

Marie-Louise Karttunen

MAKING A COMMUNAL WORLD

English Merchants in Imperial St. Petersburg

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ENGLISH MERCHANTS IN IMPERIAL ST. PETERSBURG

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INTRODUCTION.

THE ENGLISH COMMUNITY AT ST. PETERSBURG.

Dominating the sea-lanes of the world, these [European] merchants invaded existing networks of exchange and linked one to the other. In the service of “God and profit,” they located sources of products desired in Europe and developed coercive systems for their delivery. In response, European craft shops, either singly or aggregated into manufactories, began to produce goods to provision the wide-ranging military and naval efforts and to furnish commodities to overseas suppliers in exchange for goods to be sold as commodities at home. The outcome was the creation of a commercial network of global scale. (Eric Wolf [1982] 1997, 265.)

As Residents at St. Petersburg, interested for the most part in Commerce and manufactures, we are in a position to fully appreciate the manifold advantages which extended Trade cannot fail to afford to both countries [Russia and Britain], for it is no imaginary bond that draws the two nations together, but a community of interests, based upon an interchange of services which the greatest agricultural people and the greatest manufacturing nation of Europe are capable of rendering to each other. (GL 11749, 336. Extract from an address by the English community welcoming His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to St. Petersburg 20th October/1st November 1866¹.)

In 1553 a group of City of London merchants raised the finance to send three ships north east around the European continent in an attempt to discover a short sea route to Cathay. The aim was to establish a monopoly trade with the Chinese which might produce the kind of fabulous wealth that the Spanish and ‘Portingales’ were extracting from the new worlds of the Americas (Hakluyt, 1927[1589]²). Instead of China, the ships – or rather one of them – discovered a direct route to Muscovy which avoided the Baltic, the Hanseatic monopoly of Baltic ports, and the toll at the Danish Sound. The investors were satisfied with this and founded the London-based Muscovy Company (later the Russia Company) the following year – an organization which attempted to maintain a monopoly on Anglo-Russian trade from 1554 until the later decades of the nineteenth century, policed at the Russian end by a local Chief Agent and his assistants. All English merchants trading with Russia were required by English (though not Russian) law to become ‘freemen’ of the Company on payment of a fee, but were only eligible to do so via patrimony (father’s prior membership), five years ‘servitude’ with an established Russia trading house, or, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, an Act of Parliament. This latter mode of entry was the most fluid and widely implemented, though many of the hundreds listed over the years as entering the trade this way do not appear again in community records, so either never took up the option, or failed rapidly and moved on. Most of those resident in Russia, before the founding of St. Petersburg, were based in Moscow or Novgorod, shipping in and out of Archangel during the summer months when the seaways were

¹ Russia operated according to the Julian calendar, revised to the Gregorian calendar in Britain in 1752, which places Russian dates in the nineteenth century twelve days behind those in England. I have not problematized this issue, citing the local date of any record, but it is an interesting point in terms of perceptions of living a behindhand existence to the rest of the western world. As one of my principal ‘informants’ noted on Dec. 31/Jan. 13 1901: “Can’t really feel as if this were the beginning of the New Year & Century as it has already begun everywhere in the world but here” (Mary Riddle née Whishaw).

² Publication dates will be excluded in future citations of Hakluyt.

free of ice cover. This established a pattern of annual migration between summer and winter residences that was maintained by the English until the demise of Imperial Russia.

Peter the Great created his empire's new capital, Sankt Pieter Burkh, on disputed ground on the edge of the Gulf of Finland in 1703, the Baltic Sea being "at that time practically a Swedish Lake" (Morfill 1902, 27). He insisted that noble Russian families build houses there, though most would have preferred to remain in Moscow, and also, "having been pleased to remove the trade from Archangel to Petersburg" (Cattley 1824, 7), obliged all foreign merchants to likewise relocate³. At some point prior to the removal, British merchants were "embodied" at Archangel, "adopted the plan of keeping minutes of their proceedings" and, in 1716 "resolved to write for a minister, his salary to be 100*l.* per year, free house and firing" (ibid., 5). By 1717, their chaplain had arrived and the merchants had begun to style themselves 'the British Factory' (after 'factors' or trading agents). The Factory survived the move to Petersburg and for nearly two centuries continued to protect local English merchant interests (sometimes against the interests of the parent 'body', the Russia Company in London, and British Foreign Office directives), also performing a regulatory function in the community: adjudicating business and social disputes, running the 'English Church' and its subsidiary institutions, managing and dispensing the Poor's Fund, and setting charges on British ships, goods and trade-related services.

The principal focus of this study is the nineteenth century, most of which was lived under the rubric of 'Victorianism' – with all that the period entailed⁴. It is neither straightforward social history nor broad ethnography; rather I have used the primary data to investigate the perennial human concern of community construction and maintenance, particularly salient in emigrant and expatriate groups such as this one who live, at least mentally, in more than one place at the same time. The social psychologist, Berry, suggests that four alternatives face an ethnic minority in a new place of residence: integration, assimilation, separation or marginalization (1990, 1992). Assimilation into the Russian host world was an option taken up by some Britons, but it was a choice that excluded them from the 'English' community as designated. Integration (defined by Berry as a compromise that allows for a plurality of cultural forms drawn from the host and the home world), was much more common, though also consciously resisted by those who wished to remain part of the English communal world. Seepage of the 'other' through the boundaries, however, was inevitable over time, as I will

³ "...almost everything having to do with the founding of Petersburg is surrounded by legends, great and small. According to one of them, on May 16, 1703, on an island in the estuary of the Neva River, chosen because of its access to the Baltic Sea, Peter tore a halberd from a soldier's hands, cut out two sections of peat, laid them crosswise, and announced: "The city will be here!" Then, tossing the halberd aside, Peter picked up a shovel and work began...Peter buried in the foundation a golden ark with a piece of the remains of the Holy Apostle Andrew, the first to bring Christianity to Russia....Contemporary historians are skeptical about these legends, justly noting their propagandist character...One thing is absolutely clear, though, Zayachy itself was uninhabited, a miserable swampy place that would never have become the site of the future imperial capital if not for the will and vision of Tsar Peter. What moved him? What led to that strangest of choices, later resented and dismissed by hordes of critics? And their argument was sound – that for geographical, climatic, strategic, commercial, and nationalistic reasons, the mouth of the Neva was no place for the new capital of Russia or any large city. [Peter, however, believed that Russia needed] radical *perestroika* or "restructuring" and, therefore, maximal increase in contacts and trade with the West." (Volkov 1997, 6-7.)

⁴ Lytton Strachey, in his well-known biography, describes Queen Victoria as "the living symbol of the victory of the middle classes" (1951, 23).

illustrate. There is no evidence that these ‘Anglo-Russians’⁵ ever felt that they were marginalized, with the term’s implications of powerlessness, outsider status and conscious exclusion by the host country. From the perspective of the English merchant community, Russians and other nationals were the ‘foreigners’ in everyday discourse throughout the community’s duration. This was a group that chose to remain separate and detached from their hosts, to maintain their perceived boundaries, and ignore what lay beyond⁶. In this study I examine how they achieved this, and what they chose to enclose and exclude.

Until fairly late in the nineteenth century the greater proportion of Britons in St. Petersburg were still connected with Anglo-Russian trade (and the community of interests it nurtured) which, throughout the pre-Soviet era, was based principally on the monopoly export of Russian primary produce to Britain and onwards: timber, flax, hemp, tallow, barilla, wax, furs, grain. The movement of goods in the other direction was considerably less substantial and comprised the products of British manufacture and of Britain’s globally extensive trading outposts and ‘official’ colonies: textiles, china, silverware, sugar, tea, coffee and spices – principally luxury items, in other words. After the advent of steam driven ships, Britain’s requirements for many Russian commodities declined and in 1888 the British Consul-General in St. Petersburg recorded:

Russia exports to Europe wheat, rye, oats, hemp, flax, and other natural products of a value of about 41 mill. £, England purchasing (mostly grain) to the extent of about one-third of the total export...According to the British Board of Trade returns, the real value of the direct exports of home produce from Gt. Britain to Russia was only about 5 mill. £. (Thomas Michell 1888, 47.) [The value of the £ in 1888 is estimated to be 74 times greater than in 2001 (P. Richards, 2002)]

During the reign of Peter the Great, English and Scottish experts in diverse fields – military naval, medical, mathematical and technical (of whom many had been recruited during Peter’s turbulent visit to England in 1698) – had begun to swell the English merchant ranks and continued to arrive and be found fitting or wanting by the community throughout the ensuing centuries. A further stratum of Britons, referred to in the Minutes of the British Factory (GL 31782, 2.3.1822) as “the lower classes of our Countrymen here”, also lived in or near Petersburg⁷. Into the latter category fell the large, mainly nineteenth-century influx of skilled artisans and mechanics, primarily from the Midlands and Scotland, who directed the operations of early Russian and British foundries and textile mills or helped train their operatives; and teachers, tutors, governesses, and upper servants such as coachmen and housekeepers. These, for reasons I will later discuss, tended to be rather rapidly absorbed by other local worlds than

⁵ ‘Anglo-Russian’ was not an autodesignation often used by community members at the time, though it was occasionally deployed in memoirs written when Britain still ruled India and the agents of that rule referred to themselves as ‘Anglo-Indians’, without implying any national or racial connection with India *per se*. I use the term for convenience.

⁶ That they were more ‘civilised’ than ‘the foreigners’ was never held in any doubt.

⁷ Raymond Williams notes that the term ‘lower classes’ only came into English usage at the end of the eighteenth century (1990, xv). It did not appear in the records of this group until this reference in 1822. Prior to this and enduring long after, however, there are numerous mentions of ‘the poor’ (i.e. the destitute), and ‘the lower orders’; while their own circle, if ‘classed’ beyond the tacit appellation of ‘gentlemen’, was referred to as “those who are in the better stations of life” (GL 31781/2, 3.11.1824).

the English one,

The heart of the nineteenth-century community, as I investigate it here (i.e. as it was perceived by others and as it perceived itself), comprised comfortably situated merchants, bankers, brokers and select manufacturers along with those who serviced their bodies and souls (clergymen and doctors, but not dentists), long-term consular staff (but seldom the more peripatetic senior diplomats), news correspondents attached to reputable English newspapers (towards the end of the nineteenth century) and numerous, regularly visiting cadres of homeland kin. They were, therefore, from the class which Comaroff and Comaroff refer to as “gentlemen of trade, the professions and the clergy”, the lowest of the four “privileged” classes in nineteenth-century Britain (1992, 185)⁸. In other words, they were firmly bourgeois, “in the ‘classical’ or ‘narrow’ sense of the word, namely the upper layers of the mercantile, financial, industrial and propertied middle classes” (Kocka & Mitchell 1993, xi). The dynastic genitors, however, came from a variety of pre-nineteenth-century backgrounds. Some were younger sons of the English landed elite who “were left to trickle downwards through the social system, with only some education, some money, and influential patronage to give them a start in life” (Stone and Stone 1986, 6); some were sons of yeomen, clerks or minor factors; some were descended from long lines of merchants trading in many places besides Russia.

A list of “the names of all the persons of the English Congregation in Mosco” prepared between 1706 and 1710 numbered sixty-nine (including the Chaplain), of whom about three quarters were male (GL 11192 B – Appendix 1). This figure can be compared with: the 482 members of the St. Petersburg congregation of the English Church listed in April-May 1782 (ibid. – Appendix 2); the 236 adult males who signed a congratulatory address to George IV on his coronation in 1821 which had been left a week for this purpose in the Library attached to the English Church (GL 31782, no date); and the 415 members (male and female) of the congregation who signed a petition in 1864 requesting that the Russia Company in London not interfere with their choice of Chaplain in St. Petersburg (GL 11749/280). Almost certainly none of these figures represents the actual numbers of Britons resident in either Moscow or St. Petersburg on those dates, something which is impossible to ascertain precisely⁹. What the

⁸ Cain & Hopkins point out: in Britain, “...specific forms of ‘service capitalism’ [banking and large scale merchantry] had attributes of status and leisure which allowed privileged access to political authority as well as to economic power...Between 1688 and 1850 the dominant element [of gentlemanly capitalism] was the landed interest: after 1850 it was succeeded by the financial and commercial magnates of the City and the wealthiest and most influential elements arising from the growth of services in the south-east of England.” (1986, 504, 510). F. M. L. Thompson concurs, noting that “...there is plentiful evidence of the involvement of aristocracy and gentry in a range of business activities; of keen, even obsessive, aristocratic interest in rates of interest, money, and wealth; and of the active concern of the ruling elite with commercial policies. The commercial face of the aristocracy was not new to the eighteenth century; but there is a strong suspicion that it became more prominent and assertive, and hence of more consequence to the rest of society.” (2001, 21.) A merchant need not be ‘in trade’ (a pejorative description which barred sons from the better public schools), provided he did not ‘live above the shop’. Members of this community usually had homes in England where they could reside as members of the gentry (i.e. at leisure), and frequently retired there, to become what John Galsworthy describes as “the middlemen, the commercials, the pillars of society, the corner-stones of convention; everything that is admirable.” Such a pillar of society “knows a good thing, he knows a safe thing, and his grip on property – it doesn’t matter whether it be wives, houses, money or reputation – is his hall-mark.” (1968 [1906], 202.)

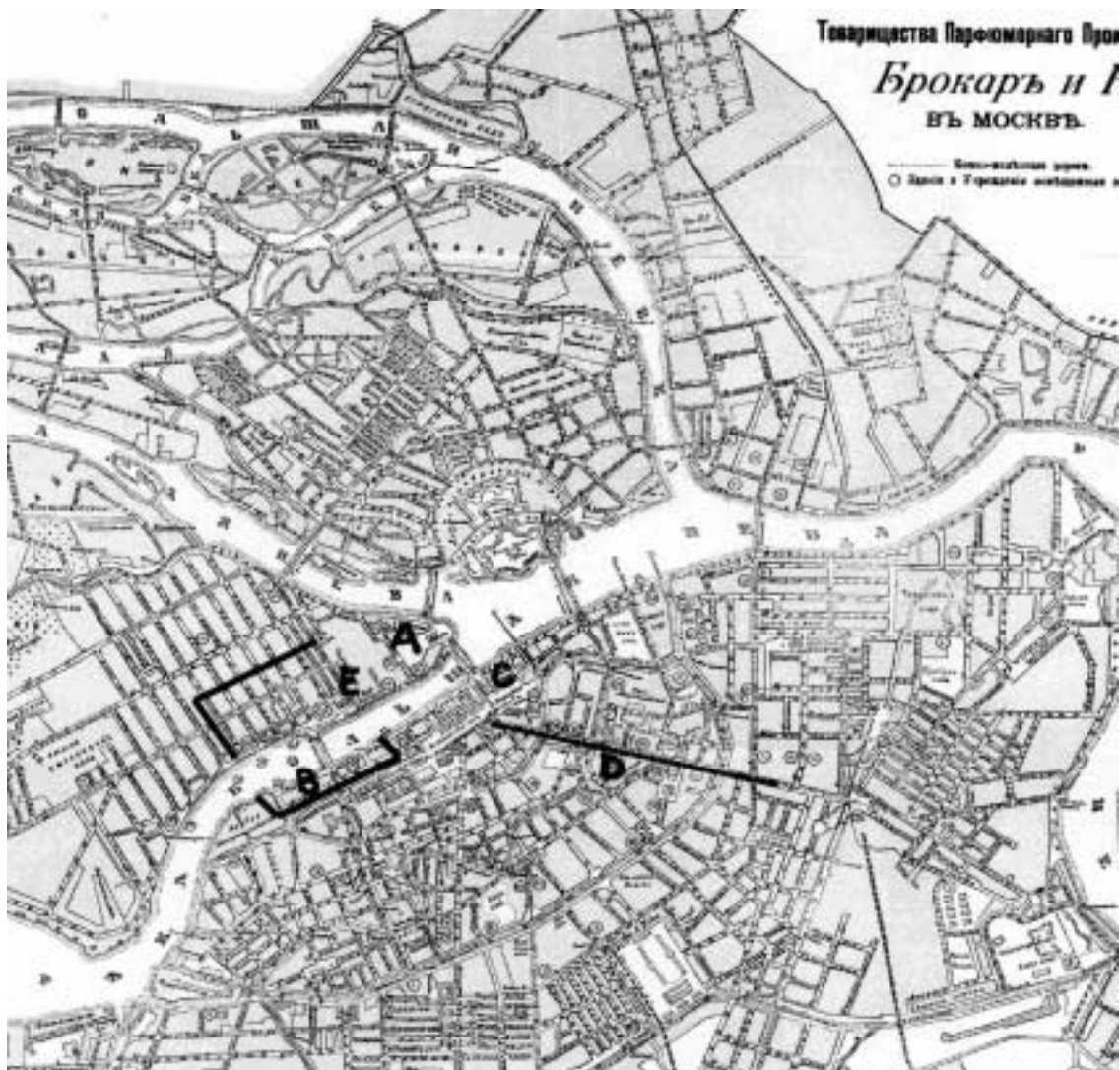
⁹ Heinrich Storch in *The Picture of Petersburg* (1801) suggests 930 in 1789 (cited in Cross, 1997); John

figures do represent is the will and ability of a substantial nucleus of those Britons to operate as a unit in contexts where group solidarity was perceived to provide advantages over independent action¹⁰; and a conscious perception that such a group comprised a ‘we’ to which the individual was prepared to subscribe. Most of them were related by dense ties of blood and marriage; most lived cheek by jowl with Russian servants and neighbours from a wide range of social backgrounds on or near the island of Vassili Ostrof (opposite the English Line or Quay on which was situated the substantial building housing the English Church and its related institutions, see map on following page); all were principally resident in St. Petersburg for between two and six generations.

Those who resisted what was referred to by community members as ‘Russification’ throughout this time had comparatively little to do with their hosts’ socio-cultural creations and reflexively worked towards their own discursively negotiated goals: the maintenance of the linguistic hegemony of English within their sphere – spoken with a specific ‘pure’ accent and intonation, untainted by the speech patterns of their hosts; the upholding of the Established Church of England mode of Christianity as entextualized in *The Book of Common Prayer*; and the protection of those elements and ethics they felt defined their national character. Those who aligned themselves with these aims seem to have been unconcerned by their local political and social liminality. They did not perceive the need for involvement or representation in their host country’s regulatory institutions, perceptions which encourage the kind of work antithetical to community closure – that is, attention to paths that connect it laterally to larger, ‘alien’ worlds, usually at the expense of internal connections. Quite simply, their primary nationalistic allegiance lay elsewhere – though it was possibly more formal than passionate – and despite generations of local residence in many cases, the community and its accredited members perceived themselves as remaining resolutely English.

Parkinson, a tutor ‘chaperoning’ the wealthy scion of a noble English family in St. Petersburg between 1792 and 1794 recorded the capital’s British population to have been 15,000 at the time – an obvious error which he presumably meant to write as 1,500 (1971); a rough draft of a letter from the Russia Company in 1857 (to an unspecified destination, probably the British Foreign Office) states that “The British subjects in St. Petersburg alone amount to about 3,000 and are constantly on the increase” (GL 11749/222); and the current web page of the United Kingdom Consulate General in St. Petersburg asserts there were 2,100 in 1869. This may be compared, for example, with Bengt Jangfeldt’s estimate of approximately 7,000 to 8,000 Swedes resident in Petersburg in the second half of the nineteenth century, a community which had certain parallels with the one discussed here (Jangfeldt 1998). Moscow seems to have been virtually emptied of Britons after the wholesale move of 1723, though by 1886 there were 266 male and female subscribers (many related to members of the St. Petersburg community), to the British Church in Moscow’s ‘General Fund’ aimed at covering the running costs of the Moscow ministry, (GL 11749/440).

¹⁰ Independence as a personal quality, however, was also highly valued.



Picture 1: Map of central St. Petersburg, c. 1890 indicating the topographical English sphere: the 'Lines' on Vassili Ostrof in which most of the community lived and, south across the Neva, the English embankment, home to the English Church, the British Embassy and the wealthiest of the merchants.

- A. The Exchange and Customs House.
- B. The English Church.
- C. The Hermitage Museum and Art Gallery.
- D. Gostinni Dvor, on Nevsky Prospect, the principal shopping road.
- E. Mary Wishaw's family lodgings on the Cadet Line.

PART ONE.

CHAPTER ONE.

THE PROBLEM, THE METHOD, THE OUTLINE.

HOW DOES COMMUNITY BECOME – AND EXIST – AS A “THING-IN-THE-WORLD”?

It is by no means true that the existence of common qualities, a common situation, or common modes of behaviour imply the existence of a communal social relationship...[E]ven if [persons] all react to this situation in the same way, this does not constitute a communal relationship. The latter does not even exist if they have a common ‘feeling’ about the situation and its consequences. It is only when the feeling leads to a mutual orientation of their behaviour to each other that a social relationship arises between them rather than of each to the environment. Furthermore, it is only in so far as this relationship involves feelings of belonging together that it is a “communal” relationship...(Weber 1968, 42.)

Communities are imagined: belief in their presence is their only brick and mortar, and imputation of their importance their only source of authority. An imagined community acquires the right to approve or disapprove in consequence of the approval-seeking individual to invest it with the arbitrating power and to agree to be bound by the arbitration... (Baumann 1992, xvii.)

What is the difference between a localised collection of individuals – a bus queue, a crowded public swimming pool, a planeload of global commuters, a modern urban apartment tower or a stadium audience – and a body or corporation of humans? a collectivity, fraternity or sorority? a sodality, association, sociation¹, fellowship, clique, faction, circle, society, gang, union, *tribus*², clan, extended family – a group of individuals who feel they belong together, whose identities are drawn to a substantial degree from group membership? Or, as I propose to call such jelled entities in this paper, a ‘community’ of humans. What is the difference? What is required, particularly in an expatriate grouping with tenuous rights and limited history in its new location, for interactions to become histories and histories to sediment into structure firm enough to provide a very solid-feeling something; firm enough to think, and to fight with or against? Is it all situational? Are the specific purposes or causes which bring individuals together also specificities in the processes of actually creating reliably functional networks of interrelationships? That is, do quite different processes operate in different types of ‘coming together’? Do ways of maintaining the entity that emerges on ‘staying together’ vary cross-culturally or according to founding principle? Or are there universals? Who or what are the agents involved in effecting this transformation? At the most basic level: “When, in principle, can a social grouping be said to exist as a thing-in-the-world?” (Urban, 2001, 94.)

These are the principal questions which guided the research for this study, largely as they

¹ A term used by Simmel to refer to the contact between people which synthesizes human interests, contents and processes (1964, 4), a rather unpremeditated form of contact distinct from ‘association’ which may be used to refer to formally organized contact such as that taking place in the British Factory, which may both spring from sociality and be instrumental in its continuance.

² “Typical examples of *tribus* are not only fashion victims, or youth subcultures, This term can be extended to interest based collectivities: hobbyists, sports enthusiasts...” (Maffesoli 1996, xi.)

relate to the group under analysis, but at the same time aiming to highlight certain processes which I suggest universally characterise the emergence of a sense of ‘we’ in the many different circumstances in which humans begin the laborious process of connecting with each other, negotiating and hierarchizing norms and values, and structuring their intra- and inter-group relationships. These processes occur, with varying degrees of intensity, in a multitude of different contexts beside those which may analytically be viewed as ‘traditional communities’: in nation states; diaspora (voluntary or otherwise); corporations and other large work places; institutions such as churches, the military, hospitals, prisons and parliament; interest and occupational groups (face-to-face, or via cyber space); clubs and associations. Emergent groupings of this kind have always been with us; even groupings which are represented, both by themselves and others, as though they have ‘always’ been around must have, in some distant past, been *in statu nascendi* before attaining an unreflexive sense of permanence. What goes on between these two points at the abstract level of ‘permanence’ creation?

Rather than beginning with extensive discussion of the ethnographic data on which the study is based, I feel that explication of the approach to culture and social process which informs the study is my first priority, as the approach was instrumental in eliciting many of the conclusions I reached in the course of analysis. Therefore, chapter two begins with discussion of the work of contemporary scholars who have taken a discourse-centred approach to culture, who conceptualise stretches and snippets of talk as concrete cultural items, to be examined in their own right as vehicles of meaning, rather than as exegesis, as merely presenting a transparent window onto communal worlds. The traditional (though perhaps ‘conventional’ is the better term) anthropological method for eliciting the beliefs and meanings of a group of people has worked off a tension between the exegetical statements of informants and the direct observation of the ethnographer. This dichotomy “between meaning (extractable from informants) and social relations (directly observable)...prevents researchers from recognizing that meanings are also part of observable discourse, that they are out there in circulation, and that they form part and parcel of what are thought of as social relations” (Greg Urban, private correspondence, 2.10.2003). While the question – how does community come to exist as a ‘thing-in-the-world’? – implies the exploration of a very broad range of possibilities, the approach I have used here is to examine the discursive items produced and transmitted within the community, in the firm belief that talk, in its natural contexts of use, carries the meanings which both inhere in any social world, and also work to change that world or maintain it in stasis. Berger and Luckman, discussing the social construction of reality, also note that the “common objectifications of everyday life are maintained primarily by linguistic signification. Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language I share with my fellowmen (1966, 51).

By ‘natural contexts of language use’, I mean both the socio-cultural circumstances in which talk is deployed, and the immediate, ongoing and emerging actualities of speech usage (Sherzer 1987, 296). I believe that behaviour, praxis, action, whatever, by itself is meaningless. As Urban also notes:

Behavior is but a fleeting thing. Every instance of it can be given life only by its descriptive encoding in discourse. How else could those who did not experience the behavior first-hand pass judgment on its appropriateness or inappropriateness? How else could the opinion of a broader community be brought to bear on that evanescent thing?

The behavior can be “oriented to the patterned expectations of others” in Merton’s words, only because the discourse in which it is descriptively encoded circulates in the broader community. (1996a, 109.)

An ethnographer can minutely describe, for example, a ritual practice that is clearly a cultural creation familiar to a whole community, and, without a discursively created context, it is merely a silent shadow play deploying incomprehensible puppet shapes. On an even simpler level, behaviour, demeanour, bodily placement and so on could theoretically be learnt by merely replicating that of others; but without accompanying commentary – ‘this is good’, ‘no, don’t do it like that’ – once again, the actions are meaningless. Berger and Luckman draw the same conclusion and further note that an “objectively available sign system [language] bestows a status of incipient anonymity on the sedimented experiences by detaching them from their original context of individual biographies and making them generally available to all who share, or may share in the future, in the sign system in question” (1991 [1966], 85).

These are the theoretical understandings which directed and informed analysis of the primary data, the conceptual framework on which I relied. Comaroff and Comaroff point out, however, that “far from being opposed to (or detachable from) theory, ethnography is instrumental in its creation – and hence is indispensable to the production of knowledge about all manner of social phenomena” (1992, xi), and the two projects – shaping the conceptual frame by application of the primary data and ordering the data with the assistance of the frame – were inseparable.

Therefore, naturally concurrent with investigations into factors contributing to the construction of communal worlds is examination of the stuff from which this specific one was made. What were the elements which were drawn together to produce the very compelling *weltanschauung* of British merchant and colonial expatriates during the nineteenth century, a period of British colonial conquest and mercantile hegemony on a global scale? Though I travel through the metaphorical village of ‘the English community at St. Petersburg’ (as the subjects of this study generally titled themselves) in search of explication, I am convinced of the analogical relevance of both data and conclusions to all the expatriate British communities of their era. Local conditions certainly varied substantially across this global diaspora – place, climate and the lifestyles dictated by these ‘external’ factors; the position of status, power or influence a specific British community held in any local world³; the indigenous ways of being, doing, thinking – but perceptions of “we, the English”, were immeasurably instrumental in shaping the conditions and ways of living of those who subscribed to that ‘we’, while also impacting, for related reasons, on all those into whose lives expatriate British communities thrust themselves.

More than any other colonising nationals of the era, Britons distanced themselves from their (willing or otherwise) hosts and operated according to this principle of separation. Examination of the Petersburg incarnation casts interesting side-lights on both ‘informal’ British

³ I will be discussing local English perceptions of their status in Russia in some depth in later chapters, but it is worth noting, and remembering, that by the end of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, “Emperor Nicholas II still considered England our sworn enemy and more than once had said in my presence that there was no difference between ‘kikes’ and Englishmen” (*Memoirs of Count Witte*, S. Harcave (ed. and transl.) 1990, 452). The English seemed unaware of this attitude.

colonial practice and also on that inhering in the maintenance of British hegemony in the ‘official’ colonies of the British Empire in locations all around the globe. Community members were drawn from the same social classes as their Empire-building compatriots and had kin who were resident in India, Africa, the Antipodes and Asia. They lived the same peripatetic existence between host country and homeland: mostly born in the host country, educated in the homeland, marrying in either place but usually someone from the same milieu, perhaps planning to die and be buried in the homeland, while often failing to attain this aim. This paper reflects British global expansion, and the categories of people who brought British imperialistic policy to life, and *into* the lives of millions of subalterns, but from the rare perspective of the British as a peripheral group on the fringe of a powerful host society.

The ‘English community at St. Petersburg’ was a conveniently sized entity, of sufficient but precise duration of existence, to assist in the exploration of the questions I have raised above, and to help demonstrate that the processes, tools and techniques which come into play both intentionally and inadvertently in the making of communal worlds are, at a certain level of abstraction, applicable to all incipient social entities and also relevant to the maintenance and dissolution of those that have existed beyond memory. In addition, the community has received no anthropological treatment (hardly surprising) though the work of historian Anthony Cross on the British in Petersburg up until about 1825 has left, I would imagine, very little undiscovered in that period from an historical perspective. As an anthropologist, however, I have had a different agenda, different data sources and considerably less interest in ‘event’ and temporal progression.

METHOD AND MATERIALS – “ONE CAN ‘DO’ ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE ARCHIVES”

(Comaroff & Comaroff 1992, 11).

Historical consciousness has always been part of the anthropological project and this consciousness has survived even the most extreme forms of ethnographic presentism. Anthropological history has consisted not of durable artefacts but of something else. The structures of action, features of social organisation, modes of ritual action and above all, the structures and transformations of meaning have been in the locus of anthropological discussions. (Siikala 1990, 5.)

I have only talked to one person who had some first-hand memories of the community and its world – Grace Riddle (daughter of Mary, née Whishaw), an elderly but very spry spinster who was born in Russia in 1904 and died in England in 2001 – though I have met and talked to six others who hold memories supplied them by members: Anna Gullichsen, the great-granddaughter of Baroness Lily Ramsay née Cummings⁴; Christine Bruun, Tom Sederholm and Barbro Scheinin, grandchildren of Baroness ‘Mim’ Bruun née Henley (all living in Finland in

⁴ Lily’s husband, George Ramsay, was a member of a family of Scottish descent, who had been resident in Finland since the seventeenth century (part of this time under Swedish suzerainty), whose name graces the waterfront road in Munkkiniemi, Helsinki, where their main residence was situated – ‘Ramsayntie’. “Major General, from 1886 Lieutenant General, Georg Edvard Ramsay, son of the grenadier General Anders Edvard Ramsay...commanded the Finnish army as long as it existed, from 1880 to 1901” (Luntinen 1997, 131).

2003); Richard Riddle, one of Mary's grandsons and Grace Riddle's nephew (now living in France); and Lance Grimky-Drayton, Jim Whishaw's grandson (living in England). All had family anecdotes which they shared with me, evidence both that direct verbal transmission of family histories still takes place despite the hegemony of print media but also – something which became evident when the stories were checked against contemporary records, letters and diaries – of the 'cultural shift' that takes place when exactness of replication is not a metacultural imperative⁵.

My twenty-first-century 'informants' were most generous in allowing me access to family documents: Anna Gullichsen lent me an invaluable collection of letters written to Lily Ramsay from her St. Petersburg family and friends between the 1860s and 1918, predominately from her step-mother Caroline Cummings, and her cousin, Harriet Hardie; Anna, Grace, Chris, Tom, Barbro, Richard and Lance also lent, gave or provided me access to published and unpublished material produced by community members: memoirs, diaries, letters, nineteenth-century etiquette and household management books used by grandparents, Bibles, Prayer Books, family trees and 'family books' tracing genealogies, photographs, paintings, dinner party menus, guest lists and invitations, lists of wedding presents, visitors' books, engraved silver, furniture and bibelots – even country manor houses (Summa Gord near Hamina and Palikaisten Gord) which Mim Bruun and Lily Ramsay had furnished and inhabited between seasons in St. Petersburg in the course of their husbands' work.

Richard Riddle lent me the nineteen surviving volumes of Mary Riddle née Whishaw's diaries spanning the years 1888 to 1911 and comprising thousands of closely written pages, which he had discovered at the death of his aunt, Grace Riddle, Mary's fifth and final child. Mary herself was the eldest of the eight surviving children of Alfred Whishaw (born 1830), himself one of ten siblings, most of whom either lived permanently in Petersburg with their families or visited there regularly. Alfred was the grandson of the first Whishaw to come to St. Petersburg, William "Speedwell" Whishaw, who married Constancia Fock, daughter of Bernhard – the Dutch Inspector of the Imperial Gardens – in 1777. Five of Constancia's nine siblings married into English merchant families in Petersburg, and of Constancia and William's nine children, four did likewise. Most reproduced prolifically⁶. Confusing though these details

⁵ Contemporary family lore has it that Lily Ramsay's cousin, William, shot himself in 1898, but letters written at the time make it clear that it was actually Lily's brother, John, who "lost his reason" and perpetrated an act with a loaded gun that left him incapacitated: "pronounced to be incurable, part of his brain is paralysed and he will never be fit for anything" (Harriet Hardie 10.1.1898). Can one then believe that Harriet's niece's wedding was called off at the last minute because the potential groom, Simon Halpert, was seen emerging from a homosexual brothel two days before the ceremony? – a story stemming from the same twenty-first-century source. Certainly the wedding was cancelled at the last minute – the Church Register attests to this – and for reasons connected with the groom's behaviour – Harriet had "never expected Halpert to have behaved so badly" (ibid 3.12.1896) – but no exact or scandalous details are provided. They never are. All is inference. All is understood.

⁶ Bernhard, among other responsibilities, also oversaw the Imperial greenhouses which produced the first peach ever grown in Russia. Proud of his achievement, he commissioned a number of paintings of himself holding said peach which he distributed among his children. According to family legend, upon first entering her new husband's house in Finland, Mim Bruun née Henley (Mary Whishaw's second cousin) was astonished to find a painting of her own ancestor above the mantelpiece – peach in hand. The Bruuns, like the Whishaws, Cazalets, Bayleys, Handysides, and many more, were also descended from Bernhard, son of Johann Fock.

appear at first sight, it may be taken as fact that Mary Whishaw could (and did) trace consanguineal or affinal ties to most of the members of the community as its members perceived it, as could almost everyone else, and that she was centrally placed to discuss them in terms of social equality (see Appendix 4 for an image of the ‘Whishaw web’). Her marriage in 1891 to Arthur Riddle, the Church of England Chaplain at Cronstadt who doubled as curate to the English Church at St. Petersburg, also introduced her to elements outside the core of the community. Her diaries, which are very finely detailed, have provided me with a reality check for the huge quantity of records produced at the time and in hindsight by the community – both published and provided by other archival sources. They have allowed me to compare what people say or later recall as having happened with how another observer perceived the same events, circumstances and practice at the time – often more than one other observer, as the Ramsay letters and other sources overlap in many instances. Memories inevitably skate over the repetitive details of daily routine, the reversal of expectation and the inconsistencies which comprise the bulk of existence. Reports of the same incident never entirely tally. Comparison helps to highlight the processes by which consensus is concluded to have been reached, and another brick in the world perched in its place. Not that Mary’s diaries are particularly riveting – Mary, though widely read and educated at Cheltenham Ladies’ College in England⁷, does not appear to have been a riveting woman – but as data has accumulated, and the characters, events, activities, places, things, food, clothes, books, attitudes and gossip recorded by Mary have become anchored for me by other records, her diaries have become an increasingly rich ethnographic source.

The Guildhall Library in London is the repository for records concerning or produced in the City – London’s ‘square mile’ of concentrated business and banking operations⁸. The Russia Company, which pioneered the Archangel trade route and subsequent Anglo-Russian commerce, had its office in the City and most of their Minutes Books and selected correspondence still survive, meticulously portraying the mercantile and social concerns of merchants (free of the Company) in Petersburg⁹. Copies of the Registers of Baptisms, Marriages

⁷ One of four prestigious girls’ schools established in the mid-nineteenth century which were “dedicated to the propositions, first, that girls were not to be educated solely with an eye to catching husbands, and secondly, that girls’ education should be no less rigorous, intellectually, than boys’ ” (W. J. Reader 1966, 171).

⁸ “At the centre of London’s wealth was the City, which was by itself in every period and at every level of wealth the single most important geographical unit, generally by several orders of magnitude over its nearest rival. Nearly all of the City wealth-holders were engaged in commerce...” (W. D. Rubinstein 1981, 106).

⁹ The Governor of the Russia Company and his Court of Assistants were usually senior members of family businesses with branches in the Russian capital and elsewhere: wealthy, sometimes titled, comprising at all times members of Parliament, Bishops and other men of influence, and representative of conditions in Britain which were hangovers of strong mercantilist policies of political and diplomatic support for independent foreign trade. The influence that the Russia Company – along with similar organisations such as the East India Company – could exert over the direction of Britain’s foreign policy was considerable. The British Consul-General in St. Petersburg was partially paid out of monies raised by taxing British ships homeward-bound from Cronstadt under the heading of ‘Fees to the Russia Company’s Commercial Agent’, a fiction ‘requested’ by the Foreign Office as a result of the Russia Company’s traditionally paying *all* diplomatic costs incurred by either Russia or Britain in the early centuries of Anglo-Russian trade – an anomaly by the nineteenth century. This practice of tolling business associates for the benefit of the F.O. lost popularity with Petersburg-based English merchants when the

and Burials which span most of the years between 1706 and 1917 are also stored with the Russia Company documents. The Registers, though they contain just over 10,000 separate entries between 1706 and 1900 (with most but the burials listing upwards of three individuals), do not produce an exact representation of the community during the period, in that newcomers appear without histories, infants are born and baptised elsewhere, people re-marry without the burials of prior spouses being recorded, and a substantial number of the marriages of core community members – particularly after the middle of the nineteenth century – took place in England to allow the attendance of senior, high status family members not resident in Russia. These omissions, however, were usually rectified by data from other sources in the cases of core families. As a ready reference to characters, I transcribed the Registers in full from 1706 until the early twentieth century, organizing all names into their appropriate family groupings and descent lines. In the case of long term residency this was comparatively easy as the names of sponsors and witnesses to the recorded rituals helped to establish kin connection. Isolated mentions (usually a burial) indicated that the person was transient and/or peripheral to the community. The work involved was considerable but constantly rewarding. Slotting each entry into its place brought the lives of these people into my own. I watched some couples marry and, knowing their connections, could imagine the life they set up together. I was pleased with each new baby and mentally congratulated them, made comment on the selected name and speculated about the sponsors (godparents). I was distressed when baby after baby failed to make it through infancy. I remember families like the nineteenth-century Diggles – Matthew was a foreman mechanic at the Sampson Mill at Viborgsky and not a community aspirant – who produced seven children between 1877 and 1886, only one of whom may have lived past six months. I came to dread the appearance of another Diggle baptism.

Some Registers list the addresses of participants, others occupation, many mention mother's maiden name at baptism, a few name the fathers of the spouses at marriage and even their occupations. This data has been invaluable in plotting consanguineal and affinal relationships between community members as well as opening a window onto lifeways and praxis. The three sponsors of infants are mostly recorded, as are the witnesses to weddings, with the lists of the latter lengthening in direct relation to the community standing of the spouses and their families. When a marriage took place between two core merchant families there could be as many as twenty witnesses recorded, 'unknowns' might merit the inclusion of two, highlighting exactly who was considered to be important at any time, and delineating the social categories of the larger whole. This also established which families operated together as close-knit cliques or factions. Many family names, in groups of three or more, appeared as spouses, witnesses and sponsors to each other for over a century. This has given clear and repeated indication that the community was structured into small, porous cells with broad though more tenuous connections. In the case of core families, affinal ties were either localised within the English community in Petersburg or trailed out into family segments and connections in

F.O. began to appoint its own consular representative in the mid-nineteenth century, rather than endorsing one drawn from the Factory elite, and it was terminated when British Parliament cancelled the Company's right to collect import duties at British ports. The Foreign Office was then obliged to pay the salary of their consular representative in full, which conformed with concurrent moves to eradicate nepotism and corruption in British diplomatic practice.

England; those not concerned with community membership might marry 'out', usually into a Baltic German family, less often a Russian one, and their connections would extend in other directions, away from the community.

The Registers also bring other social facts to light, such as the role of unmarried women of influential families in chivvying lower class parents into baptising their children (sometimes a group of siblings of various ages are baptised simultaneously with the same three people of influence as sponsors to all); the higher incidence of death in lunatic asylums than hospitals; the breathtaking rapidity of remarriage after being widowed in the eighteenth century compared with the nineteenth century's longer periods of mourning. The incidence of illegitimacy (universally minimal for those who baptised their children) and pre-marital conceptions (low for the Registers as a whole, non-existent for the community as designated) are also illuminated. Further to Register data, many of the family archives I have examined also contain genealogical details and some of them have copies of family trees. This has helped to fill in gaps and has also provided evidence that, even in the absence of corroborating data, the groupings extracted only from the Registers are probably substantially accurate. It has been constantly reassuring when coming across a vaguely familiar name in a new context to have been able to go to my 'encyclopaedia' and instantly establish the identity, age, connections and status of the individual or family. Bengt Jangfeldt, in his study of the Swedish community in Petersburg (1998), likewise relied extensively on the Church Registers of the Lutheran Church, of which most Swedes were members. In both cases the churches were focal to community activities and record keeping.

Surviving records of the British Factory (the association of British merchants which represented the core of the community, both in terms of influence and community-wide connection) are also stored at the Guildhall. The Minutes Books are fascinating in that they detail concerns of immediate general importance to the community as well as trade-related problems: the replacement of unpopular church officers, the maintenance and improvement of the Churches in Petersburg and Cronstadt, the functioning of the Library, Imperial Russian *ukazes* which concerned the well-being of the British residents, lists of local British nationals who required economic assistance and the reasons for granting or refusing them charity from the substantial Poor's Fund held and managed by the Factory, the endless petty and not-so-petty conflict between 'Factorians' (as they referred to themselves) and outsiders over defining the rights and history of the community in general and the Factory in particular. There is also one invaluable Copy Book which records the informal discussions which took place, over 'refreshments', before the Factorians reached consensus and resolution on some issue.

The final principal source of primary data was the Leeds Russian Archives, a special collection in the Brotherton Library of Leeds University under the dedicated curatorship of Richard Davies. According to Anthony Cross, the archive is "a treasure house of family histories in Russia" (private correspondence), and my own experience endorses this. The question of why families retain or discard boxes of old letters, photographs, diaries, menus, remedies, schedules, scraps of fabric, chips of brick and pressed flowers is a subject in itself but anybody engaging in archival research can only be grateful to those who, rather than discarding the 'junk' they discover in an aged relative's attic, take the trouble to donate it to a system that has also taken the trouble to allocate different areas of interest to specific archival collections.

The Leeds Russian Archives allow the researcher access to the kind of family memorabilia, accumulated in the one spot, that would take years of patient plod to locate, let alone record.

HISTORY MATTERS – BUT NOT NECESSARILY AS ‘MATTER OF FACT’.

I do not see anthropology as concerned only with the pre-literate or pre-industrial societies, either by design or by default. For me it is the comparative study of socio-cultural systems in which Nottingham is as relevant as the Nuer. Even confining the field to ‘other cultures’, we would still no longer be dealing with pre-industrial societies when we are carrying out observational studies. Communities of human beings are not like groups of monkeys; there are no societies in the world today that remain uninfluenced by the world system, that is, by the industrial economy and by the political developments of colonial empires and the independent or quasi-independent nations that succeeded them. (Goody 1982, 3.)

As Eric Wolf says in his preface to the 1997 edition of *Europe and the People Without History*, although I write “as an anthropologist rather than as a professional historian, I think history matters” (x). This resonates with Comaroff and Comaroff’s assertion that “no ethnography can ever hope to penetrate beyond the surface planes of everyday life, to plumb its invisible forms, unless it is informed by the historical imagination – the imagination, that is, of both those who make history and those who write it” (1992, xi), and Berger & Luckman’s observations that “symbolic universes are social products with a history. If one is to understand their meaning, one has to understand the history of their production. This is all the more important because these products of human consciousness, by their very nature, present themselves as full-blown and inevitable totalities.” (op. cit., 115.) This is as true for ethnography in the present as for my own project of examination of the past. Both require that the residue of earlier times be excavated, or at least that the processes which led to such sedimentation be understood. A comparison of salient circulating discursive artefacts among contemporary British expatriates in Helsinki and those which were currency among their compatriots in St. Petersburg a century and more earlier, (Karttunen, 2000), provides no evidence of the major temporal rupture between some bounded era of ‘modernity’ and our own times, which is suggested by theorists of ‘postmodernity’ (see Bauman, Lyotard et al.). Continuity continues and the talk that travels across time and also space re-works new contingencies into understandable patterns long before it is dropped (*if* it is dropped) for reasons of contemporary irrelevance. Even responses to the major technological developments of the twentieth century mirror those of the similarly major technological developments of the nineteenth, responses which, for that matter, are not very dissimilar in nature to Marcus Tullius Cicero’s assertion, almost one century BC, that “learning has been more common [in recent times], and the ignorance of elder times utterly abolished...our modern ages being more polished deride and reject all things that seem impossible” (cited – and also derided and rejected – by St. Augustine in *City of God*, itself written at the end of the 4th century AD).

Jack Goody, writing on the development of the institutions of family and marriage in Europe (1983), notes the difficulties which are raised by an orientation which looks backwards from today, “it tends to overvalue the present – in either a positive or a negative way” (ibid., 2). It may also result in the adoption of “a dichotomous approach that draws a sharp line between we and they, between modern and traditional” (ibid., 3). As I have examined the processes and

talk of this community over the long term, it has become increasingly evident that social change was incremental, and also that it demonstrably conformed to the internal logic of the group's valorized cultural configurations. The merchant world of the 1890s, contrasted only with that of 1554, might suggest epochal variation, but plotting the passage of discourse items over the intervening centuries dispels that impression. I am, like Goody, worried by implications of fundamental social schism between temporally defined eras: traditional and modern, modern and postmodern¹⁰.

Benedict Anderson argues convincingly that several combined factors have driven "a harsh wedge between cosmology and history", suggesting the existence of two discontinuous modes of thought, worldview and practice (1998, 36). These factors are: 1) the gradual, uneven separation of ontological truth from any specific script-language, which implies that a highly reflexive perception of language as merely a communicative tool – any tool will do – has become a globally generalised one, whereas I suspect that for many ordinary people ontological truth is still rather firmly articulated with their own language; 2) the same separation of ontological truth from systems of leadership such as inhere, for example, in monarchy by divine dispensation – or British Parliament, for that matter, given the endorsement of that institution by the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*; 3) an evaporation of the belief that "the origins of the world and of men were essentially identical" (ibid.), yet I feel that an unreflexive opinion that the world *is* its human population, dating its genesis from that of humans, guides a great deal of contemporary behaviour, including that of world leaders; 4) "the impact of economic change, 'discoveries' (social and scientific), and the development of increasingly rapid communications" (ibid.). Anderson appears to be sketching an unbridgeable dichotomy of fantasy and fact, pre-modern (traditional) and modern, non-reason and reason, them and us (whether in space or time) – "cosmology and history". Despite his convincing framing of 'the harsh wedge' (which replicates millennia of similar framings), I feel certain that a continued, *conceptually* irrational valorization of the 'order' perceived to inhere in 'our way of doing things as contrasted with the ways of 'others' (*our* language, *our* leadership, *our* origin myths – our talk), which is one of the inevitable passengers of any consistent patterns of doing, being and thinking, argues that the supposed wedge is neither as harsh nor as universally prevalent as Anderson asserts. The 'history of the world' and 'our' history – as it is embodied in the way 'we' believe and act, the language that 'we' use to describe what 'we' perceive and think, the unquestionable reality of 'our' systems, 'our' cosmology – are not as divorced in everyday modern, 'rational' thought as the academic mind might postulate. As Comaroff and Comaroff also observe:

[T]he Western eye frequently overlooks important similarities in the ways in which societies everywhere are made and remade...[W]orlds everywhere are complex fusions of what *we* like to call modernity and magicality, rationality and ritual, history and the here

¹⁰ This becomes particularly salient in the group being analysed where 'the new' was, as often as not, drawn from socio-cultural praxis that belonged in the domain of another group's 'traditional', as must often be the case in diasporic borrowings from host cultures. Is it 'postmodern' to borrow the traditions of others? Or is it a phenomenon that has been around as long as humans have organised themselves into bands, and therefore highly 'traditional'? One feels the precariousness of endorsing the notion of temporal rupture.

and now...If such distinctions do not hold up, it follows that the modes of discovery associated with them – ethnography for “traditional” communities, history for the “modern” world, past and present – also cannot be sharply drawn. We require ethnography to know ourselves, just as we need history to know non-Western others. (1992, 5-6 emphasis in text)

The ‘fact’ that this community was part of a world that recorded, daily, its events, thoughts, ethics, understandings, opinions etc, in media as diverse as personal diaries, political pamphlets, letters, novels, learned treatises and the *London Times* – means nothing more than that. It was not a world that was shaped by, produced or lodged in objective ‘fact’, any more than an orally reproduced cosmology can be postulated as ‘fantasy’. It just had a lot of written records. And talk recorded in writing has enduring substance and truth-value in the Western mind, if only because it can easily be referenced decades or centuries later. That does not divorce histories from cosmologies. The principal differences merely lie in the fixity of form which the written word, and particularly the mass printed word, supplies to discursive artefacts. The variation in the ‘histories’ of the community produced and sometimes published by various community members exemplify the same factitious potential as a folk tale.

