находился всего лишь два с половиной года в сербских руках, и в такой короткий срок трудно было “европеизировать” его.
In fact, the Serbian people in Albanskiye eskizy plays an exemplary role because it takes in the middle ground between Lavrin’s depiction of Europe, Montenegro and Albania. The Serbs are not the victim of an extreme emphasis on civilization like European nations, but they are open to civilizational development which facilitates further national and cultural development. The Serbs do not reside in blissful isolation like the Montenegrins, but do have an eye for the protection of national integrity. Lastly, the Serbs do not indulge in easy and/or quick imitation, but keep an eye open for cultural influences that can lead to a fruitful cultural symbiosis. Lavrin still maintains the ideal of balance between culture and civilization. Moreover, also the pursuit of balance between cultural preservation and openness recurs – i.e. a “double-consciousness” in which cultural nationalism and cosmopolitanism (in Kaufmann’s interpretation (2003)) are combined.

**Personal Gain, Chivalry and Moral Justice**

It is possible to reveal a third layer underneath the oriental hierarchy and the different attitudes towards national integrity in the travelogue. Via several anecdotes Lavrin gives the reader insight in three different value sets that underlie the attitude to life and the nation of the “childlike” Montenegrins, the “poetic” Serbs and the “barbaric” Albanians.

Fitting with their reputation of noble savages, Lavrin ascribes to the Montenegrins an unspoilt understanding of good and evil and speaks of the “bygone chivalry of the Hajduks” (Лаврин 1916: 28). This reference to the hajduks, the Robin Hoods of Balkan folkloric tradition, situates the Montenegrin attitude towards life and war in a romanticised middle age. This is further illustrated by a previously mentioned incident that occurs when the Montenegrin army troop Lavrin travels with observes the funny behaviour of a little hare:

> A dark “guard” [an Albanian – T.G.] took his gun and aimed, but everyone, as one man, shouted: Don’t do it! Don’t do it! It would be a pity… Let it live! Thus shouted the professional warriors, who were accustomed to slaughter and blood, and did not know any mercy in battle…

(Лаврин 1916: 99-100)

The small anecdote suggests that killing innocent creatures would go against the sense of honour of the Montenegrin soldiers, while the more violent code of honour of the

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277 [...] былое гайдукское рыцарство.

278 Смуглый "гардеец" взял ружье и прицелился, но все, как один человек, закричали: Не надо, не надо! Жалко... Пускай живет! Так закричали профессиональные рубаки, привыкшие к резне и крови, не знающие пощады в битвах...
Albanian guards that escort the troop apparently leaves no room for compassion. This chivalrous attitude also comes to the fore in Lavrin’s account of Montenegrin bravery in battle. The rational rules of modern warfare, which require absolute obedience to the army leadership and leave no room for heroic behaviour, are wasted on the instinctive, emotional “Hajduks” (Лаврин 1916: 30). Lavrin concludes that “they [the Montenegrins – T.G.] are too much of a hero, to be good soldiers...” (Ibid.: 31). Thus he comes back to the conclusion that they are not fit for modern times.

The oriental otherness that is attributed to the Albanians in the travelogue is connected to a lifestyle guided by love for violence and material gain. Lavrin argues that the Albanian love for violence is almost a “psychological necessity” (“психическая потребность”, Лаврин 1916: 16). He suggests that the Albanian collaboration with the Ottoman ruler was largely inspired because it facilitated their violent culture: it gave them a licence to attack the Serbs in the region (Ibid.: 16). With a fragment from the influential British (and thus told from a British, coloured perspective) travelogue *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe* (Путешествие по славянским областям Европейской Турции, 1878 [1867]) by Georgina Muir-Mackenzie and Adeline Paulina Irby, which was translated in Russian in the late nineteenth century, Lavrin paints an image of the effect of the Albanian collaboration. The excerpt from the British travelogue tells how the Albanians helped to suppress the development of Serbian culture in the region: after a violent attack by the Albanians during Orthodox Christmas in Đakovica, the Ottoman authorities announced a ban on Orthodox service, Serbian school and Serbian trade in the city. In his whole Russian career, Lavrin has condemned the suppression of minority identity. The suggestion that the Albanians, a fellow minority in the region, have helped the suppression of the Serbs merely to fulfil their bloodlust, contributes to the idea of an essentially barbaric people.

The second motive Lavrin sees underlying Albanian society is material gain. The first encounter with the profit-oriented attitude of the Albanians Lavrin describes is quite innocent. He portrays a seller of boza (a popular drink on the Balkans made of fermented wheat), who accepts an invitation to join lunch during the previously mentioned Orthodox church festival near Pristina (Лаврин 1916: 10-13). The Albanian soon leaves the party: the idea that his competitor, a seller of Turkish delight, could make more

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279 Они чересчур герои для того, чтобы быть хорошими солдатами...

280 Mackenzie and Irby especially championed the Bosnian population, but they did not consider them as equals. Irby, for example prided herself that she remained “proudly conscious of her superiority of birth, breeding and civilization.” She also stated that in her eyes the Bosnians remained “semi-barbarians” however much education they received (Todorova 2009 [1997]: 98).
money than him makes him jump up with the words “I don’t have time to eat. I have to trade...” (Ibid.: 12). This profit-oriented attitude takes on a perverted form in Lavrin’s description of the behaviour of Albanian tradespeople in the days after the Bulgarian invasion. He for example calls the inhabitants of Mitrovica “sly Albanians” (“хитрые албанцы”, Ibid.: 91) because they had no compassion with the starving refugees, but instead hid the food stocks until the price skyrocketed. Other times, Lavrin mentions how Albanians followed the groups of Slavic refugees and the fleeing, thinned out Serbian troops hoping they could rob them and get some profit out of their weakness (Ibid.: 95, 104).

Lavrin also presents material gain as an important motive when it comes to Albanian cultural practices. He suggests several times that the cultural imitation of the Albanians is inspired by utilitarian and chiefly financial reasons. His description of the Albanian reasons for conversion is a case in point. Lavrin suggests that the conversion of seventy per cent of the Albanians to Islam happened “usually for purely material reasons” (Лаврин 1916: 23). Also the conversion to Catholicism by some tribes in the north, claims Lavrin, has more to do with their love for “Austrian guilders” (“австрийские гульдены”) and “Italian liras” (“итальянские лиры”, 1916: 62) than actual religiosity. Lavrin uses an anecdote on the greediness of an Albanian host to confirm that financial motives are more important than religious ideals. He recounts how the host asked him and his traveling companion to pay an outrageous amount of money for spending the night on the cold floor. Lavrin’s description of the ensuing dialogue between his friend and the swindler is telling:

When we paid, my companion told him: Great, you cheated on us, Halid; Allah will punish you for this. – E-e-e... This is a trading activity and Allah does not care about trade... Allah is not a tradesman – the sly Albanian answered, while counting his money for the third time...

In fact, Lavrin draws a picture of the Albanians in which a dubious moral goes hand in hand with an instrumentalization of culture for economic gain. It is easy to draw parallels with how Slavyansky mir and Lavrin’s 1913 essay for the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Rapprochement connect moral degeneration in European nations to an extreme focus on political and economic – instead of cultural – progress (cf. Chapter 8).

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281 Мне некогда есть. Надо торговать.
282 […] обыкновенно из чисто материальных соображений.
283 Когда мы расплачивались, мой спутник сказал ему: Здорово ты нас надул, Халит; Аллах тебя накажет за это. – Э-э-э... это торговое занятие, а Аллаху нет дела до торговли... Аллах не торговец - ответил хитрый Албанец, в третий раз пересчитывая деньги...
By suggesting this strong similarity between the dominant values in the allegedly barbaric civilization of the Albanians and those in European nations, Lavrin repeats the idea that Europe, including Russia, has entered a state of “civilized barbarism”.

Lastly, the Serbs, the model-people in the travelogue, are represented as a people that is not driven by medieval chivalry, bloodlust or material motives, but by higher ethical values closely connected to Serbian identity. In one of the last chapters, Lavrin lets a young Serbian soldier speak the following words: “Serbia perishes because it has fulfilled its duty to the end. But it is better to die with honour than to buy your life with villainy.” (Лаврин 1916: 101). These words, coming from a member of the common people (Lavrin states that it is a “simple soldier” (“простой солдатик”, Ibid.) to underline his humble origins), suggest that it is more important for Serbia to retain a high ethical standard than to retain a piece of land.

What the high ethical standard Lavrin attributes to the Serbs exactly entails is not put forward as explicitly as the violent and financial motives of the Albanians. Lavrin’s account of a conversation with the family that invites the Albanian merchant to eat with them during the Orthodox church festival does give an important clue. First of all, the head of the family, a Serbian farmer, shows respect for the different religion of the merchant by saying: “You pray to the Turkish god, I pray to the Christian god, but we are all human…” (Лаврин 1916: 11). This is in stark contrast to the story of the Albanians helping the Turks to suppress Orthodox religious practice in the region. Second, the farmer adds that the Serbs, who are now in charge in Kosovo, are not rancorous and do not want to retaliate the crimes the Albanians committed during the Ottoman rule:

If we wanted to take revenge on them for everything they did to us under Ottoman rule, we would have to take revenge for a long time... How much violence, how many murders, blood and grief we endured from them! Another 15-20 years of such a regime, and not a single Serb left in Kosovo... But God be with them! What happened is over... (Лаврин 1916: 11)

The farmer wants a Kosovo where Serbs and Albanians live side by side. His emphasis on the Albanian crimes underlines the alleged moral superiority of the Serbs. Third, in the

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284 Сербия гибнет оттого, что до конца исполнила свои долг. Но лучше честью погибнуть, чем подлостью купить свою жизнь.
285 Ты молишься турецкому богу, я молюсь христианскому богу, но все мы люди-человеки...
286 Если мы захотели мстить им за все, что они делали с нами под турецким владычеством, то пришлось бы долго мстить... Сколько насилый, сколько убийств, крови и горя вынесли мы тогда от них! Еще 15-20 лет подобного режима, и на Косове не осталось бы ни одного Серба... Но Бог с ними! Что было, то прошло...
same conversation the farmer explains that crimes that are currently committed are solved by the law (Ibid.). In this conversation Lavrin repeats three principles of “Slavic” behaviour which were applauded in *Slaviansky mir*: respect for national integrity, no violent attitude towards the other and a just treatment of minorities. Although *Albanskiye eskizy* mainly addresses the topic of national development and does not explicitly refer to ideas of a supra-national unity, the value set that is attributed to the model-people in the travelogue is inspired by *Slaviansky mir*’s guidelines that should enable a more united world in the future. Moreover, the moral superiority attributed to the Serbs reminds of Lavrin’s take on “defensive patriotism”, aiming at self-determination and self-affirmation in the name of humanity and justice (cf. 7.4). It shows that Lavrin still pursues a reconciliation of difference and maintains what Tihanov would call a kind of political cosmopolitanism in the last years of his career.

In order to maintain the image of the Serbs as an ideal people, Lavrin downplays the repressive measures of the Serbs in the Albanian regions they annexed during the Balkan Wars\(^{287}\). He does not conceal all of these measures for the reader, but in line with the oriental hierarchy in the travelogue, the Serbian decisions are framed as necessary steps in the education of the more oriental Albanians. One of the Serbian characters in the book for example states that the Albanians “are tamed now” (“теперь они укрощены”, Лаврин 1916: 11). The systematic orientalisation of the Albanians in the travelogue also helps Lavrin to present the repression of certain Albanian traditions in the light of education. He for example tells how the Serbs (helped by the Montenegrins) have confiscated all Albanian weaponry, “even beautiful artistically decorated ‘kremenyachi’, which passed from father to son during God knows how many centuries\(^{288}\)” (Ibid.: 48). Although Lavrin somewhat regrets the confiscation of the traditional weapons, he argues that it is better for the order in the region to not provoke a return of “the former Albanian *byt*” (“прежний албанский быт”, Ibid.). Moreover, Lavrin’s repeated suggestion that there actually is no overarching Albanian culture and identity adds to the impression that there are no important cultural / traditional features to suppress.

In fact, Serbia’s presence in the Albanian cities seems to be presented as a justified and welcomed *mission civilatrice*. This is endorsed by Lavrin’s account of a conversation with Esad Pasha. The interview ends with an expression of gratitude of the leader of Central-

\(^{287}\) During the war, for instance, the Serbian troops had caused a massacre among the local population. Another example is how the Albanian, the Slavic and Turkish Muslims were violently chased out of the region in the chaotic period after the First Balkan War (Detrez 2019: 270).

\(^{288}\) [...] даже красивые художественно отделанные “кременячи”, которые преходили от отца к сыну в течение, Бог знает, скольких веков.
Albania towards the Serbs: “It was not Europe that brought order to us, but small Serbia. It has saved us from anarchy and defeat” (Лаврин 1916: 79). The Serbian government had indeed financially supported Esad Pasha and his army to reclaim Albanian leadership, but it had done so in exchange for the annexation of considerable parts of Northern Albania (Detrez 2019: 285). As the interview, nor the accompanying remarks go into details about the deal, which was very advantageous for the Serbs, Lavrin presents Serbia as an almost selfless saviour of Albania. Given the parallels between the oriental barbarism in Albania and the civilized barbarism in Europe, Lavrin’s portrayal of Serbia as the bringer of order to Albanian chaos seems to imply that also Europe could end its civilized chaos by following the Serbian example.

9.4 Conclusion

Most scholarly work that touches upon Albanskiye eskizy bases itself on the context of the periodical, i.e. its connection to The New Time, to conclude that the travelogue disseminates a conservative, even reactionary outlook on the Slavic world, rather than the liberal one that prevailed in Slavyansky mir. There are several elements in the travelogue that indeed seem to endorse that the work has a reactionary bias: its oriental representation of a (predominantly) Islamic people vis-à-vis its idealization of a Slavic Orthodox people, its emphasis on national development, and its aversion to modernity. Nevertheless, a closer analysis of the representation of the Albanians, Montenegrins and Serbs in Albanskiye eskizy reveals that this impression of conservatism needs to be nuanced.

The orientalising discourse Lavrin uses in the travelogue opposes the image of a primitive South-Eastern Europe to that of a modern Western Europe. It, however, does not employ the representation of the peoples in the Balkans as exotic primitives to endorse the idea of a superior West. The contrast between the exotic image of the Balkans in Albanskiye eskizy and modern Europe fulfils two different functions. First, the pure forms of primitiveness embodied by the Serbs and the Montenegrins are presented as potential alternatives for the hectic, industrial, overly civilized existence in Western Europe. (Only the Serbian alternative is considered viable). Second, the value set attributed to the barbaric Albanians in the travelogue is used as a kind of distorted mirror

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289 Порядок у нас водворила не Европа, а маленькая Сербия. Она нас спасла от анархии и разгрома [...].
for the modern reader. It suggests that the emphasis on power, militarism and financial gain is not guiding the modern world to a better future, but rather is guiding it towards a new kind of barbarism. Lavrin’s aversion to the outgrowths of modernity, especially from the perverted ideals that he associates with it, is undeniable. Nevertheless, Lavrin does not consider it necessary to reject all the successes of modern civilization. The negative assessment of the Albanian cities and villages is for large part based on their lack of modern comfort: (basic) hygiene, paved roads, safety, order, etc. Moreover, he attributes to the Serbs a certain degree of Europeanization. It appears that for Lavrin, modern civilization becomes a problem when it becomes a goal in itself and/or overshadows national identity. From the moment that national culture becomes subjected to the needs of economics, warfare and geopolitics, Lavrin turns away from it.

The orientalization of the Slavic peoples on the Balkans is also used in contrast to Russia. It does not support the Pan-Slavic image of Russia as a big sister who has to save its younger, less developed siblings. On the contrary, Lavrin puts Russia in the same category as Europe. He constructs the idea that a great modern power like Russia actually could be saved by a small Slavic nation, that for a long time could not reach its full potential because it was oppressed by a larger empire comparable to Russia. Thus Lavrin brings the importance of minority emancipation to the fore again: not by emphasizing the precarious position of small (Slavic) peoples living within or near the borders of great powers as was (part of) the strategy of Slavyansky mir, but by underlining the enormous cultural and redemptive potential of minorities and small nations. Like many individuals and nations with a contested membership to supra-national constellations reimagine those constellations to ensure their membership (Sorrels 2016: 4), Albanskiye eskizy can be interpreted as an attempt of Lavrin to redefine the potential roles of the players within the Slavic world and Europe to challenge the superior position of the great powers and to change the subservient position of small (Slavic) nations.

The redemptive role Lavrin envisions for Serbia – or any other people that behaves like Serbia in the travelogue, – is closely connected to a conservative attitude towards national culture. Just like in the rest of his Russian career, Lavrin places national integrity at the centre of cultural development. The negative assessment of the Albanian attempt to cover its poorly developed national culture with a veneer composed of different foreign influences reinforces this idea. Reversely, Lavrin’s prediction that the lifestyle of the Montenegrins, the “most aristocratic and purest people on the Balkans”, would soon be obsolete, seems as an advise for the reader to look further than national identity alone. Lavrin warns for isolated cultural development and instead repeats his advocacy for balance between cultural preservation and openness: cultural symbiosis with strong national roots.
In Albanskiye eskizy Lavrin draws up an implicit guideline for small nations with respect to their national identity and cultural development. Therefore the theme of supra-national rapprochement and unity seems to fade into the background. Nevertheless, the attention to the role small nations can play within Europe and the world refers to the larger whole and reminds of the essential universalism disseminated in Slavyansky mir. The fact that national development is addressed with the world as a whole in mind, appears from Lavrin’s interpretation of nationalism in the travelogue. Although Lavrin writes Albanskiye eskizy on commission of Suvorin, he does not adopt the “zoological nationalism” for which The New Time is criticized. The set of values which Lavrin attributes to the Serbs in the travelogue is similar to the idea of the “Slavic” behaviour put forward in Slavyansky mir’s manifest, and can be compared to Lavrin’s 1913 proposal for an alternative “defensive nationalism”: unless it is necessary in the light of national self-preservation, a respectful and just attitude towards the Other is essential. Lavrin’s vision of national development still starts from a kind of political cosmopolitanism where difference is reconciled by a shared respect for human dignity.
Part 3 – Lavrin in the United Kingdom
Chapter 10  **Background and Context of Lavrin’s British Career**

10.1  **The New Age**

Although Lavrin intended to return to Russia when he left Corfu in the summer of 1917, he never completed his plans. When he started his return journey, he could not travel to Russia right away due to the circumstances of the war. He had to make a detour via Paris, where he had to wait for a few months, and London, which was intended to be his last stop before going to Saint-Petersburg. Lavrin judged that it was safer to stay in London until the explosive situation in Russia (which had deteriorated during those months of waiting) subdued (Барановский & Хлебникова 2011a: 332). Eventually, he decided not to return to Russia. In an 1977 article for *Slavonica*, a little magazine published by the Slavonic department of Nottingham University, Lavrin explains his decision: the war years had left him with poor health that would not allow him to endure the post-revolutionary chaos (Lavrin 1977: 12). Also the discontinuation of *The New Time* and thus the loss of his main source of income in Saint-Petersburg contributed to his decision, he adds (Ibid.). According to Pleterski, Lavrin’s decision to stay in London roughly coincided with a loss of interest in Yugoslav politics and a break with the Yugoslav Committee\(^\text{290}\) (2001: 188).

Despite his new outsider position, now as an Eastern European in Western Europe, Lavrin quickly found his way to Britain’s literary circles. There are indications that he had connections with the Bloomsbury group via D.S. Mirsky. Mirsky’s biographer holds that

\(^{290}\) This was probably partly caused by the fact that the Committee accused Lavrin of being an Austrian spy. Although he could easily refute this accusation as Austria-Hungary had issued an arrest warrant and put a price on his head, this must have been a blow for their relationship of trust (Pleterski 2001: 188).
the Russian’s “closest relationship of all in London may well have been with the Slovene Janko Lavrin” (Smith 2000: 90). The fact that Lavrin wrote about five articles for Life and Letters (Lavrin 1935), a periodical published by Desmond MacCarthy, a core member of ‘Old Bloomsbury’, supports this connection. Lavrin’s son John claims that Lavrin had a better bond with the Fitzrovians, the artists who gathered in London’s bohemian neighbourhood Fitzrovia and (originally) frequented the Fitzroy Tavern (Jones 2009: 30). Regular visitors of the tavern were writers like Dylan Thomas and George Orwell, but it is not known whether Lavrin knew them personally (Ibid.). Moreover, Lavrin’s surviving correspondence shows that he had warm contacts with other leading figures of the English literary scene in Great Britain and the United States. The Lavrin Archive of Nottingham University holds letters from among others Edwin Muir, Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell, Herbert Read and Henry Miller (Ibid.). That Lavrin had good connections with the British literary world also appears from the fact that he was one of the first members of the International PEN Club in London (Ibid.).

The group that had most impact on Lavrin’s British career, was the circle around A.R. Orage (pronounced like the French word for storm) and his modernist weekly The New Age. Under Orage’s editorship between 1907 and 1922, the periodical was one of the main influencers in the landscape of British thought, despite its relatively small circulation. A contemporary explained Orage’s impact as follows:

What circulation his [Orage’s] paper enjoys I do not know; it cannot be large; probably it is not more than two or three thousand; perhaps it is not even so much as that. But the men and women who read it are the men and women who count — people who welcome daring and original thought, who hold important positions in the civic, social political and artistic worlds, and who eagerly disseminate the seeds of thought they pick up from the study of The New Age. Tens of thousands of people have been influenced by this paper who have never even heard its name. It does not educate the masses directly: it reaches them through the medium of its few but exceedingly able readers. (Cumberland 1919: 130, cited by Scholes in the Modernist Journals Project)

“Daring and original thought” is a description Orage probably found suiting for the content of his periodical. Although The New Age initially was a vehicle for the Fabian

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291 The circulation of The New Age varied greatly under Orage’s editorship. In the earliest years the periodical’s circulation probably reached its peak with 22,000 copies by the end of November 1908. In later years sales dropped. In 1913, Orage sold about 4,500 copies per week (Scholes in the Modernist Journals Project).
Society and the radical left in Great Britain\textsuperscript{292} when Orage became its editor, it was soon transformed into an open forum for debate that did not adhere to one political orientation. Orage promoted “a wide variety of competing opinions” to encourage “lively exchanges among dissident intellectuals and artists” and to develop “a field of radical political-cultural discussion” (Garver 2011: 90).

Not unlike the seemingly paradoxical elements of Lavrin’s oeuvre, the broad spectrum of opinions in The New Age has caused both readers and contributors, and subsequently contemporary scholars, to categorize the periodical in contrasting political camps. Some scholars such as Ann Ardis and Robert Scholes support the claim of readers and contributors with a background in the Fabian Society that The New Age was the main progressive and socialist periodical of the time (Ardis 2002, Scholes 2004, cited in Garver 2011: 86-87). Other scholars such as Charles Ferrall, Dan Stone and Tom Villis, then, support the opposite claim of conservative contributors like Oscar Levy that the periodical was reactionary and looked “nostalgically to the past for a sense of political stability and cultural order” (Levy n.d., Ferrall 2001, Stone 2002, Villis 2006, cited in Garver 2011: 86-88). Garver problematizes these limited interpretations of the periodical and argues that it is necessary to take all voices in the periodical into account in order to grasp the value of the discussions that were held on its pages: they broadened and nuanced the radical political debate, enabled critical discussion of holy cows in modernist thought and made it possible to transcend political boundaries (2011: 110-112). It is reasonable to assume that this broad spectrum not only created controversy, but also formed a welcoming environment for people like Lavrin, whose thought is not easily pigeonholed as “progressive” or “conservative”, “left” or “right”.

Orage welcomed Lavrin as a member of The New Age staff already in 1918, before the end of Lavrin’s first year in Great Britain (Jones 2009: 28). Lavrin started to attend the regular Monday afternoon meetings the editor organized and was introduced to established modernists like H.G. Wells, Katherine Mansfield, Ezra Pound and T.E. Hulme, but also to (then, at least) less well-known names like Dimitrije Mitrić and Edwin Muir (Rigby 1984: 60-61). Orage liked to combine prominent modernist voices with fresh opinions of newcomers as a way to encourage the lively cultural and political debate Garver 2011: 90).

\textsuperscript{292} The New Age originally was a vehicle of the Christian socialist movement. In May 1907, the weekly was taken over by Alfred Orage and Holbrook Jackson, with financial help from George Bernard Shaw. In the first year, the periodical “determined to present a socialist perspective on politics, art, and literature”. In 1908 Orage dropped the adjective “socialist” in the periodical’s description to indicate his pursuit of a broader cultural and political debate. Jackson was only involved as co-editor during the first year (Modernist Journals Project).
From 1918 until Orage’s resignation in 1922, Lavrin contributed more than forty articles to *The New Age*: three series of ten articles on the work of Dostoyevsky (1918), Ibsen (1918-1919) and Nietzsche (1921), and about fourteen society critical articles and discussion contributions. Jones argues that Lavrin’s work for *The New Age* already holds in it two lines that play an important role throughout Lavrin’s British career. He states that Lavrin joined in (and benefitted from) two major trends in the interwar English literary landscape: the cult of Russian literature and psychoanalysis (2009: 35).

Jones suggests that Lavrin’s choice to write his first series for *The New Age* about Dostoyevsky was inspired by the British modernists’ interest in Russia, especially in Russian literature from the nineteenth century. At the time, as Beasley and Bullock state, “nineteenth-century Russian realism presented a model to modernist British fiction” and the “spiritual aesthetics” of many Russian Realists was promoted in reviews, reproductions and exhibitions (2014: 8). To illustrate the timeliness of Lavrin’s choice within the British cultural landscape, Jones adds the example of the Hogarth Press, the publishing house of Leonard and Virginia Woolf which specialized in Russian literature. It was established in 1916, just before Lavrin’s arrival in London, and became commercially viable in 1920, at the time that Lavrin was a regular contributor to *The New Age* and when he published his *New Age* series on Dostoyevsky as a monograph (Jones 2009: 36). The British modernist’s attention to all things Russian probably prompted Lavrin to focus on Russian literature during the interwar period, rather than on any other Slavic literature. According to Jones, this allowed Lavrin to take in a position “at the very forefront of the development of English literary culture” (Ibid.).

Psychoanalysis was the second major trend among British modernists Jones mentions. The interest in psychoanalysis expanded enormously after the First World War when it appeared to be more successful for the treatment of war trauma than traditional psychiatric means (Passerini 1999: 82). As psychoanalysis (and psychology) was perceived to be useful as a tool to better understand and affect the development of the human mind, the idea rose that it could address larger groups of people and maybe even humanity at large. As the First World War was often interpreted as the symptom of a diseased humanity that needed urgent treatment, scholars and modern thinkers started to apply psychoanalysis to history, politics and literature in an attempt to better understand the latent, unconscious dynamics underlying the devastating developments of the early twentieth century (Ibid.). Thus psychoanalysis became in vogue and was an interest of every self-respecting intellectual at the time (Van Hengel 2018: 187). *The New Age* was a trend setter for the use of psychoanalysis as a tool for literary criticism. Already in 1912 there had been a lively debate between Orage and A.E. Randall, a regular contributor to the periodical, on the potential successful application of psychoanalysis to literature (Jones 2009: 35). In the years after, several psychoanalysts joined the discussion and
experiment on the pages of *The New Age*. As the connection between literature and the unconscious, more specifically the idea that literature is the most instinctive expression of a people’s character and soul, was an important element of literary analysis in *Slavyansky mir*, the idea of applying psychoanalysis to literature may have appeared a logical next step for Lavrin, who started to describe his own approach to literature as ‘psycho-critical’.

To the two trends Lavrin picked up at *The New Age*, according to Jones, I would like to add a third (which partly overlaps with the previous two): the search for a new Europe. When Lavrin got involved in the periodical, it paid a lot of attention to the general sense of anxiety over the apparent bankruptcy of the old Europe and its decadent civilization. The debates treated a wide variety of questions about the impact of technology, the nature of modernity, the idea of European culture, Europe’s difficult position within the world and the possibility of a new and better Europe after the war. Typical for *The New Age*, these debates were characterized by an equally wide variety of voices. Discussions on the effect of the war ranged between advocating the idea of creative destruction and the belief that the war had created a *tabula rasa*, and expressing the hope that the war would be at least a sociological and political watershed (Jackson 2012: 1). Also the discussions about what the new Europe should become included conflicting voices. Several contributors attuned their world view to the new totalitarian ideologies that rose during the interbellum, like Fascism and Communism. Think for instance of contributors like Ezra Pound293 and Ödön Pór294, who made a gradual shift in the direction of Italian Fascism, or S.G. Hobson295 who advocated for Marxist revolution (Jackson: 55–61). This is also evident from some reactions from the periodical’s readership: Jackson explains that both

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293 Ezra Pound (1885-1972) was an American poet who worked in London as a foreign reporter and was an important contributor to *The New Age*. Blaming capitalism for the war he sought alternative approaches to the economy. Like many others in Orage’s circle Pound became a convinced supporter of the theory of Social Credit, which was popular among right-wing political circles. Pound started to work for Oswald Mosley, who became the leader of the British fascists in the 1930s, and moved to Italy in 1924, where he worked for Mussolini’s regime. David Moody devoted a monograph to Pound’s interwar years (2014).

294 Ödön Pór (1883-1971) was a Hungarian journalist in Italy, who came into contact with *The New Age* during his work as a correspondent in London during the First World War. Pór saw a strong overlap between the aim of Socialism and Fascism and saw the latter as the former’s legitimate successor. He wrote several idealistic works in support of Fascism and was a contact of Mussolini. Despite his belief in the opportunities Fascism could provide, he did not endorse the actual Italian regime. For more information, see Franzinetti (2017).

295 Samuel George Hobson (1870-1940), first a member of the Fabian Society, was a founder of the Independent Labour Party in 1893. He developed the theory of Guild Socialism, which became popular among many contributors to *The New Age*. His theory was aimed at a form self-management of workers inspired by medieval guilds. Hobson “drew especially on Marxist calls for a revolution to transcend [...] the spiritual crisis brought about by capitalism” (Jackson 2012: 42).
members of the British Union of Fascists and the British Communist Party claimed to be inspired by ideas spread in *The New Age* (2012: 61). Other contributors, like Lavrin, were not interested in the extreme solutions offered by contemporary political and cultural players, but were interested in the idea of finding a cure for Europe’s pathological state. The attention of *The New Age* for the obsolescence of Europe’s decadent civilization arguably provided Lavrin with an easy way to introduce and further develop his ideas about “civilized barbarism” for the European public. Additionally, the periodical’s openness to different visions of Europe, often including the Slavic world, gave Lavrin the opportunity to start and gradually extrapolate his ideas on a diverse, united Slavic world to a European context. The ‘Contemporary Fragments’ series that was addressed in the introduction is an excellent example hereof (cf. 1.2).

The impact of these three trends shows in the rest of Lavrin’s British career, which can be linked to two British cities: London and Nottingham. The cities represent two different, albeit somewhat overlapping parts of Lavrin’s life in Great Britain. London is the city where Lavrin, initially inspired by his work for *The New Age* and the weekly get-togethers organized by A.R. Orage, openly adhered to initiatives that wanted to create a new Europe after the First World War. Nottingham, then, was Lavrin’s anchor in the academic world. In 1918, encouraged by Orage, Lavrin successfully applied for the position of lecturer in Russian at Nottingham University College (Jones 2009: 28-29). In 1921, Lavrin became a professor of Russian literature at – what had in the meantime become – Nottingham University. His academic position gave him the chance to acquaint a British readership with Slavic literatures, to give Slavic literature a place among the European letters and to diffuse his conception of a European culture among his English readers (Ibid.: 43). What is more, it provided Lavrin with the opportunity, as this second part of my dissertation will show, to use literary criticism as an alternative conduit for his criticism on the state of Europe and the world.

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296 Lavrin adds that it was Sir Bernard Pares, the founder of the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies in Great Britain, who also steered D.S. Mirsky into a university teaching post, who advised him to apply in Nottingham (Lavrin 1977: 12; Smith 2000: 90).
10.2 London

Lavrin most openly published about Europe and its future in London-based modernist periodicals like *The New Age*. As appeared from the short look at his ‘Contemporary Fragments’ series in the introduction to this dissertation, Lavrin advocated for a united and diverse Europe, thus apparently mirroring his vision of the Slavic world. This makes him one of the first (and few) interwar advocates for forms of European integration. At the time, the general consensus deemed it quite laughable and unrealistic to go beyond nationalisms (Passerini 1999: 59). Ideas of a united Europe were often depicted as castles in the air or even as monstrosities. Nevertheless, thought about an integrated Europe did have some broader influence, especially during the 1920s (in the 1930s until after the Second World War it fell largely off the political radar because of the rising influence of Fascism and Communism, and the faltering democracies all over Europe) (Dinan 2014: 4).

In order to be able to situate Lavrin’s views, it is key to shortly address the most prominent voices on European unification during the interwar period. Their definitions of Europe are diverse, both concerning its geographical range (which nations should be included?) and concerning its nature (should Europe be an economical, political or rather a cultural union?). The first advocates for a form of European unity during the interwar period, political activist Robert Seton-Watson and Czech politician Thomas Masaryk (the first president of Czechoslovakia from 1918 until 1935), started disseminating their view on a united Europe already during the First World War, respectively via the periodical *New Europe* (1915-1920) and in a monograph with the same title (1918). Their New Europe mainly aimed at the emancipation of the Slavic minorities (later newly formed states) in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Seton-Watson and Masaryk believed that the establishment of a regional federation of Balkan and Central-European states could help bridge the gap between Western and Eastern Europe and would contribute to “a new European order based on cooperation, open diplomacy and disarmament” (Passerini 1999: 52-53). Although their federative ideas were never executed, their ideas have influenced participants of the Paris peace conference to look beyond the existing borders of Europe’s empires (Ibid.: 53).

A year after the discontinuation of Seton-Watson’s *New Europe*, Count Richard Coudenhove-Kallergi published his *Pan-Europa* (1921), the most influential and most widely addressed interwar concept of a united Europe. His vision of Europe consisted of a federal union of European states centred on the axis France-Germany and based on economic and political cooperation. Coudenhove-Kallergi did not include Russia, as he considered the rise of communism one of the main threats for the continent (Sorrels 2016: 176), nor did he include Great Britain, because it had already built its own international
unity through its imperial success (Wyrwa 2006: 112). Although he focused on economic and political integration, culture played an important role for Coudenhove-Kallergi in so far that cultural acquaintance would make European nations understand that they were all but political sub-groupings of one European whole (Sorrels 2016: 149).

After the publication of Pan-Europa, the Count established the Pan-Europa Movement to execute his plans. It was via this movement that his ideas for a federative Europe penetrated the political circles of a few nations. The Czech branch of the movement was supported by Masaryk and was headed by Edvard Beneš, the Czech minister of Foreign Affairs. To the French branch of the movement belonged the leading French politician Aristide Briand, who became a strong advocate for European unity in the League of Nations (Dinan 2014: 3). In his capacity of Foreign Minister Briand succeeded to build a good relationship with his German counterpart, Gustav Stresemann. It was through their common effort (with help of Britain’s foreign minister Austen Chamberlain) that the Locarno Treaty was signed in 1925, guaranteeing the borders of the nations in Western Europe and ending Germany’s exclusion from the League of Nations (which was decided with the Treaty of Versailles in 1918). Although Briand and Stresemann thus laid the foundation for a French-German entente that would form the heart of Pan-Europa, the nations remained too suspicious of each-other’s intentions. The repeated proposals by Briand and Stresemann in the League of Nations were deemed too radical for most European countries (Ibid.). When Stresemann died in 1929, the hope for European rapprochement died with him.

Even though I touched only briefly on the basic tenets of these prominent interwar advocates of European integration, it is clear that there were a couple points of contact with Lavrin – e.g. the cooperation and solidarity among Slavic nations or the use of cultural acquaintance to foster unity – which suggest that there was a potential openness to Lavrin’s views on cultural and societal development in circles debating the possibility of a new Europe. Moreover, within the ranks of the New Age, there was another (lesser known) promoter of European unity whose ideas came very close to those of Lavrin: Dimitrije Mitrinović. In his weekly New Age column ‘World Affairs’, Mitrinović promoted the idea of the creation of a Union of European Republics as the best means to

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297 Coudenhove-Kallergi did not oppose to colonialism. Like other internationalists at the time, he believed that the spoils of the overseas colonies should be shared among European nations and thus could help support European peace after the war. Inspired by evolutionist ideas, Coudenhove-Kallergi considered that the domination of other “under-developed civilizations” was legitimized. For a fine-grained analysis of the combination of empire and European integration in Coudenhove-Kallergi’s thought, see Sorrels 2016.

298 For more information on Mitrinović and his European project, see Pajin 2008; Passerini 1998; Rigby 1984, 1999 & 2006; Van Hengel 2018.
avoid continental as well as global conflicts (Pajin 2008: 211). The foundation of Mitrinović’s thinking was formed by an anthropomorphic interpretation of the world which (1) allowed to recognise the heterogeneity of humanity and (2) simultaneously provided an over-arching unity that could embrace the differences among individuals and nations (Rigby 1984: 70). This anthropomorphic world-view went hand in hand with the belief in a progressive unification of the world: starting with a federation of Europe (including the Slavic world) and ending with the unification of humanity (Pajin 2008: 211). Until his death in 1952, Mitrinović consequently disseminated the same idea, always approaching it from a different angle: psychology, spirituality, economics, politics... In his interpretation of a united Europe, culture always played an important role as he believed it could form a counterweight to nationalist militarism (Le Dréau 2005: 314).

The similarities between Mitrinović’s concept of Europe and the ideas Lavrin disseminated during his early Russian career are striking. One would expect that these similarities would lead to a close cooperation between the two. Nevertheless, accounts of the relationship between the two South Slavs underline that Lavrin did not hold Mitrinović and his ideas in high regard. Jones and Rigby emphasize that Lavrin called Mitrinović “a poseur and a charlatan” (Jones 2009: 37) and a man with “a home-made Messiah complex” (Rigby 1984: 63). This rather negative assessment of Mitrinović is probably connected to the latter’s penchant for mysticism and symbolic vagueness, two things which Lavrin considered symptoms of decadence and which opposed his focus on a more practical approach (cf. 8.3). Different than Lavrin, Mitrinović deliberately disseminated his ideas in a hermetic way. This appears for example from Van Hengel’s description of a typical contribution of Mitrinović in *The New Age*: the column ‘World Affairs’, signed with the enigmatic pseudonym M.M. Cosmoi, was characterized by a grandiloquent “mythological language”, with which he wanted to appeal to the unconscious and to emotions, rather than to the rational intellect of the reader (Van Hengel 2018: 176). The puzzling effect of Mitrinović’s message lay also in his syncretism. Passerini and Van Hengel claim that Mitrinović mixed ideas and elements from theosophy, and several religious and cultural traditions with modern thought: he combined ideas of Helena Blavatsky (a Russian medium and the mother of theosophy),

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299 Initially, the column ‘World Affairs’ was written by Orage who condensed lengthy conversations with Mitrinović in a short text.
Vladimir Solovyov, the Indian Veda’s and Nietzsche, to name but a few (Passerini 1999: 106; Van Hengel 2018: 20-21).

Despite Lavrin’s critique of Mitrović’s enigmatic ways, there are nonetheless several indications, which have not received any scholarly attention before, that Lavrin and Mitrović, who not only shared similar concepts of unity, but also a similar past (they were both involved in the South-Slavic emancipatory struggle), held regular contact with each other after they had stopped working for The New Age in 1922 (the year of Orage’s resignation). The Mitrović Archive of the New Atlantis Foundation holds a couple of postcards and letters of Lavrin that indicate that the two occasionally met each other in the 1920s (NAF 1/7/12/15, 20, 28, 103 & NAF 5/2/2/14). Moreover, I have discovered that Lavrin was involved as a contributor in the weekly New Britain (1933-34), one of the initiatives Mitrović established during the interwar period. This shows that their connection was – to a certain extent, at least – maintained during the early 1930s and that Mitrović played an influential role in Lavrin’s work as a society critic.

The weekly New Britain takes in a specific place within Mitrović’s work and helps to understand Lavrin’s position vis-à-vis Mitrović and at the same time shows how their approach to (European) unity differs. Before going deeper into Lavrin’s role in the weekly New Britain it is opportune to situate the periodical in Mitrović’s oeuvre. In the years after he left The New Age, Mitrović established a range of initiatives (with links to several international networks) to promote European integration and federation. During the interwar years he subsequently (and sometimes simultaneously) established the Chandos Group, the Adler Society, the New Europe Group – not related to the initiatives of Seton-Watson and Masaryk – the New Britain Movement and the Eleventh Hour Flying Clubs (Burgham 2014). In each group the approach to a federative Europe was different. The Adler Society, a branch of the International Society of Individual Psychology, for example addressed the future of Europe through a psychological lens (Passerini 1999: 120-125). The New Europe Group, then, and especially its subsection the New Britain Movement,

300 Mitrović developed this way of thinking through his contacts with a mystical circle of European intellectuals, mainly with Wassily Kandinsky, Frederik Van Eeden, and Erich Gutkind, a German Jewish philosopher (Passerini 1999: 106; Van Hengel 2018: 20-21).

301 Like Lavrin, Mitrović had been involved in the students protests against the Austro-Hungarian dominance in his home region. He was an activist of the cultural wing of Young Bosnia (Passerini 1999: 106) the Bosnian (more violent) counterpart of the Omladina Lavrin adhered to.

302 The New Atlantis Foundation, named after one of Mitrović’s periodicals, is established by Mitrović himself to safeguard his archive and to act on his behalf after his death.
appeared to have a more political approach to European federation. The New Europe Group, the New Britain Movement, and its weekly New Britain, in which Lavrin was involved, were relatively popular in Great Britain because they took in an anti-capitalist position between the extremes of Fascism and Communism (Van Hengel 2015: 260). Le Dréau argues that this search for a way in between the two “isms” and the movements’ ties with L’Ordre Nouveau in France make it possible to place the movements within the larger European trend of non-conformism of the 1930s and its search for “concepts de ni droite-ni gauche” and a “troisième voie” (2005: 312-313).

