THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF N. G. CHERNYSHEVSKY

by

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This thesis deals with three major works by N. G. Chernyshevsky: his first novel, *What Is To Be Done?*, and his two philosophical essays, "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" and "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality."

Chernyshevsky's text is closely examined to present a fair cross-section of his arguments and the manner in which they are formulated, and to point out their shortcomings.

*What Is To Be Done?,* although written as a form of fiction, lacks psychological intricacies. The purpose of the work is political propaganda; hence its form is a philosophical dialogue, in which Chernyshevsky attempts to formulate his own system of ethics. He grapples unsuccessfully with utilitarianism, adopting some of the principles of J. S. Mill.

In "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," Chernyshevsky attempts to formulate his own theory of knowledge. He shows himself to be a kind of empiricist, with strong tendencies toward materialism and pragmatism. He also tackles some moral issues, advocating utilitarianism.

In "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality," Chernyshevsky offers a critique of Hegelian aesthetics. He then proceeds to develop his own aesthetic theory.

The approach to all three works is to lay bare Chernyshevsky's system, point out his philosophical inconsistencies and show where his prejudices lie.
Chernyshevsky's work is demonstrated to be of little merit as far as its philosophical depth and literary scope are concerned. Instead, it stands as a monument to the kind of attitudes and concerns of the Russian positivist of the mid-nineteenth century.
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INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this study of N. G. Chernyshevsky deals with his first novel, What Is To Be Done? The remaining two chapters deal with his two major philosophical essays, "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" and "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality." These three works seem to be the most relevant material in viewing Chernyshevsky's thought, and they can safely be considered the backbone of all his later works.

The study deals closely with Chernyshevsky's text to present the reader with a fair cross-section of his arguments and the manner in which these are formulated, and points out their shortcomings.

A great deal of scholarly work has been done on Chernyshevsky, both in the Soviet Union and in the West. However, these works do not concentrate on the actual texts of his works and they fail to analyze and examine them closely.

Most of the Soviet literary criticism concentrates on the historical relevance of Chernyshevsky's work, on his apparent heroism in face of the repressive Tsarist regime, and, of course, on biographical studies. Studies in English seem to follow a similar historico-biographical pattern. For example, Franco Venturi's lengthy volume Roots of Revolution presents Chernyshevsky in the context of radical, political aspirations of the mid-nineteenth century. E. Lampert's book Sons Against Fathers also concentrates on presenting him in
an historical context, and attempts to trace his development through biographical data.

William F. Woehrlin's recent book Chernyshevsky (The Man and the Journalist) contains two chapters, "Philosophy" and "Aesthetics and Literary Criticism," in which the author deals in some detail with Chernyshevsky's ideas. However, Woehrlin concentrates on presenting Chernyshevsky's development through those who influenced him and through the literary scene of his time. In both of these chapters Woehrlin's study of Chernyshevsky's ideas is too general.

It appears that Chernyshevsky scholars are not keen on tackling the confusing and confused labyrinth of his philosophy. However, it is important to lay bare the theory on which he hoped to build his so-called "new and just, progressive society."

Chernyshevsky states in "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" that "theoretical fallacy inevitably leads to practical harm" (p. 125). Ironically, his own work became a good illustration of this point when it was later adopted as a teaching manual by Lenin. And to this day Chernyshevsky's "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality" stands as a principal source of the official Soviet attitude towards art and culture. The crude materialism of his "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" also remotely voices the official doctrine of the Kremlin.
CHAPTER I

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

In mid-nineteenth-century European thought, the voice of authority was very highly regarded. It has been said that

... although the critical spirit was characteristic of the age, nevertheless what especially distinguished [it] was [its] insistent attitude of acceptance, [its] persistent belief in (but only rare examination of) the credentials of authority, its innate desire to affirm and conform rather than to reject or to question ... the will to believe overrode the desire to question, and private judgment was renounced, both deliberately and unconsciously, for external authority.¹

Perhaps the best example of this attitude in Russia is the literary endeavour of N. G. Chernyshevsky.

In What Is To Be Done?, his first work of fiction, Chernyshevsky presents a selective picture of the most advanced philosophical ideas of the time, hoping to show the reader that there were answers at hand. His motto is to spell out the truth, even at the expense of art and style:

У меня нет ни тени художественного таланта. Я даже и языком-то владею плохо. Но это все-таки ничего: читай, добрейшая публика! прочтешь не без пользы. Истина — хорошая вещь: она вознаграждает недостатки писателя, который служит ей. Поэтому я скажу тебе: если бы я не предупредил тебя, тебе, пожалуй, показалось бы, что повесть написана художественно, что у автора много поэтического таланта. Но я предупредил тебя, что таланта у меня нет,— ты и будешь знать теперь, что все достоинства повести даны ей только ее истинностью. [p. 11]²

This is a curious statement at which most contemporary scholars and critics would no doubt cringe,³ but above all, it is the kind of statement which is typical of Chernyshevsky's
ideas and attitudes. It virtually summarizes his aesthetic principles as formulated in the essay on "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality." For Chernyshevsky, art has no relation to philosophical and social significance. He associates art with artifacts, with superficial embellishments, hence he holds that art brings forth a kind of sugar-coated illusion which does not exemplify the living reality. The Hegelian aesthetic against which he argues in the essay sees art as a dialectical process, as a serious portrayal of social and philosophical realities. Chernyshevsky disagrees.  

In "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality," Chernyshevsky criticizes Hegel:

It is also needless to say that the beautiful according to Hegel is only a phantom that comes from a superficial view, unenlightened by philosophical thinking, which obscures the seeming perfect manifestation of the idea in the separate object, so that the more thinking is developed the less remains of beauty until, at last, with fully developed thinking, only truth is left, beauty has vanished.  

Philosophical speculation or thinking in general must necessarily destroy any aesthetic entity, Chernyshevsky argues. Hence his rigid distinction between expression and content. Accordingly, What Is To Be Done? is written from the perspective of "what is told" rather than of "how it is told."

As the title suggests, the novel is intended as a manual of how to improve one's social and personal situation, of how to bring about the Utilitarian "greatest happiness" for oneself and how to aid others to this goal. Vera Pavlovna,
the female protagonist, is found in a solitary and poor social condition in the exposition of the story. She begins to find her way out of this situation, when she meets Lopukhov, a medical student:

... что ж странныго, что тебе хочется быть вольным и счастливым человеком! Ведь это желание — не бог знает какое головоломное открытие, не бог знает какой подвиг геройства.

А вот что странно, Верочка, что есть такие же люди, у которых нет этого желания, у которых совсем другие желания, и им, пожалуй, покажется странны,

... А ты не знаешь, что это странно, а я знаю, что это не странно, что это одно и натурально, одно и по-человечески; просто по-человечески; — "я чувствую радость и счастье" — значит "мне хочется, чтобы все люди стали радостны и счастливы" — [p. 57]

This is where Chernyshevsky's thesis begins to unravel. His first premise is much like that of J. S. Mill in his Utilitarianism:

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals "utility" or "the greatest happiness principle" holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure. ... pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things ... are desirable either for pleasure inherent in themselves or as means to the promotion of pleasure and prevention of pain.6

Simultaneously with the plot, these ideas are elaborated and exemplified.

The reader's understanding is to advance along with Vera Pavlovna's. So, what Lopukhov is to Vera Pavlovna, Chernyshevsky is to the reader. Vera's awareness develops in stages. At first Lopukhov acquaints her with some essential
pragmatic axioms: "Man is governed exclusively by self-interest," he states.

— Стало быть, правду говорят холодные практические люди, что человеком управляет только расчет выгоды?

— Они говорят правду. То, что называют возвышенностями чувствами, идеальными стремлениями, — все это в общем ходе жизни совершенно ничтожно перед стремлением каждого к своей пользе, и в корне само состоит из того же стремления к пользе. [p. 65]

Like Hobbes, Hume, and the utilitarians Bentham and Mill, Chernyshevsky puts forth a completely individualistic picture of human nature. He does not follow closely any one of these philosophers, but shows some similarities to Mill. However, Chernyshevsky's interpretation of the utilitarian philosophy is somewhat muddled. He aims to popularize these thoughts, and this requires a good grasp of the subject, yet often it is not clear whether he knows what he is talking about. The manner in which he handles his arguments often carries with it a great deal of naïveté. His notion of self-interest is a case in point.

Chernyshevsky explores this topic in greater detail in "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," and it seems that his examples of self-interested actions either contradict the notion or describe a different thing altogether, as, for instance, will. In What Is To Be Done? his ideas on this topic are better exemplified, yet he encounters the same kind of problems here, just as he did in his essay. He states that "men are governed exclusively by self-interest," but
self-interest refers only to "acting from certain motives in a given type of situation." The same action done from the same motive in another type of situation would not be correctly characterized as done from self-interest. Self-interest is involved where disregard for legitimate claims of others is concerned. And besides, Chernyshevsky cannot claim that all men will be ready to disregard legitimate claims of others in all situations. So what he infers is that men exercise their will. But what he wants to say is that men desire happiness; he wants to promote the utilitarian principle here.