I live as a foreigner in Helsinki, in the same relatively extreme climate that the members of this British merchant community experienced and incorporated into their ways of living; I have explored the streets, parks and buildings in St. Petersburg where they lived, shopped, worked and ‘played’; visited the sites around the Russian capital where they established summer ‘colonies’; handled their possessions, sat in their chairs, eaten with their cutlery and china, worn their jewellery, pored over their fading photographs and read the books and newspapers they read. Most of my understandings of the ways they lived and thought are, however, inevitably drawn from their talk as they recorded it at the time, and their written words as they remembered their lives afterwards. Such talk created, and has re-created for me, a worldview that has become very real and almost seamless during the years of research. I am certain that they felt they lived in patterns that were exactly appropriate to the “nature, structure and origin of the universe as a whole” (which is the concern of the ‘science’ of cosmology according to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* 1995, 489).

At the same time, in relying on recorded talk as a major data source, I have endeavoured to “resist the reduction of anthropological research to an exercise in ‘intersubjectivity,’ the communing of phenomenologically conceived actors through talk alone” (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992, 10). Throughout the project I have been conscious of the need to place such talk in broader “natural” contexts (Sherzer 1987, 296) of structural limitations and opportunities operating within the group, and of the contemporary events and received wisdoms in which the group was situated by virtue of its place, time and composition. “Improperly contextualised, the stories of ordinary people past stand in danger of remaining just that: stories. To become something more, these partial, ‘hidden histories’ have to be situated in the wider worlds of power and meaning that gave them life.” (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992, 17.)

The methodology implicit in the approach outlined in the following chapter is ideally suited to investigating a community which was as prolifically literate as this one has proved to be. This is not an excavation of a subaltern group such as Le Roy Ladurie’s albigensian shepherds, priests and peasants (1979), or individual such as Ginzberg’s sixteenth-century miller of Friuli

(1980[1976]), products of largely oral cultures from which “the thoughts, the beliefs, the aspirations...reach us (if and when they do) almost always through distorting viewpoints and intermediaries” (ibid., xv). As I have said, core community members were merchants, professionals and their kin – all literate record keepers.

Given the extraordinary global influence of the British economy in the nineteenth-century world, British merchants of that time can easily be conceptualised as speaking the contemporary languages of exclusion with native mastery – of writing the lexicons, so to speak – so I suspect I ought to feel some shame in vicariously enjoying the achievements of such a patently privileged and hegemonic social entity. However, these people, these Anglo-Russian merchants and their families, like the pre-literate subalterns who have been “passed over in silence, discarded, or simply ignored” (ibid., xiii) by historians and anthropologists until quite recently, created through their words and actions a distinctive social world as significant as that of any other.

DISSERTATION PREVIEW

The following chapter begins by exploring the concepts of community and culture as they are used in this study. I then expand on the theoretical framework which I have indicated above, discussing a discourse-centred approach to the concepts as it is presented by scholars such as Urban, Silverstein and Sherzer, and also as it is obliquely supported by the work of a variety of other writers concerned with the workings of community, *sui generis*, who do not specifically present the premise that underpins this study. I also explore the concept of ‘metaculture’, the evaluative commentary which accompanies cultural transmission. I discuss the suggestion that metacultural commentary which endorses tradition will insist on as exact a replication of discursive and other cultural items as possible, whereas that which operates under conditions of ‘modernity’ values innovation in cultural production and re-production. Given my antipathy towards conceptualizations of temporal schisms, I have some modifications to make to the latter formulation.

Chapter three plots the movement of recorded talk within, and about, the community from its incipient period in sixteenth-century Moscow until its settled establishment in St. Petersburg during the early decades of the eighteenth century. As Urban asserts, the degree to which a discursive object is fixed over time is open to empirical investigation: “if we are dealing with culture that has been passed on across generations, the given instance is a copy of some earlier instance of discourse, but in what ways is it similar and in what ways different?” (1993, 2). Culture exists in its transmission, and an investigation of early incarnations enables me to draw attention to the origin and development of some of the discursive constructs which repeatedly shaped and were shaped over time, altering or not “in the course of numerous replications and recontextualizations” (ibid., 4). It also indicates, at hyper-speed, the kind of processes which aggregates of humans both set in motion and have thrust upon them in the course of ‘becoming’ a community. I conclude the chapter by briefly siting the community in the larger worlds of which it was a part, in local events and politics, in global trade and in English specificities over time.

Following historical excavation, chapter four explores the community’s nineteenth-century perceptions of itself and of those who were eligible for membership. Rather than endeavouring

to ‘intuit’ what and who this might have been I have relied on examining the different circumstances and contexts in which the first person plural pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ were implemented and to whom they referred and why; and the various items, practices and institutions designated by the possessive pronoun ‘our’. Community members defined themselves as English; their frequently reiterated ‘Englishness’ is one of their most easily traceable discourse items. The ‘we’ of the community was most closely tied to expressions of (often apocryphal) common ethnicity (though ‘race’ was the term deployed). They were ‘the English community at St. Petersburg’ – though sometimes ‘the British residents at St. Petersburg’ when a larger, objective category of national allegiance was envisaged. They were resident ‘at’ the city, rather than a part of the fabric of local life; usually British subjects, but invariably English whatever their actual descent. Those ‘natural born Britons’ who had taken Russian nationality for commercial reasons could, theoretically, resume their British status on the signing of a paper supplied by the local British Consul-General. As Russian Minister of Finance, Count Witte – “the greatest autocrat as a minister Russia has had” (J. Whishaw 1935, 109) – is *said* to have said to Jim Whishaw, who, as a temporary Russian subject in the late-nineteenth, early-twentieth centuries, could hold all the English-owned oil-fields in Baku in his name as local agent and nominal owner:

‘You are an Englishman, but for purposes of business you have become a Russian subject. I know everything that you are doing. I know also that you are within the law, but you are doing acts that must be put a stop to. I am, however, going to help you, for I wish to milk the English cow.’ I had wit enough to say, in my execrable Russian, that the cow was plentifully supplied with milk. (ibid., 109-10.)

Chapter four concludes by examining framings of the community’s most significant ‘others’, because it is evident that discursive artefacts reproducing such ‘others’ in negative ways acted upon the community which produced them in prescriptive and proscriptive ways.

Chapter five looks at two of the principal factors that impinged on the community from outside its own cultural constructs and accelerations and also devotes some attention to the relationship between praxis and praxis approval (shared action and shared talk), in the making of communal worlds. The first exterior factor I excavate is the printed material which reached the community from the homeland. “Fiction, like myth, is part of the conceptual repertoire of contemporary societies. Readers of novels and poems can be moved to intense action...and their authors often contribute to the construction of social and moral maps for their readers” (Appadurai 1998, 58). As Tyler points out, however, a text cannot “dictate its interpretation because it cannot control the powers of its readers” (1986, 135). The books and newspapers that were read by the community were, frequently, read aloud and discussed, and given the limitations imposed by their isolation from the sources of mass printed media in English, many of the same books and newspapers would have been read and discussed by most community members. The Library in the English Church and ‘Watkin’s’, the English bookshop in Petersburg¹¹, were both sources of literature and community members lent and borrowed among each other. Mary Riddle née Whishaw mentions hundreds of titles of books and newspapers

¹¹ Bengt Jangfeldt also notes the presence and importance of the Swedish bookshop to the Swedish community in Petersburg (1998).

which she read over the years, a list which is so interesting for the light it casts upon the influences at work shaping the attitudes and circulating talk in the community that it might be the basis of a whole study in itself. She was not a woman to have sought out and read proscribed material; what she read was being read by everyone else in the community who read for pleasure, and all seem to have done so. Reports of current affairs that were graded as ‘news’ in the homeland were also widely disseminated; Mary mentions *The Times*, *The Mail*, *The Guardian*, *The Standard*, *The Graphic*, *The Church Times*, *Punch* and many more as ‘taken’ by her family or available at the Library. The normal journalistic model of the time was to reproduce “transcripts of statements by public figures, reported with the minimum of interventions and explanation by journalists” (Brown 1985, 102), which brought the world of England to the English world in Petersburg without the filter of editorial commentary, which they seem to have provided themselves. They did not always agree with the way events which involved Russia were interpreted by English politicians, for example. Thus books and newspapers, while they helped maintain a loose fit with the English in England, were liable to some re-interpretation when processed by the community.

It is a little difficult to assess the degree to which stringent Russian censorship laws affected the reading material available in the country. “All printed works published in the Empire and most foreign works passed the examination of governmental censors either before they circulated or before they were printed” (Balmuth 1979, 41). Despite this, or perhaps because of it, by 1876 the number of imported titles was five times the number of titles published in Russia¹² (ibid.). Large packets of books brought in by private individuals were taken at the border for examination and could be retrieved later on payment of a ‘fee’ (Michell, 1888). Bibles and Prayer Books were exempt and it is, in fact, the latter that I examine in the first section of chapter five. *The Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England is the text that dictated the phraseology and ritual practice of worship in the community and a document which was, and had been for centuries, extraordinarily influential in shaping the discourse of the social class to which the community assigned itself. The congregation of the English Church in Petersburg accepted its doctrines without reservation, unlike that of the British Church in Moscow which comprised a variety of Protestant sects which did not accord the Prayer Book final authority in mode of worship. Printed items of talk in general kept many aspects of community practice in a loose sort of fit with contemporary England, the Prayer Book demanded absolute replication of the traditions of the country’s Established Church.

If the replication demanded by the *Book of Common Prayer* maintained certain aspects of talk and praxis in stasis for centuries, and consequently identical to the same aspects in England, other areas of everyday life, also outside the control of the community, did exactly the opposite. The second half of chapter five examines how the community made sense of the place they lived in, and how the place wove itself into the fabric of their everyday lives, demanding innovation in many different areas of praxis and metacultural evaluation.

Chapter six is concerned principally with what can be conceptualised as the structure of

¹² The Hon. Maurice Baring, correspondent for the *Morning Post* in 1905, noted with some amusement that translations of authors including Jerome, Wells, Kipling, Conan Doyle, Marie Corelli and Mrs. Humphrey Ward could all be bought at small side stations between Harbin and Baikal (n.d., 19) – so had obviously passed the censors. Mary had read all of these in English.

connections within this merchant community. The most salient aspect of this is the dense kinship network, but I also look at cohort association, data for which is drawn from analysis of Mary Whishaw's listed contacts, running into the thousands, for three years on either side of her wedding date. The next section of the chapter examines the way biological kinship was conceptualized and practiced, working from the premise that *a priori* categories may obfuscate more than they clarify. I examine two degrees of 'fixity' of kinship roles, those of 'sister' and 'father', to illustrate that relationships which may be conceptualized as purely biological, are affected by considerations that range beyond this simplistic model. In chapter seven I examine merchant marriage. Overwhelming is the degree to which marriages replicated or produced business association and alliances between the families who produced the successive 'Treasurers to the British Factory', the most important position available for the exercise of local aspiration – and this pattern is discussed, as are the drawbacks of alternative choices.

The last three chapters before I conclude recall St. Augustine's definition of "a people" as "a multitude of reasonable creatures conjoined in a general agreement of those things it respects" and "in a common fruition of what they properly desire" (1950, 264), beginning, in chapter eight, by examining the most salient regulatory body in the community, the British Factory. Those who did not have any connection with the Factory might have been 'British residents at St. Petersburg', but they were not an agentive part of the community. The Factory was the locus for the 'common fruition' of what the breadwinners 'properly desired'. The Factory also controlled the English Church in Petersburg, a powerful unifier of all Anglican British residents in Petersburg, added to which is the empirically observable fact that the merchants comprising the Factory, as patriarchal heads of families with demonstrably the most extensive kin connections within the community and the most influential connections into the host society and that of the homeland, had ready-made paths of dissemination for cultural objects they wished to peddle, particularly of the discursive variety. Chapter nine investigates the application of a gramscian model of hegemony to explain the continued influence of the Factory over the centuries. Chapter ten models, via three connected case-studies, the actual workings of contestation in the Anglo-Russian context, when personalities collided or event impacted on tradition. I follow in some detail the processes involved in which contradiction was discursively re-presented by protagonists drawing, with varying degrees of success, on precedent, prior networks and personal strength of character¹³.

¹³ Dividing the data into categories such as 'self-presentation' and 'merchant kinship' and 'the hegemony of the Factory' is not intended to assume a division between what may be described as the ideational creations of the community – understood by Geertz, for example, as cultural system – and the institutions which can be conceptualized as structuring social organization. "[I]nvestigations into the natural histories of particular discourses...suggest that the distinctions between social and cultural cannot...be easily made, and that social categories, if readable from entextualization processes, are just as much products of them" (Silverstein and Urban 1996, 6). The division is merely one of academic convenience, aimed at assisting comprehension and analysis of source material by directing attention to certain facets of the community's existence, rather than reflecting any consistently separable sectors of behaviour and belief, or discontinuity between the cultural and the social. Both the latter, I am convinced, are the result of sedimentation over time of discursive representations of the world into instructions, rules, preferences, proscriptions and so on which both continuously re-create the world and endeavour to maintain it as it has been created. The more rigorous the requirement that a discursive object be exactly replicated at each reproduction, the stronger the likelihood that the object will form part of an institution which will act back on its constituent humans in binding ways over long periods of time.

CHAPTER TWO.

A DISCOURSE-CENTRED APPROACH TO CULTURE AND COMMUNITY.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

For, besides the inherited forces and instincts, the influence of a community as an educating and guiding will is the most important factor determining the condition and formation of every individual habit and disposition. Especially is the family spirit (*Familiengeist*) important, but so also is every spirit (*Geist*) which is similar to it and has the same effects (Tönnies 1955 (1887), 53).

Inherent in much of the work which has contributed to formulations, usages and discussions of concepts relating to the term ‘community’ and its academic typologies (which tail off, at some indeterminate point, into not-community), is the premise that the objective existence of a social collectivity is the starting point of most ethnographic research. A group must exist – it seems – as a material ‘fact’, definable as such by the observer, before its practices, beliefs or other specificities may be examined, described, analysed and re-presented by the researcher. Part of the project of essentializing social collectivities (by outsiders) is the practice of attaching a ‘name’ to a group targeted for research, assistance, subjection or extermination, even in the absence of an autodesignation, which then may operate as a subliminal ‘proof’ of its status as object¹. One assumption on which this practice rests is that if a group of people does not have a name, then their existence as an entity of some kind is open to doubt, though all it really exemplifies is a Euro-western practice which carries “a baggage of presuppositions about culture and social groups” (Urban 1996a, 35). Naming something lends it the appearance of a thing, and the sensing and descriptions and modelling of community are all very much about making a tangible ‘thing’ out of a disparate collection of concrete criteria, semi-tangible institutions and intangible understandings – not to mention the individuals entangled with these human constructs. Even today (and we – as social scientists whose largest discourse circulation is sited in Western-oriented discursive networks – do not yet escape a Western bias), the projects which require that a group be delimited in order to study a particular phenomenon or phenomena, still attempt to produce universal, concrete criteria by which it may be judged whether a group comprises a thing-in-the-world in the first place (possession of a ‘name’ being one of them). The inutility of such academic practice was noted by Alan Macfarlane in his detailed study of two English parishes from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, leading him to conclude that even in an era which is generally categorised as one in which ‘communal’

¹ Benedict Anderson points out the anomalies to which this universal Western practice leads when discussing the formal and informal European census takings of South-East Asia during the colonial period. In this project of ethnic construction he suggests that no more than “a tiny fraction of those categorized and sub-categorized would have recognized themselves under such labels” (Anderson 1991, 165). In another example, the ‘Chinese’ trading in the Philippines in the 17th century were classified by the Spanish as “*sangley*”, a distortion of the Hokkien word *sengli* or trader. “One can imagine Spanish proto-census men asking the traders drawn to Manila by the galleon trade: ‘Who are you?’, and being sensibly told: ‘We are traders.’...for two centuries the Iberians remained in a comfortably provincial conceptual fog.” (ibid., 168.) Given the size and ethnic diversity of China, leaving them with their generic ‘traders’ label would have been a more accurate way of designating them if they were to be categorised as some sort of ‘group’ than the term ‘chino’ which the Spanish later applied.

ties predominated in social organization, “it was just not possible to use the models of community-based societies which historians and anthropologists had devised in relation to many parts of the world...however one defined ‘Community,’ there was relatively little of it in the villages we were studying, as far back as the sixteenth century” (1978, 4-5).

Paul Morris records “a renewed interest in the issue of community in recent years across a range of academic disciplines and practices” (1996, 225), noting, however, that the new concern is “an attempt to theorize community outside of the existing modernist grand narratives” (ibid. 246). Nonetheless, it is pragmatically useful to briefly examine the literature on community which has been produced within this frame, particularly as such an undertaking also helps to cast light on the worldview of the type of social formation which contributed to such academic perspectives and assumptions - and was, in turn, shaped by them².

In 1957 George Hillery produced a paper in the *Journal of Rural Studies*, in which he listed 95 different definitions of community culled from years of community analysis by many different researchers and theorists. The article was extensively mentioned over the next few decades in community studies literature (e.g. König 1968, Stoneall 1983 et al.) in tones varying from the critically attentive to dismissal of the project altogether. The three central categories which may be drawn from this compendium, however, are generally agreed to be: commonality among people, social interaction, and common land or, at least, locality of residence. This, in essence, is a reiteration of Durkheim’s assertions that “[w]hat bring men together are mechanical causes and impulsive forces, such as affinity of blood, attachment to the same soil, ancestral worship, community of habits...It is only when the group has been formed on these bases that co-operation is organized there...” (1949, 278).

There is no doubt that ‘affinity of blood’ was a powerful factor in this community’s sensing of itself as such. It was, however, an affinity which developed *after* other factors had brought a disparate group of people together in the same place, at the same time, with the same aims. Endogamous marriage objectively webbed them together by the mid-nineteenth century, but it was a phenomenon that was not in place a century earlier. ‘Ancestral worship’ – here construed as attachment to concepts of nationality and ethnicity, of ‘British’ or ‘English’, and ways of doing, being and thinking ascribed to these concepts – was also a factor, but, likewise, one that was valorized over time, rather than being in place during the first moments of association. Neither was salient in the talk of the early merchants. ‘Community of habits’ obviously developed *after* initial association. Specificities of local conditions, global placement and all the other factors that impinge on a group required novel response; ‘habits’, as normative devices, required negotiation of these responses into forms that found group acceptance. Postulating ‘community of habits’ as a ‘mechanical cause and impulsive force’ in *bringing* people together reverses the relation between cause and effect, though they certainly become part of the social glue once established. It is true, as I discuss in the following chapter, that the earliest English

² The work of nineteenth-century academics – anthropologists, sociologists, historians – is of particular relevance in reaching understanding of this nineteenth-century, literate group of Western bourgeoisie. Scholars and bourgeoisie had a hermeneutic relationship in terms of contemporary circulating discourses. Maine, Spencer, Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel and many more re-presented the understandings of similar groups to this one, in the same era, and also the perspective on ‘others’ produced by such groups. Thus their insights are highly pertinent, if often ‘politically incorrect’ according to current terminology and ethos.

merchants were from a similar milieu, or cultural background, hence probably sharing the ‘affinities’ discussed here, but there is strong evidence that they did not operate together as a *societas*, much less a *universitas* (in the terms discussed by Dumont, 1986, 63-74). Choice of allegiance to the Russia Company, to local Russian factions or to purely personal advantage did not encourage a sense of belonging together, or the negotiation of a community of habits. Over the centuries, the Britons who appeared in Moscow and then St. Petersburg came from increasingly diverse backgrounds in their home country. Religious practice, regional affiliation, dialect, social and occupational ‘class’ and all the minor details of everyday life and praxis subsumed by these categories and many more were brought as multiple narratives into the new association. While potential members of the group could not be said to have “come into the world full grown, and armed at all points like the fruit of the serpent’s teeth sown by Cadmus at the corners of his cucumber bed” (Halévy cited by Dumont 1986, 74, footnote 15), this was a diasporic social entity; and, furthermore, one which had disruptively relocated itself from the Moscow/Archangel axis to St. Petersburg/Cronstadt in 1723. Internally generated records are scanty prior to 1774, but it is clear that it had taken almost all of this half century for the English themselves to see the point in sinking their perceived differences and moving forward as a community. Although, from an outsider’s perspective, they *were* ‘the English’; although the texts which were produced in the first two centuries of English merchant residence in Russia (and survived), objectively demonstrate (via the discourse-centred approach employed in this study) that the “institutions, values, concepts, language” (ibid.) of the homeworld were understood and widely (if not universally) reproduced in the talk, beliefs and praxis of those who have left records, the question still remains: could the English merchants in St. Petersburg be considered as a communal thing-in-the-world, before they personally perceived themselves as such? before they personally presented themselves to ‘others’ as ‘we, the English community’?

Durkheim dismisses the possibility that so-called “primitive units” could pass “from the state of perfect independence to that of mutual dependence” (ibid.) with the rhetorical question: “But what could have determined such complete transformation in them?” (1949, 279). Weber, too, asks a similar question but from the pragmatic stance that such, indeed, is the case: individuals do, in the course of their lives, break out of old social configurations and begin the work of creating new ones, which may often involve a re-negotiation of cultural norms, values and practices. For Weber “real empirical sociological investigation begins with the question: What motives determine and lead the individual members and participants in this socialistic community to behave in such a way that the community came into being in the first place and continues to exist?” (1947, 107.) This is much the same sort of question this study investigates. As for Durkheim’s framing of *his* answer: he dismisses as a paradox the possibility that society might be formed by the coalescence of individuals – “it consists, indeed, in deducing society from the individual” (1949, 279.)³. Yet Durkheim does not offer any explanatory suggestions as

³ This is an example of the common human practice of shifting an opposing point of view to an extreme and tendentious position in order to demonstrate its foolishness, because who would *not* argue that “culture powerfully constitutes the reality that actors live in” (Ortner 1994, 396) and, concomitantly, the type of individuals that a given socio-cultural order is most likely to produce? Even Weber, who asserts that “for sociological purposes, there is no such thing as a collective personality which ‘acts’,” goes on to

to how communal worlds are created which satisfactorily counter the possibility that community might often be the product of individuals (or primitive units) negotiating their differences toward a compromise in the interests of the perceived ‘whole’ – with the conscious, or semi-conscious, knowledge that a cohesive aggregate can provide the individual with positive benefits unprocurable to the individual or ‘primitive’ family unit *sui generis*. The negotiation itself is an ongoing, open-ended, constantly contested, incremental process, as I hope to illustrate via the ethnographic material comprising this study.

Another postulated *a priori* criterion for the objective existence of community is its ‘shared territory’ component – Durkheim’s appealingly phrased “attachment to the same soil”, René König’s less attractive “global society of a local unit type” (1968, 25). König’s qualifier ‘global’ refers to the criterion implicit in most early formulaic definitions of community – including Durkheim’s – that of self-sufficiency⁴, which reflects the size of the units being considered as communities. These are often ‘whole’ societies as bordered by geo-political map lines, or, at the least, groups that are attached, to the exclusion of others, to a particular site or, in the case of nomadic groups, predetermined sites. “Such named locations, which often come to be identified with the groups that inhabit them, constitute the landscape of anthropology” (Appadurai 1988a, 16). Appadurai, however, goes on to say that even when contact with large-scale external forces has been minimal, the presence of ‘internal’ variations in isolated groups and groups of groups “suggests that no one grouping among them was ever truly incarcerated in a specific place and confined by a specific mode of thought...[M]y general case is that natives, people confined to and by the places to which they belong, groups unsullied by contact with a larger world, have probably never existed” (1988b, 39). Physical proximity of residence may be relevant to the development of a sensing of commonality in past, present and future interests – which contributes to the sensing of community – particularly prior to developments in communication technology over the past century, but the coterminous nature of residence of the English diaspora in St. Petersburg with its hosts was, by the late-eighteenth century, nonetheless compatible with feelings of belonging with other Britons, whether in Petersburg or elsewhere, to the exclusion of immediate Russian neighbours. Prior to that time, “attachment to the same soil” appears to have had little effect on perceptions of shared identity either with other Britons or with Russian hosts. By the mid-nineteenth century, community identity was attached to two soils, that of St. Petersburg and its immediate environs, and that of southern England.

Homogeneity was another required characteristic of community that cropped up repeatedly

say that “these concepts of collective entities...have a meaning in the minds of individual persons, partly as of something actually existing, partly as something with normative authority...Actors thus in part orient their action to them, and in this role such ideas have a powerful, often decisive, causal influence on the course of action of real individuals.” (1947, 102). On the other hand, Mary Douglas makes a similar point about Durkheim’s critics in her “Forward” to *The Gift* (1990), saying, “And as for those he attacked, especially those across the Channel or across the Atlantic, it was evidently easier to misrepresent him than to disagree with what he was actually saying”: Bartlett discrediting “the collective memory” as “quasimystical soul”; Simon disassociating himself from implications of “group mind” and so on (xv). Her observation is also just.

⁴ This community was certainly not self-sufficient and had no pretensions to being so. All its material requirements were either supplied by the host culture, which necessitated everyday contact with the ‘others’ that their overt practice sought to exclude, or – from legs of mutton to contemporary press – imported from Britain.

in scholastic works during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries⁵. *Pace* Ruth Benedict, an anthropological focus on the “more or less successful attainments of integrated behavior” (1934, 48) was a major factor in the restricting of anthropological research to the locus of “primitive society”. Noting that modern civilization comprises “individuals” drawn from “heterogeneous groups”, she goes on to assert that in “primitive society, the cultural tradition is simple enough to be contained within the knowledge of individual adults, and the manners and morals of the group are moulded to one well-defined general pattern” (Benedict 1934, 17).

While this acknowledges that contemporary (Western, ‘civilized’) groups, at least, have porous boundaries and contain multiple perspectives, Benedict assumes that cultural traditions in primitive society are of one well-defined general pattern, implying a natural linkage between ‘culture’ and ‘integrated homogeneity’ which complex civilization has perhaps mislaid along the way. Based on readings of early sociologists and anthropologists, this would seem to have been a widely held, if not well authenticated, view, although Brightman, for example, suggests that accusations that all early anthropologists understood culture as homogenous and primordial “gamble rather poignantly for their topicality on an increasingly pervasive disciplinary amnesia, a lack of familiarity with what has gone before” (1995, 540). Indeed, Benedict herself concluded that a “lack of integration seems to be as characteristic of certain cultures as extreme integration is of others” (1937, 223). Even Durkheim, despite his emphasis on “normative integration and common cultural values” (Featherstone 1995, 6), on stressing that citizens of a country seek each other out in preference to strangers because they love each other, their country and the society they form by their union (Durkheim 1960, 105), infers the existence of many minor narratives and multiple allegiances in his discussion of the “moral life” that grows up around the association of individuals in occupational groups, where “little by little, a restricted group, having its special characteristics, will be formed in the midst of general society” (1960, 14). Discussing postmodernity almost a century later, Maffesoli refers to “the processes of tribalism at work that have always existed but which, according to the era, have been more or less valued” (1996, 69), which result in aggregations within a larger social environment based on perceived affinity among aggregation members. Whether these ‘restricted groups’ or ‘tribus’ may actually be called ‘communities’ is a moot semantic point, of course, but I take the line that if membership in a group comprises its members’ principal or most affective mode of self-identification (or even one of several) – even if members have concurrent allegiances and ties to other groups – then, as phenomena, such groups are open to anthropological investigation as things-in-the-world.

Comaroff and Comaroff remind us of the fairly recent anthropological insistence that culture (and by extrapolation the communities ‘sharing’ cultural patterns) must be seen as “a

⁵ König’s sociology of community has a much longer list of criteria, however, creating such a rigid model that one doubts whether any social creation would ever sit comfortably within it. Apart from numerous forms of inner relationships, such as a multiplicity of functional spheres (by which he means organizations responsible for education, housing, public works etc) social groups (multiple classes, ages, ‘races’) and other social phenomena (specific land settlement, size, migration, language, religion, the economic system etc.), a community “will also as a matter of course, have its own tangible institutional and organizational external structure” (ibid.). Quite frankly, I only include this list to demonstrate the limitations of an essentializing approach to the understanding of community. I fail to see where this kind of investigation, based on predetermined variables, might lead. Perhaps if all criteria were met, one could conclude that all criteria had been met.

fluid, often contested, and only partially integrated mosaic of narratives, images, and practices...[that in a single society] there may be alternative (gendered, generational, even stratified) histories and world-maps” (1992, 19; see also Renato Rosaldo 1988, Featherstone 1995 et al.), while Abu-Lughod questions the “organic metaphors of wholeness and the methodology of holism that characterizes anthropology [in that they] both favor coherence, which in turn contributes to the perception of communities as bounded and discrete” (1991, 146). I take the stance that the terms ‘community’ and ‘cohesion’ travel comfortably together. Individuals must cohere to some extent to allow for the sensing of community – and the praxis and shared understandings associated with such sensing – and ‘cohesion’ implies the act of cohering. ‘Coherence’, however, is a stronger term and ‘homogeneity’ stronger still and both must be treated warily. In so far as they imply unity and consistency, I would suggest, as Appadurai and many others suggest, that coherence or homogeneity within a group is never totally attained – though its attainment might be an acknowledged aim of certain factions within any collectivity. It certainly did not exist in the group of nineteenth-century English merchants under analysis, despite repeated, unreflexive assertions of shared Englishness and the qualities encompassed by the term; “it was always more of an ideal, an intention rather than an actuality” (Featherstone 1995, 13).

Based on documented evidence four institutions are possible ‘holding containers’ for a sense of community throughout this specific community’s duration: ties of kinship, which were dense and extensive; the English Church as both the ‘Established’ religion and as a physical building on the English Quay in Petersburg which enclosed a multiplicity of spaces with valorized functions; the British Factory as a local professional association with an administrative role in the community; and British diplomatic representation in St. Petersburg. The effect of the latter was nugatory. Diplomatic representatives had stronger ties with the Russian court and international diplomatic circles than they had with their own locally resident compatriots and exerted insignificant cohesive effect on them, except for the occasions when an Ambassador or Consul-General roused concerted opposition in the community by some act of high-handedness⁶. As for the Established Church of England as spiritual dogma, there is considerable evidence that the bulk of the congregation of the English Church was not deeply devout, despite punctilious participation in the rituals of Easter, Christmas, rites of passage of their own members, and mass turn outs for services commemorating the births, funerals, weddings and coronations of the ‘English’ (Dutch and Hanoverian) monarchs and their families, and those of the ‘Russian’ (German and Danish) ‘Imperials’. However, the repetition of Anglican ritual was discursively formative, as I will discuss, and the Church as a physical building was definitely an enduring and vital locus of community interaction from the time it was acquired in 1753. Kin ties were likewise highly influential in creating and maintaining a sense of community, and the British Factory and those associated with it also exerted considerable centripetal effect, responsible as they were for the management of the Church and its activities and also local charities operating as pension schemes – as well as the conditions under which Anglo-Russian trade, the material life blood of the community, was conducted.

⁶ Clashes between British Factory-backed factions in the community and Foreign Office-backed British diplomatic representatives will be discussed in chapter ten. The disputes seemed, however, to have beneficial contributory effects on the welfare and longevity of the community.

So, instead of the bounded locale; self-sufficiency; durability and stability of family residence over time; unitary nationality and language; internal and external legal and governmental apparatus; and internal coherence – which communitarian studies have suggested are prerequisites for authentic community – we have an occupational association with self-defined executive functions, a single multi-purpose building wherein a variety of ritual-rich events and processes occurred, and a dense network of acquaintanceship connected to, but not fully defined by, affinal and consanguineal relationships. And yet, records which have survived make it clear that, for at least the last century and a half of its existence, the community under analysis was perceived as such by both those who regarded themselves as members of it and those who did not.

One Petersburg-resident British subject who did not, though descended from one Robert Hynam who did⁷, was Herbert Swann, who wrote in his memoirs:

...the British, who were the second largest [foreign] community after the Germans...could be divided into two groups – those who had integrated into Russian or Baltic German society, and those who held themselves aloof, mixing almost entirely with others of their own nationality...personally I did not know any of [the latter group] (1968, 29-30).

The Swann family had retained its British nationality and its ritual connections with the English Church in St. Petersburg but had married into Baltic German families who, “although most of them retained cultural links with the German language, were largely Russianised and members of the Russian Orthodox faith” (ibid., 29). It must be born in mind that this English merchant community was not an isolated geographically defined entity (if such a thing has ever existed) where non-participation in, or exclusion from, community activities equates with marginalization from social concerns altogether. There were many accessible modes of living and sociation in Petersburg: Germanic, Dutch, Scandinavian, Nonconformist British and, of course, Russian lifestyles and networks were available alternatives. Globalized conceptions of ‘home’ were also common discursive currency, which meant that many of those whose rites of passage are recorded in the Registers of the Petersburg English Church later moved onwards to destinations that were coloured pink on British maps – Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, New Zealand, Malaya, Rhodesia etc. – and also to those that were not. Returning to Britain itself was always yet another an option, even for the destitute (courtesy of repatriation assistance from the Factory or the British Embassy – both of which institutions were happy to rid their environment of those who did not add lustre to their nation’s profile abroad).

What the ‘English community at St. Petersburg’ represented, therefore, was an energetic, partially conscious strategising aimed less at harmonious, reciprocal cooperation (though the machinery of rift resolution was well-oiled), than at protecting a locally defined ‘English’ way of life (and the group of people who were prepared to adhere to these definitions) from dissipating, alien forces, and at projecting this perceived ‘order’ forward through future generations. That they managed to do so for so long with so little of the construction and restoration materials deemed by past ‘community’ theorists to be necessary to the project

⁷ Hynam will crop up again. He was Court Horologer to Catherine the Great and had entrée both at the Russian Court and among his compatriots.

indicates that these materials are not the key to understanding either how individuals coagulate into groups, nor to understanding the persistence and substance of such coagulations. It also provides supportive evidence for my contention that marking out human history and praxis into epochs such as ‘traditional’, ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ is solipsistic. Appadurai, for example, somewhat contradicts his earlier stance (1988a), when he suggests that in “*today’s world*”, “groups are *no longer* tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogenous” (1998, 48, emphasis added); that “standard cultural reproduction (like standard English) is *now* an endangered activity that succeeds only by conscious design and political will, where it succeeds at all” (ibid. 54, emphasis added); that “habitus *now* has to be painstakingly reinforced in the face of life-worlds that are frequently in flux” (ibid., 56, emphasis added). I would suggest that these formulations, and many others like them, are also examples of academic amnesia, or lack of familiarity with what has come before. On the basis of the data which informs this study, these qualities would appear to have accompanied the human condition seamlessly across time and space.

In framing the questions whose answers I have researched in this study, I have made the conscious decision to focus on the *making* of communal worlds and collective consciousness, on the *processes* involved, an emphasis which has, inevitably, been at the expense of the exact cultural content of the entity at any one moment. There can be no doubt that some of the moral qualities valorized over time by the members of this collectivity underwent considerable metamorphosis, while others maintained comparative stasis, both absolute in some respects, and merely in the manner of their ‘framing’, in others. Valorization of individualism, of “natural independence”, as the Factory perceived it in the late eighteenth century, is a specific case in point. The narrow and fairly brutal utilitarianism favoured by Britain’s privileged classes from the late seventeenth century until its apogee in Mill’s revised and humanised formulations in the mid-nineteenth, underwent a ‘communalisation’ as it allowed, or was forced into allowing, the encompassment of additional sectors of British society, as a result of the increased and finally universal suffrage that accompanied industrialisation. Arguably, British liberal valorization of the ‘natural independence’ of the individual⁸ – which contrived to articulate with the idea that one ‘traded’ a measure of it for the greater good of the group’s members (conspicuously *not* the group as a whole) – gradually crumbled during the late-nineteenth century. There appears to have been a correlation between increasing valorization of humans as replicants (encouraged by many aspects of Victorianism, not least the spread and nature of the education on offer from the fourth decade of the century), and devaluation of independent action and eccentricity, qualities which were encouraged – even demanded – by the trajectories of early English mercantile expansion. That, however, can only be a sub-plot in this text due to other greater concerns. These British merchants and their families were eminently social beings, but beings who were operating in a system which highly valued independence in certain spheres. Mary Bouquet, drawing an analogy between the quintessentially English stories of Beatrix Potter and English social organisation, makes the same point: “The *Tales* help to illuminate the contradiction: different animals have common ground between them as ‘social’ persons. Their existence as ‘social persons’ does nothing to alter their ‘individualist tendencies’.” (1993, 208.)

⁸ “The mid-Victorian City [of London] was overwhelmingly Liberal...By the late nineteenth century the City was as firmly Tory as it had been Liberal a generation before.” (Rubinstein 1981, 95-6.)

CREATING 'THE WORLD' THROUGH TALK.

The discourse-centered approach to culture is founded on a single proposition: that culture is located in concrete, publicly accessible signs, the most important of which are actually occurring instances of discourse...We cannot have a public, construed in its broadest sense as a society or culture, without the public circulation of discourse... (Urban 1993 [1991], 1, 191.)

Mathematical concepts can be separated from the group which uses them. Triangles may be explicable without reference to historical situations. Concepts such as "civilization" and Kultur are not. It may be that particular individuals formed them from the existing linguistic material of their group. Or at least gave them new meaning. But they took root. They established themselves. Others picked them up in their new meaning and form, developing and polishing them in speech or writing. They were tossed back and forth until they became efficient instruments for expressing what people had jointly experienced and wanted to communicate about...This shows that they met not merely individual but collective needs for expression. The collective history has crystallized in them and resonates in them...One generation hands them on to another without being aware of the process as a whole and the concepts live as long as this crystallization of past experiences and situations retains an existential value, a function in the actual being of society - that is, as long as succeeding generations can hear their own experiences in the meaning of the words. (Elias 1968, 7.)⁹

Essentializing models are at odds with contemporary anthropological insistence that 'culture' – and, by extension, the groups of people who cohere around specific cultural configurations – should not be regarded as bounded, static, homogenous and so on. And yet, people continue to think of themselves as part of a group or, at the very least, to assume that 'groups' exist. The two understandings may be reconciled, however, by focusing on "how realities become real, how essences become essential, how materialities materialize" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992, 20). Implicit in this, from the perspective which informs this study, is the less objectifying requirement that the material fact of the collectivity be subjectively sensed by the members of the proposed entity itself, rather than be definable by the observer according to an *a priori* set of variables or typologies; in other words, that any essentializing which is carried on, is the work of the entity members themselves rather than an outside observer eager to delimit the research 'object' by the application of a theoretical model¹⁰.

This is where I return to my research questions as outlined above; where I also turn to formulations of the pivotal role which the movement of discourse plays in the process of building "a suitable place for a home"¹¹. Greg Urban argues that discourse – talk – is forced by

⁹ This insight may be applied to the whole spectrum of human verbal intercourse which lies beyond the two culturally- and linguistically-specific terms Elias is discussing: "civilization" and "Kultur".

¹⁰ Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussel, in their introduction to a volume of essays on ethnic and regional foodways in the United States point out that the initial problem common to all the academic disciplines that study contemporary 'multi-cultural' society is that of determining the boundary definitions of the group to be examined. They note that all the contributing scholars to their volume "share a methodological assumption: that groups, both ethnic and regional, are most usefully defined *internally*, using the group's markers of self-identification as key factors" (1984, 5). That is also the methodological assumption implicit in the approach outlined here.

¹¹ This was a phrase which recurred frequently in the circulating talk of the British expats in Helsinki at the end of the twentieth century (Karttunen 2000), in reference to the perceived need for club houses,

competitive pressure “to fashion itself in such a way that it creates the conditions for its own circulation...The discourse of community that is successful survives. By virtue of its circulation, it establishes and maintains community. By virtue of its meaning, it defines for consciousness the nature and operation of that community” (Urban 1996a, 251). The substantial records the Anglo-Russian community have left behind them indicate that they ‘talked’ this entity into being: they named themselves and defined what those names represented; even the institutions of Church and trade organization were ‘talked’ into the distinctive shapes that then worked as affective codifiers of future praxis. They ‘talked’ over the place that harboured them; over the practices and beliefs of that place and the political and economic relations between that place and the wider world, particularly Britain; over the acceptability or otherwise of borrowings and other innovations in different areas of life; over residential location and style of housing; over costume and adornment; over subjects as diverse as the correct mode of table service at a formal dinner party and the type of education necessary for their male and female children, to the lapses of moral rectitude indicated by late rising, missing family prayers or Mrs Hoth’s desertion of her husband and children for a younger man. Some of these spheres required greater evidence of conformity than others, some obviously allowed a wide latitude of idiosyncrasy; they all required, at the least, understanding of the signs each strand or stretch of discourse carried – what was at stake, for example, in the choice of governess, local German gymnasium or Cheltenham Ladies College as educational institutions for one’s daughters, or the significance of the Chaplain facing the congregation or the altar during prayer.

In *Metaculture* (2001) Urban illustrates the approach also used in this study with the assistance of fairly similar or exact re-tellings of various myths among the Brazilian Amerindians; and of stretches of text produced by several independence movements in North American history, most of which can be demonstrated via actual word usage as drawing on the texts which came before, while incorporating something new extracted from the contemporary world. He further demonstrates “the historical motion of consciousness from person to person over time and space, and the movement of something from the world into the consciousness that beholds it” (2001, 182), by analysis of reviews of two different films by a number of different writers. These limitations on subject matter help to overcome the principal problem with analysis based on this kind of conceptual framework: that of establishing, in any consistent way, discursive ‘units’ which may be demonstrated to be replicated over time and across the space of the community. “Such carrying over, or ‘transduction,’ is essential to culture understood as shareable or transmittable across the generations” (Urban 1996b, 21). In the absence of such substantial and comparable stretches of discourse representing or evaluating the same item, event, practice or whatever, the units of analysis on which I have had often to rely have been located in rather brief references though they recur in demonstrably similar form and context over time and broadly scattered throughout the source material¹².

meeting places and neutral (British) common ground for the various associations which comprise the ‘British’ world in Finland today. It was an understood thing that the creation of a communal world required a place where talk could be marketed.

¹² There can be no pretence of exact quantification, the source materials are not sufficiently similar to do so, though I am satisfied that they are representative; genealogical research indicates that most of the family with widespread kin connections and long-term and influential roles in the community have at least one nineteenth-century spokesperson, or someone who speaks about them, and males and females

The plasticity of everyday discourse in the hands of its replicators encourages its transmogrification as it is transmitted – unlike the ceramic pot or set of dinnerware. It is part of my undertaking to excavate the consistencies and changes of attitude and valorizations *expressed* in talk by investigating the consistencies and inconsistencies in relations between referents (ideas, events, roles, value judgments and so on), which inhere in the arrangement and relations of items or stretches of text. In the case of sacralized texts, or highly profiled community opinions, exact replication of phrasing and words is detectable though, according to the different personal experience and agendas brought into play, even these replications are often manipulated in idiosyncratic ways.

Culture(s), as the perceived possession(s) delimiting human groups (or societies) from the rest of the natural world, has/have always been the principal concern of anthropological study. Always problematic, the latter decades of the twentieth century saw debate over the term, its usage and abuse, move away from what culture ‘does’ or comprises to whether it is valid concept at all, in a process Brightman refers to as “relexification” of culture. Abu-Lughod, for example, is wary about the “power inherent in distinctions of self and other” (1991, 140), asserting that “[c]ulture is the essential tool for making other” (ibid., 143), and, rather than agreeing with “most American anthropologists” that culture is “the true object of anthropological inquiry” (ibid.), suggests that the notion of culture “may now have become something anthropologists would want to work against in their theories, their ethnographic practice, and their ethnographic writing...Despite its anti-essentialist intent...the culture concept retains some of the tendencies to freeze difference possessed by concepts like race” (138, 144)¹³. On the other hand, it may be pointed out that on the first page of her essay, Abu-Lughod herself regrets the exclusion of the writings of feminists and “halfies”¹⁴ from Clifford & Marcus’ 1986 collection, *Writing Culture*, concluding: “Perhaps they [halfies] are not yet numerous enough or sufficiently self-defined as a *group*” (ibid., 137, emphasis added). There seems to be no getting away from the idea of group membership as part of identity. And yet no getting closer to an answer to the question: but *how* does a group come to be defined as such, either by its members, or as an empirically observable entity? If we have discarded conceptions of fixed, predetermined, ascribed categories (and we hope we have), and yet ‘groupness’ (which allows the application of labels such as ‘feminists’, ‘halfies’, ‘the English’ etc.) is not, *pace* Abu-Lughod, to be understood by virtue of members’ negotiated adherence to, and reproduction

are equally represented. Further, among the forty plus principal ‘informants’ and the large body of Russia Company and British Factory data, people, places, events, phenomena and opinions are repeatedly cross-referenced.

¹³ I note that three ameliorative strategies which Abu-Lughod suggests for “writing against culture” are:

- 1) a focus on practice and discourse – “the social uses by individuals of verbal resources” (1991, 148).
- 2) the excavation of connections rather than partitions between “people, cultural forms, media, techniques and commodities,” (149) “by tracing through specific situations, configurations and histories” (148).
- 3) by producing ethnographies of the particular, by which is meant “a concern with the particulars of individuals’ lives” (150) – in other words, a concern with the ways that macro and historical processes are inscribed in the minutiae of daily praxis and routine, and a wariness of generalization.

Though the term ‘culture’ causes me no angst, *per se*, these three strategies are all part of the project in hand.

¹⁴ “Halfies” - a repellent term Abu-Lughod uses to refer to people such as those comprising the community under this analysis “whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage” (1991, 137).

of, its ways of thinking, being and doing – its ‘culture’, in other words – then what?

I incline personally to the pragmatic approach: ‘culture’, as a term, is not something to raise blood pressure. Clearly, unarguably, every social collectivity whose members identify it as an entity of some sort, especially if their own identities are felt to be drawn from entity membership¹⁵ – that is, when members know what ‘we’ refers to when used other than to refer to an immediate context such as ‘the people here at this moment’¹⁶ – will lay claim to characteristic ways and worldviews which members perceive to be their own. Inevitably they (we) will, in some or many ways, perceive these to be different from coterminous, contiguous or even quite separate and distant groups. They (we) will also understand those characteristic ways as somehow patterned and part of a system or order of doing things. It strains credulity to suggest that human groups operate without any impetus from the structure, however impalpable and flexible, lodged in negotiated definitions of the ‘average’, the ‘correct’, the ‘acceptable’, the ‘normal’, the ‘aberrant’, the ‘punishable’; let alone the structure embodied in long-standing localised institutions such as modes of leadership, of exchange, of education, of communication¹⁷.

On the other hand, I do not argue that structure in this sense is in any way a static, rigidly enclosing edifice like a large office block – though even large office blocks have proved ephemeral. The intimations of ‘structure’ just listed are eminently pliant, but nonetheless exist as factors that enter into future action, debate, motivations and so on, even if only in a contestative relationship. In this view I am not alone. Silverstein and Urban are concerned with exploring how discourse or fragments of discourse (as text) are *used* (entextualized) “as a way of creating an image of a durable, shared culture” (1996, 2). “Entextualization reveals an architecture of social relations, and becomes the basis for numerous metadiscursive projections, as the interactional backdrop of a given text is projected onto others, producing a generic image of fixed identities and social categories” (ibid., 14), an insight which envisages “the structures of culture as a malleable, adaptable, organization of semiosis” (Urban 1993[1991], 45) a – more agentive and processual conceptualization than the Geertzian model of *a* culture as an ensemble of texts. Ginzberg similarly believes that “culture offers to the individual a horizon of latent possibilities – a flexible and invisible cage in which he can exercise his own conditional liberty” (1980[1976], xxi). Like Marshall Sahlins, these writers do not feel that apologies for structure are necessary (Sahlins 1999, 406). Further, nor do they involve themselves in obfuscating debates about the morality of detecting systemic differences between social entities. This also resonates with Sahlins’ suggestion that “knowing other peoples is not fully accomplished by taking the proper attitudes on colonialism, racism or sexism” (ibid.) – all factors exerting a currently politically incorrect influence on the activities of the community under analysis.

¹⁵ “The more I consider things, the more thankful I feel that *I am an Englishman...*” (Rev. Edward Law addressing a meeting of the British Factory at St. Petersburg, GL 31,782/1, 1821) emphasis added).

¹⁶ “*We* your Majesty’s dutiful and loyal subjects, The British Merchants and others resident in St. Petersburg & its vicinity...” (GL 31,782, 2, emphasis added); “*We*, the living” (Urban, 1996a, emphasis added).

¹⁷ Even Lyotard, sometimes credited with inventing the conception of an incoherent, unstructured postmodernity does not perceive what he suggests to be the fragmentation of the grand narratives of ‘modernity’ as leading to “what some authors analyze in terms of the dissolution of the social bond and the disintegration of social aggregates into a mass of individual atoms...[N]o self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before” (1986, 15).

Focusing on talk as the principal tool used in shaping social, cultural and individual worlds does not here imply a Foucauldian understanding that it is one only wielded by the powerful at the expense of the weak, thereby determining “what can be said, perceived or even imagined” (ibid., 410) – though the hegemonic propensities of well-deployed discursive objects are undeniable. Plotting the passage of talk as a material cultural item moving through a community reveals “the ways in which social actors seem to lift texts from contexts, [and] the transformations that even ‘the same’ discourse undergoes in the process” (Silverstein and Urban 1996, 15). Each stretch of discourse – be it a command, a prohibition, an opinion, a set of evaluations comprising a discussion, even a fragment of thoughtless chat – which is passed from person to person, from group to group (in a process similar to the passage of shell bracelets in a kula ring), gathers or loses value according to the degree of prestige of the transmitter (itself established by transmission of different discursive objects), and the degree of interest in its reception by potential transmitters¹⁸.