The New Europe Group’s interpretation of such a “third path” helps to understand Lavrin’s attraction to it. At one point, the Group’s secretary, Winifred Gordon Fraser, formulates the group’s standpoint as follows:

> Man cannot only be conservative, liberal or communist. Man is by nature – and rightly so – conservative in the cultural field, because we owe everything of value to the past; he must be liberal in the field of law and advocate tolerance provided that such tolerance does not harm the interests of the community; and in terms of material needs, no honest man can contend that all people should have an equal share. (Gordon Fraser 1932, cited in Van Hengel 2018: 242).

Apart from the pursuit for European (and world) unity, this summary shows a pragmatic approach, which underlines the importance of cultural tradition and the need for tolerant behaviour towards the other, two principles that played an important part in the ideas Lavrin disseminated in his early Russian writings.

The pragmatism that appears from Gordon-Fraser’s summary of the New Europe Group’s standpoint, however, was not typical for Mitrinović and his initiatives. The summary is actually a symptom of a rift that grew among the sympathizers of the New Europe Group. This rift is also apparent in the vehicles of the Group: the previously mentioned weekly New Britain, and The New Britain Quarterly (1932), The New Atlantis (1933) and The New Albion (1933). A closer look at the idea behind these periodicals will help to

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303 Apart from European integration the weekly New Britain paid a lot of attention to reforms that the movement thought necessary to create a federation: a reform of the monetary system; the reorganisation of industry through national guilds; the devolution of parliament into a House of Industry, a House of Culture, and a Political Chamber (Passerini 1999: 130).

304 Een mens kan niet enkel conservatief, liberaal of communistisch zijn. Een mens is van nature – en terecht – conservatief op cultureel gebied, omdat we alles van waarde aan het verleden te danken hebben; hij moet liberaal zijn op het gebied van recht, en tolerantie voorstaan, met als voorwaarde dat die tolerantie de belangen van de gemeenschap niet schaadt; en op het gebied van materiële behoeften kan geen eerlijk mens bestrijden dat alle mensen een evenredig deel moeten krijgen.
understand Lavrin’s position towards Mitrinović, the New Europe Group and the New Britain Movement.

The concept of The New Britain Quarterly, The New Atlantis and The New Albion was more in line with the previous description of Mitrinović’s enigmatic style and approach. Therefore these periodicals were the preferred vehicles of Mitrinović and his small circle of confidants. They approached European integration through spiritual, abstract and vague processes (Van Hengel 2018: 240-241). The style, vocabulary and content of The New Britain Quarterly, The New Atlantis and The New Albion were so abstract and intricate that they did not appeal to many of the sympathisers of the New Europe Group (Ibid.: 240). The above summary of the group’s standpoint by Gordon Fraser, was in fact an attempt of the inner circle to demonstrate its openness to critique, and was an attempt to appease the increasing criticism among their sympathisers.

The weekly New Britain, then, to which Lavrin contributed about twenty articles, did meet the demand for a more accessible periodical. The weekly was the designated vehicle of the more pragmatic New Britain Movement. It addressed more realistic and topical themes about European integration in a more understandable language. This approach hit bull’s eye: the first issue of the weekly was sold more than 30.000 times (Van Hengel.: 260). Although this format appealed more to the general public and succeeded to reach many people looking for an alternative for Fascism and Communism, it did not suit Mitrinović. He limited his involvement in the weekly New Britain and actually tried to hinder its practical character by opening several issues with a mysterious and enigmatic column (Ibid.: 261). Soon, already in 1934, it came to a clash between Mitrinović and the editor of the weekly, Charles Purdom, when the latter wanted to use the momentum of the periodical to create an alternative political movement in the country. In March 1934, during the first congress of the potential political movement, Mitrinović’s confidants staged a coup: they voted down the pending changes, torpedoed the political potential of the Group, and decided to gradually discontinue the weekly New Britain (Passerini 1999: 131; Van Hengel 2018: 260-265). Instead, Mitrinović and his confidants returned to their preferred abstract and spiritual approach to Europe’s future. In the aftermath of the congress, many of the followers of the New Europe Group decided to turn away from it.

It seems that this moment also was a deal breaker for Lavrin. In May 1934, when the weekly New Britain was on its last legs, he established his own periodical on European

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305 Most initiatives Mitrinović established revolved around him as a kind of guru. Members were often “arranged in concentric circles according to the degree of intimacy with him” (Passerini 1999: 124).

306 Le Dréau argues that the group has left only few traces in the history of Great Britain because of its lack of influence on the political life in the country (2005: 313).
integration with help from his former *New Age*-colleague Edwin Muir: *The European Quarterly* (1934-35). Also Muir and his wife Willa were friends of Mitrinović, but, like Lavrin they were critical of his grandiloquent approach to the world. Willa Muir called Mitrinović “an entertaining companion because he was such an egregious nonsense-monger” (Rigby 1984: 61). Similar to the mission of *Slavyansky mir*, the editors of *The European Quarterly* wanted to encourage a feeling of unity among the European nations through literature and art:

> Believing that the realm of literature, art and thought should transcend all national and political boundaries, *The European Quarterly* will try to foster the growth of the European spirit in every sphere of human activity. (N.N. EQ-1/1: 2)

The content of the quarterly seems to be a fusion between *Slavyansky mir* and the weekly *New Britain*. It combines literary and cultural criticism with literary translations of work from all over Europe with articles on topical themes with respect to European integration and other European concerns, such as Hitlerism and bolshevism. Already after four issues, *The European Quarterly* was discontinued due to financial problems and the problem of finding an audience (Jones 2009: 36, Marks 2009: 632). Despite its short life-span the periodical is said to have had a considerable influence at the time as it provided assessments and comment of topics that were often neglected in Britain at the time (Marks 2009: 631).

After the discontinuation of *The European Quarterly*, Lavrin’s explicit interest in the future of Europe seems to disappear gradually. In the build-up to the Second World War, Lavrin did not publish any works explicitly touching upon European integration or European problems. During the war, he did come back to the theme when he worked for the broadcasting service of the BBC (Jones 2009: 41), first as a broadcaster, later as a member of the Editorial Board for European Broadcasts. His broadcasts focused on the developments in Yugoslavia, probably because he was one of the few staff members who spoke South Slavic languages. From the few surviving drafts of Lavrin’s broadcasts held at the Lavrin Archive at Nottingham University, Jones deduces that Lavrin’s texts “combine the general thrust of British wartime propaganda with what seems to be a highly personal reading of current events” 307 (2009: 41).

After the war, Lavrin is fifty-eight at the time, the themes of Europe and European unity disappear into the background again. This might be related to the Cold War and the

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307 Only eight short drafts have been preserved in the Special Collections and Manuscripts Department of Nottingham University. The archives of the BBC hold hardly any broadcasts of the war period. Most tapes were reused for subsequent broadcasts. Therefore it is hard to get a full grasp on Lavrin’s personal interpretations of the events.
seemingly definitive division of the world in two blocs. The confrontation between East and West must have frustrated Lavrin’s dream of a united humanity. Only in the 1960s, probably because Tito’s independent Third Way and the thaw under Khrushchev showed that a different world order still was a possibility, Lavrin seems to come back to the theme of European and Slavic unity. Almost every year, he published one or two essays that address the Slavic Idea, the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe and the role Eastern Europe can play in a Europe without the Iron Curtain. In 1969, Lavrin published a re-worked compilation of these essays, titled *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*.

### 10.3 Nottingham

Although Lavrin preferred the thriving and lively cultural scene of London, he spent an important part of his British career in Nottingham, which he considered to be a dull provincial town (Jones 2009: 30). Jones suggests that Lavrin only started to feel more at home when he was able to replicate the big-city atmosphere during public lectures and discussions at the university (Ibid.: 34). Moreover, his academic career provided him with sufficient funds to pay for his undiminished fondness of traveling (Ibid.: 29-30).

As Lavrin was affiliated with the Russian program from 1918 to 1952, he witnessed several changes at Nottingham University, which often benefitted his career. When the University College became a full-fledged University, Lavrin seized the opportunity to successfully renegotiate his appointment and change his lectureship into a full-time professorship (Jones 2009: 30). Moreover, he saw the increasing appreciation for and recognition of Russian studies at the university: when Lavrin started his career, courses on Russian Language and Literature belonged to the program of the Modern Language Department of the university, only in the 1930s it became a full-fledged study programme (Ibid.: 33). This evolution gave Lavrin more independence for the organisation of Russian studies, and gave him the opportunity to extend the program to other parts of the Slavic world: Lavrin introduced courses in Serbo-Croat (1919), Czech and Polish (1930s) and he helped organize summer courses in Slovenia (1950s) (Ibid.: 40-41). Jones argues that Lavrin was to a large extent responsible for the progressive growth of Russian Studies in Nottingham: he tells of Lavrin’s lively teaching style that enthused the small, but (high-)qualitaty groups of students in Russian languages, his well frequented and “greatly prized” public lectures on Russian literature and culture, and his many publications on Russian and Comparative Literature “that kept pouring out” (Ibid.: 32-33, 40).
An overview of his publications shows that the three trends typical for his contributions in *The New Age* seem to play a role here as well. As the following paragraphs will show, the two trends Jones alluded to – the cult of Russian literature and psychoanalysis – are very prominent. Lavrin’s interest in a different Europe, the third trend, appears to be more indirect, but also here there are indications that this trend remains present.

As a professor in Russian literature Lavrin joined in with the fascination for Russian letters in many British modernist circles during the interwar period. His very first monograph *Dostoyevsky and his Creation* (1920a) – which significantly builds on and overlaps with his articles on Dostoyevsky in *The New Age* – is the first in a rich series of monographs on (chiefly) nineteenth-century Russian authors. This series consists on the one hand of a couple of compilations of Russian literature, think for example of collections such as *Russian Poetry Reader* (1946d), *Russian Humorous Stories* (1946c) and his two *Series of Representative Russian Stories* (1946a, 1946b). On the other hand, the series comprises several articles and no less than seventeen monographs, devoted to cardinal Russian writers like Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Gogol and Chekhov. He also published a couple of overview studies on Russian literature in general like *Russian Literature* (1927b), *An Introduction to the Russian Novel* (1947a) and *From Pushkin to Mayakovsky: a Study in the Evolution of a Literature* (1949). The fact that Lavrin mainly addressed Russian realists, shows that he knew what appealed to an intellectual public at the time, or at least indicates that his interests aligned with theirs. Also Lavrin’s attention to the work of Solovyov (1924b, 1930, 1931), whose ideas were popular among British modernists, points in that direction.

Lavrin’s scholarly interests exceeded the field of Russian literature, though. He regularly contributed to the then young field of Comparative Literature. Among British comparativists, Lavrin took in a unique position as he was one of the first to offer an Eastern European perspective (Jones 2009: 44). He compared Russian authors with Western-European contemporaries, like in his articles ‘Tolstoy and Nietzsche’ (1925b), ‘Chekhov and Maupassant’ (1926) and ‘Dostoyevsky and Proust’ (1927a). Lavrin also published three overviews of Modern European Literature, in which he placed Russian – and now and again other Slavic – literature within a larger European context. Five of the eleven chapters in his *Aspects of Modernism: From Wilde to Pirandello* (1935), for example, concern Russian writers or literary currents, that had an important Russian branch, like Futurism. Lavrin’s comparative works give the impression that he used the modernist openness for Russian literature to give it a place within the European letters and thus to create a sense of cultural rapprochement. This is a first indication that Lavrin used the interest in Russian literature to incorporate the third trend, his ideas about a different Europe, in his academic work.
The second trend Jones alluded to, psychoanalysis, is very prominent during the early years of Lavrin’s academic career. The (sub)tites of his first three monographs - *Dostoyevsky and his Creation: a Psychocritical Study* (1920), *Ibsen and his Creation: a Psychocritical Study* (1921), and *Nietzsche and Modern Consciousness* (1922) – all explicitly show that psychoanalysis, in the form of “psychocriticism”, became a key aspect of his approach. After 1925, Lavrin no longer uses the term “psychocritical” in the titles of his works, but that he maintains the same method comes to the fore very clearly in the introductory remarks and prefaces of his monographs. His *Studies in European Literature* for example opens with an exposé of the struggle between the rational and irrational halves of “human personality” and its effect on literary and cultural history (Lavrin 1929a: 7-25). A similar link is suggested in the introduction of *Aspects of Modernism*, which points to the connection between “human consciousness” and literature:

The only thing one can do is to portray a number of European authors and let their works speak, not only for themselves, but also for their epoch. (Lavrin 1935: 10)

Lavrin maintains this “psychocritical” approach to literature also after the Second World War, even though the study of the author’s consciousness was increasingly replaced with the study of the mechanisms in fictional texts (Brooks 1987: 334). Although the approach of his choice was increasingly considered reductive and obsolete (Ibid.), Lavrin seems to choose for psychoanalysis because revealing the unconscious currents in a fictional work comes close to revealing the collective consciousness of (national) groups the author belongs to or even of humanity at large. The introduction to his monograph on Pushkin in 1947, for example, states that

the study of any literature, if undertaken in the right spirit, should enable us to follow the successive patterns of the life and consciousness of the nation which gave it birth. (Lavrin 1947b: 1).

This quote suggests that implementing the classic, obsolete form of psychoanalysis enabled Lavrin to disseminate his ideas on Europe and humanity: it permitted him to address themes like national development in his literary criticism. Moreover, this implies that in his comparative works, he could assess several national developments within a larger European context, and by extension, the development of European culture as a whole.

Another indication that Europe and its future played a role in Lavrin’s scholarly work comes from an unexpected quarter: a very critical, even condescending remark about Lavrin’s academic competences by one of his peers, Elizabeth Hill. Hill, who was a Russian linguist at Cambridge University, writes in her autobiography that Lavrin was no more than “a journalist with academic ambitions” (1999: 138). (Considering that Lavrin did not
have a real academic degree, her criticism is not entirely unfounded.) Hill bases her 
judgement on the impression that Lavrin’s work – she speaks of his work on Dostoyevsky 
in particular – was indebted to the ideas of Mitrinović, which Lavrin allegedly soaked up 
and passed off as his own (Ibid.). Hill’s assessment of Lavrin’s work on Dostoyevsky seems 
to be unfounded, because Lavrin published his first assessment of the writer already in 
1918, before he actually met Mitrinović. Interestingly, the very fact that Hill noticed a 
certain overlap between Lavrin’s literary criticism and Mitrinović’s work, which was 
always closely connected to the conception of Europe or a solution for the European 
(cultural) crisis, indicates that Lavrin incorporated his own ideas on Europe – which, as 
we saw, have the same basic tenets as Mitrinović’s – in his literary criticism.

After 1935, Lavrin’s academic output started to decrease. As Jones suggests, it is fair to 
say that Lavrin’s golden age ended in that year (2009: 43). From that moment onwards, 
Lavrin’s involvement in modernist periodicals stopped, and also his original scholarly 
output decreased. Only three of the monographs Lavrin published after 1935 are based on 
new material: Pushkin and Russian Literature (1947b), Goncharov (1953) and Lermontov 
(1959). The other studies Lavrin published, about twelve, are all based on his earlier 
work. He seems to have made it a habit to revisit his previous publications and to 
republish them in a slightly adapted form – he for example adjusted his account by 
drawing parallels between the historical context of the author and the contemporary 
geopolitical developments. In his 1948 analysis of Nietzsche, for example, he elaborates 
on the way in which Nietzsche was (mis)used in Nazi ideology. Over the years, Lavrin 
revisited almost all of his works at least once.

Lavrin also republished several of his articles and chapters in Slovene periodicals, most 
often in Blue Bird (Modra Ptica). Usually they were translations by a Slovene translator, so 
eventual changes in the Slovene-language articles cannot be attributed to Lavrin. A 
diverse selection of his previous work appeared in Slovene: several chapters of his Aspects 
of Modernism, a couple of articles that appeared in British modernist periodicals, and even 
an occasional translation of a chapter from Albanskiye eskizy.

One could say that Lavrin’s choice to publish his work in Slovenia is part of a stronger 
engagement with his homeland after 1935. It is not that Lavrin did not maintain contact 
with Slovene friends and colleagues before 1935 however: he was one of the founding 
members of PEN club Slovenia in 1926 (Žitnik 1996: 6) and organized several group trips 
in the country (Jones 2009: 31-32). In the late 1920s Lavrin also published several articles 
– a foretaste of his book Studies in European Literature, – in the Slovene periodical The 
Ljubljana Bell (Ljubljanski Zvon). In the build-up to the Second World War, however, the

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308 In 2005 posthumously appeared his monograph Anton Chekhov: an introduction to his Life and Work.
share of Slovene language articles increases significantly. For the English public, Lavrin’s rekindled interest in his home region appears from his involvement in projects to popularize South Slavic, chiefly Slovene literature in Great Britain. This is especially the case after his retirement in 1952. He contributed to several anthologies of South Slavic poetry, both as a translator and as an editor. In 1954 he for example contributed to the anthology *The Parnassus of a Small Nation* with Slovene poetry; in 1959 he translated the work *A Wanderer went through the Atom Age* by the Slovene poet Matej Bor; and in 1962 he published *An Anthology of Modern Yugoslav Poetry*. Usually, Lavrin wrote the introduction for these works in which he provided an overview of the literary history of the region(s) and paid attention to the place of these literatures within European literature at large.

Also the very last monograph Lavrin wanted to publish, his memoires *Between Eight and Eighty* (*Med osem in osemdeset*, 1987) was meant to bring him back to his homeland. However, as Janja Žitnik writes,

> the book was supposed to coincide with the author’s hundredth birthday, but its publication, like his hundredth birthday, was overtaken by the writer’s death. (Žitnik 1996: 13)

The semi-fictionalized memoires consist of twenty sketches Lavrin mostly wrote after his retirement, which tell of the colourful encounters Lavrin had during his many travels. Starting in Slovenia, Lavrin takes the reader with him on a trip across the continent, to Russia, Czechia, Italy,… with short detours to Turkey and Northern Africa. Vladimir Gajšek describes his sketches as “old world images, […] when cosmopolitanism was still naïve and without malice” (Gajšek 1987, cited in Žitnik 1996: 14). One could say that his memoires show that Lavrin ended his life like he lived it: looking to learn from encounters with other cultures, open towards differences, and keen on sharing his experiences with others.
Chapter 11  The State of Europe

When Lavrin starts the British part of his career, several of the factors that determined his earlier writing have significantly changed because of the consequences of the First World War. First, Lavrin’s move from Saint Petersburg to London has changed the nature of his outsider position. He no longer starts from his position as a member of the Slavic periphery who wants to acquire an equal position within the Slavic world. Instead, he now seeks to secure a position within Europe from a double outsider position: as a member of the Eastern-European periphery and as an expatriate living in Great-Britain, which has an ambiguous relationship with the continent. Second, the different status which former Slavic minorities have obtained during the peace talks in the aftermath of the war makes one of the central themes of Lavrin’s early work, minority emancipation, less pertinent. At the same time, one can assume that the many conflicts and rising nationalist dictatorships during the interwar period cause Lavrin’s other central theme, supra-national integration, to become more important. Third, the First World War has served as a confirmation and a magnifier of Lavrin’s diagnosis of Europe’s “civilized barbarism”. The countless deaths and the pointless destruction caused by nationalistic greed of Europe’s heads of state have showed that Lavrin’s ideal of a shared humanitarian morality is a far off dream. This, assumedly, brings the need for the regeneration of Europe (and by extension humanity) more to the forefront in Lavrin’s work.

The scholarly observations on Lavrin’s British oeuvre already hint at the fact that Lavrin indeed showed an increased attention to supra-national integration and cultural regeneration in some of his interwar writings. Jackson points out how some of Lavrin’s articles for The New Age express hope for a transvaluation of Europe after the First World War (2012: 84). Both Passerini and Marks, then, shortly address how The European Quarterly reflects a cosmopolitan hope to use culture to transcend Europe’s borders, and to tackle the unsubdued post-war chaos (Passerini 1999: 231-232; Marks 2009: 626-632). Lastly, Sozina argues that Lavrin’s analysis of Tolstoy betrays a search for an ideal humanity and a universal imperative (2011: 128-129).
Indeed if we look at the works in which Lavrin most explicitly formulates his views on Europe – his social criticism for *The New Age*, his contributions to the weekly *New Britain*, and the little magazine *The European Quarterly* which he edited with Muir, – the most pertinent issues are European regeneration and integration, which he often connects to each other. Still in 1918, Lavrin hopes, not unlike other contemporary intellectuals who see the war as a possibility for creative destruction, that the atrocities of the war can mark the beginning of European change. This appears from one of Lavrin’s early contributions to *The New Age* during the last year of the war. In a rather Nietzschean discourse he states that

> [m]any comfortable old illusions have been destroyed during the last four years; many philistine “ideals” and ideologies have been drowned in blood. [...] And it is possible that this total catastrophe of all our former values will give birth to the true transvaluer, i.e., to the tragic individual. The time is perhaps not far off when he will come and sweep away, like a raging wind, the rest of our hedonistic “ideals” and subterfuges, our lies, our miserable sins, and still more miserable virtues. (Lavrin NA 1918(22/26): 502)

Over the course of the interwar years, this desire of Lavrin does not decrease, but the hope for effective change withers nonetheless. In 1920, just a few years later, Lavrin’s disappointment in the lack of regeneration and integration shows in the previously mentioned series ‘Contemporary Fragments’ (cf. 1.2). In the series Lavrin criticizes “the Farce of Versailles”, which in his eyes has not created a “new world” or a “vital leading idea which could [...] unite humanity” but has only safeguarded the old status quo (Lavrin NA 1920(26/19): 307). A decade later, in a contribution to *The New Britain* entitled ‘Nationalism’, Lavrin repeats this disappointment and expresses his regret about how the “Al Capones of politics” reinforce the nationalist fragmentation in Europe and threaten to “undermine the last feeble chance for a supra-national European consciousness” (NB 1933(1/17): 530). In the unsigned mission statement opening the first issue of *The European Quarterly*, then, editors Lavrin and Muir forewarn that the failure of “the self-appointed ‘makers of a new world’” has led to more cultural chaos and mere symbolic pacts of friendship which will eventually lead to a new world war (N.N. 1973 [EQ 1934(1/1)]: 1).

It is correct to highlight Lavrin’s desire for an over-arching “new world” and universal values that could glue Europe back together, like Jackson, Passerini, Marks and Sozina do in a superficial way. However, to understand what these over-arching solutions mean – what does this new world entail? How far does this universality reach? – it is important to zoom in on what Lavrin wants to “transvalue”, how he interprets this transformation and how this relates to the friction between supra-national and national interests. This and the following chapters go deeper into the ways in which Lavrin imagines a new
Europe in his British oeuvre and how this corresponds with his older views of a united Slavic world and humanity. First, I engage with Lavrin’s work for modernist periodicals during the interwar period as they hold his most explicit texts about the state of Europe. Afterwards, I use the insights from this chapter as a base to tackle Lavrin’s implicit engagement with Europe in his literary analysis in the other chapters.

This first chapter addresses Lavrin’s texts in *The New Age* and *New Britain*, and his and Muir’s approach to *The European Quarterly*. It does so in a chronological way. The chapter will show how Lavrin’s vision of a regenerated and integrated Europe is mainly informed by his concerns about civilized barbarism and its impact on several layers of society: not only on the national and international level, but also – and increasingly so – on the level of the individual.

### 11.1 *The New Age*: Overcoming Post-War Chaos

In the socially critical articles Lavrin writes for Orage’s *New Age*, he further elaborates on the problem of civilized barbarism and how to reverse or transcend humanity’s emphasis on political and economic progress. In these articles Lavrin shows how the obsolete – in his view – values of civilization negatively impact the development of society in three ways. In some articles, like ‘The Tragic Individual’ (NA 1918(22/26)) and ‘Individuality and Character’ (NA 1918(23/10)), he zooms in on individual and group morality. In other articles like ‘Master and Creator’ (NA 1918(23/3)) and ‘The Galvanized Muses’ (NA 1920(26/12)) Lavrin pays more attention to the impact on cultural practice. In yet other articles like ‘Germany and Culture’ (NA 1920(26/24)) and ‘Small Nations’ (NA 1921 (28/22)) he focuses on the impact on the dynamics between nations. A comparison of the content of these articles shows that Lavrin’s concerns about the ways in which civilized barbarism influences society are often connected to each other and generally boil down to the following over-arching characteristics: the emphasis on personal gain, the mechanisation of society, and quick copycat behaviour. The following sections each address one of these characteristics and investigate how Lavrin connects them to the development of individual and group morality, cultural practice and the dynamics among European nations.
Personnal Gain

The first problematic trend in European society Lavrin criticizes in his contributions to *The New Age*, is the impression that the emphasis on mere political and economic progress fosters the pursuit of personal gain: individuals and groups of individuals want to be the richest, the mightiest and the largest... Lavrin writes that “the interest and the egoism” of those groups have become “more unrestrained than ever” (NA 1920(26/19): 307). In his assessments of the development of individual and group morality in European society, Lavrin distinguishes three consequences of the focus on personal gain. First, he suggests that the (unwritten) moral rules of social groups (be it class, religion, or a political ideology) are increasingly instrumentalized to cater to the interests of the group itself. Second, Lavrin states that following the principles or the creed of a certain group is in that case no longer inspired by personal conviction, but by the need to protect “the welfare and preservation of the community” (NA 1918(23/10): 150), which in essence serves personal gain. (The wish to preserve personal gain thus, paradoxically, hinders personal development). Third, as a consequence, he suggests that the moral rules of such a group are increasingly used to emphasize the group’s distinction and superiority vis-à-vis other individuals or groups with a different set of rules (NA 1920(26/9): 142).

In articles that address the impact of an egoist mind-set on modern cultural practice, Lavrin signals more than once that also contemporary artists have succumbed to the call of financial success and popularity (NA 1920(26/19): 308, NA 1920(26/12)). He regrets that this has facilitated the instrumentalization of culture. On the one hand, Lavrin condemns the behaviour of artists who cater to the to the taste of the powers that be (NA 1920(26/12)) and thus de facto make art “the obedient handmaid of the exploiting classes” (NA 1920(26/19): 307) – a point of critique that reminds of Slavyansky mir’s take on the critical function of culture. On the other hand, he criticizes artists who make their art subservient to their own ‘egoistic’ interests. Lavrin for example frowns upon artists who create a cult around their person for “that is what draws listeners and buyers” (NA 1920(26/12): 191). Just like individuals adhere to the rules of their social group not out of conviction, but in order to preserve the group’s (and personal) welfare, a lot of art is in Lavrin’s eyes no longer an expression of the soul, but a means for the artist to maintain his material position in society. Such art, in Lavrin’s view, can but serve as decoration to cover up the emptiness that is created in a society driven by material gain (NA 1920(26/19: 308).

Importantly, Lavrin sees a similar impact on the dynamic between nations. Lavrin largely considers the exclusive behaviour of Europe’s great powers – before, during and after the World War – as a consequence of their pursuit of political and economic progress. In the article ‘Germany and Culture’, for example, Lavrin presents the
imperialist course Germany started to steer in the nineteenth century as the result of a clash of its youthful cultural ambitions with the “paralyzing force” of the “economic and capitalist competition of modern States” (NA 1920(26/24): 383-384). Lavrin’s description of the development of German culture since it stepped in that competition shows important parallels with his assessment of how personal gain affects group morality. He states that Germany increasingly used its culture as a tool to generate internal homogeneity and to preserve its distinction from other nations, in other words, to become ‘more ‘German’ and [...] less ‘European’” (Ibid.: 384). Like in social groups, Lavrin suggests, the focus on distinction has created a feeling of cultural superiority, which helped legitimate Germany’s imperialism under “the veil of a German cultural mission” (Ibid.).

Also the chaotic international relations after the war are according to Lavrin to large extent caused by the perpetuation of the economic and capitalist competition of modern states. In ‘Germany and Culture’, for example, Lavrin suggests that the isolation of Germany which the great powers laid down in the Treaty of Versailles was for large part informed by an attempt to emphasize and maintain their own economic and political superiority instead of working towards “the possibility of a mutual understanding and genuine co-operation between the various nations” (NA 1920(26/24): 383). Lavrin warns for an all too harsh treatment of Weimar Germany. Instead, he urges to assess Germany in an objective and balanced way that includes both the nation’s political crimes and its cultural contributions to humanity (NA 1920(26/24): 383). In this way, Germany would be able to transcend its focus on personal gain and make the right choice on the crossroads it finds itself on:

either to return from the spirit of Bismarck to the spirit of Goethe, or to persist in [its] revengeful exclusiveness even after all [its] hard lessons. (Lavrin NA 1920(26/24): 385)

In other words, the reintegration of Germany in Europe is in Lavrin’s eyes inherently connected to revaluing culture vis-à-vis politics and economics.

A similar warning appears in Lavrin’s assessment of the integration of the newly established states in Europe, mainly previous Slavic minorities. His assessment shows that the emancipation of those minorities, which was one of the central themes in his Russian work, did not bring the expected result. Lavrin chiefly criticizes the fact that the young

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309 This is in line with John Maynard Keynes’ influential judgement on the treatment of Germany after the war. Shortly before Lavrin wrote this article, Keynes predicted that the financial provisions of the peace talks would complicate inter-European relations and increase German nationalism (Dinan 2014: 2)
Slavic states were immediately carried away by the economic and political competition that already existed among the older European states. Lavrin mainly tackles this issue in the article ‘Small Nations’ in which he expresses his regret about the negative outcome of the liberation of minorities: “national intolerance, mutual jealousy, egoism, petty political intrigues and quarrels” instead of a step towards a “creative [and thus cultural – T.G.] Europe” (NA 1921 (28/22): 258). He believes that the sense of cultural groupness and the solidarity among minorities, which he presented as important empowering elements in their emancipatory struggle (cf. 7.3), have ceased to exist because of their new struggle for political and financial gain. In a way Lavrin presents their loss of solidarity through the focus on personal gain as a shift from a universal essentialist interpretation of the nation (aimed at the greater good of humanity) to a particularist interpretation of the nation that, as Malachuk argues (2007: 42), is not compatible with cosmopolitan views of cooperation and integration. Because of this loss of groupness and solidarity the new small nations cannot form a significant counterweight to the great powers. On the contrary, Lavrin suggests that their participation in Europe’s competition pushes them right back in the arms of “the old imperial wolves” who get the opportunity to manipulate and exploit their former minorities in a new, subtler and potentially even more powerful way:

As most of these fortunate nations are financially and economically more enslaved than ever before, they must dance, willy-nilly, to the tune of their generous creditors and so gradually prostitute themselves and their liberty. In other words, instead of risking direct and open action, the big Imperialists of the future will have a subtler move at their disposal: they will intrigue through their “liberated” pawns, who must comply with their demands in some way or other – displaying even a grateful smile into the bargain. (Lavrin NA 1921(28/22): 258)

According to Lavrin, the continued egoistic behaviour that is fostered by civilized barbarism heralds a new age of imperialism and renewed oppression of the small nations at Europe’s margins, whereas a focus on cultural development would foster international cooperation based on mutual understanding and trust.
The Mechanisation of Society

The second effect of civilized barbarism Lavrin tackles is how principles typically associated with industrial production have penetrated modern society. Like the previous section, this section first addresses Lavrin’s assessment of the ways in which this mechanisation of society has impacted individual and group morality according to Lavrin.

In articles like ‘Production and Creation’, ‘The Tragic Individual’, and ‘Individuality and Character’ Lavrin problematizes that individuals are being devaluated because they are increasingly considered as means for production. He for example describes how man has become “a perfect machine or an appendage of the machine” (NA 1918(23/12): 188) and “a manufactured respectable member of human society” (NA 1918(22/26): 502). The second quote indicates that Lavrin also sees society itself as a machine (or a factory) in which the value of an individual depends on his ability to behave as a standardized cog in a wheel. In his articles Lavrin sees several forces in society that foster this standardization: the press overloads its readers with “all that is ready-made and commonplace” (NA 1918(23/12): 188), education does not foster critical thinking but creates “impressions of the same cliché” (NA 1918(22/26): 502), and the Church, social class and the political party make man “a slave of […] imposed principles” (NA 1918(23/10): 149). In line with his earlier aversion to uniformizing cultural practices (cf. 7.2, 7.4), Lavrin condemns this standardization because it reduces the variety and thus the richness of society. In his eyes such an attitude towards the individual leads to a “plebeianization” of society, which reduces each individual to a superficial and self-less part of the machine, instead of a “democratization” of society, which gives individuals equal opportunity to raise their general development (Lavrin NA 1920(26/19): 308, NA 1921(28/22): 257)).

The plebeianization of society is also one of Lavrin’s main points of criticism on contemporary cultural practice. He regrets that modern art has become an industry with music hall stars and clowns (NA 1920(26/19): 191, NA 1918(23/3): 40). Lavrin warns that the maximization of cultural output not only reduces the individuality and originality of the artist – also the cultural product has become standardized, – but goes hand in hand with the loss of creativity and, thus, with the loss of a connection to life itself: artists have become “pariahs of Spirit” and “eunuchs of the Muses” (NA 1918(23/3): 40). The loud cries

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310 Technological innovations and the impersonal nature of industrial cities, which could be both thrilling and threatening, were a major theme in modernist debates (Lewis 2011: 11). Members of the Bloomsbury Group, with whom Lavrin was affiliated, typically resisted the influence of industrial capitalism on life and the arts (Ibid.: 12).
of modern artistic currents who embrace the mechanisation of society – he for example points to Italian Futurism with its devotion of “the beauty of smoky factories, machines and American boots”, – Lavrin considers but attempts to hide that spiritual poverty.

The mechanisation of society is an equally important theme in Lavrin’s description of modern nations. He for example specifically connects maximization of cultural output to German culture. His somewhat stereotypical description of the way in which “the” German enjoys culture is a case in point:

In general, then, the mind of a ‘cultured’ German is what one calls encyclopaedic. In things intellectual, as in things culinary, he has more sense for quantity than for quality. [...] As an ideal investigator of scientific details, an equally ideal bookworm and walking encyclopaedia, he is, naturally, poor in creative values. (Lavrin NA 1920(26/24): 384).

In Lavrin’s eyes, by replacing creation with erudition, Germans have started to treat culture – or rather, cultural facts – as collectibles instead of something that grows organically. Because a focus on accumulation prevents original processing of the accumulated cultural facts, Lavrin considers this cultural practice another way to facilitate loss of individuality (NA 1920(26/24): 384). On several occasions, Lavrin argues that actually the German people as a whole has experienced the most far-reaching loss of individuality. He describes them as prone and even eager to become a part of the state machinery of the German Empire (NA 1918(23/12): 188). Lavrin explicitly writes that the builders of the German Empire deliberately converted the “national organism into [...] an efficient machine” (NA 1920(26/24): 384), thus underlining the contrast between a cold, lifeless accumulation of will-less and standardized individuals and a living, creative organism that thrives because of the excellent condition and development of each of its parts. The latter mirrors the world view suggested in Slavyansky mir’s 1911 manifesto. Connected to this contrast is the different attitude of the nation-as-machine and the nation-as-organism towards surrounding nations. Lavrin states that the civic drill and discipline – instead of cultural development – in the nation-as-machine made the Germans prepared to “disintegrate all the surrounding nations in order to make them manure for the German ‘super-nation’” (NA 1920(26/12):385). By analogy, one can assume that the nation-as-organism does not see other nations as fuel, but as potential allies for future symbiosis. The contrast between the nation-as-machine and the nation-as-organism also implies two different futures of Europe and humanity: a homogeneous unity in which everyone becomes part of the German super-nation or a heterogeneous unity in which everyone can develop his own identity.
Quick Copycat Behaviour

The third and last effect of civilized barbarism Lavrin addresses is the way in which modern society copes with the emptiness that emerges due to the lack of cultural development. The previous sections already pointed out how Lavrin criticizes that individuals often cover up this emptiness and distract themselves with (loud) soulless art. Lavrin considers imitative behaviour the most common way to cover up this emptiness: copying existing cultural practices of other social groups or nations is an easy and, importantly, quick way to remedy this problem. In the article ‘Individuality and Character’ Lavrin for example complains about how individuals try and imitate values and ideas like “a coquette changes each season her hats and dresses”:

This year Nietzsche is modern – they are Nietzscheans; the following year mysticism is in fashion – they suddenly become mystics and subscribe even to theosophical journals; the next year they may turn out feminists, then futurists, then Bolsheviks, and so on, according to the “progressive” weather […] These lackeys and vulgarisers of all modern ideas are simultaneously the greatest danger and enemies of all true progress, for they reduce the most serious questions of mankind to a mere flirtation and sport. They ape all new ideas, and by their very aping they distort and kill them. They prostitute all great values by changing them into mere poses, and still more by reducing them to the size of their petty ape-souls.

(Lavrin NA 1918(23/10): 150)

Although such copycat behaviour creates the illusion of culture in the short term, says Lavrin, it is impossible to internalize ideas and values at such a fast rate, nor is it possible to imitate them properly. In line with his critique of imitation as a solution to overcome the sense of cultural backwardness of Slavic minorities (cf. Chapter 6), Lavrin suggests that drifting from one imitated current to the other prevents modern individuals of transcending civilized barbarism and actually helps to prolong cultural emptiness instead of overcoming it.

Lavrin expresses a similar criticism concerning the cultural practice of emancipating groups in society. In the article ‘The Coming Wave’, Lavrin describes what he considers a typical characteristic of modern societal change: emancipating groups (in general) often adopt the cultural traditions of the group they fight against – be it because they focus on political and economic change (and not on culture), for convenience or for quickly achieving a certain standing (Lavrin NA 1920(26/19): 308). In doing so, Lavrin argues, these emancipating groups often quickly, “and usually very badly”, take over the external markers of that culture and turn it into an eclectic borrowed veneer (Ibid.). Importantly, Lavrin’s critique does not seem to come from an aversion to emancipation or progress,
but rather from the idea that instead of adopting existing culture (and its flaws) these emancipating groups could be a refreshing breath for that culture. This appears from his attention to the feminist movement\textsuperscript{311} in the article ‘Culture and Erotics’ (Lavrin NA 1918(23/8)). Lavrin suggests that the modern woman should not aspire to imitate modern man and his so-called progress. Instead, he believes she should find a way to regenerate him (Ibid.: 125). In the same vein as Slavjansky mir’s presentation of the less educated masses as a repository for national consciousness, Lavrin now presents women, who are in his eyes less tainted by civilized barbarism, as the keepers of the connection between modern civilization and life, and thus creativity. He pleads that they should not become a bad copy of modern men, but should “pour new streams of Spirit and Life into our stifled and vulgar age” (Ibid.).

Apart from the copycat behaviour of emancipating groups in society, Lavrin also addresses such behaviour among the newly established states in Central and Eastern Europe. The cultural development of a nation, states Lavrin, can be divided into two categories. He makes the distinction between national culture that “grows from the racial psyche and expands by organically absorbing elements which enrich [...] its own creative potency” and nationalistic culture that “makes a pastiche of purely external and ethnographic elements, [...] scrapes together various important readymade fashions and puts upon them a ‘national’ [...] garment” (Lavrin 1921(28/22): 258). To Lavrin’s disappointment small nations usually pick the latter, and instead of taking their time to develop a genuine, organic culture, they prefer a quick “parasitic eclecticism” (Ibid.). Paradoxically, Lavrin thus relates the copycat behaviour of the small nations to the desire to quickly show off a distinct national culture and to set themselves apart from each other, while he deems a more conservative cultural development that is truly rooted in the nation as more prone to cultural rapprochement and synthesis in the future. Moreover, Lavrin's aversion to this cultural behaviour suggests that he had hoped that the fresh culture of the newly liberated nations – remember how he presented Serbia as an exemplary culture in Albanskiye eskizy (cf. 9.3) – could serve as a cure for civilized barbarism and could revive the old powers in Europe.

Lastly, the danger of imitation also plays a role in Lavrin’s assessment of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Bolshevism. Different than in the rest of Europe, in Russia the World War has not resulted in a confirmation of the status quo, but has brought about a fundamental revolution, which could bring a potential solution for the degenerated state of Europe. Lavrin puts it as follows: the revolution probably

\textsuperscript{311} Woman’s emancipation was topical in 1918 as the British parliament had recently passed an act that granted suffrage to women aged over thirty who owned land or premises with a certain value.
is but a noisy prelude to that coming wave which threatens to sweep away without pity all the “bourgeois” foundations of our life. Those who know what the contemporary bourgeoisie is like will hardly shed tears at this prospect. (Lavrin NA 1920(26/19): 308)

Despite his enthusiasm for the potential regeneration of Russian society, Lavrin also has an important remark. He fears that, despite the instinctive and organic nature of the initial revolutionary impulse (NA 1920(26/19): 307), the speed of the changes have led to the adoption of “petty second-hand formulae” and “worn-out Marxian dogmas imported by post” (Ibid.). Also when Lavrin addresses the future of Russia he points to the danger of imitation. If the reborn nation maintains this imitative behaviour, the impulse for change will degenerate in a “castrated” and thus sterile environment. Nevertheless, Lavrin still believes there is a chance that Russia will outgrow this imitation and create “out of this rough clay a New Humanity” (Ibid.: 308).

**European Regeneration = European Integration**

The solution(s) Lavrin proposes for the problems he observes in modern Europe are quite consistent, even though they are not always equally explicit. Virtually every society critical article he writes for *The New Age* hints at his ideas for a new Europe: he speaks among others of a “super-individual morality” (NA 1920(26/9): 143), a “European consciousness” which prevails over “national dimensions” (NA 1921(28/22): 257) and a “European synthesis” (Ibid.: 258). The descriptions Lavrin uses confirm what was already suggested in the previous sections: cultural regeneration (of the individual and of society at large) is closely connected to European integration. He never really elaborates on what this new morality or consciousness should entail exactly, but many of his articles lift a corner of the veil.

The basis of Lavrin’s solution is always the same: a revaluation of culture. Instead of culture being instrumentalized by politics and economics, it should at least achieve an equal status, he claims. In the article ‘The Galvanized Muses’ Lavrin questions why economic, social and political reconstruction are given priority and adds that “not the bankruptcy of European politics only, but the bankruptcy of European culture ought to be taken as a symptom of extreme importance” (NA 1920(26/12): 192). Other articles even suggest that political decisions should become subservient to cultural development (Lavrin NA 1918(23/12): 188, Lavrin NA 1920(26/19): 307).