Chernyshevsky's promotion of self-interest creates problems in his system. Had he followed Mill's theory closely and dealt with the individual's desire for happiness, happiness for the greatest number, and the pleasure and pain factors, he would have been free of major inconsistencies. Luckily, his later statements tend to clarify his earlier ones and put them into perspective. Lopukhov's further instruction of Vera Pavlovna introduces a kind of utilitarian calculus:

— Рассчитывайте, что для вас полезнее.
— Что для меня полезнее! Вы знаете, я очень не богата. С одной стороны, нерасположение к человеку; с другой — господство над ним, завидное положение в обществе, деньги, толпа поклонников.
— Взвесьте все; что полезнее для вас, то и выбирайте.
— И если я выберу — богатство мужа и толпу поклонников?
— Я скажу, что вы выбрали то, что вам казалось сообразнее с вашим интересом. [p. 66]
Bentham's hedonic calculus was a doctrine by which one could determine a way to judge between alternative courses of action by considering the consequences of each, and assessing them in terms of the pleasure and pain of all the people affected.9

Chernyshevsky's calculus is at this point concerned only with the one individual's happiness rather than with that of all involved. Lopukhov further explains his position:

... если вы так сделали, значит, такова была ваша личность, что нельзя вам было поступить иначе при таких обстоятельствах, они скажут, что вы поступили по необходимости вещей, что, собственно говоря, вам и не было другого выбора.

— И никакого порицания моему поступку?

— Кто имеет право порицать выводы из факта, когда существует факт? Ваша личность в данной обстановке — факт; ваши поступки — необходимые выводы из этого факта, делаемые природою вещей. Вы за них не отвечаете, а порицать их — глупо.

This passage is somewhat confusing. The utilitarian system presents the individual with choices. The individual has to choose, and surely he is responsible for his actions. Chernyshevsky seems to be saying here, just as he did in "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," that the choice factor is negligible. There may be a plausible explanation, however. Mill argues that knowledge provides greater horizons, therefore a greater number of choices and a greater moral strength:

It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only
know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides. Accordingly, there is only one (thus inevitable) course of action for the fool, while there is a number of choices for someone like Socrates, who will decide according to his moral strength. Although Chernyshevsky is vague about the question of moral responsibility, the later development of the plot of *What Is To Be Done?* supports this interpretation.

What is desirable for Maria Alexeyevna (Vera's mother), or for Storeshnikov (Vera's well-to-do former fiancé) is not desirable, for instance, for Vera, Lopukhov, or Kirsanov. Thus the more evolved the individual's consciousness, the more complex is his reasoning in choosing his courses of action. Vera Pavlovna decides not to marry the wealthy Storeshnikov; she neither likes nor respects him. While independence rather than money and position is Vera's choice, Vera's mother, on the other hand, finds such a view incomprehensible.

Virtue, according to the utilitarian doctrine, is not naturally and originally part of the end, but it is capable of becoming so; and in those who live it disinterestedly it has become so, and is desired and cherished, not as means to happiness, but as a part of their happiness.

Chernyshevsky, like Mill, does not place virtue as either a part or the end of the utilitarian happiness, but shows by example (e.g., Lopukhov's, Kirsanov's, Vera's lifestyles) that a life of virtue is preferable.

In "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," Chernyshevsky argues for self-interest throughout the essay, but
in the end he comes down in support of rational conduct which, for him, means the pursuit of virtues: "Only good actions are prudent; only he who is good is rational, and he is rational only to the degree that he is good." Although this may sound as though Chernyshevsky declares allegiance to Plato, his source here is probably Feuerbach.

In 1849 Chernyshevsky read Feuerbach and accepted his anthropologism. The first premise of anthropologism states that only a sensible being is a real being. We do not know exactly how far Feuerbach's influence on Chernyshevsky goes. It seems that Chernyshevsky's interpretation of Feuerbach is highly pragmatic: for instance, Chernyshevsky has a tendency to deify matter; Feuerbach would not approve. This is especially evident in Chernyshevsky's "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality." We can only say that Chernyshevsky accepted Feuerbach's view that only a sensible being is a real being and, further, his overall view that man is a complex chemical compound whose behaviour is strictly subject to the laws of causality, and whose character is determined by the features of the environment within which he is obliged to act. Feuerbach, for instance, advocates that man is what he eats; Chernyshevsky also holds this view.

In "The Anthropological Principle of Philosophy," Chernyshevsky attempts to show that rationality has a will of its own. "He [man] may say to himself: I will be wicked, I will do people harm; but he will not be able to do that, any more
than a clever man can be a fool even if he wanted to be one." Similarly then, according to Chernyshevsky, a good chess player would not be capable of making a wrong move if his life depended on being able to lose the game, even supposing he played against a tyrant, who was known to dispose of his intellectual superiors. By the same token, Galileo would have been incapable of recanting his teaching before the Inquisition. What happened to self-interest and to Chernyshevsky's statement about the force of events dictating the course of action? He blatantly contradicts what he says in "The Anthropological Principle" by his later statements in What Is To Be Done? Luckily enough, the actions he ascribes to his fictional characters redeem him and show his rationale to be coherent enough.

In Chernyshevsky's conception, the power of clear thinking gives moral strength. Hence, like Socrates, his characters are capable of great sacrifices. For instance, Lopukhov leaves home and friends for America and fakes suicide to free his wife when he discovers that she is in love with another. Chernyshevsky makes both the rationalist and the utilitarian principles compatible; the rational man cannot but follow his reason (he has no other will, as it were), even though such a course of action may prove physically painful to him. But this, in the utilitarian sense, may be a right choice because he merely sacrifices a smaller pleasure for a greater pleasure, and to follow his reason gives
him more pleasure than any other course of action. This is not in contradiction with Chernyshevsky's statement in *What Is To Be Done?* that if one's action is such and such, that means one is an individual who could not act otherwise under the circumstances.

Chernyshevsky's relationship with the reader intensifies as he traces Vera Pavlovna's development in social awareness. At first, conversing with Lopukhov, she merely identifies with his ideas. Later, as Lopukhov's wife, her own understanding begins to crystallize. Chernyshevsky shows the progression of her awareness in Vera's dreams. In her first dream, Vera is able to identify her situation at home with a state of paralysis; she longed for independence but her struggle took place on the subconscious level, leading to mental anguish but not to a change in her situation. Lopukhov was the first to bring it out to her consciousness, and she was able to channel her previously negative attitudes into positive ideas and efforts which culminated in a total change in her situation.

Later, after having been exposed to Lopukhov's philosophy books, Vera comes to the conclusion that "everything rests on money":

— Все основано на деньгах, . . . у кого деньги, у того власть и право, говорят ваши книги; значит, пока женщина живет на счет мужчины, она в зависимости от него. [p. 89]

Like Mill in *The Principles of Political Economy*, Chernyshevsky advocates financial independence for woman. But he is well aware of the difficulties women of his era faced if they
tried for independence. Vera Pavlovna summarizes these thoughts:

Нам формально закрыты почти все пути гражданской жизни. Нам практически закрыты очень многие,—почти все,—даже из тех путей общественной деятельности, которые...не...загорожены для нас формальными препятствиями. Из всех сфер жизни нам оставлено тесниться только в одной сфере семейной жизни,—быть членами семьи, и только. Кроме этого, какие же занятия открыты нам? Почти только одно, быть гуверnantками; да еще разве—давать какие-нибудь уроки, которых не захотят отнять у нас мужчины. Нам тесно по этой единственной дороге; мы мешаем друг другу, потому что слишком толпимся на ней; она почти не может давать нам самостоятельности, потому что нас, предлагающих свои услуги, слишком много. . . .

Нет, пока женщины не будут стараться о том, чтобы разойтись на много дорог, женщины не будут иметь самостоятельности. Конечно, пробивать новую дорогу тяжело. [p. 259]

Chernyshevsky knows the actual situation, yet he suspends the actual to show the possible—the future happier society. He shows Vera Pavlovna at first thriving in her sewing business (a co-operative which employs a number of young women who manage the business among themselves and share the profits), and later, when financially secure, entering a medical school.

Chernyshevsky deplores the social realities of his period. He sees both women and the poor as the most underprivileged groups, and the solutions he offers in What Is To Be Done? are especially oriented towards the elimination of poverty and the emancipation of women. He believes that man's emancipation starts with his strength and ability to rise above abject poverty if circumstances place him in such
a condition, and that man should fight for his interests, even at the expense of virtuous conduct. Chernyskevsky does not directly advocate lawless conduct, but is not ready to condemn any self-interested action.

In Vera Pavlovna's second dream, Chernyshevsky reverses Vera's circumstances to show what her life would have been like had her mother been a virtuous woman. The circumstances he paints are much like those of the Marmeladov family in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The mother is ill and broken, the father is a hopeless drunk, and the daughter is forced to walk the streets. He then allows Maria Alexeevna to comment on the scene:

Ты ученая—на мои воровские деньги учена. Ты об добром думаешь, а как бы я не злая была, так бы ты и не знала, что такое добро называется. Понимаешь? Все от меня. [p. 123]

It is true that children profit from parents' sacrifices, but it is presumptuous to say that Vera's virtue resulted from her relatively sheltered life, while her mother's somewhat coarse nature was a product of her poor circumstances. Virtue is neither inherited nor can it be taught, nor is it a product of one's environment. Virtue is an instinct, but is not an instinct accompanied by reason. It is very likely that had Vera Pavlovna been in her mother's situation, she would have been an ill and defeated woman in the second dream, while her mother would have been the unprotected but enterprising daughter, who would have emerged financially secure by means of her aggressiveness. Chernyshevsky does not take this into
Chernyshevsky asserts man's strict causal dependency on his environment. Like Rousseau, he believes that man is by nature good and that, if he proves to be otherwise, his environment is to blame for this. In this instance, Chernyshevsky's characters show how false this theory is. Most of the young people in What Is To Be Done? are morally upright individuals who, by and large, come from poor families. Why are these people virtuous when, according to Chernyshevsky's theory, they would have been made corrupt by their continuous struggle against poverty? Rakhmetov is the only exception here. He is the only character amongst these new people who comes from a wealthy family. But why isn't Storeshnikov, Vera's one-time fiancé, like Rakhmetov, when their circumstances are similar? In Storeshnikov's case, his mother's wealth contributes to his corruption. Storeshnikov is both a base man and a fool, who has no interest in either self-improvement or the improvement of society.