From these understandings one can re-approach the idea of ‘culture’ from a distinctly practical perspective. “Reduced to its simplest formula, culture is whatever is socially learned, socially transmitted. It makes its way from point A (an individual or group) to point B (an individual or group).” (Urban 2001, 2.) While ‘culture’ is impalpable, and its elements must be lodged in material objects – of which speech is one of the most salient, but also styles of dress and appearance, modes of behaviour and bodily control, silks, sugar and Sheffield silver – in order to be manifest, these combined, fragmented and recombined cultural elements add up to something that is experienced as a solid sedimentation – a thing-in-the-world¹⁹. This sense of culture as a ‘thing’ which is shared by all of ‘us’ is the basis of a sensing of community, of belonging more with others like ‘us’ than with others like ‘them’. As a term, ‘culture’ is adequate to refer to that characteristic combination of being, doing, thinking, to which any specific group lays claim: “the semantic space, the fields of signs and practices, in which human beings construct and represent themselves and others, and hence their societies and histories” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, 27). While it is part of the project of the contemporary social scientist to bear in mind those critiques of culture (portrayed as a static, bounded, hierarchically ordered ‘thing’) enunciated by Abu-Lughod among others, it must be remembered that it is usually the unreflexive (or even considered) view of the layperson that ‘ours’ is quite different (and usually better) than ‘theirs’ – implying a powerful sensing of bounded and distinctive stasis

¹⁸ One of the few major differences between the passage of items of talk and that of artefacts conventionally recognised as ‘material’, is that it is natural for each transmitter to re-shape a discourse object somewhat before passing it on (the basis of the game, ‘Chinese Whispers’). The degree to which re-shaping is permissible, desirable or prohibited is an important focus of anthropological research in this context, and one with which this paper is concerned. That hegemonic relationships are involved in the ‘prestige-gathering’ which a travelling discursive item undergoes is indisputable, but I refuse to countenance the implied powerlessness which Foucault ascribes to certain levels of receivers of circulating discourses within a discourse community: all human receivers also transmit, even if the volume is low, and in doing so, most ‘add their mite’.

¹⁹ This recalls Durkheim’s assertion that “collective representations originate only when they are embodied in material objects, things, or beings of every sort – figures, movements, sounds, words, and so on – that symbolize and delineate them in some outward appearance. For it is only by expressing their feelings, by translating them into signs, by symbolizing them externally, that the individual consciousnesses, which are, by nature, closed to each other, can feel that they are communicating and are in unison.” (1973, 160.)

in ‘our’ world. This characteristic human belief must be included in anthropological reckoning when attempting to understand any configuration of ‘social fact’, because such sensed immutability and valorisation of ‘ours’ is powerfully affective in shaping and contributing to the worlds of its users – probably more so than anything else that is casually passed around in common discourse.

On the other hand, particularly from the analytical perspective, Greg Urban observes that culture is never in stasis; the essence of culture is its transmission. At the very least it is transmission between two people and across units of time (however these might be locally defined). Culture only exists as movement. The trope of culture as ‘oneness’ “misses the essential dynamism of culture, its restlessness, its itchy movement into uncharted and mysterious futures” (2001, 2). It also misses the processes of sedimentation which have led to the sensing of ‘our own’ culture at any time by any people as substantial and systemic. As suggested by the two extracts from the work of Urban and Elias with which I commenced this section, communities, and the sense of cultural sharing which goes into creating those communities, are products of the circulation of the discourse in which collective history has crystallized – the “efficient instruments” which express the reality of the world for their users – and the evaluative talk which accompanies circulating cultural items. “Discourse is in fact the means by which the past is kept alive in the present, by means of which a culture is maintained” (Urban 1993, 17). As Keith Basso points out when discussing the experiencing of place by locals, it is by “attending to ordinary talk” that “the native views of the physical world become accessible to strangers” (1996a, 56), just as they become accessible to natives, because worlds are constructed of, and construed by, talk.

The assumptions about culture and its expression in sensed community outlined above have implications for the methodology employed throughout this paper. Indeed, the methodology is basic to the theoretical formulations. Ethnography which attends to ‘ordinary talk’, as Basso puts it, employs a double line of inquiry. As with conventional methods of exploring the ‘fit’ between exegetical explanation and anthropological observation, such ethnography “seeks to discover truths that are built up about the world, how perceptual reality is construed” (Urban 1996a, 74). Memoirs, evaluative commentary recorded in letters and diaries, and the very nature of the subjects and topics which recur regularly through the primary material all contribute to this exploration. But discourse, if also understood as material culture, as “sensible”, “as perceptible, as circulating within a sensorily confirmable ambience” (ibid.), resists solipsistic tendencies as firmly as carefully recorded field experience. There in the arrangements of words, in their relationships with each other, with event, with practice and with other stretches of talk, lies confirmation or refutation of statements advanced by informants as ‘truth’. And there, in the movement of stretches of talk, both evaluative and that considered by its producers as ‘factual’, lies the movement (and transmogrification) of cultural ‘stuff’ across space and time – provided it is continually re-embedded by the scholar in changing historical specificities²⁰.

²⁰ In contemporary ethnography, where actual cultural practices may be studied concurrently with naturally occurring talk, the same proviso must operate. Under what circumstances is a particular discursive ‘artefact’ redeployed, and why? The artefact should not be regarded as a “despatialized”, “detemporalized”, “deprocessualized” *thing* whose “meaning can be clearly transmitted across social boundaries such as generations, without regard for the kinds of recontextualizations it might undergo”

The English merchants' community in Imperial St. Petersburg comprised a diasporic social entity. Its specificities were as much about that quality as about its mercantile or English self-definitions. In examining the "truths that are built up about the world", an inevitable magnet of interest must be the degree to which 'foreign' cultural elements are fused to, or encompass, more specifically internal worldviews, praxis and belief, and *why* a group might opt for plurality or preservation in different areas. This is relevant to the examination of any group in any place or time (though perhaps particularly in today's self-consciously 'globalising' worlds), as none make themselves in isolation. The next section considers the means by which such locomotion is fuelled, or starved of fuel; by which cultural configurations are approved, retained, accelerated, decelerated, allowed to wither or resisted from inception; in other words, how the tension between 'traditional' and 'new' ways may be conceptualised and examined.

METACULTURE: FUELLING CULTURAL TRANSMISSION.

An obvious corollary to the continued transmission of cultural objects is *acceleration*, or the impetus which is required to keep such objects – be it a story, a style, a judgement, a ceramic pot or whatever – an active part of the world of any group. This acceleration Greg Urban terms 'metaculture'. Metaculture is the assemblage of commentary, not necessarily (but most effectively) framed in speech, which a group produces in the process of reflecting on the things, activities, phenomena, texts and events in which it is embedded and in which, and of which, it is a part. Metaculture thereby comprises the interpretation and judgment of cultural elements as they circulate through the world, along both global and locally circumscribed pathways. It is not principally what people say about what they say and do to an *outsider*, though it is that too, of course, but rather what they say and do about the world to each other which is of greatest interest to the ethnographer. As Benjamin Lee notes in his introduction to *Metaculture* (Urban 2001), "metacultural judgments form the normative core for the creation of community and the reproduction of culture" (xi). Metaculture may be separated, though only analytically, from voiceless cultural phenomena – the "nonreadable surround or background" (Silverstein and Urban 1996, 1) – or even, up to a point, from statements that purport to relay what 'is', rather than what is 'right' or 'wrong'; 'good', 'less good' or 'no good'.

To provide a 'concrete' example of what I mean in the belief that theory is best explained with the assistance of reconstruction of actual occurrence, I will pre-empt a subject that I discuss more fully in a case study in a later chapter. The term 'an English gentleman' may be, at any point in space, time and context, a solid cultural item with taken-for-granted application. As such, it may be passed through the worlds of its users with its only accompanying metaculture consisting in an evanescent trail implied by its ascription to various categories of person. It may be an uncontested object that present circumstances have defined, its present users have approved and yet which has just sufficient edginess to maintain interest in it as an object and keep it on the move. But the world changes in other domains: 'non-gentlemen' get the vote, get rich and send their sons to expensive Public Schools; the ranks of the Diplomatic Service bulge

Silverstein and Urban 1996,1). The reader will understand that in attempting to recontextualize the transmitted talk of this community over the envisaged time span, unwieldy side trips into larger worlds have sometimes been required.

to accept sufficient outsiders to dispel accusations of nepotism and ‘Old Corruption’; for political reasons, increasing numbers of tallow merchants are raised to the peerage. Yet the object ‘English gentleman’ continues to attract interest and attention, to be accelerated. If anything, as metacultural judgements about its ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ application (its meanings) become more salient, it accelerates with greater, much greater, speed than before. Then the cultural object is used incorrectly (as one might use a sacred chalice as a soup bowl) – misapplied by someone not cognisant with accepted community understandings, or by someone who should know better but is perhaps unaware of the ‘real’ circumstances – preferably in a context of broad general interest, preferably in connection with people who are widely known. Metacultural commentary erupts. Subsequent contestation over the meanings inherent in the term ‘English gentleman’, and how and when it should be used, or not used, is what may be analytically separated from the item and conceptualised as ‘metaculture’. It is “culture that is about culture” (Urban 2001, 2). “The interpretation of culture that is intrinsic to metaculture, immaterial as it is, focuses attention on the cultural thing, helps to make it an object of interest, and, hence, facilitates its circulation” (Urban 2001, 4). He goes on to stress, however, that an analytical appreciation of the difference in content and mode of transmission between cultural items and metacultural *judgments* of those items should not obscure the affective connections between the two: “Something of the world gets into the idea, and something of the idea gets into the world” (ibid., 5).

As an item is passed from person to person, person to group, or group to group, the meanings attached to it by the people it touches *en passant* ‘comb’ the world of the item’s passage into specific configurations, however slightly, and also leave a volatile residue ready receive or reject similar items in the future, or to construct or reconstruct similar or different items in its turn. This is true, no matter whether the item is the Lenten timetable for the English Church at St. Petersburg; or the Minister’s preaching that “we ought always to obey our consciences as we couldn’t know what the effects of our actions might be” (Mary Wishaw, 28.10.1890); or a ripe leg of English mutton received with rapturous approval at a dinner party. This is not a mistaken attempt to personalise the inanimate, or reify the intangibles of cultural configurations. Quite the opposite. Meanings are created and put in place by *people*. Meanings merely *appear* to animate an item. It is actually the simultaneous passage of meanings *with* any item, and the changes they undergo during that passage through human recipients over time, which work back on the item itself, changing it in similar increments. This provides an illusion that cultural creations exist independently of their human creators, and makes it almost impossible to avoid semantic constructions – in English at least – that appear to imply that cultural constructs have their own agency. Though the meanings which humans attach to objects that they handle, view, hear, and objects they discursively produce as a result, act on the world around them, that does not make those objects agentive *sui generis*. Those meanings are only agentive, in fact they only *are*, by virtue of the propulsion or otherwise – the movement – provided them by their human users. Snow on the ground is unquestionably inanimate, though it may be acted upon by any number of outside forces and invested with any number of meanings. A snowball in the hands of a mischievous child can, equally unquestionably, appear highly animated, volatile and certainly agentive. But it is not. This is a vastly more important and exciting world to investigate than the static objective bases of a social entity (or any cultural

phenomenon) as laid down by an outsider – its duration, its self sufficiency, its shared ownership of land or means of production, the existence of internal administrative institutions, or any other *a priori* bounded domain in the fluid fields of human cultural production.

Here I want to briefly digress to examine the modes of acceleration of two different types of cultural objects, particularly relevant to this community which was both mercantile and diasporic. Urban discusses possible analytical distinctions between ‘objects’, the culture they embody, and modes of disseminating the objects into new worlds. Dissemination, he suggests, may be carried out either by physically replicating the cultural objects at each transmission, or by severing dissemination from replication by the transmission of articles which have been mass-produced – mass-replicated – elsewhere: two processes that carry very different cultural luggage. Replicating an object at each transmission requires that the transmitter take on, at the least, a great deal of the original cultural signification carried by each item, in order to be able to re-transmit it comprehensibly and comprehensively²¹. A potential transmitter must internalize the “profoundly immaterial” elements of culture which are transiently lodged in the material thing before being able to externalize “the more general, aestheticized form that is reflected in the specific thing”.

The connection between these two processes – externalization and internalization – is that the public evidence for the internalization by another is the reexternalization of the entity by that other, the reembodiment of the abstract form in another physical thing. Consequently, dissemination and replication exist in a dynamic interrelation...Making the cultural element public (that is, disseminating it) is only possible through replication. (Urban 2001, 42-3)

Distributing an item which has been mass-produced elsewhere, however, may entail an understanding on the part of the *distributor* of the cultural signs inhering in the item in its place of production – or it may not. It certainly does not necessarily entail any such understanding on the part of the receiver. The circulation of many conventionally material cultural ‘objects’ in the mercantile worlds created by mass-production²² requires that the processes of replication and dissemination be conspicuously uncoupled. Resulting in swift lateral spread, mass produced replicas of an item – a stretch of printed text, the memorisation of a ritual text in an incomprehensible foreign language, an iron axe head or cooking pot, commodities comprising the silks, sugar and Sheffield silver of culture – do not carry with them more than a fraction of the cultural knowledge that went into their production. They move from hand to hand and mind to mind without the necessity of re-replication at every remove. Trade has always relied on such an uncoupling; often, of course, because specific items have been valorized by importers (for reasons connected with local lifeways) and yet have simply not been sufficiently available locally – the timber, tallow and tar that the English merchants extracted from Russia to support

²¹ I can think of contentious exceptions to this: the parrot-fashion learning of a Church of England prayer by a non-English speaker, for example. This could then be re-transmitted (probably in slightly garbled form), without any of the cultural signs carried by it in its usual milieu. It would carry other signs, however, which might adhere to it if it had the acceleration to move onward.

²² I use the term ‘mass-production’ to refer to everything from making three lengths of fabric when only one is required for personal use by the ‘primitive unit’, to the multi-national production of commodities known to the twenty-first-century global economy.

England's maritime aspirations, for example. On the other hand, merchants have frequently acted as cultural brokers, introducing domestically produced items to destination worlds that they plan to keep distributing as items uncoupled from physical replication – usually for reasons of profit. It would have been, for example, of small mercantile advantage and productive of quite different results if, once new objects had been introduced – disseminated – into Russia by English merchants, local replication re-colonized the processes of dissemination and the smallest user of sugar, spice, silk or silverware began to produce his or her own as required²³. In the case of mercantile dissemination, the disseminators themselves usually have no hand in the production and replications of the items (though some of these Anglo-Russian traders were also connected to major manufacturing enterprises), but merely act as profit-spawning conduits of whatever seems likeliest to find favour in new worlds of use. And those new worlds of use inevitably attach local meanings to objects which are not inherent to the objects either in their place of production or elsewhere.

These understandings illuminate other types of cultural dissemination which are not so directly linked to the cash profit accruing on each successful transmission of an object or objects. For example, the metal pots and axes which were offered by representatives of European imperialists to indigenous Brazilian communities were designed to excite the interest of the recipients in the culture which could produce such technological miracles (Urban 2001, but a widely reported colonizing practice). The metal products were found superior to the home product and moved into regular usage, but, once again, the “accumulated social learning” (ibid., 45) which went into their creation did not move along with the items. Incorporating the use of a metal pot or sugar and tea into traditional cultural practice is uncoupled from the processes of producing and replicating these items – skills best disseminated via propinquity, through learning via repeated empirical experience of processes of replication under the tutelage and explanations of experts who have similarly gained their expertise. This is exemplified in the oral telling of myth, for example, but also in cultural transmission within small groups such as the family – or wherever a ‘teacher’ is involved – and so is a universal and probably an ineradicable form of cultural movement. On the other hand, as Urban indicates, this kind of oral transmission lacks the ‘fixedness’ of external shape and appearance which is attained when dissemination may be uncoupled from the moment of replication. Given the flexibility of discourse in the hands (or minds and mouths) of its users and transmitters, communities relying on oral cultural transmission must insist on each reincarnation of discourse replicating the one that came before, when such discourse pertains to areas of social and cultural life that are highly valorized. Urban suggests that this valorization of replication spills over into much broader cultural practices within such groups.

This brings us back to the idea of ‘metaculture’ as an accelerator. Circulating metacultures may emphasize the importance of similarity of tellings or other externalizations of culture over time (such as prescribed bodily control) – nearly exact replication, in other words; or may stress the value of uniqueness in certain areas of cultural reproduction – that is, when value accrues to a new object because it can be understood, metaculturally, as a unique response to (rather than a

²³ Textiles (and war materiel) were always popular items of British export in Russia. Britain did not relax a total ban on the export of her technology in the former field until the 1840s, and *never* officially relaxed her ban on the exportation of munitions technology – though what actually occurred is another story.

replica of) a prior object (Urban 2001, 197²⁴). Although Urban does not stress the point as much as I am inclined to do, both types of commentary – valorization of sameness and valorization of effective innovation – may be seen to co-exist in all social groups at any one time. When the innovation is one whose production originates outside the group which makes use of it, when its dissemination is not tied to its replication (or not at first), its status within its new lodging will depend, not only on its intrinsic usefulness (though this is a relevant factor), but also on how it may be worked into the existing cultural fabric of its new disseminators. Mike Featherstone refutes the suggestion made by some theorists that, under postmodernity, culture is becoming globally homogenous or possibly globally meaningless, arguing instead that: “the seemingly empty and universalist signs circulating in the world informational system can be recast into different reconfigurations of meaning [to] inform the (re)constitution and/or creation of individual and communal identities” (Featherstone 1995b, 2-3). Framed as Urban (and this paper) suggests, it is the metacultural comment which is engendered by a particular object – ‘new’ or ‘old’ – which decides how it will be received and whether and how it will be utilised within any cultural system. The meaning of disseminated objects, uncoupled from their sources of replication, may be modified extensively in the course of local responses to the objects, such meaning being established via the related circulation of metacultural comment, largely framed in speech, whether voiced or written.

All this is highly relevant to the creation by the English community at St. Petersburg – in its diasporic rather than purely mercantile incarnation – of distinctive cultural forms which incorporated strands of both traditional and borrowed practices and objects. The British merchant community, whose members were, after all, quintessential disseminators of the ‘new’ in their Russian milieu, appear to have understood instinctively the thesis propounded here, and they fought in many different ways the encroachment of ‘other’ manifestations of the new in specific (though by no means *all*) areas of their ways of life – not entirely successfully. What they did *not* appreciate was that *any* new element, even when worked into the existing system in ways that make it locally acceptable, inevitably carries with it immanent cultural properties that, once accepted along with their vehicle, are there to stay as part of both the cultural and the metacultural schemata that provide the frame for the treatment of future items.

Consciousness of the ‘dangerous’ accompanying baggage of an otherwise acceptable object is often only raised when reexternalisation of those unsuspected, immanent foreign properties carried by a new element takes place too rapidly, in a different and unsuitable context. In such circumstances, the objects themselves may attract such negative metacultural comment that contestation over their acceptance, and resistance to their encroachment, may continue indefinitely. For example, in the case of the favourable film review (discussed in Urban 2001), one can objectively record reexternalizations (responses to internalization of the disseminated review) in increased box office takings, as people re-enact the reviewer’s initial cultural act in attending a showing of the critiqued film – or not, as the case may be. However,

²⁴ Paradoxically, while metacultures valorizing the new appear to espouse ideas of ‘fresh’, ‘unique’, ‘innovative’ etc., they are *also* indissolubly linked to the mass production of *identical* items which, detached from their site of replication, may circulate concurrently all over the globe in a kind of highly concentrated, synchronic manifestation of culture under metacultures of tradition – which encourage or insist on exact replications of single items over time.

reexternalizations of certain activities actually taking place within a film itself provide one of the strongest current arguments in favour of the tightening of censorship laws in the wake of what are termed ‘copy-cat’ atrocities. I believe that the intermingling and subsequent relationship between the two types of metacultural valorisation in any identifiable social entity - one favouring traditional replication and the other, newness and innovation - to be an extremely complex, highly affective and group-specific one which a substantial part of this paper is devoted to investigating.

METACULTURAL EVALUATION IN THE ST. PETERSBURG ENGLISH COMMUNITY.

When a group is coterminous with a larger one which has a different hierarchy of values, it will often perceive marked benefits in the making and maintenance of exclusive and exclusionary community by fighting for its distinctions against both amorphous and specific affective outside pressures²⁵. This results in interesting combinations of acceptance/rejection in different fields and also foregrounds processes of traditional replication in ways that may remain quiescent in the diaspora’s place of origin. In addition, the usual disciplining of internally produced aberration must continue. Mere cultural inertia is not (and never is) sufficient to maintain cultural items in transmission without the acceleration provided by metacultural approbation. Here is where the conceptual separation of cultural item and metacultural evaluation provides an invaluable tool for tracking the processes whereby community seeks to maintain itself in its habitual state and where it fails to do so, for whatever reason, and undergoes transformation. In this section I propose to examine two everyday examples of the different types of judgment made of deviation from accepted norms in bodily control and decorum in two different and compartmentalised areas of daily life in the community under analysis. Neither is very profound, but, I would argue, change in cultural configurations probably occurs via incremental micro indices to a greater degree than it occurs under the impetus of almost anything else except sudden unexpected cataclysm. I firstly provide a simple illustration of the active acceleration required to retain traditional cultural forms in unaltered stability, in order to dispel the notion that long term cultural stasis occurs merely as a result of inertia. This is followed by a demonstration of the potentially broad effects of welcoming novelty in an apparently unthreatening leisure pursuit.

Behaviour in the English Church in the Petersburg community was governed by time-honoured norms of strict bodily discipline and ‘sacred’ demeanour. This was frequently contrasted in the metacultural discourse of the community with the physical latitude, the irreverence, noisiness, movement, even drunkenness of Russian Orthodox congregations – and most members of the merchant community would have attended an Orthodox service, as a curiosity to exhibit to visiting relatives at least. Mary Whishaw went to Easter Service in St. Isaac’s Russian Orthodox cathedral in 1889 (probably not for the first time, but her diaries are only fully extant from that year), and thereafter formed the habit of going to St Isaac’s quite

²⁵ Many diasporas do not stress the retention of traditional ways, or do not manage to project their desire forward through new generations. Even organizations such as national military forces, which place great importance on uniformity and continuity over time and have the apparatus to ensure it, are forced to keep some kind of lagging pace with the larger society in which they operate.

regularly. It was on the route between the English Church and the Hermitage Museum and Art Gallery where she often went with friends on a Sunday after the Anglican Matins service which ended at 10.30. The Hermitage did not open until 11. She writes: "Went to Matins with Vi [sister], & then we went on to S. Isaac's & came in for a Service. The congregation was not a very reverent one, & we came to the conclusion we'd much rather not belong to the Greek Church" (9.3.1891). After her marriage, Mary attended a service held by the famous Father Ionn of Cronstadt at which "the whole multitude about 4,000 people all began to scream out, & wail & sob in the most extraordinary manner...the Church got into a perfect uproar, & the whole congregation perfectly hysterical, even the men sobbing and crying...it was a regular Inferno" (20.2.1898). This was not at all as Mary expected people to approach Confession and Communion: "it is all hysterical surface emotion with most of them" (ibid.).

Ethel Stevenson, connected by kin ties to the community and governess to a noble Russian family, likewise commented on the difference in attitude between English and Russian worship. "There are no seats, and although some come and go during the service, the greater part of the congregations stand out the whole service. This is a very trying piece of business, and *it would never do under the English system of listening in motionless stillness to sermons and prayers.*" (LRA 856 – my emphasis.) The Russians, however, bowed and knelt, prostrated themselves before effigies of the saints, kissed the icons and crossed themselves repeatedly which "would no doubt ward off the feeling of intense fatigue which in my case became painful before the service was half over" (ibid.). Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, on his only trip abroad from England, visited Russia in company with Henry Liddon, a noted preacher and Pusey-adherent (very High Church Anglican, which was comparatively ornate in ritual compared to Broad or Evangelical versions of Established Church praxis) in 1868 and commented that:

The only share the [Russian Orthodox] congregation had in the service was to bow & cross themselves, & sometimes kneel down & touch the ground with their foreheads. One could hope that this was accompanied by some private prayer, but it could not be so in all cases: I saw quite young children doing it, with no expression on their faces which even hinted that they attached any meaning to it...the more one sees of these gorgeous services, with their many appeals to the senses, the more, I think one learns to love the plain, simple (but to my mind far more real) service of the English church (1965, 978).

Yet an allowable, even desirable, outlet for energy and emotion in the Established Church of England was the singing of appropriate hymns at appropriate moments in an appropriate style. It must also be noted that, in contrast to the generally held opinions of Russian congregations and their 'heresies' and 'irreverence', Russian singing, particularly sacred singing, was highly regarded and set an enviable standard: "This morning Walter and I went to Isaacs Church & heard the wondrous singing...a cry that rent ones heartstrings so sad & beautiful it was" (LRA 1015/86 Letter from Molly Muir to sister, 8.9.1885)²⁶. The male and female choirs of the English Church (the latter occasionally referred to as the "She" Choir

²⁶ Incidentally, in a not-so-odd coincidence given the close internal ties of the community, Lewis Carroll spent a considerable portion of his time in Petersburg in the company of Molly Muir's family, and also that of Maida Mirrieles, whose father he had met on the train from Germany.

according to Mary Whishaw's diary 31.3.1890) met weekly – though not often at the same time – and more frequently as prominent annual rituals such as Easter and Christmas approached. They rehearsed assiduously, often a “dull” business as Mary notes, with the aim of reaching controlled, melodic unison, and judged their own and others' performances critically. These judgments are part of metaculture. They propel certain modes of ‘doing’ forward onto the next materialisation of the same combination of cultural elements.

Frequent and bitter were the comments when someone was perceived to be producing inappropriate renditions of ways of hymn singing during church services: “I don't grudge the little Gardener boy his success [at a concert held in the Library] – but what a beastly family his is. Did you ever sit before or behind them in Church – they make the welkin ring – whatever the welkin may be, and out of tune too.” (LRA 1406, Letter from James Cattley to his fiancée 1884.) Harriet Hardie, writing to her cousin Baroness Lily Ramsay in Helsingfors, was reassuring on the subject of someone (illegible) after whom Lily had inquired: “[he] sat next to me in Church last Sunday and sang wildly so his throat is quite well, else he could not have roared so” (10.1.1892). Mary Whishaw, who sang in the ‘She’ Choir, found a certain Miss Rayne “a little trying on high notes, she was so very earnest & took the notes tremendously tremola & slightly false” (10.12.1889)²⁷. On another occasion, heated solidary criticism by Mary's choir co-members actually irrupted into concerted action over “the falseness of the singing behind us” by someone who was not sufficiently ‘recognised’ by the critics to be given a name. “We had the two women who sing false sitting behind us as usual & so Mim, Ella & I have settled to give up the Choir for good & all if Mr. Watson [Chaplain] won't move us into his pew, as it only makes us cross & we can't sing where we are possibly” (7.1.1890). Militancy, however, was not socially acceptable in women and, unsurprisingly, at the next Choir Practice, in preference to what Mary had been referring to as a “Strike”, she “suddenly had the brilliant idea that instead of making a fuss we should (those who object to the “shouter”) quietly play truant from the Choir Pew in the morning services & sit there in the evening when she does not come. Mim agreed.” (12.1.1890; Mary's bracketing and a situational ‘we’ usage.) This strategy had only partial success but it was adhered to stubbornly throughout the ensuing year. When ‘the shouter’ was absent, Mary, Ella and Mim (Isabel and Mary Henley – Mary Whishaw's second cousins) sang in the choir's pew; when she was present they sat in the body of the Church. About half way through the year, the Chaplain, Mr Watson, was absent for some months as he supervised the death of his wife from consumption in England, but when he returned, Mary presumably re-opened negotiations and for the latter part of the year, whenever she mentions her seating arrangements, she has occupied either the Chaplain's pew (because of the shouter), or the Choir pew (absence of shouter). Singing as a chorister required rather different praxis to singing as a normal congregation member and it would have been embarrassing to have ‘performed’ in the body of the Church, whereas the Chaplain's pew encouraged certain distinctions. On Christmas Day, however, there was a complication and Mary records, without further comment: “Went to Matins with Vi with my swagger boa on [a Christmas present], sat in the front pew, North Side with Mim and Ella. We sang as Choir there & all the rest were in Mr. Watson's pew.” (25.12.1890.)

²⁷ Miss Rayne belonged to a long term but not very high status Petersburg English family.

Singing together, especially in a culture that valued physical and emotional control as highly as this one did, provided a vital sense of togetherness generated by regular, concurrent emotional expression, albeit conventionally channelled. The manner in which it should be performed was subject to various rules. Evidently, to sing too fervently, too loudly, or worse, too loudly and off-key, did not conform to acceptable practice, though logically, if the hymn singing were purely for the glorification of God, surely the louder and more sincerely the better. But no. This is, as much as anything else, an example of the valorization of traditional culture, but also indicates the dangers inherent in relying on the power of 'custom' unaided to maintain such a state. The shouters and roarers and welkin ringers were introducing innovation that could not be tolerated, that certainly required judgment to be both passed and passed around. These faults in cultural reproduction were the subject of metacultural debate, as demonstrated by these extracts and many more like them, and, in the last instance, of *action* that can also be construed as metacultural comment. Metaculture is not composed solely of speech, verbal or printed.



Picture 2: Interior of the English church at St. Petersburg, circa 1890.

Perhaps the most important point to be made again here, is that without the impetus or acceleration of metaculture, whether via proscription or prescription, culture cannot even maintain itself over time. We should not imagine, Urban suggests, that culture, or rather the cultural elements lodged in material items, survive purely because of ‘inertia’²⁸ but rather they survive when they are able to overcome the forces of deceleration that tend to accompany cultural inertia, forces that may be either entropic or competitive (2001, 19-20). If the shouter and the roarer and the welkin ringers went unjudged, the principle of ‘cultural drift’ would shortly ensure that the communal singing which was such a salient and regular part of communal togetherness, would fragment and individualise, affecting the consciousness of the group as “coparticipants in a single social reality” (ibid 21). Communal activities that are governed by metaculturally shaped and upheld norms contribute to the generalised impression of cultures – and their adherents in the shape of communities – as ‘single social realities’, as static homogenous items, an impression which has been widely disseminated as actuality by both practitioners and academics alike. The *impression* of homogenous fixity, of the governing power of tradition unaided, has disguised both inevitable deviations from the norm and the constant work of maintenance that goes into jostling such deviations back into the rank and file.

Another powerful contributor to this fantasy of fixity is the identification by both practitioner and analyst of the reappearance of the same cultural elements in object after object, in hymn singing after hymn singing. Yet hymn singing as a cultural object, like the telling of myth, is transitory; it dies, so to speak, in the course of its production. It is the immaterial cultural elements embodied transitorily in the hymn singing which are reproduced in a future re-manifestation; and in the case of secular singing – singing for social entertainment at a soirée or concert – only some of the elements will be appropriated, while others (humour, hand gestures, a pretty gown with a low décolletage, a preparatory glass of champagne), will be added. This is not particularly mysterious, however. Humans ‘talk’ and ‘act’ immaterial culture into material manifestations. Memory, both of the body and the mind, ensures that reproduction of the cultural content of a manifestation is replicated if circulating ‘talk’ establishes equivalent replication as a value, because circulating talk in the shape of metacultural musings on the rightness of the reproduction is stored along with images of the object itself – internalized – preparatory to reexternalization at appropriate moments.

The example of expectations associated with sacred song in this cultural context illustrates modes by which communities and their ‘specific’ cultures maintain the appearance and sensing of stability over time. In other words, with this illustration I have endeavoured to expose the operation of metacultural constructions that endorse tradition, that favour replication of the old as a means of cultural reproduction by excluding or correcting the hidden creep of the new or innovative. The principal thrust of Urban’s discussion in *Metaculture* (2001), however, is concerned with metacultural judgments that, by allowing for plurality, tacitly favour the novel: metacultures of modernity, to use his term (and I do not care to problematize his application of ‘modernity’ at this point). Both Urban and Benedict Anderson, among others, highlight the print

²⁸ The principle of inertia encourages cultural transmission in two passive and slovenly ways. Existential inertia allows the acceptance of culture because it happens to be around, in the way that an infant is surrounded. Habitual inertia is the impressment of future experience on these embodied frames; cultural elements are received and processed in ways that accord with prior experience.

revolution as instrumental in changing modes of cultural dissemination, but what, in practical terms, contributes to a 'new' cultural item's being evaluated in positive ways? Sahlins rejects the idea that "human cultures are formulated out of practical activity and, behind that, utilitarian interest" (1976, vii). He does not agree with the views of "some" that "culture is precipitated from the rational activity of individuals pursuing their own best interests" (ibid.)²⁹. He "takes as the distinctive quality of man not that he must live in a material world...but that he does so according to a meaningful scheme of his own devising" (ibid. vii). The "decisive quality of culture" is not that it "must conform to material constraints but that it does so according to a definite symbolic scheme which is never the only one possible" (ibid.). Maffesoli makes a similar point when he discusses "constitutive groupings of sociality": "each in its own way, creates its ideology and pieces together its own small history from disparate elements culled from the four corners of the earth. They may be borrowed from local tradition or they may cut across these traditions. Nevertheless, their assemblage will constitute a sort of matrix, giving rise to and reinforcing individual representations." (1996, 68.) These formulations accord with conclusions drawn from analysis of content, process and change within the community here discussed.

The English in St. Petersburg were much readier to adopt novel practices in secular areas of daily life associated with leisure, pleasure and practical comfort than those associated with the sacred, a designation that extended beyond purely 'religious' praxis and belief, as I will later discuss. This was a natural concomitant to the generally held belief that life in the St. Petersburg English community offered its members unrivalled opportunities for enjoyment of every kind. This was the 'cultural logic' on which easy acceptance of novelty in these arenas was predicated. "St. Petersburg in 1877 was looked upon, and deservedly looked upon, as one of the gayest capitals in Europe. The English colony³⁰ (especially those in society) was a large one, and one could dine out practically every evening without meeting the same people twice." (J. Whishaw 1935, 63.) "[N]o English people living out of their own country could have lived happier or more jolly lives than we did...It was a bright and comparatively care-free life – visitors from the old country always carried away with them happy and perhaps somewhat envious recollections" (J. Whishaw 1992, 171). Molly Muir, quoted above, who was partially resident in England, wrote to her sister in the same letter that comments on the beauty of the St. Isaacs' singing that "Mother tries to get me to think seriously about going home but I am enjoying myself so much that I always 'waive a point'" (op. cit.). John Baddeley, news

²⁹ Sahlins' use of term 'rational' in this context raises the interesting point that valorization of 'rational' thought and behaviour was very much a product of Western Enlightenment and therefore, it could be argued, a conscious contemporary ideal that had less to do with 'utility', *per se*, than with the symbolic scheme or cultural logic which ordered socio-cultural operations of groups of this kind in that era. Sahlins tacitly acknowledges this when he notes that "[u]tilitarianism...is the way the Western economy, indeed the entire society, is experienced; the way it is lived by the participating subject...The main relations of class and politics, as well as the conceptions men entertain of nature and of themselves, are generated by this rational pursuit of material happiness." (1976, 167). That it is possible to argue that such 'rationality' is illusory, does not invalidate it as a symbolic and meaningful product of the socio-cultural milieu that spawned it.

³⁰ Writing after 1917, it was common to refer to the community as the British or English 'colony' in St. Petersburg, in line with the denominations of the extant 'British colonies' of Africa and India – it was only occasionally referred to as such at the time.

correspondent in St. Petersburg for *The Standard* for two decades and regular visitor to both Whishaw and Riddle families, wrote of the community as it was in the 1880s:

[The British colony] had passed through many vicissitudes to reach at the time of my arrival in Russia a stage that as far as regarded social amenity left really nothing to be desired. There were very few old people, the great majority of the leaders of the community being, by chance, young married couples, nearly all in receipt of good incomes and possessed of spacious apartments in St. Petersburg and pleasant country quarters at Lígovo, Mourino, or elsewhere – with tennis lawns – where they spent the summer months and where they delighted to entertain their friends. There were pretty girls about, too, and altogether a more pleasant society, for a young man, it would have been difficult to find anywhere. (1921, 38)

Part of the appeal of the Petersburg life for the English was the degree of freedom which local mores allowed and which was in marked contrast to the much greater curtailment of activity prevalent among bourgeois families in Victorian England at the time. One contributing factor was the more physically adventurous life which was considered normal even for ‘protected’ young ladies. ‘Ice-hilling’, ice-skating, ‘snow-shoeing’ (cross-country skiing), ice-boating and troika races in winter; rowing, cricket, tennis, and swimming in summer³¹. ‘Ice-hilling’ is a case in point, though I will be discussing other innovations of a similar apparently frivolous but inevitably affective nature in later chapters. It was a peculiarly Russian pastime for which large blocks of smooth ice were hacked from rivers such as the Neva and laid on top of a sloping wooden frame “standing about as high as an average house” – a vague description elaborated by saying that three flights of steps were required to reach the starting point – and “just about as steep as the roof of a house”, which were then “worked until their surface is as even as a mirror” (Fred Whishaw 1890, 361-363). At the bottom of the ice-hill described by Fred there was a flat “run” of several hundred yards of similarly glassy surface to the staircase of an identical second slope which would allow the heavy iron sledges with their gaily decorated cushions to swoop back to their starting point³². It was particularly popular among Russians in the weeks leading up to Lent and ice-hills were constructed on the Neva for public use, culminating in a week’s wild carousing at *Maslinitza* (Butter Week). This came to an abrupt end on Ash Wednesday when both the carousing and the ice-hills were abandoned by Orthodox Christians for the Lenten season of penance. By all accounts, it was a rather violent sport, frequently resulting in undignified spills and injury. Fred Whishaw adds: “I know of scarcely any amusement so fascinating and so exhilarating as this. The exercise is glorious; the

³¹ It might seem insignificant, but swimming in Russia, though sex-segregated among the English, seems to have been affected by Russian practices in which both sexes swam naked in close proximity, or even intermingled. The English in Russia did not do this, but nor did they require the ‘bathing machines’ of polite contemporary Britain, which turned a swim into a necessary part of a health regimen, conducted within a gloomy covered box. Consequently, according to Mary Whishaw, who would have been shocked to hear she was experiencing sensuous pleasure, swims were “delicious”. “Eve & I went to the Cattleys to bathe but we found Mr Cattley wanted to bathe with the boys, so we asked Fan [Jim Whishaw’s wife at ‘the Territory’] to let us bathe at their float & undressed in the old unused wash house; had a delicious bathe” (25.7.1890).

³² “At the foot of each staircase stand half-a-dozen men employed to carry sledges up to the platform at the top of the landing” (Fred Whishaw, 362).

excitement quite sufficient to prevent the sameness of the occupation becoming wearisome” (ibid, 380).

I cannot establish when the English community first took to the activity, which they did with gusto, but references to it in the sources all mention the *private* nature of the English enjoyment of ice-hilling – the essential, recognisable carry-over from other forms of ‘public’ sport permissible in their sphere: a ‘private’ space in which to enjoy them. Fred describes the site of the ‘British’ ice-hills on the island of Chrestoffsky near Vassili Ostrof, maintained for the winter by a subscription of about a guinea per member – “very few Russians belong” – and mentions that “an extremely popular method of entertaining one’s friends among English and German circles in St. Petersburg is to invite them to an ‘ice-hill party.’ The scene is fairy-like...” (ibid, 362), the Germans were from the Embassy. “On two afternoons of the week a numerous and aristocratic company assembles in the room at the top of the hill. Here hot coffee is partaken of, and the proceedings are watched by the ladies; many of the less nervous of these enjoying an occasional flight through space [as passenger]” (ibid., 362.) Here it must be remembered that Fred’s memoir was for publication so the pastime is framed for English readership: the “aristocratic company”, the passivity of “the ladies”, and their nervousness of temperament being comprehensible and valorized elements in English discourse in contemporary bourgeois England.



Picture 3: ‘Ice Hilling’, from a print enclosed in Mary’s 1890 diary.

The Cazalets, a wealthy family with a large house and extensive grounds on the Neva waterfront in 'Chekooshi' (a principally industrial suburb on Vassili Ostrof in which the Cazalets had factories), built their own ice-hills each winter and took back large groups of friends "in the big family sledge" on Sundays after Church for lunch and energetic fun. Maida Mirrieles, one of many Cazalet relatives, describes the adventure, stressing how quickly she became bored with the passive female role of passenger and got her own sledge. Mary Whishaw mentions she did the same, so it was worthy of note, but not unique. Maida describes her own experiences:

After supplying ourselves with the necessary valinki (high felt boots to slip over ordinary ones) and rukavitsi (leather gauntlets with only thumbs) we were initiated into the delights of ice-hilling...and I was soon proficient in rushing down the hills in a variety of positions unaccompanied and dependent for safety on my own skill (LRA 31192/2, Maida Mirrieles, *A Family Record*, brackets in text).

Maida's elder half-brother, Walter Philip, was manager of the family-owned 'Muir & Mirrieles' in Moscow, Russia's grandest department store, and Maida spent part of some winters with her younger sister Maggie at Walter's Moscow home. "We three introduced the fashion of ice-hilling among the British of Moscow, starting an ice-hilling club and hiring some hills once a week quite near our house which was the rendezvous of the club and where we had impromptu suppers and dances after our sport" (ibid.)³³.

At a time when, in Britain, sport "was by definition an all-male affair" (Best 1979, 231), where 'ladies' were only just beginning to indulge in a little heavily-clad lawn tennis beyond the acceptable elegant side-saddle trot through Hyde Park or seaside promenade under close chaperonage, ice-hilling as actually experienced by its young female enthusiasts did not contain cultural elements which would have made it recognisable as a suitable feminine pursuit amongst their home-based contemporaries. Even the relatively passive role of passenger required that the 'lady' cling tightly to the shoulders of her companion for the duration of the ride, anticipated her willingness to risk injury and the exposure of underwear and leg in the event of a toss, not to mention the likelihood of becoming entangled with the gentleman steering the sledge. There is a blurring here between public and private domains as they were perceived by the same social class in England - indeed, by these self-same people on their visits to England - in as much as the sphere of upper middle class women in England at the time tended to be 'private' as encompassed by the domestic, family arena, though there were some prominent rare exceptions

³³ The English everywhere preferred most of their social activities to be conducted within the ordered privacy and protection of a club or, when dining, in private homes or occasionally private rooms at the Hotel d'Angleterre. Consul-General Thomas Michell writing for Murray's 'Handbook for Travellers' in 1888, mentions the Cricket Club, the English Boat Club, the Commercial Club with its English newspapers, and the River Yacht Club as English institutions "to which the traveller in Russia will be welcomed by any member of the British community at St. Petersburg. to whom he may have been recommended" (169). Other sources refer to an English skating club established in front of the Church each winter, the Arrow Sailing Club, the 'all-English' Harraka Fishing Club, and the English ice-hills at Petroffsky described by Fred, all of which were venues where community members could go and be certain of meeting large numbers of 'us'.

who helped beat the path for those who followed³⁴. Making a spectacle of oneself in public, albeit ‘private’ public, riding a sledge in close physical contact with a gentleman and risking the likelihood of an immodest fall for the sake of excitement was anathema. “Rowdyism... uninhibited vulgarity – marks equally of those who cared not for ‘respectability’ and those who were too poor to care or even know about it – were shunned by ‘respectable’, ‘decent’ working people as well as by all of higher social standing” (Best, 220-1). As for “rushing down the hills in a variety of positions unaccompanied and dependent for safety on my own skill” – one is reminded of Eliza Doolittle’s famous out-of-place remark, “Not bloody likely...I am going in a taxi” (Shaw 2000, 78).

Meta Muir, sister of the Molly Muir cited above, outlines the contrast between life as it was lived by a young upper middle class woman in the two countries in a letter to a gentleman to whom she had been introduced in St. Petersburg, and whom she later married.

Since [returning to England] I have had much to do getting new servants and putting the house into working order, and now the same old game begins again – seeing friends, writing notes, shopping, going to one or two classes, learning music, reading a little, ordering dinner, visiting people, and all the hundred things that make up a London maiden’s life. It’s not a bad sort of life but it’s rather different from yours... (LRA 1015/91, 10.10.1887.)

And, as one of the Whishaw cousins, Jim, records of his honeymoon trip to England to visit his and his bride’s relatives in 1872: “for any one accustomed as I already was to the comforts and unconventionalities of Continental life, the strictness and punctilios that had to be observed were truly awful” (J. Whishaw 1935, 87).

Fred Whishaw himself had been educated at Uppingham (one of the top English Public Schools, though not one of ‘The Seven’), during the course of which he had attached himself to (or been attached by) the world of the upper-middle class England-based Victorians. Public School education was a device for shaping character in a particular way, “it aimed to create men with a specific outlook and approach to life” (Coleman 1973, 110), and was such a total immersion in a world controlled to these ends that it was largely successful in its aims – none of which were to prepare young men for trade. Fred never re-entered the world of the English merchant community in Petersburg as a committed member and, after spending a short time as an adult in the firm of Hills & Whishaw there, and marrying Ethel Moberly, from a prominent local family, he “found commerce distasteful, and soon after his marriage he returned to England and took to writing...” (J. Whishaw 1992, 182). Though he became an ice-hilling enthusiast, Fred’s initial response on being introduced to the fun by a friend focused on an aspect of the sport that obviously did not occur to enculturated community members Mary and Maida. With somewhat forced humour he describes his chagrin on being assured by his friend and sponsor of an avid audience for his first attempt.

‘It’s the grandest fun in the world watching the beginners [his friend says with relish].

³⁴ Even the famous ‘salons’, both literary and political, were the province of the aristocratic hostess, drawn from a class that had never ‘worked’ and therefore did not need to enforce boundaries between money earners (male patriarchs) and ‘others’ (women and minors of the same social category).

Why, several of our members only subscribe for the fun of seeing the new hands sprawl about.' ...What a disgusting position! [thinks Fred] If there is one thing in the world I do detest above others, it is making a fool of myself in public. (Fred Whishaw 1890, 365-6.)

The community modified their cultural borrowing a little by locating their enjoyment of ice-hilling in a private 'British' sphere, civilizing it with the serving of coffee and samovars of steaming mulled wine to an 'aristocratic company', but this 'new' cultural element was accepted, despite being counter to metacultural valorization of public restraint of behaviour, because community members were more ready than their insular compatriots at home to take up the 'new' in a spirit of adventure – purely for the fun of it. It was, after all, a sense of adventure which had first brought their forebears to Russia, so the ground was more fertile for the growth of seeds of certain types of innovation. In this they drifted away from practice among their contemporaries in England. The sport is not likely to have found favour even among England-based Victorian 'gentlemen', if the view of one Dr Edward Morton, physician to the Vorontsov family 1827-29 may be taken as typical:

A young English friend offered to procure me a ticket for some private "Russian Mountains;"...I requested him to endeavour to describe it to me. He hesitated for a few moments, and then said, "If you can form any idea of what the sensation must be, while descending to the street, upon being suddenly flung out of a two-pair-of-stairs window, you will know how one feels in descending the 'Russian Mountains.'" I confess, after this reply I felt no desire to ascertain, by personal experience, the correctness of his description. (E. Morton 1830, 53-4.)³⁵

Here we have evidence supporting the contention that even cultural items which are severed from their site of production and then accepted by different cultural configurations, carry something of intangible culture along with them in their travels. As I will discuss later, while the English community did not problematize the boundary between their own and their hosts' culture, rather taking it for granted, many discursive items and discursively referenced practices perceived as 'English', and therefore specifically and uniquely 'ours', were actively accelerated onward by frequent repetition, often in a replicated mode, which kept community boundaries (and even the stuff contained within those boundaries) figuratively stable. However, innovation was *inadvertently* carried into the cultural practice of the community along with the items which were *discriminatingly* allowed, which they "processed, evaluated and reproduced through existing schemata" or habitus (Urban 2001, 224), thereby appearing to keep intact the habitual inertia of the cultural praxis of the community while actually working the new into the existing fabric.

The new elements in a traditionally sanctioned cultural notion of 'exercise' laid down paths for dissemination of further items, recognisable only by their relation to *previous* 'new' elements and in fact carrying whole new matter into cultural circulation. For example, for the

³⁵ Morton's book is entitled *Travels in Russia, and a residence at St. Petersburg and Odessa in the years 1827-1829; intended to give some account of Russia as it is, and not as it is represented to be, &c. &c.* In its preface he states that one of his aims has been to debunk the "highly flattering account of everything relating to Russia" (viii) and "comparisons which reflect unjustly on England" (ix) perpetrated by other memoirists, by stating the facts as "truth compels him to" (xi). His was not a worldview shaped by long-term residence in the English community at St. Petersburg.

women of the community to take up – to be allowed to take up, perhaps – this type of healthy outdoor activity (traditionally a ‘good’ thing in itself), which required courage, spirit, independence, physical stamina and an abandonment of standards of bodily decorum and control, allowed tacit acknowledgement that such qualities were not an inherently all-male preserve. These are not, however, attributes which can be confined to one tiny area of daily life or worldview; once admitted at all they have inscriptive force. Contemporary female gender roles and the future trajectories of at least this mid- to late-Victorian generation of Anglo-Russian young women provide proof that they took these strengths for granted in other areas of their lives. They travelled freely and unaccompanied across Europe, and between British colonial outposts and many made themselves later careers outside the domestic sphere.

Another uninvited traveller that accompanied the range and excitement of the leisure pursuits available to the English in Petersburg was one attendant on similarly luxurious activities of a rather higher social class in England: the undeniably aristocratic, whose church attendance declined more rapidly than the more convention-bound middle classes of the homeland. Hugh McLeod suggests that this was because they were “becoming increasingly ready to take pleasure as their first consideration, even when it conflicted with what they had been taught to regard as a duty.” While this sometimes took the form of an “articulated gospel of self-development”, more often it took the form which it appears to have taken here: “an ‘unconscious hedonism’, which broke free from some of the more irritating restraints imposed by convention, without attempting to apply any general principles” (1974, 238). Naturally, I am not trying to imply that ice-hilling, skating and snow-shoeing are solely responsible; but they were some of many activities acting conjointly as what is colloquially referred to as ‘the thin end of the wedge’, introducing into circulating metacultural evaluation a tolerance of relaxed behavioural patterns which was delayed by decades in England in the absence of ‘frontier’-type cultural input. Underlying values changed at a much slower pace, but change was inevitable.

PART TWO.

CHAPTER THREE.

THE COMMUNITY IN TIME AND SPACE.