In the same vein, cultural practice should be liberated from external influence and should no longer be viewed as an instrument. Instead, Lavrin wants cultural expression to reconnect with life and become organic again (NA 1920(26/12): 192). This reconnection
to life should help to (re-)establish a dynamic between art and life which propels both of
them towards a better development (NA 1918(23/3): 40, NA 1920(26/12)). When Lavrin
speaks of this reconnection to life, the idea of collective consciousness and the creation
of a new value set melt into one another. He explains that the better development (or
even creation) of culture and life is facilitated by the fact that the free artist can adopt a
critical attitude towards the principles that govern society. As Lavrin puts it in ‘The Tragic
Individual’: “the struggle for real growth [...] usually begins with the struggle against all
the mechanical principles, ideologies and ‘golden rules’ which have been imposed a
priori” (NA 1918(22/26): 502). It is, however, because of the very connection between art
and life that the artist is able to distinguish which principles benefit human development
and which prevent or hinder it (Lavrin NA 1918(23/12), NA 1918(22/26), NA 1920(26/12)).
The same connection, suggests Lavrin, should enable the artist to develop new creative
values that can unite humanity and lead it to a different and better future.

Lastly, the new morality or consciousness should be aimed at resolving the egoist and
exclusive attitude Lavrin observes among modern individuals and nations – very much in
the line of the “Slavic” behaviour that was advocated in Slavyansky mir. Although he
proposes to (re)align everybody’s interests, Lavrin does not interpret this unity as an
amorphous collective, on the contrary. As is already suggested by his aversion
to standardization and uniformization, he highly values individual and national agency.
(This is also the only way in which an artist could maintain a critical attitude.) Lavrin
explicitly underlines the importance of homogeneous moral unity which enables
heterogeneity among the different nations within Europe. Like in his Russian works,
Lavrin’s work for The New Age attests to what Tihanov would call political
cosmopolitanism: the search for a universal respect for the other that reconciles, but does
not erase difference. In the article ‘Production and Creation’, for example, Lavrin speaks
of a “new pan-human, almost religious, conception of the national idea” and underlines
that each nation should “find its own creative ‘idea’ [...] by which its existence before
humanity can be justified” (Lavrin NA 1918(23/12): 188). In ‘Small Nations’, then, he
argues that Europe needs a

strong European consciousness as would make all European States and nations –
whether big or small – regard themselves as various provinces of one political and
cultural whole.” (Lavrin NA 1921(28/22): 258)
11.2 *The New Britain*: Reevaluating Small Nations

From August 1933 until April 1934 – almost during the entire run of the periodical – Lavrin regularly contributes to the weekly *New Britain* of The New Britain Movement. His contributions are divided in two series with a different character and scope. Lavrin first writes a series of nine articles entitled ‘Contemporary Fragments’ (1933). The articles in this series are very similar to his society critical publications for *The New Age* a decade earlier. The series even sports the same title as a series he published in 1920. The main topic in ‘Contemporary Fragments’ is the state of contemporary Europe: Lavrin criticizes how the unbalance between culture and civilization (still) negatively influences morality, cultural practice and international relations. This first series of articles is followed by a second one of at least twelve articles\(^{312}\) with the title ‘Picturesque Europe’ (1933-1934). At first glance, this second series appears to be a kind of tourist guide for Eastern Europe, but a closer look shows that also this series entails Lavrin’s vision of the current and future state of Europe, albeit often in a less explicit way. Because of the different nature of the two series, they will be addressed separately in the following sections.

**Contemporary Fragments**

Like his society criticism for *The New Age*, Lavrin’s ‘Contemporary Fragments’ series is mainly devoted to the problem of civilized barbarism. Lavrin denounces the fact that Europe still “regards culture in the best case as a by-product” and mainly pursues political and economic progress, following the mantra of “cash and credit” and “economic fatalism” (NB 1933(1/19): 594). Lavrin regrets that because of this, several achievements of modern civilization that could potentially be used to foster European rapprochement – he mentions the motor car, the aeroplane, the wireless and television – are put to the service of material gain and have quickened the capitalist rat race even more (NB 1933(1/13): 402, NB 1933(2/32:166). In the series he addresses the consequences of this...
unbalance between culture and civilization through different angles: modern cultural criticism, nationalism, the growing proletariat and the idea of nationalism, to name a few. Like in his articles for *The New Age*, Lavrin’s assessments can generally be divided in three categories: the consequences of civilized barbarism for (1) individual and group morality, (2) cultural practices and (3) the dynamics between European nations.

Lavrin’s assessment of the impact of civilized barbarism on individual and group morality in ‘Contemporary Fragments’ mainly tackles the consequences of a focus on politics and economics for the attitude towards the individual in society. More than in any of his previous works, Lavrin puts individual development and agency forward as a prerequisite for the development of society, nation and humanity at large. This is for example expressed by his criticism on the subservience of individual growth to financial gain. Lavrin regrets how the focus on political and economic progress has perpetuated the idea that the modern individual is but a means of production. He problematizes that in order to keep up with the race for more money and success, profession becomes a drudgery used to keep the “body [...] alive at the expense of one’s soul” (*NB* 1933(2/32): 166). Another time, he criticizes that the individual becomes a “standardized robot” (Ibid.) or a “civilized savage” who sacrifices his inner development to external riches and “walks about like an unburied corpse” (*NB* 1933(1/13): 402). By using the term “civilized savage” instead of “civilized barbarian” which he uses in his Russian work (cf. 8.4), Lavrin no longer refers to the general moral degeneration in highly civilized nations due to the subservience of culture to economics and politics, but instead refers to the disappearance of individuality caused by the subservience of inner development to external wealth. He describes the difference between an “uncivilized and a civilized savage” as follows: “one is not yet, and the other is no longer a personality” (*NB* 1933(1/13: 402). Besides pointing at the problem of the lack of individual development, Lavrin – as a kind of counterweight – sometimes underlines how most achievements of humanity only were possible because of the emancipation of the individual from the church or the tribe. He emphasizes that it was the development of individual personalities and minds that has enabled the enormous progress of humanity in every possible domain (*NB* 1933(1/16): 498, *NB* 1933(1/19): 594). For Lavrin discarding one’s personality and individual development in order to join the capitalist rat race is a step backwards in human development.

Despite this emphasis on the importance of individual development, Lavrin has not become a promoter of an individualistic and egoist society in his work for *New Britain*. Like in *The New Age*, he still is cautious for an extreme focus on the self as comes to the fore in the following quote:
egoism unbound and equipped with all the intellectual, scientific, and technical resources achieved since the Renaissance – such is the core of that bankruptcy which has led to our latest Armageddon and may lead to others. (NB 1933(1/16: 498)

As an alternative to both an amorphous and an overly individualistic (egoist) society, Lavrin proposes a society that transcends individuality by “super-individual expansion” (NB 1933(1/16): 498). As he previously stipulated that national development should be aimed at the development of a universal humanity, he now underlines that individual development should contribute to the development of the over-arching whole. The common goal or idea that could align the efforts of individuals is, however, states Lavrin, still “lacking in modern Europe”. Nevertheless, he still sees a certain potential in the changes in the Soviet Union. Because of certain developments in Soviet Russia, however, his belief in the potential change instigated by the Revolution remains conditional. On the one hand, Lavrin is enthused by the ability of the Soviets to unite individuals. He for example applauds that the communist ideal is able to make drudgery creative again, because the workers believe “that by so doing they can assist in the building of a new society, a new humanity” (NB 1933(2/32): 166). On the other hand, Lavrin is cautious towards the interpretation of unity of the Bolsheviks. He criticizes the five-year plans as he considers them equally blunting as a standardized approach to society in the name of capitalism (NB 1933(1/13): 402). Additionally, Lavrin problematizes the way in which the Soviets have created a classless society by eradicating difference – he mainly points to how they got rid of the intelligentsia – rather than by transcending difference through a common ideal (NB 1933(2/26): 44). In his eyes, such forced equality is equally tyrannical as the forced inequality in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany (where the proletariat is suppressed for the benefit of the middle class) (Ibid.).

The second aspect of modern society Lavrin addresses in the articles of the ‘Contemporary Fragments’ series, is the approach to cultural practice. Like in The New Age, he problematizes how the economic logic of modern society has penetrated into cultural production. In his first article for the series, he for example complains that man’s instinctive sense of wonder is replaced by “the cult of the thrill”, a search for records instead of beauty, and thus a quantitative attitude towards culture (NB 1933(1/13): 402). In another article, Lavrin speaks of the sterility of modern cultural critics, which often base their assessments on logical comprehension and analysis, and because of this forget to connect art to the actual experience of life (NB 1933(1/15): 466). Also the church does not escape his scrutiny. For Lavrin official Christianity is interested too little in guiding inner development, and too much in serving the State “even to the extent of blessing the weapons and invoking Christ’s help in the legalized mass-murder euphemistically called war” (NB 1933(1/18): 562). The examples show that Lavrin still worries about the
mechanization and the instrumentalization of culture and cultural actors and how this perpetuates the moral degeneration of the continent.

Lastly, Lavrin addresses how a society aimed at economic and political gain impacts international relations in Europe. Some observations and opinions have remained the same as in his contributions for *The New Age*, as certain aspects of European society have not changed for the better since the World War. It comes as no surprise that Lavrin still problematizes the what he labels as egoist and aggressive competition between most great powers in Europe: in his view it has intensified over the last decade and has expanded with some new, eager competitors like Fascist Italy (NB 1933 (1/17): 530). The struggle of the fittest among European nations, which he previously has called “zoological nationalism”, Lavrin now dubs “political nationalism”, which he defines as national development that is based on egoist self-assertion at the cost of others. He is afraid that this attitude will definitively prevent a united Europe and “the so much needed pax Europa” (Ibid. Italics in original). In line with the teleology expressed in his Russian work (cf. 5.2), Lavrin contrasts this self-oriented political nationalism with humanity-oriented “cultural nationalism”, which he defines as

> the innate tendency of every national organism towards its fullest self-expression, as well as creative self-realization, for the sake of supra-national, that is universal values. It is on the plane of national individualism in its truest sense (as distinct from national egoism), and its formula would be: not away from the nation but through the nation to humanity. (Lavrin NB 1933(1/17: 530)

Just like his vision of a future heterogeneous, “super-individual” society in which individuals work together to achieve a common goal, Lavrin’s vision of future Europe is a heterogeneous unity in which different nations together form a symbiosis. The idea of universal essentialism that transpired in Lavrin’s Russian work, thus still informs his interwar society criticism.

Very different than in his contributions to *The New Age*, Lavrin’s ‘Contemporary Fragments’ series holds a more hopeful assessment of the role recently liberated small nations in Europe like Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia313 and the Baltic countries can play in the development of a heterogeneously united Europe. Especially Lavrin’s article ‘Small Nations’ (NB 1933 (1/24): 812) shows a change in opinion in comparison to the previous

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313 One could rightly remark that Lavrin’s support for a dictatorship seems at odds with his pursuit of a heterogeneous Europe. Lavrin is however not blind for the problems that rise in interwar Yugoslavia, this comes mostly to the fore in the series ‘Picturesque Europe’. Here, probably for the sake of the argumentation that Small Nations are Europe’s last hope, he calls the dictatorship a “temporary splutter” and, not without reason, “infinitely milder and more civilized than the one we see in Germany, or even Italy” (NB 1933 (1/26): 812).
article under the same title (NA 1920(28/22)): the dominant emotion is no longer disappointment about the exclusive and egoist behaviour of many small nations right after the War, but relief because recent events showcase that the small nations have not lost their valuable emancipating groupness. Lavrin praises how the recently liberated small nations work together to protect their national integrity. He points, for example, at the Little Entente between Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, which he optimistically calls “virtually a federation of three States” (Ibid.). Different than a decade before, Lavrin is hopeful about the role the small nations could play in Europe. He several times repeats how this cooperation could and should “mature into [...] a wide self-protective federation on the part of the small nations of Europe” (Ibid. Italics in original) which then could serve as an example for the great powers. Nevertheless, there is a desperate ring to this hope as he calls it “a question of life and death for Europe” and a way to save “Europe from a final disaster” (Ibid.).

Apart from attributing these small nations a role as political pioneers, Lavrin also presents them as cultural examples. He calls them “fresh” and he speaks of their “healthier instincts” as opposed to the “prostituted and commercialized ‘big’ cultures of Europe and America” (NB 1933 (1/24): 812). More cynically, he adds that they have not enough resources to focus on a culture of quantity rather than on a culture of quality (Ibid.). In a way, connecting an advantage to backwardness resembles the rationale of Albanskiye eskizy, in which the slower and later development of Serbia is presented as an advantage to the decadent development of Europe.

**Picturesque Europe**

As mentioned before, the series ‘Picturesque Europe’ at first glance appears to be a tourist guide through Eastern Europe. In each of the episodes Lavrin tells the reader of his visit to an Eastern European city or region (subsequently: Kotor, Sarajevo, the countryside in Bosnia and central Serbia, the islands along the Dalmatian coast, Dubrovnik and the villages around it, Slovenia, Prague, Bohemia and Tabor) and acquaints him or her with the typical nature, the architecture and the people of each place. He even devotes an entire paragraph to his dislike of the Czech diet of sausages, enormous dumplings and beer (NB 1934(2/47: 648). Nevertheless, there is more to these articles than initially meets

314 In reality the Little Entente was a series of treaties aimed at containing Hungary’s revisionist ambitions in the region. That the Entente between Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia was limited would become painfully clear when the latter two did not want to extend the cooperation treaty to oppose Germany’s interests in the Czech lands in the build-up to the Second World War.
the eye. It does not seem to be a coincidence that Lavrin, a month after the publication of ‘Small Nations’, in which he is so positive about the political attitude and the cultural development of the smaller nations in Europe, starts a new series entirely devoted to introduce these small nations to the British reader. What is more, several of these articles hint at themes that are important in Lavrin’s vision of the state of Europe.

A first characteristic of Lavrin’s introductions to the Eastern-European regions and cities is his return to one of the larger themes in his Russian work, namely the relationship between national identity, imitation and cultural exchange. In line with his Russian work, Lavrin applauds nations which have retained a preservative attitude towards the national culture, or which were able to assimilate foreign influence to benefit their own culture. Lavrin admires how the people of many small nations have retained their culture despite a difficult past under an oppressive regime. He for example applauds the Serbs (like in Albanskiye eskizy) because they “kept the memory of the national past alive during the worst trials” (NB 1934(2/39): 364). Also small Slavic peoples who do not submit themselves to popular Western culture receive his critical acclaim: Lavrin appreciates how the dress of many local women in Dalmatia “has little in common with the standard fashions” (NB 1934(2/38): 332), and how the Slovenes are doing efforts “to save the literature from commercialization” (NB 1934(2/43): 525). Besides, Lavrin praises cities like Belgrade, Ljubljana and Dubrovnik, which in his view have successfully combined their cultural roots with foreign influence. He tells how they have assimilated Byzantine, Austrian and Italian elements and nonetheless “assert the native genius as well” (NB 1934(2/41): 428, NB 1934(2/39): 364, NB 1934(2/43): 525). Also Sarajevo he praises for being a successful heterogeneous patchwork of cultures (NB 1934(2/34): 236). Lavrin is however, like before, less fond of traces of imposed and / or badly and superficially assimilated culture in the city: he regrets the “cheap and showy manner” in which the Austrians tried to “civilize” Sarajevo, and is critical of the way in which “gypsy tradition is being gradually ousted by jazz and other doubtful importations from Western-Europe” (NB 1934(2/34): 236). Also in his account of a visit to castle Karlstein, not far from Prague, Lavrin regrets how modern restorations of the castle have “ruined” its exterior: the renovators, academics with a mainly theoretical (instead of an organic) approach to art, literally covered the national past with an artificial veneer (NB 1934(2/47): 648).

There is one important difference in Lavrin’s discourse about the cultural development of the small nations, specifically of Serbia, that is most remarkable for one who is familiar with Lavrin’s assessment of Serbia in Albanskiye eskizy some twenty years earlier. Initially his assessment is quite similar to the one in 1916, as he calls the Serbs and their reverence for the past and their religion “more poetic, than is the case in ‘advanced’ European countries” (NB 1934(2/39): 364). Lavrin ends his article about Serbia, however, with a critical note that nuances the exemplary role he attributed to the country earlier:
one cannot help wondering whether this worship of the past does not thrive too much at the expense of the present, of the future. One feels that its very intensity, if turned in the right way from the past to the national future, could lead perhaps to achievements greater and more important. (NB 1934(2/39): 364)

Lavrin criticizes how Serbia’s idealization of the golden age of Lazar’s Orthodox Old Serbia stands in the way of a modern Serbia. The article suggests, moreover, that apart from the good blend with Byzantine culture in the past, the modern achievements of the nation are “rather second-hand” and have not developed organically contrary to the nations in the Western Balkans, which according to Lavrin have a more organic – in Lavrin’s eyes thus better – development inspired by the West (Ibid.). Although Lavrin does not explicitly refer to it, this criticism cannot be detached from the political situation in Yugoslavia and the role Serbia plays during the interwar period. When the article comes out, Yugoslavia is a dictatorship ruled by the Serbian, but moderate King Aleksandar I. Despite the King’s efforts to achieve equality among the different member-states, especially Serbians occupy key positions in the country’s administration, leadership and military (Detrez 2019: 313-314). Because of this, especially the Serbian interests, like the dominance of the Orthodox Church (vis-à-vis the Catholicism in Croatia and Slovenia), are promoted in Yugoslavia, while other nations are forced to take in a second-rate position. The criticism of Lavrin about the poorer development of Serbia in recent years can be seen as a reaction to the lesser position of Croatia and, mainly, Slovenia. It underlines that Yugoslavia could develop better in the future if also the other nations receive a more equal say.

In other articles of this series, Lavrin is even more critical – openly, this time – for the political and cultural situation in Yugoslavia. Pointing again at the difference between the culture in the Western and Eastern Balkans, Lavrin is concerned about the country’s approach to unity:

The problem which thus arises is whether these elements are going to be jumbled together mechanically […] or else whether an organic synthesis of Yugoslav culture is still possible. The latter can be, however, achieved only through a free and peaceful cooperation, and not through dictatorial measures, or through a compulsory levelling down of provinces which for centuries had little or nothing in common – except the language. […] As matters stand at present, the second process is taking place. (NB 1934(2/43): 525)

Without being explicit Lavrin here refers to the constitution of Yugoslavia which was issued in 1932 (less than two years before the publication of this article). This constitution was an attempt of King Aleksandar I to impose a homogeneous unity on the country: no longer a state of three peoples, but one state of one people, the Yugoslavs (Detrez 2019:
The king implemented new borders and divided the country in banovinas\(^{315}\) with which he erased historical regions, and forbade the use of different national symbols (Ibid.). For Lavrin, who had fought for the (cultural) liberty of (South-)Slavic minorities and who disseminated the ideal of a heterogeneous Slavic unity as an emancipating and reinforcing power during his whole career, this interpretation of Jugoslovenstvo must have been a grave disappointment.

A second characteristic of the series ‘Picturesque Europe’, is its emphasis on the ethical and humanitarian attitude of several small Eastern European peoples – an attitude that according to Lavrin is disappearing in egoist Western Europe. Lavrin points out a couple of times that the fact that these small nations do not (or cannot) participate in the capitalist rat race leads to a more inclusive society with a human face. In his description of Kotor, he for example applauds the people’s “natural courtesy which is dictated by respect for man rather than for his riches” (NB 1934(2/33): 204). In his article on Slovenia, then, Lavrin esteems the widespread democratic education (as opposed to plebeian education (cf. 11.1) in the nation, which has ensured that “the bulk of the intellectuals come from peasant stock” and often remain in touch with the masses (NB 1934(2/43): 525). Yet another example can be found in his article about Prague, in which Lavrin is particularly enthused by the way in which the city has received refugees and “has treated them […] with more tact than can be said by any other belligerent country” (NB 1934(2/46): 616). Each of these positive assessments indicates a preference for equal chances (not for imposed equality) regardless of one’s social or national background.

Although Lavrin considers the more human development of small Slavic nations overall exemplary for the rest of Europe, there are two nations that translate this ethical behaviour in political attitudes and in his eyes rise above the rest: Slovenia and Czechoslovakia. As he already hinted at in his article ‘Czech Literature’ for Bayan, Lavrin is fond of the Czech president Masaryk. Now he describes him as “one of the very few continental statesmen whose name can be mentioned without a hidden sneer” (NB 1934(2/46): 616) and who has retained “unadulterated humanitarian ideals” (NB 1934(2/48): 680). Not only Masaryk, but the whole Czechoslovak society receives Lavrin’s critical acclaim. In a general comparison with other European nations Lavrin describes Czechoslovakia as having “a greater and a more genuine cultural life”, not dragged along by “unprincipled materialism”, “brimming over with vitality” and “one of the last strongholds of European democracy at its best” (NB 1934(2/46): 616). To Slovenia, then, he attributes (with certain exaggeration) “an exceedingly high conception of law, of

\(^{315}\) Aleksandar I replaced the original division of Yugoslavia in thirty three provinces based on ‘historical’ regions with nine banovinas, provinces with names that referred to rivers and the sea (Detrez 2019: 317).
freedom, of social work, and of administrative methods” (NB 1934(2/43): 525). Lavrin’s idealization of both nations seems to be based on their balanced attitude towards culture and civilization. They are no examples of “civilized barbaric” nations where culture is instrumentalized for economic and political gain. In both cases, it seems to be the synthesis of ethical and moral (cultural) characteristics and organizational, economic and political (civilizational) attitudes that makes the nations exemplary in Lavrin’s eyes. Lavrin seems to use them to show how nations where culture can function as a moral checks and balances develop in a more humane way that does not jeopardize future rapprochement. One can suspect that it is not a coincidence that both nations are Slavic but also lean close to Western Europe, and have assimilated certain Western European cultural and civilizational aspects in their national identity. Also on this level, Slovenia and Czechoslovakia can be considered as a synthesis between East and West, and therefore as a bridge between the two different worlds. Nevertheless, Lavrin does not explicitly speak of this.

11.3 The European Quarterly: Preventing the Armageddon

In May 1934, Lavrin continues his explicit criticism on the state of Europe in The European Quarterly. He and Muir base the short-lived periodical on the premise that the necessary change after the First World War has not yet been realized, and that despite the fact that European rapprochement has become more urgent than ever, the “distance between the various nations has never been greater than it is at present” (N.N. 1973 [EQ 1934(1/1)]: 1). Although the mission statement in the first issue does not elaborate on the specific reason for this heightened urgency, it is, like one of the periodical’s commentators suggests, more than likely related to Hitler’s recent rise to power in 1933 (Marks 2009: 625).

The mission of The European Quarterly is to contribute to the reversion of the drifting apart of European nations by serving as a “meeting house for British and European literature, criticism and culture” (Marks 2009: 627). The lion’s share of every issue consists of literary and cultural criticism and examples of literature coming from all over Europe. In the Quarterly Lavrin maintains the idea that getting to know other (European) cultures and specifically their literatures will facilitate the necessary (European) rapprochement. According to Peter Marks, the eclectic nature of the periodical indicates that besides the wish to contribute to the realization of the European spirit, The European Quarterly “exhibits no common ideological leaning, nor any specific aesthetic programme” (2009: 628). Nevertheless, both the mission and the approach of the periodical remind of the way
in which Lavrin tackled the topic of Slavic rapprochement in *Slavyansky mir*. This suggests that this eclecticism might hide a more well thought-out program than appears at first glance.

A typical issue of *The European Quarterly* opens with a political essay – consecutively on Hitlerism, the relation between Great Britain and Europe, and the impact of the instability in the Balkans on European peace (N.B. 1973 [EQ 1934(1/2)]: 65-69, A Continental 1973 [EQ 1934(1/3)]: 129-132, Wenzelides 1973 [EQ 1934(1/4)]: 209-214). By placing such articles at the very beginning of each issue, Lavrin and Muir seem to remind the reader each time of the urgency of the periodical’s goal. Moreover, this showcases the programmatic nature of the *Quarterly*: the editors thus underline that the content that follows the opening articles should be read with the aim of European cultural integration as a solution for the political chaos in mind. A typical issue concludes with a series of reviews of recently released books on the British market.

In between the political article and the reviews each time comes a mix of about four to six cultural and literary critical essays and about as many poems and short stories by authors from all over Europe (both English and English translations of other literatures). In line with the periodical’s mission, this mix is very international. About two thirds of the selected critical articles address foreign or comparative topics and / or are written by foreign critics (cf. Figure 14). The critical articles, both original work and translations of previously published articles or essays, cover a large part of Europe, ranging from a critical overview of young English poets to a translation of a lecture by Aleksandr Blok and even an introductory article to the work of the Georgian painter Niko Pirosmanishvili. Both Lavrin and Muir regularly contribute with their own critical views about European culture and literature.
Also the selected poems and short stories come from all over Europe (cf. Figure 15). There does not appear to be a systematic connection between the critical articles and the literature in the periodical. About half of the featured authors are Eastern European like the Czech Otokar Březina, the Polish Zofia Nałkowska and the Russian Sergey Yesenin. Thirty per cent are authors who write in English, coming both from Great Britain and the United States. Often, the English authors featured in the Quarterly are debuting, like the young George Barker and David Gascoyne. The remaining twenty per cent is written by established Western European authors like Federico García Lorca or Antonio Fogazzaro.
In a way, the mix of international cultural criticism and international literature reminds of the symbolic space of unity in Slavyansky mir. The attention to Eastern European authors betrays an interpretation of the European space that is broader than usual in Western European countries at the time. Moreover, by adding international criticism in the mix, Lavrin and Muir imply that criticism on European culture is equally valuable when it comes from Soviet Russia, Weimar Germany or Great Britain.

Not only the mission and the conception of The European Quarterly indicate that there is more to its eclectic appearance. As the following sections will show, the selection of critical articles and European literature clearly betrays certain pet peeves which recur in all four issues of the periodical. What is more they correspond with the broad themes that Lavrin previously raised in his Russian work and elaborated on in his articles for The New Age and the weekly New Britain.

**Scientific Perfection and a Low Moral Level**

First, the most explicit congruence with Lavrin’s previous work is the attention to civilized barbarism as the reason for the chaos in Europe. This mainly comes to the fore in the articles Lavrin and Muir have selected as opening articles of each issue of the European Quarterly. (It is not clear who the authors of these articles are: they sign with their initials or a penname, it is even possible that Lavrin and Muir themselves have written these opening articles). The article ‘Great Britain and Europe’, the opening article of the third issue, goes into that topic most explicitly, when it forewarns that the current
state of Europe will end in a new Armageddon that will surpass the First World War in atrocity and devastation:

That such an Armageddon is being rapidly prepared is amply proved by the armament budgets of the various countries, by the flourishing state of arms manufacturers, and particularly by the frequent disarmament conferences. Moreover, our political upstarts, demagogues and dictators are doing their very best to keep up and to increase the proper mood all over Europe, where the words “freedom” and “democracy” already sound like a bad joke. The great scientific and technical perfection, combined with the low moral level into which the post-war world has sunk, is the surest guarantee that a new international conflict would probably turn into the final and irreparable breakdown of humanity (A Continental 1973 [EQ 1934(1/3)]: 132).

The three other opening articles mainly engage with the difficult relationship between European nations as a result of their pursuit of political and economic power. They indicate that the problematic position of Germany and Europe’s small nations in the aftermath of the war has escalated over the last decade because of a lack of genuine European cooperation (N.B. 1973 [EQ 1934(1/2)]: 68-69, Wenzelides 1973 [EQ 1934(1/4)]: 210-211). The article ‘An analysis of Hitlerism’ confirms Lavrin’s earlier fear that Germany’s isolation after the Treaty of Versailles would foster an exclusive attitude towards the rest of Europe and categorizes the election of Hitler as a consequence of “the protest against the nations which won the war” (N.B. 1973 [EQ 1934(1/2)]: 68). The article ‘The Balkans and the Peace of Europe’, then, regrets that the still ongoing interference of the great powers in the Balkan region – it mainly points to the claims Italy makes – forms an important obstruction to the pacification of the entire continent (Wenzelides 1973 [EQ 1934(1/4)]: 214).

Echoing the solutions Lavrin suggested in his articles for The New Age and following the line of the Quarterly’s mission to transcend European borders, the opening articles advocate for a supra-national value set that should decrease the post-war chaos and divert the impending Armageddon. One of the articles speaks of a “broad cosmopolitanism” which should counteract nationalist passions (A Continental 1973 [EQ 1934(1/3)]: 129-130). Yet another article explicitly underlines the important connection between revaluing culture and European integration:

15 centuries ago culture was saved by the supranational Christianity. Just as Roman nationalism was then unable to resist the onslaught of the German barbarians, so no sort of modern nationalism can resist the impending catastrophe. What the world awaits is a supra-national wave of new inner values which shall save culture
from civilized barbarity, under whatever label it may be preached and practised. (N.B. EQ 1973 [1934(1/2)]: 69; Italics in original)

**Individual Freedom and Agency**

Like Lavrin’s ‘Contemporary Fragments’ series for the weekly *New Britain*, the Quarterly pays a lot of attention to individual freedom vis-à-vis the rules and constraints imposed by society. The periodical, however, more explicitly connects it to the pursuit of European rapprochement. The selected opening articles state that the “supra-national wave of new inner values” which should unite Europe should not preclude diversity and underline that “the only possible basis” for a reconstructed Europe is “the basis of a free Federation” (A Continental 1973 [1934(1/3)]: 131) and that

> it is obvious that true individualism should lead to a free union of many individuals and not to a compulsory obedience to one individual, or to one party only. (N.B. 1973 [EQ 1934(1/2)]: 68. Italics in original).

In other words: both national and individual membership of a federation should be voluntary. The importance Lavrin and Muir attach to this theme appears from the fact that more than half of the twenty cultural and literary critical articles in the short-lived Quarterly to a larger or lesser extent engage with individual freedom and agency. The other articles have a more random character, like a four-part series with reminiscences on the formative years of D.H. Lawrence by his first lover, Jessie Chambers (using the pen name E.T., 1973 [EQ 1934(1/1)]: 36-45; [EQ 1934(1/2)]: 106-114; [EQ 1934(1/3)]: 159-168), and an article on modern architecture by Maxwell Fry, a brother of Lavrin’s spouse (1973 EQ 1934(1/2)]: 60-63). Remarkably, also Lavrin’s own contributions to *The European Quarterly* – among others an essay on Sergey Yesenin and one on Arthur Rimbaud do not tackle this theme. The articles, prepublications of a couple of chapters for *Aspects of Modernism* (1935), come across as mere introductions to the oeuvre of non-British works within the context of the Quarterly. Within the context of *Aspects of Modernism* and the rest of his scholarly work, the essays get an extra layer of meaning. This will be addressed in the subsequent chapters.

Central in the articles that engage with the theme of individual freedom and agency, is the need to make the individual more conscious of the value set he or she (often) blindly adheres to, and more critical of the institutions he or she regards as the main source and judge of that value set: religious institutions, political ideologies, but also the press and even art. In general the articles formulate two critiques that sound familiar after reading Lavrin’s society critical articles for *The New Age*: emptiness and standardization. The
criticism of emtpiness comes most clearly to the fore in the essay ‘On Human Values’, a translation of a 1921 text from the Russian thinker Gershenzon\(^\text{316}\) (1973 [EQ 1934(1/1)]; 12-17). Gershenzon questions the dominant values in society because they have increasingly become “cold and stern”, “petrified” and “converted into a fetish” (Ibid.: 13). He believes that these values have therefore lost their meaning and power. On the one hand, Gershenzon states, individuals no longer feel a genuine connection to the rules and principles that guide and determine their every decision. On the other hand, the corruption of these values enables misuse and subjection to personal passions and the powers that be (Ibid.: 14). Other articles point to examples of such subjection individuals have to be aware of. The essay ‘A Personal Confession’, a translation of a 1846 text by Soren Kierkegaard, for instance, tells of Kierkegaard’s personal struggle with “official Christianity which is best described as a caricature of true Christianity” (1973 [EQ 1934(1/3)]; 116). Contributor Isidor Cankar (a cousin of the Slovene author), then, who was asked to write an essay for the European Quarterly, warns the reader to be critical towards the artist, who is increasingly regarded as “a judge of spiritual values” (1973 [EQ 1934(1/3)]; 195). Although Cankar applauds the fact that art plays a more significant role in society, he nevertheless asks to be careful as sometimes art can be a cover for the artist’s inner poverty or a mere expression of a passing fashion (Ibid.: 196). In other words, the values such an artist promotes are not necessarily worth following.

The problem of standardization and uniformization comes for example to the fore in another essay by Kierkegaard, ‘The Public and the Press’, an extract from his A Criticism from the Present Age which appeared in 1846. Kierkegaard problematizes the more abstract institution of the press because it reduces readers to will-less and uncritical observers of ideas, opinions and events and thus generates an abstract “public” that can make, but far more often break the ideas of those who “are superior to the rest” because they have a critical mind (1973 [EQ 1935(1/4)]; 220). The problem of standardization is also central in Muir’s comparative article ‘Bolshevism and Calvinism’. The co-editor of the Quarterly criticizes certain aspects of communism by pointing out parallels with a religion that the readers would have deemed repressive and obsolete. In both ‘isms’ he among others sees the dominance of one infallible universal idea, imposed education instead of cultural development and historical determinism which all make individual agency no more than an illusion (1973 [EQ 1934(1/1)]; 3-11).

\(^\text{316}\) The essay ‘On Human Values’ is based on one of the letters from A Correspondence from Corner to Corner (Переписка из двух углов, 1921), a dialogue between Mikhail Gershenzon and Vyacheslav Ivanov, who exchange views on the future of humanity.
Muir’s criticism on Bolshevism does not mean that The European Quarterly rejects socialism all together. As Marks puts it, the periodical “remain[s] willing to publish alternative political positions” (2009: 630). Lavrin and Muir print several articles and essays that express sympathies for the new regime. The essay of Gershenzon, for example, presents the Russian revolution as an opportunity to overthrow obsolete values and to re-establish a more intimate bond between individual and value (1973 [EQ 1934(1/1)]: 16-17). The article ‘Recent English Poets’ of A.T. Cunninghame, then, applauds the interest of young authors for communism (1973 [EQ 1934(1/1)]: 53-58). Moreover, the article ‘Three Shakespeares’ by M. Levidov is even highlighted as the work of “a well-known Soviet critic of Marxian views” (1973 [EQ 1935(1/4)]: 230). In fact, it comes across that The European Quarterly treats the Russian revolution and its new ideology as a cultural phenomenon and a potential “transvaluing” force that needs to be evaluated. By confronting the reader with several positions, the periodical practices what it preaches: it fosters a critical attitude and enables the individual reader to take in his own attitude towards the Russian Revolution and communism.

Although most articles Lavrin and Muir have selected show an emphasis on individual freedom and agency, some articles in the Quarterly are nonetheless rather critical of individualism and remind of its limits. The article ‘The Downfall of Humanism’, an abbreviated translation of a lecture delivered by Aleksandr Blok in 1918, for example links the bankruptcy of Western thought to an exaggerated emphasis on the individual: overly rational thinking, short-term benefit, loss of connection with culture,... are but a few of the listed consequences (1973 [EQ 1934(1/3)]: 136-37). This article reminds of Lavrin’s criticism on egoism and personal gain in The New Age, but also of his assessment of the Albanians in Albanskiye eskizy. Blok also points to the danger of the relativization of values: “a hundred different ways in politics, law, science art and ethics” which “diverged more and more from one another” (Ibid.: 138). He mainly warns that unbridled individual freedom without roots in the collective, nature and history leads to the disintegration of humanity (Ibid.: 138-142). Also Muir himself addresses the problem of the relativity of values and constant change caused by a focus on the self. In the article ‘The Contemporary Novel’ he describes how modern British writers have dealt with this theme in their prose. Muir states that, paradoxically, the relativity of values has resulted in a sense of relativity of the human life: in an environment without universal values, the individual can only affect himself and thus threatens to lose agency (Muir 1973 [EQ 1934(1/2)]: 70-72). By adding such articles to The European Quarterly, Lavrin and Muir nuance individuality: individual freedom and critical thinking is essential to overcome the cultural stagnation of humanity, but humanity will benefit most from individuals that are willing to pull in the same direction.
11.4 Conclusion

Embroidering on the theme of civilized barbarism in Europe, Lavrin engages with several aspects of the grey zone between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. At first glance, a clear preference for supra-national unity comes to the fore, both on the political and the cultural level. On the one hand, Lavrin’s writings show a clear aversion to the increasing fragmentation and exclusive behaviour among Europe’s nations: he attacks the capitalist competition that leads to new imperialism, the emphasis on national welfare that leads to exclusion and isolation, and the use of culture to present the nation as essentially different and even superior vis-à-vis the other. On the other hand, his projects show a consistent pursuit of an over-arching Europe, be it as a federation, a shared – almost religious – consciousness or as cultural rapprochement.

Simultaneously, Lavrin’s socially critical work shows a belief in the creative potential of every nation, at least on the cultural level. The distinction Lavrin makes between national and nationalistic culture, and between political and cultural nationalism, shows his preference for (slow) cultural development that starts within the nation and its cultural heritage, and is aimed at a symbiotic humanity. This development should not be prevented by too strictly maintained borders or by the imperial ambitions of a perceivably “universal” culture. Also Lavrin’s recycling of Slavyansky mir’s mission and approach to cultural rapprochement in The European Quarterly shows that for him the European spirit is an amalgamation of different national cultures.

Like the focus on universal essentialism in Lavrin’s Russian work gave him the opportunity to underline the necessity of Slavic minority emancipation, it now enables him to emphasize the need for including Eastern Europe within the European centre, by attributing to it a kind of messianic role. Lavrin’s initial disappointed and later hopeful assessment of the behaviour of Europe’s new nations showcases his belief that they could be a fresh wind in Europe: their combination of nationalism and solidarity, and the way in which some of them have succeeded in balancing culture and civilization makes them exemplary for the great powers. Moreover, his critical attention to the Russian revolution and the invitation for critical reflection of the new regime in Russia in The European Quarterly, expresses the (conditional) hope that the one nation that was able to start something entirely new from the ashes of the First World War could serve as a an inspiration for the stagnating rest of Europe.

Lastly, it is important to pay attention to the new protagonist in Lavrin’s story: the individual. Lavrin’s discourse on the individual in society, and chiefly on his ethical behaviour, is closely connected to the state of European nations and Europe as a whole. His assessment of the place of the individual in society – the relationship between
individual and collective, if you will – resembles his pursuit of a supra-national Europe: Lavrin problematizes the fragmentation created by a tendency to focus on personal gain and distinction, and simultaneously criticizes the creation of amorphous collectives in factories and state machines. Instead Lavrin promotes a kind of voluntary homogeneity, which closely resembles universal essentialism. Lavrin pursues a free humanity consisting of critical individuals who have the best development of humanity at heart. What is more, Lavrin seems to assume that it is the critical evaluation by individuals of the new and old values and ideologies in society, especially in the arts, that will lead to the distillation of a new set of guiding principles that will (re)align the interests of individuals and groups of individuals.
Chapter 12  A Psycho-Critical Approach to Literary Analysis

Before I start with the actual analysis of the literary criticism Lavrin published in his British period, it is useful to shortly look into the nature of this part of his oeuvre because it significantly influences the nature of my own analysis in this and the following chapter. As I will show in the next paragraphs, it is possible to roughly divide Lavrin’s literary criticism into two groups. The works that can be assigned to the first group centre around the theme of modernity. The works in the second group do not have a specific thematical focus, but have a more introductory nature. Different than the works of Lavrin that I have tackled up to now, Lavrin’s own vision of the Slavic world, Europe, society and culture is not the main focus of these works, but is a by-product that comes to the fore in (often short) intermezzo’s dispersed throughout his monographs, overviews and introductions to anthologies.

The first group I discern consists of monographs and overviews in which Lavrin studies literature as a looking glass to modern consciousness. To this group on the one hand belong his explicitly psycho-critical analyses on Dostoyevsky (1918, 1920, 1943\(^{317}\)), Ibsen (1918-19, 1921, 1950), Nietzsche (1921, 1922, 1948) and Tolstoy (1924, 1944). In his series on Ibsen for The New Age, for example, Lavrin calls the work of the playwright “a searchlight illuminating and revealing the spiritual undercurrents of modern individuality” (NA 1919(25/10): 167). On the other hand, this group comprises Lavrin’s publications on Comparative Literature, like his Studies on European Literature (1929a) and Aspects of Modernism (1935). Lavrin opens Aspects of Modernism for example with the wish

\(^{317}\) Lavrin has the tendency to republish his literary criticism – sometimes more than once – in a slightly adapted, but apart from some passages, still very similar form. When I use fragments from works that have been published multiple times, I normally quote from the version that appeared first, unless when there are significant and pertinent alterations – for example when Lavrin includes a new digression about the state of Europe.
to “portray a number of European authors and let their works speak, not only for themselves but also for their epoch” (1935: 10).

In these works, Lavrin typically looks upon fictional works as expressions of the authors’ reactions to the degeneration of modern Europe. (As Jones aptly remarks, in doing so Lavrin confuses author and work with “an enviable self-confidence” (2009: 35)). Within this framework, themes that were central in his Russian work and/or in his British society criticism, like the conflict between culture and civilization, individual freedom and the need for a new guiding principle are addressed regularly. Lavrin’s studies on Dostoyevsky for example focus on the problem of absolute value, namely the tension between individual agency and (among others) the comfort of and the longing for a normative idea of good and evil. His monographs on Tolstoy, then, address different key themes in the writer’s work, for example Tolstoy’s vision of religion, sexuality and society, but also how these themes, in Lavrin’s view, reflect the writer’s tendency to retreat to nature and a primitive existence. Also in his *Studies in European Literature and Aspects of Modernism* Lavrin introduces the reader to different literary reactions to modern Europe: e.g. the hedonism of Baudelaire (1929a: 99-117), the extreme individuality of Pirandello (1935: 231-247) and the retreat into nature by Knut Hamsun (1935: 93-111). Importantly, despite the obvious thematical connection between these works in the first group and Lavrin’s other publications, Lavrin’s own vision about these themes takes in a secondary position. The lion’s share of these monographs and overviews consists of excerpts from the author’s fictional work and ego-documents (often intermixed) to illustrate the way in which Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and others coped with problems of modern society and modern culture. Lavrin’s own vision comes to the fore in his meta-discourse about the reactions of these authors. It for example surfaces in the way he frames certain excerpts or chapters, in his (sometimes casual) value judgements about the author’s approach to art, in his doubts about the validity of certain reactions and in his suggestions that the unconscious message of the author actually is completely different.