Chernyshevsky believes in the future progress of mankind. "The present state of knowledge," as he formulates it in "The Anthropological Principle," is only a particle of the future whole. Likewise, he argues about "plenitude of goodness and virtue in the future mankind":

Это скоро будет, Верочка. Тогда злые увидят, что им нельзя быть злыми; и те злые, которые были людьми, станут добрыми: ведь они были злыми только потому, что им вредно было быть добрыми, а ведь они знают, что добро лучше зла, они полюбят его, когда можно будет любить его без вреда. [p. 125]
It is difficult to know whether Chernyshevsky is as naïve as the statement indicates. It may be argued that once again he suspends his experience of the actual world in order to encourage the reader. But this is unlikely because everything in his work indicates that the statement about the good and virtuous future existence is to be taken seriously. He stakes all his hopes on the future.

Emancipation from poverty is then the first item of Chernyshevsky's manual for the man of action. The second item is to work towards self-improvement. In Vera Pavlovna's second dream, Chernyshevsky talks extensively about labour:

— Да, движение есть реальность, — говорит Алексей Петрович, — потому что движение — это жизнь, а реальность и жизнь одно и то же. Но жизнь имеет главным своим элементом труд, а потому главный элемент реальности — труд, и самый верный признак реальности — деятельность.

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

— Да, отсутствие движения есть отсутствие труда, — говорит Алексей Петрович, — потому что труд представляется в антропологическом анализе коренной формой движения, дающее основание и содержание всем другим формам: развлечению, отдыху, забаве, веселью; они без предшествующего труда не имеют реальности. А без движения нет жизни, ... [pp. 119-120]

Reminiscent of Marx's philosophy, this outlook also builds on Hegel's view that flux and strife are the life of the world. This is an adaptation of the Pre-Socratic, Heraclitean philosophy, which fits well into Chernyshevsky's overall view. In fact, it helps him to tie all his theoretical loose ends. His relativistic "theory of truth," his belief in the future progress of mankind, and his pragmatic ethics are quite
compatible with the belief that motion and change are the essence of life. This view may also be the basis for his aesthetics and show why he makes such a harsh division between expression and content.

Heraclitus, with a statement like "you cannot step twice into the same river," reaches the logical conclusion of the materialistic answer. The water will be different water the second time, and if we call the river the same, it is because we see its reality in its form.18

Hence one can see why Chernyshevsky deifies the idea of content which in the Heraclitean conception is the element of change, and virtually ignores form (expression), which is the static element.

Like Marx, Chernyshevsky considers labour to be the principal element of life. Idleness, he believes, causes corruption. The roots of a plant and the soil which are immersed in stale waters rot. This is Chernyshevsky's metaphor for stagnation employed in Vera Pavlovna's second dream. Further, idleness isolates the individual from the collective and leads him to withdraw into his own imaginary world, the world of passions and dreams. Labour alone is Chernyshevsky's solution to alienation.

— Вот почему тебя так заняли стихи о том, как Катя избавлялась от тоски работой. Ты хочешь знать, испытал ли я верность этого замечания на себе? Да, оно совершенно справедливо. Я довольно легко выдерживал борьбу поэтому, что мне некогда было много заниматься ею. Все время, когда я обращал внимание на нее, я страдал очень сильно; но ежедневная необходимость заставляла меня на большую часть времени забывать об этом... .

... Нужно иметь такое дело, от которого нельзя отказаться, которого нельзя отложить,—тогда человек...
In this instance, Chernyshevsky's attitude is very similar to that of the new English bourgeoisie, whose anti-intellectual stand is summarized by Carlyle in one of his later statements: "Man is sent hither not to question, but to work; —the end of man—it was long ago written—is an Action, not a Thought."^20

In Vera Pavlovna's third dream, Chernyshevsky makes a transition in concerns. The third dream is personal, unhampered by references to ideology. In this dream Vera acknowledges that she does not love Lopukhov, who now is her husband. She encounters "self-awareness" in the form of a famous opera singer, who mysteriously changes appearances. This apparition forces Vera to read aloud from an imaginary diary and enables her to recollect her suspicions and doubts about the nature of her relationship with Lopukhov.

Vera finally has to conclude that she and Lopukhov, although friends who have a great deal of respect for one another, do not love each other and never have done. Vera's predominant feeling for Lopukhov is gratefulness, because had it not been for his offer to marry her, she would have had to continue living with her family and eventually would have
been forced to marry Storeshnikov, whom she despised. Though this dream causes Vera to feel guilt and anxiety, it has a final liberating effect on her. Once she admits that she had been deceiving herself, her trauma is over. It is in the open and she can begin to deal with the problem. Chernyshevsky's final concern in the realm of self-improvement is to show the importance of personal emancipation. Man should question his hopes and his fears.

Chernyshevsky considers human relationships to be in essence political, and makes a strong case for it here: Vera's initial choice between her former misery at home and Lopukhov was strictly a utilitarian one. Now Chernyshevsky places her in a different situation:

At this point the reader already knows that Vera and Kirsanov, Lopukhov's best friend, are in love. Both suspect that the feeling is mutual but neither feels it right to interfere in the other's life. But Lopukhov, who is impartial, because of his friendship with Kirsanov and his brotherly love for Vera, decides to act when he finds out about the situation. At first he confronts Kirsanov and is ready to convince him that he is obligated to pursue his happiness, implying that Kirsanov and Vera should be together. But Kirsanov is outraged;
Moreover, he presents an argument that Lopukhov cannot dispute:

... To, что мы с тобою признаем за нормальную жизнь, будет так, когда переменятся понятия, обычай общества. Оно должно перевоспитаться, это так. Оно и перевоспитывается развитием жизни. Кто перевоспитался, помогает другим, это так. Но пока оно еще не перевоспиталось, не переменилось совершенно, ты не имелш права рисковать чужую судьбою.

... Я поставлю этот теоретический вопрос в другой форме: имеет ли кто-нибудь право подвергать человека риску, если человеку и без риска хорошо?

... Предположу, что этот человек—женщина; предположу, опять-таки в смысле отвлеченной гипотезы, что это положение, в котором ему привольно жить,—замужество; предположу, что он доволен этим положением, и говорю: при таких данных, по этой отвлеченной гипотезе, кто имеет право подвергать этого человека риску потерять хорошее, которым он доволен, чтобы посмотреть, не удастся ли этому человеку приобрести лучшее, без которого ему легко обойтись? [pp. 181-182]

Lopukhov cannot but agree with Kirsanov's utilitarian reasoning and it is then that he decides to leave. His decision follows a kind of utilitarian calculus akin to Bentham's hedonic calculus, which favours the happiness of all involved.

Lopukhov's life prior to his decision to leave was comfortable and secure as far as his professional and financial affairs were concerned, but his private life was unsatisfactory. His marriage and life with Vera Pavlovna were a burden on him. Finally, Vera's and Kirsanov's unhappiness outweighed all the reasons which might have made him stay. Nevertheless, Lopukhov's action is a heroic deed, especially so when judged according to Kirsanov's utilitarian argument
about loss of security. Lopukhov's action is a step away from both financial and cultural security (when he eventually leaves for America), and it appears to be a blatant contradiction of Chernyshevsky's theory which argues against heroism.

In fact, most of Chernyshevsky's young people in What Is To Be Done? have a heroic streak in them. All can be said to be courageous and assertive, with high ideas that none are willing to sacrifice to unfavourable circumstances. Both Lopukhov and Rakhmetov, Chernyshevsky's super-hero, fit this description, and Kirsanov, Vera Pavlovna and later Katerina Vasilievna, although not as forceful in action, also qualify. Chernyshevsky creates a world in which all are virtually superhuman because immune to "the inertia of the given," to use Simone de Beauvoir's term, and they busy themselves in restructuring the world, while the author accompanies their actions with very pragmatic philosophizing, urging strict adherence to self-interest, mocking heroism and altruistic deeds. This kind of dichotomy seemed to have afflicted most of the nineteenth-century positivists. But Chernyshevsky could at least have reiterated one of Mill's basic assumptions on differences of temperament, as stated in his Utilitarianism, whereby Chernyshevsky would have made a good case for all the heroic action in What Is To Be Done?

The main constituents of a satisfied life appear to be two, either of which by itself is often found sufficient for the purpose: tranquility and excitement. With much tranquility, many find that they can be content with very little pleasure;
with much excitement, many can reconcile themselves to a considerable quantity of pain.\footnote{21} Hereby Chernyshevsky's new young people belong to those who thrive on excitement: interest, assertion, action, in short, on expansion, despite the fact that all this may cause some pain and occasional setbacks. It is tempting to suggest that despite the pragmatic theorizing, Chernyshevsky remains a man of the romantic era with a probably unconscious weakness for heroes and heroic action.

To return to the plot, the reader already knows of Lopukhov's departure and his faked suicide, since Chernyshevsky pre-empts this dramatic moment in a kind of preface to the story. Chernyshevsky now closes the cycle: Lopukhov leaves to start a new life, and Vera and Kirsanov are free to start theirs together. The story could have ended here, but Chernyshevsky does not feel that his vision of the new society is completed. He goes on to depict Vera's contented life with Kirsanov while she continues aiding in the sewing business and begins her studies in medicine. Chernyshevsky further juxtaposes this couple's happiness with that of another couple, Beaumont and Katerina. Beaumont is really Lopukhov, who returns from America under a new identity. He now is a successful business man who runs a factory in Russia. Katerina is a woman to his liking, someone he can be happy with. The four, in the end, start a kind of co-operative existence, and the book ends with Vera Pavlovna's fourth dream, which prophesies a future harmonious existence of
mankind, a life free from poverty and injustice.