“WHY DID THEY GO THERE?”¹

The newe Navigation and discoverie of the kingdome of Moscovia, by the Northeast, in the yeere 1553: Enterprised by Sir Hugh Willoughbie knight, and perfourmed by Richard Chancellor Pilot major of the voyage:

Written in Latine by Clement Adams [Transl. Richard Hakluyt]

At what time our Marchants perceived the commodities and wares of England to bee in small request with the countreys and people about us, and neere unto us, and that those Marchandizes which strangers in the time and memorie of our auncestors did earnestly seeke and desire were nowe neglected, and the price thereof abated, although by us carried to their owne portes, and all forreine Marchandises in great accompt, and their prises wonderfully raised: certaine grave Citizens of London, and men of great wisdom, and carefull for the good of their Countrey, began to thinke with themselves, howe this mischiefe might bee remedied. Neither was a remedie (as it then appeared) wanting to their desires, for the avoiding of so great an inconvenience: for seeing that the wealth of the Spaniards and Portingales, by the discoverie and search of newe trades and Countreys was marveilously increased, supposing the same to be a course and meane for them also to obtain the like, they therefore resolved upon a newe and strange Navigation...for the search and discoverie of the Northerne part of the world, to open a way and passage to our men for travaile to newe and unknowne kingdoms. (Hakluyt, 266-267.)

A copie of the first Privileges graunted by the Emperour of Russia to the English Marchants in the yeere 1555.

Forasmuch as God hath planted al realmes and dominions in the whole world with sundry commodities, so as the one hath neede of the amity and commodities of the other, and by means therof traffike is used from one to another, and amity is thereby increased:...considering also how needfull marchandize is, which furnisheth men of all that which is convenient for their living and nouriture, for their clothing, trimming, and the satisfying of their delights, and all other things convenient and profitable for them, and that marchandize bringeth the same commodities from divers quarters in so great abundance, as by meanes thereof nothing is lacking in any part, and that all things be in every place (where entercourse of marchandizes is received and imbraced) generally in such sort, as amity is thereby entred into, and planted to continue, and the injoyers thereof be as men living in a golden world... (Hakluyt, 313)

As an ethnographer, I could section the English community in St. Petersburg in, say, the 1890s – the material is abundant for that decade – and detail the connections, the institutions, the beliefs, the garments, foodways and sensing of time and place. While interesting in its way, it would be a surface view, a swiftly fading snapshot. Anthropology has grown out of pure

¹ This was a question that was rhetorically asked by many later memoirists of their first Anglo-Russian ancestors' move to Russia; not with regret, but with some wonderment.

ethnography – in both senses of the phrase. Its roots lie there, but it is no longer enough to say ‘this is how this group, or this phenomenon was’; ‘this is how it worked’². Taking the viewpoint that culture exists in its transmission, in process, the focus of this study is ‘what gets passed on? why? and, even more importantly, how?’ As an historian, I could list the interplay of events, people, institutions and so on which dragged and prodded the community forward over the centuries of its existence (or merely accompanied it), without ever investigating the effects such stimuli and catalysts had in shaping the worldviews and social arrangements of the protagonists – which amounts to a similar two-dimensional slice, but cut *with* the grain of time rather than against it. Centring analysis on the ways that the circulating talk of the community expressed, negotiated and shaped the whole of their world requires – or at the very least is immeasurably enriched by – situating the whole of its world in the larger world with which it was inextricably enmeshed. The community was immersed by its talk, which was the product of its history, in its history; immersed by its talk, which was also the product of its present, as far as its present reached³. Thus, what they actually talked *about* reflects their real concerns – their histories as they were real to them, if you like, as opposed to a putatively objective history (the latter being less important with regards who and how they were, except in so far as it indicates the way they shaped the material to hand with the tools they had manufactured⁴). Therefore, most of this chapter is devoted to exploring the foci of concern of the first English merchants in Russia as they connect with later concerns; followed by a brief ‘placement’ in the broader worlds which contributed to the selection of later spheres of interest: in other words, the worlds of their hosts, their homeland, their city of residence and global trade (from an English perspective).

By the middle of the sixteenth century the merchant class had established itself in England as one of the dominant forces in the land, a circumstance influential in the future development of a specifically English social structure and relations within it. It is clear that “our Marchants”, by the time of the statement of resolution which motivated the exploration of the “Northerne part of the world” with a view to finding a direct sea route to Cathay, felt themselves to comprise a definite group, with interests they were prepared to defend, and complicated institutional structures which facilitated their organization and monopolistic aspirations, both at home and abroad. As a broad generalization one might say that English merchants were a voracious breed who had risen up through the ranks of the prevalent and powerful craft guilds which had run the ‘manufacturies’ and organized the marketing of the products of manufacture throughout the Middle Ages. From the fourteenth century, the wealthiest members of the craft guilds had gradually usurped the guilds’ trading functions, many of them abandoning workshop

² And the most swiftly produced synchronic study is still, always, lodged in the past.

³ The least cosmopolitan of all my informants could tell her step-daughter that she had had a letter from one of her sons written from Shanghai – “quite an European town, built on the sea shore. Now he must have arrived in Hankow.” (Caroline Cummings to Lily Ramsay 4.6.1880.) This is the territoriality of international merchant worlds.

⁴ Even in the short term, as I will demonstrate with the case studies in chapter ten, the interpretations of an event or series of incidents are almost comic in their variety. There is little point in trying to extricate the objective ‘truth’; research for this study indicated to me that as far as human interaction is concerned, there is no such thing. The version that is widely accepted and provides temporary closure (imbued with ‘truth-value’) is more pertinent for the light it casts on the internal organization of a group – the power structure, obviously, but also the metaculturally endorsed group norms and values which each protagonist manipulated in attempts to gain his/her own ends.

enterprise altogether and forming alliances with the suppliers of raw materials to form organizations which were exclusively mercantile in purpose and firmly monopolistic in nature⁵. With growing wealth came the power to influence and then dominate the governing bodies of towns and cities, a position which was exploited to further curtail the rights of lesser guild members to indulge in wholesale trade, and, by the end of the fourteenth century, even the rights of the citizenry to vote in town elections.

Merchants were early to understand the power of organization. English traders had worked the Baltic from at least the thirteenth century and, by the end of the fourteenth, the first signs of the emergence of later trading companies are evident in the issue of 'privileges' by King Richard to loose confederations of merchants, transforming them into regulated companies known, in one instance, as the Merchant Adventurers⁶. Such corporations allowed merchants to operate individually inside a defined area of interest and according to principles laid down by a governing body – usually comprising a Governor, his Court of Assistants, and Committees convened for special purposes – with its own meeting house, the right to elect its office bearers and a specific range of jurisdiction. At the time, the Baltic ports provided the bulk of England's ship building supplies – hemp and flax, timber, tallow, pitch and tar – along with grain and the potash required for the manufacture of woollens (England's principal export item). This would not change until late in the nineteenth century when steam and iron took over from wind and wood, and grain became the staple Russian export to Britain. The Baltic, therefore, was vital to England's early global maritime supremacy, though it might be as accurate to say that the successful establishment of direct trade with Russia, as one of the greatest accessible sources of ship building requirements, was instrumental in encouraging the development of this English specificity.

Prior to the establishment of direct links to the Russian interior in the sixteenth century, English merchants traded out of the important Baltic city of Danzig which serviced the Polish hinterland. Given the distances involved, and the length of time it took for correspondence from the home office to reach the active trader, there was a clear need to decentralize entrepreneurial decision-making responsible for the conduct of trade. "In order to undertake most sorts of medium- or large-scale business, to secure the benefits of a steady and diversified trade, a system of resident representatives was essential, unless the house was large enough to maintain permanent branch houses in separate locations" (Supple 1977, 409). Many merchants chose to settle in Danzig personally, trading on their own account as well as on behalf of the companies for which they were factors. Some acquired civic rights, Danziger brides and positions of some importance locally. By 1422 there were 55 English merchants resident in the city: "Despite its

⁵ Relevant to the later appeal of the merchant organization in Petersburg for its members was that a guild was "at once a group protecting the economic interests of the merchants in a particular town and a fraternity offering all the pleasures of conviviality" (Briggs 1983, 80).

⁶ These are to be distinguished from later joint-stock companies with highly centralized structure in which all members were partners on payment of a steep entrance fee, sharing the risk and profit jointly and carrying on trade directly through their agents or factors within a prescribed area. By the time of the Tudors the Merchant Adventurers comprised all English merchants who were not members of the Merchants of the Staple Company, which had been solely concerned with the wool trade to Calais. 'Staple' and 'entrepôt' refer to the channelling of a particular trade or commodities through a specific town or trading centre (Glamann 1977, 268).

many difficulties, the English colony in Danzig was numerous and well organized; periodic attempts to expel it were never completely successful” (Zins 1972, 17). This might also be said of the much later English ‘colony’ in St. Petersburg.

Danzig, however, was a Hanse city; that is, all goods which were brought there from the interior for export had to pass through the hands of Hanseatic middlemen, while outsiders, such as the English, were subject to severe restrictions. If English merchants were to operate freely in the Baltic, the Hanseatic League had to be overthrown. With this desired end in view, the English government (always willing to assist its eminently taxable foreign merchants) attempted various strategies aimed at breaking the League’s dominance – such as expulsion of Hanse merchants from London – which largely proved abortive. In the event, it was the Dutch who ousted the League from its monopoly of the Baltic when they pioneered a sea route from the North Sea through the Danish sound to Baltic Netherland ports, which pensioned off the cumbersome Hanseatic overland route from Hamburg to Lübeck and created tensions within the League itself⁷. From the end of the 15th century, Antwerp, which encouraged free trade by foreign merchants, became the Merchant Adventurers’ main market until the city crashed in the 1550s and thereafter declined as an entrepôt. Nonetheless, in 1560 the English commercial colony in Antwerp numbered between three and four thousand clustered around the Merchant Adventurers’ residence, somewhat more than comprised the similar colony in St. Petersburg three centuries later, while the proximity of the port to England and the freedom of trading operations allowed the aggressive initiative of the English merchant class to develop, and be richly rewarded for so doing (Zins 1972).

Concurrent with foreign trade expansion and the associated growth of organizational praxis, English merchants were consolidating their position at home. The subordination of craftsmen involved in the manufacture of products aimed at foreign markets was sealed by the changing nature of the twelve London livery companies. These were originally craft guilds associated with specific areas of expertise, such as the Mercers, Drapers, Merchant Tailors, Ironmongers, Haberdashers and so on, but, as trading functions were excised from the privileges of the craftworker by the trader, the livery companies developed into associations of wholesalers and export merchants. By the late-sixteenth century all the most important positions and functions within the livery companies were held by wealthy merchants, and the medieval nomenclature came to have very little in common with the branch of trading in which each guild actually specialized. The livery companies controlled the country’s major cities, especially the ports, because city governments were monopolized by guild leaders. In London, aldermen were selected by the Lord Mayor from the ranks of the ‘eminent and prudent’ possessing estates of at least £1,000 and all were members of one of the livery companies. The Lord Mayor in his turn was elected by the aldermen in concert with the retiring Lord Mayor, concentrating the workings of London governance in the hands of a merchant oligarchy.

The early trading wealth of England was generated by wool, both raw and woven. Of the twelve London livery companies in the sixteenth century, five had long connections with

⁷ While the League lost its monopoly on Baltic trade, and some ports withered, Hanse cities such as Hamburg adapted themselves to the new trade routes and remained dynamic operators in the sphere. The Merchant Adventurers kept their German headquarters in Hamburg until the nineteenth century (Glamann 1977, 216).

various branches of cloth manufacture and readily concentrated on woollens, and of the rest even the Salters, traditionally dealers in salt, listed woollen textiles as their principal item of export. English woollen exports rose by two-thirds in the first half of the sixteenth century, most of it leaving the country via London for Antwerp. The Merchant Adventurers had wool staples in several Baltic cities and even the ban by the Netherlands of all imports of English woollen goods in 1563 did not culminate in defeat of, or retreat by, the English merchants from the area. They continued to pressure the towns of the Hanseatic League until Hamburg granted them such favourable terms in 1567 that the Merchant Adventurers moved the staple there, then onto Emden and Stade when Hamburg was pressured into expelling them by other Hanse towns, then back to Hamburg in 1611, whence they could conveniently export overland to Italy. They never resorted to travelling with their goods from town to town seeking buyers, preferring the staple system, where the buyers were obliged to come to them. English merchants, for nationalistic reasons, were prohibited by English law and custom from allowing foreign factors to sell their goods on commission. They remained objects of envy to the German traders who competed with them for the German and Italian markets.

The collapse of the Antwerp market and a concurrent decline of interest in English woollens at Calais did provide the impetus, however, for the trading ventures of the latter half of the sixteenth century which culminated in the formation, by various interests in the Merchant Adventurers, of the major trading companies of the era: the Muscovy Company (later the Russia Company) in 1555, the Spanish Company in 1577, the Eastland Company in 1579, the Levant Company in 1581, and most infamous of all, the East India Company in 1600. “[O]ur Marchants perceived the commodities and wares of England to bee in small request with the countreys and people about us, and neere unto us” (see above). It was felt and stated that business could be better and there were envious precedents being set by the Spanish and Portuguese in the New World which English merchants wished to emulate. With the energy which had forced the craftworker out of the guilds, raised the reconstituted guilds into positions of eminence in local government and influence in national policy, which had forced English trade into Hanse-bound Baltic markets and surmounted the restrictions and expulsions imposed on them there, “our Marchants”, rather than petitioning government or the English monarch for leadership and economic assistance, created new companies to finance exploration and grasp monopolies on trade with new destinations, on their own account.

The profit motive supplied the funds for the trading explorations: wealthy backers needed to feel they would get a return on their investment and the example of the Spanish and the “Portingales” indicated that they probably would, but there were other factors motivating explorative ventures than the simple search for profit. The title of the originating confederation – the Merchant Adventurers – evokes another motive. The intrepidity of the men who trusted their lives to the frailty of the expedition’s ships and set out from London against contrary winds, without a chart to guide them once they passed the mouth of the Baltic Sea, is impressive, particularly in the case of the accompanying merchants and other volunteers who were prepared to weigh their lives against problematic cash return – in the spirit of adventure? It’s impossible to say but one suspects that must have been part of it. The three ships that set out on the 1553 expedition (to discover a sea route to Cathay) held combined crews and passengers of 115 men, ten of whom were certainly merchant shareholders in the enterprise, with another

possible seven. This seems a substantial number of merchants for an exploratory expedition, but it was hoped their endeavours en route, or, better still, in Cathay, would help recoup the cost of fitting it out and, in any case, that was the English way of conducting trade, always seeking the cutting edge and positioning themselves where it was sharpest. Those ten to seventeen merchants typified one of the earliest incarnations of the entrepreneur, defined by Supple as “an administrator, the agent who makes important decisions for the unit or enterprise, or as the risk-taker and bearer of uncertainty...[and] in the early modern period...risk rather than administration would appear to be the dominant motif” (1977, 395).

Some of the documents produced in connection with the early expeditions were first printed in 1589 in folio form edited by Richard Hakluyt (born 1553, educated at Westminster and Oxford), who had a life long fascination with exploratory voyages and travels into the New World. Though the first reports were produced for the information of the English monarch and the merchants who had funded the trip, and reached this intended audience, Hakluyt considered the contents of sufficient interest to translate them into the vernacular, where this was required, and collate them with other records of *Principal Voyages and Navigations of the English Nation* dating back to 517 AD. This found a publisher and presumably an interested audience because, as Febvre and Martin point out, book-sellers in the early years of mass printing – the sixteenth century – “were primarily concerned to make a profit and to sell their products, and consequently they sought out first and foremost those works which were of interest to the largest possible number of their contemporaries” (cited in B. Anderson 1998, 38). *Principal Voyages* was published thirty years after Marco Polo's *Travels* had demonstrated the reading public's interest in the “discoverie and search of newe trades and Countreys” and “newe and strange Navigation”. The popularity of Hakluyt's compilations were enduring, spawning repeated editions up until the most recent in 1972 and also the creation of ‘The Hakluyt Society’ in 1846, which still continues his work of publishing accounts of stirring explorations.

More relevant here, publishing and mass printing the expedition's reports and those of the merchants who swiftly established themselves in ‘Mosco’ meant that the documents could be widely disseminated in the exact format and detail in which they were first written. They were certainly read by future merchants and incorporated into the metacultural commentary associated with later Anglo-Russian trade and English residence in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Discourse items or agendas which were in circulation among English merchants at the time of the “discoverie” of Russia in 1553, and those which were generated by the event and ensuing contacts, were still available in print throughout the duration of the community, forming the bedrock of the lore surrounding the community's ‘imagined’ history⁸. The widespread nature of

⁸ The term “discoverie” itself is a case in point. Alfred the Great had commissioned a White Sea voyage which reached the Mezin River at the end of the ninth century; English coins have been found dating from the mid-ninth to the mid-eleventh century in north-west Russia; and Gyta, the daughter of the English (Saxon) king, Harald, who was defeated and killed by William the Conqueror in 1066, married Vladimir Monomakh, Grand Prince of Kiev, in 1074/5 (Goldfrank 1977, 179, 180). Russian trading items had been entering England via Jewish merchants since the twelfth century and via the English traders in Hanseatic ports since at least the thirteenth. There is no question that the existence and general whereabouts of Russia was known to those English who cared about such things, unlike, for example, the ‘Americas’ to the Spanish and ‘Portingales’ to whom they came as a novelty. It was known by sixteenth-century English merchants that there was a Dutch staple at Novgorod and there were, at least, Italians at

their usage in primary sources produced by community members and English travellers to Russia, the repeated reappearance of many of the same discursive items, referencing similar attitudes, beliefs and praxis, give evidence of continuities both over time and across it. Examination of these first specimens of discourse – both in the form of instructions to the “marchants” from the parent association and reports moving in the opposite direction – and tracking them briefly through until their incarnations in the English merchant community during the nineteenth century casts significant light on the processes by which a seemingly arbitrary aggregate of people, initially connected only through occupational interest, build the solid feeling ‘thing-in-the-world’ that constitutes community as the term is used here.

THE FIRST INSTRUCTIONS.

The “intended voyage for Cathay” (Hakluyt, 232, future page numbers refer to this source unless otherwise stated) which fell somewhat short of its intended destination, was masterminded by Sebastian Cabot, governor of the Company of Merchant Adventurers, in 1553⁹. Six thousand pounds had been raised to equip the expedition by levying a £25 pound fee on all who wished to share the risk and possible profits, creating an association of shareholders who became the founding members of the Muscovy Company. Three ships set sail in May of that year, the *Bona Esperanza*, *Bona Confidentia* and *Edward Bonaventure*, the latter being captained by Richard Chancellor, pilot major of the fleet and a man “in whom alone great hope for the performance of this businesse rested” (269). After two and a half months of sailing slowly north against contrary winds, the *Esperanza* and *Confidentia* lost sight of the *Bonaventure* in a storm, and tacked hopelessly about the North Sea until the middle of September vainly looking for inhabited land, before “seeing the yeare farre spent, & also very evill wether, as frost, snow, and haile” (253) was upon them, they realized they would have to winter where they were, in a deserted rocky haven “called Arzina in Lapland” (254). No one on either ship survived the Arctic winter though the craft themselves were later located – an important consideration to the backers. Richard Chancellor and the *Bonaventure* made it to landfall somewhere near the later site of Archangel, whence he traversed the fifteen hundred miles to Moscow and was amicably received by Ivan IV (the Terrible, or Awesome, depending on translation), Duke of Moscovia and self-styled Emperor of Russia, safely returning to England the following year.

The section in Hakluyt's *Voyages* concerning the trip begins with the “Ordinances,

the court of Ivan IV and Turkish and Armenian traders in Russia – countries with which England had mercantile dealings. Although this is never elucidated, the “discoverie” which so excited the sponsors of the expedition of 1553 was a *trade route* which could take their business directly to Russia, avoiding both the tolls of the Danish Sound and the Hanse middlemen whose ‘cut’ went so against the grain of English commercial aspirations. Nonetheless it was recorded by the reports as the “discoverie of the kingdome of Moscovia” and that is how early readers would have received it.

⁹ Sebastian was the son of John Cabot who was leader of reputedly the first Europeans since the Norsemen to set foot in North America (1497). John thought he had discovered the Cathay of mythic cities, gold, silks and spices. He died on a second expedition the following year. His son Sebastian was apparently about thirteen at the time and there is no solid evidence that he accompanied his father. He had the same dreams, however.

instructions and advertisements”, composed by Cabot prior to the expedition’s embarkation and printed in a “booke” which “shall once every weeke be read to the said companie, to the intent that every man may the better remember his othe [oath], conscience, duetie and charge” (233). The ritual of each reading naturally comprised an act of preservation and acceleration of the text’s content. Instructions of all kinds are metaculture par excellence, as well as comprising cultural items in themselves. They reflect the concerns, behaviour and constructions of the current communal world, and endeavour to shape those of the future world both by providing accelerative approval for those tenets and practices which are accounted desirable (prescription), and by repressing those which are not (proscription). As the content of these first instructions and first reports resonates almost audibly with contemporary concerns of the Anglo-Russian merchants of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, I propose to examine them rather carefully. They represent samples of the first talk to travel to the new place and to be used in endeavours to make sense of what was found there, and their very longevity indicates the influence they had on the future construction of communal Anglo-Russian merchant worlds. Cabot’s “Ordinances” are divided into 33 points, which fall loosely into four categories: restrictions governing the personal trading of “pettie marchants” aimed particularly at the protection of the profit and common stock of the Company; advice of an almost ethnographic nature as to dealing with “strange and wondrous” peoples encountered en route¹⁰; general guidelines for everyday routine, morals and behaviour; and what may be interpreted as a summarising statement of specifically merchant worldview.

I deal with the everyday guidelines and merchant worldview in some depth because these same preoccupations reappear repeatedly throughout the following centuries. In line with the idea that metacultural judgments may provide the acceleration for both traditional and innovative culture, it is interesting to examine the form and content of discourses which travelled through the centuries to the nineteenth and those, such as advice concerning the eaters of human flesh, which did not. If instructions concerning morals and daily routine seem rather predictable – commonsensical – it must be remembered that anthropology ‘at home’ also requires that the apparently mundane be examined, much as the locally mundane is

¹⁰ The ethnographic advice recommends circumspection: “not to disclose to any nation the state of our religion, but to pass over it in silence...seeming to beare with such lawes, and rites, as the place hath, where you shall arrive” and yet “not to credit the faire words of the strange people which be many times tried subtile, and false.” In order to learn the natures and dispositions of the inhabitants, it is suggested that one such person be “allured” on board to “learne as you may, without violence or force.” After this is accomplished, the informant is to be well entertained and clothed and set back on land in order to entice others to view the expedition’s trading wares, “and if the person taken may be made drunk with your beere or wine, you shal know the secrets of his heart.” Expedition members are not to be afraid if they see people wearing lion or bear skins and carrying long bows and arrows because these are more often worn merely to frighten strangers than for any other cause. At the same time they are to ensure that they always have the stronger force when accepting invitations, and that a careful watch is kept against such people who desire the bodies of men “which they covet for meate” (Hakluyt 237-8). Not surprisingly, the finer details of this advice, though sound enough in their way, received no acceleration from future experience, nor the talk engendered by future experience, and are not seen again in any recorded discourse – though the general recommendation of circumspection remained part of the community’s *modus operandi* right up until September 1917 when “Sir George Buchanan, the English (sic) Ambassador in Petrograd...instructed the English colony to leave with dignity, as if they would soon return, which meant not scuttling with everything” (LRA 1072/68, 20).

monumentalized in so-called exotic cultures. Renato Rosaldo jokes that “ethnographers grumble that they did not risk dysentery and malaria only to discover that Tahiti and Des Moines are, in certain respects, quite alike” (1988, 78). He is making the point that ‘civilized’ people (and also ‘non-authentic’ or ‘corrupted’ cultural combinations, for rather different reasons) “appear too transparent for study...our commonsense categories apparently suffice for making sense of their [our] lives” (ibid., 80), therefore they (we) have no culture, and therefore are of no interest to the ethnographer. Rosaldo admits to caricature but it is a common enough attitude, though one which establishes ethnography as a coarse instrument, adequate for detecting differences (provided they are salient enough), and stuffing such differences into prefabricated categories (provided they can be made to fit), but not adequate for its purpose, which is, surely, the study of humankind. All humankind. A discourse-centred approach to culture allows the operation of any human group to be investigated in the same way. Both contemporary and historical ethnography requires that vast quantities of talk be sifted until, firstly, the repetition of subject matter begins to indicate areas of concern within a group and secondly, until relationships inherent in the placement of certain terms, words and ideas within these salient discourses emerge. The themes in Cabot’s list of “ordinances” have proved on examination still so vital, three centuries later, that they provide an excellent springboard into nineteenth-century community preoccupations. The items recorded for the first time in Cabot’s instructions as part of the discourse of this incipient community were, and remained, a salient part of what St. Augustine regarded as the basis of a ‘people’ – the conjoining of a multitude of reasonable creatures “in a general agreement of those things it respects” – for the community’s duration. The language in which “those things” were couched changed over the centuries (though the degree of apparent change is accentuated by the absence of a standardized spelling which was later carried by the *Book of Common Prayer* into general usage), but the contexts of word, term, discourse and ‘object’ association reveals a notable continuity over time.

Implicit throughout the list is the presence of paternalistically controlled hierarchy. It was an attitude or approach that permeated every aspect of the communal worlds of the English abroad and at home, and, arguably, still does: the Established Church of England, understandings of kinship relations, business association, class and power asymmetries were all inextricably rooted in the idea of paternalist hierarchy. Expedition ‘duty’ was owed in an ascending direction from the ordinary mariner through the master’s mates, the ships’ masters, the *Bonaventura*’s captain and expedition Pilot Major (Richard Chancellor), the expedition’s Admiral (Sir Hugh Willoughby on the *Bona Esperanza*), the “myserie and companie of the Marchants adventurers” of whom Sebastian Cabot was the governor, the English monarch (Edward VI) and thence to a God of mercy and vengeance¹¹. In the interest of readability I have paraphrased the lengthier passages.

2 Item...every person [in his degree] hath given an othe to be...loial subjects to the Kings most excellent Majestie...and [to observe] all lawes and statutes...and to serve his grace, the

¹¹ The expedition itself had twelve counsellors which spread decision making a little: Willoughby and Chancellor, two merchants, the Minister, a Gentleman, the ships’ masters and their mates. This decision making by hierarchized committee was another aspect of English practice which exhibited great tenacity and staying power.

Realme, and this present voyage truely and not to give up...said voyage untill it shalbe accomplished (232).

3 Item...furthermore every mariner or passenger in his ship hath given like othe to bee obedient to the Captaine...and to be prompt, ready and obedient in all acts of honesty, reason and duetie...in advancement and preferment of the voyage and exploit (232-3).¹²

The term “othe”, its repetition, and the gravity implied by it, emphasizes the content of the sentences which follow on: in item 1, “every person” owes loyalty to the king, the laws of the land and the trip being undertaken; in item 2, the repetition of “othe” demands a similarly grave and binding loyalty to the captain of the vessel on the part of the ordinary sailors and passengers. The poetic repetition sets up a second hierarchy which is envisaged to reflect the seriousness of the first usage, and indeed, in either context – whether to king or ship’s captain – disloyalty, treason, mutiny were punishable by death.

The reification of social hierarchies produced ‘degrees’ or ‘orders’ of status with correlative duties of obedience and subservience by those lower to those higher in the social pecking order. However, though weighty with implications of fixedness of individual membership of class and category, this impression is somewhat misleading in the English case, as the need for an oath to this effect demonstrates. As Asa Briggs has pointed out, even during the period in which Cabot was writing, there was “relatively flexible entry into the ranks of the gentry and many of the distinctive features of English society, when viewed comparatively, have been related to this characteristic” (1983, 113). Sumptuary laws were difficult to enforce (though heavy penalties were still attached to their transgression in the last such Act of 1597), and Sir Thomas Smith, a lawyer and government official, could state in 1560 that “as for gentlemen, they be made good cheape in England. For whosoever...can live idly and without manual labour, and will bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called master...and shall be taken for a gentleman” (cited in Coleman 1973, 97). The English King mentioned throughout the instructions, Edward VI, himself spoke disparagingly of “merchants become landed men” who called themselves “gentlemen though they be churls”¹³ (Briggs 1983, 113). Here, as elsewhere, the effects of mass printing may be detected. Coleman points out that “the dissemination ...of Renaissance culture from France and Italy...helped to give birth to a progeny of native works setting out the approved behaviour and ideals of the English gentleman...The gentleman became

¹² The second expedition which set sail in the spring of 1555 required a similar oath of service, honesty and obedience to every clause of the instructions which was sworn upon the “booke” and the Evangelists. Predictably, however, now that it was known that profits were to be made, Agents and junior merchants were also required to bind themselves to the Company and their ‘friends’ “in severall summes of money, expressed in the actes and records of this societie,” and “for the trueth and fidelities of them, for the better, and also manifer testification of the trueth, and of their othes, promises, and bandes aforesaid, they have to this Commission subscribed particularly their severall hands” (306). A cash security and a signature binding according to secular law carried more weight than an oath, no matter how gravely sworn.

¹³ Daniel Defoe suggested that money guaranteed acceptance into the higher social spheres in England.

“Wealth, howsoever got, in England makes
Lords of mechanics, gentlemen of rakes.
Antiquity and birth are needless here,
‘Tis impudence and money makes a peer.”

(*Writings*, xiv, Oxford, 1927, 45, cited in Stone & Stone 1986, 20).

an English institution” (Coleman 1973, 97). It certainly did that, but it was a very flexible institution and open to contestation and re-interpretation, as one of the case-studies in chapter ten indicates.

The later English merchants, often from comparatively modest backgrounds, strove throughout their lives to personally penetrate barriers to upward mobility. As money – or the gentility which money could purchase – increasingly became a passport, the well conducted merchant career often provided concurrent entrée to privilege, and many were notably successful in their aspirations, while simultaneously assuming that those of ‘lower degree’ were fixed, and should remain fixed, in the position allocated them. At the same time, nineteenth-century English merchants were outwardly obsequious to such superiors as could affect their material well-being, or who held such lofty social positions they inspired awe – the Russian ‘Imperials’ or visiting members of the English royal family, for example – while those whom they considered as somehow operating within their own ‘web’ (Her Britannic Majesty’s Ambassador in St. Petersburg, for example, even if aristocratically titled), were awarded respect and regard only on the basis of results. Thus in 1837 at a dinner to mark the departure of the Earl of Durham from his position as British Ambassador to the Russian Court, Robert Cattley, the dinner’s president¹⁴, noted his appreciation of the work the Earl had done on behalf of Anglo-Russian trade; the trust and confidence he had inspired in “the highest Individual in the Empire” (the Emperor); the handsome piece of plate the Earl had donated as a prize to “the British Residents of this City” to promote “that truly British amusement of [horse] Races”; and the generous annual donations to the Factory-managed charitable fund which supported the British Poor in St. Petersburg – in that order. Cattley was further gratified to note that: “Laying aside the distinction of rank, & descending from the high Station in which your Lordship is placed, you have made every man feel, when he entered your Cabinet, that he was going into the presence of a friend” (LRA 1406). This contrasts strongly, however, with the attitudes held by the merchants towards Lord Augustus Loftus, Ambassador in 1874, who contested the right of the Factory to dictate Church matters, and indeed, the actual legality of the Factory as an administrative/executive institution (described in chapter ten). In a letter to the Russia Company complaining of Loftus’s behaviour, Edward Cattley¹⁵, Robert’s eldest son, threatened “an open rupture between a portion of the British community here, and the Ambassador, and...public Scandal” if Loftus were not curbed (LRA 1406)¹⁶.

This is the first of many subsequent examples of flexibility of fit between what was said and how it was concurrently or subsequently deployed in different circumstances and by

¹⁴ In 1837 Edward Cayley was Treasurer of the British Factory, elected annually by Factory members and the most important ‘official’ position in the community, but Robert Cattley held office five times between 1818 and 1853 and the Cattley family was one the most influential of the community throughout the century.

¹⁵ Edward (Robert’s son) spent six consecutive years as Factory Treasurer from 1869 to 1874 (GL 21,377), after British Parliament (in line with general ‘free trade’ legislation) had abrogated the right of the Russia Company to collect taxes on Russian imports to Britain in 1860 (the Company had been fighting a rearguard action against this for a decade – GL 11,741 vol. 13) a development which cost the two bodies some of the focused involvement of members, though did not seem to greatly affect their local influence.

¹⁶ This is the only mention in the sources that refers to the merchants as being merely “a portion” of the community: the reasons for the framing will be discussed in chapter ten.

different individuals. Lodged there in the choice and arrangements of words and stretches of talk – “in his degree” and “descending from high station” – is an undeniable valorization of hierarchy, indeed a certainty of the naturalness of such an arrangement. No one was free, as long as they aspired to membership in this communal world, to deny the truths inherent in such framings. Even to think such a denial requires a conscious struggle towards reflexivity, as anthropologists can attest. Nonetheless, this is where contextualising such talk is essential to understanding the world which produces it. How was it deployed in practice? Under what circumstances was it fully empowered by instruments of coercion? When was it a frame which could be manipulated according to individual proclivity, personal strength of character, or well-built networks?

While an overview might produce an impression of inflexibly hierarchized social structure, closer examination reveals the degree to which an individual was free to move within the system. Stephen Cattley, the founding father of the Cattley merchant dynasty in St. Petersburg, was explicit on this point in the “Hints” – more instructions – he compiled for his nephew Robert (above) on his ‘going out’ to the family business in St. Petersburg in 1802, at the age of fourteen: “in proportion as you acquit yourself well in this most fagging department of the Counting House [copying letters and writing out particulars of goods], you will be advanced to other employments of more consequences, and then some other boy will be the fag, and you will be his Superior” (LRA 1,406). Robert and his descendants clearly took this piece of advice to heart, as did all those community members who have left records to posterity.

5 Item, all courses in Navigation to be set...by the advice of the Captaine, Pilot Major, masters and masters mates with the assents of the consailers and the most number of them, and *in voyces uniformly agreeing in one* to prevaile....

7 Item, that the marchants, and other skilful persons in writing, shall daily write...the Navigation, [assembling] once every week to conferre all the observations...to the intent it may appeare wherein the notes do agree, and wherein they dissent and upon good debatement...put the same into a common leger, to remain of record for the company....

8 Item, that all...exploits of discovering or landing...to be...*enterprised by good deliberation and common assent*, determined advisedly (233-234 emphasis added).

These instructions are all interesting because of the consciousness they exhibit both of the likelihood of disagreement among members of a group and the need to overcome this tendency in the interests of the specific project at hand, or group cohesion and amity more generally. It was a reflexive understanding which was to characterise intra-group relationships throughout the community’s existence and one which tends to work against Durkheimian assumptions that equilibrium or cohesion are ‘natural’ to human collectivities. Dissent and conflict were regarded by the Governor of the Merchant Adventurers as being the likeliest outcome of humans associating closely over a period of time. Cabot had added to his first, introductory, item “that dissention (by many experiences) hath overthrown many notable intended and likely enterprises and exploits” (232)¹⁷ and the whole “booke” of ordinances is an attempt to establish a system of

¹⁷ John Cabot’s exploratory trip in search of Cathay in 1497 had been cut short by shipboard acrimony, causing considerable pecuniary disappointment to the backers of the expedition.

rules whereby the inevitable might be either avoided or brought to a satisfactory compromise. Decision making was not in the hands of one man – as it was aboard a warship. The various interests and expertise of the expedition members were taken into account in the institution of the council of twelve counsellors who were instructed to deliberate and determine advisedly. Debate under controlled circumstances such as among the Governors and Courts of Assistants of the later Russia Company, among the committee members of the British Factory – indeed the whole parliamentary system of Britain – incorporates this notion that “voyces uniformly agreeing in one” and “common assent” must decide the course of activities of the whole governing body. A stress on public consensus among the elite, no matter how artificial – a united front, in other words – was a value that was articulated to hierarchical principles with remarkable ease. Community discourse would repeatedly approve this *modus operandi* over the centuries, while in practice, its breaches behind the scenes were both regular and, one senses, exhilarating. Chapter ten is devoted to three case studies of community conflict in which I track the processes by which consensus was deemed to be reached, noting, at the same time, which type of protagonist was doomed from the start, and why. Consensus was not expected to operate right across the group, only among those who ‘counted’. The ‘others’ were expendable scapegoats whose purpose (from the points of view of those who were most influential in the community), was achieved when they had raised questions which required contestation, public pronouncement and temporary closure, but in a forum safely removed from the group’s core.

Cabot also details unacceptable modes of ship board behaviour, including publicly communicated doctrinal doubt (in the form of blasphemy or ungodly talk) or spoken crudity (in the form of swearing, ribaldry or filthy tales). In a hierarchy which depends for its validation on unquestioned acceptance of the sacred nature of its pinnacle, and the natural progression thereunto, ungodliness is a constant potential risk. Contained in ‘12 Item’ are discursive objects drawn directly from the Bible (God’s “sword of vengeance” from Revelations, for example), a practice that was unselfconsciously adhered to throughout the community’s existence. An important point to be noted is the connection made between the outward expression of piety (or ungodliness) and the inner state of the ‘parties’.

12 Item, that no blaspheming of God, or detestable swearing be used on any ship, nor communication of ribaldrie, filthy tales, or ungodly talke to be suffred in the company of any ship, neither dicing, carding, tabling, nor other divelish games to be frequented whereby ensueth not onely povertie to the players, but also strife...and oftentimes murder to the utter destruction of the parties, and provoking of Gods most just wrath and sworde of vengeance. These and all such like pestilences, and contagions of vices, and sinnes to bee eschewed, and the offenders once monished and, not reforming, to bee punished at the discretion of the captaine...(235)

It is interesting that the principal grounds for Cabot’s disapprobation of gambling was that it produces “not onely povertie to the players, but also strife,” – two outcomes at extreme variance with the aspirations of the merchant for whom ‘poverty’ directly equated with personal failure and ‘strife’ with interruption of trade. One could argue that the excitement which gambling engenders was valorized by the merchant when in the form of a prudently calculated, and carefully laid off trading venture but anathema when in the form of putting significant sums of money on the turn of a card or dice. Cabot also instinctively understood one of the principles

underlying a discourse-centred perspective on human praxis: items which are found appealing in metacultural assessment, and accelerated on this account, spread like a “contagion”. Whether as discursive cultural constructs – “ribaldrie, filthy tales, or ungodly talke” – or as cultural practices – “vices and sinnes” – once favourably received they will move until they reach a barrier of coercive proscription, disapprobation or disinterest.

I will be discussing the moral life of the community situated within the Victorian context in more detail in later sections, but one of the few direct references to “contagions” of vice mentioned in later primary sources is when Stephen Cattley advises his nephew Robert, in 1802, that: “In St. Petersburg, as in most other places, you will find a great many young men (as well as some old ones) addicted to irregularity and dissipation – these instead of imitating as you grow up, you must avoid as the sailors do the rocks and Beacons that come in the way of their navigation” (LRA 1406). This may be contrasted with the observation made by Jonas Hanway (a reputable Russia merchant and member of the Court of Assistants of the Russia Company, who investigated a trade route to Persia but did not live in the community for any length of time), in 1754 that:

The BRITISH factors in St PETERSBURG, as may be observed in all small societies, contribute much to each other's amusement, and are now become sober and virtuous, as well as more elegant in manners than in times past, when they were debauched and low in their pleasures; and though calumny and detraction seem to be the more peculiar growth of such societies, it does not reign among them in any remarkable degree¹⁸ (368 – note that to Hanway, the small society of Petersburg Factors was ‘they’, not ‘we’).

It is impossible to establish a quantitative degree of “dissipation” and “debauchery” from such differing versions, though it is probably relevant that in “The List of all English residing in St. Petersburg 1782-1783” (GL 11,192 B, Appendix 2), of whom Stephen Cattley was one, out of 130 men, 44 were single, a circumstance likely to encourage ‘irregularity’ in behaviour. The important point here is that discourses touching on the spread and containment of vice were maintained for at least three centuries after Cabot’s ordinances, though tending to relax by the early-nineteenth century, by which time community control appears to have weeded out threateningly aberrant behaviour, or marginalized those exhibiting it¹⁹. One factor would

¹⁸ He was probably referring to a British association named the British Monastery or Bung college, formed on the same principles as Peter the Great’s Most Drunken Synod which came into being in 1692 with a programme of “elaborate ceremonies and processions, designed as obscene parodies of church rituals and institutions and...prolonged drinking orgies, ending with the participants blind drunk, retching or unconscious” (Cross 1984, 14). The first documents pertaining to the British Monastery, “with its Bacchic revels and obscene practices” (ibid., 17) are dated 1720, though it is probable that it had been around since the previous century, and list fifty five officers in the Monastery, the greater proportion of whom were Englishmen who also appeared in the Church Register in some capacity or other, if only as the principal at a burial. Certainly their public faces were those of doctors, scholars and merchants including Robert Nettleton, future Governor of the Russia Company, which made their obsession with penises and pot-valour all the more incongruous. Hanway knew Nettleton well, dedicating his book to him as Governor of the Russia Company in 1754, so presumably had first-hand report of earlier ‘debauched pleasures’. The association seems to have disbanded soon after Peter’s death.

¹⁹ At the same time euphemisms had replaced direct reference to “sinne”, or, in fact, any practices involving bodily function beyond discourses of health and illness.

certainly have been that, as I will later detail, the proportion of English women, both imported and locally produced, increased to the point where intra-group marriage and domestic life was the norm.. A second factor in this ‘weeding’ process was that those English who arrived in Petersburg prior to the later decades of the eighteenth century were largely cast in the adventuring mould (if the preponderance of unmarried youngish men, and the few detailed histories of some of them which I have read, may be regarded as indication), while the greater proportion of nineteenth-century members of the community had been shaped from birth by community talk and practice, or selected on the basis of amenability to being shaped, usually from family connections in England.

13 Item, that morning and evening prayer, with other common services appointed by the kings Majestie, and laws of this Realme to be read and saide in every ship daily by the minister in the Admirall, and the marchant or some other person learned in other ships, and the Bible or paraphrases to be read devoutly and Christianly for his grace to be obtained, and had...(235)

Item 13 reflects attitudes to religious practice of the English merchants and their families which were also still very much alive in the nineteenth century, and had been at least publicly observed in the intervening years, despite the Bacchic revels and obscene practices behind the closed doors of the British Monastery gatherings. The mention of the appointment of services by “the kings Majestie, and the laws of this Realme” is particularly fascinating in that it may be one of the earliest instances in which ‘prayer’ and ‘services’ are explicitly connected to the agency of the English monarch and the laws of the realm. Prior to the Reformation, services in English churches had been conducted in Latin, as appointed by the Holy Church of Rome, though there had been no single liturgical uniformity. As the effects of the reformation on the continent reached England, Thomas Cranmer was authorized by Henry VIII in 1544 to produce a Litany in English, comprising the first section of the later English Book of Common Prayer which was brought into existence by an Act of Uniformity in 1549. The Act suppressed church services and worship in Latin, and all idiosyncratic local usages, and instituted *The Book of Common Prayer* as only arbiter of the order of religious service and the administration of sacraments, rites and ceremonies. The content, however, though translated into the vernacular, remained closely comparable to traditional Latin canons. In 1552, less than a year before Cabot wrote the instructions reprinted in Hakluyt, a second Act of Uniformity substituted a radically revised Prayer Book for the 1549 version, bringing the English position much closer to an extreme Reformed stance of simplicity, and also refuting the notion that the wafer and the wine of communion convey Christ’s body and blood to the communicant. This second Prayer Book would have been the text which the expedition was instructed to use, though it is not known how readily this innovation was taken up – British Protestants were still arguing over the doctrine of transubstantiation, for example, 300 years later. Certainly, the new text and liturgy appointed by the King and the ‘Realme’ were much more compatible with everyday usage, and with reproduction by the layperson – including the merchants who were to read the services and prayers on the two ships of the expedition lacking a priest. It is ironic that Edward died before Chancellor returned from Russia and his sister Mary had meanwhile rescinded the Acts of

Uniformity and outlawed *The Book of Common Prayer*²⁰ “to the great Decay of the due Honour of God, and Discomfort to the Professors of the Truth of Christ’s Religion” (third Act of Uniformity, 1559, cited in *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1968 ed., 4).

One can imagine what might have been the effect of these engineered visions and revisions of a whole system of religious practice and belief on the minds of the pragmatic. The “Preface” to the Prayer Book as re-instituted by Edward and Mary’s sister Elizabeth I in 1559, attempts to justify the various abolitions and retentions of ceremony and meaning by observing that the particular forms and rites of Divine worship “being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged” (ibid., 10), should be open to change upon weighty consideration by “those that are in place of Authority”, constituting explicit acknowledgement that “Ceremonies as be used in the Church...have had their beginning by the institution of man...have been devised by man” (ibid., 11). As to why some were abolished and some retained: those which blind the people and obscure the glory of God are cut away, while of others “it is thought good to reserve them still...[because]...the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God...The appointment of the which order pertaineth not to private men” (ibid.). The discipline and order, though openly acknowledged to be the words of “those that are in place of Authority” rather than the word of God, are there “to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God” (ibid., 12). In conclusion it is stated that “we”, the writers of the justificatory preface, think it convenient that every country should construct its ceremonial as it thinks best suits the reduction of its people to “a most perfect and Godly living” (ibid.). A demystification and pragmatization of religious practice, while retaining some usages for the sake of order and discipline, was ideally suited to the expanding mercantile elite of England who had little evangelical inclination, certainly prior to the nineteenth century. The observance of a neatly canonised, mass-printed, liturgical calendar, with assigned Lessons, Prayers, bodily positions, responses and so on for every occasion throughout the year – ritual which, by virtue of its entextualization in the vernacular and in habitual usage, was unlikely to engender inappropriate passion or ecstasy – was about the extent of religious commitment amongst the bulk of the English community observable from later source material. I will be discussing this subject in greater detail in chapter five.

Item 15 introduces a discourse of filth and cleanliness that was to thrive throughout the history of the English community in Russia.

²⁰ It remained in usage only among clandestine Protestants, and those who emigrated to the continent, until Elizabeth I then reversed the whole procedure in 1559 by a third Act of Uniformity, restoring the Prayer Book, but also a greater degree of ceremony of vestment and the re-association of Christ’s body and blood with reception of the sacramental elements. With a few small revisions this book was re-affirmed after the restoration of Charles II in a fourth Act of Uniformity in 1662, and despite various attempts at revision has maintained its form, albeit flexibly, in ‘High’ Anglican worship ever since (though the number of Anglican churches in which High Anglican ritual is still used are now in a minority). Doctrinal conflict which was strongly evident in the multi-denominational English Church in Moscow, though not in the relatively homogenous English Church in Petersburg, stems from issues raised by the fine details of liturgical observation and practice: the vestments, the stance on transubstantiation, the bodily positioning of the officiating vicar, the altar and the congregation, and so on.

15 Item, no liquor [human waste products] to be spilt in the balast, nor filthines to be left within boord: the cook room, and all other places to be kept cleane for the better health of the company (235-6)

This might be less worthy of note – it is commonplace in modern Western discourse, particularly as framed in terms of health risks – if it were not that standards of hygiene in England at the time, including those pertaining to the preparation and service of foodstuffs, were, by any standards, abysmal. It was understood by the educated that unclean practices in food preparation were connected with ill-health. Gervase Markham's "The Good Hus-Wife", first published in 1615, recommends to the subject of the title: "let her diet be wholesome and cleanly prepared at due hours" (cited in Mennell 1985, 84), but this was addressed to the gentry classes, or at least to those who had access to fresh produce other than that sold at market. Although none of the reports produced by Chancellor's first foray into Russia comment specifically on Russian hygiene, the subject is continuously represented from that time on, both in the discourse of visitors and that of long term residents, marking a partially imaginary boundary between English and Russian practice that was ever-present, though based on little objective evidence if the praxis of the same classes at all levels in both countries are compared. Once again, I will be discussing this in much greater detail in later chapters.

18 Item, the sicke, diseased, weake, and visited person to be tendred, relieved, comforted, and holpen in the time of his infirmitie...(236)

This item, while also an apparently routine instruction as to the care of those sick or 'visited' (insane, and both conditions likely due to dietary deficiencies on board ships of the time), frames attitudes that were also to operate throughout the term of the community. Later pensions granted by the Factory were common in the case of infirmity. Blindness, the loss of an arm, old age, chronic or acute illness engendered assistance with little demur, provided the applicants were of "respectable Character" and had exhibited "prudence and propriety of...Conduct" (GL 31,781/1, 10.1.1777), whereas those physically able to work but unable to find employment were not objects of sympathy. Although the term 'Lady Bountiful' has mildly pejorative connotations today, visiting and offering material assistance to sick who were regarded as community responsibilities, who had passed the 'good character' test and were recipients of pensions or a place in the "English Home" for elderly English governesses, for example, was one of the prescribed activities of the mature women of the community, along with very regular philanthropic sewing ('work') parties. Support of all kinds to families of employees was also valorized: lengths of warm material, food baskets, medicinal bottles of wine and food were offered where appropriate²¹; regular attendance at the sickbed, or at least visits of inquiry, were customary among equals, and those who were severely ill were often escorted back to England by close family members, a substantial undertaking.

Items 20 to 25, while principally relevant to the joint-stock nature of expedition finance, also expound on particular mercantile practices which are as relevant today as they were then,

²¹ Regrettably, the economic value of such charity, even between siblings, was considerably less than the sums expended on gifts to those who were socially superior – as I will later discuss.

and certainly were issues of common concern to the nineteenth-century community: “pettie marchants”, who had some of their own stock with them, were ordered not to trade without the consent of “the Captaines, the cape Marchants and the assistants, or foure of them...and no embezelment shall be used, but the truth of the whole voyage to bee opened, to the common wealth and benefite of the whole companie...without guile, fraude, or male engine.” All merchants were to be bound in their trading ventures by the “generall captaine, and the Councell...to whose order and discretion the same is left: for that of things uncertaine, no certaine rules may or can be given” (Hakluyt, 236-7). Merchants are advised to “esteeme your own commodities above al other, and in countenance shew not much to desire the forren commodities; neverthelesse take them as for friendship” (ibid., 238).