The second group comprises works of Lavrin with an explicitly introductory and popularizing angle. In the preamble to his biography of Gogol, Lavrin for example explains that it has the objective to “introduce to English readers a great and complex foreign writer in as simple terms as possible” (1925a). Also his *Russian Humorous Stories* he describes as nothing “more than an introduction to the subject” and an attempt “to give the non-Russian reader at least a foretaste of how Russia laughs” (1946c: 14). To this group belongs a diverse set of publications: Lavrin’s biographies of cardinal Russian writers, his introductions to Russian literature, his anthologies of Russian and South-Slavic literature, but also the introductions and prefaces he wrote for collections edited by others.
Because of the introductory nature of the works in this second group, at first glance it seems to hold little value for this dissertation: the works generally have a very standard and classical approach that does not seem to leave a lot of room for society and cultural criticism. Nevertheless, there is often more to them than initially meets the eye. Lavrin’s biographies of Gogol (1925a, 1951), Pushkin (1947b), Goncharov (1953), Lermontov (1959) and Chekhov (2005), for example, only seem to give a detailed chronological overview of their life and works, and mainly focus on retelling the different plots. There are, however, certain elements in these monographs that allow Lavrin to join in with themes that played an important role in his older work. Lavrin for example often pays attention to the position of the author’s work in a broader European context, which allows for an assessment of a topic that was central in his Russian work, namely the author’s engagement with foreign or indigenous influence. He also regularly addresses the author’s attitude to the nation or the state. Lavrin maintains the idea, as I already indicated in Chapter 10, that “the study of any literature [...] should enable us to follow the [...] life and consciousness of the nation which gave it birth”.

Also Lavrin’s overviews of Russian literature – Russian Literature (1927b), An Introduction to Russian Literature (1947a), From Pushkin to Mayakovsky (1949), Russian Writers, their Lives and Literatures (1954) and A Panorama of Russian Literature (1973) – at first glance do not seem to engage with ideas that occupy an important position in Lavrin’s other work. As the table of content of one of Lavrin’s overviews shows (Figure 16), they are very similar to other classical overviews and reference works of Russian literature like those written by Victor Terras (1985) or Emmanuel Waegemans (2003).
As a rule, Lavrin starts with one or two chapters on early Russian literature. Then he continues with the lion’s share of these overviews: several portraits of individual authors and their respective oeuvre, richly illustrated with translated fragments of the addressed works. Lavrin mostly tackles nineteenth-century canonical writers (Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Goncharov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov), but he also pays attention to early twentieth-century authors like Gorky, Blok, Mayakovsky and Yesenin. In between these portraits, Lavrin often adds a couple of chapters that are devoted to major literary currents and important evolutions in the cultural landscape in Russia (a.o. Slavophiles and Westernizers, Belinsky’s Naturalist School and Populism). In these chapters Lavrin often addresses the work of less well-known authors – for his primary public, at least – like Tyutchev, Ostrovky and Nekrasov. Lavrin ends each overview with a couple of chapters in which he very concisely goes over the developments in Soviet literature.

The perception that Lavrin’s overviews are classical introductions is shared by Lavrin’s peers. Marc Slonim for example called Russian Writers, Their Lives and Literatures “an
excellent introduction for college students and general readers who begin their exploration of Russian poets and novelists” (1955: 75). Nevertheless, the reviews by some of his peers also indicate that the content of his overviews does not entirely meet their expectations of such an introductory work. Some of them express their unease with the “irrelevant”, “controversial” and “frustrating” intermezzos Lavrin includes in his overviews (Friedberg 1955: 426, Slonim 1955: 75). It are exactly such divergent remarks and excursions, usually about historical and political themes that can provide more insight in the personal ideas of Lavrin. What is more, in the overviews that are published after the Second World War – the majority of them – these political digressions often show a very explicit opinion about the state of the world.

Lastly, also the anthologies of Russian, Slovene and Yugoslav literature which Lavrin publishes and/or contributes to have a more popularizing angle. Think for example of his Russian Humorous Stories (1946c), The Parnassus of a Small Nation (1957) or the selections of poems by Aloiz Gradnik and Oton Župančič (1964, 1967). Even though one may expect that these compilations have the potential to reflect Lavrin’s vision of cultural development, as was the case in the literary section of Slavyansky mir, the compilation of these works is overall rather standard and introductory: it is not embedded in a certain programme and is not informed by Lavrin’s vision of Europe and/or the Slavic world. In A First Series of Representative Russian Stories (1946a), for example, Lavrin mainly includes short stories of the canonical writers he also addresses in his overviews of Russian literature: e.g. ‘The Postmaster’ (‘Станционный смотритель’) from Pushkin’s Belkin Tales (Повести покойного Ивана Петровича Белкина, 1831), Taman from Lermontov’s A Hero of Our Time (Герой нашего времени, 1839), Chekhov’s The Black Monk (Чёрный монах, 1893) and Gorky’s Twenty-six Men and a Girl (Двадцать шесть и одна, 1899). Also the compilation of the anthologies of Slovene and Yugoslav literature Lavrin contributed to do not betray any underlying vision. In many anthologies, Lavrin was not involved in the selection process: he was only asked to write a general historical introduction or to translate a couple of works into English. Also the compilation of the anthologies in which he was involved in the selection process – An Anthology of Yugoslav Poetry (1962) and the second edition of The Parnassus of a Small Nation (Slodnjak & Lavrin, 1965) – generally give a broad introduction to Slovene and Yugoslav literature. There are indications that for An Anthology of Yugoslav Poetry, Lavrin based his selection mainly on collections that appeared in his home region. One of his peers, for example mentions that the Macedonian section of the anthology corresponds to Contemporary Macedonian Poetry and Prose (Savremena makedonska poezija i proza) that appeared in Belgrade a year earlier (Kadić 1964: 208-209). A closer look at the latter anthology, Parnassus of a Small Nation, shows that it not only includes canonical writers like France Prešeren, Aloiz Gradnik and Oton Župančič, but also comprises some works of more minor poets like Anton Medved, Fran Gestrin and Silvin Sardenko. The
inclusion of these minor writers seems probably more remarkable for a twenty-first century reader, as they no longer receive attention today, but in Lavrin’s time they were considered upcoming talents in literary circles, which mainly suggests an attempt to introduce the reader with a broad range of Slovene literature.

Although the selected works in Lavrin’s anthologies of Russian, Yugoslav and Slovene literature themselves shed little light on his vision, the general introductions Lavrin writes for the anthologies do contain traces of his take on cultural and societal development. Depending on the subject, Lavrin concisely provides the cultural-historical context to the authors, the works or the national literature featured in the anthology. Despite the brevity of these introductions, they contain some remarks that resemble the “controversial” excursions from Lavrin’s overviews of Russian literature. His introductions on Yugoslav or Slovene literature, for example, always refer to and assess the nations’ recent history and situate them within European literature at large.

The above overview shows that Lavrin’s own vision of Europe, society and culture is not the main focus in his British literary criticism. His own voice is less prominent and has to be traced in his meta-discourse and “annoying” digressions. My analysis in this and the following chapter is therefore based on a collection of short remarks, intermezzos and small hints coming from several different works. I address this collection in a thematical way.

12.1 Lavrin and Psychoanalysis

As mentioned before, during the interwar period psychoanalysis was on the rise as a tool to better understand what impulses had led to the atrocities of the First World War and its chaotic aftermath (Passerini 1999: 182). Michael Frosh adds to this that especially in modernist circles, where many had an interest in the unconscious as a motor for sometimes incomprehensible behaviour, psychoanalysis was used increasingly as a way to cope with the rapidly changing world (2003: 116). Moreover, he argues, psychoanalysis provided a language enabling one to not just speak about the destructive “drives” of the age, but also offered “a vision of creativity as reparation, which is [...] attuned to the modernist impulse to make something good out of chaos” (Ibid.: 107). In this chapter, I investigate how psychoanalysis also gave Lavrin a vocabulary and a tool to explore the state of Europe and its potential “transvaluation” through his literary criticism.

That Lavrin consciously uses his psycho-critical approach as a tool to probe the unconscious underlying modern Europe throughout his career appears from the way in
which he frames his studies of European literature as studies of the European mind. In the opening lines of his series on Ibsen for *The New Age*, he for example explains his interpretation of literature (and art in general):

> Art is a symbolical diary of mankind’s inner evolution. The history of art is the history of mankind’s soul, for each epoch bequeaths its soul to future generations through its art. An artistic creator is thus the best witness for his own time. (Lavrin NA 1918(24/5): 73)

Also Lavrin’s study of Nietzsche shows the same interpretation. Lavrin for example states in the first chapter of *Nietzsche, a Psycho-Critical Study* that the philosopher’s work “could well be an Ariadne-thread to the labyrinths of the modern Soul” (Lavrin 1973 [1922]: 12). Also when Lavrin no longer explicitly calls his method “psycho-critical” – he uses the term for the last time in 1924 – he keeps using his literary criticism to explore modern consciousness. In his studies of Comparative Literature, like *Aspects of Modernism*, he writes that European authors speak for their era in their literature. His *Introduction to the Russian Novel*, then, he ends with the remark that “a study of the Russian novel gives one not only a high literary pleasure, but also an introduction to the innermost spirit of Russia” (1947a: 248). The quotes, coming from different works Lavrin published from the beginning of his academic career until a few years before his retirement, show that he generally treats modern literature as a place where the usually hidden modern consciousness comes to the surface and reflects and reacts to the chaos of modern society.

This systematic framing by Lavrin suggests that his engagement with literature as a whole may potentially reflect his worries about the state of Europe and his search for a better future. Up to now, however, Lavrin’s use of psychoanalysis has not received considerable attention. Because of this neither the connection between his psycho-critical approach and his vision of Europe and humanity has been addressed. The three scholars that have tackled Lavrin’s scholarly work – Jones, Sozina and Stakhanova – have not neglected the psycho-critical angle, but they have not really addressed how Lavrin actually used it. Jones speaks of Lavrin’s substantial contributions to the application of psychoanalytic criticism in literary scholarship, but he does not elaborate about his exact merits (2009: 34-35). In the beginning of her analysis of Lavrin’s works of Tolstoy, Sozina

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318 Lavrin’s understanding of modern consciousness is broader than what is generally understood under the term “modern”. In *Aspects of Modernism* he defines it as “the advanced type of consciousness and sensibility” that “can easily be traced back to the romantic movement and even farther” (1935: 9). This broad interpretation of modernity enables him to include many nineteenth-century, sometimes even eighteenth-century authors in his study of the modern European mind.
mentions that the Slovene bases his enquiry on the connection between the author’s work and life, and the conflict between unconscious and conscious, but she does not come back to it in the body of her analysis (2011: 127-129). Stakhanova, then, most extensively engages with Lavrin’s interest in psychoanalysis, but mainly traces how Lavrin presents Dostoyevsky as a psychologist and does not really tackle Lavrin’s own particular psycho-critical approach (2011: 116-126).

This lack of attention to Lavrin’s idiosyncratic approach is not surprising considering the development of the application of psychoanalysis in literary criticism after the Second World War and the changed attitude towards the first implementations of psychoanalytical criticism. Starting from the 1950s, literary studies matured and more analytical and structural approaches became the norm. Traditional psychoanalytical criticism, like Lavrin’s, which tended to use literature as a means to understand the unconscious drives of the author (or even the era), was gradually replaced by approaches that centred on the structure and rhetoric of the literary text (Brooks 1987: 334). This transition in the attitude towards psychoanalytical criticism is reflected in the reviews Lavrin received during his career. His interwar peers applauded his work precisely because of its psycho-critical angle. D.S. Mirsky for example welcomed his “fresh standpoint” (1924: 207) and praised Lavrin for the “moderation and tact with which he use[d] the language and methods of Freud” (1926: 223). Carey McWilliams, then, celebrated Lavrin as “the most brilliant and successful practitioner” of a new type of biographical writing which studies how an author “tries to understand the relationship between the world and the self” (1931: 247-248). Contemporaries of the second half of the twentieth century seem to have been much less fond of Lavrin’s approach, however. This appears explicitly from a review by W.D. Williams who pointed out the “over-simplifications which spring from the application of a rigidly ‘psychological’ approach to Nietzsche” (1949: 433). Implicitly, it appears from the fact that his peers eventually stopped paying attention to his use of psychoanalysis, even though Lavrin’s voice was still distinctly psycho-critical at the time.

Despite the change in the status of psychoanalytical criticism, Lavrin maintained his psycho-critical approach throughout his entire academic career and afterwards. For Lavrin, the Second World War was a sign that there still was an urgent need to better understand and to regenerate the European consciousness. This comes clearly to the fore in his description of the events of the Second World War in his 1954 overview study *Russian Writers, Their Lives and Literatures*. Lavrin speaks of “civilized cannibalism [...] practiced [...] in the death-factories of Auschwitz [...] according to the last word of science” (Lavrin 1954: 200). By using the term “civilized cannibalism” which seems to be a superlative of “civilized barbarism” – and thus not only denotes moral degeneration caused by an extreme focus on political and economic gain, but a complete disappearance
of humane behaviour, – Lavrin even indicates that the need for regeneration of the European consciousness has become more urgent. This in a way seems to serve as a legitimation to maintain a critical approach that addresses the consciousness of the author and the age, rather than following the general academic line.

In this chapter I focus on Lavrin’s assessment of the (development of the) literary representation of modern reality. More specifically I investigate how Lavrin treats two motives that are prominent in psychoanalysis during the interwar period: (1) the interaction between manifest and latent reality, and (2) revolution, which is often considered as a place or a moment where latent drives overthrow the manifest order (or in this case chaos). In each section I aim to show how Lavrin’s psycho-critical approach betrays his assessment of the state of Europe and hints at his vision of change.

12.2 Poetic Transvaluations of Actuality

Lavrin presents his studies of European literature as studies of the European mind as he considers art and literature as “a symbolical diary of mankind’s inner evolution”. Nevertheless, he regularly points out that not all literary representations of modern reality are equally suitable for this task. Starting from a psychoanalytic standpoint, Lavrin often suggests in his literary assessments that in order to understand – and evaluate – modern European reality, it is important that also the invisible, unconscious aspects of reality are reflected in a literary work. In his very first literary analysis, an assessment of the life and work of Dostoyevsky, which appeared as a series in the New Age (1918), Lavrin makes the distinction between a horizontal, superficial approach to reality and a vertical, deepening one (NA 1918(22/12): 229). According to Lavrin, the problem of literature with an (extreme) horizontal approach, or ‘Art of the Surface’ as he calls it elsewhere (NA 1918(23/3): 40), is that it only addresses manifest – visible – reality, or “actuality”, and is unable to reveal what plays under the surface. He distinguishes two forms of this art of the surface:

[…} the so-called naturalism, and the so-called l’art pour l’art; the former degenerates into journalism and Cinema, the latter – into worship of form, as well as into “aesthetic” eclecticism, which successively substitutes art by artificiality, the dynamic simplicity by rhetoric, and style by stylisation. […] this is peculiar to our epoch which has lost almost every organic connection between art and life.
(Lavrin NA 1918(23/3): 40)
In either case, Lavrin reproaches these artistic currents because they, each in their own way, only address what meets the eye: a purely objective, empirical approach to the world around us or an absolute focus on aestheticism, form and appearance.

Throughout his academic career, Lavrin keeps using terms and practices associated with naturalism/journalism and aestheticism as negative value judgements. He for example discards large parts of the work of Saltykov-Shchedrin, because his vehement criticism often turned into pamphleteering instead of art (1947a: 93). The same happens with Nekrasov’s work, as Lavrin considers that “the bulk of his civic and political poetry can be dismissed as rhymed pamphleteering” (1949: 128). The first generation of Russian symbolists, the dekadenty, then, he rejects because they are representatives of “aesthetic cliques, hothouses and ivory towers” (1947a: 157). In analyses of writers Lavrin values highly, but who are sometimes associated with these “superficial” approaches, he seems to feel the need to emphasize that their work goes beyond a representation of manifest reality and pure aestheticism. While speaking of Ibsen, Lavrin underlines, “the word realism should be used cautiously [...] for he never copied reality” (1950: 72). In his monograph Goncharov, then, Lavrin stresses that although Goncharov is a good observer, he is not a “photographic realist” with a cold observation which has nothing to do with creative art (1953: 17-18).

Lavrin’s aversion to horizontal art seems to be related to the fact that he interprets a lack of attention to latent, invisible reality – the unconscious reality – as a sign of a damaged or even severed connection with life. This lack of connection with life is also one of the main problematic consequences Lavrin observes in the cultural practices of an overly civilized society (cf. 11.1). This aversion comes mainly to the fore in a couple of assessments in the overviews Studies in European Literature and Aspects of Modernism. Lavrin for example states that the work of the playwright George Bernard Shaw threatens to degenerate into journalism. He considers Shaw’s method too descriptive, and has the impression that the psychology in his plays is “prepared in his intellectual laboratory rather than extracted from living life” (Lavrin 1929a: 93-94). Lavrin’s use of the description “intellectual laboratory” indicates an association between superficial “journalism” and the outlook inspired by an overly rational, mechanical civilization. Also the early work of Joris-Karel Huysmans and August Strindberg, whom Lavrin compares to each other, gets the same critique. Although Lavrin appreciates how their naturalist work represents manifest reality in all its facets, he regrets that their microscopic view on life often makes them “lose hold on deeper reality by reducing [the bare truth of life] to the bald external facts of existence” (Ibid.: 119).

Whereas Lavrin still shows a certain appreciation towards the observations presented in naturalist or journalistic literature, he sees no value in aestheticism at all. He regularly repeats that he considers literature that focuses on beauty, form and appearance as an
escape from and a negation of life (1929a: 111, 1947a: 162, 1952: 15). This comes to the fore very clearly in Lavrin’s assessment of Oscar Wilde, who, according to Lavrin, embraces “that ‘aesthetic’ gospel which puts Art before life, above life, and – if necessary – even against life” (1935: 21-22). It also appears, for instance, in his approval of Yesenin’s choice to turn away from Imaginism and its focus on form without content (1935: 220). It seems to be no coincidence that Lavrin includes a quote of the Russian poet in which he claims that “only organic images are of value” (Ibid.). Thus he implies that the Imaginist focus on form alone has no connection to life.

As the productive counterpart of horizontal literature, Lavrin presents vertical literature, i.e. literature that does not stay near the surface, but reveals (or tries to reveal) the latent reality below (NA 1918(22/12): 229). His interpretation of vertical literature is not the complete opposite of horizontal literature. It is rather a more comprehensive approach to reality that includes both the manifest and latent aspects of that reality. In his literary analyses, Lavrin systematically endorses authors who are able to present manifest reality in such a way that it symbolizes the latent reality underneath. Over the years he uses many different terms to emphasize the deepening effect he expects from a deeper interpretation of reality; he among others speaks of “symbolic realism”, “subjective realism”, and “intensified realism”. Lavrin uses these terms to identify literary processes that creatively engage with empirical data obtained through observation to straddle the border between manifest and latent reality. He for example explains that Dostoyevsky and Proust address reality as “their raw material”, which “they sift through their intuition until it becomes more real than actual life” (1927a: 610). Lavrin describes Ibsen’s engagement with reality in a very similar way (1950: 72). Moreover, he regularly praises a kind of re-creation of reality. Lavrin for example applauds authors like Balzac, Goncharov and Gogol who according to him often unconsciously select and accumulate details from their environment and respectively “exaggerate and magnify” (1929a: 31), “transform” (1953: 55), and “modify and retouch” (1951: 100) them to represent their subjective truth of life.

Lavrin also uses the terms “symbolic realism”, “subjective realism”, and “intensified realism” for authors who use their literature to explore the grey zone between the two realities. A good example is Lavrin’s analysis of Dostoyevsky. Lavrin underlines that Dostoyevsky explores the observable mental pathology of his characters as a way to examine the bounds of normality and abnormality and, thus, to reveal “the mysteries of inner and transcendental reality” and to discover the essence of life (1918: 229). Another type of exploration comes to the fore in Lavrin’s analysis of Ibsen. There he suggests that Ibsen envisions his plays as spaces where he can subject rational ideas to the reaction of his unconscious:
The skeleton [of the play – T.G.] may be shaped according to the dictates of one or another ‘Idea’, yet this rarely involves the subjugation of Ibsen’s subsequent intuition to any preconceived purpose and tendency: it only gives to it the direction, and this once fixed, the ‘intuitive’ process strives to develop towards its own independent conclusions. (1972 [1921]: 8)

A third exploration of the grey zone between manifest and latent reality Lavrin considers exemplary, is the work of the second generation of Russian symbolists. He is relieved that authors like Blok, Bely and Remizov have left the purely aestheticist path of their predecessors and have started to combine formal experiment with religion and mysticism in order to look for a “deeper conception and even a religious affirmation of life” (1935: 115).

One could assume that Lavrin’s interest in the convergence of latent and manifest reality simply is a symptom of his psycho-critical approach to literature. I want to argue, however, that Lavrin uses the image of literature as a meeting place between the conscious and unconscious as a symbol and maybe as a plea for creating a meeting place – a (re-)union – for two pairs of opposites that are central in his critique of the state of Europe: civilization and culture, on the one hand, and the individual and the collective, on the other.

First, the association of manifest and latent reality with civilization and culture already comes to the fore in Lavrin’s very first literary analysis for The New Age. Lavrin explicitly describes culture as something latent, namely as “the complex of all the inner or spiritual values” and civilization as something manifest, “the complex of all external values” (NA 1918(22/19): 372). Later, he no longer speaks of this explicit connection, but it is among others incorporated in some of Lavrin’s interpretations of the horizontal and vertical approach to reality. As I showed before, Lavrin tends to associate what he considered as overly “naturalistic” or “journalistic” literature, like the oeuvre of Shaw, and the early work of Huysmans and Strindberg, with the cold rational and analytic outlook of mechanic civilization. By quoting Yesenin who denounces Imaginism for its formalism (i.e. for not being organic), Lavrin also connects aestheticism with cold detachment. What is more, in some of his descriptions of vertical literature Lavrin clearly associates the meeting of manifest and latent reality in “symbolic realism” with the (re-)union of civilization and culture. This appears most clearly in his appreciation of the method of Balzac, who according to Lavrin combined a cold analytical mind which “approached modern humanity almost in a way a scientist would approach the animal kingdom” with a heightened intuition, “an exuberance due to his own vitality [...] and his imagination” (1929a: 30). Literature that Lavrin presents as praiseworthy, thus holds at least an attempt
at counterbalancing the excessive focus on external values and civilization with a deeper cultural meaning.

Second, Lavrin seems to connect the combination of the two aspects of reality with a combination of the individual and the collective. When he describes the ways in which authors process manifest reality as “raw material”, he often points to the following transformation: the creative process elevates the author’s personal observation to a universal symbol. Lavrin for example points to how Ibsen’s works raise the petty tragedies of simple Norwegian villagers to the level of universal tragedy (1918: 107). A similar process Lavrin observes in Gogol’s work. He applauds the way in which the tragedies of Gogol’s “little men” like the simple clerk Akaky Akakiyevich in *The Overcoat* (Шинель, 1842) symbolize a universal truth (1925a: 126). A third example is Lavrin’s suggestion that some symbolic realists are able to create characters that represent a whole category of human beings, a kind of archetype (1925a: 170, 1953: 35-36). He for instance specifically refers to the characters of Gogol’s *Dead Souls* (Мертвые души, 1842) and to Goncharov’s *Oblomov* (1858). Lavrin thus repeatedly associates the combination of latent and manifest reality with the connection to something universal or over-arching. This suggests that he interprets that latent, unconscious reality as something collective. In this way, symbolic realist works seem to symbolize spaces where the modern individual can reconnect to an over-arching European or even worldwide consciousness.

Lastly, Lavrin’s attention to authors who explore the overlap between latent and manifest reality seems to reflect his desire for change. Occasionally, Lavrin presents vertical literature as a transformative force of life in general, for example in this fragment from his analysis of Rainer Maria Rilke:

> At the same time, he [Rilke] was unable to accept life as he saw it. Hence his poetic transvaluations of actuality [visible, manifest reality – T.G.]. Again and again he returned to the world, but only in order to re-create it through his vision and his longing; to imbue it with a new significance – until art for him, step by step, became a path towards a transfiguration (and, through it, also a conquest) of all life. (Lavrin 1935: 167)

Also Ibsen’s attempt to “unite organically intellectual, ethical and aesthetical elements” Lavrin considers to be aimed more at “new forms of life than [at] new forms of art” (NA 1918(24/7): 107). The same idea of vertical literature as a symbolic space for transformation is alluded to when Lavrin speaks of “visionary realism” when he describes Dostoyevsky’s creative process (1969 [1943]: 33).

Now and again, Lavrin suggests that modern Russian literature as a whole shows more aptitude for transformation than other European literatures. In his *Introduction to the Russian Novel*, he writes that the “intensified truth of life” that is represented by Russian
literature “helped shape [...] the advanced consciousness of modern Russia” (1947a: 58). Also in Gogol, after explaining the importance of going beyond representing manifest reality, he states that “by taking such a course, Russian fiction did endeavour [...] to become a vital force capable of influencing or even transforming man’s consciousness, and through it life itself” (1951: 14). This seems to be connected to Lavrin’s interest in the Russian Revolution (and the nation’s development ever since) as a cultural phenomenon which can be discerned in his work for *The New Age*, *The New Britain* and *The European Quarterly* (cf. Chapter 11). By suggesting that the Revolution was preceded by a long process of transformation through “intensified literature”, Lavrin seems to imply that it is no coincidence that Russia was the only nation in Europe that broke with the obsolete values of the past and actually tried something new. In a way, it appears to be an attempt to give the revolutionary endeavour more legitimacy. This also comes to the fore in Lavrin’s very positive assessment of Socialist Realism. Importantly, Lavrin does not approve of the version imposed by Stalinism, which he heavily criticizes (1954: 339), but regularly applauds Gorky’s original interpretation of Socialist Realism as a right attitude towards art and reality contrary to the attitude of “our [thus Western – T.G.] bourgeois realism”. Contrary to “bourgeois realism”, states Lavrin, Socialist Realism does not wallow in the problems of modernity, but wants “to direct the creative present towards a more creative future” (1947a: 226). To substantiate his argument, he adds a quote of Gorky that actually closely resembles his own vision of literature

> I want literature to rise above reality and to look down on reality from above, because literature has a far greater purpose than merely to reflect reality. It is not enough to depict already existing things – we must also bear in mind the things we desire and the things which are possible of achievement. (Gorky (n.d.), cited in Lavrin 1947a: 218)

Combined with Lavrin’s aversion to the imposed version of Socialist Realism under Stalin, the message seems to be that if the Soviet Union would base its further development/transformation on Gorky’s approach to literature and life, it would be able to generate true change.

### 12.3 Revolution or Tradition?

The general rise of psychoanalysis among British modernists during the interwar period was joined with a heightened interest in revolution, both in culture and politics, because
it was interpreted as a moment when latent, irrational desires break through and overthrow the established – manifest and rational – order (Frosh 2003: 123). Lavrin’s desire for change, his belief that literature is the most creative and potentially transformative when it facilitates a combination of latent and manifest reality, and his interest in the Russian Revolution and the new Russian regime can be considered an example hereof. Nevertheless, Lavrin’s literary analyses regularly demonstrate a rather reluctant attitude towards revolutionary transformation. This attitude comes mainly to the fore in his monographs that engage with Russian literature. In almost every literary assessment, Lavrin addresses the effect of two key transition periods of Russia’s history on literary development: the Westernization under Peter the Great and the end of Czarist Russia by the Russian Revolution. The following sections will show that Lavrin’s discourse on the cultural consequences of these events significantly nuances his desire for and interpretation of change.

**Western Import and Russian Soil**

Whether Lavrin writes a monograph about one Russian writer in particular, or a chronological overview with selected highlights of Russian literary history, or an introduction to a reader with Russian stories, he almost always briefly mentions the early development of Russian literature. In those brief overviews, the westernization of Russia by Peter the Great is – with good reason – systematically presented as the main transformation of the country before modern times. Lavrin shows a rather ambiguous attitude towards the cultural effect of the changes Peter initiated. Sometimes, Lavrin underlines how Peter the Great’s reforms of Russian society facilitated a necessary acceleration in the cultural development of the nation which had been too isolated from the West up to that moment in time. In *An Introduction to the Russian Novel*, for example, Lavrin presents Peter’s policy as the welcome end of Russia’s isolated position “which [had] resulted in literature devoid of any creative élan or originality” (1947a: 2; Italics in original). Other times, however, for instance in his article *Vladimir Solovyov and the Religious-Philosophic Thought of Russia*, Lavrin stresses the danger of Peter’s emphasis on a quick adoption of European customs because it would “stifle the original spirit, the innate cultural potency, of Russia herself” (Lavrin 1924: 28). This second attitude, especially because it is combined with the words “Peter’s attempt at grafting Europe on Russia” reminds of the criticism on the westernization of the Slavic elite in *Slavyansky mir* (cf. 6.2). The two descriptions of the influence of Peter the Great on the development of Russian culture seem to be diametrically opposed to each other and alternately show a cosmopolitan and a nationalist attitude towards cultural development (foreign influence
as an opportunity or as a threat). Nevertheless, a combination of the two descriptions signals a continuation of Lavrin’s pursuit of balance between cultural openness and preservation, and of the universal essentialism that were expressed in his Russian oeuvre: without foreign influence Russian literature remains self-centred and devoid of cultural stimuli, without national distinction Russian literature becomes a sterile clone that cannot contribute something new to the world. For Lavrin, change seems not to be about a radical adoption of another, purportedly better culture. Instead, it seems to be about maintaining what is good and allowing other cultures to help ameliorate what should be better.

Lavrin’s emphasis on balance between influence and distinction is confirmed by his account of the development of Russian literature after Peter the Great. Lavrin systematically speaks of (1) a phase of passive imitation, followed by (2) a phase with more attention to Russian identity (probably a reference to the discussion between Slavophiles and Westernizers) and ending with (3) (the prospect of) a phase of synthesis between Russia and the West (1924: 28; 1945: 2; 1947a: 4; 1947b: 18; 1954: 22). In these simple presentations of cultural history, cultural synthesis is always presented as the objective of cultural development. This idea is reinforced by small remarks that accompany the first phase of this timeline. The remark “in this apprenticeship there was a continuous instinctive endeavour not only to imitate Europe but to digest it” (1924: 28. Italic in original) for example attempts to highlight that Russia, at least unconsciously, always maintained her distinctness. Whereas the remark “true enough, Russia needed the whole of the eighteenth century to adapt herself to Western standards” (1947a: 5), betrays an attempt to minimize the imitative phase.

A name which Lavrin regularly connects to the third phase of synthesis between Russia and the West is that of Aleksandr Pushkin, whom he once calls Peter the Great’s cultural counterpart in order to underline how he imported Europe in Russian literature (1947b: 214). He presents the golden-age poet as the proof that such a synthesis is possible. On several occasions Lavrin praises Pushkin as “a perfect Russian and a European in one” (1945: 5) whose “cosmopolitan sympathies did not in the least interfere with what was essentially Russian” (1947b: 17). The fact that Lavrin feels the need to soften Pushkin’s cosmopolitanism seems to indicate that he interprets (or that he expects that his readers interpret) cosmopolitanism as essentially antinationalist and rootless, an interpretation which also came to the fore in certain contributions to Slavyansky mir (cf. 6.2). Lavrin’s discourse about Pushkin’s Europeanism actually more than once reminds of his musings about rooted cosmopolitanism in his Russian work. Another example can be found in Pushkin and Russian Literature where Lavrin repeats the remark that originally appeared in Slavyansky mir (Костеж SM 1909(1/2): 27) that Pushkin only used foreign influence, for example from Byron and Shakespeare, as “steppingstones towards the summits of [his]
own [Russian] creative genius” (Lavrin 1947b: 15). In the same monograph, Lavrin supports a statement from Dostoyevsky’s famous Pushkin speech, in which the writer describes how Pushkin represented a “fusion of the Russian spirit with his characteristic all-embracing universality” (1947b: 75). This mirrors a passage about Cankar in Slavyansky mir, which praises how the Slovene was able to use the universal “to deepen and ennoble” the national elements in his work (Савин SM 1911(3/2-3): 20). In a periodical like Slavyansky mir which pursues a heterogeneous unity of the Slavic world, the remark about Cankar can be connected to Slavic minority emancipation as it shows that something Slovenian may be distinctly Slovenian and Slavic at the same time. In Pushkin and Russian Literature, which is not explicitly framed as a work that propagates European unity, this representation of Pushkin nevertheless seems to underline that something Russian can be distinctly Russian and simultaneously form a part of the Western world. Lavrin thus maintains the pursuit of heterogeneous unity of his Russian work also in his imagery of Europe.

It sometimes seems as if Lavrin also uses his former idea of rooted cosmopolitanism to evaluate the work of other Russian writers who come after Pushkin, who thus seem to become other symbols of a synthesis between Russia and the West. When he describes the style of (for example) Lermontov, Dostoyevsky, Bely and Blok – writers whom Lavrin generally receives well – he briefly points out that they have been inspired by Russian and Western examples (which in itself is already a sign of synthesis between Russia and the Europe), but never imitated them. In the case of Dostoyevsky he explicitly remarks: “We should bear in mind, however, that whatever suggestions Dostoyevsky may have received from other people’s writings, he always based his novels on his own inner problems and on actual observations of Russian life” (1947a: 115-116). Another interesting example are Lavrin’s remarks about the similarities between Lermontov and Byron. When this topic was treated in Slavyansky mir, the similarities were categorized as imitation. In his British work, Lavrin underlines that this is not the case, he states that “[Lermontov’s] Byronism was not an imitation but had certain traits of its own” (1949: 65; 1954: 82) and that it was “a case of parallelism, rather than a passive following or imitation” (1959: 9). This different assessment is probably related to the environment in which the works were published: the problematization of imitation in Slavyansky mir may have been part of a common strategy to warn for a too close connection with the West. The emphasis on Lermontov’s parallelism instead of imitation in Lavrin’s British literary criticism, then, may be part of the strategy to underline that Russian literature takes in a distinct place within the Western cultural world.

In one case, Lavrin applies the reverse strategy, namely in his assessments of the first generation of Russian symbolists, the dekadenty, whose work he considers sterile. He uses a lack of synthesis as a criterion to downgrade their literary qualities. He explains how
authors like Merezhkovsky, Gippius, Balmont and Bryusov “frankly adopted the formula of ‘art for art’s sake’” from the French symbolists (1947a: 156), a remark that emphasizes imitation rather than mitigating it. In this way Lavrin further puts aestheticism in a bad light: after denouncing its superficiality and empty attitude towards life, he now presents it, in Russian context at least, as unoriginal and rootless. In contrast the second generation of Russian symbolists, who turned away from French symbolism, receives critical acclaim from Lavrin (1947a: 157). He describes their inspiration as a combination of Solovyov, Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche – thus implying the idea of a Russian-Western synthesis again. These remarks indicate that it is important for Lavrin to emphasize that valuable Russian authors are not passive receivers in the European cultural landscape, but that they are active players who enrich Russian and European culture by blending the two.

Importantly, Lavrin not only reserves cultural synthesis for his analysis of Russian literature, but also uses it in his discourse about the broader Slavic world. In his anthologies of Slovene and Yugoslav literature he points to the same propensity. About Prešeren he writes that he “absorbed foreign influences not as an epigone, but as a creator in his own right” (1955: 306). In his assessment of Yugoslav modernists in general he writes that they assimilated external stimuli “in such a way as to blend with certain native ingredients and thus produce poetry which was modern [and international] and at the same time imbued with a flavour and inflection of its own” (1962a: 19).

Lavrin’s attention to the possibility of a cultural synthesis between Russia (and the Slavic world) and Europe should not be disconnected from the geopolitical situation and from Lavrin’s own geopolitical aspirations. Emphasising that Russian literature can simultaneously be Russian and European at a time when European nations and Russia are suspicious of each other’s political and social course seems to hold a plea to overcome those differences. The connection between cultural synthesis and political reunion is not only implicitly present in Lavrin’s work. Sometimes it comes to the fore very explicitly. In the conclusion of Pushkin and Russian Literature, for example, Lavrin uses his interpretation of Pushkin as the perfect fusion of Russia and Europe as an excuse to address the political disunity in Europe (and the world) at the beginning of the Cold War – a “political excursion” as Friedberg, one of his critics would call it:

Since the future of the world depends largely on rapprochement between these two countries [Russia and Great Britain – T.G.], it is almost imperative that such a process should first take place in the realm of cultural values. (Lavrin 1947b: 215. Italics in original).

Although Lavrin specifically points to a rapprochement between Russia and Great Britain it is reasonable to assume that he addressed Great Britain as the then perceived leader of
Europe and had in mind a more extensive, European rapprochement. This paragraph illustrates the transformative power Lavrin attributes to culture and his belief that cultural change will be reflected in other, more civilizational aspects of society. For Lavrin this remark is not a political excursion, for him cultural and political development are inseparable from each other.

In the years to come, Lavrin maintains his pursuit of rapprochement between Russia and Europe, both in the cultural and the political sphere. In the conclusion of *Russian Writers, Their Lives and Literatures*, which appears not long after Stalin’s death, Lavrin underlines that the benefits from rapprochement would “be invaluable for Russia and the West” (1954: 348). He also expresses his regret that Stalin has made this more difficult by turning Moscow into a kind of isolated and superior Third Rome again. Very atypically, Lavrin writes that “the initiative [for rapprochement] will have to come from the elements which lie outside of literature” (Ibid.). This seems to imply that he considers that the isolated course of Soviet literature has diminished its transformative, synthetic powers. The references to cultural synthesis that still pop-up in the chapters about authors like Pushkin, Dostoyevsky and Blok now appear as a nostalgic reminder of the fact that Russia once had a more European side in the (near) past. As the book ends with the remark “now that Stalin is dead there certainly is room for new changes and possibilities”, the references also seem to be a call to the European reader that the Soviet Union just needs some external help to find Russia’s European face again in the future.

**Revolution and Cultural Heritage**

Lavrin’s reluctance concerning radical, disruptive change not only appears from his moderate stance towards Western influence in the Slavic world, it also shows in his discourse about the effect of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet regime on the attitudes towards cultural heritage. Before I tackle his analysis of Soviet literature, I want to highlight that Lavrin generally addresses this subject in a rather superficial way. Marc Slonim is not entirely wrong when he states in his review of *Russian Writers, Their Lives and Literatures* that “his [Lavrin’s] ‘assessment’ [of Soviet novels] is reduced to a lifeless enumeration” (1955: 75). This description actually applies to almost all chapters Lavrin dedicates to Soviet literature: he often only devotes a couple of lines to each writer, in which he describes a couple of his or her works – often only the plot – and seldom gives a real assessment of the quality of their works. Nevertheless, as the following sections will show, there are certain important markers in these chapters that signal Lavrin’s opinion about the development of Soviet literature. Such markers can for example hide in generalising remarks about key periods in the literary development such as the New
Economic Policy (NEP, 1922-1928), the first Five-Year Plan (1928-1932) and the start of Socialist Realism (1932), which frame the works of the writers of those periods. In some overviews Lavrin does dedicate fully fledged chapters to a couple of authors that are related to the revolutionary years, namely Gorky, Blok, Yesenin and Mayakovsky. Although these chapters all address the authors’ respective reactions to the build-up and aftermath of the revolution, only Lavrin’s analysis of Mayakovsky and Gorky also engages with the ways in which the revolution has influenced attitudes towards cultural heritage, which forms the focus in this section.

Sometimes Lavrin explicitly expresses his discomfort with the wish of Soviet artists to create a radically new purely proletarian culture, which betrays a preference for evolution instead of revolution, at least when it comes to art (a.o. 1947a: 187, 207; 1947b: 214; 1954: 339). For the most part, however, this preference speaks from Lavrin’s tendency (near obsession) to emphasise the continuities between “old” and “new” Russian literature, instead of treating the Russian Revolution as a permanent break. When Lavrin tackles Soviet literature (and sometimes also when he addresses older Russian writers), he seizes several occasions to convey the image that “Soviet literature [...] preserved, as far as it could, its allegiance to the best nineteenth-century traditions” (1954: 350). A first explicit marker that highlights Lavrin’s focus on continuity is the air of relief that breathes through the passages that describe that the Soviets themselves not always tolerated literary initiatives that wanted to break with the past. When Lavrin tackles the literature of the young Soviet Union, he applauds Trotsky and Lunacharsky because “fortunately” they did not agree with the idea of making literature subservient to the new regime (1947a: 188-189). Also Gorky is praised as “a defender of cultural continuity” as he demanded that the best elements bequeathed by the former intelligentsia should be assimilated by the Soviet masses and creatively blended with what they themselves can give to the world. (Lavrin 1949: 211)

Lavrin not only addresses individuals who fought for a connection between old and new Russian literature, but also expresses his support for changes in the Soviet political course that positively affected the attitude towards cultural heritage. He for example applauds the fact that the NEP allowed a freer intellectual climate and the rehabilitation of a couple of “bourgeois” writers (1954: 327). Lavrin also critically acclaims Stalin’s celebration of Pushkin (1937), whose poetry for a long time did not receive a lot of attention in Russia (1947b: 215, 1949: 302). He for example tellingly refers to the slogan “back to Pushkin” as “a corrective” of more radical attitudes towards art (1949: 302).

A second marker of Lavrin’s preference for gradual literary development based on the classics, can be found in his description of literary achievements, both of individual writers and groups of writers. In his overviews of NEP-literature, for example, Lavrin
reserves his acclaim for writers like the Fellow Travellers – he especially points to the Serapion Brothers, – who had no membership to the Party at the time, which allowed them to maintain a neutral attitude. Lavrin mainly applauds them because they regarded “art and culture as something which stands above class-ideologies” and did not want to throw overboard “the remnants of the former ‘bourgeois’ culture” (1954: 327; 1947a: 188).