Despite Chernyshevsky's good intentions, *What Is To Be Done?* ends up as an ambiguous piece of writing, which fits loosely into both fiction and political philosophy, but is a poor example of both. Chernyshevsky is a bad philosopher. He is painfully dogmatic; he needs positive solutions at all costs. He simplifies, distorts and misreads both the works of philosophy he praises and those he criticizes. Being a poor observer of human relations, he is just as bad a fiction writer; his writing is clumsy and contrived.

Chernyshevsky has the unfortunate tendency to deal with all situations in terms of solutions. Life for him is to be solved in the same way as one tackles a mathematical problem, or proceeds in a chess game. He seems absolutely oblivious of psychological intricacies and cannot conceive of insoluble situations which, problem-solving aside, one has to acknowledge and learn to live with, because in those situations action is known to be absurd.

Chernyshevsky's attitude, actually, very much underlies the present Soviet official view, which holds that man can succeed in all if only he is willing. Chernyshevsky's naïve positivism, indeed, became a recipe for the art of so-called Socialist Realism, which was to deify labour and downplay "bourgeois passions." The characters in *What Is To Be Done?* lend themselves easily to these concerns: their passions and impulses are subdued; they seem as if directed from above,
like puppets or robots. They appear to be programmed to act out their lives only to eliminate obstacles in the most efficient and rational manner. But, while endowed with elementary emotional responses, they lack sophistication.

Chernyshevsky's intended super-hero, Rakhmetov, is a good example of this. Chernyshevsky wanted Rakhmetov to appear as an intellectual wizard and a superman, a man whose "greatest happiness" was to serve humanity and assist in the improvement of society. Rakhmetov, whose nickname is, fittingly, Nikita Lomov, is no doubt modeled after the heroes of Russian byliny (folktales or mythological tales), someone like Ilya Muromec. The heroes of these stories always appear when the oppressed are in great need of a protector and a liberator. These legendary figures, however, are better known for their strength than for their wits, and Rakhmetov, despite Chernyshevsky's efforts, also fits this description. He lacks social grace and finesse, always acts from a position of strength, insults people and orders them around; in argument he is forceful and dogmatic. Beside this, he eats incredible quantities of food and is known to have slept on nails. Rakhmetov does all this supposedly to prepare himself for a future revolution. But all this appears ludicrous rather than praiseworthy and, to the perceptive reader, Rakhmetov seems more like Dr. Frankenstein's legendary monster than a man of integrity.

What Is To Be Done? is undoubtedly a challenge to the
critic, since it lacks the "writerly" on which the analyst of literature dotes. The "writerly," according to Roland Barthes, is the novelistic without the novel, poetry without the poem, the essay without the dissertation, writing without style, production without product, structuration without structure. But What Is To Be Done? merely presents "the product and not the production." Had its philosophical side been developed to perfection, What Is To Be Done? could have been a modern form of philosophical dialogue, only slightly more applied than those of Plato and Berkeley. As it stands, it does not come anywhere close to that. Sadly enough, ideology "reflects, it doesn't do work." Chernyshevsky did not foresee this when he stated that he was to present nothing but the truth.
CHAPTER II

"THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE IN PHILOSOPHY"

In the exposition to his "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," Chernyshevsky sketches a picture of the new nineteenth-century man, the man of the Post-Napoleonic era. He is a man of intellect, self-taught, and without means, but who had just awakened to the realization that intellect and ambition are as great a wealth as that of the inherited, material order.

Chernyshevsky's assessment of this phenomenon is somewhat atypical in comparison with that of his time:

The wealthy classes are at first moved to pity at the sight of intelligent, honest and industrious people living in hopeless poverty and degradation. Out of pure human kindness the great help their less fortunate brothers. Thanks to the charitable concern of well-to-do people, the son of a poor artisan, shepherd and cooper's apprentice goes to school and enters the road that leads him to honour and out of poverty. But praiseworthy though it is, this assistance is inadequate: ... The youth's natural talents are great, however; he has not yet learned anything, but he knows, at all events, that only learning can save him. He will not abandon intellectual work no matter how straitened his circumstances may be. ... Even while his hands are engaged in drudgery, his mind is taken up with general human problems and with the problems of the conditions of the whole class to which he belongs. ... At first these new thoughts please the learned men in respectable society in the same way as they had been pleased by the gifted village lad. They encourage his labours, he continues his intellectual occupations, he develops his ideas. But at last his patrons awaken to the fact that there is a pernicious side to his thoughts, ... But too late: he no longer needs patronage, he is already stronger than his persecutors, ... he crushes everybody against whom he is compelled to raise his
hand. This biography of a single individual is the history of the class to which he belongs. [pp. 64-66]

In Chernyshevsky's conception, the aware individual immediately identifies himself with his social class and is ready to enter the path of revolutionary struggle to overthrow the ruling class.

The evolutionary outlook, on the other hand, sees this individual at first dissociating himself from his own social stratum, finding himself an individual in the universal sense. He is not a member of a particular class but a man of particular merits, who by virtue of his merits elevates himself to the ranks of the ruling class. Thus, by infiltration, those with a new diverging outlook and experience form the new ruling class and a new social order is established.

In Chernyshevsky's perspective the change is possible only by means of revolutionary channels. He infers that each enlightened individual can, and perhaps is morally obligated to, involve himself with such activities. He is to prepare an environment for a revolution. The change will happen by artificial means. What possible implications this would have for a society is not Chernyshevsky's concern. The assumption here would be that the society would deal with that particular issue when it arose.

However, this change is still in the distant future, Chernyshevsky gathers, because the aware individual is full of contradictions. He is not ready to guide his society
toward a new social order:

He has not yet grasped the scientific concepts which correspond most to his position, inclinations and needs, and, we think, that correspond most to the truth, but at all events to the present state of knowledge. [p. 68]

We have seen what stage of development has been reached by the trend of thought of a plebeian in Western Europe. He has not yet grasped the general ideas of present-day science, the deductions from which correspond to his needs. He still clings to the obsolete principles . . . and constantly passes from jaundiced repudiation of them to submission to them. He cannot remain in this state of submission long and again bursts out in caustic tirades only to submit to routine once again. This jaundiced indecision, this vacillation, is totally alien to the spirit of the new ideas. [p. 86]

What are the obsolete principles that Chernyshevsky talks about? Perhaps those that are philosophically sound but have negative implications for the social realm. Chernyshevsky believes that these have to be rejected. The jaundiced image of the learned man without means is accurately depicted. The nineteenth-century man still looks for absolutes. He is not a pragmatist and will not be inclined to adopt ready-made solutions.

What is it that Chernyshevsky expounds here? He states that one's political interests determine, or should determine, his philosophical views. Further, he infers that knowledge serves the purpose of furthering one's political strength, thus presumably the strength of his social class, which will help him in his political struggle against another class. Knowledge, in Chernyshevsky's opinion, is relative. The truth, he states, will perhaps be evident in the distant
future. "The present state of knowledge" should be considered the closest token of the truth, although it affords only a glimpse of it.

Chernyshevsky holds some sort of belief in progress, but exactly what this notion entails for him is impossible to judge. The material he presents on this topic in this essay is insufficient to make any conclusions. It is likely that Chernyshevsky's view is influenced by historicist ideas and it retains the characteristic eighteenth-century emphasis on the struggle between reason and superstition, on the movement of mankind away from theological and metaphysical modes of thought to positive or empirical habits of mind, and on the importance of extending the standards and methods of the sciences to all domains.²

However, this is just a guess. What is really left after analysis of "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" is that Chernyshevsky seems to denounce all past theories of knowledge in favour of the "present state of knowledge," that is, the very latest view.

Chernyshevsky was known to be a follower of Feuerbach. Feuerbach is, of course, not mentioned by name in this essay. Chernyshevsky was aware that the name would not pass the censors. However, there is little evidence of Chernyshevsky's precise understanding of Feuerbach beyond the fundamental assertion that man lived in a material universe and that a dualistic opposition between man and God, or any other
supernatural power or essence, simply did not exist. 3

If Chernyshevsky is referring to Feuerbach in this essay, the references are extremely esoteric, e.g., "the scientific concepts which correspond most to his position, inclinations and needs," "the spirit of the new ideas," "the present state of knowledge," etc.

It appears that Chernyshevsky believes that science and technology will further man's social and moral progress, and that the obstacles that hampered man in the past will thus be eliminated.

Already, earlier in the essay, Chernyshevsky begins to outline his view on "the order of things." His objective is to enlighten his contemporaries with his so-called "spirit of the new ideas":

That part of philosophy which deals with the problem of man, just like the other part which deals with the problems of external nature, is based on the natural sciences. The principle underlying the philosophical view of human life and all its phenomena is the idea worked out by natural sciences of the unity of the human organism; the observations of physiologists, zoologists and medical men have driven away all thought of dualism in man. Philosophy sees him as medicine, physiology and chemistry see him. These sciences prove that no dualism is evident in man, and philosophy adds that if man possessed another nature, in addition to his real nature, this other nature would reveal itself in some way, but since it does not reveal itself in any way, since everything that takes place and manifests itself in man originates solely from his real nature, he cannot have another nature. This proof is beyond doubt.  [p. 70]

What is this real nature of man? Do these named sciences really prove that no dualism in man is evident? Chernyshevsky
does not elaborate on these statements. He is fond of the sciences but is not concerned with scientific analysis. The chief intent of his journalistic approach is to get a reaction from his reader. Since the reader cannot be clear on what is said, he is thus urged to do his own research to get a better insight into the issues presented.