By the third expedition, when the infrastructure of trade was settling into place in Volodga, Novgorod, Colmogro, Jaroslav and Moscow, there were more precise instructions as to record keeping: an insistence on keeping meticulous accounts of goods bought and sold or left unsold, of the charge of maintaining the three principal trading households, and “of every voyage by it selfe, and not mingle one voyage with another” (385). This latter kind of accounting, the ‘venture’ system of double-entry bookkeeping, had been borrowed from the Venetian merchants who developed it in the fifteenth century to deal with their large volume of overseas trade. When all the goods of a shipment had been sold and the agent had credited the money to the voyage or *viaggio* account from his personal account, the voyage account was closed and a fresh one opened for the next venture. According to Frederic Lane, “This way of grouping and checking the records of every transaction made it easier for a resident merchant to keep track accurately of what his partners or agents were doing” abroad (Lane 1977, 9). While a mere system of bookkeeping did not inform a London merchant if an agent or partner in Russia was falsifying prices and expenses, it allowed for the checking of discrepancies and for independent investigation of actual commodity prices, local tolls, shipping costs and so on, from other merchants and agents in Russia and among colleagues at the Russia Company in London. Hanway explains the high reputation of one English merchant as being due largely to “the integrity and exactness of his commercial correspondency, by which he has acquired a considerable fortune” (1754, 53). This may be contrasted – as it frequently was at the time – with Russian merchants who “seldom keep any Books of Account, as many of them cannot read or write, and are unacquainted with the knowledge of Figures” (Dimsdale, 1989, 45). Frederic Lane concludes:

These developments of double entry were to be sure as much a result as a cause of the transition from traveling merchants to resident merchants. The expansion...of the number of investments in which an individual merchant was simultaneously involved created a need for the ‘comprehensiveness and orderliness’ which double entry did in a sense ‘compel’. But as in the connections between technical improvements in navigation and the expansion of trade, the causal relations were reciprocal. While more trade called for better business management, better business management was a factor in increasing trade (1977, 191).

The problem of trust is a perennial one among people whose relationships are based principally upon a concern for cash profit; between buyer and seller, naturally, but in this context more pertinently between partners, or between principals and agents, ostensibly on the

same side of an exchange, but on different sides of the English Channel. Efficient bookkeeping removed the worst of possible doubts, but not all sources of dissatisfaction. A great deal of the friction between the members of the Russia Company in London and the British Factory in Petersburg in ensuing centuries was caused by beliefs on both sides that principals or agents were obfuscating the facts (the word ‘cheating’ was not used as it was such a serious accusation that it would have demanded termination of business dealings at the very least). The principals in England frequently suggested that their agents or partners in Petersburg were not supervising local quality control sufficiently rigorously, thereby allowing the passage of poor or underweight goods, and the Petersburg merchants were forever exasperated with “Dealers in England sign[ing] certificates for one another claiming poor quality and abatements on this account” (GL 31,781/1) or with “Principals in England throwing goods on the hands of the Agents here” when the exchange rate varied unexpectedly causing fluctuations in the agreed price of a shipment (GL 31,782, 37). The reasonable lack of trust between business partners even within the same trading company was an important factor in the recruitment of family members into the counting houses as a way of ensuring that an element of ‘brotherly trust’ was built into the business relationship. British Factory records at the turn of the eighteenth century, a period of upheaval in Anglo-Russian trade, show that the duration of partnerships between non-family members, particularly among relative newcomers, were frequently rather short, further necessitating exemplary book-keeping as an evidentiary sign of mercantile probity²².

On the other hand, prevarication was unblushingly recommended and put into effect by the merchants themselves in order to further the interests of insiders against the outsider, as may be seen from the advice above: “shew not much to desire the forren commodities; neverthelesse take them as for friendship”. Examination of nineteenth-century records produces a large number of similar, one-sided admonitions. This was a game plan which endured throughout the centuries of British residence in Russia. For substantial profits to be made in trade, and this was the *raison d'être* for settlement, accurate information was vital. This ideally required that Russian partners to Anglo-Russian market exchange should forego the advantage they had as insiders and impart all local information freely and veraciously, while the foreign merchant refrained from disclosing the real value of the goods in the export market, thereby allowing the English to squeeze maximum profits out of the ‘new’ country for remission to the old. It must be remembered that the principle of the absolute sum total of resources which guided mercantilist behaviour at the time led to the understanding that the profit of the English merchant could only be had at the expense of the Russian – or possibly the German or Dutch.

²² Mary, Jim and Fred Whishaw’s common great-grandfather, William ‘Speedwell’ Whishaw, had been in Petersburg for over ten years when he became a partner in the firm of Sutherland, Rigail and Browne in the late 1780s, though apparently without capital investment. Business went badly and a couple of years later ‘Speedwell’ engineered the reorganisation of the partnership resulting in the expulsion of Rigail and one of the Sutherlands. Two years later, in 1794, he persuaded the remaining partners that bankruptcy was inevitable and the company went into the hands of assignees. ‘Speedwell’, described by Anthony Cross as the “villain of the piece”, received an allowance from the assignees and was absolved of debts (Cross 1997, 82-3). Stephen Cattley had been in partnership with Rigail in 1780, with Atkins and Rigail in 1783, operating independently in 1787 to the extent of turning his back on the Factory to be admitted to the 1st Guild of Russian merchants, back with the Factory in partnership with Prescott two years later and by 1821 his son Robert Cattley was in partnership with John Forrester. It was a volatile business world that seemed to be at its most settled when partners were also ‘in-laws’ as I will discuss in chapter seven.

No one framed this as in any way an immoral aspiration.

Above all, Cabot insisted that careful records were to be kept of the commodities which the peoples encountered are most willing part with, “what things they are most desirous of” and “what mettals they have in hils, mountains, streames, or rivers, in, or under the earth” (238). This was reiterated to the members of the second (1555) expedition with three Company Agents and a cadre of “yong marchants” and clerks. All were to perfect their knowledge “of the people of Russia, Moscovia, Wardhouse, and other places, their dispositions, maners, customes, uses, tolles, carriages, coines, weights, numbers, measures, wares, merchandises, commodities, and incommodities...that by ignorance, no losse or prejudice may grow or chance to the company...” (305).

This is how these Tudor English merchants began to build their business world: what do the Russians have which the English require and what do the English have which the Russians might be persuaded to want? The merchant stood between the two worlds, a calculating rather than judgmental conduit for the passage of goods. A balance of trade, or much better, a balance favourable (in terms of bullion) to Britain was the chief aspiration in terms of the homeland’s mercantilist economy, but of less moment to the individual merchant or chartered company who were happy to take commission and profit on any goods, of any kind, for any purpose (even those, such as munitions, which were ostensibly proscribed English exports), no matter which way the balance lay. Greg Urban also makes a similar point when he talks of the role which trade has played in the gradual uncoupling of dissemination of cultural items from their replication. “Traders do not involve themselves in questions of how the material items they transmit are to be used – or, at least, this is not the essence of trade as a social phenomenon. Its essence is the dissemination of material things in and of themselves” (2001, 61).

Cabot concluded his instructions with what might be conceptualized as a summary of mercantile world view:

33 Item...alwaies obedience to be used and practised by al persons in their degrees, not only for duetie and conscience sake towards God, under whose mercifull hand navigants above all other creatures naturally be most nigh...but also for prudent and worldly pollicie, and publike weale, considering and alwaies having present in your mindes that you be all one most royall kings subjects...with daily remembrance of the great importance of the voyage, the honour, glorie, praise, and benefite that depend of, and upon the same, toward the common wealth of this noble Realme, the advancement of you the travailers therein, your wives, and children...[and the satisfaction] of them who...have so furnished you in good sort, and plentie of all necessaries...(240)

Notable here is the qualification of the duty and good conscience owed to God by a much lengthier diatribe on that owed to “prudent and worldly pollicie” and the “publike weal”, bolstered by a reminder of their nationality and earthly ruler, the “royall king”. Rewards for honesty, concord, and obedience are of a conspicuously secular nature: honour, glory, praise, national and personal wealth, family and personal advancement, and the satisfaction and fulfilment of the hopes of those who have fitted out the expedition at such great and previously unheard of cost. This is a logical state of affairs. Distilling Christian dogma into the few

commandments vital to the successful conduct of business²³ and reducing the all-encompassing Christian God to the status of a deity to be appeased most ardently by those who come most nigh under his merciful hand (i.e. those most at the mercy of the vagaries of nature), are two processes certain to result in expectations of immediate, tangible reward for trouble taken.

There is considerable current debate about the validity of the proposed causal connection between Protestantism and the rise of Capitalism made by Weber (among others) – the relationship between values and activities never being a direct, linear one – but certainly the merchant classes of those countries most widely affected by the splintering of Christianity (the Netherlands, present-day Germany and Britain), endorsed moral values conducive to productivity and the accumulation of capital. The second expedition from London to Russia instructed that those who were to be left behind in Moscow to carry on the Russian end of the trade were also to find houses with warehouses and offices where the Agents and company factors (“Clerks and yong merchants”) must spend every night “and in all to use and behave themselves as to quiet marchants doeth, and ought to apperteine” (308). Calvinism in particular cast business success in the metaphor of religion – the ‘Elect’ were those who prospered and vice versa. Here and in later sources, however, there is clear evidence that even mercantile Anglicanism – which eschewed notions of predestination – nonetheless viewed the relationship between man and God as also bound by the laws of direct reciprocity: “see that you forget not daily in all the voiage both morning and evening, to call the company within boord to prayer, in which doing you shall please God, and the voyage will have the better successe thereby, and the company prosper the better” (331). Two centuries later, Jonas Hanway, in the dedication of his *An Historical Account of the British Trade to the Russia Company Governor, Robert Nettleton, and his Court of Assistants*, echoes the idea of God as a superior sort of trading partner when he commends the Company for its (second-hand) philanthropy.

If we call to mind that religious zeal with which you raised a fund for building a public place of worship at St PETERSBURG; and your generous resolution not to permit that the BRITISH nation should be the only one in RUSSIA without this mark of honour and distinction²⁴; may it not be expected that the SUPREME BEING, who directs all events by his providence, will enable you to either revive your Caspian trade, or to strike out in some other branch more beneficial? (1754, v.)

THE FIRST REPORTS.

Following Cabot's “Ordinances”, Hakluyt included the long report which Richard Chancellor produced on his return from the expedition, written up “by that learned yong man Clement Adams, schoolemaster to the Queenes henshman, as he received it at the mouth of the said Richard Chanceler” (266). With the report Chancellor fulfilled Cabot's directive that the

²³ Hanway believed that every British subject should be inspired by “such sentiments as promote industry, and restrain the growth of a luxurious and irregular manner of living” (op. cit. xi).

²⁴ According to Sir Francis Dashwood in 1733, there were six foreign churches (and ten Russian) in St. Petersburg at the time of his visit that year: three German Lutheran, one Reformed Dutch, one French Catholic and one Reformed French (Kemp 1959, 211). The Anglican congregation met in a private house until the English Church, bought in 1753, was partially ready for its purpose in 1754.

places of merit which were visited and “the dominions orders and commodities thereunto belonging” should be recorded in detail. Chancellor began with lists of commodities of interest to England, and therefore the English trader, which he and his crew had located in Russia: salt and saltfish at Colmogro; treine (in this case, seal) oil produced by the River Duina; furs such as sable, marten, beaver, fox and mink to the North part of the country; wax, honey, hides, flax and hemp at Novogorode – noting in passing that the Dutch have had a Staplehouse there; tallow, flax and wax at Volodga; hides, tallow and corn in great plenty at Jeraslave (154-155).

The commodities which were most saleable and profitable in England were established by 1557 and a letter from London to the Agents in Russia, sent with the third expedition, advised that “wee doe purpose to ground our selves chiefly upon these commodities, as waxe, cables and ropes, traine oyle, flax and some linen yarn” (383). A further Agent, ten apprentice merchants and seven English rope makers were also dispatched to Russia with the third expedition, the latter to turn the hemp and tar into rope *in situ*, thereby saving freight costs on raw goods, which were “deere”. A small rope manufactory was rapidly established to train local workmen and labourers in the craft – England’s first foray into the development of Russian industry. Likewise were sent two coopers to make the barrels required to ship the train oil, tallow or similar goods and an expert in yew wood to investigate claims that this special commodity grew in abundance about the River Pechora. Agents were charged to investigate the goods sold by the Flemish in Russia, with a view to undercutting prices “to make those that have traded thither, wearie, and so to bring ourselves and our commodities in estimation” (388). They were also requested to send “large instructions” overland from Moscow written in cipher, according to the code book sent to them by ship. The correspondence which subsequently passed between the Agents in Russia and the then Muscovy Company give evidence of the fascination and identification of these men with their activities: transactions, prices, commodities and the location and timing of the great trade fairs in the country were detailed with passion, precision and a clear indication of the sheer amount of work they willingly undertook in the course of “the trade”.

Chancellor proceeded from his catalogue of local commodity wealth to a brief description of “Mosco”, which he estimated to be larger than London with all its suburbs but “very rude, and standeth without all order” and, being all of timber except the “faire Castle”, a great fire hazard. He declined to describe their buildings further as “we have better in all points in England” (255-6). Over the centuries that followed, opinion was sharply divided among visitors as to whether Moscow and later, St. Petersburg, were beautiful; whether St. Petersburg was the greatest city in Europe or dilapidated and disappointingly dull. On the other hand, as with community opinions about many aspects of life in the Russian capital, features which struck the visitor forcefully were often not salient to those who inhabited the place.

Chancellor was, however, impressed when he dined at the Duke Emperor’s palace: “for all were served in gold, not onely he himselfe, but also all the rest of us, and it was very massie: the cups also were of golde and very massie. The number that dined there that day was two hundred persons, and all were served in golden vesell” (257). Two hundred and forty years later, in 1791, John Parkinson attended a ‘viewing’ of the Empress Catherine dining with the Knights of St. Andrew and also noted that the “greater part of the service appeared to be of massive gold” (1971, 62). Though the food was also rich, however, “Swannes all in pices, and every one in a

several dish,” Chancellor reiterated a theme which *was* to prove a generalised response by English residents to Russian custom in many fields: “the service of his meate is in no order, but cometh in dish by dish” (257)²⁵. Further evidence of disorder was that, although when attending his wars “the Duke himselfe is richly attired above all measure: his pavilion is covered either with cloth of gold or silver, and set with stones that it is wonderfull to see it” (258), the rest of the time he “goeth but meanly in apparel” (259). This was a contrast which was to occasion comment for centuries: the richness and costliness of the public face and the slovenly habits behind the scenes. As I will describe in more detail later, the English merchants prided themselves on equable decency at all times; not too much show at festive events and a respectable face and apparel from the moment of early rising to the reasonable hour for bed.

Though Chancellor was not very impressed by the cultivation or elegance of the Russian court, nor the beauty and architecture of Moscow’s buildings (though he noted that they were well equipped with “ordinance of all sortes”), the power the Emperor could wield in his wars instilled considerable awe: “For he is able to bring into the field two or three hundred thousand men”, most of whom were mounted and equipped as archers. Despite commenting, predictably, that “They are men without al order in the field” (259), Chancellor conceded that “they be such men for hard living as are not under the sun” (261). Clearly astonished, he noted that they may lie in the field in midwinter for two months without tents, living on their own rations of oatmeal mixed with water, while their horses dine on green wood “& such like baggage.” With a mixture of prescience and warning, Chancellor went on to make it quite clear that this was not a country to consider subduing by force:

I pray you amongst all our boasting warriors how many should we find to endure the field with them but one moneth. Now what might be made of these men if they were trained & broken to order and knowledge of civill wars? If this Prince had within his countreys such men as could make them to understand ye things aforesaid, I do believe that 2 of the best or greatest princes in Christendome were not wel able to match with him...If they knewe their strength no man were able to make match with them: nor them that dwel neare them should

²⁵ The English manner of service, already settling into a pattern in Chancellor’s time, and highly formalized by the nineteenth century, was to have upwards of four courses to a dinner, each course comprising a very large number of dishes arranged on the table at the same time, partially replaced during the course (a ‘remove’), and fully cleared (apart from an ornate centre piece perhaps) before ushering in the next one. Thus the fourth course, which preceded the dessert and ices, might include ducklings, guinea fowls, cheesecakes, orange jelly, meringues, lobster salad, sea-kale and macaroni with parmesan cheese. With this kind of menu in mind, Mrs. Beeton pronounced in 1861: “The nation which knows how to dine has learnt the leading lesson of progress. It implies both the will and the skill to reduce to order, and surround with idealisms and graces, the more material conditions of human existence; and wherever that will and that skill exist, life cannot be wholly ignoble.” (facsimile 1986, 905.) To the modern eye there seems little order in such a range of incompatible dishes, a style of service known as *à la Française*. Interestingly, by the late nineteenth century it was superseded by service *à la Russe*, which had been imported to England via the first of the international celebrity chefs, the Frenchman Antonin Carême, who had served as chef in the Russian Imperial household and masterminded the catering at Napoleon’s wedding to his empress before bringing his skills to London and the English royal family. This was a mode of service which brought just a single main dish (often already plated) and its accompaniments to the table at a time, usually comprising a progression in the nature of soups, fish, fowl, meat, salad or specialty vegetable such as asparagus, cheese and fruit, dessert: it ‘cometh in dish by dish’. It was still considered a fashion too daring to be reproduced at a dinner party for the socially ambitious Rothschilds in 1829 (Ian Kelly, 2003).

have any rest of them...(ibid 259, 261).

Chancellor neglected none of his instructions and included a brief disquisition on the laws and religion of the country. While commenting that a defendant in a legal case was used contrary to the laws of England in that he was immediately arrested and beaten severely until he could give an answer that satisfied the Justice, Chancellor commended certain aspects of Russian law, which, he recorded with approval, did not require a lawyer to plead a case in court, relied on the Emperor as final arbiter, and only hanged a man at his third offence²⁶. He was astonished that the Duke could arbitrarily transfer the property of the old or infirm, who could no longer give him service, to a young, strong servitor and the loser thereby would merely respond, “that he hath nothing, but it is Gods and the Dukes Graces, and cannot say, as we the common people in England say, if wee have any thing: that it is Gods and our owne” (261). Chancellor, however, outwardly approved this practice and attitude – at least in a paper certain to be read by his British Sovereign among others: “Oh that our sturdie rebels were had in the like subjection to knowe their duety towards their Princes” (261). The idea that any English merchant, either then or later, would “give and grant his goods which he hath bene scraping and scratching for all his life to be at his Princes pleasure” (261), must have caused some consternation among the worthy marchants of the Muscovy Company.

The report concluded with a comment on the religion of Muscovy – “the lawe of the Greeks” – which Chancellor declared they observed “with such excess of superstitions, as the like hath not bene heard of” (264). Though he noted their piety, devotion, church attendance and extended periods of severe fasting, he added that they had no skill with prayers nor knowledge of the Commandments and “when the Priest is at service no man sitteth but gagle and ducke like so many Geese” (264)²⁷. Chancellor was not flattering in his final summation of the nature of the Russians with whom future merchants would be dealing: “As for whoredome and drunkennesse there be none such living: and for extortion, they be the most abhominable under the sunne” (266). The putative whoredom received little accelerative attention over the ensuing centuries (probably because it was simply not discussed in public or recorded in private), though the morals of the Russian court, especially under Catherine the Great, attracted prurient comment; the ‘drunkennesse’ received attention, but principally from tourists; the dishonesty leading to extortion was dwelt upon at great length by a variety of residents and visitors over the years, as I will detail in the following chapter.

The charges of mendacity and extortion, particularly by the first English merchants in Russia, seem to have been something of the pot calling the kettle black. The earliest Anglo-Russian trading methods were entirely self-seeking and arguably extortionate: the English were recommended to undercut prices to “tire” their competitors; to take the goods offered them as if in friendship while appearing to value what they had to offer more highly; and English

²⁶ The first offence received a long prison sentence and severe knouting, the second resulted in the removal of a piece of nose and a branding. “I heard a Russian say, that it was a great deale merrier living in prison than foorth, but for the great beating. For they have meate and drink without any labour...” (263).

²⁷ This is the first framing of the ‘irreverence in church’ discourse which was discussed in the previous chapter.

diplomacy spent the next three hundred and fifty years manoeuvring to have other nations excluded from the trading privileges it extracted from the Russian Government through a judicious mixture of political bribery, blackmail and the menace of the British navy. The Russia Company virtually throttled Anglo-Russian trade during the seventeenth century with its monopolistic policies, which benefited no one save the tiny number of its very wealthy partners. Yet, Anglo-Russian merchants expected their opposite numbers to be open and above board, an unreasonable requirement. Hence the Russians (also the Dutch, for that matter), were wily, lying, cheating extortionists. This discourse was to be repeated, embroidered, and transmitted throughout the period the English lived in Russia, though – like discussion of Russia’s disorganized and autocratic government, the immorality and filth of Russian people, and the deficiencies of Petersburg as a city – to a much lesser degree in the recorded discourse of the community than in that of their visitors. As pointed out by an historian writing in 1902, most of the adventurers who came to Russia after the time of Peter I came to make their fortunes and “too often loaded the country where they had failed with abuse as soon as they found themselves safely beyond the frontiers, and it is from them that many of the anecdotes to the discredit of Russia have emanated” (Morfill, 104).

Cabot’s instructions and the earliest reports of Anglo-Russian merchants may be conceptualized as carrying a set of concrete discursive items which were to be reckoned with over the next three and a half centuries of English merchant dealings and residence in Russia. They summarised the world – they *were* the world – as the founders of the Russia Company perceived it; they provided the tools which generations of English merchants would implement in confrontation – both intra-group and with homeland-based bodies; their maintenance over time indicates their valorization as traditional items of English cultural creation. These are not exegetical descriptions of ‘what we think’ and ‘how we do things’; exegetical descriptions of a world which lies somewhere else, somewhere real and solid. While these items, and their paraphrasings, and their relexifications, move in space and time, they are the boundaries, the possibilities, the *structure* of the world they comprise. Mere words, perhaps, but excise their circulation – through proscription or destruction of discourse pathways²⁸ – and there *are* no communal worlds. Extraordinary, isn’t it?

As concrete cultural objects, all these items could remain in apparent stasis so long as they continued to be transmitted across space and time in more-or-less this form. And, indeed, as I will discuss in the next chapter, they were alive and well in the nineteenth century. Like all concrete cultural objects, however, their meanings, or the signs by which they were recognised, could not be held in similar stasis. Even though circulating metaculture in the group predominately valorized maintenance of tradition, of English cultural ways, and could appear to maintain it via the application of acceleration to these items over time, no ideological hegemony can resist the creeping of new meaning into old forms in the long term. According to Macfarlane (1978), a valorization of individualism stretches far back into England’s past, and certainly by the sixteenth century, when the intrepid merchant adventurers set out on their expedition to discover a northern sea route to the fabled wealth of Cathay, the preconditions for

²⁸ Which happened to the community in 1917 – and then there was nothing but memories of the once solid world: mental *and* embodied, but in scattered individuals, to die with their deaths.

capitalism as it manifested itself in Britain, were firmly established. Macfarlane suggests that the “peculiarly English concept of absolute property” (ibid., 57), in that “ownership or ‘seisin’ lay in the individual” (ibid., 88) even among the smallholders (unlike in the peasant family units of the rest of Europe), which was manifest in the law of primogeniture and the shedding of weaker family members, indicates that English ego-centred ideas of personhood date back far earlier than the Marx-Weber chronology suggests (i.e. Protestantism, colonial expansion, the industrial revolution). Marilyn Strathern points out, however, in a formulation that resonates with the one followed in this study that “whereas [Macfarlane’s] account would stress the continuity of ideas that are ‘old’ and run ‘deep’, or of proclivities that are curiously ‘preserved’, it is also an historical axiom that old ideas only endure insofar as they are reproduced in new forms; tradition is thereby reinvented at every change” (1992, 11). No walls are high enough to permanently isolate a discourse ghetto.

FROM IVAN THE AWESOME TO PETER THE GREAT.

This section comprises a facile gallop through the centuries between first settlement by English merchants in Moscow to the period, in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, when they had relocated to the new Russian capital on the Gulf of Finland, St. Petersburg. While I work from the understanding that items of talk construct and construe the world for their users as they are passed through a group, encountered and re-encountered in a variety of guises and contexts, it is undeniable that something – or a great deal of something – of the world gets into the talk, provoking its continued relevance, reinterpretation, and, often enough, new production. I am not writing as an historian, however, so I feel it is sufficient to merely delineate the major events which impacted on Russia, Anglo-Russian relations and the English merchants themselves in the ensuing century and a half, in order to situate the community where it is principally to be examined: St. Petersburg from the late eighteenth century.

By the time Chancellor returned to England in 1554, Edward VI had died of tuberculosis and his half sister, Bloody Mary, had become queen. It was she who received the letters Duke Ivan Vasilivich, Emperor of all Russia, had addressed to Edward in which he promised to allow free passage to English ships in Muscovian waters. Ivan further promised that if the English monarch sent a royal counsel to treat with him, English merchants should have “their free Marte with all free liberties through my whole dominions with all kinde of wares to come and goe at their pleasure, without any let, damage or impediment, according to this our letter, our word and our seale” (294)²⁹. As I noted above, a second expedition set out in spring 1555, after Chancellor’s return the previous year. The Agents and factors of this second venture settled rapidly into trading centres in Volodga, Novgorod, Colmogro, Jaroslav and Moscow, found themselves houses and warehouses, were received by the Russian court and negotiated a trading agreement between Ivan and the Muscovy Company which gave its members complete freedom to trade throughout Ivan’s dominions, guaranteed the protection of their wares and persons, and

²⁹ At this stage in Russian trading history Turkish and Armenian merchants paid customs on all goods imported, while the Dutch were free of this, “notwithstanding for certaine offences, they had lost their priviledges” (297) for a period, regaining them in 1554 on a fee of thirty thousand roubles.

assured them of access to local labour supplies. The agreement also granted the Muscovy Company full power and authority to govern and rule all Englishmen who made their way to the Empire, to dispense justice and punishment as it saw fit. In the event that any of said Englishmen did not obey the Company's representative, Russian officers would be made available to assist the local Agent "to bring such rebell or disobedient rebels...to due obedience", as would the loan of "prisons, and instruments for punishments from time to time" (315-316). All this was to be binding on the present Emperor and all his heirs and successors forever. As it happened, the free access promised by Ivan fluctuated in degree over the ensuing centuries, and even during his own reign, but his promises were recalled and invoked as late as the nineteenth century. Being of a high degree of interest and relevance to the mercantile activities of the community, they retained their accelerative power apparently effortlessly throughout the community's duration³⁰.

In England Queen Mary and her husband, Philip of Spain, granted a corollary Charter to the Muscovy Company in 1555 which gave it the monopoly of Russian trade, and that of all unknown countries to the North, with detected interlopers to forfeit ship, cargo and possessions, half of which would accrue to Her Majesty, half to the Company. The Charter also established the Company's governing structure and granted it the power to make statutes "for the laudable rule of said fellowship and communaltie of Marchants" (323) and set penalties from fines to imprisonment for offences touching the "communaltie", provided they were not contrary to the laws of the land. The Company was also empowered to trade in any land not known before "sayd late adventure" and to "subdue, possesse, and occupie, all maner of cities, townes, Isles, and maine lands of infidelitie [to the English monarch]...as our vassals and subjects and to acquire and get the Dominion...unto us, our heires and successors for ever" (326-7). The licence to 'subdue, possess and occupy' is long-winded, wide-ranging and extraordinarily explicit. It was freely permitted by the English monarch – the penultimate pinnacle of the hierarchy which terminated in God Almighty – that all lands previously unknown (to "us" is implicit), no matter whether it be a city or town, a castle, a village, an island or part of the mainland, could be claimed by the Muscovy Company under the English flag. The same type of charter operated in the case of the East India Company, with well-known results. By today's standards, these are extraordinarily public statements of colonial licence by a potential colonizer. In fact, the Merchant Adventurers who established the Muscovy Company never showed the slightest inclination to "subdue, possesse, and occupie" Russia, probably for reasons connected to the terrifying ability of its population to absorb unimaginable punishment, its geographic and climatic deterrents, the comparatively modest wealth it offered its foreign merchants, and the fact that, possessing centralized government, negotiation on a broad front was possible.

On the third trip, the Muscovy Company set in train the system whereby a joint-stock

³⁰ This is further evidence that stretches of talk, of text, must be resituated in context. "Forever" is a word with ostensibly unambiguous meaning. But who among us would accept it as a promise – in any context at all – without mental qualification? Naturally, neither did the people involved in this particular agreement. It implied momentary goodwill, nothing more. It might, however, prove a tool or weapon in later dispute which would be exactly as sharp as the person attempting to wield it could hone it. A word, or a stretch of talk or text, may appear unequivocal, but without contextualization in place, time and circumstance, and especially without examining relationships with other discursive objects in which it is embedded, it is, essentially, meaningless.

company could operate over such long distances. Conscious, perhaps, of further precedents being set, they meticulously tied off all avenues whereby an individual could engage in any personal speculation on his own account in a sphere they now regarded as their own. No packages or parcels were to be carried on board without the Company mark; no letters, private or otherwise, were to be transported by anyone unless the contents were known; and no money apart from the Company's was allowed to be delivered to any person in Russia. The chief Agents were given the obnoxious job of spying on the rest of the crews, including captains, and secretly noting if any packing and conveyance of goods on private account took place at any port of call, to be reported on return – "and you shall deserve great thanks of the whole company" (332). This foreshadowed a decline in trade with Russia in the early seventeenth century as the Company increasingly restricted private endeavour by its monopolistic tendencies, but for the remaining decades of the sixteenth century it flourished under the energies bestowed upon it by the newcomers.

By the end of the sixteenth century, however, and into the seventeenth, English trade with Russia was being adversely affected by a variety of factors: aggressive competition from the Dutch; Ivan's displeasure about the cavalier treatment he felt his emissaries had received at the hands of Elizabeth I, who succeeded her sister Mary – or rather the hands of her merchants, as the English Queen had declined to have much to do with the Russian representative (this latter factor resulted in a brief withdrawal by Ivan of English trade privileges in 1571-2); the long drawn out 'Time of the Troubles' as Russian and Polish factions strove for ascendancy in Moscow after the death of Ivan's successor, Feodor; the Russian loss of the Baltic port of Narva to Sweden; and Alexei's adverse reaction to the beheading of Charles I in 1649. The greatest hindrance, however, came from the Russia Company itself which, during the seventeenth century, fell under the control of a monopolistic oligarchy interested only in furthering the profit of the very few. Even Archangel, whose genesis was largely the result of its being the destination of English merchant ships, was not exempt from the diminution of English movement of goods and the concomitant increase of Dutch traders. In 1582 nine English ships cleared Archangel compared to only six Dutch vessels but by 1638 the majority of the eighty ships which logged into the port were from the Netherlands and only four were English (Vernadsky, 1951). In 1649, under pressure from native merchants though ostensibly in response to Cromwell's treatment of Charles I, the Russian government stripped the English of all special trading privileges.

If Anglo-Russian trade languished, English trade in general was spreading across the globe. "The Navigation Acts [1650-1696] provide convincing proof that England recognized the necessity of encouraging her industry and commercial development through her shipping" (Reading, 15). The gist of these Acts consisted in the requirement that all ships importing goods to England and, importantly, all her colonies including those in North America, be either English owned and crewed, or owned and crewed by countrymen of the exporting country. Russian ships, crewed by Russian crews could bring Russian goods to England, as could English ships of course, but no one else. These laws were aimed principally at the Dutch, England's major trade and maritime competitor, and also at restricting the independence of Britain's North American colonies. They were highly successful. In 1714, 6,048 English-owned ships cleared from England compared to 514 foreign vessels. Eventually rescinded in 1849, the

Navigation Acts were aimed at protecting English trade abroad, and provided enormous impetus to England's expanding merchant navy and, incidentally, the Russia trade which provided ship-building requirements.

Moscow's traditional isolation was being undermined throughout the seventeenth century, a process given added impetus by years of Polish-Russian warfare culminating in a military alliance with Poland in 1686, after which Polish customs became fashionable in Russia, acting as a kind of bridgehead for European cultural penetration. As is well known, this foreign influx increased dramatically in the reign of Peter I, who came to the throne in 1682 at the age of ten. By this year it is estimated that there were 18,000 foreigners in Russia (Harcave 1959, 81) with the larger proportion living in Moscow in the *Nemetskaya Sloboda*, or German suburb (at that time the word *nemets* referred to Germans specifically, but also foreigners in general). Foreigners were thus isolated from mainstream Russian life, but also easy to find, and Peter became friendly with the suburb's doctors, technical specialists, merchants, and with British soldiers like Patrick Gordon, later to become a close associate of the Tsar and commander of the Russian army. Gordon's descendants were part of the English merchant community into the twentieth century.

Peter came to the throne determined to modernise his state, to bring to it the technology, administration and initiative of Western Europe, train a modern army³¹, establish a Russian navy (a pet project), and annexe the Baltic states, at that time held by Sweden, in order to provide Russia with a long Baltic coastline. In 1697-8 he toured Europe; inspecting, learning and recruiting approximately 900 experts in various fields to implement the changes he envisaged for his realm. In 1703 he laid the first stone of the Peter and Paul fortress on the shore of the Neva and declared that there would rise his capital Sankt Piterburkh, in a place which he called his 'paradise' despite the treeless and unhealthy swamps which surrounded it. In 1709 he defeated the Swedish army under Charles XII at Poltava, the following year Riga fell and Russia took possession of Livonia, Estonia and part of Finland. If Europe was slow in coming to Peter, and still regarded Russia and her Emperor with some contempt, Peter had certainly come to Europe. With the displacement of Sweden, Poltava marked the accession of Russia to the position of leading power in Northern Europe. The Treaty of Nystadt in 1721 legalised Peter's claims to Estonia, Ingria, part of Finland with the town of Viborg, and also recorded his undertaking to pay Sweden two million 'rixdollars' (Dutch currency) for Livonia.

At home Peter was also reaching out for Europe in his civil reforms: "...all these things so necessary to [the Russian] were to come from outside, from the foreigner, and even then not for the people but for the State, for the top layer, thence only gradually filtering down to the middle and lower ranks of state service" (Pares 1949, 176). Peter abolished the religious office of patriarch, the ecclesiastic head of Russia, and substituted a 'metropolitan' of Moscow, subordinate to temporal power – an arrangement he had observed and approved in England – and a newly-created synod to regulate ecclesiastical matters. Peter is said to have seated himself in the patriarch's chair after the *Dukhovni Reglament* appeared in which the church government

³¹ Perhaps he had taken Chancellor's opinion to heart: "Now what might be made of these men if they were trained & broken to order and knowledge of civill wars? If this Prince had within his countreys such men as could make them to understand ye things aforesaid, I do believe that 2 of the best or greatest princes in Christendome were not wel able to match with him..." (cited above.)

was remodelled (1721) and exclaimed “I am patriarch” (Beer 1908, 79). The same year he instituted the Table of Ranks, which classified all free inhabitants – non-serfs – on the basis of their ecclesiastical, civil or military capacities, dividing all officials into fourteen classes. The right of hereditary nobility and land tenure became dependent on service to the country in one of the top six classes, no matter how plebeian the background. Those who could show that they were descended from noble families could only gain inalienable rights over their real property by seven years service in the army or ten in a civil capacity. He also endeavoured to introduce the law of primogeniture, later abrogated by the Empress Ann, hoping thereby to encourage younger, landless sons to enter the professional workforce, thereby gradually creating a middle class such as that instituted by primogeniture in England, and largely absent in Russia.

However, although evidently a brilliant and phenomenally energetic man, Peter presumably did not understand or care that the institutions and practices developed and approved within one discursively created world cannot be wedged with any sort of comfort into one produced by an entirely different conjuncture of circumstances and conditions. Outward appearances may be shaped to conform to an ideal by the application of perseverance and coercion but the meanings which the people ascribe to the outward trappings cannot be so easily controlled. This was noted by the British diplomat, Sir George Macartney, who was in Russia between 1765 and 1768 renegotiating a lapsed Commercial Treaty between Russia and Britain.

Nothing was ever more just than Rousseau's censure of Peter the first's conduct; that monarch, instead of improving his subjects as Russians, endeavoured totally to change and convert them into Germans and Frenchmen³²; but his attempts were unsuccessful; he could not make them what he wished to make them, he spoiled them in the experiment, and left them worse than they were before (Sir George Macartney, English Ambassador to the Russian Court, *An Account of Russia MDCCLVII* (1768), cited in Cross 1971, 207).

MERCANTILISM AND THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMERCIAL TREATY OF 1734.

If the Natiue commodities exported doe waigh downe and exceed in value the forraine Commodities imported; it is a rule that neuer faile's, that then the Kingdom growe's rich, and prosper's in estate and stocke: because the overplus thereof must needs come in, in treasure. (Misseldon, cited in Beer, 1905 117.)

Governments of all persuasions had a permanent interest in promoting overseas trade because the state depended heavily on revenue from customs and excise duties to service the national debt and finance patronage. The alternative was to raise the land tax, but this would have alienated the gentry and endangered the Revolution settlement by weakening the solidarity of the landed interest. Consequently, a high tariff regime was installed at the close of the seventeenth century and it survived, with the support of the Navigation Acts, until the advent of free trade and its corollary, income tax, in the mid-nineteenth century. (Cain & Hopkins 1986, 518.)

³² One wonders if Macartney's opinion would have differed if he had felt that Peter was trying to convert his subjects into Englishmen.

While I generally use the word ‘mercantile’ in reference to trading operations in the broadest sense, it is a term also used in the more limited context of the sixteenth-century rise of an economic phenomenon known as mercantilism. This was a doctrine which was primarily concerned with placing all economic activity within a state in the service of the state’s interest in empowering and enriching itself. Almost needless to say, in its English incarnation, it had to contend with the power of the regulated trading companies who were more interested in enriching their members than the state, though writers such as Daniel Defoe and Jonas Hanway often reproduced the format cheerfully outlined by Misseldon above. English mercantilism involved the development of nationally implemented protectionist policies towards the home product against foreign competition, based on the theory that a country’s welfare could be gauged by its balance of trade because a favourable balance meant the accumulation of precious metals. “Gold and silver were looked upon as something apart and distinct from other commodities, as the very incarnation of wealth” (Beer 1908, 242). Signs of this trend were already evident in 1560 when in a letter to their agents in Russia, the Muscovy Company wrote that “now there is a Proclamation made that no fures shall be worne here, but such as the like is growing here within this our Realme” (Hakluyt, 400). Underlying the rise of mercantilism was the belief in the absolute sum total of the world’s economic resources – any gains made by a state were done so at the expense of all other states. The rise of British prosperity during the period in which the doctrine was strongly enforced seemed to provide evidence of its general validity. To these ends, support for the trading ventures of English merchants came from the highest quarters. In October 1721, King George I told Parliament:

It is very obvious that nothing would more conduce to the obtaining so public a good, than to make the exportation of our own manufactures and the importation of the commodities used in the manufacturing of them, as practicable and easy as may be; by this means the balance in trade may be preserved in our favour, and navigation greatly increased, and greater numbers of our poor employed. (Journal of the House of Commons, XIX, 676; cited in Reading 1938, 4).

Regulations were implemented to step up the production of commodities designed for export, with woollens constituting one third of this category. The English Government frequently used its diplomatic clout at the request and on the advice of individual commercial interests. The Russia Company, whose London-based administration comprised not only the heads of the major Russian trading houses, but also members of parliament and the aristocracy, had influence in high places. It did not, however, have sufficient influence to stop a law being passed in 1698 which lowered the restrictively exorbitant fee to become a member of the Russia Company³³ to a more reasonable £5, open to any Protestant, native-born Briton. This broke the monopoly which had been such a damper to Anglo-Russian merchant initiative in the seventeenth century, creating an influx of new English merchants into Archangel and Moscow and tripling the value of exports from Russia to England during the first three decades of the eighteenth century, to a level which equalled that of all the other nations of Europe combined.

³³ The company had wound up its joint-stock organization in 1670, becoming a regulated company with a £50 entrance fee, a sum out of the question for any but the larger merchant houses of the time.

This was largely the result of the particular commercial organization which came into operation under the aegis of the reorganized Russia Company. The greatly increased membership comprised representatives of established English trading firms, often with global connections, which gave the English merchants elasticity of operations and capital resources which were out of the reach of most of the individual traders of other nations doing business in Russia (Putnam 1952, 70-71).

The principal exports from Russia and her dominions in the Baltic to England at the beginning of the eighteenth century were still connected with ship-building. Although, in terms of cash outlay, this could not compare to more costly imports to England from Europe, the Levant and Africa, the Russian trade comprised products absolutely vital to England's supremacy at sea. England absorbed more than two thirds of Russia's annual hemp production, half her flax, and half Russia's total exports overall. However, instead of working towards a balance of trade between the two countries, Russia bought most of her woollens from Prussia so England was labouring under huge adverse trade deficit in the exchange, being forced to pay two thirds in cash to purchase her naval requirements while faced with a glut of goods manufactured for export (Reading 1938). By the 1720s British commercial houses were annually shipping £200,000 of gold bullion to Russia (Putnam 1952). Although England warned Russia that if more favourable trading conditions were not granted her merchants she would transfer her purchase of naval commodities to her colonies in North America, the truth was that the Baltic trade was cheaper, more convenient and vastly preferred. In any case, the trade deficit was not without its hidden advantages. Some of the goods bought from Russia for cash were traded onwards at double the value, via other regulated trading organizations in England such as the Levant Company. While Russia would naturally have preferred the Levant countries to trade with her directly, by the beginning of the eighteenth century no other country in the world had a merchant fleet to challenge England's. A second advantage was that Russia desperately needed the specie which her trade with England brought her as the balance of trade with Holland, Hamburg and Prussia was not in Russia's favour. The Anglo-Russia trade had substantial benefits which Russia would be loath to lose.

Relations between the two nations began to sour when George I ascended the throne in 1714. He was the eldest son of the Elector of Hanover and of Sophia, the granddaughter of James I of England (the first of the unfortunate Stewart dynasty), and heir to Queen Ann of England by an Act of Settlement in 1701. His ascension to the English throne united Hanover to Britain, one effect of which was to provide Hanoverians with the status of British subjects. George I and Peter the Great had a mutual antipathy and in 1720 diplomatic relations were broken off when George sent a British fleet under Admiral Norris (a long-time friend of Peter's), to the Gulf of Finland to lurk ominously near St Petersburg in support of Sweden. Despite threatened hostilities, both Peter and an opposition party in England which supported the Russia Company interest were eager that diplomatic rift should have no adverse effect on trade, resulting in the anomalous position that English merchant houses continued to buy naval goods from Russia with English specie while the English navy menaced Russia with possible attack in the Baltic. Peter I and later Catherine I announced through their London resident that

their benevolence for the Anglo-Russian merchants was in no way affected³⁴ (Martens, *Sobranie traktakov*, IX, 41 ff, cited in Reading 1938, 41). Remarkably, English exports to Russia peaked in the years 1714-21, reaching levels which would not be repeated until 1748.

In 1723, Peter ordered that all exports of naval supplies leave Russia from Petersburg and most of the members of the English commercial colonies in Archangel and Moscow followed the general move and commenced activities in the new capital. The merchants had retained the designation of ‘factors’ – agents undertaking specified purchases and shipment on behalf of mainly London-based trading houses for a commission on the value of the goods – though most merchants traded on their own account as well. The St. Petersburg British Factory’s inaugural meeting, on 20th October 1723, was attended, and the Minutes signed, by representatives of thirteen Anglo-Russian ‘Merchant Houses’ at the office of Elmsall and Evans (GL 21,377). It was decided at the same meeting that a house should be taken on the English Quay for their Chaplain, Dr. Consett, where they could also assemble as a community for Divine Service.

By 1729 the Russia Company, and presumably the Factory as well, had lost patience with the political discord still extant between Britain and Russia and presented a petition to British Parliament to this effect, requesting that diplomatic relations be resumed because of the damage being done to commercial interests vested in the Anglo-Russian trade. Moreover, they wanted a Commercial Treaty to be signed between the two nations which would put the Russian end of the trade onto a reliable and ordered footing so English merchants could function without the constant arbitrary abuses by local officialdom which plagued all foreign merchants in Russia.

Few nations outside Europe at the time provided environments favourable to international trade, which operated most smoothly when supported by such institutions as standardization of weights, measures and coinage; elimination of internal barriers including arbitrary tolls; uniformity of legal practice; the provision of suitable port facilities; the protection of the trader from piracy; and the availability of a single all-purpose local institution through which trading complaints, queries and suggestions for modifications could be channelled. Hence the great joint-stock East India Company’s appropriation of tracts of India, which had none of these things, in order to provide them on their own account and then reap sole benefit from the investment. The British Factory and the Russia Company, however, whose members were familiar with local conditions, were certain that Russia could be cajoled, threatened, bribed and shamed into stabilizing its trading infrastructure, given that it had, at least, a centralized government and a clear understanding of the profits accruing from its balance of trade with England. A second, more aggressive agenda, whereby England would be granted ‘favoured nation status’ and facilities enabling the exploitation of the Russian market according to mercantilist principles weighted in England’s favour, was added later (Reading 1938).

In a classic example of the pressure the Russia Company could bring to bear on Britain’s political programme, diplomatic relations between Russia and Britain were reluctantly resumed, though the Foreign Office refused to discuss Russia’s request that the proposed Treaty should have more than purely commercial content. Britain was not going to be drawn into committing

³⁴ This goodwill towards their resident English merchants, inspired though it was by commercial considerations, endured, as noted below, throughout the Seven Years War and was also to be maintained through most of the nineteenth century, a period when Anglo-Russian diplomatic relations were frequently antagonistic and occasionally ruptured.

her political support to any of Russia's expansionist schemes on the Baltic. However, a mercantilist British Government was bound to support its merchants, if not for the moral reason that they were fellow nationals, then certainly because they provided the government with a lucrative source of revenue. Trade was such an eminently suitable object to tax: it worked in money so had fluid capital which could be readily tapped; English merchants had proved by their persistence in the face of frightful early set backs that they were prepared to endure losses for the moment in a calculated gamble on future pay offs; and, politically, trade was much less sensitive to target for revenue than land or incomes. If it was unfortunate that international commerce relied on diplomatic relationships being kept amiable between trading partners, it was also unavoidable. To protect tariff revenues, and, even more important in Russia's case, to ensure an uninterrupted delivery of naval requirements, the British government would have to settle their outstanding grievances with the Russian government, provided it were not too expensive. Moderate costs, such as the re-establishment of a British Embassy at the Russian Court, would be footed by the Russia Company, which also paid for the Russian Embassy sent to England.

After some years of negotiations the Anglo-Russian Commercial Treaty was signed in 1734³⁵, one of the earliest European trade conventions in which the 'most favoured nation clause' was definitively formulated as a commercial/political principle (Reading 1938)³⁶. Article 28 of the agreement engaged the contracting parties to immediately grant each other all privileges which any other trading partners enjoyed, of principal importance with regards import, export and transport tariffs and freedom of navigation. Britain's Navigation Acts so restricted the freedom of navigation by all foreign ships in her waters, that the latter part of the clause was of little benefit to Russian merchants who, after a few abortive efforts in which Russian merchant ships sank within sight of Cronstadt, did not transport their goods to England themselves³⁷. Further to the tariffs and duties, English merchants were not obliged to pay these in rixdollars if they had none available, as had previously been the case, but could pay in roubles at the rate of 1.25 per dollar. This saved the trouble of buying money in Amsterdam and the usual loss in rates of exchange this entailed. When the value of the rouble dropped in the reign of Catherine II, the advantages were even more tangible. A further article threatened that if English woollens were not granted greater favour and encouragement, the purchase of naval supplies would be redirected to the American colonies.

The remaining articles dealt with Russian abuses in foreign trade affecting quality control, weights and measures; storage of goods; construction of warehouses and long piers on Vassili Ostrof; the liability of masters for their agents' transactions and so on. English merchants were granted the right to purchase, build or rent houses in St. Petersburg, in the German quarter of Moscow, in Archangel and Astrakhan, and Russians were to have the same right as any other

³⁵ Great famine had struck Russia in 1733 and the peasants were starving, their masters having to be reminded to feed those dependent on them. From a purely commercial point of view, a decimated peasantry meant less revenue in poll tax, while keeping them alive was an expensive business. Money must have been at a premium under such circumstances and English trade a ready source thereof.

³⁶ Reading prints the Treaty in full at the end of his volume, and the following summary is drawn from this source.

³⁷ Furthermore, Russia had produced relatively few sailors and those there were, were inclined to desert in foreign ports, incurring a 150 rouble fine to the ship owner.

foreign national in England to do the same³⁸. Previously, English merchants had frequently been turned out of hired premises on little notice and business could not be conducted without premises in which to conduct it, quite apart from the personal accommodation factor. Nor would the quartering of Russian troops be permitted in English houses in these places³⁹. The books and papers of English merchants were only to be examined if evidence in court were required, and then by four foreign merchants of irreproachable reputation – Russians could no longer gain access to the papers of the private British subject. The law which required merchants wishing to depart Russia to leave security against possible outstanding debts (which meant that many could not afford to leave at all), was changed to the easier requirement that two months public notice be given of departure. In addition, should a rupture occur between the contracting parties, “*ce qu'à Dieu ne plaise*,” the persons, effects or vessels of the subjects of both nations would be protected and they would have at least a year to wind up their affairs before departing. Above all, mercantile interests were to be cognisable only in the Russian College of Commerce, a single body, instead of being scattered piecemeal through the shadowy corridors of a corrupt and disorganized Russian bureaucracy. The College of Commerce was also empowered to settle disputes between foreign and Russian merchants and to arrest defaulting Russian merchants and detain their effects until the debts were discharged⁴⁰.