When Lavrin assesses authors in the subsequent period of Soviet literary history, namely Stalin’s first Five-Year Plan, Lavrin is overall rather pessimistic because there was a dominance of the “Prolet-Kult enthusiast and second- or third-rate novelist” (1947a: 207) and literature threatened to become “applied literature” (1954: 339). Nevertheless, it is striking how often Lavrin uses words like “continuity”, “bridge”, “link” and “preservation” in these passages. He claims that despite the “literary dictatorship” the proletarian rationale was unconsciously accompanied by “the wish to preserve the organic continuity of national culture” (1947a: 207, 216). On the one hand, Lavrin often points out how certain authors who published before and after the revolution established a connection between new Soviet fiction and Russian literary tradition. He for example briefly states that Aleksey Tolstoy “forms a link between the old and the post-revolutionary realism” (1947a: 196) and that “this continuity was helped in its own way also by the émigré Aleksey Remizov” (1946b: 15), also Gorky’s work is regularly mentioned in this respect (e.g. 1946a: 20, 1947a: 155, 1954: 247). On the other hand, it appears that Lavrin, whenever he can, points to the connection between new Soviet authors and pre-revolutionary artists like Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov. Usually, Lavrin does not extensively substantiate the connections he perceives, as appears from the following typical fragment taken from the chapter ‘A Pattern of the Soviet Novel’ in Russian Writers, Their Lives and Literatures (1954: 326-348), which also resembles several passages in his other overviews of Soviet literature:

The psychological novel, which had played such an important part in Russian literature from Lermontov’s The Hero of Our Time onwards, had a strong enough tradition to assert its rights also during the Soviet regime. Of the older writers it was Panteleymon Romanov (1884-1940) who combined certain moral problems – those of sex and marriage – with a psychological approach to Soviet youth and the new type of intellectuals. A balance between the Soviet byt and the psychology on Dostoevskian lines was struck in Leonov’s The Thief. Other authors, too, such as Olesha, Savich, Budantsev, and also Kaverin, shifted the attention to the “inner man” whom they approached from a cautiously irrational angle. (Lavrin 1954: 335, Italics in original)

Lavrin’s assessment of these authors is rather shallow and brief (although he elaborates more about the authors’ works after this fragment), and it brings together authors with
different backgrounds and styles who are usually not addressed simultaneously (Romanov is a chronicler, Olesha is a satirist and Kaverin is a previous Serapion Brother with a penchant for formal experiment). For Lavrin, however, it is more important that they all honour the psychological line that was typical for Russian realism. This fragment comes from a section in the chapter in which Lavrin highlights the continuities between Soviet and pre-revolutionary literature, before tackling the new tendencies instigated by Socialist realism. The connection between continuity and the attention to psychology also appears from the content of the chapter (with a telling title) ‘Links between Past and Future’ in An Introduction to the Russian Novel. In the chapter, Lavrin points out how the revival of the historical novel helped to engender a sense of continuity, but mainly emphasizes how the attention to psychology forms an important link between old and new (1947a: 216-227). It therefore appears that Lavrin’s emphasis on continuity is (at least partly) inspired by his own vision of transformation: a combination of manifest and latent reality forms the most fertile soil for creative change. Breaking with Dostoyevsky and his predecessors, would mean to throw away a long tradition of attention to the impact of the unconscious on reality.

A third marker of Lavrin’s focus on the connection between old and new literature, can be found in his evaluation of older Russian writers. It is quite obvious and seemingly inconspicuous that Lavrin shows the connection between the styles and approaches of the authors he discusses in his literary overviews, for example the influence of Pushkin on Lermontov or the connection between the satire of Gogol and Ostrovsky. In From Pushkin to Mayakovsky, however, the emphasis on the connection between pre-revolutionary and contemporary writers is so prominent that it shows that underlining continuity is no less than essential for Lavrin. Almost all assessments in the monograph conclude with a look at the position of that particular author in contemporary Russian literature: Pushkin is presented as “the standard of literary values” and “a symbol of cultural continuity up to our own day” (1949: 31), Gogol “remains an inalienable part of the literary heritage in Russia, no matter what changes may take place in her politics, in her taste, or in her general outlook upon life and the world” (Ibid.: 62), Turgenyev, then, “in spite of all the changes in literary fashions [...] remains one of the greatest artists in Russian as well as in European fiction” (Ibid.: 120) and also the influence of Leskov’s work persists “in spite of so many literary and other changes” (Ibid.: 173). Although these concluding remarks are not unfounded or extreme, they nevertheless betray how Lavrin wants to frame literature as a paragon of stability in turbulent times.

The above paragraphs show that if you start to focus on Lavrin’s stress on continuity it sometimes appears to take on ridiculous proportions. This is of course less prominent when you read but one of his books. Nevertheless, by almost systematically pointing out that there are important continuities between the old and the new literary tradition in
Russia, Lavrin instils the idea on the reader that Russian culture has not necessarily changed that much since the revolution. It sometimes appears that Lavrin at any cost wants to show that although the Soviet Union has a radically different political system, the nation nevertheless respects its cultural heritage. With his assessment of Albanskiye eskizy and his criticism on the state of Europe in The New Age and The New Britain in mind (cf. 9.3, 11.1, 11.2), it seems that Lavrin wants to show that Soviet Russia despite its quota, its Five Year Plans, its Stakhanovite working ethic and its atheism, has not become a new civilized barbaric country and still can contribute to the cultural development of humanity. How far he wants to go to do this certainly appears from the last example in this section, Lavrin’s framing of Russian Futurism in his chapter about Mayakovsky in From Pushkin to Mayakovsky (which is repeated in Russian Writers, Their Lives and Literatures).

Lavrin starts his analysis of Mayakovsky with a comparison between Italian and Russian Futurism, which he closely connects, respectively, to the rise of Fascism and Communism. In his comparison, he implies that the Italian Futurists facilitated the rise of an authoritarian and civilized barbaric (or, rather, civilized cannibal (cf. 12.1)) regime because it replaced cultural heritage with an idolization of the Machine:

The Italian movement under that name [i.e. Futurism – T.G.], initiated and led by Marinetti, was a noisy reaction to the weight of too big a cultural heritage. An excess of humanistic tradition was felt to be a drawback, a brake, in an age of technique, of speed and machines. Consequently an attempt was made to ignore that tradition and turn art itself into a glorification of the mechanical values of life. [...] It was Marinetti who anticipated [...] all the elements of fascism and of the “dynamic” mailed fist. (Lavrin 1949: 280-281)

Moreover, the fact that Marinetti and the Italian Futurists were not able to create art fitting for modern times with respect for Italy’s cultural heritage Lavrin interprets as a sign of a “sterile mind” (1949: 281) – i.e. not suited for a creative, organic future.

Conversely, Lavrin implies that Mayakovsky and the Russian Futurists, although they also aimed at the development of “a new poetic technique more appropriate to our modern pace”, did not break with Russia’s cultural heritage. He points out two reasons for this: (1) Russia simply did not have “an over-ripe cultural heritage”, and (2) it had another heritage to react against, namely the “overwhelming tradition” [...] of autocracy and political oppression” (1949: 281). Lavrin thus (boldly) suggests that Mayakovsky and the Russian Futurists supported the Revolution that wanted to undo the “drawback” caused by the Czarist authoritarian regime “because a fight for the future had to start with a fight against these evils”, but did not want to break away from Russia’s cultural tradition (Ibid.). With this opening paragraph, Lavrin severely frames an otherwise rather classic overview of Mayakovsky’s work. This overview, by the way, also includes A Slap in
the *Face of Public Taste* (1912), but it fails to mention that the Manifesto contains the Futurist’s wish to “Throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc., etc. overboard from the Ship of Modernity” – a subtle, but important intervention to support the impression of continuity. Another subtle intervention is the fact that Mayakovsky and his work are regularly called “vital” throughout the chapter, which implies an opposition to Marinetti’s allegedly mechanical and sterile work. Lavrin does not neglect Mayakovsky’s innovations and radical change, he regularly mentions them and even applauds them during the chapter. Afterwards, in the concluding lines of the monograph, however, he remarks that

> whatever social, political and psychological changes may have taken place, the essential literary continuity has been preserved without any unbridgeable gaps between the old and the new. Even Mayakovsky’s futurism made no radical difference in this respect. New poetic, technical and ideological devices merged and are still merging with the creative heritage of the past in order to work out gradually a literature in accordance with the social-political pattern [...]. (Lavrin 1949: 304)

This remark simultaneously holds a concession that Mayakovsky’s change of literature was nearer to disruption than to continuity, and reaffirms the continuity in contemporary Russian literature by pointing out how these changes nevertheless merge with the “heritage of the past”.

### 12.4 Conclusion

Lavrin’s engagement with (the representation of) modern reality and revolution in his literary assessments shows a clear desire for change that reminds of his society critical articles. First, Lavrin’s psycho-critical assessments of literature refer to the revaluation of culture which his articles for *The New Age* put forward as a prerequisite for European change. This appears in Lavrin’s ideal of “symbolic” or “intensified” realism, with which he suggests that literature can serve as a place of transformation when it assumes its full potential, i.e. when it not only reflects manifest reality, but also the unconscious reality hiding underneath. The need for a revaluation of culture also recurs in Lavrin’s association of the meeting of latent and manifest reality with the (re-)union of culture and civilization. Second, Lavrin’s preference for symbolic realist literature can be connected with the need for an over-arching European consciousness and a universal
guiding principle that can (re-)align the interests of (European) individuals. This mainly comes to the fore when Lavrin associates the convergence of latent and manifest reality with a re-connection of the individual with a collective unconscious reality.

Although Lavrin’s promotion of symbolic realism signals a desire for transformation, his discourse about actual cultural change shows that this desire is nuanced. For Lavrin it is essential that a culture, more specifically a literature, grows and develops and gets in contact with other cultures and literatures, but that development should always be gradual and should respect the own cultural heritage. This topic mainly comes to the fore in Lavrin’s assessments about Russian and occasionally other Slavic literatures. This is for large part related to his approach: his monographs on Russian literature are in essence a chronological overview of the literary development of an author or of Russia as a whole, while his monographs on European literature contain snapshots of different literatures within one and the same period. It also seems to be related to the place Lavrin attributes to Russian, and to larger extent Slavic literature within Europe.

When Lavrin writes about cultural change through imitation, his emphasis on moderate change strongly reminds of his earlier emphasis on national integrity and the need for rooted symbiosis vis-à-vis an isolated culture or an underdeveloped culture hiding under an adopted veneer. Different than in his Russian career, Lavrin not only identifies imitation of the West as a possible danger for cultural heritage, but also points to the danger of an indigenous pursuit of radical change. This second threat for cultural symbiosis creates an important contradiction in Lavrin’s discourse about Russian literature. On the one hand, Lavrin suggests that it is exactly Russian literature’s aptitude for “intensified literature” and its attention to latent reality which prepared the nation for real change, and which enabled Russia to go through a transformation after the First World War, contrary to Western-Europe, where Lavrin only sees a maintained status quo. In a way this penchant for change, or transvaluation, reminds of the potential redemptive role Lavrin attributed to small Eastern European nations in Albanskiye eskizy, The New Age and The New Britain, and thus seems to suggest that Russia can serve as an example in civilized barbaric Europe. This is reinforced by the fact that Lavrin presents Russian literature as a symbiosis of the best elements of the European and Russian literary traditions. On the other hand, Lavrin warns that precisely because of the change brought about by the Russian Revolution, the connection to Russia’s cultural history, and thus to the transformative capacities of “intensified literature”, threatens to disappear. One could argue, that Lavrin in this way suggests that Russia may lose its exemplary position within Europe, something he probably saw confirmed by the increasing rift between Western and Eastern Europe in the twentieth century.

From this perspective, Lavrin’s focus on moderate change, both in the form of a symbiosis between national and foreign literature and in the form of an emphasis on
evolution rather than revolution, seems to be an attempt to show his European readership that the Soviet Union still can play an essential role within Europe. Lavrin’s examples of Russian literature as a symbiosis between Russian and Western literature show the potential of a rapprochement between the two regions. Lavrin’s emphasis on continuity between old and new Russian literature, then, serves as “proof” that the break with the past has not penetrated all levels of Russian byt, and that this break is not definitive. It appears that Lavrin thus suggests that Soviet Russia, if it alters its attitude vis-à-vis culture, could possibly reclaim a more exemplary role. Moreover, if one connects Lavrin’s stress on Russian literature as a synthesis of Russian originality and Western influence with his emphasis on cultural continuity, one may conclude that Lavrin makes an additional suggestion. By underlining that Soviet Russia still respects its cultural heritage and thus the many authors that made a cultural synthesis, Lavrin implies that the culture in the Soviet Union still has more ties with Europe than it likes to admit. Lastly, as Lavrin writes his overviews of Russian literature for a European public, his suggestions about the role of Russia (and the Slavic world) in Europe seem to encourage a more open attitude on the European side, as he shows that also Europe will benefit from strengthening the bonds with the Soviet Union, both cultural and otherwise.
Chapter 13 Literary Criticism and the Pursuit of a United Humanity

The analysis of Lavrin’s work for The New Age, the weekly New Britain and The European Quarterly in Chapter 11 showed that the individual had become an important new protagonist in Lavrin’s pursuit of a new Europe. One of the aspects Lavrin addressed several times was the place of the individual in society: he problematized both the idea of a fragmented, individualized society and the idea of an amorphous, collectivist one. By addressing this tension between individual and collective, Lavrin joins in with one of the debates among modernists in the 1920s and 1930s. Pericles Lewis holds that the aftermath of the First World War and the rise of communism and fascism suggested to many that the ideal of individualism that reigned during the nineteenth century would be replaced by a new ideal of collectivism (2011: 210). Writers and artists responded to this in different ways. Some of them celebrated one of the new rising collectivist regimes and/or the idea of the authoritarian leader enforcing unity. Others critically reacted to the loss of individual agency and problematized how the public interest increasingly replaced individual and private desires (ibid.: 210-211). As the previous chapters showed, also Lavrin reacted to the rise of Fascism and Communism. He denounced Fascism (and Nazism) and considered them as an outgrowth of the self-centred pursuit of economic and political gain of the nations in the “old” Europe. Lavrin followed the socialist project of the Soviets in Russia with more interest, hoping that the radical change may potentially lead to a new guiding principle for Europe and the Western world. Overall, his discourse about the place of the individual in society shows that in the first place he pursued a balance between individualism and collectivism: he did not want a society where individual desires dominate, and neither did he want a society where the individual is subservient to the collective and the public interest. Lavrin’s society criticism showed that his own vision of a united Europe and humanity always departed from an essentially voluntary union: a combination of individual freedom and collectivism (cf. 11.1, 11.3).
This chapter embroiders further on Lavrin’s wish to combine individuality and collectivity, and explores how he engaged with this theme in his British literary criticism. An important indication that Lavrin indeed addressed this theme in his literary assessments appears from the fact that he regularly incorporated his own particular view on the development of humanity in his monographs and overview studies. The following fragment from *Tolstoy, an Approach* (1944) is the clearest example hereof:

The harmony, symbolized by the legends of ‘paradise’ or of the ‘golden age’, points to that pre-individual (as well as pre-moral) wholeness which constitutes the main charm of primitive communities and also of children. On this plane the individual is still more or less merged with the collective group-psyche through which he participates in the life of the race and of Nature herself. [...] Not yet severed or differentiated from the group, the individual knows no disturbing problems and dilemmas of his own, but lives the life of the group. [...] Had humanity stopped at this phase, it would have forfeited its history and growth. [...] The primitive Adam must taste of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, that is, he must commit the original sin of individualization, if he is to grow at all. There is no history, no progress, no civilization without the ‘paradise lost’. This is a fact of enormous psychological and moral significance. For it means nothing less than the awakening of the individual and his assertion against the group. [...] Only after having broken up its passive pre-individual unity, can it [humanity – T.G.] hope to attain – through the process of individuation and the hell wrought by it – that new and integral unity which has overcome the conflicts inherent in the march of man and civilization. (Lavrin 1944: 67-69)

For someone who only reads this monograph about Tolstoy, Lavrin’s phased interpretation of the development of humanity – a pre-individual “golden age”, the necessary “hell” of individualistic society and finally a “new integral unity”, – probably would strike as a peculiar attempt of Lavrin to situate certain typical elements of Tolstoy’s thought, like his idealization of the communal farmers’ life. Situating Lavrin’s particular view on the development of humanity within his complete oeuvre, however, shows that this is more than an occasional attempt to situate a writer’s thought. Lavrin has integrated this phased interpretation of the development of humanity in many monographs and overviews that he wrote in the first twenty-five years of his career. It appeared for the first time in a for Lavrin uncharacteristically mystical chapter about the

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319 In one of his reviews of Lavrin’s works, D.S. Mirsky has dubbed it Lavrin’s “very own philosophy of history” (1924: 208).
relation between the individual and the universe in The New Age series ‘Dostoyevsky and his Creation’ (1918)\textsuperscript{120}. Later his view on the development of humanity recurs – always in a slightly adapted form – in several other publications: Tolstoy, a Psycho-Critical Approach (1924a), Studies in European Literature (1929a), Aspects of Modernism (1935), and in the second versions of his work on Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy in the 1940s. Although Lavrin each time uses his view on the development of humanity to discuss other aspects of that development – e.g. the relationship of man and God in ‘Dostoyevsky and his Creation’ (NA 1918(22/13)) and the role of sex in society in Tolstoy, a Psycho-Critical Approach (1924a: 177-202), – it always boils down to the development of the relationship between the individual and the collective, an evolution from a pre-individual to an individual society (the current state of humanity) which should lead to the advent of a super-individual integrated society, for Lavrin the telos of human development.

When one is familiar with other works of Lavrin’s oeuvre, the different phases Lavrin discerns in the development of humanity significantly remind of other views on human or cultural development that come to the fore in his work. The phases Lavrin describes not only reflect his ideas about the relationship between individual and collective in his British society criticism. The contrast between the innocent harmony of the pre-individual phase and the “hell of individuation” in the second phase, for example, also mirrors the contrast between the anachronistic and isolated Montenegrins and the civilized barbarism of Europe in Albanskiye eski\textsuperscript{z}y (cf. 9.3). The phased interpretation of the development of humanity also comes close to the idea of rapprochement in Slavyansky mir: before a consciously united Slavic world (or a united humanity) could be pursued, first all peoples had to assert their individual identity apart from the empires to which they belonged (cf. 5.2, 6.1). The phased interpretation even, to a certain extent, reminds of Lavrin’s phased timeline on the attitude towards foreign influence in the previous chapter: an evolution from passive imitation, to a focus on national literature and, eventually, to a synthesis of national and foreign literature (cf. 12.3).

\textsuperscript{120} The chapter is larded with a rather mystical vocabulary, Lavrin for example uses the words “Microcosmos” and “Cosmos” to denote the individual and God. The fact that he uses these words, especially in combination with the word “Aryan race” further in the text (a reference to Indian mystics, not to the eugenic interpretation later used in Nazism), suggests that Lavrin was influenced by Mitro\textsuperscript{n}ovi\textsuperscript{c} while he was writing his analysis of Dostoyevsky. These words namely take in a central place in the texts that circulate in Mitro\textsuperscript{n}ovi\textsuperscript{c}‘s network during and shortly after the First World War. Guido van Hengel discusses this network at length in his De Zieners (2018). The similarities do not necessarily mean that Lavrin takes over Mitro\textsuperscript{n}ovi\textsuperscript{c}’s ideas because Mitro\textsuperscript{n}ovi\textsuperscript{c} did not use his hermetic texts to disseminate ready-made ideas, but rather to appeal to the unconscious of his public. It is more likely that Lavrin adopted this vocabulary to impress his new employer Orage, who had a particular interest in Mitro\textsuperscript{n}ovi\textsuperscript{c}‘s mysticism at the time.
By incorporating this view on the development of humanity in his literary criticism, Lavrin imports his vision of the future of Europe (and humanity) as an evaluation tool. He uses it as a framework to assess “modern” author(s) and works. Lavrin views modern authors as representatives of the individualist society (phase two), who are torn between their own individual interests and the (unconscious) longing for a connection with the rest of humanity (phase three). He expresses this most clearly in the prefatory note to *Aspects of Modernism* (1935):

> Utter atomization of the individual, and parallel with this, a passionate though impotent will to achieve at least some balance and harmony in spite of all – such are the two polar trends reflected in European modernism as a whole. (Lavrin 1935: 9)

Lavrin views the works of these modern authors as a reaction to the tension between these two poles. The implied question in Lavrin’s analysis of these works is the following: can this reaction serve as a new guiding, and thus unifying principle, and help to transcend the individual stage? As the word “impotent” in the fragment already indicates, Lavrin’s answer is usually no. Lavrin believes that modern authors like Dostoyevsky, Ibsen, Nietzsche and Tolstoy “are still in fetters in spite of their attempts to free themselves” from the crisis in modern society (1924a: 221). Nevertheless, he considers them as teachers, but “only in so far as they show [the reader] how to surpass them” (1924a: 22). For Lavrin, reading the work of these authors can give more insight into how (not) to reach the final stage of human development.

Besides serving as a framework, Lavrin’s view on the development of humanity for large part determines his evaluation of literary works even in those works that do not explicitly refer to his phased interpretation of human development. It is possible to divide his evaluative remarks into three groups: (1) Remarks about the orientation of the reaction of the author/work: is it future-oriented or does it, for instance, represent a retreat to the past? (2) Remarks about the relationship between the individual and the collective: does the worldview represented in a fictional work show a preference for one of the two or maybe a combination? (3) Remarks that address the development of the individual that is reflected in the author’s work. This chapter successively addresses these three groups of remarks in Lavrin’s work and aims to show how he uses them to share his own vision of Europe’s ideal future via his literary criticism.

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321 “Modern” is a broad term in Lavrin’s work: he also considers Romanticism a modern period (1929: 7-25).
13.1 “We can no longer go back to nature, but only forward to it.”

Lavrin’s literary criticism contains a multitude of remarks that attribute a direction or an orientation to the way in which an author or a fictional character created by that author reacts to the tension Lavrin discerns between individual freedom and the need for connection with humanity. By including these Lavrin expresses a certain evaluation: he endorses reactions that hold the promise of a new and different future of Europe or humanity as a whole, and criticizes reactions that seem to linger in the past or seem to perpetuate the existing individualistic situation. The emphasis on the need for a different future comes to the fore most clearly in comparative remarks like the following in Tolstoy, a Psycho-Critical Approach (1924a). Lavrin calls the world view disseminated by Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche “active and dynamic”, pointing “forward to the future, to the ‘super-conscious’ potencies of the race”, whereas he considers Tolstoy’s world view “static and passive”, “directed backwards – to the primitive infancy and the ‘paradise’ of the undifferentiated group-soul” (1924a: 68). The adjectives attributed to Tolstoy’s world view give an impression of stagnation and a lack of progress, thus suggesting that such a reaction to modernity holds no real change, and actually prevents it from happening.

In most of his literary assessments, Lavrin emphasises progressive development more subtly. Sometimes during the discussion of a novel or a poem he adds, almost casually, a remark about the need for a future orientation. In his retelling of the plot of The Gypsies (Цыгане, 1824) of Pushkin, which tells of a young man who moves away from the city to join a gypsy camp but never completely adapts to the Gypsies’ way of life, Lavrin for example claims that the hero of the poem “stands for the inability of a civilized man to run away from civilization ‘back to nature’” and immediately adds that “such a flight or regression is always forced and therefore insincere, unreal” (1947b: 93). In his evaluation of Ibsen’s Emperor and Galilean (Kejser og Galilæer, 1873), Lavrin makes a similar remark about the impossibility of the desire of the main character Julian, the last non-Christian ruler of the Roman empire who wants to bring the empire back to its ancient pagan values: “[he is] oblivious of the fact that [...] after Christ we cannot return to Olympus” (NA 1919(24/17): 278).

The assessment of Emperor and Galilean holds another example of the way in which Lavrin brings his vision of the development of humanity to the fore. When he evaluates stories that seem to suggest that a different future is not (yet) possible, he regularly points to certain interventions in the plot, often at the end of the novel or play, that allegedly betray the unconscious desire of the author for a different outcome. In Lavrin’s
assessment of *Emperor and Galilean* this is related to Julian’s rejection of the idea of a Third Empire as suggested by his mentor Maximus, a “super-moral” synthesis of collective “pre-moral” pagan and Christianity (NA 1919(24/17): 277-278). Lavrin suggests that this rejection reflects Ibsen’s rational scepticism towards such an optimistic outcome (Ibid.: 279), but also that certain elements in the play indicate that Ibsen unconsciously actually rooted for the idea of the Third Empire. Lavrin ends his analysis of the drama’s plot with the suggestion that Julian’s death at the end of the play is Ibsen’s (unconscious) way to show that the emperor’s choice for a regression to paganism is faulty (Ibid.: 278). Moreover, he adds that the prophecy of Maximus at the end of the play – “But the Third Empire shall come! The spirit of man shall re-enter its heritage!” – proves that Ibsen unconsciously kept pursuing this ideal, because it “was not so easy to give up the only ‘positive theory of life’ he was able to discover” (Ibid.).

Something similar happens in Lavrin’s assessment of Goncharov’s *The Ravine*222 (Оberyw, 1869). In his retelling of the plot Lavrin devotes quite some attention to the relationship of Vera, a character with a modern and liberated character, with Volokhov, a representative of the new Russia. He holds that Vera’s eventual return to the traditional values of her grandmother show “a moral victory” for the old patriarchal tradition in Russia. After this conclusion, Lavrin adds the following remark:

> But Goncharov must surely have known that such a wholesale triumph [of the old tradition] would not hold good for long. After all, Malinovka [the old estate where the main characters live] – even when purged of ‘oblomovism’ – was hardly a solution. So Tushin was called in as a possible deus ex machina: a man who combined the solid old roots with what looked good and promising in the trends of the age. (Lavrin 1953: 46)

For Lavrin, the appearance of Tushin as Vera’s new wooer in the end of the story, serves as proof that Goncharov felt the obsolescence of returning to the “gold age” of large estates and serfdom.

Other times, when Lavrin assesses authors (or characters) who – according to him – resolutely choose to overcome the individualized modern society by withdrawing into a simpler, less individualized reality, like Tolstoy does, he is very critical about the orientation of this choice. He systematically presents their world views as an escape to a simpler harmony that precedes individualization, rather than transcends it. This comes clearly to the fore in a couple of assessments in *Studies in European Literature* and *Aspects of* 

222 The title is more often translated as *The Precipice*, but Lavrin explains in a footnote that he prefers *The Ravine* because that is the place where one of the characters, Vera, and her lover used to meet each other (1953: 45).
Modernism. In his chapter on Joris-Karl Huysmans and August Strindberg, Lavrin tells of their alienation from modern society. Their search for wholeness via a religious turn in their late career – Huysmans and Strindberg were respectively drawn to a medieval interpretation of Roman Catholicism and to an unorthodox occult version of Christianity, – Lavrin calls “a mask [...] for their flight from life. Instead of going forward to religion, they went back to it” (Lavrin 1929a: 130). For Lavrin their conversion was an escape from the modern society they renounced, instead of an attempt to solve its problems. Marcel Proust’s fascination for memory in A la recherche du temps perdu (1909-22), then, Lavrin calls an “emergency solution” (Ibid.: 210). He considers it a “last shelter” for Proust, who can no longer participate in life because of his invalidity and instead flees into his own past (Ibid.: 214). Also the fascination of Knut Hamsun, D.H. Lawrence and Vasily Rozanov for primitive sensuality and sexuality Lavrin pigeonholes as an escape from their own incapability to find harmony in real life (1935: 93-105, 141-145). He problematizes their “escape in that undifferentiated pre-Christian unity” (Ibid.: 146) because it can never lead to “real harmony or integration” (Ibid.: 150).

In general, Lavrin seems to reject these visions because in the wish to retreat in an idealized past, there is also a threat of undoing achievements of modern humanity like civilization and individual freedom. In his analyses of authors who idealize a primitive past, he therefore emphasizes the importance of civilization and the individualization that comes with it. Lavrin does this most explicitly in the following assessment of Hamsun’s aversion to the city:

He [Hamsun] ignores the fact that town, as a civilizing agent, disrupts the vegetative patriarchal life “rooted deep in the past”, not necessarily for the sake of a general disintegration, but also in order to make man conquer, sooner or later a new and broader rootedness; rootedness not in the “soil” only, but in the whole of mankind; not in the past, but in the creative present and future. [...] [W]e can no longer go back to nature, but only forward to it. [...] What we need is the simplicity which has absorbed and transcended civilization; not the one which is vainly trying to eliminate it. (Lavrin 1935: 110-111. Italics in original)

Lavrin expresses his understanding for the difficulty of many authors to cope with the “disruption” and “disintegration” caused by modernity. In his assessment of Tolstoy’s return to nature, he even calls civilization “the machine which performs the maiming and yet creative work of division” (1924a: 65). Nevertheless, he does not approve of artists who react by retreating in a more harmonious shelter: he calls “escapist” authors like Huysmans, Rozanov and Hamsun “weak” (1929a: 17), “confused” (1924a: 167), and “erroneous” (1935: 111). Reversely, he considers authors who look the problem of civilization in the eye “strong” (1929a: 17) and “superior” (1935: 202) because they are
willing to “learn how to overcome and transmute it [civilization] so as to make it truly creative” (1944: 115). For Lavrin, strong authors are not only those he regularly explicitly labels as future-oriented, like Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche (e.g. 1924a: 68, 1927a: 120, 1954: 199-200), but also those authors who try to clear the way to enable a different future. He for example praises Rilke’s struggle “to make art a path towards the highest peaks of consciousness and life” (1935: 179), and, like in Slavyansky mir, applauds Cankar and his firstlings, because they keep fighting for a different nation even though they usually fail (1935: 202).

Apart from past and future oriented reactions to modernity, there is a third “direction” that Lavrin frequently addresses in his work, namely visions on development that seem to have no particular orientation in human history, but are only focused on the self. Although Lavrin highly values individual freedom and agency (this will be addressed in the next section), he cautions for attitudes that “confuse inner aimlessness with mental freedom” (1947a: 155). Relying on self-centred ideas about development and progress perpetuates; he suggests, the individualized modern society instead of transcending it. In Nietzsche and Modern Consciousness he formulates it as follows:

For if we [modern men] ask ourselves towards what we are actually evolving and progressing, we shall with difficulty find an answer that goes beyond those accepted commonplaces whose role is to label as innocuous any disturbing problems. A hundred apostles of progress would probably give a hundred different answers. (Lavrin 1973 [1922]: 33)

Lavrin does not have a specific label for these individualistic takes on development and progress, but in general his remarks boil down to a lack of direction, orientation and focus: he speaks among others of “a loss of super-individual basis and raison d’être” (NA 1919(24/11): 175), “unguided impetus” (1935: 81) and “destruction of all values, all direction, all responsibility” (1935: 245).

Lavrin’s judgement about authors and works that in his view show a lack of guidance and focus significantly differs, depending on his perception of the authors’ attitude towards it. He respects authors who render an honest image of the relativity in an individualized society and thus question this aspect of modernity. He for example values the works of Chekhov and Maupassant, because their fragmented and static representation of reality, which he calls “short-hand realism”, shows modern life as an “atomized” static mosaic and thus underlines the lack of a shared goal or idea (1929a: 163-164). Lavrin also praises the “intellectual frankness” of an author like Luigi Pirandello, because the latter’s cynical work, which plays with the figurative masks people wear in daily life, exposes the relativity of the subjective and constantly changing values in modern society (1935: 246). Although such artists do not show a way out of this relativity,
Lavrin writes, he believes their works are important because they make a diagnosis of the age they live in. Moreover, Lavrin appreciates that these authors are honest with themselves and others, for they do not sacrifice their “inner integrity” by covering up the uncertainty they expose with “half-beliefs and ‘isms’” or “false pretences” (1929a: 161; 1935: 246).

At the same time, Lavrin reacts less positive to another type of authors, those who do not expose, but represent the consequences of a life led in utter subjectivity. A word that often occurs in his descriptions of such rudderless world views is “sterility”. In his assessment of Pushkin’s Yevgeny Onegin (Евгений Онегин, 1833), for example, Lavrin states that the superfluous position of the main character is caused by a lack of “deeper focus or rootedness” which led him to “remain sterile” (1947b: 124). He makes a similar remark in his analysis of Gorky’s The Life of Klim Samgin (Жизнь Клима Самгина, 1927), which follows the life and downfall of the Russian intellectual Klim Samgin during the turbulent years between 1880 and 1918. Lavrin states that an egocentric aimlessness such as Klim’s makes “one sterile […] and unable to go beyond and outside oneself” (1947a: 155). (Like Chekhov, Maupassant and Pirandello, Gorky is praised for exposing this sterility). In these fictional characters, Lavrin observes how a world view without a super-individual focus can place one outside society (as a superfluous man) and even outside history (during a revolution).

Oscar Wilde, then, is the author whom Lavrin presents as the pinnacle of sterile self-centredness. He considers Wilde nothing more than an important “symptom” of the “decadent” period (1935: 16). In his assessment of Wilde and his very personal aesthetic framework in Aspects of Modernism, Lavrin several times calls out the problem of Wilde’s lack of focus and orientation. He does this for example by comparing the development of Wilde’s Dorian Grey and Huysmans’ Des Esseintes from A Rebours (1884):

> With all its pretentious perversions there is something inevitable in Huysmans’s morbid book; inevitable at least in so far as it expresses a phase of the author’s inner development in a definite direction, provided the word direction can be applied at all to a state which is in itself a decadent blind-ally […] In contrast to Huysmans, Oscar Wilde was devoid of introspection. He was equally devoid of inner growth in the sense of a steady and inevitable process. (Lavrin 1935: 25-26).

While underlining the wrong (backward) orientation of Des Esseintes (and Huysmans’) conversion to Christianity, Lavrin suggests that this attitude to life is still preferable to the lack of direction and thus the lack of growth of Dorian Grey. In this analysis, Lavrin claims now and again that Wilde was unconsciously aware of this lack of development. Lavrin states that Wilde “had secret misgivings” and “suspected that there was something wrong” (1935: 26) and shows this by pointing out certain fragments from the author’s
work. He for example interprets the fact that Dorian Grey becomes “a walking collection of vices, a heartless monstrosity” as a kind of “involuntary moral allegory”. This, then, for Lavrin shows how Wilde himself condemns Dorian Grey’s (and his own) purely aesthetic attitude towards life (Ibid.: 28-29).

Lastly, Lavrin extends his opinion about the sterile lack of orientation to his “political excursions” – which again shows that politics and culture cannot be separated to understand Lavrin’s thinking. In his assessment of Blok’s *The Twelve* (Двенадцать, 1918) in *From Pushkin to Mayakovsky*, he remarks that the figure of Christ who appears in the end of the story should be interpreted as a “symbol of the creative side of the revolution” (1949: 258). Lavrin uses this remark about the revolution to elaborate about his own opinion on the real-life events of the Russian Revolution and suggests that it would be no more than “a calamity […] crushing and sterile” if it did not have a higher goal (Ibid.). This idea that political change and progress need a definite direction, also appears from Lavrin’s description of the interwar period in *An Introduction to the Russian Novel*. He even uses it to draw up a positive image of Russia vis-à-vis the West:

> Whereas the carefully planned economic and social experiment in Russia proved a working proposition, there seemed to be no general directive in the world outside Russia capable of restraining the political gangsters on the one hand and the cynical indifference with its *après-nous-le-deluge* mentality on the other. (Lavrin 1947a: 228. Italics in original)

Lavrin’s description compares a (fairly) optimistic image of a composed interwar Russia guided by communism to a different future (he conveniently forgets about the civil war or Stalin’s purges) and a chaotic and aimless Western-Europe that lay at the basis of the Second World War. He adds that it was the clear direction of Soviet Russia that enabled it to build “the moral stamina” to face the major conflict that loomed over chaotic Europe. Lavrin does not remain positive about Soviet Russia’s direction or its moral stamina in other chapters of the overview (this will be addressed in the next section). This remark of Lavrin therefore is no part of an uncritical promotion of the Soviet Union. It does seem to serve as a reminder to the British readership that Soviet Russia has also played a positive role in the fight against fascism and deserves its respect.
13.2 The Individual and the Collective

A second group of evaluative remarks that is informed by Lavrin’s view on the development of humanity assesses the engagement of the author (or of a fictional character he created) with the relationship between the individual and the collective. In his phased interpretation of human development, Lavrin underlines that the individualisation of mankind is an essential step. He speaks for example of the necessary emancipation from an authoritarian god (NA 1918(22/13): 252-253), from the dominance of the Church (1929a: 18), or from the expectations of a patriarchal society (1924a: 177-178). Also in the super-individual united future, which Lavrin sees as the telos of human development, he considers the freedom of the individual within the new collective as essential. His interest in the combination of individual freedom and collective society (but not the dominance of one of them) comes to the fore in many remarks in his literary analyses. Lavrin regularly – sometimes loudly and explicitly, more often subtly and implicitly – questions the position and agency of the individual in the world views he sees represented in the literary works he assesses. The remarks show how Lavrin uses his literary assessments to explore different takes on individual freedom. Of every worldview brought forward in a literary work, he wonders how free the individual who adopts it actually is. On the one hand, Lavrin questions how much freedom is left when an individual follows a super-individual guiding principle. On the other hand, he questions how free an individual can, and this is closely related to the problem of rudderless relativity in the previous section, if his development leads to and depends on a constant competition with other individuals. As the following sections will show, Lavrin most often addresses such questions when he assesses authors who have an extreme focus on individual freedom or on collective unity. Instead, Lavrin systematically promotes a third way between the two, because “an individual who remains exclusively in the group […] cannot develop into a personality” and “an isolated personality is bound to become starved through its very isolation” (1944: 56). In this way, Lavrin also seems to use his discourse about the individual and the collective to covertly return to the third way between exclusive self-centred nationalism and inclusive over-arching cosmopolitanism.

The Danger of Self-Glorification

A first characteristic of Lavrin’s discourse about individuality is, simply stated, an opposition to interpretations of individual freedom that leave no room for unification/rapprochement. Lavrin’s negative opinion about extreme self-centredness
already appears from his remarks about the sterility of world views with a lack of focus or direction. His remarks do not stop there, however. In his literary assessments Lavrin regularly incorporates short remarks, doubts or musings that question the validity of the individualistic worldviews that are represented in works that he is tackling, or offer a reinterpretation that suits his own world view better. To show how this works, I focus on Lavrin’s monograph on Nietzsche. This monograph holds the most obvious and extensive interventions. Along the way I include examples from other assessments by Lavrin that enrich and corroborate my argumentation.

Lavrin published his *New Age*-series and subsequent psycho-critical monograph on Nietzsche (1921, 1922) at a time when many modernists regarded the philosopher as a prophet of liberation for his criticism on the controlling nature of Christian and state morality (Lewis 2011: 22). Lavrin was no exception and valued Nietzsche’s attempt to reach “new forms of human existence” (1973 [1922]: 221). At first glance, Lavrin’s work on Nietzsche comes across as a relatively classical overview of the philosopher’s life and work illustrated with fragments from ego documents and published work. Not without reason *Nietzsche and Modern Consciousness* (1922) was called the “standard short work on the subject” at the time (Barnes & Noble Digital Library 2011). Nevertheless, the overview comprises several passages in which Lavrin challenges Nietzsche’s vision of the power of the individual, and thus shows his own vision of humanity.

A first way in which Lavrin brings his criticism on Nietzsche’s extreme individuality to the fore is his negative framing of Nietzsche’s emphasis on physical strength and the power the philosopher attributes to subjective truth and morality. Sometimes Lavrin calls it right-out dangerous. When Lavrin addresses Nietzsche’s choice to determine his own morality, for example, he speaks of “the danger of self-glorification” (1973 [1922]: 164). Other times, he points out that Nietzsche’s theories are a result of his weakness. Lavrin for instance states that Nietzsche’s theories are a result of his weakness. Lavrin for instance states that Nietzsche’s emphasis on the strength of the individual was “a mental drug” to compensate for his own invalidity (Ibid.: 49). Elsewhere he claims that Nietzsche’s “egotism” was a kind of “antidote” or “self-defence” for his increasing loneliness (Ibid.: 178-179). Such remarks categorize Nietzsche’s focus on self-development and biological strength more as an escape from and a shelter for personal problems, and challenge the idea that this can be a creative solution for the decadence of mankind.

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323 Lavrin’s first analysis of Nietzsche in *The New Age* is incomplete. The last part of the series that was published in April 1922 ends with a reference to a sequel or sequels (NA 1922(25/25): 323), but they never appeared, probably because Lavrin stopped working for the periodical when Orage left the editorial board. Therefore I use the monograph *Nietzsche and Modern Consciousness* (1922) as Lavrin’s basic study of Nietzsche: it repeats the same argumentation as the original series and holds (what seem to be) the missing chapters.
A second way in which Lavrin introduces his own view is more subtle. Lavrin regularly intervenes in his overview of Nietzsche's life and work to suggest that the philosopher himself unconsciously nuanced or even contradicted his emphasis on individual strength and relativity. Especially in the second half of the monograph, Lavrin points to statements of the philosopher and passages in his work that seem to indicate that there lingers a pursuit of unity and universalism underneath Nietzsche's Superman and Will to Power. Lavrin describes this as follows: the philosopher’s “ego [regularly] endeavours to break its fetters with an almost religious craving to embrace the whole of Humanity” (1973 [1922]: 189). In a chapter about Nietzsche’s egotism that follows this remark, Lavrin selects a couple of fragments that insinuate that Nietzsche actually was not that self-centred at all (Ibid.: 190-193). The selection among others includes excerpts from Morgenröte (1881), Also Sprach Zarathustra (1883) and the (now contested) posthumous Der Wille zur Macht (1910) in which Nietzsche suggests that individual development should be altruistic and aimed at the good of others. The excerpt Lavrin selects from Also Sprach Zarathustra, for example, contrasts Nietzsche’s “holy selfishness”, which strives for the good of everyone, to “sickly selfishness”, which comes from a desire to have more than others (1973 [1922]: 191-192). Strikingly, the contrast between “holy” and “sickly” selfishness comes very close to the contrast Lavrin makes between different takes on national development: “defensive” and “cultural” nationalism aimed at the good of humanity, and “aggressive” and “political” nationalism aimed at personal gain. The selection of this particular fragment from Nietzsche thus also seems to remind of the universal essentialism that runs like a thread through Lavrin’s other works, and refers to the telos of an over-arching whole.