Further, Chernyshevsky talks of the progress made in the sciences and social sciences:

In the same way, the union of the exact sciences, under the government of mathematics, that is, counting, weighing and measuring, is year after year spreading to new spheres of knowledge, is growing by the inclusion of newcomers. Chemistry was gradually followed by all the sciences concerned with plant and animal organisms: physiology, comparative anatomy, various branches of botany and zoology. Now the moral sciences are joining it. [p. 91]

The natural sciences have already developed to such an extent that they provide material for the exact solution of moral problems too. All the progressive thinkers among those who are studying the moral sciences have begun to work out these problems with the aid of precise methods similar to those by which the problems of the natural sciences are being worked out. [p. 94]

. . . in the moral sciences, a strict distinction has been drawn between what is known and what is not known, and on the basis of what is known the unsoundness of some of the previous assumptions concerning what still remains unknown has been proved. [p. 94]

There is a number of problems in these statements. First of all, Chernyshevsky lumps science, philosophy and psychology together as if they were one discipline with identical modes of inquiry; he also identifies philosophy with psychology. But the two are very different disciplines. Psychology is
an empirical science which tries to discover how our minds work, i.e., what the various mental processes are and what causal laws operate among them, with the object of giving as complete an explanation as possible of mental happenings, both normal and abnormal. Its methods are those of natural science, with the handicap that its subject matter is not available for direct inspection (except in the case of the experimenter himself), but has to be inferred from the observed appearance and behaviour of human (or sometimes non-human) bodies.

Psychology, then, is interested in causal questions, in finding out how minds work. Philosophy, on the other hand, is interested in questions about what minds work on, what their material is, what their relation is to objects in the external world, to other persons' minds, to the events of history, and so on. 4

Moral philosophy, to which Chernyshevsky especially refers, is a discipline which concerns itself with judgements of approval or disapproval, judgements as to the rightness and wrongness, goodness or badness, virtue or vice, desirability or wisdom of actions, dispositions or objects or states of affairs. 5 So, although it may be interested in dispositions, that is, the circumstances of the frailties of the human condition, its chief concern is in what is just. Even utilitarianism, to which Chernyshevsky alludes in the first paragraph when talking about quantitative assessments,
although a pragmatic philosophy, does not spring from a deterministic position. The greatest happiness, in utilitarian terms, is a solution worked out from the combination of absolute values and those representing inclinations. Although pain, as in hedonistic philosophy, is undesirable, utilitarianism incorporates absolute values, that, is, humanitarian imperatives. Secondly, Chernyshevsky seems to imply that "what is known"—referring presumably to human inclinations—will necessarily cause a man to act.

Chernyshevsky believes that man is geared towards selfishness and that all his actions will therefore follow this pattern. This is why he suggests that moral sciences will become laboratory sciences, where more will be found out about these inclinations, and what implications they will have. He discusses these matters in greater detail:

... is man a good or an evil being? Lots of people rack their brains in an endeavour to solve this problem. Nearly half of them decide that man by nature is good; others, also constituting nearly half of the brain-rackers, decide otherwise: they say that man is by nature bad. ... But at the very first application of scientific analysis the whole thing turns out to be as clear as clear can be. A man likes what is pleasant and dislikes what is unpleasant—... a man is good when, in order to obtain pleasure for himself, he must give pleasure to others. A man is bad when, in order to obtain pleasure for himself, he is obliged to cause unpleasantness for others. Here, human nature cannot be blamed for one thing or praised for the other; everything depends on circumstances,

[pp. 98-99]

Chernyshevsky's position is very peculiar. He does join the camp of those who assert that man is by nature good, despite
his claim that the two basic distinctions are immaterial.

But his position is altogether quite extreme. In his view, man cannot be at all morally responsible for his actions. Man seeks pleasure and refrains from pain, and these are the only criteria which will direct his conduct. Man causes pleasure when he knows that this will help him to attain pleasure; he causes pain only when he can obtain pleasure from it. Chernyshevsky is entitled to say that man prefers to do what is pleasurable to him, but he cannot have pleasure as a moral principle unless he can provide some sanction against men doing pleasurable things which are bad. If the pleasure principle is right, a man cannot refrain from doing something bad if it gives him pleasure. It would follow that the giving of pleasure or pain to others is quite irrelevant to deciding what is pleasurable, because people will always do what is pleasurable to them regardless of what pleasure or pain is caused to others. Thus it is quite arbitrary to call an action which gives pleasure to others "good" when it can never be part of the pleasure giver's ultimate intentions, which are always his own happiness. This places Chernyshevsky in a dilemma, because if he defines pleasurable actions as those actions which give pleasure to others (and thereby introduces the important sanction), he cannot maintain a strict pleasure principle such as Mill's:

... that pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things ... are desirable either for pleasure inherent in themselves or as means to the promotion
of pleasure and the prevention of pain.\(^6\)

For Mill, the standard of moral conduct is not the agent's own happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether. Thus it would be impossible for a pleasure-seeking agent to get pleasure from harming others unless there was a greater number of people yet who would benefit. If Chernyshevsky is using Mill as the source of his own formulation of the pleasure principle, then he has left out the standard which allows utilitarianism to be called a moral theory.

Although he would like to think himself a utilitarian, Chernyshevsky is not adhering to any moral theory. He is neither a utilitarian with a defined notion of happiness, nor a hedonist who would argue for pleasure to be the universal good. Speaking of 'self-interest', he states:

... the strongest passion gets the upper hand over those that are less strong, which are sacrificed to the former.

A careful examination of the motives that prompt people's actions shows that all deeds, good and bad, noble and base, heroic and craven, are prompted by one cause: a man acts in the way that gives him most pleasure. He is guided by self interest, which causes him to abstain from a smaller gain, or a lesser pleasure, in order to obtain a larger gain or a greater pleasure. The fact that good and bad actions are prompted by the same cause does not, of course diminish the difference between them. \[p. 124\]

Here Chernyshevsky's position seems to be quite different from his initial argument on this issue. He finally admits that satisfaction can be gained from an action that may actually cause pain, besides that which actually causes pleasure.
Further, he postulates that man passes up a smaller gain, lesser pleasure, for a larger gain, greater pleasure. Does this mean that Chernyshevsky identifies with Plato's position as formulated in The Protagoras? If this is true, then he contradicts his earlier claim. If, however, he does not understand the idea of greater gain, greater pleasure in this context, then his whole position in incomprehensible. The idea of greater gain, greater pleasure is in essence utilitarian. In Mill's Utilitarianism this concept can be identified with that of Plato's Protagoras, that is, the good is the greater pleasure. However, what "good" is for Chernyshevsky is not clear. He fails to assert that the catalysts of all utilitarian assessments are moral imperatives. It is not even clear whether he understands that the utilitarian position involves moral decisions. The utilitarian has to choose, but can Chernyshevsky's deterministic position allow for this?

Utilitarianism is an answer to the pluralistic belief that moral choice is arbitrary; that, given two alternative actions, an agent has no criterion by which to make a moral decision. Chernyshevsky denies pluralism but, like pluralism, his notion of self-interest excludes the possibility of making moral decisions. If an agent can willingly act only in his own interests, he cannot willingly sacrifice his interests for the sake of others.

Mill was aware that any theory of moral behaviour must
include notions of what is right, good, just, and so on; that any moral theory must take into account not only self-interest but the interests of others. At the very least, a moral decision is one that must take into account a possible conflict between what an agent believes to be his own interest, and what he believes to be the interests of others. If, as in Chernyshevsky's notion of self-interest, no such conflict can ever be taken into account when making a decision to act, then the decision is not a moral one.

Further, Chernyshevsky states that good and evil are culturally relative (p. 124). Then he goes on to state that:

The interests of mankind as a whole stand higher than the interests of an individual nation; the common interests of a whole nation are higher than the interests of an individual class; the interests of a large class are higher than the interests of a small one. In theory, this gradation is beyond doubt; it is merely the application to social problems of the geometrical axioms: "the whole is greater than the part," "the larger quantity is bigger than the smaller quantity." [p. 125]

This gradation, then, would sacrifice the interests of a minority and those of an individual. Chernyshevsky is aware that further criteria will be necessary. And here, for the first time, he mentions one of the imperatives of the utilitarian position:

Theoretical fallacy inevitably leads to practical harm. In those cases when, for its own advantage, an individual nation tramples upon the interests of mankind, or when an individual class tramples upon the interests of the nation, the result is always detrimental not only to the side whose interest had been encroached upon, but also to the side that had hoped to gain by this. [p. 125]
A particular group, then, cannot arbitrarily trample upon another group to fulfill their interests. Chernyshevsky, however, does not mention that, according to the quantitative principle, it would be the minority and the individual whose interests would be sacrificed. He chooses the opposite case, where a minority exercises power over a majority; that is why he calls it a theoretical fallacy. No doubt, he has in mind the ruling class in Russia, whose conduct, according to the utilitarian quantitative principle, is outrageous. It is becoming clear that Chernyshevsky does not aim at theoretical implications of any philosophical position, but rather at political agitation.