While these concessions would appear to be fairly one-sidedly in Britain's favour, the English regarded them as being the barest requirements to set Russian foreign trade on a stable basis. While assuring each other that the peace, friendship and openness between the contracting parties would last forever, the negotiators were more cautious than their predecessors Ivan and Mary with their promises; the second last article of the document proffers fifteen years as its duration, with renewal as the object at that time. Renegotiation was undertaken by Sir George Macartney in the two years he spent in St Petersburg between 1765 and 1767 (after the termination of the Seven Years War). If the Russian government had any qualms about agreeing to sign the initial document, they were probably later assuaged by the £25,000,000 Russia had collected from British merchants and the British Admiralty long before the close of the eighteenth century (Reading 1938).

³⁸ Once again, an entirely meaningless concession on the part of the British government as only those who were British subjects by birth or naturalization could own land in Britain.

³⁹ It was a money saving practice of the Russian Government to lodge its troops in private houses.

⁴⁰ A century and a half earlier a Muscovy Company Agent, Henry Lane, had described the legal process which ensued when ‘sundrie’ Russian merchants doubled the sum they had initially agreed that Lane owed them (Hakluyt, 406). According to the practice of the time he was offered the possibility of a trial by combat between representatives of the litigating parties to settle the dispute, but the Russian merchants and their champion refused the “strong willing Englishman” who was Lane’s champion and the case went to court. When Lane’s offer of settlement in court was refused, the case was decided by drawing lots. Two inscribed balls of wax were drawn from a hat by a tall man randomly picked from among the spectators and “the lotte in ball first taken out was mine”. The plaintiffs were obliged to accept “the summe by me appointed” out of which they had to pay 10% to the Emperor, “for their wrong or sinne, as it was termed...Many dayes after, as their maner is, the people took our nation to be true and upright dealers, and talked of this judgement to our great credite” (Hakluyt, 407-8). One can detect a note of incredulous amusement in Lane’s description of the farce. Legal proceedings were not quite so arbitrary by the time of the Commercial Treaty of 1734, but procuring a favourable verdict was often considerably more expensive.

Overall, the treaty stimulated English commercial activity by giving merchants a sense of security. Tariffs were fixed and payable in local currency; their houses, papers and business premises were now inviolate; they had a single bureaucratic organ with whom they were to deal in the future, with fixed practices in cases of faulty merchandise, false measures, or defaulting debtors disappearing untraceably into the Russian hinterland; and they could leave Russia for visits home or abroad whenever they were inclined. St. Petersburg, after over two decades of residence, was no longer the frontier town it was described as being when they first moved their operations there in 1723. The trade route between the downriver, deepwater port of Cronstadt and British ports was swift and safe compared to the arduous overland trek with goods from Moscow to Archangel and the long dangerous voyage through the North Sea, cutting freight costs, risks and travel time. This increased security and comfort of tenure is clearly connected to the growth of practices connected with the creation and maintenance of an English merchant community in St. Petersburg from this time forward.

In terms of goods exported from Russia to Britain by these English merchants, tallow and wax retained their popularity until the advent of electricity, while flax for linen manufacture still supported substantial British firms in Estonia and Latvia in the mid-twentieth century. Items such as potash, bristle, isinglass, rhubarb and furs were added to the list but the greatest demand which the British had on Russian exports remained those commodities which would service her navy and merchant ships: tarred rope (and ‘unwrought’ pitch and hemp), and timber. The demand became even more pressing in the mid-eighteenth century when imminent war with France threatened Canadian timber reserves. “By July 1758, the [British] navy consisted of 263 ships, double pre-war figures. For a 100 gun ship like the ‘Royal George’ (1756) the timber requirements alone were over 6,000 loads (7,500 tons) of oak, elm and plank. Most of this was Baltic timber...The trade potential was, therefore, enormous...” (Clendenning 1977, 534). British merchants were not slow to take advantage of it. The greatest mercantile fortunes made in Russia (and the most cataclysmic bankruptcies) were rooted in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Despite the Seven Years War which raged across central Europe between 1758 and 1764, an English merchant, William Gomm, went into partnership with Count Shuvalov, a senior official at the court of Empress Elizabeth, aimed at exploiting the timber in the northern Kola region. In 1760, as English and Prussian troops faced a Russian, French, Austrian and Swedish alliance south of the Baltic, the Russian Senate allowed Gomm to purchase Shuvalov’s monopoly and lent him 200,000 roubles to further expand his empire, appointing three foreign merchants – Poggenpohl, Cavanaugh and Cozens – as guarantors. The latter two were English, of central standing in the community and, predictably, brothers-in-law. Cavanaugh had married one of Cozens’ sisters in 1753 and, some years later, Poggenpohl married Elizabeth Cayley, the daughter of John Cayley and a second Cozens sister⁴¹.

⁴¹ Cozens’ and Cavanaughs were part of the nucleus of the English merchant community from the eighteenth until the middle of the nineteenth century when the names were lost in female lines of descent (Cattley, Moberly, Raikes, Cayley etc.). A postscript to the tale of William Gomm is the impressive speed with which he spiraled downwards into debt and bankruptcy. In 1769 creditors in England and Holland seized and sold his property there, at a huge loss to all. Miraculously, he continued mercantile activity for another decade in Russia until early in the 1780s when he accepted a British diplomatic posting to The Hague. Fortunately for Cozens and Cavanaugh, they had been released as guarantors for Gomm’s loans in 1764, being replaced by a John Ramsbottom, merchant, who married Gomm’s sister Sarah soon

St. Petersburg was a European city, built on neo-Classical lines, that seemed to turn its back on the perceived disorder and uncertainty of Slavic life. By the nineteenth century the bulk of English merchants lived on Vassili Ostrof (V. O.), which housed the Exchange, Customs House and the Colleges (or departments) of Foreign Affairs and Commerce, but, in 1733, when Sir Francis Dashwood accompanied Baron Forbes, envoy extraordinary and treaty negotiator, to St. Petersburg, the “long rows of large houses [of V. O.], that look well on the outside, but allmost all unfurnished, and most uninhabited” (cited in Kemp 1959, 206), were symptomatic of Peter’s over-ambitious plans for his capital. “Here the merchants were designed to live, but though the houses and streets are very handsome, they are mostly uninhabited, for the Admiralty-isle is far the most populous” (Mrs Vigor 1730, cited in Kemp 1959, 202). The Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1734 encouraged the influx of a more modest class of merchant, the mansions on V.O. were divided into lodgings of various sizes and degree of luxury and by the mid-nineteenth century, ‘the island’ was the preferred place of residence for all but the most wealthy.

In the first century of Petersburg habitation, however, the beautiful houses on the quays of Admiralty Island near the future Winter Palace – “where her Majesty and the best part of the Court inhabit...as well as all the English Merchants, and I believe most other foreign merchants” (ibid., 202) – were in demand. The quay, where it extended west of the Admiralty, later became known as the English Quay, from the preponderance of English merchants and diplomats who lived there. From the balconies of quayside homes the merchants could look across the Neva to the wharves of V. O. where their merchandise was being unloaded from the merchantmen, or from barks which had brought it up from the deep water port of Cronstadt. There was a “good handsome bridge upon boats” across to V. O. during the summer, though “the Merchants generally have boats of their own, being obliged to cross the water everyday” (ibid., 202-3), to attend to their affairs at the Exchange and Customs House which were situated on the wharves at the eastern tip of the island.

As I mentioned in my introduction, there are no reliable figures available for the population of the community at any stage in its existence. Some idea of growth patterns, however, may be deduced from the marked increase in marriages and baptisms registered in the church records (see Table 1, following page). Based on the figures for marriages and baptisms, the community was slow to grow in the first decades of its resettlement in Petersburg. The Commercial Treaty of 1734 and Catherine II’s later incentives to foreign investment encouraged new merchants to bring their families with them but the Church Registers, erratically kept until 1750, show no more than a handful of entries for each year: between one and five baptisms, a maximum of four

afterwards. By 1774, against assets of 300,000 Rs, Gomm owed nearly 2,000,000 Rs. In 1778 Ramsbottom’s name appears on the British Factory Poor’s List as the monthly recipient of 20 Rs. In September 1781, presumably after Gomm had decamped to the Hague, it was unanimously resolved by the Factory that John Ramsbottom and his family “have the use of the rooms in the Church yard...Rent Free for the term of one year by way of encouragement to enable them to set up a school and place Mr. Ramsbottom in a situation to look out for some separate employment for himself”; in 1784 and 1785, after poor John’s premature death, Sarah was allowed to keep the rooms but lost the pension. Her name does not appear in the charity lists again, probably because two daughters married well in the following years (GH 31,781/1 & Church Register), and they (or their husbands) would have been responsible for her welfare from that point on – a practice clearly codified in British Factory Minutes: no pensions to potential recipients with solvent relatives. This was an integral facet of merchant kinship understandings.

marriages and often none at all. Even deaths (the highest figure) never rose above eight per annum for the community. It was hard for a merchant in the first half of the century to find an English wife locally, and the few marriageable English women that there were, showed no particular preference for English husbands. The list of “names of all the persons of the English Congregation in Mosco” of 1706-1708 (Appendix 1) indicates an imbalance of 54 males to 16 women, at least four of whom were married to men of other denominations. Such marriages as merchants made were often to German or Dutch Lutherans, though English widows were snapped up in indecent haste. By the final quarter the daughters of mid-century marriages were available, and, increasingly, bachelors were arriving with sisters in tow, though an imbalance was still evident in the list of residents of 1782 (Appendix 2).

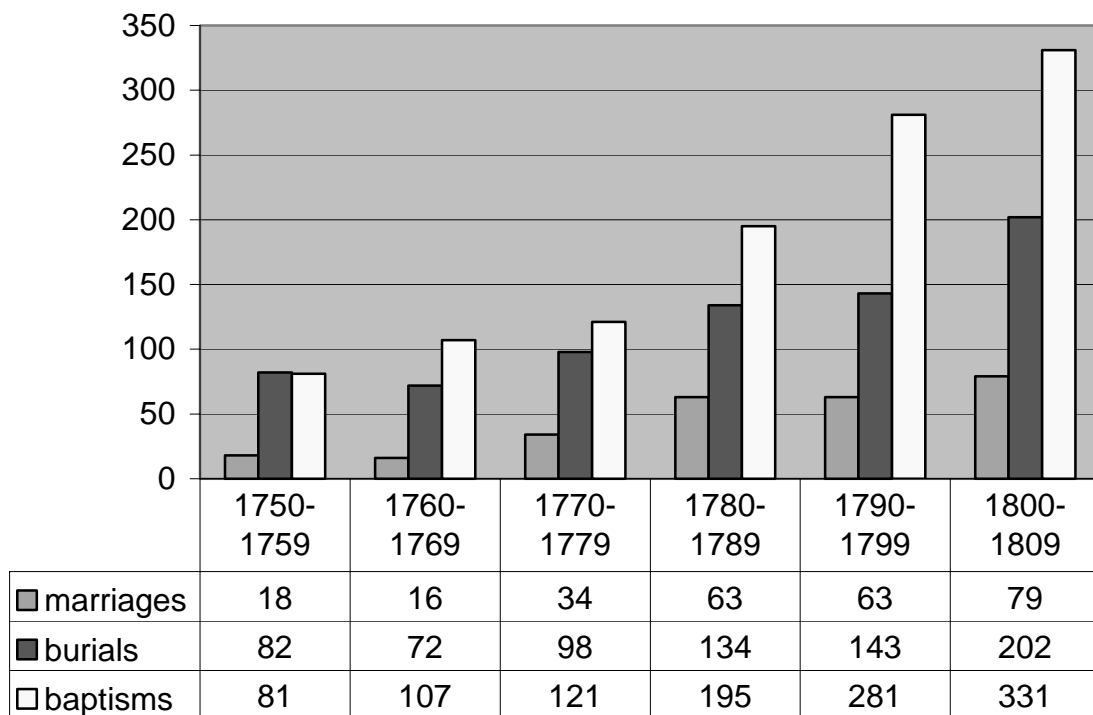


Table 1: The growth of the community in the second half of the eighteenth century, based on data drawn from the Church Registers (GL 11,192).

I will be discussing the implications of marriage and kinship under the rubric of social connections in chapters six and seven, but an interesting feature to which the table draws attention is the sudden jump which took place in the 1780s and afterwards. This coincided with a growing sense in the British Factory that English merchants in Petersburg comprised a “Society”, which resulted in their decision to draw up a regulatory constitution (GL 31,781/1, 23.1.1777). The rapid growth in marriages and baptisms which ensued provides compelling evidence of the magnetic appeal which a sense of belonging and collective destiny exerts on humans, and also foreshadows the major centripetal role the Factory would play in the community over the next century and a quarter.

CHAPTER FOUR.

AUTODESIGNATION AND AUTODESIGN.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Essentialization [by members of a group] is a remarkable process; it objectifies a culture, turns it into a thing. It molds a group out of a collection of individuals, giving speaker and audience alike a consciousness of something enduring and far-reaching - part of the immutable stuff of the universe. At the same time, from a discourse-centered perspective, the consciousness is really the product of something small and fleeting and insubstantial: a few words that waft through the air. (Greg Urban 1996, 62.)

In chapter two I argued the inadequacy of externally constructed typologies in establishing the existence of an entity which may be referred to as a 'community' rather than merely an arbitrary gathering together of a number of people in the same place at the same time. In this chapter I bring a 'discourse-centred approach', as outlined in chapter two, to bear on the talk which is recorded as circulating among the people comprising the 'gathering together' of English merchant families in nineteenth century Petersburg. An indivisible part of the package is the metacultural commentary on discursive and other cultural constructions in their own world and those worlds that impinged upon them. Such evaluative references percolate through the primary sources, denoting degree of interest in objects – whether approving or disapproving – with a concomitant potential for accelerating an item forward in time and across space, or stopping it dead in its tracks. Into this latter category fall all the circulating objects in broader worlds which community discourse failed to notice, such as the existence and lives of their co-residents in Russia generally; and those things in their own world which they chose not to notice, like drunkenness or other vice in family members, sexuality, menstruation, the evacuation of bodily wastes (except in the case of infants when it was graphically detailed), and so on: sometimes absence may be just as illuminating as presence.

Whether the Petersburg-based English merchant families themselves sensed and believed that they comprised a material community is the first question to be explored, principally by teasing out the contexts, and interrelationships with other contexts, of the usage of the first person plural pronouns: 'we', 'our' and 'us'. Did they delineate themselves as an entity, and if so, on what basis? And in opposition to whom, or what? An inherent focus in this discussion are the pairings English/British and England/Britain, because the terms were deployed in different contexts, which raises the question of the roles played by national allegiance and moral quality in their perceptions of themselves and the behaviour, beliefs and other cultural phenomena which they valorized.

I then go on to look at the qualities which were ascribed by group members to themselves, which, in effect, can be regarded as criteria of eligibility to membership. I do not intend to suggest that these qualities were in any way 'objective' (apart from a few generalizations about occupation and the economic capacity to take part in social activity), rather they were an internally produced image of 'right and proper' as it was internally understood.

Finally here, I contrast 'we' with 'they', because, naturally, such a contrast is integral to the

sensing of group identity. Here I will look at the placement of the third person plural pronouns in a few salient areas, to examine the degree which the English shaped their talk and praxis in opposition to perceived qualities in their hosts, or whether such differences had salience at all.

In order to understand whether a group exists as an entity in their own perceptions, and in what kind of entity they consist if they do, examination of the contextualised use of pronouns in the talk that circulates through potential-group members is of central importance. To whom do the first person plural pronouns – ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ – refer in the various discourses that implement them? With whom (or what) is ‘I’ and ‘my’ placed in conjunction and opposition? And who are the third persons contrasted with ‘us’? This analysis of actually circulating word usage – by no means limited to pronominal usage, but effective in this department – is the foundation of a discourse-centred approach to cultural configurations. Of course, ethnographic observation may tell us that members of the aggregate have similar appearances, behave in similar ways, seek each other out in preference to other ‘others’ and so on, but the external imposition of group status by an outsider upon an aggregate of individuals who seem to share such basic characteristics is always problematic.

The extract from Urban's *Metaphysical Community* (1996) cited at the commencement of this section is taken from a chapter in which he is specifically concerned with whether the indigenous Brazilians living at P. I. Ibirama (a settlement established by the Brazilian government) in the 1980s can be said to constitute a group as a real thing, as “a bounded entity, a set consisting of individuals” (ibid., 29), in their own perceptions. Europeans who had first encountered ancestors of P. I. Ibirama residents in the wilderness came to regard them as a bounded ethnic entity on the basis of internal similarities of appearance and artefact use that differed from other groups in the region. Urban, however, came to the reluctant conclusion (some three quarters of a century later), that the group was not perceived as a discrete entity by the people themselves, “because it is not construed through the native circulating discourse as a bounded thing” (ibid.). Urban’s analysis of native usage of the first person plural pronoun ‘we’ elicited, instead, a polarity between ‘we the living’ and ‘they the dead’, or ancestors, thus embracing all that are alive. There was no emic name for the group, no ‘we the Shokleng’ (an etic name) as opposed to ‘the others’ – the Whiteman, neighbouring tribes etc. – and no corresponding perceptions of collective self-identity so commonly expressed in statements like ‘we Americans’ in U.S. presidential addresses, for example. Urban points out that “[p]atterns are formed by the way in which one discourse fragment mimics others, one use of ‘we the living’ as opposed to ‘they the dead’ confirms other uses” (1996, 63). Oppositions which are discursively constructed within a community to highlight who ‘we’ are by drawing attention to who ‘we are not’, “pull into their fields of attraction other areas of discourse” (ibid.), structuring a broader culture around the polarity of the discursive micro-snippet ‘we/they’.

Urban goes on to propose that “We [Urban and readers, presumably] can find broad regularities in the use of ‘we’ within particular cultures. The contextual shape of ‘we’ crystallizes around certain meanings. Additionally, some meanings may be more prominent in certain genres than others” (ibid., 45). He confesses that examination of ‘we’ as it is used in political oratory by residents of P. I. Ibirama might elicit an “ethnicized ‘we’ opposed to White people or other indigenous peoples” (ibid., 48), which is absent in his principal focus of study – the circulating myths at the settlement – but makes the point that such an ethnicized usage “does

not colonize the genres that are the core of culture, that is, the mythological and historical narratives shared throughout the community and passed down across the generations” (ibid.). The use of ‘we’ in any context involves the making of a political statement: it excludes as well as includes, tying the user/s to particular allegiances while rejecting others. Not all the people at P. I. Ibirama see the Whiteman as ‘the other’; many want to blend into the White population, so a ‘we’ that implemented an ethnic division would not be universally usable. Narratives which instituted such an opposition would not be accelerated forward by those who did not endorse the division.

On the other hand, an opposition between ‘we the living’ and ‘they the dead’ is politically innocuous in the contexts of P. I. Ibirama and attractive to all potential transmitters¹. This is necessary in order to imply the existence of a broader community than those immediately present at an instance of ‘we’ usage, because a ‘we’ of this broad sort is required in order to allow for the imagining of “a community in which speakers identify their subjective experiences with those of others who could not have shared them, or, correspondingly, who identify themselves with the experiences of others they could not have known” (ibid., 51). The narratives at P. I. Ibirama do this by the occasional usage of pronouns which cross the temporal divide and bind those present to the ancestors (although most frequently ‘we’ is situational, that is, it refers to those who are or were present on a given instance). Western conceptualizations implicit in ‘we’ usage frequently overlook objective difference (even that of living and dead on occasion) in favour of certain features which the actors themselves regard as significant (Barth 1982) and which act as eligibility criteria for the membership of the ‘we’ in immediate use, no matter its numerical size. Depending on the project at hand, whether it aims to include as many as possible or to delimit to an exclusive group, the implications of a particular ‘we’ are there to be examined via actual instances of its use.

In his later book, *Metaculture* (2001), Urban makes the same point with regards the different purposes to which the rhetoric of ‘we’ usage has been put in various prominent stretches of discourse in the history of the United States: the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Causes, which accelerate notions of a ‘we’ that comprise an aggrieved group in opposition to a third party/ies via a poetic “litany of complaints” against the oppressor/s; the Gettysburg Address ‘we’ which embraces firstly its immediate listeners and then goes on to contrast a ‘we’ of living Americans, and those of the glorious future, with a ‘they’ who died during the Civil War to produce that future; and the principally task oriented ‘we’ of the Declaration of Sentiments which referred to those present at a women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls in 1848. The litany of complaints in the latter document are framed in the third person (“He [man] has compelled her [woman] to submit”), to avoid the exclusion of that part of the population of the States not included in a ‘we’ of women, because the social entity that the document envisages – a nation where men and women are equal – requires that the document’s discourse could be replicated by every citizen of the country.

The problem that seemed to face me when I turned to examination of pronominal usage in the primary sources which have supplied the ethnographic data for this project, was the

¹ Urban provides evidence that this pattern is a long standing one in the narrative discourse of the community, not one developed in response to White colonization.

enormous diversity of application of ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’. I have put no limits on the kind of material analysed: it did not comprise only political agenda, nor only the talk contained in religious myth, nor only literary criticism. It comprised all these and more, and a vast quantity of everyday banality to boot. How to reconcile the ‘we’ of formal and semi formal rhetoric, clearly politicized, with the ‘we’ of letters between family members, or that in a diary? What is politicized about Mary Whishaw’s report (28.7.1887) that, on a visit to England, she and a couple of her younger siblings – ‘we’ – went rowing on an English river which was “not much wider than the Mourino Ochta [River] at our float, but much deeper, the banks are low but not like ours a bit” (emphasis added)²? This seems a quite straightforward domestic/situational reference and at a substantial remove from the communal ‘wes’ appearing in public talk. The public ‘we’ and ‘our’ of religious ritual is immutably fixed for Church of England congregations by *The Book of Common Prayer*, virtually unchanged since 1662, and corresponds in significant ways to the ‘we’ which emerges from reflexively exclusive/exclusionary discourse within the community, but is it to be trusted in the absence of corroborative ‘wes’ and ‘ours’ in domestic discourse? Was there, in fact, a generalised circulation of ‘we, the English/British’ in the community at all?

Initial examination of the various contexts in which ‘we’ occurred, however, immediately drew my attention to the obvious: given the wide genre variation in the primary sources for this project, a concomitant variety of application of claims to grouphood must be expected. In fact, ‘we’ usage breaks down roughly into three categories. Here are not only the narratives of origin and moral precept, fixed in the case of the orally transmitted culture prevailing at P. I. Ibirama by an insistence on accuracy in verbal replication, and by mass printing in *The Book of Common Prayer* for congregations of the Church of England everywhere (endorsed in both instances by metaculture valorizing fixity of sacred forms); not only the secular statements of self-identity exemplified by the various high-profile Declarations in North American history and by the petitions and assertions of community members and factions in St. Petersburg (actually open to manipulation and innovation by subsequent users of discourse items contained therein, though valorized according to the degree to which subsequent use appears to carry on prior use); but also statements of inclusion and exclusion exemplified by Mary’s diary extract, which say a great deal about the micro-structure of the community.

Without contextualisation, the ‘our/s’ of the Mourino float and Ochta river banks would seem to include only those present on the English river excursion. Fairly obviously, however, they also reference those members of Mary’s immediate family not present on the excursion: her father and mother and other siblings. Less obviously, at least the second ‘our’ which references the river “banks” as opposed to the family’s personal “float” must also include those other English families, very closely associated, who summered along the Ochta River at Mourino with Mary’s branch of the Whishaws, who swam, boated, picnicked, played games and prayed together every Sunday at Mourino every summer of Mary’s life in St. Petersburg. “Life there really was that of a large family” according to Mary’s cousin Jim (J. Whishaw 1935, 64) – a metacultural comment born out by Mary’s rather less succinct diaries. The national identity of

² The Whishaws were one of a group of English families who summered at the village of Mourino, about twelve kilometres north-east of Petersburg. Many of these families regarded their Mourino address as ‘home’. I will be returning to Mourino in more detail later.

such families needed no iteration in domestic discourse, nor, generally, were they explicitly contrasted to any specific third party: “those who do not summer at Mourino” is merely implied. This latter type of ‘we’ will be explored more fully under the rubric of kinship and other intra-group connections. The ‘we’ of Church of England congregation, which tied the community closely to their compatriots in the homeland as well as to each other, will be explored in the following chapter. The ‘we’ of national and occupational/class/cultural identity among members of the English merchant community in St. Petersburg will be explored here.

On a purely factual level, it should be pointed out that the ‘British’ nation-state, as such, was a reasonably recent innovation, the product of an evolutionary process that had taken nearly a millennium since the first emergence of an English polity under the Saxons. Ensuing consolidation was very gradual, beginning with the Normans, gathering speed under the English/Welsh Tudors who also wrested church control from Rome, followed by the absorption of Wales in the mid-sixteenth century (some ten years before Chancellor set sail for Cathay), and the union of the Scottish and English monarchies in 1703 which created Great Britain. With the passage of the Act of Union which incorporated Ireland into the ‘United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland’ in 1800, Britain and British had come of age on paper, but even today, two centuries later, ‘English’ (in all its various versions in languages all over the world) still has an active discursive life. David Powell notes that, “In the course of this evolution, an earlier multiplicity of governing mechanisms was from 1800 replaced by the deceptively simple unity of a single government, a single parliament and a single crown” (2002, ix)³. But, as I point out below, even in the minds of that single government’s most highly placed representatives, the ‘Government of *England*’ still had discursive vitality in 1850 and the term English was still used to designate Britons from all over the United Kingdom.

The full title of the first volume of Richard Hakluyt’s *Voyages*, from which much of the data in the previous chapter is drawn, is *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation Made by Sea or Overland to the Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at any Time Within the Compass of These 1600 Years*. Conspicuously absent, however, throughout the various documents pertaining to the first expedition and subsequent settlement, is a usage of ‘English’ which resembles the one in common currency by the end of the eighteenth century. First and foremost, the individuals comprising the earliest entity were merchants (or ‘inferiour or meane officers and mariners’ – i.e. ‘others’), and it was their role as merchants of London that defined them and provided them with the commonality of discourse which led to the sensing of a communal world. The distillation of the first instructions was a set of guidelines for successful mercantile enterprise, London merchant-style, not preservation of national identity. Perceptions of ‘our’ are not reflexively ‘English’ as they become in later centuries. Although Chancellor occasionally uses ‘our’ in relation to the things and practices ‘of England’, when describing those of Russia, those early adventurers did not carry their ‘Englishness’ with them like a national flag that would stand for the same thing, and

³ According to Powell: “It was a Welshman, the celebrated Dr John Dee, who coined the term British Empire in the sixteenth century, drawing on the semi-mythical Celtic associations of the idea of Britain as the community that had pre-dated the English state and on the legend that it was a Welsh prince, Madog, who had been the first Briton to travel to America” (2002, 15).

express a whole world, wherever it happened to be planted⁴. The words ‘we’, ‘our’, and ‘us’ are invariably used in connection with merchandise and merchants, both those situated in Russia and the ‘Companie’ in London. Like the Hokkien traders ethnically labelled ‘Sangley’ by the Spanish in the seventeenth-century Philippines whom Benedict Anderson mentions, the first Englishmen would have called themselves ‘merchants’ if asked for identification. Theirs was a merchant world, not an English one. It seems probable that one of those ‘Western assumptions’ which contemporary anthropology attempts to shed when examining non-Westerners – that of identifying community (one’s own, or others) on the basis of ‘ethnic’ or ‘national’ allegiance – was not firmly in place in previous Western eras either. It would be interesting to plot the gradual emergence of ‘Englishness’ over the centuries as the primary term of autodesignation, both for this community and for those like it scattered around the globe and ‘at home’ in England but there is simply not the space. Suffice it to say that, by the nineteenth century, unlike in the literature of the sixteenth century, ‘English’ appeared in the recorded discourse of the community with almost hypnotic regularity.

Analysis of the meaning of a group appellation – in this case British/English – involving connotations of nationality is both simplified and complicated by the signifier. Simplified, because the modern world is divided, however temporarily, and however contestedly, into states to whose sovereignty most individuals can be assigned, and complicated because these very broad assignments usually do not – perhaps never – reflect the actual group loyalties of the individuals in question. In terms of nationalist tags, a diasporic community presents the most complicated face of all. Britain was the nation-state to which the nineteenth-century Anglo-Russian merchant community owed national allegiance, but everything else about them was ‘English’: their church, language, sentimental attachment, their monarch – well, not the monarch perhaps, but then, neither were a good proportion of community members actually ‘English’ either. When were they British, when English, and what were they if they were officially neither?

BRITISH NATIONALITY, ENGLISH IDENTITY?

Practically all anthropological reasoning rests on the premise that cultural variation is discontinuous: that there are aggregates of people who essentially share a common culture, and interconnected differences that distinguish each such discrete culture from all others. Since culture is nothing but a way to describe human behaviour, it would follow that there are discrete groups of people, i.e. ethnic units, to correspond to each culture...[however]...It is important to recognize that although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are not the sum of ‘objective’ differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant. (Fredrik Barth, 1982, 9, 14.)

⁴ There are many photographs in the archives of ‘English’ houses in Russia displaying the Union Jack, either hoisted or pinned to a wall. ‘King Philipe and Queene Marie’, however, in granting a charter to the ‘Marchants of Russia...upon the discoverie of the saide Countrey’, were undecided about what best represented their nation: “banner, standard, flags, and ensigns” (Hakluyt, 326) – any or all would do.

Throughout this paper I usually refer to the group in question as ‘the English merchant community at St. Petersburg’ because that is how I believe they most clearly saw themselves, but perhaps I should qualify this somewhat. They were also wont to present themselves as ‘British’ on certain occasions, as the ‘British Residents at St. Petersburg’ and, by the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, in a memorandum written by the British Ambassador they were referred to as: “the entire British community, of the Established Church at St. Petersburg” (GL 11,749/414). However, the designation of British is so much more frequently encountered in formal or official discourse, (particularly, but not exclusively, when the might of that creation, Great Britain, wished to be invoked), and English so much more frequently associated with actual identity, that the dichotomy is worth examining, even if only to point up a variety of factors which contributed to a sensing of a social entity distinctively their own.

The St. Petersburg merchant homeland, as I have pointed out, was not a geographically bounded place. Alexandre Benois was of a prominent local French-Italian family and later founder of the Ballet Russe in Paris. His sister married an ‘Englishman’ (Irish, actually), and he felt he was speaking for the whole foreign population of St. Petersburg when he noted:

In Moscow the foreigners lived apart in a separate district...to which Russians had no entry and where foreigners were able to exist without direct contact with the Moscow population [the *Nemetsky Sloboda*, or German Suburb]. There was no such separate district in Petersburg...For the most part foreigners, to some extent Russified, lived dispersed about Petersburg and one could speak of a ‘German suburb’ in Petersburg only in a metaphorical sense. Such a district existed only as an idea without topographical substance. (Benois 1988, 31.)

In practice, the English merchant community differed from their co-foreigners, in that Russification was something they reflexively tried to combat, and all those who counted themselves part of the entity lived in a relatively concentrated area lying roughly between the Exchange and the Church – between breadwinning and public worship (see map, page 6). Benois himself noted that when he visited his sister and her ‘English’ husband, it was like visiting “a bit of England” (ibid., 149). This snippet of discourse – “a bit of England” – had wide powers of circulation and was both drawn from, and helped to maintain, ideas of the encompassing nature of Englishness as practised by the community. Not only did they reproduce English ways, they produced a bit of England itself.

Though ‘village’, or possibly ‘suburb’, occasionally functions adequately as a metaphor for community operation, there was none of the interrelatedness between all social levels which occurred in an English village of the time, where servants, game-keepers, farm-workers, publicans, schoolteachers, tradespeople, artisans and various levels of socially defined ‘gentry’ classes had symbiotic dependencies. In such a case the project of autodesignation, along with the project of eliciting such perceptions are simplified: English literature, from Henry Fielding and Jane Austen, to Thackeray, the Brontës, Dickens and Arnold Bennett, regularly re-produces discursive constructions in which village residence is integral to identity. Concomitantly, objectification of ‘other’ strata was rooted in perceptions of class difference, rather than those based on different nationality. Hence, stereotypical descriptions of ‘others’ by this upper-middling level of society back in England, whether those others were the aristocracy or the ‘lower classes’, were comparatively straightforward: the lower classes might be shiftless,

drunken, immoral and disrespectful, or hardworking, respectable worthies of respectful demeanour; the aristocracy could be envied, while at the same time comprising the targets of much the same sort of criticism as the lower orders: shiftless, drunken and immoral. Here in Petersburg, relationships, however tenuous, with ‘others’ were mostly with Russians: Russian peasants, servants, shopkeepers, hairdressers, seamstresses; Russian merchants, government officials, aristocracy, Imperials. The English ‘lower classes’ in Petersburg, or neighbouring industrial Schlüsselburg and Alexandroffsky, were, quite simply, invisible. German and other nationals held an anomalous position somewhere in between, seldom specifically referenced and sometimes encompassed by ‘English’⁵.

As Barth makes clear is usually the case with contiguous or coterminous groups whose internal connections are framed as ethnic affiliation, there was a dynamic of “mobility, contact and information” (1969, 9) between the English community and the greater Russian society of St. Petersburg in which they were sited. Even their style of dress closely approximated that of similar classes in Petersburg⁶, to the extent that the women of an English family visiting relatives in England in the 1880s were ashamed of the clothes they had had made for them in Russia before starting the trip, “because when we got to London we found they looked odd, and we put them into our trunks and bought new ones” (LRA 1192/2). Nonetheless it is not remarkable that it was nationality, rather than class, occupation, sex or other defining category, that was the mainspring of conceptions of difference, much as ‘Finnishness’ was to the Brits who comprised the autodesignated ‘British community’ in Helsinki at the end of the twentieth century (Karttunen, 2000). A fairly major difference, however, lies in emphasis: the nineteenth-century community dwelt on ‘we’, the twentieth-century Britons were much more concerned with ‘they’, something that reflects the very different degree of cohesiveness between the two eras. Most twentieth-century Britons in Helsinki who chose to socialize principally with other Britons rather than host nationals, could agree on derogatory stereotypes about their hosts; few would have been able to invest in a monolithic vision of ‘we’. The nineteenth-century group barely mentioned their hosts in their contemporary records⁷: letters, diaries, even the official Minutes of the British Factory usually employ the vaguely euphemistic “this place” to indicate Petersburg – or Russia, it is not clear – though visitors employed it in much the same way as the twentieth-century group I examined, using it as an indicator of an impending stereotype. Records produced by visitors and short-term residents abound with “Russian”; those of long-term community members abound with “English”.

A sense of home – and homeland – may be contingent upon the experience of absence from

⁵ Mary Wishaw recounts with some amusement a social gaffe made by a co-guest at a dinner party some years after her marriage to Arthur Riddle. Mary Anderson had apparently exclaimed that she did not like Frenchmen, forgetting that her host, a Mr. Reveillon, was of French extraction. General embarrassment ensued (10.9.1895).

⁶ This is a simplification. There was not a Russian ‘class’ as such, which was equivalent. The minor Russian nobility was probably as close it came, but the two groups had little in common besides social aspiration in their very different spheres, and income.

⁷ Mary’s detailed diary for the year 1890 mentions the word ‘Russian’ once, when describing a wedding she witnessed with the household’s nanny, Matriosha; St. Petersburg itself is always referred to merely as “town”, and Russia is not referenced at all. People visiting from England are always merely coming “out”.

it, although living away from the country of citizenship, whether through choice or coercion, is not experienced by everyone in the same way: "...homelessness isn't always experienced as a mutilation of one's life, an insurmountable sorrow...isn't it also true that we often feel an equally strong need to uproot ourselves and cross the borders that conventionally divide us?" (Jackson 1995, 2-3). My own research into the putative 'British community' resident in Helsinki in the late 1990s indicated clearly that some expatriates retain deep feelings of commitment to an idea of homeland and what they perceive as its ways of thinking and doing things, and endeavour to reproduce familiar aspects of these in the new environment, choosing to socialize almost exclusively with like-minded types of similar national background (though with none of the regulatory institutions created by the English in Petersburg); while others seem barely to notice the change, selecting their voluntary associations on some private criteria with little outward basis in their upbringing in the natal country (Karttunen 2000).

The few extant records produced by Britons living in Petersburg in the nineteenth century who did *not* subscribe to membership of the group under discussion indicate a knowledge of the exclusive nature of boundary maintenance by the 'English community'⁸, but no interest in broaching them, no interest in the cultural 'stuff' they contained; above all, no interest in accelerating forward a discursively created blueprint of what constituted 'Englishness' in this foreign place – the values, qualities, behaviour, demeanour and so on that local metacultural judgments applauded. At the same time, those who peopled the core of the English merchant community in Petersburg were reflexively aware of the plurality of diasporic options, which may be demonstrated by their application of the term 'British' to individuals and groups in relatively uncomplicated situations where only national status was the moot issue, when it was predominately a matter of the legal relationship between those so designated and their country of citizenship. The meanings carried by 'English', on the other hand, were in a rather different domain, and could be attributed somewhat regardless of actual nationality, but not of behaviour and the allegiance indicated by positive metacultural evaluation of practice that replicated community norms.

It is the emotive autodesignation 'English' that was reiterated in everyday conversation. Fred Whishaw, describing the 'colony' at Mourino, for projected English publication, was decided in his assertion of the Englishness of the way of life lived there.

On the left bank of the river [Ochta at Mourino] a colony of English residents have for

⁸As I have already mentioned, Herbert Swann could say with equanimity that the British in Petersburg could be divided into two groups – those who had integrated into Russian or Baltic German society, and those who held themselves aloof, mixing almost entirely with others of their own nationality. He personally knew none of the latter (1968, 29-30). Similarly, the letters from the impoverished Caroline Cummings to her step-daughter Baroness Lily Ramsay in Helsinki, refer to charity received from English merchant families such as the Henleys and the Andersons, but with no inference of grudge or dissatisfaction. "My three youngest boys were as last year asked to pass Christmas with the Henleys who are always so kind as to give them nice presents...Henry was rather fortunate this year. He got from the Henleys beautiful black cloth for a surtout & waistcoat...As for Lewis, he got two splendid portemonnaies. Also Nicky was presented with collars and writing books" (10.1.1870). Both the Swanns and the Cummings lived in different, more overtly pluralist cultural worlds than 'those who held themselves aloof', and did not judge either themselves or their surroundings by the metacultural codes circulating in 'aloof' worlds.

about a century been established. They have built themselves beautiful houses, and laid out gardens which any English gardener might be proud to claim as the product of his skill. They have English boats on the river, English dogs bark at you as you approach the extensive grounds, English voices greet you everywhere, and English children may be seen playing at English games: it is a bit of England. The colony establishes itself here every summer, coming down from St. Petersburg about May, and returning to town about the end of August. Speaking as one who knows it well, I may say that Mourino is one of the most delightful places in the world (Fred Whishaw 1891, 40).⁹

The litany of “English” and its associations of “beautiful”, “proud to claim”, “most delightful” (not to mention the “bit of England” reference), highlights both the way that a discourse item becomes a concrete feature in a worldview, and also the methodology which may be used to tease out the meanings which are carried by such concrete artefacts. That, in this case, as in many others, the application of English is partially hyperbole is not relevant. Meanings, like the words in which they inhere, have largely arbitrary relationships with ‘objective fact’.

Photographs from the later part of the nineteenth century record houses at Mourino that were commodious but unmistakably Russian: wooden, fret-worked, apparently roofed with tar paper. It must have been true that the gardens were flower filled¹⁰; Mary ‘did’ the vases of the house as often as required and took great bunches to Petersburg, on one occasion travelling “up to town in a cart, steam tram & isvo” to be “at the church at 10 AM with the flowers (lilacs) for the decoration for Mim’s wedding” to Baron Bruun (11.6.1891). According to photographs, however, the layout of the gardens themselves seems to have been an uneasy fusion of the formal geometric shapes of a certain type of middle-class English ambition, and the wobbles and weeds of the locals employed to tend them. The paths and drives were gravel – an innovation introduced to Russia by Catherine II’s English gardeners, Sparrow and Bush (Cross 1997, 273) – but the edges lacked the knife-like precision expected of them in the homeland.

⁹ Noteworthy is the fact that although Fred Whishaw had a house at Mourino himself for a number of years, he is writing for a homeland English audience and he does not align himself with the Mourino English residents by including himself in a ‘we’. This is, in fact, common enough. It is reassuring to be able to talk of a community to which one has right of entry, without that membership being a constant factor in everyday life, and Fred’s primary allegiance had shifted from Anglo-Russia to England in any case. This resonates with the pronominal *we/they* usage in the talk of the Britons in late twentieth-century Helsinki. In 18 months of association I never encountered a ‘we the British community in Helsinki’ usage in informal talk, though there were many references to the British community in the third person: to *their* common praxis, *their* meeting places, *their* clubs, associations and so on. The ‘we’ and ‘our’ were reserved for other members of the particular association to which the speaker gave strongest allegiance within the British constellation, which may have been the cricket club or the English Speaking Women’s Association or whatever. There are none of the overarching institutions and praxis in contemporary Helsinki – kin ties, the church, professional association, proximity of residence – that were found in the Anglo-Russian community and which give rise to a broad collective identity among people of dissimilar interests.

¹⁰ Mary mentions lilac, roses, tiger lilies, mallow, golden rod, sunflowers, dahlias, asters, nasturtiums, geraniums and chrysanthemums, though not, obviously, all at the same time: “the gardener brought in heaps of flowers” (14.8.1890). Visiting Mourino myself in 2002 and wandering along the now bedraggled edge of the narrow brown Ohta, I managed to identify various landmarks mentioned by Mary and, at the spot where I reckoned the Whishaw tennis court to have been, I came across a spreading clump of purple aster, where purple aster should have been. The type was not native to Russia, hailing from southern Europe, though said to withstand temperatures of up to -20°. I like to think it was a self-seeding survivor of Whishaw residence.

Mary herself notes that the boats, rather than being ‘English’ as her cousin Fred claimed for English publication, were different to those she and her family used in England – shorter and wider – though energetic river boating was a peculiarly English form of pleasure¹¹. The dogs were ‘English’, certainly, and imported regularly to top up the various breeds. Robert Cattley, writing to James Richard Cattley in 1827 (one of the young Cattleys who were sent to be trained in Russia, who remained and married a daughter of the long-serving Anglican minister, the Rev. Edward Law, more of whom later), instructed him to “Bring out with you a young male dog as a watchman for us. I should prefer a large Setter or a Newfoundlander being afraid of Mastiffs and Bulldogs, the latter I would not have on any account. Limit £1 or £2” (LRA 1406). The dogs remained at Mourino during the winter with the caretakers but played an active role in the walks and picnics of summer. The games were English – cricket, croquet and tennis – but also, to be pedantic, Scottish. The Mourino English had commissioned the only golf course in Russia, of which residents were very proud. The photograph of two late-Victorian couples stiffly ‘putting’ across coarse, tussocky grass, attended by four scruffy barefoot Russian boys as caddies (front cover), must have been widely reproduced because I have come across it in several archives as well as Mary’s private collection. The objective claim to being “a bit of England” is only satisfied in the eyes and hearts of the English who loved the place so much, but it *was* satisfied, and that is the point being made here. Notably also, it was never a *British* summer colony, nor a bit of *Britain*, the games were not British and neither were the dogs, nor those who had houses there.



Picture 4: Guests arriving at Jim Whishaw’s house in Mourino in the 1890s.

One can immediately see, however, the advantage of stressing a connection with Britain in public statements of autodesignation: Britain with its naval supremacy and its habit of sending

¹¹ One is reminded of Kenneth Grahame's Ratty in *Wind in the Willows*, first published in 1908, telling Mole solemnly “as he leant forward for his stroke. ‘Believe me, my young friend, there is *nothing* - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.’” (1961,12.) The English who had houses at Mourino spent considerable periods of summer doing just that.

chunks of into the Baltic whenever diplomatic relations with Russia were strained or broken, with its wealth and the stability and solidity of its legal and governing institutions, and, especially by the nineteenth century, Britain with its Empire, the power and prestige that went with Empire, and its commitment to protect its subjects no matter where they were on the globe – commitment which was, at the very least, noisy rhetoric and sometimes even actual, when immediate political considerations made such action apposite. It is worth examining the wider frame in which these British nationals were situated, as it bears on the way they perceived the constraints and opportunities which operated in their own smaller world.

Lord Palmerston, a prominent Liberal (of Conservative stance) from 1807, and Prime Minister for most of the decade between 1855 and his death in 1865 was “the champion of ‘gunboat diplomacy’, whereby British interests were defended throughout the world by the power and influence of the Royal Navy and the Union Jack” (Brack and Little 2001, 107). His simplistic aggression was a more easily understandable approach for the bulk of the population of Britain than the traditionally cautious British diplomacy which, up until about the second half of the nineteenth century, had been conducted behind the scenes between Europe’s aristocratic elite. Gunboat diplomacy gained Palmerston great popularity with some sections of the English middle and working classes – and strong opprobrium from others. Seemingly particularly relevant to the position of the English merchants in Petersburg, in a locale outside ‘formal’ British Empire, is a series of events that became known as the Don Pacifico incident. The finer details are not important here, but the gist of the story concerns a Gibraltar Jew, naturalized as a Portuguese citizen, who became, on application, a British subject while living in Athens, and subsequently a local ‘British consul’. After an anti-Semitic riot in the city in 1847, in which Don Pacifico asserted he had suffered enormous damage to his property, his risible list of claims (including ruined bed linen and a fabulously expensive watch) was rejected by the Greek government. The incident escalated astonishingly and led, eventually, to a British blockade of Greek ports, tension between the British, French and Russian governments and, finally, a Conservative move in England to censure the Liberal British Government for the injustice of its attitude to Greece, a peaceful nation¹².

Palmerston was in the thick of all this, and likely to have his career wrecked by the part he had played in the debacle, if the projected official ‘censure’ of the Government was passed by a majority. He rose in the House of Commons in June 1850 and spoke, without notes, for four and a half hours on “a question that involves principles of national policy, and the deepest interests as well as the honour and dignity of England” (cited in Brack and Little 2001, 109). He argued passionately that it was not acceptable that the Government of England (sic) should support the policy “that, in all cases, and under all circumstances, British subjects are to have that protection only, which the law and tribunals of the land in which they happen to be, may give them” (ibid.). This, he insisted, was manifestly unjust in cases of despotic foreign government, or when the justice of foreign tribunals could not be relied upon, but, even when this was apparently not the case, he questioned who was to decide such an issue¹³. He asserted that while

¹² I will discuss, in chapter ten, the structure of broad-scale contestation on a British model. This escalation from something trivial was a major component, and usually indicated that the real cause of friction lay elsewhere and would emerge in the course of confrontation to take centre stage.

¹³ England, France and Russia had helped wrest Greek autonomy from Turkey and, in 1832, had put a

the world had recently witnessed a

political earthquake rocking Europe from side to side...[the Europe-wide upheavals of 1848]...this country has presented a spectacle honourable to the people of England, and worthy of the admiration of mankind. We have shown that liberty is compatible with order; that individual freedom is reconcilable with order; that individual freedom is reconcilable with obedience to the law (ibid., 118).

Palmerston concluded with an impassioned prediction in which he drew a parallel with citizens of ancient Rome, whom, he claimed, could rely on the power of the Roman legions coming to their assistance or revenge in any part of the known world, under any circumstances. As with the Roman, “when he could say *Civis Romanus sum* [I am a Roman citizen], so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England, will protect him against injustice and wrong” (ibid., 119)¹⁴. Even though the originating incident – Don Pacifico’s list of spoiled bed linen and broken china – had spurious validity, the ‘Government of England’ repelled the move for a vote of censure by 310 votes to 264. Palmerston’s rhetoric had drawn too effectively on the circulating discourses most valorized by his listeners to be defeated, despite the dictates of reason and justice.

This is all rather at variance with an observation made by the Whig Secretary of State, Canning, in the House of Commons in 1823, before British Imperial aspirations had been shaped into the jingoist form they took in the later nineteenth century¹⁵. Interestingly, it is Canning’s view, rather than Palmerston’s, which is repeated verbatim in a handbook outlining laws which affected British subjects in Russia in 1870 (produced by Thomas Michell, British Consul-General in St. Petersburg).

It is one of the most important principles of the Law of Nations, that a stranger visiting a foreign country virtually binds himself in a temporary and qualified allegiance to its laws, and submits to their observance, however unwise such laws may appear to be to him, however harsh and oppressive they really are, and however they may be at variance with his own notions of political liberty (Canning, cited in Michell 1871, 30).

It must be remembered: this is all rhetoric and, I am certain, understood as such. Such items of talk do not establish, in any concrete way, anything that a historian might designate as ‘fact’, particularly if they are launched simultaneously into such a diversity of worlds – the international, the Russian, the Greek, that of the Houses of Lords and Commons, of British trading and manufacturing diasporas and outposts of Empire in every part of the globe, and so

Bavarian monarch on the throne, with the proviso that a constitution should be drawn up when the monarch came of age. Britain had continued to advocate this, but despotic Russia, Prussia and Austria had advised against it, and the advice was taken. Hence Greece also had despotic government, and the implication was that justice could not be guaranteed in such circumstances, and that it was the role of the British Government to interfere on behalf of its citizens.

¹⁴ These short extracts also serve to demonstrate the equivocal usage at the time of the terms England, English and Britain, British.

¹⁵ The term ‘jingoism’, incidentally, was coined after Disraeli sent the British fleet into Turkish waters in 1878, to resist Russian advance in the area, but the chauvinism it expressed had been growing for some decades prior to this incident.

on. Behind such items probably lies the ambition of their generators that they should be accelerated forward by replication, and sediment to the point of being taken as global fact, but it is only in those worlds that approve (or even consider) such talk (for locally relevant reasons) that favourable metacultural evaluation will ensure its survival. Certainly, Palmerston's discursive production was both drawn from, and helped to accelerate, prevailing British notions of British rights to global hegemony – as similar discursive items have accelerated similar North American notions in recent decades. But then, while Palmerston's construct would seem to have the greater potential than Canning's for acceptance by British expatriate groups such as that in St. Petersburg, it was violently counter to community precepts of independence, self reliance and healthy trading conditions, and was not replicated. Individuals must look after their own relationships with the Russian authorities by respecting local law, and if a threat were posed to the community as an entity, community leaders had a variety of levers which they would prefer to exert before asking for official British intervention of the gunboat variety – and, indeed, they never did. They had learnt from experience that the principal result of escalated discord between Russia and Britain, from their perspective, was cessation of trade and interference in their means of livelihood. Warfare or even breakdowns in communication between their host and home countries were universally deplored and remarkably unpartisan.