Another example of Lavrin nuancing Nietzsche’s focus on subjectivity, is his assessment of Nietzsche’s attack on religion. He holds that the philosopher’s critique of religion does not come from a rationally informed atheist conviction, but rather from a “profound religious instinct” and the wish to (re-)connect to an over-arching idea or force (1973 [1922]: 122). Accordingly, Lavrin claims that “the pathos with which Nietzsche denied God [...] betrays a suppressed longing for the absolute and endless” (Ibid.: 147). Similarly, he presents Nietzsche’s self-proclaimed immorality as a symptom of a highly developed morality (1973 [1922]: 161). In the same vein, Lavrin interprets Nietzsche’s idea of Eternal Recurrence – the idea that all events in the world repeat themselves for all eternity, – as proof of the philosopher’s wish to align his individualistic world view with an over-arching guiding principle. He calls it an attempt to “smuggle into his [Nietzsche’s] biological Weltanschauung [...] a kind of modified ‘eternal life’” (1973 [1922]: 197). This remark, by the way, reminds of Lavrin’s psycho-critical approach that was addressed in the previous chapter. Lavrin refers here to a balance between manifest and latent reality which he put forward as a condition for transformation. Simultaneously, Lavrin considers
the idea of Eternal Recurrence a failure – he speaks of “Zarathustra’s impasse” (1973 [1922]: 197) – because in his view it does not create an alignment of the interests of the individual and an over-overarching principle, but actually minimizes individual agency and makes Superman “a miserable tool and puppet” (Ibid.: 202). Finally, for Lavrin the ultimate proof of the bankruptcy of Nietzsche’s individualistic Superman can be found in the fact that Nietzsche went mad at the end of his life. As Lavrin puts it in his often more to-the-point 1948 publication *Nietzsche, an Approach*: “the shadow of the superman was the crazy megalomaniac, and it was the latter who won the final victory” (2010 [1948]: 52).

Lavrin regularly uses the connection between a one-sided focus on the self and mental illness to put extreme individuality in a bad light. In *Aspects of Modernism*, for example, he presents Arthur Rimbaud as someone who wanted to “subject” the universe “to his self-will” (1935: 86). For Lavrin, Rimbaud’s unbridled (drug-induced) exploration of the limits of the self shows that such an attitude becomes a destructive “chasse spirituelle” which does not lead to inner freedom, but to the verge of madness (Ibid.: 87). Rimbaud’s retreat from literature and self-exploration at a very young age, is for Lavrin proof that the poet knew that he had to refrain from further extreme introspection in order to protect himself (Ibid.: 88).

The connection between an extreme focus on the individual and mental illness is also a key element in Lavrin’s assessment of the work of Dostoyevsky. Different than in his assessment of Nietzsche or Rimbaud, Lavrin focuses less on Dostoyevsky’s personal psychological development and more on the development of the characters in his novels. He presents the characters as experiments of Dostoyevsky in his search to overcome the tension between individual freedom and the idea of an Absolute Value. Lavrin first tackles a couple of individualist characters, who at first try to live according to a self-proclaimed guiding principle: Stavrogin from *Demons* (Весы, 1871-72), Raskolnikov from *Crime and Punishment* (Преступление и наказание, 1866) and Ivan, the middle brother in *The Brothers Karamazov* (Братья Карамазовы, 1880). After his presentation of the psychological development of these characters (NA 1918(22/15-17)), Lavrin concludes that with the mental breakdown of each of them – Stavrogin commits suicide, and Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov go mad, – Dostoyevsky has proven that “these ways [are] illusory, leading to self-destruction and to the void” (NA 1918(22/18): 354).

After the chapters in which Lavrin emphasizes the connection between individualist guiding principles and madness follows a chapter in which he assesses three characters with a more super-individual guiding principle. Lavrin tackles Prince Myshkin, the main character of *The Idiot* (Идиот, 1868-1969), and Alyosha, the youngest Karamazov brother, with his teacher, the priest Zosima (NA 1918(22/18). Lavrin considers Myshkin a negative example: the sickly prince, who in the end of the novel loses his mind, is too much a
“higher consciousness” and “too little alive” (Ibid.: 355). Put differently, Lavrin not only suggests a correlation between mental illness and a one-sided focus on the individual, but also between mental illness and a self-less relationship with the universe. Reversely, Lavrin presents Alyosha and Zosima as positive examples of the alignment between individual and super-individual interests. He describes them as healthy characters who love all aspects of life and who represent “a state of synthetic inner harmony” (Ibid.). Remarkably, the way in which Lavrin structures his assessment—starting with Dostoyevsky’s proof for the bankruptcy of a purely individual guiding principle and ending with the successful super-individual guiding principle of Alyosha and Zosima—in a way underlines Lavrin’s own teleological vision of the development of humanity, which requires a transition from the individual to the super-individual phase.

Finally, apart from the negative framing of extreme individualism and his attention to contradictory irrational undercurrents and madness, there is a third way in which Lavrin intervenes in the work of authors that show or address individualistic guiding principles. He namely refers to events from contemporary history to very explicitly refute the idea that individualistic worldviews might lead to a better development of mankind. Again, this comes to the fore most obviously in Lavrin’s assessment of Nietzsche, more specifically in his assessment of the philosopher that was published in 1948. In this version, Lavrin in hindsight points to the danger of Nietzsche’s idealization of conflict and power by referring to the atrocities of the Second World War. He devotes an entire chapter to ‘Nietzsche and Politics’ in which he (among other things) problematizes how certain Nietzschean tenets can be (and have been) easily (ab)used by power-hungry politicians and leaders (2010 [1948]: 66-71). In the words of Lavrin:

If the amount of physical strength and of the will to power is to be (as Nietzsche so often insists) the measure of one’s right to live and to rule, who is then going to prevent an aggressive barbarian [...] from seizing power and installing himself as the ruling superman by means of subhuman methods? Recent history has abounded in such usurpers, and it will take one or two generations before we clear away the chaos wrought by them all over the world. (Lavrin 2010 [1948]: 53)

In this fragment, Lavrin not only dialogues with Nietzsche, but also with some of his own interwar society critical articles, namely with those articles that addressed the connection between a self-centred world view and international relations (cf. 11.1). On the one hand, he refers to the problem of aggressive competition, here. The hope for

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324 This is the case in the first two versions of his assessment of Dostoyevsky, in the 1943 version he uses a more chronological approach.
creative destruction and the possible creation of a new mankind through conflict, which is hinted at in a couple of Lavrin’s early articles for The New Age – but which disappeared quickly in the aftermath of the war – is now completely gone. On the other hand, in his assessment of Nietzsche Lavrin embroiders on the connection between egoism and the idea of national superiority. Lavrin further in the chapter speaks of the danger of “the Super-nation” which, by analogy with the Superman, creates its own self-centred guiding principle “according to which good is only what benefits the nation concerned, while everything that obstructs its appetites is proclaimed evil” (Ibid.: 68). Lavrin underlines that such an extreme nationalism leads to an interpretation of other nations as potential slaves (Ibid.: 69). The latter remark mirrors his earlier criticism of the German state-machine that saw other nations as manure (cf. 11.1).

As a kind of exoneration of Nietzsche – whom Lavrin still sees as an important modern thinker and teacher, – as an attempt to balance out Nietzsche’s (unwanted) connection with extreme nationalism, and, maybe above all, as a way to incorporate his own view on the future of Europe, Lavrin devotes one of the final chapters in the monograph to ‘Nietzsche and Good Europeanism’ (2010 [1948]: 72-75). In this chapter, he argues that

Nietzsche at his best moments advocated a cultural integration of that very Europe which the Nazis were so anxious to disintegrate in order to turn it into a German colony. (Lavrin 2010 [1948]: 71)

In this chapter, Lavrin explicitly praises elements that coincide with his own vision of cultural development: he applauds Nietzsche’s awareness of and respect for “the organic character” of the cultural tradition of Europe (2010 [1948]: 72) and his openness to other cultures (Ibid.: 74-75). Moreover, Lavrin uses the opportunity to underline twice (in the beginning and at the end of the chapter) the necessity of (re-)uniting Europe. He warns that a disintegrated Europe is a liability for “not only the fate of Europe but the future of the world, now on the threshold of the atomic age” (Ibid.).

As a last part of this section, I want to add that there are a few instances when Lavrin expresses a more positive attitude towards the idea that conflict can help to develop nations. This mainly happens when he engages with South-Eastern European literature. It is reasonable to assume that his attitude towards conflict and struggle differs because it does not concern the struggle of a great power with imperial ambitions, but of former minorities still trying to find a place and gain a more equal position within Europe. In these passages about national struggle, Lavrin recycles the idea of a kind of Golgotha, an image which also occurred in his Russian work, to present the struggle of the small nations as a difficult but necessary way to assert their own identity. In his assessment of Ivan Cankar in Aspects of Modernism (1935: 197-207) Lavrin for example returns to Slovenia’s emancipatory struggle and calls it a “via crucis through which [...] the nation
had to pass [...] as a necessary trial” (1935: 203). In his historical introductions to his anthologies of Yugoslav and Slovene poetry (1957, 1959, 1962a, 1965, 1967), then, he applauds Yugoslavia’s “heroic struggle” during the Second World War and applauds how it asserted a superior morality and formed a stronger state “amidst such calamities” (1957: 26).

On the one hand, the positive assessment of Slovenia’s emancipatory struggle fits with Lavrin’s universal essentialism and the idea that every nation should be able to play its own role within humanity. Moreover, if compared to Lavrin’s own particular view on the development of humanity, it can be associated with the transition from the pre-individual stage (under Austrian tutelage) to the individual stage. On the other hand, Lavrin connects his positive assessment of Yugoslavia’s heroic behaviour during and after the Second World War to the creation of a new solidarity among the Yugoslav nations and the birth of the Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1957: 27; 1962a: 17). Considering Lavrin’s ideal of a heterogeneous unity, it is logical that he applauds the transition from a homogenizing, centralist dictatorship – which he problematized in New Britain (cf. 11.2) – to a federation with (at least on paper) equal representation and cultural independence of all states. Moreover, the transition in Yugoslavia mirrors the last step of Lavrin’s view on human development, as it can be associated with the transition from the individual (national) to the post-individual (supra-national) phase. The fact that Lavrin hardly mentions that the country first almost perished due to ethnic violence, nor tells how the Partisans and the new regime harshly persecuted enemies of the state comes across as a strategy to not harm the exemplary role of unity in diversity he now attributes to Tito’s Yugoslavia. In this way, Lavrin increasingly presents Yugoslavia as the hope for a better future of Europe (and the world).

The Nightmare of Compulsory ‘Happiness’ and ‘Harmony’

When Lavrin addresses self-centred world views in his literary assessments, he often uses them as a starting point to underline the importance of collectivity and unity. The opposite happens when Lavrin tackles authors (or characters) that display an (in his view overly) collective world view: he uses such instances to point out the valuable and necessary role of the individual within a collective. That Lavrin pays attention to individual agency in his literary criticism already appeared in the previous section that addressed his criticism on the retreat to a simpler undifferentiated reality by authors like Tolstoy, Huysmans, Strindberg, Hamsun and Rozanov. He does not, however, limit his criticism to authors or thinkers who “want to entice mankind to a primitive communal existence” (1954: 200). In almost all of his literary assessments, Lavrin challenges
situations in which the individual cannot develop into a personality because he “passively accept[s] the scale of values dictated by the official religion, his social group or class” (1969 [1943]: 55). He addresses both fictional representations of such situations in the works he tackles and real-life events (historical and contemporary) in the political excursions he makes. For the sake of the argument I divide his criticism in two – in reality sometimes overlapping – groups: remarks about the relationship between the individual and an over-arching unifying power like the state, and remarks about the relationship between the individual and “the masses”.

Some of the works Lavrin addresses in his monographs play with the idea of a world or society led by a set of values imposed by a (not necessarily specified) higher authority or society. Think for example of the episode on the Grand-Inquisitor by Dostoevsky and a play like The Wild Duck (Vildanden, 1884) by Ibsen. In both cases, Lavrin values the artistic quality of the works, but he reacts in a negative way to the suggestion of a future world with reduced individual freedom. He does not approve of the conviction of Dostoevsky’s Grand-Inquisitor that most men cannot cope with the freedom to choose a guiding principle – in the story a religion – and need strong figures like himself to save them from the “yoke of inner freedom” by giving them a fake but easy to follow “truth”. In his first assessments of Dostoevsky, Lavrin rather implicitly disagrees with the Grand-Inquisitor’s vision: he frames it as one of Dostoevsky’s temporary experiments, he connects it to Ivan’s madness, and he reacts way less enthusiastic to the worldview of the Great Inquisitor and the synthetic one of Alyosha and Zosima (Lavrin NA 1918(22/17): 329; NA 1918(22/18): 356). In 1943, however, Lavrin radically speaks out against the future concept of the Grand-Inquisitor: “such an appalling picture of totalitarian humanity, based on a pre-fabricated ideology for the sake of man’s compulsory ‘happiness’ and ‘harmony’ as to outdo any nightmare” (Lavrin 1969 [1943]: 193). For Lavrin it is clearly not an option to sacrifice personal freedom for the illusion of harmony forged by a conventional lie. Lavrin’s more outspoken and harsher comment about a collective without individual agency in 1943 is most probably related to Nazism and the events of the Second World War. This more outspoken commentary is typical for works Lavrin publishes after the Second World War. This already appeared in Lavrin’s 1948 assessment of Nietzsche’s connection to Nazi ideology and will come to the fore in other fragments in this section as well.

Lavrin’s reaction to Ibsen’s The Wild Duck is less outspoken, but nevertheless shows a negative attitude towards the play’s suggestion that “lies are as necessary to people as crutches to a lame man” (NA 1919(24/20): 328). In order to understand Lavrin’s assessment of the drama, it is important to know that it concludes a phase of Ibsen’s career in which the playwright wrote society critical plays like Pillars of Society (Samfundets støtter, 1877), A Doll’s House (Et dukkehjem, 1879) and Ghosts (Gengangere, 1881). Lavrin applauds
how Ibsen in this society critical phase tried to unmask “conventional social lies and ideals” (Ibid.: 327). Reversely, Lavrin considers it a failure that Ibsen ends his society critical phase with The Wild Duck which endorses the necessity of masks and contradicts the idealist vision of truth of Ibsen’s previous plays (and thus comes close to Grand-Inquisitor’s idea of the convenient lie). He presents the play as a symptom of Ibsen’s scepticism and pessimism: he holds that Ibsen’s scepticism “undermined himself” and led him “to a blind-alley” (Ibid.: 328). In the last version of his assessment of Ibsen, which came out in 1950, he adds that The Wild Duck “must have been written in a mood of utter disappointment with humanity” (1950: 88). This suggests that for Lavrin the idea that humanity needs comfortable lies shows a lack of trust in the potential of a free mankind.

In other works, Lavrin more explicitly engages with the possible conflict between individual freedom and the value setting role assumed by or attributed to the state. Lavrin’s aversion to authoritarianism first appears from his praise for individuals – authors – who were able to maintain their personal freedom under oppressing regimes and used their literature as a moral checks and balances, as was also applauded in Slavyansky mir (cf. Chapter 8). Lavrin for example admires Pushkin who “under one of the most tyrannical regimes in Europe [under tsar Nikolay I – T.G.] [...] knew how to preserve his creative freedom” (1949: 9). He also applauds Pushkin’s contemporary Lermontov, more specifically his poem The Novice (Мцыри, 1840), which he calls “the most spirited bid for freedom” at the time because “many a reader must have identified the novice’s ‘cage’ with the political cage of Lermontov’s Russia” (1959: 66). Another example, then, is Lavrin’s discourse on Heine’s early life in Germany in which he describes how the nation was suffocated by “the evil genius of the Prince Metternich” (1929a: 53). One could argue that Lavrin’s attention to Russia’s and Germany’s authoritarian character in those specific periods is not exceptional and that literary overviews have to provide historical background in order to situate the authors’ works. Nevertheless, the use of words like “cage” and “evil genius” shows that Lavrin’s comments go further than a neutral background sketch. Moreover, authors who do support an oppressive state receive a rather negative evaluation. In response to Gogol’s endorsement of an autocratic state in his later life, Lavrin for example speaks of the author’s “bigoted conservative and patriarchal spirit” (1949: 56). He also questions Tyutchev’s advocacy of Russian imperialism and Pan-Slavism by insinuating that his “semi-feudal and imperialist spectacles” made him see “everything in a wrong perspective” (1949: 102).

At the same time, there are occasions when Lavrin points to the state as an important and useful regulator or unifier in difficult situations. His chapters about Soviet Life in An Introduction to the Russian Novel are a good example hereof. He admires how in his view the young Soviet regime has inspired the nation to overcome “enormous, almost insuperable” difficulties in Russian society after the First World War (1947a: 186). He also
describes, for example, the first Five-Year Plan as a “new constructive period” which inspired an almost “religious enthusiasm” (Ibid.: 206). Lavrin is also positive about the interwar efforts of the Soviets to consolidate a supra-national state and how the “Soviet cause [...] became their [of all Soviet states] common cause” (1947a: 229). For him this probably formed a stark contrast to the fragmented state of Europe at the time which he problematized elsewhere in his work. Nevertheless, despite his acclaim of certain aspects of Soviet Russia, Lavrin is weary of the slippery slope of a (very) steering regime. In the chapter ‘The Second World War and After’, he is critical of the tyrannical character the Soviet Union has achieved and explicitly condemns several symptoms of oppression: among others the purges by Zhdanov, the obligatory Stalin worship and the Stakhanovite cult of work (Lavrin 1947a: 245). Lavrin’s remarks about this period emphasize more than once that there is but a thin line between inspiring leadership and an authoritarian regime. A good example is this description of the new Soviet intellectual:

Made all of a piece, as it were, he [the Soviet intellectual] saves a great deal of his energy by adhering to a definite general line. But on the other hand, a conformity of this kind often becomes a weakness if one is precluded from ruthlessly questioning and criticizing its premises. (Lavrin 1947a: 246)

For Lavrin, who values the role of thinkers and authors as checks and balances for society, especially the conformity of intellectuals must have been problematic. Lavrin’s condemnation of the unfree intellectual development in Soviet Russia explains his enthusiasm in the introduction to Parnassus of a Small Nation about Yugoslavia’s secession from Cominform in 1948, as from then on it “followed an ever-growing effort to free literature from any outside pressure” (1957: 27).

Lavrin’s critique of silencing critical voices is closely related to his critique of imposed homogeneity, standardization and uniformization in his other work (cf. Chapter 7, Chapter 11). Also at other occasions he incorporates his negative opinion about an imposed, rather than a voluntarily followed idea, especially in his literary criticism that appeared during and after the Second World War. In one of the concluding chapters of his 1943 monograph on Dostoyevsky, for example, Lavrin states that the author “did his uttermost to [...] warn us” for “the purely quantitative and utilitarian direction [...] collectivism could take” and showed that a “compulsory uniformity” cannot substitute “real unity” (1969 [1943]: 153). Thus Lavrin smuggles in his own view on imposed unity and its suppression of individuality. Also in his post-war assessment of Nietzsche he warns for the lack of freedom and critical voices in a “police state” (2010 [1948]: 69). Here Lavrin explicitly connects the expectation of authoritarian regimes that the individual should act as “a mere tool piously listening to the decrees of those in power” and serve as part of an amorphous, uncritical work force with the atrocities of the Second World War.
For Lavrin such expectations dehumanize individuals and this is “bound to lead sooner or later, as it actually did, to the blessings of the concentration camps” (2010 [1948]: 69). By making this connection, Lavrin seems to problematize that this interpretation of the individual allows to see certain human beings as disposable goods if they do not fit with the image of the regime. At the same time, he seems to criticize how such an interpretation of the individual takes away the ability of critical reflection which would oppose this inhumane – what Slavyansky mir previously would have called “un- Slavic” – treatment of others.

The remarks problematizing the uniformity and standardization imposed by the state come close to the second group of remarks I discern, namely about the relationship between the individual and the (seemingly) amorphous masses. Lavrin’s most explicit criticism about the individual being absorbed by the masses comes to the fore in his assessments of Tolstoy. Lavrin expresses his disagreement with Tolstoy’s aversion to individuality in several ways. Sometimes, like he did with Nietzsche’s emphasis on individual strength, Lavrin reduces the value of Tolstoy’s world view by categorizing it as an escapist shelter. He pigeonholes Tolstoy’s focus on collectivism as a way “to find inner peace” (1924a: 28), an attempt to “soften” the writer’s own “suffering Ego” (Ibid.: 73), or as “the promise of comfort in the cheapest terms” (1944: 103). Other times, he expresses his disagreement with the author in more explicit terms. Lavrin problematizes, for example that Tolstoy “did not care to distinguish” egoism from individualism and therefore rejected both (1929a: 154). In his last monograph on Tolstoy, which appears during the Second World War, he even harshly states that “[Tolstoy’s] aim to reduce all human beings to the same denominator is one of the most unnatural ideals ever devised by man” (1944: 114-115).

For Lavrin the relationship between the individual and the masses becomes problematic when the former “dissolves and disappears” in the latter (1944: 99). One might therefore expect that Lavrin would agree with the wish of some modern thinkers, like for example Nietzsche, to maintain a certain gap between the intellectual elite and the less developed masses. That is, however, not entirely the case. Now and again, Lavrin explicitly speaks out against this gap. In his assessments of the vague, more hermetic literary currents of the fin de siècle, for example, he disapproves of the authors’ “prided exclusiveness”, their belief that they were “different from ordinary mortals” and their anxiousness “to write not for the crowd but for the elect” (1954: 267). He considers this exclusiveness as a disconnection from real life – and like elsewhere in his oeuvre, he deems such a disconnected literature sterile: he calls it among other things a “sterile sectarianism” (1954: 268) and a “sterile self-centredness” (1947a: 156). In fact, for Lavrin it is a problem that the focus on their distinct status, prevents the members of the elite
to take up their guiding role as “father” in society and to help the masses to find a way to solve the problems of modern society.

At other occasions, however, Lavrin speaks out against the initiatives that want to reduce the gap between the intellectual elite and the less or uneducated masses. He mainly condemns initiatives that want to eradicate difference by lowering the general intellectual level. He for example does not approve of how

the recent revolution from below [the 1917 Revolution – T.G.] swept away the whole of the intelligentsia, thus solving the problem [the lack of connection between the classes – T.G.] in a manner which is perhaps worse than no solution at all. (Lavrin 1924a: 71)

Additionally, like in his society criticism, Lavrin points several times at the problem of plebeianization, namely the idea that the whole society levels down and focuses on mediocrity when it aims to include the masses (a.o. 1935: 110, 1947a: 44-45, 1948: 67). In these passages, he is especially weary of the way in which plebeianization presents personal intellectual development as something elitist and generates negative attitudes towards “everything that raises the human mind” (1947a: 44).

These contradictory remarks about the intellectual elite and the less educated masses show that Lavrin still connects the same conditions to rapprochement: unity is essential, but not when it is enforced, nor when it hinders diversity. In the passages in which Lavrin addresses the problem of plebeianization he opposes it to democratization, which he interprets not as a “tyranny from below” (1947a: 44) but as a “universal process of levelling-up” (2010 [1948]: 67). Lavrin returns in his remarks about democratization to the idea from Slavyansky mir (cf. 6.1) that intellectuals, as “the fathers of society”, can give the good example and work together with the masses to raise the general standard of culture (Ibid.: 71). He does not associate democratization with a downward movement causing the intellectual elite adapting itself to the general level, but with an upward motion enabling the masses to follow in the footsteps of the intellectuals in society. Related to this, Lavrin’s opinion about democracy brings his aversion to oppression to the fore. He writes that it is not (no longer) fruitful “to make an elite of the mind thrive at the expense of the masses” (Ibid.). Like Lavrin envisioned his ideal Slavic world as a liberal unity where all nations can develop freely instead of undergoing the illiberal universalizing practices of great powers, he now envisions a liberal democratic society where all individuals can develop freely, instead of being kept dumb by the illiberal self-interest of the elite. Lavrin repeats the idea that a heterogeneous unity leads to the best (cultural) development: “a high standard of culture can be achieved and maintained only if the two [the elite and the common people] are complementary instead of being antagonistic” (Ibid.).
Lastly, while disseminating the idea of a collective in which each individual can develop freely and reach a higher level, Lavrin underlines how belonging to a collective can have an emancipatory effect on the individual. This appears to be a projection of the empowering effect of groupness on national development that was an important theme in his Russian work (cf. 7.3). In this context he applauds the achievements of socialist societies. In his discourse, the emphasis on an upward, “uplifting” movement stands out. In the introduction to An Anthology of Modern Yugoslav Poetry Lavrin is enthusiastic about the country’s “enormous strides towards the raising of the standard of living, of education and of general welfare” (1965: 19). He also praises the emancipatory effect of the early Soviet Union, which in his eyes showed how the cooperation of developed individuals leads to the best results. Lavrin for example mentions how the belief in Soviet Russia has transformed the amorphous mass of town workers into a “conscious class movement”, and provided a link, a shared goal, for the workers and many intellectuals (1947b: 146). Moreover, he suggests that the Western reader cannot imagine the powerful incentive that is given to those workers when they no longer work “to fill the pockets of their exploiter”, but now consciously work “to raise the general prosperity, the economic, social and cultural level of the entire nation” (Ibid.: 206).

13.3 Sublimating the Conflict within the Self

The third and last group of evaluative remarks that are related to Lavrin’s view on human development, are those on the development of the individual. The role of the individual within society or within the state receives quite some attention from Lavrin during his British career, both in his society critical articles during the interwar period which are addressed in chapter Eleven and in his literary criticism which is tackled in the previous section. On several occasions, he indicates that an individual cannot develop into his full potential when he is “within the sphere of social taboos and conventions” (1944: 56) and that “real growth begins with the struggle against all the mechanical principles, ideologies and ‘golden rules’ which have been imposed a priori” (NA 1918(22/26): 502). Lavrin highlights that a free society, which does not treat individuals as standardized parts, but allows a critical attitude towards the values that govern them, enables a development that is more closely connected to life, more informed by the soul of the people and therefore more creative. From the third group of evaluative remarks that is tackled in this section appears that Lavrin applies the same idea to the way in which the individual treats the self: he not only pleads for a critical attitude towards societal values,
but also towards the “golden rules” the individual imposes on the different parts of his own personality.

In several literary assessments, Lavrin not only tackles the way in which the author copes with the different tensions in modern society, but also how the author reacts to the tensions within his own modern personality. Based on his interest in psychoanalysis, Lavrin starts his assessment from a binary understanding of the human personality: he sometimes speaks of a conflict between mind and instinct, other times he calls it a conflict between rational and irrational currents, other times still he uses a more religious terminology and speaks of the opposition between the worldly and spiritual parts of one’s personality (e.g. NA 1918, 1924a: 33-60, 1929a: 7-25, 1935: 130, 2010 [1948]: 5). Whatever terminology Lavrin uses to address this conflict in the human mind, the idea that the mind is divided in two different, contrasting currents that might oppress each other reminds significantly of the different, contrasting currents Lavrin observes in society and mankind at large. In a way he transposes his discourse about the problem of oppression, the need for heterogeneity and the need for balance between (irrational) culture and (rational) civilization on the individual. Consequently, it does not come as a surprise that in his literary assessments, Lavrin problematizes that most modern authors react to the tension between the two parts of their personality by “suppressing certain instincts and qualities”, while in his eyes “a synthetic unification of the personality” (1973 [1922]: 183), a balance between the irrational and the rational currents, would be better.

In Lavrin’s assessment of the way in which authors cope with the different currents in their personality, one can see several parallels with his discourse on the dynamics in society. They are chiefly present in his remarks about different forms of asceticism and puritanism which he observes in the literary works he tackles. There are but few works in which Lavrin does not (briefly) address the problem of oppressing certain parts of the mind. He tackles individuals – both authors and characters – whose world view is based on suppressing the unwanted part of the self like Tolstoy, who turns away from his passionate instincts later in life (Lavrin 1924a), like Nietzsche, who in his pursuit of the biological superman “borrowed most of his weapons from the ascetics” (Lavrin 1973 [1922]: 183), or like Ibsen’s Brand, the character whose self-imposed religious calling makes it impossible to love and enjoy life (Lavrin NA 1919(24/11): 175-177). These remarks about asceticism or the suppression of certain aspects of one’s personality are not exceptional for the literary assessment of these authors or characters. What is typical for Lavrin’s assessments, as I show in the following paragraphs, is that he systematically connects the suppression of a part of the self to problems that are very similar to the problems he observes in civilized barbaric European society (a society that suppresses the cultural part of its identity): (1) a loss of a true connection with life or even a reduction of
life and (2) a loss of creativity and therefore the loss of the ability to transform the self into a better version.

That Lavrin considers suppressing one side of the personality as detrimental for one’s connection to life sometimes appears from remarks in which he denotes such a hostile attitude to (part of) the self as hostile to life as a whole. For example, in his assessment of Tolstoy’s ascetic moral system, Lavrin calls the aversion to sex, and thus the oppression of irrational drives, “a recipe for a universal suicide” (1924a: 201). In his assessment of Nietzsche’s emphasis on physical strength, then, Lavrin states that it “may be as dangerous to an ascending life as a narrow ‘spiritual’ dogmatism of professional ascetics” (1973 [1922]: 215).

More often Lavrin points out the opposition between suppressing a part of one’s personality and living a full life by making comparisons. Sometimes the message of the comparison is explicit, like when he contrasts Nietzsche’s “ascetic mutilation” to “the fullest and freest natural growth” (1973 [1922]: 215). Mostly, however, the message is more subtle and plays with a contrast that also occurs in Lavrin’s criticism on the state of Europe, namely the contrast between the organic and the mechanical. Lavrin for example applauds how Solovyov has a “vital philosophy” based on experience in life, as opposed to the “armchair philosophy” of many of his contemporaries whose ideas he considers to be no more than rational thought experiments (1935: 7). In his assessment of Ibsen’s Brand Lavrin compares the “dry and formal code of moral duty” or “mechanical moral drill” to a “real religious instinct” (NA 1919(14/11): 175). Another time he describes the general modern individual as a “dried-up intellectual man” thriving at the expense of his “vital instincts” (1948: 59).

Similar as in his other works, Lavrin connects suppressing one’s connection to life, even if it is in the name of a higher truth or vocation, to sterility and a lack of creativity, whereas he considers a warm, open and embracing attitude to the self as creative and potentially transformative. The contrast between sterile restriction and transformative fullness comes to the fore most clearly in Lavrin’s assessment of Tolstoy. In his 1924 monograph on the cardinal writer, Lavrin compares Tolstoy’s Christianity with the one of Francis of Assisi (1924a: 168-170). Before making the comparison, Lavrin explains that he reacts to the tendency of some of his contemporaries to draw parallels between the two men as both voluntarily returned to a simpler life (Ibid.: 168-170). In contrast, Lavrin mainly points to the differences between the two:

In the conversion of St. Francis we feel the spontaneity and the inward élan of his entire being; in that of Tolstoy chiefly the moral principles and the moral will rebelling against the rest of his self. While St. Francis, as if by a miracle, achieved a complete harmony of his personality, Tolstoy only shifted the centre of gravity
from one part of his divided self to another, thereby even increasing the tension of his self-division. It is notable that St. Francis became a great artist – a “troubadour of God” – in word and life only after his conversion and because of it; Tolstoy, on the other hand, did everything he could in order to suppress the artist in himself. (Lavrin 1924a: 168-169)

The main thread in Lavrin’s comparison of Tolstoy and St. Francis is the different interpretation and effect of their conversion. Lavrin presents Tolstoy’s conversion as a reduction that becomes an obstacle for his inner and creative development, while he presents St. Francis’s conversion as an expansion, a discovery of and openness to more aspects of the self that serves as a catalyst for his inner and creative development. The fact that in the second half of his career Tolstoy denounced his own art, and thus his own creativity, is an important indication for Lavrin that Tolstoy’s world view cannot lead to a transformation (of himself and his followers), but only to an impoverished life (1924a: 146).

Lavrin repeats several times that repressing a part of the self and creativity are not compatible. Like in Tolstoy’s case, he rules that Gogol’s repudiation of his early art because it is sinful, is a clear signal that the great artist has been replaced by a didactic moralist (1925a: 187-222). Also in his assessment of Nietzsche’s Superman Lavrin underlines that his ideal “instead of transcending mere biology [...] urged him to reduce everything to a biological plane (2010 [1948]: 28). In an assessment of the work of the German author Weininger, then, Lavrin condemns the author’s emphasis on the mutual exclusivity between (earthly) sex and (spiritual) love and his “submission to ascetic ideas”, and adds that love instead should be seen as a “creative sublimation” of sex (1935: 154). In these remarks, Lavrin constantly opposes the regressive effect of puritanism – reduction, impoverishment, submission – to the progressive, uplifting effect of a free mind – expansion, transcendence, sublimation. In a way, the association of a less qualitative or even reversed development with suppressing a part of the self, reminds of Lavrin’s previous discourse on standardization which considers the tendency of authoritarian regimes to create a uniform, homogeneous society, and to suppress the conflicting parts in that society as an important reason for their lack of originality and creativity. Once, in his last monograph on Dostoyevsky, Lavrin makes the connection between standardization and puritanism explicit. In this assessment he upholds that Dostoyevsky averted from “all those doctrines, systems and ideas in which there was no room for one’s freedom of conscience” because his search for creative change required “the integrated and not the standardized man” (1969 [1943]: 149).

Lastly, I want to draw attention to the way in which Lavrin describes the opposite of suppressing allegedly inferior aspects of the self. Instead of overcoming the difference
within the self by silencing too different (and annoying) unconscious tendencies, Lavrin consequently underlines how it is better to find a way to combine those tendencies and to transcend difference. In an article in which he compares the work of Nietzsche and Tolstoy, for example, he underlines that both authors should have aimed for “a synthetic outlet upon a higher plane” where the conflict in their personalities could be reconciled. Their choice to suppress a part of their personality, he writes, ensured that their personalities “remained lacerated” (1925a: 183). In his assessment of Weininger’s refusal to combine love and sex, he writes that

the division between physical and spiritual disappears not because one of them has been suppressed for the sake of the other, but simply because the cleavage itself has been balanced and left behind. (Lavrin 1935: 154)

At several occasions, Lavrin repeats the idea that the individual should have an integrative and heterogeneous attitude towards the self (a.o. 1973 [1922]: 183; 1924a: 168; 1935: 145). What is more, words like balance, synthesis and integration are a recurring characteristic of the positive assessments Lavrin makes about the world throughout his life. Whether Lavrin speaks about international relations, national development, attitudes towards minorities, cultural development, or the relationship between the individual and society, he always underlines that the richness of the whole is determined by the richness of its different and diverse components. His assessment of the attitude of the individual towards the diverse currents within his or her personality suggests that he understands the dynamic within the individual in the same way, albeit on a microscopic level. In fact, it implies that the notion of universal essentialism, which could be first applied to Slavyansky mir’s presentation of humanity as an organism that functions best when all its parts can develop in an optimal way (cf. 5.2), has travelled throughout his career and also informs his assessment of the smallest particles of that organism, individuals.

13.4 Conclusion

The way in which Lavrin addresses individualism, collectivism and the relationship between them in his British literary criticism most clearly reflects his ideal of heterogeneous unity: a unity in which the development of all parts contributes to a better development of the over-arching whole and where the over-arching whole contributes to the protection and emancipation of the separate parts – be it in the village, the nation,
Europe or the world. The need for transcending (instead of reversing or perpetuating) the modern focus on the individual is evident from the super-individual telos of his phased interpretation of human development, which not only occurs explicitly. Implicitly, it also appears from Lavrin’s aversion to authors who retreat in an idealized pre-individual society, and from those who preach and live a self-centred, rudderless life. It is suggested as well by the many different interventions that dismiss the validity of forms of individuality that prevent unity and of forms of collectivity that erase difference. By connecting extreme forms of individuality to weakness, sterility and madness, and by suggesting that even the work of the champion of individualism, Nietzsche, actually showcases an (unconscious) longing for connection, Lavrin uses examples of (perceived) individualism to bring his own ideal of the combination of difference and unity to the fore. The same combination is promoted when he connects extreme forms of collectivity – be it imposed by an over-arching power or by the dynamic within a certain group, – to failure, regression and escapism, and when he returns to his previous disapproving discourse about standardization, uniformity and plebeianism. Even Lavrin’s image of the individual in relation to the self reflects the ideal of heterogeneous unity, by suggesting that the individual can only be creative and transformative when he is in touch with all parts of his personality.

The way in which Lavrin represents his ideal unity in his literary criticism reminds of his nuanced attitude towards transformation that was addressed in the previous chapter (cf. 12.3). His emphasis on the ideal collective as super-individual, which comes into being not by reversing, but by transcending individualism (and other aspects of modern civilization) is similar to the call for continuity that comes to the fore in other passages of his literary criticism. Both Lavrin’s reactions to individualism and collectivism, and his representation of the ideal development of the self advise against suppressing a part of the whole or focusing on one (or few) elements alone. Instead, Lavrin underlines the importance of harmony, balance, integration and complementarity. The emphasis on the need for a future-orientation, focus and direction, moreover suggests that this happens best (or only) when there is a common goal or ideal to follow. Lavrin thus comes back to the idea of a universal guiding principle, a shared morality, which is an important theme throughout Lavrin’s British oeuvre. The notion of a super-individual telos nuances the connotation of homogeneity that comes with a guiding principle: it is not an imposed or a passively endured set of rules, but a common goal that individuals and groups of individuals actively and freely accept and want to follow. The guiding principle has to ensure a kind of voluntary homogeneity in the field of morality in order to safeguard/allow agency and heterogeneity in other fields of life.

Lavrin’s dream of a post-individual society led by a common goal, and his aversion to merely individualistic and amorphous societies regularly incites him to incorporate
passages about the very different development of Western and Eastern Europe during the interwar period and after. The “rules” that appear to be underlying Lavrin’s assessment of national and international development, show again that there is a parallel between his vision of the development of the individual and that of the nation, as is the case in his interwar society criticism (cf. Chapter 11). In his assessment of Western-European societies, the problematic lack of – and consequently the need for – unity and a common goal is central. Lavrin explicitly connects the rise of self-centred ‘isms’ like Fascism and Nazism, and the subsequent horror of the Second World War, to the lack of a common European idea. At the same time, he contrasts this, as he does in other parts of his oeuvre, to the exemplary role of Europe’s Eastern-European periphery. Because of his scholarly interests, Lavrin mainly tackles Russia and Yugoslavia, coincidentally two different interpretations of a communist state. However, it does not seem to be a coincidence that Lavrin presents Communism as a positive alternative to the alleged rudderlessness of the West, as it is the only “ism” that can arguably be considered as a potential super-individual (and super-national) guiding principle at the time. The evolution in Lavrin’s assessments of these different interpretations of communism in Europe reflects Lavrin’s vision of an ideal unity. In the case of Soviet Russia, he is positive about the early years, which – in his eyes – mainly show how the new found guiding principle leads to a conscious and voluntary unity of individuals (and nations). Lavrin becomes critical when under Stalin there are more and more indications that in Russia communism becomes more than a guiding principle that aligns the different elements in a post-individual, heterogeneous society, but increasingly suppresses difference and leads to an amorphous whole without individual agency. When Lavrin addresses Yugoslavia, then, it is exactly the evolution from a less free centralized union to a federation with more individual and national agency after the Second World War that leads to his positive assessment. The fact that Yugoslavia acted as a critical individual within the collective of the Soviet Union and seceded when its individuality was impaired, probably only contributed to this evaluation.

Like in his other work Lavrin connects his vision of development – in this case not national but individual, – to his vision of culture and civilization. When he addresses the development of the individual self, he underlines the need to embrace the different rational and irrational currents of the mind and to allow a full connection to life. Also when Lavrin tackles the development of the relationship between individual and collective, ideally leading to a super-individual society, there is a close connection with the search for balance between culture and civilization. Lavrin sees a close relationship between civilization and individualization: the achievements of modern civilization were made possible mainly by individual development apart from the group. Moreover, just like he emphasizes the need to transcend individuality, he underlines the need to
transcend civilization, and not to reverse it. His assessment of the work of Knut Hamsun aptly expresses this: “we can no longer go back to nature, but only forward to it”. Put differently, Lavrin’s view on the development of humanity also holds a call for a kind of “super-civilizational” society. This means that the revaluation of culture, which comes to the fore more prominently in the previous chapters, should not replace civilization, but complement it.
Chapter 14  **Russia, Slavdom and the Western World**

In 1960, when he is seventy-three years old, Lavrin starts his last scholarly project. Over a period of ten years, he writes twelve articles – one or two per year, – on Russian and Slavic thought for *The Russian Review*. Lavrin shifts his focus from Europe as a whole, which was prevalent in his British career (also his studies of Russian literature showed its position within European culture), to the perceived fault line between Eastern and Western Europe. He tackles (in an unchronological order) conceptions of the Slavic world vis-à-vis the West in articles with titles such as ‘Solovyov and Slavophilism’ (1961b), ‘The Slav Idea and Russia’ (1962c), ‘Chaadayev and the West’ (1963) and ‘Bakunin, the Slav and the Rebel’ (1966a). In 1969 appears that the articles were written in preparation of a new monograph: Lavrin slightly reworks and republishes most of these twelve articles in the monograph *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*, which he presents as a historical overview of “Russia’s volatile attitude towards the West” (1969). It is an introductory overview that is meant to give the reader more insight in the contemporary East-West relationship. In eleven chapters the monograph deals with most cardinal periods and figures from Russian thought and has – just like the articles – an important focus on the

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325 Four articles did not make the final cut of *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*: ‘Tolstoy and Gandhi’ (1960), which compares the thinkers’ views on society, an article on Juraj Križanić (1966b), a Croat who is often reported as the earliest Pan-Slavist (not in the imperialist sense of the word), ‘Rilke and Russia’ (1968a), which tells of Rilke’s acquaintance of Russia via Lou Salomé and his travels there, and, lastly, a comparison of the work of Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky (1969). As the monograph *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World* focuses on Russian and Slavic thought about these regions, it is logical that there are no chapters specifically devoted to Gandhi, Rilke and Nietzsche. What is more, the articles on Rilke, Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky appeared in more elaborate form in previous monographs of Lavrin. The fact that Lavrin did not incorporate his article on Križanić in the monograph (he does include a short biography of the Croat) is less logical, but can be related to the fact that the few chapters on non-Russian Slavic thought in the monograph are comprehensive overviews rather than in-depth discussions of particular thinkers.
nineteenth century. Lavrin adds a couple of chapters, devoted to how the relationship between Russia and Western-European countries has influenced the Slavic minorities and nations between them, and how this has impacted the recent history in Europe (1969: 40-56, 143-161, 162-179).