Chernyshevsky winds up his essay by exploring what the good is:

Good is, as it were, the superlative of utility, very useful utility, as it were. [p. 129]

If we think that "good is higher than utility" we only say "very big utility is higher than not very big utility," we only express a mathematical truism, . . . Only good actions are prudent; only he who is good is rational, and he is rational only to the degree that he is good. [p. 130]

This series of statements is very confusing. Chernyshevsky initially states that good is the greatest utility. This is not explained. It merely gives the impression that quantity is the essence of what is good, but nothing is mentioned about what qualities are involved.

It is elementary that there can be an abundance of bad things as well as of good things. What is bad will not be
made better or good by virtue of its quantity. Thus, leaving the utilitarian good unexplained, Chernyshevsky jumps to the conclusion that what is good is rational and vice versa.

This is an unexpected turn. From Utilitarianism, Chernyshevsky seems to turn to Platonic idealism. Both concepts of the good and the rational are still undefined. So what we are left with is a tautology. In Chernyshevsky's syllogism, it would follow that to obtain the greatest utility is rational. In other words, he, who takes the greatest, largest portion of all there is, is rational. How would this be rational? Of what does Chernyshevsky's notion of rationality consist?

However, Chernyshevsky's final claim resembles one of Mill's in his *Utilitarianism*. Mill's argument in favour of the quantitative contention goes as follows:

The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it; and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it. If the end which the utilitarian doctrine proposes for itself were not, in theory and in practice, acknowledged to be an end, nothing could ever convince any person that it was so. No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness.  

In this interpretation, the idea of the general good would also be given a free hand. Mill, however, introduces an important qualification of the idea. His initial concern is to define what it is to be fully human:

It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than
a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.9

Chernyshevsky's own statement that good is prudent and rational remotely voices the concerns of this passage. As yet, Chernyshevsky says nothing on the subject of virtues. But in the end of his essay he touches on the subject:

He [a man] may say to himself: I will be wicked, I will do people harm; but he will not be able to do that, any more than a clever man can be a fool even if he wanted to be one. [p. 131]

This shows that in Chernyshevsky's theory there is no place for moral weakness. He assumes that a man who can conceptualize moral right cannot but put it into action. What happened to Chernyshevsky's notion of self-interest? Will a man whose self-interest is in jeopardy not pretend to be a fool who does not know moral right in order to protect his self-interest? What happened to self-deception? to will?

Chernyshevsky's conception of rationality comes close to the Platonic conception, where the rational man cannot be subject to moral weakness, because if he were he could not be referred to as a fully rational person. But in Plato's philosophy moral weakness is acknowledged.10 In addition, Chernyshevsky's present position is certainly incompatible with either the hedonistic or the utilitarian position.11

Further, Chernyshevsky argues that virtue has the greatest utility value:
External objects, no matter how closely they may be attached to man, nevertheless, only too often part from him: . . . If, however, he is useful to other people because of his own virtues, because of his own spiritual qualities . . . he cannot cease to be useful to other people— . . . [p. 131]

Virtue, in Chernyshevsky's view, has a permanent utility value. But why would an individual seek virtue and act in accordance with it, rather than adhere to self-interest? Chernyshevsky fails to explain. The utilitarian position, as formulated by Mill, incorporates the absolute system of morals, but does not put it forward as the part or the end of the utilitarian greatest good:

Virtue, according to the utilitarian doctrine, is not naturally and originally part of the end, but it is capable of becoming so; and in those who live it disinterestedly it has become so, and is desired and cherished, not as a means to happiness, but as a part of their happiness.12

This latter statement of Mill's in some way detracts from his statement on what is entailed in being fully human. It shows that utilitarianism designs different happiness for those like Socrates, who are fully human, and for those unlike Socrates, who are not. Chernyshevsky's understanding is similar. In his novel What Is To Be Done? he shows that there is different happiness for different people. It is one thing for Lopukhov and another for someone like Storeshnikov.

In conclusion, Chernyshevsky reveals why he calls his essay "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy": "It is that a man must be regarded as a single being having only one nature" (pp. 132-133). In other words, Chernyshevsky states
his opposition to the position of philosophical dualism; but he presents no argument for this opposition.

Chernyshevsky believes that the anthropological principle is evident in all areas of human activity. In summary of his main points:

1. Self-interest determines the individual's philosophical and therefore his political position (pp. 64-66, 68, 86).

2. Man's moral conduct is determined by circumstances (pp. 91-92, 94).

3. Man cannot be blamed for evil. He seeks pleasure and refrains from pain (pp. 88-89).

4. Good and evil are culturally relative (pp. 124-125).

5. Man has only one nature (pp. 70, 132-133).

"The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" does not present a consistent philosophical position; neither does it argue philosophically. It is, rather, a declaration of principles, which amount to vehement, in essence almost religious, beliefs in progress and a new scientific social order.
CHAPTER III

"THE AESTHETIC RELATION OF ART TO REALITY"

Chernyshevsky's treatise on aesthetics deals with methods and aspirations similar to those described in "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy." "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality" was originally Chernyshevsky's master's thesis. In this essay he defends nature against art. He endeavours to prove that nature is far superior in beauty (idea and content) and perfection (execution) to art (p. 379).

Chernyshevsky's initial task is to investigate the question of the aesthetic relation of works of art to the phenomenon of life, to test the German Rationalist school's view that beauty, the highest aim of art, is not present in nature but is attained only by art. In this connection, Chernyshevsky examines the Hegelian categories of the sublime and the tragic. In addition, he states his own views on the questions of the essence of beauty and the content and aim of art.

Chernyshevsky is highly critical of Hegel; therefore it should be pointed out here that there is no clear evidence that he ever read any of Hegel's works. William F. Woehrlin's comments on this subject are helpful here:

His [Chernyshevsky's] last two years at the university had witnessed a collapse of his earlier religious convictions, and after a brief attempt to understand Hegel, his rejection of philosophical idealism. Significantly, the basis for his rejection of Hegel had been the philosopher's
difficulty, which the young Chernyshevsky readily admitted, and his feeling that Hegel was "a slave of the existing order of things," the existing structure of society.¹

Chernyshevsky's thesis adviser, A. V. Nikitenko, had objected to his identifying ideas from Vischer as Hegelian philosophy. Nikitenko advised Chernyshevsky either to omit his discussion of Hegelianism or to revise it. Since Chernyshevsky preferred to retain most of the basic definitions taken from Vischer, he adopted the term "prevailing view" to suggest a connection with Hegel and yet avoid the responsibility for giving a coherent picture of Hegel's views or quoting him directly.²

Judging from this, one can only assume that the only scholarly work to which Chernyshevsky refers in this essay is F. T. Vischer's "Aesthetik oder Wissenschaft des Schönen" (1846-1857). Although Vischer was an Hegelian of a sort, Chernyshevsky could not have gained a full perspective of Hegel's aesthetics from this source. Clearly, Vischer's work did not embrace the scope of all the issues raised in Hegel's lectures on aesthetics and could not have presented them in such detailed analysis as did the original. Thus it seems that Chernyshevsky's criticism of Hegel is not quite justified, considering that he may not have even read Hegel's text. However, Chernyshevsky does refer to Hegel by name in this essay and to his lectures on aesthetics, hence the analysis of "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality" must take this into consideration.
Chernyshevsky actually opens the essay with criticism of Hegel:

... the beautiful according to Hegel is only a "phantom" that comes from a superficial view, unenlightened by philosophical thinking, which obscures the seeming perfect manifestation of the idea in the separate object, so that the more thinking is developed the less remains of beauty until, at last, with fully developed thinking, only truth is left, beauty has vanished. [p. 283]³

Chernyshevsky opposes Hegel's assertion that spirit is the moving factor in all of human activity. He dislikes the idea that beauty should be conceptualized. Throughout the essay he emphasizes that beauty is in matter, that is, in nature, that it is exposed to human vision, hearing, touch, etc., forgetting that perception is a mental process and that conceptualization is inevitable. His vehement anti-intellectual stand exemplifies this. Chernyshevsky wants to do away with perception as a mental process. He wants it to be a purely sensual experience. Hegel's highly abstract theory seems to him to be an impostor in place of the sensuous beauty of nature. Chernyshevsky deems that philosophical thinking presents merely abstract philosophical concepts which are barren of the sensual forms that they undertake to contemplate. Hegel's view on this matter is actually similar. Although Hegel holds that only the Idea (that is, the concept) is the truth, he postulates that only a concrete, living thing can represent it:

We spoke (in Chapter One) of the beautiful as Idea in the same sense as we spoke of the good and the true as Idea, in the sense that ... the idea is
the purely substantial and universal, the absolute matter (not sensually perceptible at all), the substratum of the world. More specifically, however, as we have seen already . . . the Idea is not only substance and universality, but precisely the unity of the Concept with its reality, the concept rebuilt as concept within its objective realization. It was Plato . . . who emphasized the idea as alone the truth and the universal and indeed as the inherently concrete universal. Yet the Platonic idea is itself not yet genuinely concrete; for, although, apprehended in its concept and universality, it does count as the truth, still taken in this universality, it is not yet actualized and, in its actuality, the truth explicit to itself. It gets no further than truth merely implicit. But just as the concept without its objectivity is not genuinely concept, so too the idea is not genuinely idea without and outside its actuality. Therefore the idea must go forth into actuality, and it acquires actuality only through the actual subjectivity which inherently corresponds with the concept and through subjectivity's ideal being for itself. So, for example, the species is actual only as a free concrete individual; life exists only as a single living thing, the good is actualized by individual men, and all truth exists only as knowing consciousness, a spirit confronting itself as spirit. For only concrete individuality is true and actual; abstract universality and particularity are not.

Philosophical thinking is merely concept-making and will not become any more than that, Hegel argues. Although beauty is a concept, it is not enough to put it forth as understanding. Beauty can be actualized only when presented in its sensual external form.