The British umbrella, however, was a capacious one and the community used it in most formal instances of autodesignation. Thus, on the first state visit to Russia of “an heir to the throne of Great Britain” in October 1866, it is predictable that, in an address of welcome presented to Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, who was attending the wedding of his wife's sister, Princess Dagmar of Denmark (or Maria Feodorovna as she became known on entering the Orthodox Church), to the future Alexander III, ‘British’ should be the emphasised designation:

We, the undersigned Members of the British Factory and British Residents at St. Petersburg, impressed with feelings of devotion to our Sovereign and of attachment to our country, are desirous of presenting to YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS our tribute of respectful homage on the occasion of Your visit to the court of St. Petersburg... (GL 11,794/336).

The ‘we’ of *public* Anglo-Russian merchant identity (usually ‘British’), is conspicuously and repeatedly contained in official or semi-official discourse emanating from the community: congratulatory or commiserative addresses to British and Russian monarchs on occasions of celebration or disaster, addresses welcoming visiting dignitaries and members of the British royal family to St. Petersburg, community petitions to the Russia Company requesting they be allowed to run their own affairs and so on. This usage – ‘We the undersigned...’ – unequivocally attaches to “Members of the British Factory and British Residents at St Petersburg” (though occasionally “and others” replaces “British Residents”), though only those ‘residents’ and ‘others’ who the British Factory considered to be worthy of inclusion as signatories to prestigious documents¹⁶.

¹⁶ I will be discussing gender in greater detail when discussing kinship and other social connections. It comprised a more complicated set of relations and roles that the simplistic label ‘Victorian’ brings to mind. Undeniable, however, is the fact that the all-male Factory represented the most influential sectors

“We, the undersigned”, as a snippet of discourse, actually functions very well as a metaphor for the community as it was perceived by its most prominent members, and possibly by all of them. It stands inflexibly for a construction of community that encompasses ‘those to whom we offer the right of inclusion, who have taken us up on our offer and have agreed to sign their names to the entextualization of community praxis and beliefs as we perceive them’. The litany of ‘we’ and ‘our’ in the address cited above, which continues over two pages (a further section is cited on page 1), attempts to conclusively delineate those who signed it as a cohesive entity. The first letters of this nature which are still extant limited the signatures to the males of the community. By this stage, however, women were regarded as demonstrably part of the ‘we’ and their signatures also appear. The document was presented by a small committee of community members who were viewed as its most prominent citizens, a selection process that was attended by gratifying contestation, as I will discuss in one of the case studies in chapter ten.

Invoking Britishness also served as a useful reminder in communications between community spokesmen and the interfering Governor and Court of Assistants of the Russia Company in London, of a shared legal status, of an equality against which the expatriate condition in no way militated; in short, of rights owed to British subjects by virtue of their subjection. These kinds of documents included a broader range of Petersburg Britons, because of the advantages to be gained from numerical strength, and were left at the Library in the church building to facilitate the easy access by all members of the Anglican congregation. Finally, and equally common, was the use of British to designate all those residents of St Petersburg who shared the same citizenship, but who were not regarded as being part of the English community, at least in the implicit opinions of the spokespeople of that community who have left their records to posterity.

As might be expected, the term ‘British’, with its connotations of formality, legality, and solid, ‘ordered’ power could be broken down into comparatively clear-cut categories. Writing in 1871, after the passing of British Naturalization Acts in 1870, Consul-General Michell lists “four classes of persons resident in the Empire of Russia” as being affected by the new laws (1871, 3). These comprised: “British residents who have taken an oath of allegiance to His Majesty the Emperor of Russia, and who desire to remain subjects of His Imperial Majesty”; those who had taken the oath but desired to retain British nationality; those who were born in Russia of British parents and wished “to renounce their allegiance to her Britannic Majesty”; and Russian subjects, born within British dominions and held to be “natural-born subjects of Great Britain” (ibid.). In addition, and unaffected by the 1870 Naturalization Law were British subjects who had no desire to renounce or in any way alleviate their British nationality. It should be remembered that the category of nationality, subsumed by the term ‘British’, is the broadest discussed in this paper in connection with community delineation, and consequently the most porous. Russian nationality, for reasons of commercial expedience, was held by some who belonged to core community families and it did not affect their ‘Englishness’; British

of the community, both locally and in the homeland, and each member was at a nodal point in a dense net of connections that extended far beyond immediate family – so, not only were Factorians in the position to disseminate Factory resolutions and other talk along broad and overlapping discourse pathways, they also considered they had every right to speak for their connections, as though they and their connections were ‘one’; they had the interests of the community (as they perceived them) at heart.

naturalization papers allowed other individuals and their families to be designated 'British' who were never felt to have anything to do with the community; and there were still 'others' like "Charles Maynard, who, although an Englishman, was more Russian than English" (J. Wishaw 1935, 71), and Mrs Dmitreffsky, who, although born British, had married a Russian¹⁷.

In practice, Russian and British nationality could apparently be juggled according to expedience. Russian nationality was required of the ship brokers who constituted the connection between merchants with cargoes and ship masters with empty ships. As this was a lucrative line of business, there were always lists of applicants whenever a vacancy came up; the taking of Russian nationality was outweighed by the profit factor, even for a centrally placed community member like Jim Wishaw, who was vociferously 'English'¹⁸.

Ship-broking in St. Petersburg was a strict monopoly: there were only three sworn ship-brokers – Heimbürger, Charles Maynard and my uncle – and no chartering business was legal unless a contract or charter-party was signed by a sworn ship-broker....In the year 1884, by the death of old Mr. Charles Maynard who was then nearing ninety years of age, a vacancy occurred for a ship-broker. I was forced to abandon my British nationality. It was a horrible ordeal to have to go through... (J. Wishaw 1935, 97.)¹⁹

Jim Wishaw remained a highly respected member of the community, becoming British Vice-Consul from 1886 and Treasurer of the British Factory in 1904, although, as this was after the Naturalization Acts of 1870, he would have lost his British nationality on becoming 'Russian'. Certainly the simple, pre-meditated exchange of one national status for the other had no relevance, *per se*, to the designation 'English', or the value orientations, identity and way of life perceived to inhere in the appellation. It was an interesting phenomenon, not one likely to be understood in 'official' British colonies where the concept 'subject' (in the sense of citizen) was inalienably connected to the nation-state of Great Britain. Her subject colonies were not nation-states and their inhabitants were British subjects. Britons did not relinquish their nationality. English merchants in Russia, however, appear to have continued to approve Cabot's injunction

¹⁷ Britons married Russians from time to time, though it was very rare until the end of the nineteenth century, due to both Russian law and informal English embargo. Martha Dmitreffsky had committed the combined crime of 'marrying out' (allowed by Russian law if the spouse joined the Orthodox church), being a woman and thereby instantly losing her British status under both Russian and English laws (unlike a man in a similar situation), and then being left so destitute in 1805 that she applied to the Factory for assistance. A meeting of the "Gentlemen of the Factory" reached the following 'resolution': "In reply to Mrs Dmitreffsky's petition, that as having married a Russian subject, she cannot with propriety be admitted a Pensioner on the Factory's Books, the Churchwarden be allowed to pay her occasionally such sums as he may find on Enquiry her Situation and Conduct may merit" (GH 31,781/1). Martha D. died three years later at the age of 76 and was buried according to the rites of the 'Chapel of the British Factory'.

¹⁸ In any case, prior to the passing of the Naturalization Acts of 1870, no British subject could legally (as far as the law of Great Britain was concerned) divest himself of his British nationality. The 1870 Acts 'released' all those who had become naturalized elsewhere from their allegiance to Her Britannic Majesty: everyone, that is, "who has voluntarily become naturalized in a foreign State while under no disability, i.e., not while a minor, a lunatic, an idiot, or a married woman" (T. Michell, 1871, 44-45). No comment.

¹⁹ One feels that Jim's greatest objection to the whole procedure, however, was that it meant he was processed last, with other Russians, on disembarkation in British ports.

to act with circumspection, “seeming to beare with such lawes, and rites, as the place hath, where you shall arrive” (op. cit.).

By way of a contrast, there were a number of ‘English’ who would probably have been regarded as ‘foreigners’ if they lived in a similar milieu in England. Edith Klockman (born 1856), for example, was the daughter of Nicholas Klockman (previously spelt Klockmann), a St Petersburg merchant, and Martha Linsley of Leeds. The Klockmans lived on the 1st Line of Vassili Ostrof – a prestigious address in community terms – and the sponsors (godparents) of Edith and her brothers and sisters were members of key English families – Handysides, Henleys, Gellibrands, Thorntons. Nicholas died before all his children reached adulthood but – a vital post mortem test of worth in the eyes of the community – he left his family well provided for! Independent of any help from community members, whether related or otherwise obligated, widowed Martha and her unmarried children could spend part of the year near their Linsley relatives in England, enjoy the rest of it in St Petersburg, and were very comfortably situated in both places. (In an analysis of Mary’s listed contacts between 1888 and 1894, Mrs Klockman is specifically mentioned seven times and invited to Mary’s wedding in 1891.) In 1884 Edith became engaged to James Edward Cattley, (great-nephew of Robert Cattley, grandson of the Revd. Edward Law), and after their marriage she moved to join him in Riga, where, as a younger son, he ran the local branch of the Cattley empire and was later British Consul. Edith was definitely an English girl, despite her name. In a letter written to Edith in Petersburg from Riga before their marriage, James tells her: “Today I went for a walk of about 10 versts with Angus and Chapman... these two worthies have been writhing in ecstasies at the thought of having *a real live Englishwoman* added to the colony” (LRA 1406, 11.1.1884, emphasis added).

Joseph Hanway, the Russia Company merchant who later held a position on the Court of Assistants, was recruited in 1743 by the Company to travel to Persia to investigate rumours that one of their merchants was upsetting the Russian government by building warships for the Shah²⁰. In the book Hanway wrote of his travels the overwhelming theme is the universal utility of trade, especially that conducted by English merchants. The places he passed through were only salient for the potential they offered to English commerce. And English commerce, he was adamant, should be confined to those who were truly English. He complained bitterly of the extension of rights to foreigners via ‘Naturalization’, to people who had no intention of living in England or remitting their profits there, but who reaped the commercial advantage of the trading privileges accompanying British citizenship while continuing to serve their own countrymen: German, French, Italian – foreign! Naturalization should be, Hanway insisted, strictly limited to “foreign protestants of easy fortunes, skilful in commerce, capable of introducing or improving manufactures, or, in a word, fit to become useful members of the community; into which they are received in the most solemn manner, and become intitled [sic] to all that is dear and valuable to Englishmen.” Everyone else merely debilitated the English merchants, “damping that spirit and application to trade on which is founded the opulence of this nation, and its strength and influence as a maritime power” (Hanway 1754, 387-8).

The second point of an outline for a projected British Factory Constitution, drawn up in

²⁰ Apparently, Hanway also introduced umbrellas to England, at the cost of years of public ridicule – “a lasting gift to posterity” (Putnam, 79).

1777 by a Factory committee (discussed in more detail below), insisted that “Brittish (sic) Subjects *only* be admitted Members of the Factory, that no Person of any other Nation be permitted to attend their Meetings either as a principal or by procuration from an absent Member unless naturalized and entitled to all the priviledges (sic) of a Brittish(sic) Subject” (GL 31,781/1, emphasis added). This was not to suggest that even a naturalized Briton had automatic right of entry – a majority of approving votes by members was (naturally) required – and those of foreign origin seem to have rather quickly shed characteristics delineating them as such, Duisberg becoming Duesberry, between 1775 and 1777, for example, and Weltdens, Cazalets and Vernezobres etc. all numbering themselves on the list of English residents in St. Petersburg in 1782 based on the congregation of the Church of England (GL 11,192 B).

The term ‘English’, clearly had much more imprecise connotations than ‘British’, though it was also considerably less open to expedient manipulation. Englishness was perceived as a quality ascribed to *and* achieved by an individual or family group, which comprised public adherence to a vague underlying system of values, and this partially irrespective of whence the adherents hailed²¹. One might expect the use of ‘British’ to occur most frequently in reference to alienable legal status, and the ‘English’ tag to be invoked when some appeal to the emotions was being made, or to tie behavioural injunctions to a moral principle, and indeed this was mostly the case. However, to confuse the issue, it must be confessed that there are also instances when the two associated pairs of words, England and Britain, English and British, seem merely to be used as synonyms, with the term chosen carrying no greater implication than the arbitrary choice of one of any pair of synonyms. The context of use has to be examined carefully. Even in the consular document outlining the legal status of British subjects in Russia, cited above, where you would expect exclusive use of the more exact and formal term, a slip into the vernacular of ‘English’ and ‘England’ is not completely avoided:

It is difficult to define all the cases in which the acts of a British Subject who continued to serve the Russian Government during a war with Great Britain would be considered treasonable by the law of England...All Englishmen taken on board naval vessels engaged in actual hostilities against the naval or other forces of their country, would...be deemed guilty of the crime of high treason. (T. Michell 1871, 24.)

Likewise, in the speech by Canning in 1723 (stating an opposing principle to Palmerston's doctrine of ‘*civis Romanus sum*’ and quoted at length in the consular document) the same transposition is made: “an Englishman going into a foreign country accepts the authority of its legislation, abdicates for a time the benefits of British jurisprudence, and subjects himself to all the consequent inconveniences” (ibid., 31-32), thereby collapsing distinctions between the Scots, Welsh, Irish, English and naturalized Britons into one all-embracing category. Consul-General Michell goes on to say on his own account that, “It is scarcely necessary to observe that an Englishman who has adopted Russian nationality has no claim to British official protection in Russia” (ibid., 35) – which highlights clearly the virtually inalienable attachment of the appellation ‘English’ to a group or an individual (once it has been applied), as opposed to the

²¹ Incidentally, it was also the local etic label given the British in general: they were *anglitsanie* (plural), *angliiski* or *angliskaya* (male and female singular), and had been since their earliest presence in Russia.

legally alienable attachment of 'British'. Thus, even in these examples, which would appear to indicate an arbitrary selection of term, there is a whiff of rhetoric in their placement: 'British', for the impartial, impersonal, inexorable machinery of the sovereign state; 'Englishman' to recall the moral nature of choices made under individual agency – though also the role of national nurture in making those choices.

British Factory discussions of an application to them for cash sponsorship of a school for the offspring of poor foreigners in Petersburg in 1822, established as an ecumenical and multi-national institution under the Lancaster plan, disclose both a bias towards maintaining the community's boundaries and a deployment of 'British' and 'English' that supports my suggested explanation for the selection of a particular term in a given context. Sir Daniel Bayley, the then British Consul-General and Agent for the Russia Company in St. Petersburg (an anomalous duality of roles)²², who sat in on the Factory meetings, offers his observations on the subject, "contrary to my usual custom".

What may be the consequences of any number of English children going to this general mixt [sic] School, must be a matter of opinion, until they can be known by experience...I really find it difficult to conceive what peculiar claim it can have upon British Benevolence:- On the contrary it appears to me that the promiscuous avmixture [sic] of foreigners of all Nations and persuasions presents an insuperable objection to an Institution for the lower classes of our Countrymen here.

The features of our National character would be thereby in danger of losing that distinctiveness which I feel it is so desirable to preserve, and which must necessarily be liable to be alloyed by this amalgamation.

...If such objects of charity really exist as supposed in the plan before us...why not take the matter into our own hands – form an establishment for poor english [sic] children and let it be conducted under our own principles. (GL 31,782, 73-77.)

As Consul Bayley was trying to excite sympathy on behalf of the children (even though the existence of "such objects of charity" seems to have come as a surprise to him), 'English', or even 'english', was the word he used to describe them, because the signs it carried, deployed in a configuration containing 'poor' and 'children', were likely to soften the mercenary hearts of the Gentlemen of the Factory, and persuade them to loosen the purse strings. Used in this

²² The history of the dual role, and the part payment of a diplomatic official by a regulated trading organization goes back to 1557, when an English emissary was sent to Russia who was to be paid out of the Company coffers. The practice endured until the 1860s. British Consuls-General in St Petersburg, until that time, were appointed from families with long trading connections with Russia, although they were supposed to give up mercantile activity on being appointed to the post. In *A Tour of Russia, Siberia and the Crimea* spanning 1792-1794, the writer notes that "The Consul has in all £1000 a year as such...300 from the Russia Company and about 700 at 10 roubles each from the ships. He is not permitted to trade. Mr Bayley has been [here] forty years and perhaps worth 30,000. They would sooner take the word of an English Merchant than the Bond of any other, especially a Russian." (Parkinson 1971, 69.) This was Sir Daniel Bayley's father; diplomatic positions were heritable property. Despite this apparent embargo on consular trade, Parkinson records that some days earlier, he and the young man to whom he was tutor and escort had called on Mr Bayley "to look at some Pelisses and Bootle [his charge] fixed upon a Bearskin the price of which was 324 roubles" (ibid., 47). It is evident that Bayley did not import goods from Britain, where records were kept by the British, but did export from Russia. Rules of this nature were, like English Common Law in general, open to endless re-interpretation by protagonists.

context, it is apparent that Bayley knew it had a direct emotional appeal, which, in this case, was unsuccessful. On the other hand, the term ‘British’ loads the referent ‘Benevolence’ with implications of qualities both just and charitable, yet simultaneously impersonal, stable, durable, powerful and *ordered*.

Another illustration of this thesis is the speech given in 1821 by the Chaplain of the English Church, Edward Law, at “the Proceedings of the Meeting for the consideration of an Address to His Majesty King George IV on the occasion of his Coronation” (GL 31,782, 1). Edward Law came to St Petersburg in 1820 to fill the post of community’s Chaplain, remaining in that role until 1864²³. His particular brand of rhetoric was apparently very acceptable to the community; “No man can be more universally and deservedly loved by his congregation than Mr Law is by his; this speech was delivered with the genuine feelings of Patriotism and affection – and with that unassuming and unaffected manliness, which so pleasingly characterizes our worthy Chaplain...” (ibid. – some trace of irony detectable).

Law “rose and spoke as follows”:

I feel, sir, I should be needlessly trespassing upon your time were I to enter into any lengthy disquisition in order to prove the duty of loyalty to our King and attachment to our country. Rather I would express the hope that it is a sentiment which deeply pervades the bosom of every British Subject resident in St Petersburg, that it resides within them fixedly and habitually, forming as it were a part of their very nature, as the fire within the flint which needs only the collision of the steel to call it forth into action....

I rejoice on every occasion when I find myself surrounded by a large body of my valued fellow countrymen whether it be in the adjoining House of Prayer, to testify our Allegiance to the King of Kings, or as at present to perform the correlative duty which is so nearly allied to it, of manifesting our Allegiance to our earthly Sovereign...The more I consider things, the more thankful I feel that I am an Englishman; nor can I for a moment feel surprised at that high and honourable estimation in which the British character has so long been, and I trust will ever be deservedly held...the heart of an Englishman is full and overcharged // herewith Law's feelings overcame him...(ibid.)²⁴

In this emotion choked “disquisition” the reverend gentleman swoops from “the bosom of every British Subject resident in St Petersburg” – a predictably impersonal category given that the address under consideration stemmed from “We your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the British Merchants and *others* resident in St Petersburg...” (emphasis added) – by way of the ‘high and honourable estimation’ held of the British character, to the first person singular, and expressions of idiosyncratic emotion: “I am an Englishman...the heart of an Englishman is full and overcharged...” The use of a term which forever escapes precise definition, in the way that ‘British’ does not, allows people receiving it to fill it with meanings which are personal and with which they personally identify. One man’s Englishman could be another’s idea of a scoundrel or a prig. On the other hand, in terms of general usage, this aspect of flexibility does not matter. That a term is mostly received by its users and transmitters in personally stable

²³ His children married community members of high standing (including an inevitable Cattley), and he was also influentially connected in England, one of the criterion of this type of patron/client appointment.

²⁴ It must be noted that refreshments, probably of a generous nature, were available in the Committee Room, and a ‘short pause’ had been taken before Law rose to speak.

fashion constitutes the foundation of stable terminological usage (always open to contestation, of course, should occasion arise). Like the *mudyi* of Ndembu ritual, the term ‘English’ had its referents in the public domain of politics but also, at the same time and more importantly, it was the carrier of individual meanings that could never be *precisely* excavated by the kind of discourse implemented in attempts to clarify – or, more frequently, redefine – a host of more pragmatic and tangible issues such as whether the Factory could be regarded as a legal body, or ownership of the local place of worship. For ideology to work, it must be able to appeal to individual worldviews drawn from personalised experience, while forever presenting itself, and being received, as ‘a good thing’. The address to His Majesty itself, which was of a fairly standard issue, was left to lie at the British Library (like the Committee Room, also part of the Church building on the English Quay) “attended by a person” for an hour per day for six days, during which time it accumulated the signatures of 236 male British residents, of whom I can identify most as merchants, or connected to merchant houses as clerical staff.

As an autodesignation, ‘English’ implied an acknowledgement of voluntary membership in a certain roughly delineated social rather than political category, separate and cognitively different from other social categories by which it was surrounded, and quite unlike the body of obligations and rights automatically assigned by virtue of possession of a passport underwritten by Her/His Britannic Majesty’s Government. This resonates with what Norbert Elias observes about the meaning of ‘civilization’ to the English (and the French), which “sums up in a single term their pride in the significance of their own nations for the progress of the West and of mankind” (1978, 2). Elias goes on to comment on the difficulty of defining such terms as the German ‘Kultur’ or the English and French ‘civilization’ because of “the way in which a piece of the world is bound up in them, the manner in which they include certain areas and exclude others as a matter of course, the hidden evaluations which they implicitly bring with them” (ibid, 3). The designation ‘English’, as it was used in this community – and in nineteenth-century Britain more generally – carried similar signification to ‘civilization’. Analysis of the ways praxis and belief were assessed among them reinforces Elias’s assertion that, unlike the German concept of ‘Kultur’, ‘civilization’ as understood by the English “can refer to accomplishments, but it refers equally to the attitudes and ‘behavior’ of people, irrespective of whether or not they have accomplished anything” (ibid.). It is “the value which a person has by virtue of his mere existence and conduct” (ibid.). This understanding is clearly enunciated in the stern list which accompanied young Robert Cattley to his uncle Stephen’s counting house in 1802, which included, among various other pieces of advice, the following: “Remember above all that you cultivate the principles of Truth, Candor, and Integrity, without which mere acquirements are but Superficial things. Good principles are to form the man, and acquirements are to set off his value.” (LRA 1406.)

The next section of this chapter discusses the valorized characteristics of “mere existence and conduct” to which the English merchant community at St. Petersburg laid claim and which they demanded of existing or potential members. But before doing so, I want to briefly review some ideas connected with perceptions of shared ethnicity as a principal mode of identifying group membership. Ethnicity is such a problematic concept that I would be inclined to omit it from discussion altogether were it not that, firstly, ‘English’ was the chosen autodesignation by the Anglo-Russian merchants of the nineteenth century and, secondly, Englishness was

conceived as constituting a ‘race’, something explicitly stated in the primary sources²⁵. In addition, Michael Hechter used the concept in his discussion of the “internal colonialism” practiced by the English over the Welsh, Scots and Irish – “the Celtic fringe” – of Great Britain (1975), and Strathern notes that, especially between the years 1880 and 1920, “‘English’ was being legitimated as a national culture. Nations did not just have characteristics or traits, they had cultures.” (1992, 31, references omitted.) Hechter notes that ethnicity is often conflated with a totality of cultural forms within a specific group which are “conceived to have their origins in unique historical circumstances” (1975, 311-2), but suggests this is a tendency that should be resisted. Rather, ethnicity should “refer to the sentiments which bind individuals into solidary groups on some cultural basis” (ibid.). These observations lead him to the conclusion that “far from being threatened by the intensification of intergroup contact, ethnicity is sometimes created, and at other times strengthened as a consequence of interaction” (ibid.), a view which replicates Fredrik Barth’s earlier focus on *boundary making* by ethnic groups (1982[1969]), rather than cultural content, even to some of the wording (discourse items which ‘travelled’). These insights are relevant to the group under analysis: there was continuous contact with, and dependence upon, their Russian hosts, continuously shifting membership and group participation by its component individuals as they came and went, broad areas of everyday praxis which were objectively indistinguishable from those of large sectors of their hosts and substantial variation from the norms of the England of the time to which they professed adherence at every opportunity.

Barth’s conception of an ethnic group, accelerated by Hechter (et al.), therefore, corresponds rather closely with the conclusions which may be drawn from the usage of ‘English’ as an autodesignation by the unit under study: the boundary of the group was associated with ideas inhering in ‘Englishness’ (rather than Britishness), while the actual cultural content within the boundary was fluid over time and according to context. The conclusion drawn by Barth is that the critical feature which constitutes an ethnic group as such is not that it is biologically self-perpetuating, nor that its members share identical values and cultural forms, nor even that it makes up a field of communication and interaction (1982, 10-11), but that it “has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order” (ibid., 11). Barth was attempting to move away from various forms of essentialization, by suggesting that the perception and maintenance of boundaries was the critical factor in ‘grouphood’, rather than the cultural ‘stuff’ contained within them – and very laudable too, if somewhat impoverishing to the ethnographic project. He fails to explain, however, how such boundaries could possibly be instituted in the absence of fields of communication and interaction, which he here dismisses as being of lesser importance than the boundary itself. Elsewhere, however, he corrects himself when he suggests that:

²⁵ A British Ambassador, addressing a meeting held in 1890 to commemorate fifty years of the American Chapel in Petersburg stated, among a number of equally embarrassing solecisms, that “English...is the only true designation, ethnologically and historically, for our race, and I only wish usage would allow me to address you as American-English and British-English...” (LRA 1,387, 49). The American Plenipotentiary, also present, received this construct as though it were intended as a humorous pleasantry, which it clearly was not.

Ethnic boundaries can emerge and persist only [when “certain constellations of categorization and value orientation have a self-fulfilling character”]. With such a feed back from people’s experiences to the categories they employ, simple ethnic dichotomies can be retained, and their stereotyped behavioural differential reinforced, despite a considerable objective variation...Revision only takes place where the categorization is grossly inadequate – not merely because it is untrue in any objective sense, but because it is consistently unrewarding to act upon, within the domain where the actor makes it relevant. (Barth 1982, 30.)

Without the circulation of talk, there would be no categories, no value orientation, no feedback; nothing would have shape, nothing would be known, even ‘practice’ would be discontinuous and individual. Groups are groups because at various points they are discontinuous with other social collectivities – at various ‘boundaries’ – but those boundaries are discursively created, either quite simply because items of talk are halted at some point by coercion, insurmountable inertia (i.e. disinterest), or because the metacultural judgments of a group overwhelmingly endorse practices and beliefs that they frame as uniquely their own – like the signs carried by Englishness, for example – and unreflexively dismiss everything beyond an established boundary as ‘other’. Choose to bring specific cultural objects – local terms, foodways, people from different ‘national’ backgrounds, leisure activities etc. – within a boundary, however, and they become equally unreflexively, ‘ours’.

ESTABLISHING THE BOUNDARIES OF ‘ENGLISH’.

Values are those invisible chains that link relations between things to relations between people. They are invisible in the sense that they are, first and foremost, forms of human consciousness that describe what is and prescribe what should be. As descriptions they clarify the relations between the reproduction of things and people in specific historical, geographical and social settings; as prescriptions they guide the actions taken to transform a found chaos into a desired order, or, what amounts to much the same thing, to reform an existing state. For a value system to operate effectively there must be a generally accepted standard of value because valuation is essentially a comparative process by which two unlike entities – be they commodities in the market, gifts in the kula ring, or castes in India – are compared and judged to be the same or different with reference to this standard. Standards of value are generally accepted but never universally so. This is because people are endowed with a potential, not always realised, to question the reasonableness of authoritative judgements. (Chris Gregory 1997, 12.)

The ideal of a Christian home, ordered by a morality that enshrined piety, chastity, sobriety, filial obedience, and charity, and shunned displays of luxury, sexual transgressions, and all diversions which were not improving or uplifting, was the secure base from which the public manifestations and campaigns of evangelicalism were mounted...well suited to the work-and-thrift ethic of male business and professional family heads. (F. M. L. Thompson 1988, 251)

A feature of the discussion in the previous section is that I focused specifically and intentionally on reflexive usage of the autodesignations – ‘English’ and ‘British’. The speaker/s

introduce the terms for what may be described as ideological reasons, with some degree of conscious knowledge that they are doing so. The deployment of British called for a 'stand up and be counted one of the elite' kind of response. On the other hand, I believe that it is via what amount to a very large number of instances of introduction of the term English to refer to 'us' (many of which were not reflexive), that community members were reminded of an emotional bond, an attachment to each other on the basis of similarity that was more relevant in their everyday life in Russia than the British connection. Marilyn Strathern suggests that over the century between the 1860s-1960s "the English' acquired certain definitive features", which have since been thrown into disarray (1992, 30).

In that period of innocent ethnicity, the English were regarded both as a productive amalgam of diverse peoples and as a highly individualistic nation holding on to individualism as a transcendent characteristic of themselves...The English were thus self-defined in an overlapping way as at once a people and a set of cultural characteristics. (ibid.).

She mentions the generally held view that the new system of education which took off after the 1840s in England was in part responsible for legitimating 'English' as the national culture, and that "the salient question became what attributes were to be taken as representative enough to be taught in schools, how a sense of being English might be conveyed" (ibid., 31). Strathern then goes on to suggest that the ruralism of southern England and, more specifically the architecture of the English past, became a metaphor for Englishness – garden cities, Stockbroker Tudor, the rural cottage. Certainly, Fred Whishaw's description of Mourino, cited above and meant for English publication, reinforces this view, as, indeed does the deep attachment which the community felt for its country houses in general (discussed in the next chapter). I propose, however, to probe more deeply into the phenomenon of 'English' than this slightly facile generalization, investigating the values and behaviour that were promoted as 'English' in the talk of the community. While this programme would seem to be promoting a focus on the cultural 'stuff' of the community, rather than how on they saw themselves as contained, it may be taken as given that 'not English' is one very important point at which boundaries were set, and that 'English' was not a specific collection of cultural configurations so much as a collection of values as 'values' are defined by Chris Gregory (above). "By attending to the public discourses through which people describe, interpret, evaluate, make claims about, and attempt to influence relationships and events, we can extract the relatively stable [however, not static] symbols and meanings people employ in everyday life" (Yanagisako and Collier 1987, 41).

An initial proviso is that in the absence of a topographical name, the designation 'English' was discursively more salient than it would have been in similar groups in England at the time. A village/town/city name, repeated in many different contexts within a community, summons up a variety of signifieds to its residents, of which topographical location, and perhaps shared history, are the only ones open to simple objective verification. The people of a village may understand that the village name signifies a variety of qualities, possibly described in superlatives, but these will not necessarily be apparent to an outsider. Pathetically – as with the ardent support of any village's most prized claims to fame (its football team, its wartime

heroism) – the qualities accorded itself by a community usually rest on the high profiles of a very few (though none be more vociferous in claiming reflected glory than the very many); or they may be no more than the sediment of endlessly replicated factitious statements with little or no objective basis at all. Here is where I propose to sift through the sediment which comprises ‘English’.

Many of the proscriptions and prescriptions associated with Englishness, with membership of the ‘village’, can be tracked from instance to instance across time as they surface in recorded discourse like islands from an opaque sea. Metacultural judgments favouring replication of valued items continued to propel them inexorably forward over time and many can be identified in the original merchant discourses delineated in the previous chapter. That might be regarded as the point where the Anglo-Russian merchant world first began to move away from the parent one and subject itself to the work of processing, incorporating or discarding innovative cultural items not present in the homeland. Both kinds of discursive artefacts will be examined here, those carried over, and those which were ‘new’, beginning with the personal qualities which the English in general felt distinguished them as such – with emic definitions of Englishness in effect. I will begin with the most influential representative of one of the most influential families in the community. The qualities which were valorized in John Gellibrand Hubbard, are the qualities which the community professed to value generally.

William Hubbard (born 1734), the sixth son of a Congregational minister in the working class district of Stepney in London, was made free of the Russia Company in 1771, and about that time, for reasons unknown, he moved to St. Petersburg with his two sons (his wife is not mentioned in the sources). Little or nothing has been left to posterity of the earlier lives of those merchants who came to Russia without prior Anglo-Russian connections, the result of their mostly ‘subaltern’ backgrounds. According to the Church Register, William Hubbard died in Petersburg 1783, when his sons William junior and John were about fourteen and seven respectively. “Who carried on the business for the two boys after their father's death I know not, but the House went on and flourished for before the close of the century John Hubbard was well established in St. Petersburg and doing a considerable trade” (LRA 1091/8). This may be true, though family memoirs are often conspicuously contrived, but the first mention in the Factory Minutes of a Hubbard is in 1802 when John Hubbard’s name begins to appear with scrupulous regularity in the list of attendees at Factory meetings.

According to the Church Register his elder brother William married Margaret Wilkinson (of a minor merchant family) in St. Petersburg in 1791 but, as was common practice for the eldest male of each generation, William returned to London to manage the business from that end. He then dropped out of family histories for some undisclosed reason. In 1801, when the family fortunes were on the ascent, John also married a ‘local’ girl from a rather more prominent family than the Wilkinsons, Marian Morgan, and he proceeded to amass the type of fortune which allowed him retire to England, leaving business in the hands of Marian’s brothers. For the rest of the nineteenth century, Egerton Hubbard & Co in Russia was handled by a progression of younger Hubbard sons and collateral descendants (Gibsons, Morgans, Harveys, Durrants and Parishes), with senior family members visiting Russia regularly for pleasure more than business. As one descendent (a first-born and therefore London-based) describes it: “My visits to Russia were among the best times of my life, for my visits were nearly all made at the

best time of year, were full of interest, and were made invariably pleasurable by the unbounded hospitality and kindness I received at my cousins' hands" (LRA 1091/8).

Hubbards provided Treasurers to the Factory eight times during the century (second only to the Cattleys), while collateral kin filled the role a further fifteen times (particularly in the later decades); the Hubbards were deeply meshed in the kinship network which connected influential members of the community, appeared regularly as witnesses at high profile merchant weddings, spent summers at Mourino, hunted bear in winter and were guests at the wedding of Mary Whishaw to Arthur Riddle in 1891 - along with the other 250 community adults who 'counted'²⁶. The first John's eldest son, John Gellibrand Hubbard²⁷ (born 1805), was educated in France until the age of sixteen before taking his place in the flourishing family business. He married the daughter of the eighth Lord Napier in 1837 (a frequent enough conjuncture of wealth on one side, aristocratic background on the other), was elected a conservative member of parliament in 1859, buying a country estate (a significant move in the English context) at about the same time. In common with others of the Petersburg community who may have come from Nonconformist backgrounds (and many came from the Midlands, the heart of Nonconformist England), the Hubbards had long since become 'churchmen' – members of the Established Church, though they did not favour High Church practices. In 1860 John Gellibrand founded the Anglican Church of St. Albans in Holborn, then a poverty ridden area of London, an impressive philanthropic project in which he expected his own particular 'broad' or possibly evangelical type of Anglicanism to be practiced. He was bitterly disappointed that it veered immediately into High Church, even Anglo-Catholic ritual (which has been sustained ever since)²⁸. In 1887 Hubbard was raised to the peerage as Baron Addington at the ripe old age of eighty two. Stone and Stone note that prior to 1885 only seven "self-made men of business who did not possess any landed estate" (1986, 32) made it into the peerage while more than fifty were so elevated between 1885 and 1911. Addington had provided himself with an estate, but it was a recent acquisition. Stone and Stone conclude that the "ancient barriers to social change among the elite thus began to crumble in about 1880" (ibid.).

The Baron's character was delineated by the Rt. Hon. G. W. E. Russell in a history of St. Albans' controversies, a description which may serve as an outline to understandings of

²⁶ Mary's wedding to Arthur was not a particularly high status event, Arthur appears not to have been generally approved as I will later discuss; the guests, however – all invited by Mary's parents, as was customary – constituted a 'who's who' of the community in status terms.

²⁷ The Gellibrands were, at the time, still Nonconformist, though they changed allegiance in the 1840s, according to the Church Register. Some of John Gellibrand's ten siblings were born in Russia, though John himself was born in England, so his sponsors are not known. Almost certainly, however, one of them was a Gellibrand, as it was the practice to incorporate a sponsor's name into that of the child being baptised. Many years later Mary Whishaw's younger brother Richard married Madge Gellibrand in the English Church of St. Petersburg.

²⁸ On the subject of nineteenth-century philanthropic gestures such as this one, Brian Harrison writes tellingly: "if the Englishman was enabled by some philanthropies, to lower his eyes beneath him with satisfaction – he was also enabled to raise them above him in emulation. The poor were not alone in suspecting that the subscribers and managers of nineteenth-century charities profited personally from them – not only in the financial sense, but also because philanthropic activity could be a means of attaining social mobility. ...Furthermore, through the subscription list one could display one's wealth to public view, co-operate openly with the aristocracy, and thus buy a place in public life and even a seat in Parliament" (1966, 356).

‘Englishness’ among Addington's connections in St. Petersburg, as much as in England itself.

Lord Addington was a man of peculiarly English mould; straightforward, persistent and transparently sincere. As a patriarchal head of family, a thorough man of business, a fine horseman and sportsman, a munificent giver and devoted son of the Church of England, he combined the best features of the English character. To these must be added an ingrained and conscientious conservatism and a masterful will which did not readily tolerate opposition or disagreement (cited in LRA 1091/8).

This comprises an accurate summation of many similar references throughout the sources: the best kind of English ‘character’, in the self-conscious, public estimation of this mercantile milieu, was (male, of course), direct, dogged, honest, successfully businesslike, sporting in attitude and outdoor pursuit (of the more expensive variety), philanthropic, Anglican, and acknowledged head of his household (in full control of his wife and many descendants). An inflexible and dogmatic will was part of the package, reflecting “the vast importance of the idea of ‘independence’ in the Victorian period...independence secured the conditions in which responsibility could be exercised and therefore the situation of freedom to which all should aspire” (Joyce 1994, 16). Joyce also notes that views of ‘society’ as a system only began to become salient from the late eighteenth century (which resonates with British Factory decisions to script themselves a constitution in 1777), and it was only at the end of the nineteenth that “[r]ights and responsibilities were seen in terms of collective solidarities and responsibilities and articulated in a language of ‘external’, extra-personal, social responsibilities” (ibid.). This shift is also illustrated in Factory discourse concerning social aberration as discussed in the case study at the end of chapter seven.

Clear connections between this list and that contained in Cabot’s ‘ordinances’ may easily be traced. More than three centuries earlier, expedition members were adjured to be truthful, loyal to their oaths, resolute in sticking to the job at hand until its conclusion and “prompt, ready and obedient” in carrying out orders according to their station (which obviously did not apply to the expedition leaders). Hubbard, as exemplar of community patriarchs and leaders more generally, would not readily ‘tolerate opposition or disagreement’; he endorsed a hierarchical system that would not permit those of lower status and influence than he felt himself to possess to question his rulings.

The first expedition had been instructed to be regular in their observance of “common services appointed by the kings Majestic” (the Church of England *Book of Common Prayer*), and three centuries later the attachment was still valorized. Hubbard had been a ‘munificent giver’, which was the upper-middle-class nineteenth-century equivalent of caring for the weak and sick, as the first expedition had been instructed to do. Above all, perhaps, in that he would not have achieved his position without the quality, he was a ‘thorough’ man of business. There would have been no loose ends or sloppiness in his accounts, or those over which he exercised authority. The members of the first expedition were finally adjured to make “daily remembrance of the great importance of the voyage, the honour, glorie, praise, and benefite that depend of, and upon the same, toward the common wealth of this noble Realme, the advancement of you the travailers therein, your wives, and children” (op. cit.), reminding them that their interests were bound up with those of their country and that their advancement would benefit not only the

merchants themselves, but also their wives and children. Family is important to merchants, if only from practical considerations, as I will later discuss.

There is a 'new' cultural construct in Hubbard's obituary, that was not part of English merchant ethos in the sixteenth century. Hubbard was 'a fine horseman and sportsman'. In the sixteenth century 'hunting', generally with hawks or on horseback after stags, was out of the question for all but the nobility. By the end of eighteenth century, fox-hunting had become "the only chase worth the taste or attention of a high-bred sportsman" (British Sportsman 1796, cited in Stone and Stone 1984, 311). It was still inextricably linked to wealth and land ownership because of the very high cost entailed and because it required large tracts of pasture land to accommodate the wild gallops of the unspeakable after the inedible, to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw. Fishing, coursing and shooting were also popular outdoor sports, always a monopoly preserve of the elite as a result of "increasingly harsh and restrictive Game Laws" (ibid., 313). However, much as the ranks of elite had been swelled by the addition of the very wealthy, so could the very wealthy now indulge in what had been out of their reach in earlier centuries. Consequently, the term 'sportsman' had become almost synonymous, in certain contexts, with the term 'gentleman'. Jim Whishaw enlarges upon what 'sport' implied:

I have always considered sport to mean the actual pursuit of game or animals in the field, or the capture of fish in the sea or rivers. By sport then I mean shooting, hunting, fishing or hawking... Today Ping-Pong – no doubt an excellent game in itself – is called a sport: Yo-Yo is a sport, that is to say you can purchase the articles required for it in sports' shops. Personally I think that even the grand games of cricket and football, horse-racing, yachting and tennis are pastimes, and grand pastimes too, but I do not think they should be called sport... To be a sportsman, I take it that one must be a lover of Nature, and must be able to be as happy when quite alone as when in company; and I would add that I think the quality of a sportsman is born in a man, probably it is hereditary (J. Whishaw 1935, 219-220).

In 1875 the "Goriélevo Hunt, in which Russian aristocrats such as Vorontsóff-Dashkoff rode side by side with the British colonists, had just come to an end, the last master being Evelyn Hubbard" (Baddeley 1921, 38) – Evelyn was one of John Gellibrand's sons. Bear hunting in Russia was romanticised in innumerable accounts and surrounded by tales of near escapes, and the famous Captain Hamilton, who hunted alone with only a spear or a knife, was a local legend (if considered a little eccentric). Shooting game birds was within the reach of everyone with a summer residence. Not all the men of the community hunted, but certainly the ideas of perseverance, exertion, self reliance and an element of equality in any contest which were perceived to be part of the 'sporting' ethos were highly valorized, even if, as with the other qualities listed above, the life they were given in discourse did not match their rather lower vitality in practice.

Objectively, one might suggest that the meanings attached to words such as sincerity, generosity and integrity in local usage were somewhat idiosyncratic. In demonstration, we can return to the Minutes of the British Factory and the response to a request for contributions by the Factory to a Russian House for Orphans in 1818. A resolution was swiftly reached that the Factory Treasurer should reply "stating – that having our own Poor to support, and being confined by the Rules of our Society in the Direction of our Funds, we cannot contribute to the Orphans' Fund in our corporate capacity" (GL 31,781/2). The similar Factory discussion that

took place in 1820 over the request for economic assistance by the Treasurer of the Society sponsoring the non-denominational Lancaster School for foreigners in St. Petersburg (mentioned above) raised the usual objections: money and the risk of a breach in English exclusivity. The discussion quickly moved on to the main issue: how, and on what grounds, the British Factory could refuse to sponsor the Lancaster enterprise without “alienating the mind of certain persons from us [because] offence might be taken at our refusal to contribute to the support of an Establishment patronized as this appears by the Book on the Table to be” (ibid.), that is, by the Russian Emperor, among other luminaries. The formula resolved upon stated that the Factory had no funds to spare because all moneys that were collected were for defined purposes from which they could not be diverted without contravening the governing regulations of the corporation. This was a blatant lie. The British Factory could, and did, divert ‘moneys’ to all kinds of ventures and grants when the majority so decided, but its members were not going to set a precedent of donating ‘out’ of their sphere of influence, nor of donating substantial sums on request, and they would lie to protect this decision. Englishmen did not lie, however. Other people lied. This was not hypocrisy. Although community discourse reveals in its users a high degree of reflexivity when referencing themselves as a group – what that group was, and what it ‘stood’ for – an almost awe-inspiring absence of reflexivity seemed to characterize their self-perceptions in other areas. The two worlds, that of discursively created representation, and what may be deduced from the records of the world of actual praxis seem to have been only tenuously connected. It is a common human phenomenon that takes its own culturally specific forms.

Much of the everyday life illustrated by the records left by the community was based on principals of prevarication. Practices as diverse as the apparent denial of bodily parts and their functions, to the general usages involved in etiquette, politeness and business, were embedded in falsehood. But that is not the point. The point is that, as an item, the discourse of the “transparently sincere” Englishman was currency with broad circulation and immediate acceptance among those who had become familiar with its emic meaning via repeated contact with it. Those not *au fait* with all its finer shading – whether a Russian merchant, or a child of the British lower classes in Petersburg – might well regard the claim as astonishing, but they were not part of the discourse community in which it circulated. One could not, for example, expect the butler (or ‘waiter’ as he was locally termed) who regularly informed unwanted visitors that there was no one home (when he knew that there was) to endorse the transparent sincerity of his employers. Nor would the barefoot child of an English warehouseman be likely to appreciate the finer points of distinction between the assertion that the Factory was not at liberty to divert moneys to the education of poor local Britons yet could, by setting a back tax on local British merchants of 1/2% on all trade conducted by each house between 1803 and 1806, raise the enormous sum of 135,000 Rs in 1807 (“a voluntary contribution”) to be presented to the Russian Government in a vain attempt to prevent an imminent rapprochement between Emperor Alexander and Napoleon. The bribe, resolved on stoically though without enthusiasm, did not manage to prevent the Tilsit agreement of that year between Russia and France, which resulted in massive short-term losses and confiscations of British property all over Russia (GL 31,781/1). The money was there, and could be tapped at will, but only for those ends which local merchant discourse deemed appropriate, and educating the “the lower

classes of our Countrymen here” was not one of them.

While there is no doubt that the qualities of honesty, sincerity, generosity and upright behaviour were all highly valorized, *per se*, it is also undeniable that, as with their parent term, ‘English’, in practice they could be flexibly applied, particularly if their indiscriminate application were likely to lead to behaviour or results which conflicted with more important dicta. Hanway, reflecting in 1754 on the national importance of the merchant class and their activities, the qualities which best qualified a merchant for success, and the rewarding nature of the occupation, wrote:

The Glory and welfare of the BRITISH Monarchy depending on the acquisition and preservation of trade, it becomes the duty of every subject to encourage this general design, and consequently to endeavour to inspire the minds of the people with such sentiments as promote industry, and restrain the growth of a luxurious and irregular manner of living...Without entering into the evils arising from an inordinate love of money, the merchant whose mind is strong enough to pursue gain without indulging any anxious fears, and without forgetting the more essential duties of life, is in a happy employment, was it only for this reason, that there are but few callings so free and independent. (Hanway, 1754: xii, 366-7, capitals in text.)

No mention here of transparent sincerity or the honesty which circulating discourse attributed to the English and denied the Russians. No. What is important is the encouragement of sentiments that promote industry, restraint of irregularity of lifestyle and a strong and fearless mind.

From an objective point of view, excavation of the meanings attached by the people of this community to terms such as truth, honesty and integrity may be seen to disclose a bias, like Hanway’s, towards a lack of ostentation, orderly habits, firmness of purpose²⁹, refusal to compromise, a certainty of English superiority over all outsiders and an unmistakable Calvinist influence in the implication that business success was connected with moral superiority³⁰. “This strange admixture of morality, materialism, and patriotic loyalty formed the triple standard of a vital social philosophy” (Putnam 1952, 84), which fuelled British mercantile success over the centuries. Throughout that time, that ‘strange admixture’ was the result of the propulsion forward and outward of versions of those same stretches of talk from the sixteenth century (and

²⁹ Dickens put this view in the mouth of David Copperfield’s Aunt, when he has her tell David (Trot) of her wishes for his future. ““But what I want you to be, Trot,” resumed my aunt...‘is a firm fellow. A fine firm fellow, with a will of your own. With resolution...With determination. With character, Trot. With strength of character that is not to be influenced except on good reason, by anybody or anything. That’s what I want you to be.’” (1960, 260).

³⁰ Despite this tendency, the strict Calvinist philosophy of predestination, which declares God’s grace to be irresistible (i.e. His selection of those He will ‘save’ – the ‘Elect’ – and those He will not, is immutable and nothing any individual does in his/her life can change their status, leaving no room for human liberty in the process of salvation), was *not* part of Church of England doctrine. James Cattley, in a letter to his fiancé Edith Klockman, wrote: “Now I am going to preach you a sermon. You must not go near that ancient man James Handyside so long as there is anything like infection lurking about him. However I can hardly think there can be much fear otherwise yr mother wd not let you near him. You can see what an authoritative person I can be on occasion. But really dear, do keep away from that seductive old man so long as he has that sore throat. I certainly do believe in infection. What a little fatalist you are, saying, ‘that if one is to have an illness one will get it, & if not one won’t.’ Why - the next thing will be your believing in predestination.” (LRA 1406, 28.2.1884.)

earlier, without doubt), examined in the previous chapter which advocated clean, orderly, controlled outward demeanour; duty and obedience to superiors, the realm and a god of mercy and vengeance; while temptingly shaking the carrot on the end of the stick which was the potential of huge financial reward for self, wife and family. They shaped the merchant world. They established the constraints, they outlined the opportunities and the rewards. Almost any 'admixture' might have produced the same objective outcomes: success for some, spectacular failure for others, descendants for most but not for all, plurality for some leading to encompassment by the host environment, exclusivity by others leading to long term community maintenance and so on. These might be regarded as diasporic universals. This particular admixture, produced the cultural specificities of this particular collectivity.

WE THE ENGLISH, THEY THE RUSSIAN.