The text on the back cover of the monograph explicitly connects Lavrin’s historical and cultural overview to the geo-political situation of the 1960s. The text clearly responds to the difficult Cold-War relations between the Soviet Union and Western Europe by suggesting that a better knowledge of their historical relations may shine a brighter light on “a situation which has now assumed alarming dimensions and is of vital concern for us all” (1969). The sense of urgency that speaks from this quote is not surprising as the monograph appears in 1969, not long after Brezhnev’s violent invasion to end the Prague Spring (January-August 1968) and the introduction of the Brezhnev Doctrine – the right to intervene in any state of the Soviet Bloc when socialist rule is threatened. Also the concerns about the destructive power of the enormous nuclear (and other) arsenal that the United States and the Soviet Union had built and developed during the arms race were reaching a high point. During the 1950s and 1960s the arms policy of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) led to a huge accumulation of weapons, and people were increasingly aware of the fact that a nuclear attack of one of the supernations would not only destroy both parties, but would simultaneously destroy the entire world. Only late 1969, after Lavrin’s monograph had appeared, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) were started to limit the size of the arsenal and to reduce the risk of a nuclear war.

At first glance, Lavrin’s articles for *The Russian Review* and the monograph *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World* offer a standard, albeit rather old-fashioned (especially in their occasional allusions to the essential difference of the Russian soul) introduction to the history of Russian thought and the development of the Slavic Idea in Russia and the rest of the Slavic world. The periods and thinkers Lavrin addresses are comparable to those that appear in well-known overviews of Russian thought, like the one by Andrzej Walicki (1979). Moreover, the articles and the monograph have a generally introductory nature and have no particular angle or explicit message or aim, except for giving the readership a more solid historical knowledge about the Slavic perspective on the position of Russia and the Slavic world towards the West. To my knowledge, there are no reviews of the articles and the monograph, so it is hard to estimate the reception by Lavrin’s contemporaries. This does not mean that the work has not received any scholarly attention. Quite recently, a couple of scholars have referred to *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World* as a reference work for (certain aspects of) Russian thought (Löwe 2000, Sutton 2000, Tuminez 2000). This seems to suggest that the monograph is valued to certain extent. Others, i.e. two peers of Lavrin and a twenty-first-century scholar, critically refer to one of Lavrin’s articles because they disagree with the way in which
Lavrin presents certain thinkers or currents (McNally 1964: 352-353, Kimball 1971: 29, Maxwell 2020: 211)\(^{326}\). Apart from these references and remarks, Lavrin’s last scholarly project did not cause any reaction.

The fact that a couple of contemporary scholars referred to Russia, Slavdom and the Western World as a reference work for Slavic thought adds to the impression that Lavrin gives a standard introduction to the topic. Nevertheless, if one addresses the articles and the monographs within the context of Lavrin’s complete oeuvre, as is the aim of this dissertation, one cannot but notice that there is a bias in this work that is inspired by Lavrin’s own view on the (Slavic) world. This comes to the fore most clearly in the last chapter of the monograph, in which Lavrin passionately voices his own opinion about the need for a united Europe and humanity in the future:


> [...] one cannot dismiss the notion that the only outlet still left to both the individual and society is a new humanism working on a global scale and animated by the idea that humanity itself, whatever its languages and colour, should become indivisible if it is to survive at all. (Lavrin 1969: 177)

Also in the rest of the monograph and in the articles certain remarks and particular wordings remind of certain themes that run like thread through Lavrin’s oeuvre and reflect his balanced ideas on social and cultural development.

The last chapter in this dissertation is devoted to the ways in which Lavrin disseminates his vision of the future of Europe (and the world) for the very last time. In doing this, not only the explicit call for unity in the last chapter is addressed, but especially the ways in which Lavrin intervenes in the body of the work to build up towards his concluding appeal. First, the chapter tackles Lavrin’s approach to nineteenth-century Russian thought, the lion’s share of the work, and how he bends the polarity between East and West that is dominant in the ideas of this period into a narrative that suits his own vision of cultural and societal development. Second, the chapter addresses the way in

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\(^{326}\) McNally problematizes that Lavrin bases his article on too little sources and therefore unjustly reanimates the myth that Chaadayev made a “volte-face” in his Apologie d’un fou (1964: 352-353). It has to be remarked, however, that Lavrin himself contradicts the idea of a complete turnaround in Chaadayev’s thought (1963: 286-288). Kimball, then, criticizes that Lavrin (and Isaiah Berlin) perpetuated the idea of the romantic narodnik by pointing at certain similarities with Slavophile thought while he focuses on the differences between the two currents (1971: 29-32). Finally, Maxwell recently addressed Lavrin’s article on Križanić in his study of the Croat’s Pan-Slavic language. He questions why Lavrin and other modern scholars called out Križanić’s language as artificial. Maxwell suggests that their disapproval may be informed by nationalist feelings (2020: 211). In regard of Lavrin’s older work, however, it is reasonable to assume that he uses the adjective ‘artificial’ because the language is created and not organically grown. In the article ‘Yury Krizhanich’ Lavrin pigeonholes the language as a less successful counterpart of his tendency towards Slavic unity (1966: 380).
which Lavrin incorporates his vision of different forms of unity via his reactions to geo-political events in Central and Eastern Europe and to the dynamics between great powers, small nations and the common people. In this chapter I use *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World* as my main primary source because it is the end product of Lavrin’s last project. Moreover, by incorporating the different articles in a work that ends with a call for global unity Lavrin adds an extra layer of meaning to their original content.

14.1 Framing Slavophile Thought

The lion’s share of the chapters in *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World* (six out of eleven) revolve around nineteenth-century Russian thought and the discussion about Russia’s positioning vis-à-vis the West. Lavrin addresses the build-up to this discussion and tackles several of its major exponents. Most of his attention goes to Slavophile thought, which is tackled in four chapters. This focus on Slavophile thought is not surprising because the Slavophiles addressed cultural and societal themes that also play an important role in Lavrin’s own oeuvre – think for example of the essential difference of national cultures, the problem of a decadent, rationalistic West, and the pursuit of more connection and unity within the (Slavic) world.

At first glance, Lavrin seems to go along with the opposition between Russia and the West that lays at the basis of Slavophile thought. In the opening fragments of the monograph he for example points to the psychological difference between the two regions (1969: 9) and lists a couple of traits of the Russian character and soul that dominate most conversations about Russianness since the Slavophile period: e.g. the Russians’ love of extremes, their fatalism, their endurance, their so-called femininity, their nomadic propensity and their hospitality (Ibid.: 10-14). That Lavrin seems to focus on the essential difference between Russia and the West also appears from the opening lines of the first chapter on Slavphilism, which addresses one of its founders, Ivan Kireyevsky (Ibid.: 71-85). In this chapter Lavrin refers to a classical anti-Western and pro-Russian presentation of the Slavophile movement:
According to the leftish historian and politician P. Milyukov, the Slavophile current consisted of three important ingredients. Protest against borrowings from Western civilisation was one of them. Insistence on the national originality (samobytnost) of Russia was the second. And a Pan-Slav tendency, which implied sympathies with non-Russian Slavs, most of whom were under foreign domination, was the third. (Lavrin 1969: 71. Italics in original)

Although these three themes correspond with Lavrin’s own interests, Lavrin does not uncritically go along with the Slavophile attitude towards these ideas. The three ingredients Milyukov distinguishes serve as a guideline for the aspects of Slavophilism that Lavrin further addresses. More importantly, the ingredients give Lavrin the opportunity to add his own presentation, assessment and interpretation of the Slavophile attitude towards borrowing, national originality and non-Russian Slavs.

**Borrowing from the West and National Originality**

In Lavrin’s discourse about borrowing from foreign cultures and national originality, usually the need for balance between the two is emphasized. It comes therefore as no surprise that in his presentation of Slavophilism Lavrin focuses on elements which indicate a closer connection with the West than Milyukov’s “protest against borrowings from Western civilisation” suggests. (Contrary to some of his older works, Lavrin uses the term “civilization” not as the opposite of “culture”, but uses both terms interchangeably when he speaks of the cultural development of a region!). Lavrin underlines that Slavophile thought is a complex movement. In the original text on Kireyevsky that appeared in the Russian Review he even states, not without reason, that it is “a frequent mistake [...] to simplify that movement by reducing it to the mere antithesis between Russia and Europe” (1961a: 110). Lavrin’s call for nuance brings him to emphasize that the Slavophiles were not antagonistic towards Western Europe, but actually had more in common with the West than they themselves believed, or had a more open attitude towards the West than generally is taken for granted.

This comes to the fore first and foremost from critical remarks Lavrin makes about historical inaccuracies or misconceptions in the ideas disseminated by the Slavophiles. A good example is the remark that certain Russian characteristics that are idealized by the Slavophiles, the mir and the obshchina in particular, are, from a historical perspective, not

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327 Not only the leader of the Kadets before the Revolution (whom Lavrin must have known since the collaboration of the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Rapprochement Day of the Flags), but also a historian. He lived as an emigrant in France after the Russian Revolution.
typically Russian at all, but are “primitive archaic relics” that still existed in Russia because of its slower economic progress (1969: 199). Lavrin also pays quite some attention to how the Slavophile ideas about Russianness are actually greatly inspired by Western thought (e.g. Ibid.: 28-39, 58-59, 75, 91). Such remarks are not exceptional, of course: other scholars have also pointed at this ironic overlap (e.g. Detrez 2015: 261-265, Rabow-Edling 2009: 34). Nevertheless, Lavrin’s attention to this overlap seems to be part of a general strategy to underline that the Slavophiles had a closer relationship with the West than is usually assumed. In his chapter about Kireyevsky, for example, Lavrin multiple times highlights that the philosopher maintained a relatively open attitude towards Europe even when he became more critical of the West later in life (1969: 72-79). He also several times points to ideas of balance in Kireyevsky’s thought. Lavrin for example underlines that Kireyevsky wrote that Russia needs to assimilate from Western culture what she needs, “but in such a way as not to lose her own identity” (Ibid.: 72). He also emphasizes the fact that the philosopher considered both Europe and Russia as essential, complementary ingredients of human culture. What is more, Lavrin subtly endorses this idea of complementarity by adding that this is “a kind of leitmotif among the best of the Slavophiles” (Ibid.: 73. Italics in original).

Also when Lavrin addresses the work of Aleksey Khomyakov, the other co-founder of the Slavophile movement, who was more critical of the West than Kireyevsky, he concludes by underlining not the thinker’s aversion for the West, but his actual wish for unity. Lavrin emphasizes that

Khomyakov’s anti-Westernism was yet a matter of odi et amo, of hatred and love combined. What he repudiated in the West was the complete secularization of its culture; but his hope that Russia might ultimately “save” Western Europe from its materialistic blind-alley was itself a proof that he, too, wished to see a united humanity, a united East-West. (Lavrin 1969: 98. Italics in original)

This fragment is atypical for Lavrin. Normally he uses a negative narrative about Russian leadership and superiority, not only in his older works but, as I will show below, also in the rest of Russia, Slavdom and the Western World. In a way, it shows how eager he is to underline that several Slavophiles wanted a rapprochement between East and West.

Throughout the monograph, similar to his older work, Lavrin generally does not endorse the Slavophile ideal of Russian superiority and messianism as he believes this does not lead to rapprochement and unity, but to subservience. That he does not agree with Russian superiority often subtly appears from small critical insertions in the text. In the above fragment, for example, Lavrin uses quotation marks with the word “save” as a way to question Russia’s role as a saviour. Also when he describes the Slavophile idealization of certain aspects of Russian society or culture he includes small remarks that
question this idealization. Lavrin speaks of the Slavophiles’ “Romantic blinkers”, he states that they “admired rather uncritically”, and holds that the Slavophiles idealized aspects, like Russian Orthodoxy, in the way they “saw (or wanted to see) it” (1969: 10, 93, 91).

When Lavrin addresses the transition from the early Slavophiles like Kireyevsky and Khomyakov to later Slavophiles like Mikhail Pogodin and Dostoyevsky, he explicitly calls their “national pride exalting Russia over the West” one of the dangers for the development of the current (1969: 132). For Lavrin it is especially problematic that this national pride has turned into national egoism and imperialism in the work of later Slavophiles and Pan-Slavists – or, as Lavrin calls them, “Pan-Russists” (Ibid.) – like Nikolay Danilevsky. Lavrin reacts to the work of the later Slavophiles in two ways. In the case of someone like Dostoyevsky, who could “overcome his anti-Western feeling”, Lavrin underlines this eventual pursuit of rapprochement, “a pan-human unity which was cherished by the finest Russian intellectuals” (Ibid.: 1926). In the case of “Pan-Russists” like Danilevsky, who maintained an “anti-European bias” and emphasized Russian superiority, Lavrin explicitly denounces their ideas and argues that their focus on Russia’s imperial power gave the Slavophile current “such a colouring that a deservedly sharp criticism was bound to come” (Ibid.: 138). Lavrin finds this “deserved” criticism in the work of Vladimir Solovyov and his approach to a universal unity, which, according to Lavrin “corrects” the Slavophile idea of Russian superiority, by pointing out the necessity of national self-realization in the service of humanity (Ibid.: 139). The contrast Lavrin makes between the inclusive and exclusive thought of Solovyov and Danilevsky reminds of the universal essentialist idea that national development serves a universal humanity and of the distinction he makes between defensive/cultural and aggressive/political nationalism elsewhere in his work (cf. 7.4).

Lavrin’s attempt to nuance the adversity of the Slavophiles towards the West and his (almost) systematic negative attitude towards a belief in Russian superiority can be interpreted as part of the build-up towards his call for more rapprochement between the Eastern and Western bloc at the end of the monograph. Lavrin’s framing of the Slavophile thinkers – his positive presentation of Slavophiles who did not isolate themselves from the West, and his negative branding of thinkers who rejected any affiliation with the West – seems to encourage the reader to re-evaluate the opposition between the two regions. Lavrin seems to suggest that if the attitude of the initial propagators of Russia’s essential difference was actually more nuanced than is often assumed, than also the contemporary opposition between the two blocs may need some nuancing.

Lavrin’s emphasis on the need for an open attitude between Russia and the West is but one side of his narrative on the Slavophile attitude towards borrowing and national originality. Lavrin also uses the theme for his usual criticism on imitation of the (decadent) West and the idea that balance also requires a healthy attitude towards
national originality. This especially appears from the following paragraph, which serves as a kind of transitory passage to wrap up the chapters devoted to early Slavophile thought:

Whatever the virtues and defects of the Slavophiles, their apprehension that, culturally at least, a thoroughly Westernised Russia might become a kind of second-rate or third-rate Europe was not without some foundation. At a time when the whole of Western life was getting increasingly materialistic and as it were emptied from its deeper contents, the Slavophiles could not help keeping their eyes fixed on those “Russian” values which they regarded as being still able to counter the negative spirit of the age and all that it stood for. Their criticism of the West was often to the point; but what they offered instead was hardly convincing enough to make one follow them without a number of questions. (Lavrin 1969: 132)

Although Lavrin is critical of the solution the Slavophiles stood for – particularly of their idealization of Russia and its past, – he expresses his understanding and support for their diagnosis of the West and their refusal to sacrifice their unique position to bad imitation. The remark that “their criticism of the West was often to the point” endorses the Slavophile criticism on Western society and culture which Lavrin describes in the chapters on Slavophilism: the problem of individualism and fragmentation (1969: 79-80), the emphasis on rationality (Ibid.: a.o. 75, 93), the idealization of economic gain (Ibid.: 92, 117), and the secularisation of society and culture (Ibid.: a.o. 77, 81). Even though Lavrin describes the Slavophile critique in a neutral way, this endorsing remark shows how he subtly frames the Slavophile critique in order to hint at his own criticism on Western society.

Reservations about uncritically imitating the West and the need for respecting Russia’s originality also recur in a couple of Lavrin’s remarks about the Slavophiles’ antagonists, the Westernizers. When Lavrin addresses the work of Pyotr Chaadayev, for example, who initiated the discussion about Russia’s perceived backwardness vis-à-vis Europe, he tries to mitigate the thinker’s aversion to Russia and his emphasis on the West. He calls Chaadayev’s initial loathing expressed in the first Lettre Philosophique “exaggerations [...] due to the author’s frustrated feeling of pride” (1969: 61). The philosopher’s suggestion of a possible partnership between Russia and the West in Apologie d’un fou, then, Lavrin presents as the expression of “the hopes of some of the best Russians of that or any subsequent period” (Ibid.: 67). Also when Lavrin addresses Vissarion Belinsky, the founder of the Russian Naturalist school which was very critical of the societal problems and the backwardness of Russia, he indicates how many Westernizers despite their critical attitude retained a certain Russianness. In his description of the Westernizers, Lavrin refers to the idea that Russia, contrary to the West, has not lost its religious
instinct. He applauds that “the best members of the Westernising intelligentsia preserved much of their religious temperament, as well as their high ethical standard, to the full” (Ibid.: 64). Just like Lavrin softens the alleged opposition of the Slavophiles vis-à-vis the West, he nuances the Westernization of the zapadniki. In both cases Lavrin underlines the balance between cultural openness and preservation.

**Sympathies with non-Russian Slavs**

The third ingredient that comes to the fore in Milyukov’s classification of Slavophilism is the movement’s sympathy towards non-Russian Slavs. The previous section showed that in the case of the two other characteristics Milyukov attributed to the Slavophiles (the aversion to borrowing foreign culture and the emphasis on national originality), Lavrin used his remarks to nuance these characteristics and give an impression of a more balanced attitude towards the West. In the case of the third ingredient, however, Lavrin actively endorses Milyukov’s assessment: he chiefly illustrates – and thus highlights – the Slavophile sympathies towards non-Russian Slavs by giving several examples of Slavophiles who were interested in other Slavs and maintained (academic) contacts with them. He for example pays quite some attention to Khomyakov as an enthusiast promotor of inter-Slavic contacts (1969: 96-98). Lavrin also includes a list with several (minor) Slavophiles who regularly travelled to Central and South-Eastern Europe and informed the Russian reader about the Western and Southern Slavs in their travelogues (Ibid.: 96). In his short introductions about the brothers Konstantin and Ivan Aksakov, then, Lavrin underlines their advocacy for the liberation of the Balkan Slavs during the Crimea Campaign (1853-1856, Konstantin and Ivan) and the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878, Ivan) (Ibid.: 99). Although Lavrin does not include any endorsing remarks while he is describing the Slavophile contacts with non-Russian Slavs, the many examples and the emphasis on these contacts give the impression that he wanted to prove that historically there is a genuine Russian interest for the Slavic world as a whole.

That Lavrin considers this interest in non-Russian Slavs a positive trait of the Slavophiles also appears from the way in which Lavrin introduces his chapter on Mikhail Bakunin, the only Westernizer to whom he devotes a complete chapter:

It is only fair to say that even during its previous agitated period the liberal and radical-minded intellectuals, while wrangling with the Slavophiles, took on the whole little real interest in the non-Russian Slavs. Among the notable exceptions in this respect was the father of modern anarchism, Michael [sic] Bakunin. (Lavrin 1969: 100)
This quote suggests that the main reason why Lavrin devotes a chapter to Bakunin is his effort for the Slavic cause. The chapter (1969: 101-114) mainly gives a rather neutral biographical overview of Bakunin’s travels all over Europe and his involvement in the emancipatory struggle of non-Russian Slavs, especially the Poles. Because there are hardly any accompanying remarks, the chapter seems to give no extra information about what Lavrin thought of Bakunin’s relation with non-Russian Slavs. However, it does not seem to be a coincidence that Lavrin includes a chapter about a Russian with sympathies for the Poles and their liberation, which was a thorny question among the Slavophiles and was a taboo for the Russian state in Bakunin’s time. Lavrin considers the Russo-Polish problem an important obstacle to the affinity of non-Russian Slavs with Russia (Ibid.: 44-45) and he regrets that “as the years went on it [the Russo-Polish problem] seemed less and less susceptible of a solution” (Ibid.: 97). In this light, Lavrin’s attention to Bakunin’s effort for the Polish cause appears as implicit criticism of the difficult relationship between Russians and Poles. It is therefore in the line of expectation that Lavrin regrets – elsewhere in the monograph – that “even that father of modern anarchism [wrote that] ‘the very best of the Poles is our enemy in so far as we are Russians’” (Ibid.: 45).

Although throughout Russia, Slavdom and the Western World Lavrin tends to underline the sympathy of Russian, especially Slavophile thinkers for non-Russian Slavs, this tendency stops when he addresses the interest in non-Russian Slavs among the later Slavophiles and Pan-Slavists. For Lavrin this interest is no longer a positive trait when it is tainted by Russia’s imperialistic ambitions, when the love for Slavs has become a love for Slavic lands. He for example cynically remarks that the suppressed Slavic minorities “began to be looked upon as a convenient material waiting to be ‘liberated’ by Russia and thus strengthen her imperial power as such” (1969: 133). He is critical of the idea of Russia as the great ruler of a Slavic nation, of Russia as a “big brother”, and of the way in which it camouflaged its “imperialistic designs by the more popular device (especially in the Balkans) of Orthodoxy” (Ibid.: 133-134). Remarkably, Lavrin seems to contradict himself with these comments. Earlier he applauded the efforts of Ivan and Konstantin Aksakov in favour of the Crimea Campaign and the Russo-Turkish War, two wars where Russia legitimized its intervention with the “excuse” of liberating Orthodox Slavs. It is possible that this is sloppy work by Lavrin, or it may be a strange rhetorical trick. Lavrin first addresses the Aksakov brothers in a general chapter about Slavophilism. Not mentioning Russia’s imperialistic behaviour and focusing on the idea of liberation can be seen as a way to emphasize that the Slavophiles generally had a positive relation with non-Russian Slavs. His discourse becomes negative in his chapter about the later Slavophiles and the Pan-Slavists, when he connects these wars not to liberation but to the imperialistic thought. This seems to be a less successful attempt at showing that there are historical examples of Russian thought about Slavic unity that were not necessarily imperialistic.
In either case, Lavrin endorses the idea of rapprochement on equal terms, without one nation abusing the weakness of the other(s) for its own benefit, based on a just – “Slavic” – attitude towards others, like in his older work.

14.2 Imperialism versus Federalism

On the last pages of Russia, Slavdom and the Western World, Lavrin concludes that the integration of mankind has become “a historical imperative concerning us all” (1969: 179). As if he echoes other appeals for a universally shared “Slavic” morality throughout his career, he states that

one yet has to go on hoping and looking for a path leading to that kind of human solidarity, freedom and justice which would preclude any further attempts at disguised totalitarianism whether from the right or from the left. (Lavrin 1969: 177; italics in original)

With this remark Lavrin rejects the fascist regimes of the past and the totalitarian ways of the communist regime in the Soviet Union. Moreover, although he once was hopeful for the transformative potential of Communism to end the decadence of the capitalist West, the concluding pages of the monograph suggest that for Lavrin the Soviet Union’s participation in the power competition with the Western powers has forfeited that potential. In Lavrin’s eyes, regardless of a couple of positive moments (which will be addressed later), the world has not changed for the better in the fifteen years since the Second World War. On the contrary, although the war was the absolute low point of humanity which showed “a ‘naked’ mankind raving and raging in its subhuman fury”, the fetish of progress and being the first in everything still rules the world, it has even culminated in such a way that humanity can be “annihilated by the very progress of its own science” (1969: 177). Lavrin nevertheless calls to regain trust in humanity and in the power of humane behaviour, because he believes that a proper moral development will make it possible to put the scientific and technical achievements to good use for the whole of humanity, instead of “exploiting their military potential” (Ibid.). He thus maintains the close connection between the problem of unbalance between culture and civilization and the problem of disunity.

In the last chapter, Lavrin indicates that this new morality will not come from world leaders, which despite the increasing globalization are in his view still only interested in their own national gain (1969: 177). Instead, like in Albanskiye Eskizy, The New Age and The
New Britain, Lavrin points to the rejuvenating potential of relatively new players in the world (cf. 9.3, 11.1, 11.2). He states that small nations

are neither big or rich enough to ape any super-powers and have yet preserved enough common sense to form such constructive and morally binding federations. (Lavrin 1969: 177-178)

He specifically points to the non-Russian Slavs, who are “needless to say” part of this category. At the same time he has the potential of the masses in mind, because he believes that their “true life-values have not yet been erased by the atrocities and commercialized imbecilities of the present-day world” (Ibid.: 178). He hints in particular at the role the Russian people can play “whatever the mistakes and blunders of their governments” (Ibid.). With these two suggestions Lavrin simultaneously underlines the determining role the Central and Eastern-European periphery can and has to play in a positive, unifying development of Europe (and humanity), and emphasizes that the West will benefit from a more open attitude towards Russia, that should not be reduced to its government alone. In the following two sections I show how small interventions Lavrin makes in his narrative throughout the monograph anticipate this conclusion. By critically addressing different attitudes towards freedom and unity, he puts the attitude of great power governments in a bad light, whereas he presents the attitude of the small nations and the common people as a positive alternative.

**Nineteenth-Century Great Power Imperialism**

The first way in which Lavrin incorporates a negative assessment of leadership by the great powers can be found in the small remarks that accompany the styles of governance he includes in his historical overview of Slavic thought. Since the different interpretations of the Slavic Idea are closely connected to the political and social climate, many heads of state and governments are (briefly) addressed throughout the monograph. As the lion’s share of the monograph tackles the evolution of Russian thought, Lavrin most often gives his opinion about Russian rulers. Besides, because of their role in central and South-Eastern Europe, he also regularly addresses rulers of the Habsburg Empire and, later, Austria-Hungary. In doing this, Lavrin disseminates the same message as in his older work and often explicitly expresses his aversion to autocratic rulers and applauds leaders with more liberal ideas.

Already quite early in the opening chapter Lavrin hints at his doubts about the capability of Russian authorities to bring liberal change by stating that the potential of Russia has been crippled by “well-nigh insurmountable obstacles […] in the shape of a
regime which was not only despotic but corrupt to a degree” (1969: 15). Also when he presents individual rulers he underlines the negative effect of autocratic reign by judging tyrannical behaviour, by welcoming liberal periods and by regretting the interruption thereof. Lavrin for example describes the “liquidation” of the “unbearable” Pavel I as “a sign of better times to come” and the death of the authoritarian Nikolay I during the Crimean war as “a blessing in disguise” because their death made it possible for a more liberal tsar to ascend the throne (Ibid.: 24, 76). Reversely, Aleksandr I’s alleged transition from a more liberal regime to a more conservative and oppressive regime after 1812, and the assassination of the liberal Aleksandr II in 1881, Lavrin describes as unfortunate events. In the latter case he even speaks of a “great disaster in so far as it introduced a new reactionary era and precluded some further liberal reforms” (Ibid.: 120). By highlighting these occasions when Russia could have become a more liberal haven but never actually became one, Lavrin implicitly puts the failure of the Russian regime in the limelight.

In chapters that zoom out and address the Slavic Idea in Europe at large, especially in the chapter ‘Towards the Last Act’, Lavrin shows a similar attitude towards the regime in the Habsburg Empire and the later Dual Monarchy Austria-Hungary. Lavrin shows his regret about the fact that despite several opportunities, a liberal government never came into being. This for example appears from his narrative about the short-lived Kremsier Parliament, which was established during the 1848 Spring of nations and wanted to establish a liberal constitution in the Habsburg Empire. This constitution would recognize all minorities as equal parts of the Empire. Lavrin’s opinion shows from the fact that he describes the military constitution that was eventually imposed by the reactionary elements as “a stunted would-be Constitution” and from his remark that “the regime of absolutism which was to follow turned Austria for at least ten years into a ‘prison of nations’ [...]” (1969: 50-51). At several other occasions (Ibid.: 49-51, 145, 154), Lavrin

138 The militarist Pavel I reversed many of the liberal reforms of his mother Katharina the Great and waged a very repressive regime (Detrez 2015: 167).
139 Tsar Nikolay I is often painted as a very conservative ruler because of his suppression of the Decembrist revolt (1825) at the beginning of his reign. Nevertheless, contemporary historians agree that this is an exaggeration, because he did listen to the criticism and the suggestions by the insurgents (Detrez 2015: 200).
130 During the reign of Aleksandr I, Russia almost got a constitution twice. Both propositions were rejected because they were rejected too far-reaching. Nevertheless, his reign brought several reforms to Russia. Some historians see a disruption between a liberal period in Aleksandr’s reign before 1812 and a more conservative period after because he became more conservative on an ideological level, but this is disproved by the fact that the tsar still pondered the abolishment of serfdom in 1815-1820 (Detrez 2015: 192-193).
131 Under tsar Aleksandr II many reforms were implemented in Russia. The abolition of serfdom was the most important one (Detrez 2015: 210).
expresses his regret about how Franz Joseph I came close to adopting a federal constitution and creating a “multi-racial or rather multi-lingual state which would be above any nationalistic jealousies”, but never took steps until it was too late (Ibid.: 145).

As appears from his remarks about Austria-Hungary, Lavrin focuses less on the degree of freedom experienced by the general population, but bases his assessment of the Austrian regime on the degree of freedom experienced by Slavic minorities. Overall, and in line with his criticism on the imperialism of the later Slavophiles and “Pan-Russists”, Lavrin presents rulers and regimes that stand in the way of the development of (Slavic) minorities in a negative way. He regularly includes negative remarks about the attitude of Hungary towards Slavic minorities, first as a fellow minority, later as the suzerain nation in the Transleithanian half of the Dual Monarchy. Lavrin for example cynically speaks of the Magyars who in his opinion wanted to “lord over those ethnic groups which they hoped to assimilate” and of the “chauvinistic appetites of their Magyar bosses” (Ibid.: 144, 145). A similar negative narrative can be observed when Lavrin addresses the interventions of the Great Powers in the Balkans after the Congress of Berlin (1878) which “did everything it could to prevent the formation of a strong Slav State on the Balkans” (Ibid.: 148). Lavrin’s criticism is again mainly pointed at Austria-Hungary which “misused” Bosnia-Herzegovina as a colony, but also at Russia, whose treatment of Bulgaria as a “territory for its own benefit” he calls “a mistake” (Ibid.: 149).

A remarkable feature of Lavrin’s discourse about the position of the Slavic minorities, especially in the light of his preference for Slavic unity in his early Russian work, is his positive assessment of Austria-Hungary as a potential maison commune for these minorities. Like before, Lavrin is guided by his search for more freedom and supports the supra-national whole that seems to provide the (relatively) safest environment. For the largest part of the nineteenth century, Lavrin presents Austria as “a lesser evil”, because it was (a little) less autocratic. This appears very clearly from the following fragment:

During the early stages of their national revival [of the Austrian Yugoslavs] these nations showed frequent sentimental enthusiasm for a kind of idealized Russia. And this was hardly surprising, since their own rulers, the Habsburgs were not only German, but also consistently anti-liberal in their incurable conservatism. For instead of trying to understand and accept the new forces in history, the Habsburgs either ignored or else fought these forces with might and main. But actually Russia was in this respect even worse – under the appalling burden of autocracy and serfdom. An unbiased observer was therefore bound to come to the conclusion that Austria, with all her faults and drawbacks was a lesser evil. (Lavrin 1969: 46)

In his narrative about the Ausgleich in 1867, however, which shattered dreams of a Slavic state within the Austrian empire, Lavrin shows an understanding attitude towards
Austrian Slavs who thought about more rapprochement to Russia “as it no longer formed an immediate threat to freedom” (1969: 146). This is closely connected to the fact that the Ausgleich takes place during the regime of the more liberal Aleksander II (1855-1881). Later on, when Lavrin describes the conflicting interests of the two great powers on the Balkans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, he is not inclined to favour the leadership of either one. Instead he problematizes both their meddling in the region, their negative impact on the cooperation between small Slavic nations, like Serbia and Croatia, and, related to this, their responsibility for creating the breeding ground for the First World War (Ibid.: 150-158).

“Bottom-Up” Reactions in the Long Nineteenth Century

Lavrin’s negative remarks about nineteenth-century Austria-Hungary and Russia are strongly connected to his idea that they are unable and unwilling to replace their autocratic ways with a more liberal and / or heterogeneous approach to Central and Eastern Europe. In a way, showcasing their failure to contribute to what Lavrin would consider a more humane world serves as a historical argument for his appeal to follow small nations and the common people instead of the powers that be. Another way in which Lavrin anticipates his appeal in the last chapter of the monograph, is to regularly underline the the contrast between the regime and the people (the common people and the intelligentsia) and the latter’s efforts to realize a respectful cooperation between Slavic nations.

In chapters that centre Russia, Lavrin sometimes accompanies remarks about the autocratic and despotic behaviour of the tsarist regime with a disclaimer that underlines the difference, and often opposition between the population and the authorities. In the general first chapter, for example, he writes that “in no European country was there a greater gap between the government and the governed than there was in Tsarist Russia” (1969: 15). This remark is echoed almost verbatim right before Lavrin makes his suggestions for a better unified future in the last chapter. When he describes the events of the Prague Spring he indicates that the Russian people (probably) does not support the violent Soviet reaction “because the traditional gap between the government and the governed […] seems to continue also in the Soviet Union” (Ibid.: 176). By dissociating the Russian people from its authoritarian rulers from the onset of the monograph and at its very end, right before his concluding appeal, Lavrin tries to make it more plausible for the Western reader that the Russian people indeed is a potential partner that should not be despised.
Lavrin also emphasizes the opposition between intellectuals and the government. When he sketches the background for Russian thought in the nineteenth century, for example, he applauds the rise of the intelligentsia as a welcome critical answer to Nikolay I’s “leaden regime”. Lavrin admiringly describes how its members of different social backgrounds shared “their opposition to the autocratic regime, their unwritten code of integrity and their idealism” (Ibid.: 26). He repeats the contrast between the intelligentsia and the regime when he tackles their protest against the ideology of Nikolay’s minister of Education Sergey Uvarov (Autocracy, Orthodoxy and Narodnost): “the nascent progressive intelligentsia would have nothing to do [...] with a slogan parading the word autocracy” (Ibid.: 34. Italics in original). While tackling the criticism of the intelligentsia, Lavrin hastens to add that the early Slavophiles were equally in opposition to the reactionary regime of Nikolay I (Ibid.) and thus suggests they were in fact (moderately) progressive thinkers, contrary to the then dominant assumption that the Slavophiles were conservative dreamers. In Lavrin’s time (and quite some time afterwards) scholars of Russian thought usually emphasized the reactionary character of the Slavophiles (e.g. Walicki 1979: 96-97, Янковский 1981), only recently they have been addressed as advocates of (moderate) progress and change (a.o. Rabow-Edling 2009). The fact that Lavrin uses this at the time exceptional interpretation of Slavophilism confirms the impression that he wanted to underline that most influential Russian thinkers actually resisted the reactionary authorities, and that the “gap between the government and the governed” extended even to those that were often pigeonholed as reactionary and loyal to the authorities.

Apart from presenting the Russian people as different than its government, Lavrin seems to emphasize its predilection for unity and universality, and thus its suitability for the new world he promotes in the last chapter of his monograph. The fact that Russia, Slavdom and the Western World culminates in a call for an integrated Europe creates the impression that the choice to devote a monograph to ideas of Slavic unity was not a matter of mere scholarly interests. Every mention of Russian attention to, interest in and effort towards unity – be it in the form of matter-of-factly remarks, like Lavrin’s description of the typical Russian “gregariousness” in the introduction (1969: 11), or in the many examples of Russian thinkers (a. o. the Slavophiles, the Populists, Herzen, Dostoyevsky, Berdyayev) who consider universality and synthesis as a typical Russian trait (Ibid.: a.o. 12, 69, 73, 82, 92-94, 115) – instils the idea that the Russian people is a quintessential partner in the pursuit of an integrated Europe and mankind.

Also the chapters that zoom out to Slavic thought in general prepare for Lavrin’s call at the end of the monograph. By pointing out that the very reason for the rise of ideas of Slavic unity in Central and Eastern Europe is solidarity instigated by a common resistance to Ottoman domination or Austrian centralism (1969: 40-44), Lavrin presents these ideas
as more inclusive alternatives to great power imperialism. Moreover, Lavrin shows that ideas of unity are an important part of the intellectual history of these regions. This is aptly illustrated in his overview of different non-Russian takes on the Slavic idea, going from early ideas of linguistic affinity like those by the Slovene Adam Bohorič, the Croat Juraj Križanič and the Czech Joseph Dobrovský (1969: 41-42) to Kollár’s Daughter of Slava (Ibid.: 42), Polish messianism (Ibid.: 44-45) and Palacký’s Austroslavism (Ibid.: 46, 51-55).

A more telling example, however, is Lavrin’s attention to and assessment of the different Slavic congresses that took place during the long nineteenth century – congresses organised by intellectuals and devoted to Slavic rapprochement. Here Lavrin focuses less on the openness towards the idea of unity – although the congresses are important examples of practical effort towards Slavic unity as opposed to the usual theoretical effort of thinkers – and more on the (homogeneous or heterogeneous) interpretation of that unity. As the following paragraphs will show, especially the contrasting way in which Lavrin tackles the 1848 All-Slavic Congress in Prague (1969: 51-55) and the 1867 Congress in Moscow (Ibid.: 146-147) appears to serve as historical proof for his claim that small Slavic nations in particular give the good example in the search of liberal cooperation.

Although Lavrin describes the two congresses in a seemingly neutral way, there is a clear difference in his appreciation of the two international events. In the first place, his different appreciation appears from the number of pages Lavrin uses to describe the two congresses. To the congress in 1848, organized by Czech and Slovak intellectuals, and the ideas that are discussed there, Lavrin devotes no less than seven pages. To the congress in 1867 organized in Moscow, Lavrin devotes only one page and a half of his monograph. This seems to be connected in a significant way to Lavrin’s attitude towards the atmosphere on the congresses and the interpretation of Slavic unity that prevailed. When Lavrin addresses the Prague Congress, he stresses that it had nothing to do with “any political Pan-Slav tendencies” but everything with “federative Austroslavism, in the name of liberty and justice for all other nations as well” (1969: 54). Moreover, he dubs Austroslavism as “the one element which might have turned into a reliable cementing force” and might have countered “the nationalist wrangles” in the Habsburg Empire (Ibid.: 48). Lavrin even quotes a part of the liberal manifesto that was issued after the congress (Ibid.: 54). Lavrin pays particular attention to the ideas of Palacký, especially to the distinction the Czech makes between exclusive nationalism and inclusive patriotism. Lavrin describes the difference between the two, among others, with the example of Switzerland:
Here a strong and balanced Swiss patriotism transcends any potential nationalistic tendencies on the part of the German, French, Italian and Romansh communities living peacefully, together in one and the same State. (Lavrin 1969: 48)

Within the context of Russia, Slavdom and the Western World, Lavrin’s more elaborate introduction to Palacky’s Austroslavism makes it stand out as a noteworthy brand of Slavism, but nothing more. Within the context of Lavrin’s whole oeuvre, however, the attention to Palacky’s ideas is more telling, because there are important similarities between the ideas of the Czech historian and Lavrin’s own view on Slavic unity – think for example of the distinction Lavrin makes between aggressive and defensive nationalism (cf. 7.4), and between nationalist and nationalistic culture (cf. 11.1). By paying extra attention to Palacky’s ideas and by endorsing them, Lavrin can indirectly disseminate his own ideas about “good” forms of nationalism.

When Lavrin describes the atmosphere of the Moscow congress in 1867, he does not seem to include any explicit praise or criticism. It is telling, however, that he starts his description with the remark that “there were no signs of the intense liberal spirit which had prevailed in Prague” (Ibid.: 146). By adding that the congress instead focused on “Russism” and Orthodoxy, two elements he criticizes elsewhere in the monograph, Lavrin implies a negative appreciation. Moreover, it is a writing on the wall that he comments that the congress was organized “under official patronage” and that he speaks of “a strange medley” of conservative hosts – a.o. official patriots, bureaucrats and imperialists (Ibid.: 146). The adjective “strange” seems to relate more to the fact that it is odd that a conservative committee organizes an event devoted to Slavic rapprochement, rather than to the collaboration of these conservative organizers itself.

A second place where Lavrin’s different appreciation for the congresses appears, is in his descriptions of the participants to the congresses. In the case of the positively assessed Prague congress in 1848, Lavrin explicitly mentions that there were 365 participants from all over the Slavic world and that “there were quite some Poles” (1969: 54). Thus he underlines that the idea of Slavic unity was discussed by a diverse field of participants (the Poles were generally reluctant towards gatherings of Slavic peoples, especially when conservative Russians – who renounced their national identity – participated, they did not want to come). The fact that Lavrin does not seem to mind that there was only one Russian delegate (the progressive and polonophile Bakunin) suggests that he considers the presence of the Poles as more important than a large Russian delegation. Moreover, the fact that Lavrin adds that the liberal ideas of the congress “were hardly likely to appeal to the Russia of Nicholas I” (Ibid.) implies that for Lavrin dialogues about Slavic unity should be as inclusive as possible, but need no meddling from authoritarian, exclusive voices. This impression is supported by the way in which Lavrin describes the
participants of the Moscow congress in 1867: “but there were only eighty-four non-Russian delegates, and no Poles at all” (Ibid.: 146). For Lavrin the lack of diversity, in combination with the emphasis on “Russism” and Orthodoxy, seems to show that there was no truly All-Slavic atmosphere. Moreover, with his emphasis on the absence of the Poles, he implicitly refers to the disunity generated by Russia’s exclusive attitude.

Missed Opportunities in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe

In the last chapter of Russia, Slavdom and the Western World, Lavrin briefly, but explicitly reacts to several geo-political events that in his view determined contemporary European history since the First World War. Before he concludes with his appeal for a more integrated humanity, he addresses three overlapping subjects: the chaos of the interwar period, the Soviet Union’s relations with Western and Central Europe before, during and after the Second World War, and Khrushchev’s destalinization. Lavrin’s reactions to these events directly correspond to his own expectations about the role different Central and Eastern European actors (the great powers, the small nations and the common people) ideally should have played in the creation of a better, free and unified world. Overall, as the following paragraphs will show, a negative narrative prevails in Lavrin’s final chapter as this combination of liberalism and unity Lavrin aspires for was never truly attained. Quickly summarized, in Lavrin’s view the liberation of the small nations after the First World War was relative and not accompanied with unity (1969: 162-167), the unity under Stalin precluded freedom (Ibid.: 165-172), and Khrushchev’s promising détente was cut short by the start of the Brezhnev administration (Ibid.: 172-176).