In "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" Chernyshevsky states that the good is the rational. It appears that he takes a favourable stand towards Plato. Hence it seems peculiar that he chooses to attack Hegel's aesthetics, unless he is not aware that the abstract ideas of the good and the beautiful are intimately related. Hegel's aesthetics
are, after all, grounded in Plato's philosophy.  

Although Chernyshevsky argues against the Hegelian aesthetics, he often identifies with Hegel's ideas in either principle or detail. It seems that whenever Chernyshevsky misunderstands Hegel's theory his criticism becomes the strongest. The following example is a case in point:

"That being is beautiful in which the idea of this being is fully expressed"—translated into ordinary language this means: "that is beautiful which is excellent of its kind; that of which nothing better of its kind can be imagined." It is quite true that a thing must be excellent of its kind to be called beautiful. For example, a wood may be beautiful, but only a "fine" wood, one in which the trees are tall and straight, a thick wood, in short, an excellent wood; . . . In short, all beautiful things are excellent of their kind. But not everything that is excellent of its kind is beautiful. A mole may be an excellent specimen of its kind, but it will never seem "beautiful." . . . Not everything that is excellent of its kind is beautiful because not all things are beautiful. The definition of beauty given by Hegel, viz., the complete correspondence of an object to the idea of it, is too broad. It merely says that among those categories of objects, or phenomena, that can achieve beauty, it is the best of them that seem beautiful; but it does not explain why these categories of objects and phenomena are divided into such in which beauty appears and others in which we see nothing beautiful. [p. 284]

It is evident that for Chernyshevsky nature is the realm of creativity, hence of beauty. Later, he declares that beauty is life (p. 287), but under this view a mole can be beautiful because it is alive, also the crooked and weak trees in the forest will be beautiful by the same token.

It looked as though Chernyshevsky understood that Hegel is not concerned with nature and perfection in the realm of
physical phenomena (p. 283). Now it appears that he did not comprehend this, since he infers that the Hegelian aesthetic is concerned with the physical perfection of phenomena and things, and this is its essential criterion for beauty.

Another expression, . . . "beauty is the unity of the idea and the image, the complete merging of the idea with the image," has an entirely different meaning. This expression does, indeed, point to an essential characteristic, not, however, of the idea of beauty in general, but of what is called a work of art.

In this instance, Chernyshevsky agrees with Hegel's premise that the unity of the idea and the image is essential in a work of art. But he believes that this has nothing to do with beauty. He sees beauty as separate from, or not present in art, and he assumes that the Hegelian aesthetic could not possibly argue that only art can lay claim to beauty. Further, he states his own thesis on the subject: beauty is life, Chernyshevsky declares:

The sensation that beauty rouses in man is serene joy, like that which fills us in the presence of someone we love. (I am speaking of what is intrinsically beautiful and not what is depicted by art; of beautiful objects and phenomena and not of the beautiful way they are depicted in works of art; the artistic merits of a work of art may give one aesthetic pleasure, but the essence of what is depicted in it may cause sadness and even rouse disgust. Such, for example, are many of Lermontov's poems, and nearly all the works of Gogol.) We disinterestedly love beauty, we admire it; it fills us with joy, and the one we love fills us with joy. From this it follows that there is something in beauty that is near and dear to our hearts. But this "something" must be all-embracing, must be capable of assuming the most diverse forms, must be extremely general, because the most diverse things and beings, having no resemblance to one another whatever, seem beautiful to us.
The most general thing that is dear to a man, than which there is nothing dearer in the world, is life; first the life a man would like to lead, the life he loves, and then, any life; for, after all, it is better to be alive than dead: by their very nature, all living things have a horror of death, of nonexistence; they love life. And it seems to us that the definition:

"beauty is life";

"beautiful is that being in which we see life as it should be according to our conceptions; beautiful is the object which expresses life, or reminds us of life,"—

seems to be one that satisfactorily explains all cases that rouse in us the sense of beauty.

Chernyshevsky grants that art may depict life truthfully. But because it may evoke sadness and even disgust, it cannot properly represent beauty. Beauty has to evoke joy and ecstasy.

But how would one know what is beautiful without contrasting it to ugliness? Also, ugliness highlights beauty, as it were, so art will depict beauty more strikingly if it incorporates ugliness. This is where Chernyshevsky departs fundamentally from Hegel. Hegel views nature from an entirely different angle:

Now as the physically objective Idea, life in nature is beautiful because truth, the Idea in its earliest natural form as life, is immediately present there in individual and adequate actuality. Yet, because this is purely the sensuous immediacy, the living beauty of nature is produced neither for nor out of itself and beautiful and for the sake of beautiful appearance. The beauty of nature is beautiful only for another, i.e., for us, for the mind which apprehends beauty. Hence arises the question in what way and by what means life in its immediate existence appears beautiful.⁶

Nature, in Hegel's view, is a realm of neutrality. Neither
beauty nor ugliness can be attributed to it. Nature is there of necessity, and only the mind makes use of it. Nature is in itself whereas the mind is for itself. That is to say, the mind has a capacity to reason and to will. Therefore the mind, not matter, is creative and attributes such as beauty are applicable to it and to its creations.

Chernyshevsky states that beauty must be all-embracing, extremely general, because the most diverse things and beings, having no resemblance to one another whatever, seem beautiful to us. Here again, Chernyshevsky is in agreement with Hegel. This corresponds with Hegel's view that beauty as the Idea is all-embracing and general, yet its actualization must take diverse forms, forms which draw upon external appearance.

Chernyshevsky dismisses art as the proper representative of beauty, because art often depicts ugliness and evokes sadness or disgust. Hegel builds on these factors in his theory. He argues that if unseemliness is part of existence, then it has a proper place in art. Since truth, in the Platonic sense, can lay claim to goodness, it will also be beautiful by the same token. Especially when the unseemly is incorporated in a work of art, when the idea, that is, the way the artist comprehends life, corresponds with the image, that is, with the expression the artist gives it, then the work is good and therefore beautiful.

Beauty, Chernyshevsky claims, must evoke joy and ecstasy. Hegel is of that same view. However, their
conceptions spring from different sources. Hegel's is again founded in Plato: the true is the good and thus the beautiful. Whether this final creation entails apparent ugliness is immaterial. Just the fact that the thinking mind is capable of comprehending existence in its entirety is a factor that evokes joy and ecstasy, despite the fact that existence may be sad and ugly.

With further attacks on Hegel's aesthetics, the reader becomes convinced that Chernyshevsky's entire thesis is built on a misunderstanding, that is, on his misinterpretation of Hegel. The following passage exemplifies this:

The complaint that beauty in reality is rare is not, however, altogether justified; beauty is by no means as rare in reality as the German aestheticians assert. There are very many beautiful and magnificent landscapes; in some countries they are met with at every turn, for example, Finland, the Crimea...not to speak of Switzerland, the Alps, Italy.

Chernyshevsky believes that Hegelian aesthetics is contemptuous of nature, and that, in its drawing-room attitude, it views the natural realm without interest and admires only artifacts. Chernyshevsky's position in this essay is based entirely on this assumption.

He asserts that nature is more animated and more abundant than imagination, that the images of the imagination are only pale and often unsuccessful imitations of nature:

Indeed, inanimate nature does not think about the beauty of its creations, any more than a tree thinks about making its fruit delicious. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that our art has been unable to this day to create anything like an orange or
an apple ... man's forces are much weaker than
those of nature; his work is exceedingly rough,
crude and clumsy compared with the work of nature.

[p. 320]

Nature is more powerful and creative than man, Chernyshevsky
argues, because it produces food (of all colours, shapes,
luxurious smells, etc.) for man's sustenance. Nature does
this without intent and effort, he adds.

It would seem that, since neither intent nor effort is
involved here, the whole argument would be meaningless.
Chernyshevsky does not perceive this, since he builds his
argument on the unintentionality of nature. Further, it
seems pointless to mention that art is incapable of creating
a real apple or an orange. By the same token, it would be
pointless to mention that nature is incapable of creating a
Mozart symphony or a Leonardo painting.

A similar answer can be found in Hegel's aesthetics.
According to Hegel, the comparison of art and nature is
meaningless, since we cannot attribute will, that is, inten-
tionality, to nature. And besides, why would man want to
create art in such a way as to imitate nature? Would that
not be a superfluous labour? Why imitate animals, natural
scenes, etc., when we already possess these in our gardens,
forests, etc.? Besides, this superfluous labour may even be
regarded as a presumptuous game which falls far short of
nature. 7

Hegel hints at what art must deal with:

... the Turks, as Mohammedans, do not, as is well
known, tolerate any pictures or copies of men, etc. James Bruce in his journey to Abyssinia showed paintings of fish to a Turk. At first the Turk was astonished, but quickly enough he found an answer: "if this fish shall rise up against you on the last day and say: 'you have indeed given me a body but no living soul,' how will you justify yourself?" Chernyshevsky's understanding is contrary to this. He claims that, although imitation of nature is far inferior to nature itself, still this occupation may be worthwhile in certain instances:

The sea is beautiful; . . . But not all people live near the sea; . . . but they would like very much to see and admire it, . . . Of course, it is much preferable to see the sea itself rather than pictures of it; but when a good thing is not available, man is satisfied with an inferior one, . . .

This claim itself is sober enough. But Chernyshevsky concludes that imitation of nature is the sole purpose of art:

This is the sole aim and object of very many (the majority) of works of art: to give those people who have not been able to enjoy beauty in reality the opportunity to acquaint themselves with it at least to some degree; to serve as a reminder, to prompt and revive recollections of beauty in reality [i.e., nature] in the minds of those people who are acquainted with it by experience and love to recall it.

This is reductionist. Would Chernyshevsky say that Michelangelo's Last Judgement was an imitation of nature? He seems to confine art to imitative painting.

Chernyshevsky then proceeds to criticize Hegel for claiming that imitation of nature is a superfluous labour. He states that "this argument is valid only when it is assumed that art wants to compete with reality [nature] and
not simply serve as a substitute for it" (p. 366). Chernyshevsky believes that all forms of art, perhaps with the exception of literature, serve as reminders of, and substitutes for, nature.

In fine arts, landscapes and portraits serve as reminders of that which is dear to us when it is not available, Chernyshevsky argues. In music, whether vocal or instrumental, men attempt to imitate nature, that is, singing of birds, e.g., the nightingale. Literature, he admits, has a greater scope. He sees the Hegelian conception of art as a highly contrived theory. According to Chernyshevsky, art, especially literature, deals with anything that is of interest to man. Literature, especially, presents mankind with a kind of useful manual, a teaching aid on how to cope with existence. The idea of beauty in literature, according to Chernyshevsky, is, if not secondary, altogether irrelevant.

Again, his argument is based on his misinterpretation of Hegel's theory. Hegel certainly believes that art must embrace the greatest scope of existence, that it must deal with all that is of interest in it. But what is in question here is how this will all be arranged. Will there be harmony between the expression and the idea? Hegel merely argues that the Idea behind a particular work and its expression must be in harmony for it to claim any aspirations to beauty. He believes that all art should have this principle as its goal.
Chernyshevsky continues his attack on Hegel. This time, he attempts to dismantle the concept of "the sublime." He argues that preponderance of the idea over the image cannot produce sublimity but that it produces nebulousness, indefiniteness, hence ugliness.

Again, his argument is built on his misinterpretation of Hegel. The term "sublime" is the cause of this controversy. Chernyshevsky follows the popular dictionary use of this word when he analy zes the Hegelian use of this concept. Hegel uses the word in a very specific context to account for a particular trend in art, usually associated with primitive and ancient art.

Despite this, Chernyshevsky's value judgement of the sublime comes very close to Hegel's own. The sublime, as a pure form, is a substratum.

It is the Idea, truth, without shape, without individuality [Hegel argues]. Art begins when the Idea, still in its indeterminacy and obscurity, or in bad and untrue determinacy, is made the content of artistic shapes. Being indeterminate, it does not yet possess in itself that individuality which the ideal demands; its abstraction and one-sidedness leaves its shape externally defective and arbitrary. The first form of art is therefore rather a mere search for portrayal than a capacity for true presentation. . . . We may call this form, in general terms, the symbolic form of art. 9

Thus, like Chernyshevsky, Hegel identifies the sublime with indefiniteness, which is not, on examination, aesthetically pleasing.

Chernyshevsky's criticism of the category lies in his interpretation of the term "sublime" itself. He associates
and identifies it with perfection of phenomena, especially with physical phenomena in their grandeur, e.g., mountains, pyramids, etc., and also with grandeur of emotions, passions (e.g., patriotism). Sublimity can be understood in such contexts; however, Hegel's context is different. For his purpose, Hegel borrows the meaning "lying near the surface," which is also one of the dictionary definitions of "sublime." Hegel's concern is to define, and find, a suitable term for a particular historical situation, namely, for art in its initial or primitive stages, and class it as a trend. This trend is either to remain an historical past or to be incorporated in future art trends.

Subsequently, Chernyshevsky deals with the category of "tragic":

In real life the tragic is most often adventitious, it does not spring from the essence of preceding events. The form of necessity in which it is clothed by art springs from the ordinary principle of works of art: "the denouement must follow from the plot," or else is due to the artist's misplaced surrender to the conception of fate. [p. 380]

He gives some examples to explain his view:

The fate of Croesus, Pompey and Julius Caesar was tragic; but the careers of Numa Pompilius, Marius, Sulla and Augustus were very happy to the end. What was tragic in the fate of Charlemagne, Peter the Great, Frederick II, in the lives of Luther, Voltaire or Hegel himself? There was much struggle in the lives of these men; but, speaking generally, it must be admitted that success and good fortune were on their side. True, Cervantes died in poverty, but is not this the lot of thousands of obscure people who, no less than Cervantes, could count on a happy climax in their lives and who, because of their obscurity, could not at all come under the law of tragedy? [p. 309]
The tragic is adventitious in real life, supposedly because a truly great tragedy has a lofty side to it. It has the power to diminish or transcend the tedium and ordinariness of existence. The ordinary is the really tragic: it carries with it poverty and obscurity and this is the truly tragic side of life, Chernyshevsky argues.

This is an interesting view, but it is highly incompatible with his arguments in What Is To Be Done? and "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy." In both these works Chernyshevsky considers poverty as a tragic phenomenon, as something to struggle against. Aside from this, his argument is again a case of misunderstanding. Hegelian aesthetics deals with the "tragic" as an art trend, but Chernyshevsky's context is that of everyday existence.

Hegel views tragedy as a conflict between ethical powers of various universal ends; or else no substantial or universal ends collide, but the conflict is centred on personalities:

The essentially tragic fact is the self-division... of the ethical substance, not so much the war of good with evil as the war of good with good. Two of these isolated powers face each other, making incompatible demands. The family claims what the state refuses, love requires what honour forbids. The competing forces are both in themselves rightful, and so far the claim of each is equally justified; but the right of each is pushed into wrong, because it ignores the right of the other, and demands that absolute sway which belongs to neither alone, but to the whole of which each is but a part.

And one reason why this happens lies in the nature of the characters through whom these claims
are made. It is the nature of the tragic hero, at once his greatness and his doom, that he knows no shrinking or halfheartedness, but identifies himself wholly with the power that moves him, and will admit the justification of no other power.¹⁰

The end of the tragic conflict is the denial of both the exclusive claims . . . it is the act of the ethical substance itself, asserting its absoluteness against the excessive pretensions of its particular powers. In that sense, . . . it may be called the act of "eternal justice."¹¹

Hegel places emphasis on the action and conflict in tragedy rather than on misfortune and the suffering. No mere suffering and misfortune is tragic, however pitiful or dreadful it may be, unless it springs in a great part from human agency, and in some degree from the agency of the sufferer. However,

. . . there is one particular kind of misfortune not obviously due to human agency, which undoubtedly may affect us in a tragic way. [It is] the kind which suggests the idea of fate. . . . But where those factors of tragedy are present which Hegel emphasizes, the impression of something fateful in what we call accident, the impression that the hero not only invites misfortune by his exceptional stature and daring, but is also . . . strangely and terribly unlucky, is in many plays a genuine ingredient in tragic effect. It is so . . . in dramas like Shakespeare's, which exemplify the saying that character is destiny.¹²

This is Hegel's theory of the "tragic" in a nutshell. It is likely that Chernyshevsky was not acquainted with it, since he does not comment on any of Hegel's contentions. He merely states that he feels that the "tragic" has no essential connection with the idea of fate or necessity (p. 380). Hegel's argument shows this to be a very weak point; besides, Chernyshevsky is not even prepared to argue for his assumption.
Since Chernyshevsky talks of the "tragic" in the context of life rather than that of art, it is curious that in his conception there is no place for death as such. Yet earlier, when he defines beauty as life (any life even), he claims that life is the dearest, most precious thing and death is its opposite.

If the "tragic" is defined as a fall—where man is once placed high, he achieves power and wealth, and later he is dethroned—then by analogy all men are subject to this fate: youth in its strength represents the first stage and old age and death represent the second stage. In this sense, the "tragic" is inevitably linked with necessity, and it does spring from the essence of preceding events. Chernyshevsky denies this.

He concludes the essay with a summary of his main points (pp. 380-381).

In "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," Chernyshevsky could hardly be said to argue for his position; in "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality" he attempts to be more scholarly, but the outcome is the same: he is guilty of many things. His essays are badly researched, and his arguments are almost always faulty.

Chernyshevsky was an intellectual magpie, who picked up odd bits and pieces for what they were worth and then—sometimes—discarded them. His attitude was that the end justified the means. Unlike Mill, he did not realize that
"No one can be a great thinker who does not recognise, that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead." Chernyshevsky's passionate dogmatic stand in both "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" and "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality" proves this.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


3 Roland Barthes holds that "all telling modifies what is being told, so that what the linguists call the message is a parameter of its performance. [Hence] what is told is always the telling." S/Z, p. xi, trans. by Richard Miller, preface by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974).

4 See pages 44-45, 51-55 of the present study: critique of Chernyshevsky's "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality."


7 See pages 32-37 of the present study: critique of Chernyshevsky's "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy."


9 Ibid., Vol. 1, 281-283.


11 Ibid., p. 46.

12 Chernyshevsky, Essays, p. 150.


14 See pages 44-55 of the present study: critique of "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality."


16 Chernyshevsky, Essays, p. 131.


NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 Chernyshevsky, Essays.

2 Edwards, Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 6, 484.


6 Mill, Utilitarianism, pp. 10.11.

7 Jowett, Dialogues of Plato, Vol. 1, 120-125.

8 Mill, Utilitarianism, p. 44.


11 Ibid., 120-125.

12 Mill, Utilitarianism, p. 46.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1 Woehrlin, Chernyshevsky, p. 122.
2 Ibid., p. 147.
3 Chernyshevsky, Essays.
6 Hegel, Aesthetics, Vol. 1, 123.
7 Ibid., 42.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 76.
11 Ibid., p. 715.
12 Ibid., p. 721.
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