Lavrin’s disappointment about the fragmentation of Central-Europe during the interwar period is related to the role played by both the great powers and the small nations. It appears from his narrative on the end of the First World War that he considers the outcome of the abrupt regime changes in Central and Eastern-Europe – mainly the fall of Austria-Hungary and the Russian Revolution – as missed opportunities for the creation of liberal and/or federative states. Lavrin criticizes the result of the Russian Revolution in this way:

The revolution of 1917 became a welcome relief – at least in its early phase. The new authorities were however much too inexperienced to be a match for Lenin whose unexpected coup d’état victimised first of all those very intellectuals who had been responsible for the fall of the Tsarist government. The upheaval which started in the name of freedom thus landed the country in the dictatorship of a single party at the expense of freedom. (Lavrin 1969: 160. Italics in original)
With regard to Austria-Hungary, then, Lavrin regrets that despite the efforts of Karel I, the last Austrian emperor (1916-1918), the empire was not turned into a federation of equals in 1918 (1969: 161). His disappointed comments seem to suggest that Lavrin – with hindsight – implies that the establishment of a liberal Soviet Union and a federative Austria would have prevented the interwar chaos, the subsequent Second World War and the polarization that characterizes his world in 1969.

At the same time, Lavrin seems to be disillusioned about the behaviour of the small Slavic nations during the interwar period. The positive tone of his discourse about the nineteenth century interest in Slavic rapprochement disappears when he describes how the new nations forget about their previous solidarity. He gives several examples of how “even” the Slav States “were much too unsettled and preoccupied [...] to bother about any partnership or genuine collaboration with others” (Ibid.: 162). Like in his criticism for The New Age (cf. 11.1), Lavrin problematizes that instead most of the new nations replaced ideas of solidarity with an appetite for assimilation (Ibid.: 163). He for example refers to the Polish behaviour towards the large Ukrainian minority and the nationalistic dreams of a greater Serbia and a greater Croatia. Different than in his contributions to The New Britain, Lavrin is less positive about the Little Entente between Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Rumania. He still states that it was a small ray of hope among all the quarrels, but adds: “still, the process of consolidation seemed too slow” (Ibid.).

When one observes Lavrin’s representation of the relations between the Soviet Union and Western and Central Europe in the build-up to the Second World War, it catches the eye that Lavrin mainly connects the start of the war to the atmosphere of distrust among Western powers and the Soviet Union, whereas he connects turning points in the war and its eventual end to (mainly) Slavic cooperation and solidarity. The first appears in his description of the negotiations of the Soviet Union with mainly Great Britain and France after Hitler’s rise to power. Lavrin presents the early rapprochement between Western Europe and the Soviet Union – e.g. Russia’s entry into the League of Nations (1934) and the Franco-Soviet pact (1935) – mainly as the responsibility of Russia “one of the first countries willing to form a common front against Hitler” (1969: 166). The failure of the negotiations Lavrin almost solely blames on the West. Although he acknowledges that Moscow was equally hesitant to trust London and Paris, he mainly underlines the diplomatic errors of the latter, like Chamberlain’s naïve attitude towards Germany and his appeasement policy (Ibid.: 166). Especially Lavrin’s description of the agonizingly slow negotiations in 1939 express his judgement about the situation:

In the summer of the same year ([1939] they both [Great Britain and France] sent a Military Mission to Moscow – not by plane, despite the urgency of the situation, but by boat. (Lavrin 1969: 168)
For Lavrin the fact that Stalin ordered to sign the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact during these negotiations and the start of the war a short time after are “a direct result of the previous short-sighted policy on the part of Great Britain and France” (Ibid.: 168).

In the same line, when Lavrin addresses the events of the Second World War itself, he mainly focuses on the power of unity and the rekindled solidarity among Slavic peoples. He presents the Soviet Union’s solidarity, which rose as an answer to the growing Nazi threat, as one of the main strengths that helped defeat Hitler (1969: 166-167). Moreover, he underlines that “the common calamity, accompanied by a fear of systematic extermination, was bound to bring the Slavs morally and politically together” (Ibid.: 169). The descriptions of the successful Russian and Yugoslav partisan resistance against the German invader that come right after this remark are thus framed as an example of such moral unity. Lavrin also tells of the foundation of a Pan-Slavic Committee in Moscow which was aimed at the support and liberation of non-Russian Slav victims of the Nazis (Ibid.: 169-170). As he hardly mentions other aspects of the war, the impact of Slavic rapprochement on the outcome of the war is magnified. This exaggeration is of course related to the monograph’s general attention to the development of the Slavic idea, but simultaneously, stressing the positive impact of solidarity arguably serves as a stepping stone towards Lavrin’s appeal for more unity at the end of this last chapter.

In a couple of remarks that are rather uncharacteristic for Lavrin, he demonstrates a kind of admiration for Stalin’s role in the defeat of Hitler and in the resuscitation of the Slav Idea, a “historical miracle”, the results of which “exceeded one’s most fantastic hopes and expectations” (1969: 164). He for example remarks: “It is, of course, no idle question whether anyone less ruthless than Stalin could have pulled the Soviet Union through Hitler’s invasion during the most critical months in Russia’s history” (Ibid.: 172). In this way, Lavrin to certain extent seems to justify Stalin’s dictatorship, which seems to be at odds with his support for small nations, and his interest in liberalism and federalism in the rest of the monograph (and his oeuvre as a whole).

Nevertheless, a closer look shows that Lavrin regularly intervenes in the text to bring his own ideal of liberal unity to the fore. In the examples of Slavic rapprochement I summed up in one of the above paragraphs, he systematically mitigates the association with Soviet imperialism and Stalin’s rule. When Lavrin writes about the rise of Soviet patriotism, for example, he explicitly (yet incorrectly332) underlines that it was “not so

332 Detrez writes that despite its veneer of multi-nationalism, Soviet patriotism was Russian nationalism in effect. The Soviet Union was presented as the culmination of Russian history and the annexation of non-Russian peoples was explained as progression and a privilege. The efforts to preserve the different cultural identities within the Soviet Union was limited to stereotypical external appearances (Detrez 2015: 337).
much in the name of an exclusive Russian nationalism” (Ibid.: 167). In this way he refers to the inclusive, over-arching form of patriotism he endorsed earlier. When Lavrin addresses the wartime rapprochement between the Soviet Union and other Slavic peoples, then, his choice of words and way of telling suggest that he detaches this rapprochement from the Soviet government and Stalin, and rather attributes it to the common people and the intelligentsia. In the paragraph devoted to this subject, Lavrin does not mention Stalin’s name, nor does he speak of the Soviet Union, something that does not happen elsewhere. Instead, he speaks of “the Russians” which has a more neutral ring to it and seems to refer less to Soviet leadership and more to the Slavic people (Ibid.: 169-170). Also Lavrin’s description of the Pan-Slavic Committee decreases the role of the Soviet government and instead underlines the role of the intelligentsia. Lavrin presents the committee, which in reality most definitely was supervised by Party officials333 (Кикешев 2008), as a cultural organization presided by artists. What is more, he quotes an excerpt from their manifesto, which suggests that this wartime rapprochement happened in an essentially liberal spirit:

Here we are uniting as equals with equals [...] We have one all-embracing wish: that the Slav nations, just as any other nations, may be able to develop in peace and freedom within the boundaries of their own States. We resolutely and firmly reject the idea of Pan-Slavism as a reactionary idea hostile to the high ideals of the equal rights of nations and of national development of all States. (Cited from Clementis in Lavrin 1969: 170)

The above interventions show that Lavrin associates the Slavic war-time rapprochement – the build-up to the “historical miracle” of Slavic unification – and its alleged positive impact on the war with the people and a liberal atmosphere rather than with Stalin himself or his regime. After the paragraph about the Pan-Slavic Committee, Lavrin even suggests that only after the fighting ended the spirit of rapprochement “tinged the policy of the Soviet Union” (1969: 170). In his remarks about the Soviet bloc after the Second World War appears Lavrin’s criticism on Stalin’s illiberal interpretation of Slavic unity. Lavrin is weary of “the watchful eye of the Russian colossus” (Ibid.: 171) and compares Stalin’s cruel gathering of the Communist lands to the ruthlessness of Ivan the Terrible (Ibid.: 172). His aversion to the illiberal unity under Stalin also appears from his favourable reaction to Yugoslavia’s secession and Khrushchev’s détente, and his frustration about the wish of Khrushchev’s successors to “re-introduce, through the back door, a new brand of Stalinism” (Ibid.: 175). These reactions show Lavrin’s (frustrated)

333 The president of the Pan-Slavic Committee was Red Army Lieutenant-General Aleksandr Gundorov.
hope that the unity in the Soviet bloc once could go hand in hand with a more a more open and less dogmatic attitude.

A final way in which Lavrin’s reactions to the events of the twentieth century signal his own views on the (Slavic) world, is his positive valuation of Tito and Khrushchev. A first important reason for Lavrin to applaud them is the way in which they open up what he calls “the monolithic structure of Communism” (1969: 171) and encourage questions about Russia’s dominance within the Soviet bloc. He praises that they have showed that the communist ideology can be interpreted in a more pragmatic way, and therefore can go without an iron grip, without (or with less) political witch hunts and with a less militant character (Ibid.: 172, 173). Lavrin for example considers it a merit of Yugoslavia’s more independent course that it also encouraged remaining satellite states “to think more independently and without waiting to be told by Moscow in advance what was right and what was wrong” (Ibid.: 172).

Lavrin attributes the same consequence to Khrushchev’s policy towards other Slavic nations (Ibid.: 173). He refers specifically to the way in which the Soviet Union reacted to the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. Lavrin claims that the adoption of a “tolerant policy of gradual concessions” instead of making the usual reprisals inspired some satellite states “to affirm the principle of partnership at the expense of blind subservience” (Ibid.). Although Lavrin calls it a disturbing event, it has to be said that his interpretation of the events is rather lenient, almost as if he does not want to harm the positive image he wants to paint of Khrushchev. Lavrin does not mention the Hungarian democratic demands, he hardly brings up the violent oppression, and the gradual concessions he applauds actually resorted little significant effect. Nevertheless, Hungary’s so-called goulash-communism in the years after the revolution did make the state the happiest barrack of the bloc. Further in the chapter, Lavrin uses the Soviet Union’s reaction to the Prague Spring in summer 1968 to show that the ousting of the more tolerant Khrushchev was an enormous setback in the creation of a freer unity and a relapse to Russian imperialism (Ibid.: 175-176). He speaks of “a blunder”, “an insane action”, “short-sightedness” and “cynical Nazi methods” which bankrupted not only the freer climate, but also the idea of Slavic unity (Ibid.).

The second (and last) reason for Lavrin to endorse Tito’s and Khrushchev’s pragmatic approach to the communist ideology and Slavic unity, is the fact that it creates the possibility to break the hostile attitude towards the West. He addresses this topic especially with relation to Khrushchev’s peaceful co-existence. Remarkably, Lavrin not only praises the rapprochement between East and West, but also uses the topic to underline that a situation like Khrushchev’s détente would give the small Slavic nations the opportunity to play an important role in the unification of Europe. Leaning on his earlier ideas of essentialism and cultural synthesis, he argues as follows:
For although the majority of them [the small Slavic nations] belong to the Western culture zone, they can yet understand (being Slavs) the workings of the Russian mind and character considerably better than any other Europeans, let alone Americans. They might have even formed a certain balance between East and West had the Khrushchev line (with its thaw) been allowed to continue. (Lavrin 1969: 175)

It is this intermediary role of the small Slavic nations Lavrin has in mind when he starts his call for the integration of Europe and humanity as a conclusion of *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*.

### 14.3 Conclusion

With his last project, the preparatory series of articles for *The Russian Review* and the end-product, *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*, Lavrin makes full circle in his career. In his overview of the evolution of the attitude of the Slavic world vis-à-vis the West and itself, he explicitly returns to several of the themes that dominated *Slavyansky mir* in the very beginning of his career. The remarks Lavrin makes throughout the monograph come back to his previous ideas about the balance between cultural openness and preservation between East and West, and the need for a liberal and heterogeneous form of unity to ensure the independence of small Slavic nations. The main difference between the first and last project of Lavrin’s long career is the context and the inspiration for his work: *Slavyansky mir* starts from the indignation about the precarious position of Slavic nations squeezed in between the imperial ambitions of Russia and Austria-Hungary and aims to educate its Russian leadership about the strength of a diverse Slavic world. Lavrin’s remarks in *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*, then, start from the fear for a nuclear war and the destruction of the entire world because of the polarization between the Capitalist West and the Communist East. Instead of convincing a Russian public, the monograph is oriented at a Western readership with a hostile attitude towards the Eastern bloc.

Because of the different context, Lavrin’s interventions in the work not only revolve around the relation between the imperial powers and their minorities and the roles Slavic nations could play within a unified Slavic world (as in his Russian work), but also explores the difficult relation between Western and Eastern Europe and the roles the Russian people and small Slavic nations could play to ameliorate that relationship. Lavrin’s remarks that accompany this exploration on the one hand conjure an image of the Russian people and intelligentsia that makes them ideal partners for the future of an
integrated humanity: an innate longing for brotherhood, an aversion to authoritarian rule and a more balanced attitude towards the West than is often assumed. On the other hand, Lavrin uses the history of Central Europe to underline the negative impact of great power competition on the unity and heterogeneity in the region, and to show how the Slavic minorities resisted the dominant empires with a supra-national solidarity. Both lines also inform Lavrin’s assessment of the more recent history in the region, with which he endorses forms of liberal unity and rejects situations where there is a lack of cooperation and forms of illiberal unity. Thus, Lavrin anticipates the explicit wish and appeal for an integrated humanity at the end of the monograph. In this way, Lavrin seems to want to convince the Western readership that an integrated Europe and an integrated mankind will benefit from better relations with Central and Eastern Europe, however much they distrust the Soviet Union and its satellite states. In a way, Tito’s defection and Khrushchev’s détente are proof for Lavrin that Eastern Europe can come closer to the West without taking in a subservient role, and by allowing small nations to play an independent role.
Conclusion

When one reads scholarly studies of Janko Lavrin, a very fragmented and contradictory image comes to the fore: accounts of Lavrin as nationalist, as flawed literary critic, as promotor of unity, as populariser of Slavic literature, as minority advocate, as hard-line imperialist, as a dreamer of a new integrated Europe, etc. All these accounts exist independently of each other. A characteristic of the existing Lavrin studies is that they approach Lavrin in a fragmented way. Most of the time their conclusions are based on an investigation of only one aspect, sometimes only one publication, of Lavrin’s oeuvre, often without taking other aspects of his oeuvre into account. This dissertation started from the question whether a different, that is a non-fragmentary, integral study of Lavrin’s career, i.e. which takes his complete oeuvre in Russia and Great Britain into account, would confirm these contradictory images or would show that the paradoxical strands in Lavrin’s work actually are snapshots of one and the same world view and only appear to be paradoxical because of the particular way in which Lavrin spreads his ideas.

In order to answer this research question a close reading approach embracing the apparent contradictory strands in Lavrin’s oeuvre was applied: his interpretation and use of images of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, his reactions to real-life examples of loyalty to or aversion to the nation and/or supra-national constellations, and his vision of cultural and societal development were scrutinized and mapped in a chronological way, thus following Lavrin’s creative footsteps from Krupa to Nottingham. While recording the different threads throughout his career and investigating continuities, parallels, contradictions and disruptions, it was taken into account how Lavrin’s work reflected and engaged with the important events throughout his life, both on a geopolitical (the World Wars, the Russian Revolution, the interwar chaos, the Cold War) and on a personal level (his move from Russia to Great Britain, and the different roles he played as culture and society critic, as editor and as professor).

This integral and chronologically conducted analysis of Lavrin’s oeuvre has shown that the dominant fragmented perception among students of his work needs to be nuanced. It
has demonstrated that focusing on one part of Lavrin’s work without taking other (or only few other) parts of his whole oeuvre into account magnifies the (often) contextual discontinuities in his career (his move from Russia to Great Britain, his affiliation with periodicals with different, even opposing ideological backgrounds, the difference between his publicist and scholarly work) and minimizes or obscures thematical continuities, even if they are actually very prominent. This dissertation shows that the narrative in the majority of Lavrin’s publications, despite the topical changes, the different discourse in different media, the changing readership and the different angles, is founded on a similar, even limited set of “rules” concerning cultural and societal development. This set of rules, then, is in turn based on Lavrin’s pursuit of a double loyalty towards the nation and the over-arching whole.

**Lavrin as a flawed literary critic and as populariser of Slavic literature**

One of the difficulties in investigating Lavrin’s work are the many different ways in which he expresses his views and ideas: the programmatic compilation of *Slavyansky mir* and *The European Quarterly*, the war-correspondence for *The New Times*, the semi-fictional account in *Albanskiye eskizy*, the selection of works for his anthologies of Slavic literature, the evaluation of the moral state of Europe during the interwar period and the psycho-critical approach in his literary criticism – they all use different discourses and apply different filters to cultural and societal issues. Regularly, Lavrin’s voice is also restricted by the expectations of his employers, especially as a contributor to the conservative *New Times*. Nevertheless, Lavrin seems to bend most of these discourses in such a way that they become a vehicle for his own, and rather consistent view on the world.

Periodicals in which Lavrin takes up a (shared) leading role, *Slavyansky mir* and *The European Quarterly*, clearly express the connection between national and supra-national cultures in their mission statements, in the design of the periodical and – in the case of *Slavyansky mir* – in the manifesto. The contents of both periodicals have an eclectic, even chaotic feel to them. A closer look, however, shows Lavrin’s hand in the selection of articles: they complement and develop the program as it is laid out in the mission statements and they engage with the respective geo-political reality to which each periodical reacts. Also the compilation of the literary sections in both periodicals embodies the pursuit of a different (Slavic) world, as it symbolizes a place of heterogeneous unity, and in the case of *Slavyansky mir*, reminds the reader actively of the activist background and the cultural views of the selected authors.

In collaborations with other periodicals or newspapers in which Lavrin does not take up a leading role, he usually finds a way to use the existing forum to spread his own views,
even if the medium does not appear to be the ideal vehicle or even appears to have opposing views, as is the case with the conservative *New Times*. In the literary periodical *Bayan*, for example, Lavrin introduces a *Slavic Section*, which allows him to (shortly) repeat a couple of dominant ideas of *Slavyansky mir*. When Lavrin starts to work for the reactionary *New Times*, his work as a war-correspondent, covering Serbia’s reaction to the invasion by Austria-Hungary, actually does not cause a conflict of ideas because the topic coincides with his advocacy for the emancipation of small Slavic nations and his criticism on imperial behaviour of the great powers. The primitive image of the Balkans that the editor *The New Times*, Suvorin, and his readership most probably expected to find in *Albanskiye eskizy*, however, cannot be reconciled with Lavrin’s view on the Slavic world. Nonetheless, a deeper analysis of the travelogue shows that Lavrin actually succeeds in using the expected orientalising discourse to (covertly) challenge the alleged inferiority of (most) Balkan peoples and simultaneously criticize Russia’s alleged superiority. When Lavrin moves to Great Britain, then, the open forum and broad spectrum of opinions of *The New Age* must have formed a welcoming environment. Moreover, the periodical’s close connection between arts and politics, its interest in the Slavic world and the debate about the possibility of a new Europe after the First World War made it a perfect venue for Lavrin to further develop his earlier ideas about the balance between cultural and civilizational development and to translate them to a broader geographical space. The New Britain Movement and its weekly *New Britain*, where the pursuit of a “third way” between the extremes of Fascism and Communism led to a combination of the pursuit of a new Europe with the advocacy for national cultural development, must have felt equally – if not more – welcoming for Lavrin. It is telling that when the weekly *New Britain* starts to deviate from its initial course, Lavrin embarks on a new adventure, starting his own *European Quarterly* which pursued exactly those ideas.

At first glance the literary criticism Lavrin writes after his move to Great Britain has little to do with his early Russian work or with the society criticism of his earliest British years as it no longer pivots around his ideal image of the (Slavic) world. Nevertheless, a more detailed investigation of his literary criticism shows that Lavrin actually hints at aspects of his former ideal world whenever he feels it is appropriate. It are exactly some of these passages, where Lavrin goes beyond literary criticism, that caused some contemporaries to label him as a flawed literary critic. Sometimes his musings about cultural and societal issues come to the fore quite directly in the form of his short “political excursions”, to use Friedberg’s term, or in remarks endorsing or refuting the world view of the writers he assesses. More often, however, Lavrin uses his psycho-critical approach to demonstrate his own ideas on a better world. First, addressing literature from a psychoanalytical angle, and thus from the expectation that it can (or should) reflect the unconscious of the author, enables Lavrin to translate the essentialist ideas on
literature of his Russian period – especially the idea of literature as a mirror of the (national) soul – to his modernist and academic environment. Second, his ideal of symbolic realist art which represents both manifest, conscious and latent, unconscious reality helps Lavrin to continue the main lines from his British society criticism. Throughout his literary criticism, Lavrin associates the binary of symbolic realism to the reunion of civilization and culture on the one hand, and the balance between individualism and collectivism on the other. Third, Lavrin’s psycho-critical approach allows him to frame the ideas of the authors he assesses: by stating that certain elements in the work under scrutiny actually indicate that there is an opposite unconscious undercurrent in the writer’s line of thought, Lavrin can manipulate the views of that writer so that they are compatible to and even corroborate his own views.

Lastly, it is important to add that not every element of Lavrin’s oeuvre reflects his ideas about cultural and societal development. The compilations of Slavic literature Lavrin makes throughout his career that are not embedded in a certain program or mission – Veles and Perun, his series of Russian short stories, his collections of Slovene and Yugoslav poetry – do not actively, neither directly nor indirectly, reflect his ideas on the development of Europe and the (Slavic) world. Generally speaking, these compilations do nothing more than popularizing Slavic literature in Europe. Nonetheless, as Lavrin believes one gets to know and comes closer to another nation by reading its literature, also these popularizing compilations can be considered a step in the pursuit of his ideal world.

**Lavrin as nationalist and promoter of supra-national unity**

Tracing Lavrin’s attitudes towards and perception of national and supra-national development proves that one cannot address them separately from each other. Throughout his career, Lavrin systematically denounces interpretations of cosmopolitanism that are normative and universalizing, and threaten national identity. He also repudiates those interpretations of nationalism that are exclusively self-centred, based on a feeling of superiority, and often harm the interests of other nations and simultaneously the over-arching constellation they (should) adhere to. Instead, he endorses and applauds interpretations of nationalism that see national development as a part of the development of a larger, supra-national whole. Moreover, he praises what Lemos and Horta now call plural interpretations of cosmopolitanism that allow and encourage national diversity. Lavrin thus systematically connects his view on the development of peoples and nations with his view on the development of the over-arching whole they belong to – be it the Slavic world, Europe or humanity.
On a conceptual, abstract level, Lavrin several times makes the explicit distinction between open and closed forms of nationalism, whereby he systematically endorses the first and rejects the second: think for instance of the pairs “defensive” and “zoological patriotism” in his essay for the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Rapprochement (Chapter Seven), “nationalist” and “nationalistic” in The New Age, “cultural and political nationalism” in New Britain (Chapter Eleven), and his support for Palacký’s distinction between inclusive and exclusive patriotism in his last monograph Russia, Slavdom and the Western World (Chapter Fourteen). Similarly, the conceptions of an ideal humanity Lavrin disseminates always consider locality as a prerequisite for universality. This for instance appears in the anthropomorphic world-view presented in the manifesto of Slavyansky mir (Chapter Five), and recurs on a more abstract / symbolic level in his British literary criticism where he extrapolates his ideal of supra-national complementarity to his pursuit of a supra-individual humanity – a balance between the individual and the collective (Chapter Thirteen).

The teleology which is central to Lavrin’s view on human development forms an important parallel with the Slavophile aim to contribute to the universal development of culture and with the universal essentialism that Daniel Malachuk attributes to thinkers like Mazzini, Eliot, Renan and Whitman. Just like these nineteenth century thinkers, Lavrin uses the ideal of a rich and diverse humanity as an argument to legitimize and stimulate independent national development. At the same time, he transcends this focus on national development and systematically accompanies his call for national development with a call for actual rapprochement – something the Slavophiles and Malachuk’s thinkers only imagined in an abstract way (the fact that the Slavophiles did not move beyond Russia is also an important part of Lavrin’s critique of the movement (Chapter Fourteen)). What is more, Lavrin sometimes reverses the argumentation and uses the ideal of free national development as a way to legitimize and encourage supra-national cooperation: the different unities he envisions or endorses at different moments in his career – the Slavic world in Slavyansky mir, the cooperation among small Slavic nations and the ideal of an integrated Europe in his interwar society criticism, Austro-Slavic federation and an integrated humanity in Russia, Slavdom and the Western World – are imagined as protective and simultaneously enabling and empowering spaces.

On a more concrete level, Lavrin’s combination of nationalism and cosmopolitanism determines his expectations about cultural practice. Throughout his career, most of his assessments depend on one of three sometimes overlapping scales: (1) difference – unity, (2) preservationism – cultural openness, and (3) cultural – civilizational development. Generally speaking, Lavrin considers it a sign of good cultural development when the scales are balanced and reflect a combination of the national and the supra-national. Reversely, when the scales are unbalanced, i.e. when they tip to one of either sides, Lavrin
associates it with a disordered development of culture and, not unimportantly, of society at large. It was possible to distinguish these scales by exploring two of the fields of tension that served as guidelines for the close reading approach of this dissertation: homogeneity versus heterogeneity and culture versus politics. In this conclusion I want to explicitly link the scales and the fields of tension together.

(1) That Lavrin pursues a balance between difference and unity came to the fore by exploring (in line with the exploration of different cosmopolitanisms in Mapping Cosmopolitanisms) how the Slovene envisions unity in different cultural spheres. Remarkably, that Lavrin tries to achieve such a balance appears not only in his preference for heterogeneous unity that emanates in the majority of his works, but also in his occasional pursuit of homogeneous unity. Most often heterogeneous interpretations of unity prevail in Lavrin’s works. On the one hand, he shows his preference for heterogeneous interpretations of unity via his criticism on uniformizing authoritarianism and / or imperialism of great powers. This criticism is a constant throughout his career and is expressed in different ways in Slavyansky mir (Chapter Seven), his British society criticism (Chapter Eleven) and in Russia, Slavdom and the Western World (Chapter Fourteen). On the other hand, Lavrin spreads a heterogeneous interpretation of unity by regularly praising liberal initiatives and by his own (symbolic) proposals for alternative, more liberal forms of unity throughout his career. Think for example of how the literary section of Slavyansky mir and The European Quarterly resemble both difference and unity (Chapters Seven and Eleven). Yet another way in which Lavrin’s preference for heterogeneous unity comes to the fore are his reactions to extreme forms of collectivism and individualism in his British literary criticism (Chapter Thirteen). By denouncing both amorphous unity and extreme difference, Lavrin arrives at a vision of society that is essentially a heterogeneous form of unity.

At the same time, the ideal of balance between difference and unity also comes to the fore in the search for certain forms of homogeneity. Although Lavrin generally idealizes plurilingual and pluricultural unity, his narrative nonetheless holds certain elements that betray a need for homogeneity. Both in Lavrin’s Russian and British work one can find traces of different kinds of homogeneity. Sometimes, they show traces of a belief that the supra-national whole is characterized by a specific commonality: Lavrin speaks of “tribal” and occasionally of linguistic kinship among Slavic peoples in his Russian work (Chapters Five and Seven), while in his British society and literary criticism he refers to the idea of a spiritual homogeneity in the form of a European or even universal consciousness (Chapters Eleven and Twelve). More often, however, his work holds traces of the pursuit of a new shared morality, of the belief that his ideal world can be attained when nations and individuals behave justly and respectfully vis-à-vis each other. In Lavrin’s career such just behaviour is for the very first time described in Slavyansky mir, where it is called
“Slavic” (Chapter Five). Throughout his career, Lavrin several times underlines the need for an idea that could generate this just behaviour. He does so, for example, in his search for a new, uniting and aligning guiding principle in his British work (Chapters Eleven and Thirteen). Even though he no longer explicitly calls it “Slavic” after his move to Great Britain, throughout his whole career Lavrin envisions a humanity that is characterized by such “Slavic” behaviour: he is convinced that this shared morality, the respectful and humane attitude towards the other will enable and safeguard the heterogeneity in other spheres of life.

(2) When Lavrin assesses the development of national cultures and literatures, he generally pursues a balance between the nationalist practice of preservation and the cosmopolitan practices of imitation and cultural transfer. This is a combination of cultural nationalism and cultural cosmopolitanism which Erik Kauffman would call “schizophrenic double-consciousness”. For Lavrin this double-consciousness does not appear to be schizophrenic at all, on the contrary, he sees no contradiction in it and considers it as the only valid and fruitful option for cultural development. The need to be inspired by others, but to transcend imitation and in that way to achieve a synthesis between national and foreign inspiration plays a large role in all works of his Russian career and regularly recurs in his British literary criticism (Chapters Six, Nine and Twelve). This is reinforced by Lavrin’s constant aversion to cultural practices which have a uniformizing effect and / or which prevent cultural synthesis like imitation, assimilation, isolation and repression (Chapters Six, Seven, Nine, Eleven, Twelve and Fourteen). What is more, Lavrin regularly expresses the belief that only nationally rooted literature can serve as a vehicle for supra-national rapprochement. This is clearly expressed in the transnational missions of Slavyansky mir and The European Quarterly and in his maintained essentialist belief that national literature acquaints the foreign reader with that nation’s consciousness (Chapters Five, Ten and Eleven).

(3) Lastly, Lavrin seeks a balance between culture and civilization. Throughout his career Lavrin pays quite some attention to the different values that potentially guide national development: is it only guided by the pursuit of political and economic gain – civilizational progress, – or does it also value cultural progress? Ideally, as Lavrin’s positive assessments of independent writers (Chapters Eight and Thirteen), his idealization of the Serbian people in Albanskiye eskizy (Chapter Nine) and his critique of the state of interwar Europe (Chapter Eleven) show, a well-developed nation should combine a pursuit of civilizational progress and a high level of culture (especially literature). Lavrin often underlines that a high cultural level serves as a moral checks and balances for a nation’s civilizational progress. In those same works, Lavrin problematizes societies that are guided primarily by the pursuit of political and economic gain and instrumentalize culture for that purpose. The omission of the checks and balances of
culture leads to a state of moral degeneration, which Lavrin sometimes dubs “civilized barbarism”. Throughout his career, Lavrin’s pursuit of the balance between culture and civilization reflects his pursuit of balance between the national and the supra-national in different ways. Initially, Lavrin’s early Russian works suggest that civilizational progress and the problems that come with it are “universal” and “international” and that rooted literature should be able to evaluate whether this progress harms the national spirit or not (Chapter Eight). In his later work, Lavrin focuses less on a connection with the national spirit and speaks more broadly of a connection with life in general. The need for balance between the national and the supra-national now comes to the fore in his emphasis that an excessive focus on political and economic gain leads to loss of national identity, not only because of a lack of cultural development, but also because of the standardization of society, increasing self-centredness of nations, and the destructive discord in Europe that comes with it (Chapters Nine and Eleven). Also Lavrin’s call to revalue culture and to find an over-arching guiding principle that would unite individuals and nations in a voluntary way shows the connection between a balance between culture and civilization, and national and supra-national development.

Lavrin’s view on the balance between culture and civilization shows an ambiguous attitude on the political level. When one interprets politics as the distribution of institutional and / or administrative power, as Erik Kaufmann and Oisín Keohane do, then Lavrin’s ideas do not really seem to have a political ring to them. In fact, Lavrin mainly speaks out against political constellations – national and supra-national – when their pursuit of power impedes a diverse cultural landscape and a balanced cultural development. He does not problematize the power distribution as such. Nevertheless, Lavrin’s regular statements about minority emancipation and cultural freedom definitely are aimed at political change, as they ask for more liberal and democratic interpretations of unity in centralized empires and as they represent culture as a bridge between rivalling nations. In fact, Lavrin’s emphasis on equality, complementarity and mutual respect among peoples and nations, and his search for a shared “Slavic” morality in order to safeguard minority identity and national difference come closer to Galin Tihanov’s take on political cosmopolitanism: an attempt to reconcile difference, to couple it with a universal respect for human dignity.

**Lavrin as minority advocate and as dreamer of a new integrated Europe**

Paying attention to the third field of tension, periphery versus centre, has helped to reveal how Lavrin’s assessment of national and supra-national development is closely related to his perpetual position as an outsider from the periphery – part of the Slavic
minority in Austria-Hungary, a Slovene and a South-Slav in pre-revolutionary Russia, and an Eastern European in Great-Britain. Similarly to Katherine Sorrels’s conclusion that individuals and nations with a contested membership to supra-national constellations often redefine those constellations most innovatively (like the Jewish minority’s interpretation of Pan-Europa in her work), it can be concluded that Lavrin uses his work to change and redefine the marginal, inferior and subservient position of the small Slavic peoples and nations within the Slavic and European cultural spheres.

The very beginning of Lavrin’s career was informed by the wish to “do something about the case of the menaced Slavs in Austria-Hungary”. Throughout his entire career, Lavrin pays ample attention to the precarious position of his native region and other Slavic minorities/nations, which are initially squeezed in between empires and great powers, and at a later stage are victimized by Nazi Germany and / or absorbed by the Soviet Union. Although Lavrin partly envisions the membership to a supra-national constellation as a form of protection against the appetite of strong neighbours, he does not play the card of the victim. Instead his work focuses on the potential benefits the Slavic and (later) Western-European centre would get if Central and South-Eastern European peoples achieved an equal position. The three scales Lavrin uses to assess cultural practices (difference – unity, preservationism – cultural openness, and culture – civilization) highlight the benefits of more diversity, a richer culture and cultural exchange and problematize the effects of uniformization, cultural veneer and self-centredness. What is more, Lavrin not only uses these scales to showcase the benefits of a more reciprocal relationship between periphery and centre. He takes it a step further by trying to reverse the existing hierarchy between them. Lavrin increasingly uses his assessments to reimagine European and global international relations. He redefines the roles different peoples and nations can play in Europe and the world in such a way that the small nations in Central and South-Eastern Europe become incontournable.

Lavrin’s assessment of Western Europe based on the above three scales shows that he believes it can no longer occupy a central position in his ideal world. Although Lavrin respects and values the past cultural achievements of Western-European nations, he does not appreciate the way in which modern Western culture and, hence, Western civilization develops. Initially, via Slavyansky mir, he mainly problematizes the unbalance between independence and unity. The articles in the periodical particularly tackle the feeling of superiority of Austria-Hungary and Germany and their unjust mission civilatrice which is presented as an attempt to replace the culture of Slavic minorities by an allegedly superior German one (Chapters Six and Seven). Additionally, a couple of articles in the periodical point to the unbalance between civilization and culture in Western Europe. In Lavrin’s late Russian career the relationship between civilization and culture takes in a more prominent position. In his essay for The Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly
Rapprochement and especially *Albanskiye eskizy*, Lavrin’s discourse on Western Europe mainly focuses on its civilized barbarism, i.e. how it subordinated its culture to political and economic gain. Lavrin links this development to the unbalanced attitude of the nations in Western Europe towards unity and cultural development (Chapters Eight, Nine and Eleven). In his eyes, the unchecked pursuit of political and economic gain reinforces the self-centred behaviour of the Western-European nations, and causes a stagnation, if not a regression of their cultural development. Throughout his entire career, Lavrin systematically relates the turmoil in Europe during the twentieth century to these defects. Imperialism, the First World War, the chaos in interwar Europe, the rise of Fascism and Nazism and the Second World War – he all considers them proof of the moral bankruptcy of Europe and its inability to overcome it. Whereas his early contributions to *The New Age* express the hope that the First World War will instil enough courage for a “transvaluation”, his later assessments of the state of Europe both in his society criticism and his literary criticism emphasize that the Western-European nations actually need to be saved on a cultural and a moral level. His overviews of European literature mainly show an image of a fragmented and an increasingly superficial culture which is not able to give an adequate response to the unbalance it is going through. Lavrin’s monographs on Ibsen and Nietzsche, however, appear to be Lavrin’s way of suggesting that the work of independent artists can help to find a way to overcome the poor state of Europe, even though the writers have not succeeded in doing this (yet).

Lavrin’s opinion about Russia’s potential role in his ideal world fluctuates more. During his Russian career, thus before the Russian Revolution, Lavrin focuses on the unbalanced development of Russia: he points to its self-centredness and feeling of superiority within the Slavic world, but also at its imitative attitude, especially of the elite, towards Western-European fashion and civilized barbarism (Chapters Five to Nine). At that moment in time, Lavrin questions whether Russia can actually take up a leading role in Europe or in the Slavic world without going through a thorough change. In the works he publishes after the Russian Revolution, however, Lavrin’s attitude changes drastically. In his British society criticism, he follows Soviet Russia with interest because in his view it is the only nation that has tried to end the status quo of the old, bankrupt European continent. Lavrin starts to assess the communist project of the Soviets as a potential guiding principle that may lead to a supra-individual society and may play an exemplary, central role in Europe’s future (Chapter Eleven). He is not uncritical of the changes in Soviet Russia, though. In early years he problematizes that the revolution is based on badly internalized imported ideas, while later on he criticizes the Union’s isolation from the rest of the world, speaks out against the increasing degeneration into an amorphous collective without individual agency, and also questions the increasing dominance of civilization that appears from the Five Year plans, Stakhanovism and the subservience of
culture. At the same time, Lavrin’s assessment of Russian literature for a long time seems to serve as a counterweight to this critique of the Russian state (Chapter Twelve). Lavrin’s stress on the balanced aspects of Russian literature – he emphasizes the aptness of many Russian writers for cultural synthesis and underlines that the political changes have not (entirely) hindered the continuity between pre-revolutionary and Soviet culture – showcases his hope that Russia may once help to redeem Europe’s civilized barbarism. From *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World*, then, emanates a dampened enthusiasm about Soviet Russia. Lavrin considered Khrushchev as exemplary, because he in his view showed that communism indeed could go together with less oppression and with more openness, and could help end the extreme fragmentation of the world. The fact that Khrushchev was deposed, then, served as proof for Lavrin that the Russian authorities will never contribute to a better world (Chapter Fourteen). Instead, Lavrin now puts his money on the Russian people, which he presents, as he also did earlier in his career, as historically opposed to authoritarian oppression, prone for cooperation, and open for cultural exchange, also with the West.

Lavrin’s hopes for the role Central and South Eastern European peoples and nations could play within the Slavic world and Europe are maintained throughout his entire career. He starts challenging the peripheral position of these small Slavic nations implicitly from the moment he suggests that Russia should get of its high horse and learn more about the equally interesting cultures of its “little” brothers in *Slavyansky mir* (Chapter Five). Lavrin’s criticism becomes explicit when he suggests that the Slavic world – without Russia at its lead (!) – could play a redemptive role in the development of Europe in his essay for the Society of Slavic Scientific and Scholarly Rapprochement (Chapter Eight). Lavrin repeats his ambition for Central and South-Eastern Europe in different ways, usually by reinterpreting the (alleged) backwardness of the regions in a positive way. In *Albanskiye eskiży* he underlines the potential redemptive role of the “primitive” Serbian people, by presenting it as a nation with a balance between culture and civilization, between preservation and cultural openness and with a value set aimed at cooperation (Chapter Nine). In the weekly *New Britain* and in *Russia, Slavdom and the Western World* Lavrin holds (cynically) that the poverty of these small Slavic nations, but especially their common sense prevented them from following the power competition of the other, larger nations and made them focus on cultural quality and cooperation instead (Chapters Eleven and Fourteen). Other times, he argues that the small Slavic nations could play an essential role because they take in an intermediary position between Western-Europe and Russia. Especially in his last work, which problematizes the Cold-War gap between East and West, Lavrin stresses how the peripheral position of the small Slavic nations vis-à-vis both power blocs may enable them to bridge that gap (Chapter Fourteen). Especially Yugoslavia, steering its independent communist course, is
considered promising. This does not mean that Lavrin is not critical of the development of the small Slavic nations: during the interwar period he speaks out against the self-centred tendencies of the newly liberated nations and their pursuit of political and economic gain over cultural development. He also problematizes how Yugoslavia was turned into a homogenising dictatorship during the interwar period. In both cases, however, the dominant reaction is disappointment about unfulfilled dreams rather than a complete dismissal of the region’s redemptive potential (Chapter Eleven).

**Beyond fragmentation**

This dissertation has revealed the thematical continuities that run like a thread through the oeuvre of Janko Lavrin. It has disproved the contradictory and fragmented perceptions about his work and has shown that a fragmented approach to Lavrin’s oeuvre often leads to misconceptions about his views. This in-depth study of the seemingly paradoxical strands of nationalism and cosmopolitanism in Lavrin’s work has led to a better understanding of the Slovene’s views on cultural and societal development and the development of humanity at large. These insights can serve as a solid base for further research about Lavrin and his work. Moreover, this dissertation shows that future research, regardless of its subject, angle or approach, should take into account how the subject under scrutiny comes to the fore in Lavrin’s whole oeuvre. The views on cultural and societal development Lavrin spreads throughout his career are so consistent that it is likely that a study of a remarkable aspect in a specific work has traces in different, maybe unexpected parts of his oeuvre.

I see several possibilities for future Lavrin research. First, a closer look at his manuscripts held at the archives of Nottingham University can give more insight in the genesis of Lavrin’s ideas. Moreover, the archive holds a couple of manuscripts of unpublished works which can contribute to a better understanding of his views. I think for example of an unpublished monograph on Walt Whitman, one of the nineteenth-century thinkers whom Malachuk associated with universal essentialism, which can give more insight in how Lavrin interpreted Whitman’s combination of nation and universe. Second and more importantly, this dissertation can serve as a starting point to re-address the interaction between Lavrin and other cultural actors. The reinterpretation of Albanskiye eskizy for example gives several lead points for further research about Zdanevich’s *Yanko King of the Albanians*. What is more, the revelation of Lavrin’s very early engagement with ideas of a new Europe during the interwar period creates several possibilities. It for example calls for a comparison with other Eastern-European thinkers with an interest in a new Europe like Dimitrije Mitrinović and Tomáš Masaryk. At the
same time, this dissertation can serve as a base for a study of how Lavrin fits within international networks of thinkers about a new Europe after the First World War: e.g. the non-conformist “troisième voie” in the 1930s, Mitrinović’s network of intellectuals, and the Pan Europa movement. Third, in line with the new modernism studies, for example the Bad Modernisms of Mao and Walkowitz (2006), further research of Lavrin’s idiosyncratic engagement with modernist periodicals and modernist discourses in Great Britain can provide more insight in the contribution of peripheral voices within British modernism.
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