For the most part the discussion so far of what constituted Englishness, or eligibility to membership of the community under analysis, is as applicable to the bourgeois English of nineteenth-century England as to those in St. Petersburg, with important qualifiers resulting from the diasporic situation of the group. It was comparatively small, comparatively homogenous, in that it comprised a limited number of families, and therefore comparatively self-policing. Deviation from community norms was probably almost impossible to hide, whether it took place in town or the summer colonies. Commentary on regularly missed church attendance, extra-marital sexual liaison (only one made it into the records), unfounded slander, inhospitality or meanness in charitable donation, failure to attend to commitments such as Factory, committee, or 'work party' (philanthropic sewing) meetings, even self-indulgence of the late-rising or intemperate gluttony variety could enter the current of community discourse and circulate until it was replaced by something newer, more interesting, more titillating³¹. When one reads the literature concerning the same type of social groupings in England, whether in fiction or non-fiction, one is struck by the much broader spheres of transgression which generated commentary in the homeland – they ranged from the prurient interest taken by the genteel in London slums and their unfortunate inhabitants, to the immoral doings of the aristocratic classes – and the generally much greater possibilities for concealment of eccentricity. While stated and circulated standards might have appeared similar, it is clear from the letters and diaries of the time in Petersburg, here they could be much more closely monitored.

The vital area of the self perceptions of this particular group, however, which was lacking among their homeland-based compatriots, originated in their expatriate situation, in comparisons which they made between themselves and their hosts. To be more precise: talk which purported to describe Russian ways of being, doing and thinking, which found favour and

³¹ In the case of such gossip we can see how a metaculture which favours the new – in this case 'new' gossip – can work for a time to support tradition, even in central areas such as a system of values. However, items which are received negatively are required to be constantly updated to keep them interesting, the reverse side being that, over time, replication of both deviant acts and the commentary they generate leads to the initially shocking an aura of normalcy which will work against the maintenance of traditional mores.

circulated, and sedimented into widely held belief (mostly of a negative kind), was indivisibly linked to ideas of opposition between ‘them’ and ‘us’, with concomitant salience of certain qualities in auto-descriptions, some which were not so salient in the homeland. This practice reflects

that feature of our own classificatory scheme which simultaneously defines entities by way of negation...and incorporates the negative form as an instance of the positive (thus...the “personality” of someone is rendered as a matter of that person having “no personality”)...The “other” can be defined both as not-self and as a type of (another) self. (Strathern 1996,118.)

Here Strathern is talking specifically of the anthropological project, of the dissonance which arises when we attempt, as anthropologists, to be both ‘self’ and ‘other’ at the same time, a dissonance which is reduced if we define the other as a version of the self. Anthropology, Strathern suggests, “where it is honest, locates its categories of analysis within its own society but through them seeks an interpretation of others...forever [swinging] between these two devices – coming to grips with other cultures in their own terms, and utilising frames drawn frankly from its own (ibid., 119).” The English in St. Petersburg were not, however, anthropologists, and in common with what appears to have been generalized practice among both formal and informal colonialists of the British Empire, had no interest in coming to grips with local Russian cultural configurations on their own terms and it would never have occurred to any of them to endeavour to interpret the other culture on the basis of any but the categories which structured their own worldview.

It is clear from the recurrence of certain themes in the primary sources that the prevalent English opinions of their hosts focused on a particular range of negative characteristics portrayed as either specific to the ‘lower order’ Russian – with whom, in the shape of servants, *isvochiks*, tradespeople and villagers they had quite close contact – or universal amongst their hosts. In brief, these characteristics may be summed up as falling into categories of ‘thieving, cheating, lying, insincere’; ‘dirty, lazy, slovenly, undisciplined’; ‘profligate, debauched, drunken, self-indulgently greedy; yet, withal, capable – in the case of the peasant – of dog-like devotion to their good English masters and mistresses, and – in the case of the patrician – veneration and liking for Britain and the English way of life. I mentioned earlier the opinion held of the English by Nicholas II, but, as one visitor wrote of a reception he attended in 1791:

We did not get away till near two after holding a long conversation with the Princess Dashkoff who was excessively civil. Though she blames us for some things, upon the whole she is a great admirer of the English Nation, envies us our constitution and regards a well-educated English Gentleman as the glory and perfection of his species. (Parkinson 1971, 38.)

The list of ascribed Russian characteristics represents the kind of trivial, negative stereotyping which any group might produce about another with a different (or even similar) cultural background, particularly one which is geographically contiguous or, in this case, coterminous, with their own and thereby offering the greatest risk of contaminating community verities, with their inchoate illusions of certainty, stability, security. However, it is interesting

for two related reasons. Firstly, because, obviously, the English were none of these things – or, at least, should not be – and secondly because it indicates an understanding, inhering in circulating community discourse, that their own world was an ordered system whose parts fit together seamlessly. Any deviation from ‘normal’ practice upsets that notion, indicating a world in disorder or one without order at all. Russians did not do, or say, or believe all the things which the English did, therefore their world was a frightening place without system or good management, where anything could happen.

A particular source of bewildered irritation was the persistence of the Russian foreigner in assigning matter to inappropriate locations. Animals in the house, beds on the cooking stove, dirt on the body and clothes and in living areas, uncontained smells of human bodily wastes, falsehood where honesty was expected, bluntness or exposure where concealment was the norm: these were all symptoms of matter out of place according to British protocol, and they were impervious to attempted re-ordering. As Edmund Leach points out, *pace* Mary Douglas, “Earth in the garden is just earth; it is normal matter in its normal place. Earth in the kitchen is dirt; it is matter out of place...Boundaries become dirty by definition and we devote a great deal of effort to keeping them clean, just so that we can preserve confidence in our category system” (1976, 61).

I have suggested that a great deal of everyday English behaviour and talk involved deception of one sort or another, despite self-assessments of honesty and rectitude; but it was deception which took place in precise contexts where it was understood to be correct and proper behaviour: tact, modesty, business acumen and so on all required it. Russian lies, on the other hand, were matter out of place; they were unexpected and therefore unjustifiable and improper. John Parkinson (mentioned earlier, cited above), an Oxford don, was companion to a rich scion of the landed gentry, Edward Bootle, later 1st Lord Skelmersdale, who was taking an extended ‘Northern Tour’ of Russia in the years 1792-1794. The pair had introductions in Russia to the British Ambassador and members of the English community, and quickly became part of a social life that impinged on the social events of the Russian nobility to a much greater degree than would be the case even a generation later. The opinions they formed are clearly influenced by the English with whom they came in close contact, and are not favourable to Russian morals or habits.

The Russians are totally destitute of principle. A man of rank is capable of pilfering anything that comes his way and is not ashamed of doing so. A Nobleman went into a shop and pilfered a watch...This dirty action, instead of causing the man to be banished out of company, rather excited admiration and only caused people to enquire of the wag an account of the way in which he was able before the face of several persons to effect his purpose. As to truth among the men or chastity among the women, they are entirely out of the question (Parkinson 1971, 49).

These observations were made after an evening spent with Hynam, the Court Horologer, “with whose sensible and intelligent conversation I was exceedingly pleased” (*ibid.*). The story, as with many such stories that circulated through the English community in support of their opinions, may well have been apocryphal. However, a later comment was obviously based on Parkinson’s own personal observation: “The English keep themselves very distinct and hold the

Russians in great contempt, particularly for their want of principle and good faith..." (ibid., 60).

A hundred years later, Fred Wishaw demonstrates the staying power of this discursive strand and – with his peculiar brand of heavy-handed irony – also portrays his hosts as inveterate liars: "...this particular [game] keeper was, even for a Russian, a remarkable and pre-eminent liar; he was a pedigree liar, and came of good old lying stock; I knew his father, and he, too, did not disgrace his forebears in this elegant accomplishment" (F. Wishaw 1891, 335)³². The English did not hesitate to chastise their servants when caught in a wrongdoing, so there was little to be gained by admitting to something of which the irrational employer disapproved, if there was a chance that it might be concealed by a falsehood. Maida Mirrieles describes the conjuncture between English and Russian practice with reference to her brother's cook.

After...periods of religious elation, Marya peacefully started on a fresh course of peccadilloes. Lying and cheating are hardly recognised as sins by a religious Russian of this class...If I complained of being nearly stifled by the fumes of her decoctions of oil & garlic³³, she vehemently asserted that there was neither "fasting oil" nor garlic in the house, & when I [discovered] both, she was not in the least disconcerted, but merely said in a coaxing tone: "Ah, yes, of course they're there, but why should I tell the young lady a thing that would displease her?" (LRA 1192/3, circa 1880.)

Children of all cultural backgrounds learn this important lesson at a very early age – why say what will displease? – and as I have pointed out, the English themselves were competent at, and quite unashamed of, the kind of prevarication involved in providing an acceptable cover story for an unpalatable truth.

The self-ascribed English attribute of 'the sporting instinct', mentioned above, so closely allied to the nineteenth-century definition of a gentleman, also received further local acceleration from the broadly held view that Russians lacked it. Jim Wishaw offered the opinion that this was because "the Russian" did not like putting himself to a lot of trouble or having to take a vast amount of exercise, but more pertinently, because the "bag" was more important than the contest between man and Nature, so "he" would shoot at "sitting ducks" or birds on the ground (though with the assistance of beaters and guns, it would appear to me that there was little equality of contest between hunted and hunter in the Englishmans ideal either³⁴).

³² Though Fred was writing for publication and might be expected to embellish his usual style, Mary makes it clear that he was a heavy-handed wit in everyday life as well. Fred was staying at Mourino with his and Mary's cousin, Jim Wishaw, in 1890, and Mary notes that "after dinner Jim brought him over to see us, & they buffooned and made the most odious puns imaginable." The following day "Fred came over, we sat in the drawing room for a little & after Fred had made a good many execrable puns they went out to play tennis under a grilling sun to turn Fred's already copper complexion into a chocolate one" (25, 26.7.1890).

³³ During the extended and frequent periods of 'fasting', Russians could eat no meat, eggs or dairy products, replacing butter with sunflower seed oil and garlic, a practice which is often assessed by contemporary Western metaculture in favourable ways that increase its acceptance and acceleration. Fred Wishaw, however, describes "fast-oil" as "a noxious fluid in which the orthodox are supposed to cook their Lenten victuals, and the smell of which is, to English nostrils, an abomination too deep for words, excepting very wicked ones" (1891, 76).

³⁴ Jim's cousin and Mary's brother, Bert "shot in the Count's garden [at Mourino though no Count had been in residence since the eighteenth century] & killed a red headed woodpecker & a jay: the jay was a lovely bird, a light fawn sort of colour with bits of light blue: he is going to try and stuff them"

Robert Ker Porter, court painter to Alexander I (not a long term member of the community, though of similar social status in nineteenth-century England and a member of the Petersburg Church of England congregation while he was there), ponders a brutal episode of hare coursing he had witnessed in St. Petersburg in which a group of Russian spectators passively watched while hares were released from boxes one at a time and torn apart by pairs of greyhounds, eventually ‘charitably’ suggesting that the absence of ‘the sporting instinct’ might be a result of the severity of the climate.

With us [coursing] has an apology in the health produced by its attendant exercise, and the delights of pleasurable suspense. But here the recreation is so simplified, that it hardly seems to contain any thing, but the murder of the animal...I must suppose that the habits of this country are inimical to the activity of the blood which rushes through the veins of an English hunter, shooter, or racer. Our early education to exercise of all sorts gives a stimulus to mind and body that impels Englishmen to undertake every enterprise with intrepidity, and confirms them to pursue it with an undaunted resolution to overcome (cited in Putnam 1952, 341).

Another facet of Russian praxis which generated persistent, vociferous comment tending to reinforce notions that ‘English ways’ were ordered, rational and systematic was the matter of local hygiene. In the homeland this kind of opposition was maintained between similar social/status groups and those of the working classes who were not ‘respectable’. The disreputable were often unwashed (hardly surprising given the physical conditions in which they lived), and filth was universally presumed to be a representation of inner depravity. Cabot's ordinances stressed the relationship between hygiene and health – an emphasis which has returned to the Western world since Lister's discoveries – but during the intervening centuries non-medical discourses connected with ‘uncleanness’ sedimented in England into proscriptions which had as much to do with morality as life endangerment. The homily, ‘cleanliness is next to Godliness’ perhaps sums up the relationship felt to exist between moral rectitude and the order instilled by regimens aimed at ridding the person, clothes and private spaces of out of place dirt. I feel that this connection was strengthened by the rise of the ‘middling’ classes in England and seems to have been most salient among those groups who had either struggled out of the working classes or improved their social positions from yeoman/minor professional status to upper-bourgeois membership, and were therefore most interested in distancing themselves from their nearest competitors.

Lacking the armies of servants and the complicated hierarchies of residential management, which were enjoyed by the wealthy among the aristocracy, the degree of cleanliness in private, middle-class spaces relied upon the industry of the housewife in ordering both her own work schedule and those of the servants the family budget could afford – often a substantial number. The talk (among women) concerning servants and their shortcomings was, according to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English literature, as salient in middle-class Britain as it certainly was in St. Petersburg, the difference being that Petersburg servants were mostly Russian, which promoted an opposition based on perceptions of national divisions. Thus it is

(25.8.1890). The English were renowned for their love of murdering animals they had no intention of eating, but it had to be a bit tricky.

interesting that English visitors and short-term residents, and even accredited members like Fred Whishaw whose allegiance moved from St. Petersburg to homeland England, tended to conflate Russian dirt with Russian depravity, whereas locals tended to stress much the same health aspects of dirt/cleanliness evidenced by Cabot, taking measures to circumvent what were undoubtedly worrying sanitary arrangements in the Russian capital, and stressing the disordered rather than immoral aspects of dirt. We, the English, however, remained cleaner than the others.

Having said all this, once again the degree to which the English were objectively so very much cleaner and neater in their private spaces than the Russians cannot be accurately established. It is worth borrowing the scholarship of Lawrence Stone to provide some sort of baseline for English practice before examining what the English had to say about local conditions by the nineteenth century.

As late as the 1760s Topham Beauclerk, a man of charm and wit who moved in the highest aristocratic circles, was 'remarkably filthy in his person, which generated vermin'. Despite the fact that his wife, Lady Diana, slept in a separate bed and had her sheets changed daily, he was not in the least ashamed of his condition...[As late as the end of the eighteenth century] most people, even in the highest social stratum, hardly ever washed anything, except their faces, necks, hands and feet....In the early eighteenth century, Swift confirmed that English women neglected 'care in the cleanliness and sweetness of their persons',...in 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft asserted that among English women 'that regard to cleanliness...is violated in a beastly manner'. Half a century later in 1841, Dr William Acton was still complaining that in England women 'wash every other part of the body, but, unhappily for their own comfort and that of their husbands, they seem averse to let clean water reach the vagina' (1977, 304-5).

Not a pretty story and, if one reads between the lines of the letters and diaries, rather than the memoirs or travelogues, the actual practice of English hygiene seems to have been rather different from the one that was publicly presented. Mary Whishaw, that least depraved of women, casts some light on the matter. To take her 1890 diary as exemplar: virtually every day of the year Mary begins her record with, "Ordered dinner"³⁵, had prayers &c.". She was not adverse to repeating the tedious minutiae of everyday existence. In fact, that seems to have been part of the purpose behind her diary-keeping – maintaining order and the memory of order. She also mentions when she "had a hot tubby", "had a hot bath", and when "Stephania washed my hair". She mentions it exactly fourteen times in 1890. The precise periodicity of all but one of the dates indicates that a full bath might possibly have been reserved for post-menstrual cleansing. Those who have explored English antique shops will be familiar with the matching ewer/washbowl/chamber pot triumvirates that were in wide general use in the nineteenth century. Mary never mentions them in particular, but that must have been the principal method of maintaining personal hygiene – a bowl of water and perhaps a flannel.

³⁵ Mrs Whishaw was obviously training Mary in her future duties as house manager. Mary also occasionally sorted and checked the wash after it had been returned by their laundress, but mostly her mother seems to have done that. Mary's increase in domestic management when her mother was away is conspicuous; then she has 'the keys' and 'gives out' the more valuable stores to the cook, and worries that the kitchen maid might be stealing, plus, "she washes [the dishes] vilely so I think I will get rid of her" (18.3.1890).

Public presentation, publicly approved, publicly circulating (within this English public), is the focus of this chapter, however, and it is the framing, its acceptance, and its onward transmission – the threads that tied the individuals together – rather than the reality, that most concerns me. Maida Mirrieles continues her discussion of the shortcomings of her brother's servant, of whom she was otherwise rather fond, with a commentary on her kitchen practice.

Some of old Marya's idiosyncrasies tried me sorely. In spite of my remonstrance, she persisted in making her bed on the top of the kitchen stove. Not only she, but a dog with her litter of puppies, a cat, & a whole family of poultry established themselves in this desirable locality. As neither she nor her pets had learnt the rudiments of the art of cleanliness, my English feelings rose up in revolt against this use of the kitchen in which our food was cooked. I tried hard to induce her to lay her mattress on a (to me) tempting looking iron bedstead in an adjoining room, which was also provided with the requisites of washing, but when I peeped into that room, I saw nothing to lead me to suppose that she ever turned her attention to the washstand, or used the bedstead for its legitimate purpose (LRA. 1193/3).

Maida, though a community member by virtue of her family's position, connections and term of residence, and her own periods as Petersburg inhabitant, had, as a late child of Archibald Mirrieles, moved to England on Archibald's retirement in 1857, when she was only four. Apart from reciprocated visits to her many Russia-based relatives, she did not return to St. Petersburg as a permanent resident herself for nearly twenty years, though then she lived there for over a decade. Her perceptions would have been those of an outsider until she had settled into local ways again. This blurring of boundaries between outside and inside, however, was generally found distressing, particularly in relation to sleeping arrangements. Animals (but not house-trained pets who might sleep in an appropriate basket) slept outside; humans slept in beds in bedrooms, behind closed doors. Mary and her husband spent a summer in Archangel where she had to put up with servants whom she had not 'trained' herself and noted crossly:

One reason why I shall be glad to get away from Archangel is the dirtiness of the kitchen here with old Alexander sleeping in it. Nurse says he changes his shirt once a fortnight & simply swarms with vermin. The kitchen is absolutely full of B. flats [I think she means cockroaches] & black & other beetles of all sorts & sizes. It is too disgusting for anything. The Cook is almost afraid to sleep downstairs. (6.8.1902.)

Mary is not making a them/us distinction based on Russian/English praxis, however, because she included Nurse and the Cook (both Russian) in her own disgusted clique³⁶. It was not so much the sleeping arrangements that bothered her as the filth of a single member of her household. Fred Whishaw, however, also recorded that Russian peasants "sleep where they can, on the stove or near it in winter, on the straw in the cow-house, or in one of the empty carts in the yard, on the warm summer nights" (1891, 36), and one of the Cattleys mentions that "under pretence of asking for a glass of water we entered a Russian Cottage or hovel to see if possible whether all that had been told us of the Russian peasant was true. On entering the hut or cottage the first few objects which met our eyes were two Calves and a Pig (young) comfortably asleep

³⁶ She also commented unfavourably, at about the same time, that Mrs. Carr's baby, Gladys, was "a dear fat thing, but too pale and creases not well washed enough to please me" (7.06.1902).

in the middle of the room” (LRA 1406, Cattley’s Diary 1839). He did not feel the need to make further comment apparently.

A slightly different perspective is demonstrated by another bona fide long-term resident when she recalls that the porter and man-of-all-work slept on the floor of the passage of their apartment in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries: “My mother, in later years, was horrified when she thought of these primitive arrangements, but at the time they were taken for granted” (Vivian Caird Molteno née Birse). Local residents were merely conscious of the need to take precautions. Mary noted tersely from time to time that she had sent one of her servants to the public baths. They were supposed to attend regularly of their own volition but Mary obviously felt the need to remind them from time to time. Harriet Hardie sacked a new maidservant because her feet smelt “abominably”. Edith Cattley née Klockman, who lived in Russia from birth (1856) through marriage and four children of her own (until approximately 1917), recalled in 1927 that “Pluschkin was the owner of a little shop at the corner of the 2nd Line & the Quay [on V.O.], he sold tea, sugar, coffee and chickens. His was about the only shop that old Nurse was permitted to take me into, as [Father] had a horror of our going into dirty shops and getting disease” (LRA 1406). It must be recalled that by the later decades of the nineteenth century there was little social intercourse between community members and the patrician class in Russia so this kind of commentary is as much class as nationality based; the expatriate specifics of the group merely makes the national divide more salient than class.

The themes discussed in this chapter, as I hope I have made apparent, are only ‘factual’ insofar as it is fact that these things were said; it is fact that they were approved, transmitted and re-transmitted; it is fact that their passage laid down paths, or kept paths open for similar items to travel; it is fact that all helped constitute the elastic bands which tied these individuals into an entity; it is fact that they shaped and regulated group identity, the social world and perceptions of the physical, the aims, aspirations, ambitions and public praxis of their users and transmitters. It is not fact that they were ‘true’ – whatever that means. I suspect (hope, perhaps?) that even many of their users would not, upon reflection, have made that claim of them. They were stereotypes which made the world an easier place to live. As with the contemporary racist who gets to know and respect one of the objects of his/her racism; individuals can grudgingly be permitted to be ‘different’. Groups, on the other hand, need these identifying stereotypes, both of themselves, and of ‘others’. This is what makes for ‘grouphood’: publicly shared opinion, agreement and consensus – however ‘actually’ illusory. These are required even before publicly shared behaviour and embodiment of praxis can begin their contribution to community construction and maintenance. In the following chapter, I examine the relationship between these two aspects of the making of communal worlds: praxis and praxis approval: shared action and shared talk.

CHAPTER FIVE.

SOURCES OF TRADITION AND PLURALITY.

“MAKE THY CHOSEN PEOPLE JOYFUL.”

The choice of church attendance on Sunday as the supreme index of religious commitment was most appropriate to those whose main interest was in social control. Even in nineteenth-century England attendance at some sort of church service still satisfied a desire on the part of the dominant class for public, formal and national displays of religion, for the equation of Christianity alike with patriotism and good taste...[A]bove all Sunday mornings from 11 o'clock to 12.45 was sacred to the cause of national respectability...The reason for the significance possessed by weekly attendance from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries were mainly political and it would be wrong to assume the act had any intrinsic religious significance. (H. McLeod 1974, 24)

It is perhaps a mistake to describe 'religion' as 'ubiquitous', since many people contrived to limit it to Sunday. But the problem of Sunday was difficult for anyone to escape. Though the pietistic veneer imposed on most middle- and upper-class families during the first half of the nineteenth century was cracking in the 80s and 90s, Sunday (like the Anglican service) was still a ritual in which every gesture had a meaning that the informed observer would recognise. And, in this instance, the ritual – whether it were the week's nadir, or the day of intensest life – was one with which most members of the middle and upper classes had an intimate acquaintance.(ibid., 139.)

In chapter two I provided a couple of examples of practices that were valorized under different metacultural 'rules': sacred singing received its value under metaculture that valued exact replication, that endeavoured to accelerate a fixed mode of production forward without deviation or the intrusion of personal idiosyncrasy. Ice-hilling, on the other hand, which was accepted by community members with such enthusiasm that it was 'exported' to the British community in Moscow, represented a major deviation from the kind of practice that was expected of a similar class in England at the time, and was received under metaculture which valued novelty in everyday modes of pleasure and sociality, and allowed for the young women who took part to introduce even greater deviation from norms of bodily decorum, by mastering it themselves and flying down the hills in a variety of physical positions. I pointed out that areas which are regarded as 'sacred' in a community's world, and which might include religious practice, national allegiance, business methods, marriage and many other norms, will be judged according to metacultural commentary drawn from a desire to maintain tradition and stasis, while very voluntary settlement in a new country will inevitably introduce novelty which, in everyday areas of communal worlds may well be valorized *as* novelties if they are not perceived to be threatening to the protection of valued traditions. I suggested that accepting and valorizing the novel will require that it can be 'processed' according to some pre-existing frame – such as 'exercise and fresh air are good things' – but that the novel always carries additional cultural baggage which, in being 'processed' will bring with it incremental change.

In this chapter I am going to examine two major areas of the communal world of the English merchants and their families over which they had no control, in order to explore what the community did about factors in their lives which were 'givens': firstly, the element which

kept their praxis most closely in step with similar compatriots all over the world – the talk entextualized in *The Book of Common Prayer* – which was protected from innovation, not only by the prescription that large chunks of it were to be learnt by heart by all members of Anglican congregations, not only by its ‘fixing’ in the form of a printed text that endured unchanged for centuries, but also by the weight of English secular law: clergymen who deviated from its doctrines were no longer imprisoned by the nineteenth century, but they were tried and often lost their livings, and as late as 2004 English common law still holds blasphemy to be a crime, though there is talk of amending this¹.

The second area which I examine is in marked contrast. Naturally, the single factor which introduced the greatest novelty into the lives of these expatriates was their place of residence. The physical constraints, conditions and opportunities of Russia, more specifically St. Petersburg, provided very different ‘givens’ to anywhere in the British Isles, and the practices which were unproblematic in Britain had to undergo considerable modification to deal with the disparity. ‘Place’ has become of increasing interest to anthropology in recent decades and with the assistance of the considerable literature which has been produced on the subject, I will investigate the ways that the talk of the community construed and reconstructed Petersburg and its environment and lifeways.

When Consul-General Bayley suggested, as an alternative to contributing to the local Lancaster School, that the Factory sponsor their own school for poor English children (see previous chapter), he also outlined a projected syllabus which is interesting for two reasons. First is the shameful poverty of its scope, which appears, on first reading, merely to be endorsing prevalent bourgeois framings of social hierarchy as linked with moral hierarchy:

...the children would be taught the Church-Catechism, from which they may learn to keep their hands from picking and stealing, and their tongues from evil speaking, lying and slandering - not to covet other men's goods; but to learn to labour truly to get their own living, and to do their duty in that state of life, unto which it has pleased God to call them (GL 31,782, 73-4).

Even more interesting than the mere statement of hierarchical moral superiority, from the point of view of a discourse-centred approach to understanding the workings of community – the way that circulating discourse lays down parameters of operation – is the origin of Bayley's phraseology. Although I was brought up in the Church of England tradition (albeit a twentieth-century version), I did not make the connection on first reading, but obviously listeners at the

¹ “At the end of July, the new Home Secretary, Jack Straw, told the Home Affairs Select Committee (a cross-party group of MPs) that he was considering amending the common law on blasphemy. Common law is developed through a number of court judgements rather than being defined as a written law by Parliament. Currently, the law of blasphemy is defined as ‘Every publication is said to be blasphemous which contains any contemptuous, reviling, scurrilous or ludicrous matter relating to God, Jesus Christ, or the Bible, or the formularies of the Church of England, as by law established (Lord Scarman in *Whitehouse v Gay News*, 1979). In recent years there has been a lot of debate about whether the current law should be retained as it only protects the Christian faith. There was an attempt to abolish the common law in 1995 by a member of the House of Lords, but it was defeated.” (http://www.care.org.uk/resource/parl_upd/pcu02_12.htm, January, 2004)

time knew what was being said; no further explication was required and a host of other references were brought into play that could also remain unsaid. The ‘vehicle’ comprising this stretch of discourse carried multiple signs only immediately recognisable by those who had encountered the vehicle many times before. Bayley’s projected syllabus is actually an almost word for word repetition of part of that Church-Catechism he mentions, which was obligatory learning for all those who were confirmed into the Church of England².

Confirmation ceremonies, drawing upwards of a hundred candidates at a time (Mary, 18.2.1890), were conducted periodically in the English Church in St. Petersburg on the visitation of a Bishop from England (trips which were funded, without the usual quibbling, by the Russia Company), and was mandatory for those who wished to take Holy Communion. This is also known as the Sacrament or the Lord’s Supper, “for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us” (Prayer Book, 1968 ed. 184-5). Partaking of the Supper of the Lord was one of the two Sacraments (the other being the Baptismal water), necessary to salvation according to Church of England creed. Therefore, confirmation was a major rite of passage in the Church of England community, one more universal than marriage, though not as universal as baptism and burial. The text which accompanied confirmation was learned verbatim by candidates and constituted a major block of discourse that could be deployed and understood, and have regulatory capacity, in many different contexts.

Those who did not, or could not – “by reason of malicious and open contention with his neighbours or other grave and open sin without repentance” (ibid., 172) – take the Sacrament regularly were recipients neither of the outward sign of the Lord’s Supper, the Bread and Wine, nor the inward part, the Body and Blood of Christ whereby the body and souls of the recipients were strengthened and refreshed. More to the practical point, perhaps, they would have been the subject of derogatory circulating gossip. Virtually the whole community filed through the ritual at the major dates of the church calendar, particularly Easter and Christmas. Mary Whishaw took the ceremony of the Sacrament seriously, and clearly found spiritual exaltation and comfort

² The Church of England Catechism presents an abbreviated version of the Articles of Faith of the Anglican Church – doctrinal law, in other words. Other Protestant Churches may or may not have formulated some kind of similar confession of faith but most relegate these to subordinate standards of belief in view of the ultimate authority given to the scriptures. Likewise, confirmation may take place in other Protestant churches but it is usually merely regarded as signalling the acceptance of baptised members into the duties and privileges of church membership. It is not sacramental in any way. Only the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches require a bishop to administer the rite (the Orthodox church prefers but does not demand this), much as they also require priestly ordination and licensing at a bishop’s hands (hence the term Episcopalian, referring to the government of the church by a ministry of bishops). The Articles were also part of secular English law: “The sole test which the court could apply was compatibility with, or contradictions of, the legal formularies of the establishment: articles, liturgy, canons. All questions not plainly decided by those formularies must be held to be open questions, on which a clergyman may teach as he thinks fit” (Chadwick, 1970, 81). This is a paraphrase of the judgment made in the trial of Dr. Williams, a clergyman and contributor to a book of essays purporting to comprise “free and honest discussions of Biblical questions” (ibid., 75) in 1862. Williams had described the Bible as “an expression of devout reason”, and therefore had “violated the articles declaring it to be God’s Word written” (ibid., 81). He was suspended from his benefice for a year. The latter half of the nineteenth century was littered with similar trials, as the Established Church was convulsed by the ‘attack’ of science on the veracity of the Bible.

in the practice. She was disappointed to learn that in the “Greek Church” the ceremony was rather perfunctory. Her disapproval is perhaps not surprising in that in 1890, for example, she herself received Communion – “communicated” – 37 times.

Went to matins with Dedie; Effie there too [both Carrs and surprisingly distant relatives of Mary’s] & she came with me to St. Isaacs; there was a Celebration going on in a side chapel: the Russians receive standing, the Priest puts the Elements into their mouths with a Spoon: the people were not half as reverent as I expected, & seemed very casual. I believe they nearly always, only communicate once in the year (Mary 10.3.1890, emphasis in text).

The difference in understanding associated with the bread/wine ritual in the Church of England and other locally practiced religions, including British Nonconformist where it represented the outward signs of brotherhood rather than the body and blood of Christ, created “a wall harder than the wall of Balbus to leap over” (Augustus Birrell, cited in Briggs, 1968, 68). That helped to sever connections between British Anglicans and Nonconformists in Petersburg, while, as Briggs also points out, the English working classes in the mid-nineteenth century were mostly “indifferent to the call for regular worship” (ibid., 63) of any denomination. The discursive constructions which were so pervasive in the Anglican world by virtue of their entextualization in the Anglican Prayer Book stopped dead at Balbus’s wall³.

The text which had to be learnt for the ceremony of confirmation into the Church of England comprised several different sections. The first section is a series of ritualised questions and responses between the officiating Bishop and the candidates which aim to display that candidates understand what has been promised by their Godparents on their behalf at Baptism, followed by an abbreviated version of the allied Articles of belief⁴. Next comes a repetition of the Ten Commandments followed by a summary of the two things to be learnt from them – the duty towards God, and the duty towards one’s neighbour – and finally the Lord’s prayer, its meaning, and the meaning of the two major Sacraments. The duty that is owed to thy neighbour, supposedly a paraphrase of the Ten Commandments “is to love him as myself, and to do to all men, as I would they should do unto me” (ibid., 211). But, this injunction swiftly dealt with, the Catechism goes on to make clear the hierarchy involved in the concept of ‘neighbour’ and the duties owed as a result: to love, honour and succour parents, to honour and obey the

³ At the same time, it is worth noting that the preponderance of Anglicanism among community members represented a slight deviation from practice in the place whence most originated, the Midlands, where Nonconformist attendances made up more than 50 per cent of church attendances. Those who arrived in the community as non-Anglicans, however, changed allegiance rapidly, or their children did. The English Church was too much of a centripetal force in the community to be ignored by would-be community members.

⁴ “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. Amen.”

These comprise a brief summary of the first five Articles of what are known as the Thirty-nine Articles of Church of England belief, many of which are little more than bureaucratic dicta concerning church hierarchy and correct attitudes to “Romish” practices, excommunicants, good works etc.

Queen/King...

and all those that are put in authority under her: To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters: To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters: To hurt no body by word nor deed; To be true and just in all my dealing: To bear no malice nor hatred in my heart; *To keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering*; To keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity: *Not to covet nor desire other men's goods: but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me.* (ibid., 211; emphasis added in accordance with Bayley's replication, above: temperance, soberness and chastity had not been mentioned.)

Consul-General Bayley had drawn a discursively constructed sign-carrying vehicle from a high profile source into the debate about education funding, one memorised at some point by all his listeners. Carried along with its Bayley-referenced baggage, the vehicle is heavy with a load of signs which endorse a specifically English social hierarchy: the English monarch, those in authority under her, submission, lowly ordering, reverence, betters, duty, God-designated "state of life".

I am not going to examine in broad terms the impact which the discourses contained in the Bible had on the communal world of these people. That would be a major work and more than a book in itself⁵. The teachings of the Christian Bible have impacted in an infinite number of ways on virtually the whole globe⁶. Biblical discourses would have been familiar to all, but not, perhaps, as intimately familiar to Anglicans as Nonconformists. What was specific to Church of England congregations was *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of England*. It will be remembered from the brief discussion of the subject earlier that there was never any suggestion that the rituals outlined in the text were other than instituted and sanctioned by an Act of Parliament, that the document as a whole was other than a man-made instrument of order and control, "enacted by the Queen's Highness, with the Assent of the Lords and Commons in this present Parliament assembled" (ibid., 4). The Church of England, in concert with those "in authority", was entitled to make such changes in "the particular Forms of Divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein" (ibid., 8) as were considered convenient in their respective times. The wording of the Catechism, and indeed of many of the ceremonies set out in the guide (including the specific selections of Bible readings considered appropriate for every occasion), are themselves products of the dominant discourses of the same era which produced the Merchant Adventurers who shunted English trade and influence out into the wider world⁷. The

⁵ I will, however, refer to Biblical framings of certain terms and concepts in broad circulation in the community such as, in the following chapter, the construction of the concept of 'father'.

⁶ Frederick Faber, in a passage that became so famous it was widely quoted long after the author was forgotten, called the beauty of the King James version of the Bible one of the strongholds of Protestantism in England. "It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of the national seriousness" (cited in Chadwick 1970, 43).

⁷ The increasing prominence of overseas trade was given recognition in the Prayer Book of 1662 by the inclusion of some special prayers and thanksgivings "particularly for those at Sea, together with an Office for the Baptism of such as are of Riper Years" (ibid., 9), not considered necessary when the first Prayer Book was compiled in 1553 but now of use for the "baptizing of Natives in our Plantations and others

Book of Common Prayer, replicated in identical form for centuries, both held within its covers a distillation of the discourse world which spawned it, and provided a template for adherents to that world wherever they worshipped together during that time. The tenets were in broad circulation in England, certainly among the sectors to which the community was most closely allied⁸.

Any Minister who refused to follow the “Order and Form as they be mentioned and set forth in the said Book”, or who should “speak anything in the Derogation or Depraving of the said Book” (ibid., 4) was liable to life imprisonment at a third offence. Any lay person doing the same, or coercing a minister to transgress, would suffer fines on the first two offences, a total confiscation of personal property and life imprisonment on the third. (In 1593, after the Elizabethan Acts of Uniformity, three men who led a Nonconformist congregation were beheaded for asserting that “Christ is the only Head of his Church”.) These injunctions comprise part of the discipline of the Reformation as it was effected in England at about the time of the first Merchant Adventurers’ arrival in Russia, and as it was reprinted in successive editions of the Prayer Book throughout ensuing centuries.

Alan Macfarlane’s fascinating dissection of the diary of a vicar, Ralph Josselin (1970), during the turbulent ecclesiastic years spanning Cromwell’s repudiation of the Prayer Book and its final reinstatement after the restoration of Charles II in 1660 (in the Act of Uniformity of 1662), highlights the attitude of a practising Anglican minister to these changes. Josselin was mildly Nonconformist in dogma, and had supported Cromwell and his ‘roundheads’ in the Civil War but wished to retain his living and calling and outwardly approved the re-institution of an Episcopal Ministry under Charles II – unlike hard-line dissidents who felt that any ordinary Christian man, regardless of background or training, could make a better preacher than those who were appointed by the Ministry – who were perceived to hold themselves ‘above’ the common man. Josselin had been happy to cast out the Prayer Book when Cromwell repudiated it, and preach *ex tempore* – sometimes for many hours at a stretch – and he excised the

converted to the faith” (ibid.). There were a handful of adult baptisms conducted in the English Church of St. Petersburg, an Anabaptist and non-Christians like Kalmucks, Jews and ‘black men’.

⁸ George Eliot, whose books Mary Whishaw mentions borrowing from the English library in Petersburg, had one of her characters, a yeoman’s wife, curtsy towards the local squire despite her feeling that he always looked at his tenants “as if you was a insect, and he was going to dab his finger-nail on you” (1951, 330). Even though Mrs Poyzer “was not the woman to misbehave towards her betters, and fly in the face of the catechism” (ibid.), she went on to speak her mind to the squire: “I know it’s christened folks’ duty to submit to their betters as fur as flesh and blood ‘ull bear it; but I’ll not make a martyr o’ myself...” (ibid., 333). The hero of the novel, Adam Bede, reads his Bible on Sundays and “enjoyed the freedom of occasionally differing from an Apocryphal writer [those books of the Bible regarded by the 39 Articles as being of dubious authenticity]. For Adam knew the Articles quite well, as became a good churchman” (ibid., 478). To what degree these discourse items actually circulated among the yeoman and country working people Eliot is portraying is less relevant here than that they certainly circulated throughout the novel reading public, of which the Petersburg English merchant community were active participants. Many working people were illiterate, of course, and many more would not have read beyond a newspaper; even the tenets and services of the Prayer Book would only have been rote learnt. Eliot also mentions this: “For none of the old people held books – why should they? not one of them could read. But they knew a few ‘good words’ by heart, and their withered lips now and then moved silently, following the service without any very clear comprehension indeed, but with a simple faith in its efficacy to ward off harm and bring blessing” (ibid., 191). Mary found Adam Bede a moving book, but was ‘shocked’ when she read a biography of George Eliot.

Sacrament of the Supper and other prohibited ceremonies from his services without a qualm. Yet, threatened with suspension by post-Restoration church authorities and despite the resistance of some of his congregation, the Prayer Book reappeared in his church in 1662 and, after censure by the archdeacon's court for not administering Holy Communion, that ceremony was also reinstated along with the abandoned surplice and the various other practices dictated by the Prayer Book – an avowed product of human contrivance.

It is easy for present day Westerners to overlook the profound effect which documents such as the Prayer Book have had on Western belief and practice; impossible to underestimate their influence when one considers that the rituals which are set out in such detail were intended to be repeated with clockwork regularity, and, within the community under analysis, were always available for those who cared to attend formal services in the English Church. Some of them, such as the order for morning and evening prayer are “daily to be said and used throughout the year” (ibid., 40) and also constituted the daily prayers that were said within private households such as Mary's. Morning and evening prayers are very similar in both content and structure, offering opportunity at various points for the inclusion of variation according to the Calendar⁹. Some alternatives or additions, like the Litany, are to be repeated on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Specific Collects¹⁰ and readings are ordered at the major feasts throughout the liturgical year such as Christmas-Day, Epiphany, Easter-Day¹¹ etc. Rites of passage such as baptism, the churching of women (after giving birth), confirmation, marriage, approaching death (the latter not usually taking place in a church, for obvious reasons¹²), and burial all have their associated and immutable discursive programmes, as do an array of special occasions such as times of “War and Tumults”, the restoration of “Publick Peace at home”, and deliverance from storm, flood or famine and so on, for which certain forms of sacred address are also laid down.

I assume, therefore, that the discursive constructions of *The Book of Common Prayer* were in broad circulation among the people who comprised the community; phrases from it reappear in sources as disparate as the British Factory Copy Book, in English literature, private letters, and Mary Whishaw's diaries. Thomas Carlyle, considerably pre-dating Durkheim, asserted in a book that was widely read, discussed and cautiously admired in Mary's coterie that “outward Religion originates by Society, Society becomes possible by Religion. Nay, perhaps every conceivable Society, past and present, may well be figured as properly and wholly a Church”

⁹ This is printed at the beginning of the Prayer Book and contains a list of all Immovable holy-days throughout the year (the Moveable Feasts such as Easter are also listed separately) – and pre-selected lessons from the Scriptures to be read every day: Old Testament extracts at the first lesson of morning and evening, New Testament at the second, the aim being to read most of the Old Testament every year and the New Testament twice.

¹⁰ Collect: “a name given to ‘a comparatively short prayer, more or less condensed in form, and aiming at a single point, or at two points closely connected with each other’, one or more of which, according to the occasion and season, have been used in the public worship of the Western Church from an early date” (OED).

¹¹ “Easter-day...is always the First *Sunday* after the Full Moon which happens upon, or next after the Twenty-first Day of *March*; and if the Full Moon happens upon a *Sunday*, *Easter-day* is the *Sunday* after” (Prayer Book, 30, emphasis in text). The apparent paganism inherent in these instructions is actually the result of the endeavour to exactly replicate the time of Christ's crucifixion.

¹² The exception to this being Admiral Robert Hall who ‘died suddenly’ in the English Church in 1844, aged 83 years.

(1863 (1831), 132). In an organic metaphor Carlyle likens Government to the outward skin of the body politic; associations for industry, craft guilds and so on as the tissue lying under the skin whereby Society stands and works; and religion as “the inmost Pericardial and Nervous Tissue, which ministers Life and warm Circulation to the whole” (ibid.). Without religion, he continues, “Men were no longer Social but Gregarious; which latter state could not continue, but must gradually issue in universal selfish discord, hatred, savage isolation, and dispersion;-whereby...the very dust and dead body of Society would have evaporated and become abolished” (ibid.). This is a very pragmatic understanding of the role of religion and one which accords with the lines from the Prayer Book quoted in chapter three: “for we think it convenient that every Country should use such Ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God’s honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living” (12 – written before Britain began its colonization projects). McLeod also notes that, “If Anglicanism was an integral part of the life of the upper class this was primarily because most members of the class still saw the Established Church as an essential part of the social order within which they held privileged positions, and which they felt a duty to uphold” (1974, 201), a view which accords with recorded Factory valorization of the largely secular contributions which they perceived that the Church made to the community’s public profile.

It is not out of line, then, to assume that the ‘wes’ so often repeated in joint prayer and response had a marked effect in shaping an idea of who comprised those communities in which such ‘wes’ were implemented¹³, and a brief examination of the basic text for morning and evening prayer is illuminating. It begins with a selection of sentences extracted from the Scriptures, followed by an address by the Minister (or lay person conducting the prayers) and then general confession to be said aloud by the congregation, “after the Minister, all kneeling” (ibid., 42). All these stretches of discourse are awash with ‘wes’ referring to those who are assembled together for the service to “render thanks for the great benefits that *we* have received at his [our Heavenly Father’s] hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul” (ibid., 42). “*We* have erred...*We* have followed too much the devices and desires of *our* own hearts, *We* have offended against thy holy laws. *We* have left undone those things which *we* ought to have done...” (ibid., emphasis added) etc. This is followed by the absolution or remission of sins (spoken by the priest and omitted when the prayers are being led by a lay person) which refers to Almighty God in the third person contrasted with ‘we’ the penitents. Then the Minister kneels along with “the people” and they all say the Lord’s Prayer. This is a stretch of text which is probably familiar even to contemporary Western agnostics and contains 71 words, of which ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘us’ comprise nine. “*Our* Father”, “Give *us*”, “*our* daily bread”, “forgive *us our* trespasses as *we* forgive them that trespass against *us*”, etc.

After the Lord’s Prayer, the morning and evening services blossom into the passion of the Psalms: *Venite, Exultimus Domino* and *Cantate Domino*, “come let us sing unto the Lord”, and others which are appointed. These are followed by the first Lesson from the Old Testament, also

¹³ It is noteworthy that the “List of all English residing in St. Petersburg, 1782-1783” (GL 11,192) should be recorded in the Register of the English Church, as they are not distinguished by the title “English Congregation”, as the 1707-8 list is, which would make it more logical. The English Church in Petersburg had a broad sphere of operations.

as appointed by the Calendar, and either the hymn *Te Deum Laudamus* or canticle *Benedicite, Omnia Opera* (to be sung “in English”); then the second lesson and the *Benedictus* which reminds God of the promise made to Abraham “that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies: might serve him without fear” (ibid., 49). All of this is interlarded with the hypnotic response: “As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.” This is the ultimate statement under a metaculture of tradition: it has been ‘thus’ since our God made the world, it is ‘thus’ now and it will be ‘thus’ forever, followed by the term ‘amen’ which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as “a solemn expression of concurrence in, or ratification of, a prayer, or wish; Be it so really!” Talk which purports to prescribe social relations and other fundamental features of worldview operates at its most effective level when the internal structure of the relevant discourse makes use of macroparallelism, that is “repetition with variation of whole blocks of discourse within a narrative” (Sherzer and Urban 1984, 4), or, “similarities between discourse segments that are sequentially juxtaposed” (Urban 1993, 60). Architecturally incorporated in this way, the recurrence of the discursive object will suggest a sense of cultural continuity at an unconscious level. Each repetition that occurs acts as a mirror, on a smaller scale, of the replications that occur, or are assumed to occur, in the life of the community over the passing of much greater periods of time. Coupled to specific semantic content – “As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.” – the poesy of macroparallelism can exert an even more marked influence.

The Apostles’ Creed, said or sung standing, follows on from the *Benedictus*, and shifts into a re-statement of individual belief. The Creed outlines a first person singular commitment to the trinity: “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth...Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord...crucified, dead, and buried...descended into hell...ascended into heaven...he shall come to judge the quick and the dead...I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick (sic) Church; The Communion of Saints...” (ibid., 50, 59) etc. Then comes the Lord’s Prayer again, said “with a loud voice”, but minus the final lines, “For thine is the kingdom, The power and the glory, for ever and ever.”

The ritual of daily family prayer in Victorian homes is mentioned widely in literature of the time but it has not been possible for me to establish exactly how common this was among families in the community, though several primary sources refer to ‘prayers’ in an offhand way on a regular basis. In Mary Whishaw’s homes domestic prayers were read before breakfast every morning by the senior family member present (generally her father and later her husband but the duty devolved to Mary in their absence). Her diaries provide a glimpse of how rigidly it was integrated into the daily schedule: “Late for Prayers. I really don’t know how it is I can’t wake in the morning” (21.5.1890); “Missed prayers &c. nobody told me the bell had rung” (10.1.1891). Mary’s cousin Fred, however, makes oblique comment to the contrary when he describes the role of religion in the life of the Russian peasant as something which is “an integral part of his daily life, not a thing to be put away during the week and trotted out on Sundays with the best coat and hat” (F. Whishaw 1893, 80), which seems to sum up his understanding of the role of religion in the lives of those around him. In summer, when the community fragmented into its satellite summer colonies, Fred Whishaw records of Mourino: “Here [on Sundays], prayers were wont to be read by a respected member of the colony, to the accompaniment of the ceaseless song, in all keys at once, of myriads of mosquitoes” (ibid.,

338)¹⁴. However, from at least the beginning of the nineteenth century (and probably throughout its duration), the English Church at St. Petersburg seems to have aimed at holding at least a daily service, with several more on Sundays and on ‘Feast Days’ of which there were 23 in a year (GL 11,751C).

One can assume, therefore, that the ‘we’ of those assembled was a commonplace. Think of the repetition of ‘we’, of how it tied each speaker to every other present, on every occasion of assemblage. The ‘we’ of family prayer, the ‘we’ of prayer jointly held at Mourino every summer Sunday, and the less intimate ‘we’ of the formal church services held by the whole congregation in St. Petersburg. Unlike many churches in England at the time, this did not sell off its pews to families who could afford the exclusivity, so neighbours might differ from service to service. And each time, whoever they were, they were part of this ‘we’. But there are other ‘wes’ in the text. Up until the end of the second Lord’s Prayer the stretches of discourse prescribed for the morning and evening services refer to a ‘we’ which is relatively devoid of any referent beyond those who are in the immediate assembly, while simultaneously implying the larger body of worshippers which comprises a full contingent – a congregation both immediate and potential – of Christian worshippers the world over. But this apparently ecumenical worship is not what it seems, in light of developments in the later sections of the basic service. So who were these ‘wes’, both immediate and potential, to those who comprised the congregation of English Church in St. Petersburg? Those who were confirmed in the Church of England, naturally, but what was unique about the Anglican branch of Christianity – or of the “Catholick Church” as the Prayer Book occasionally calls it? After the second saying of the Lord’s Prayer, a rather more secular and particularist note enters the services which shifts the global Christian ‘we’ into a different key.

The priest stands and conducts an interlocution with a still kneeling congregation which goes as follows:

Priest. O Lord, shew¹⁵ thy mercy upon us.

Answer. And grant us thy salvation.

Priest. O Lord, save the Queen.

Answer. And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Priest. Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

Answer. And make thy chosen people joyful.

Priest. O Lord, save thy people.

Answer. And bless thine inheritance [descendants].

Priest. Give peace in our time, O Lord. [famously and erroneously reproduced in 1939]

Answer. Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

Priest. O God, make clean our hearts within us.

Answer. And take not thy Holy Spirit from us (ibid., 51).

¹⁴ In an aside that recalls expectations of bodily control during religious ritual, he goes on: “Now it is too much to expect of any Christian, even when taking part in divine service, that he will allow a mosquito to settle on hand or face... and forthwith commence to suck his blood, without instant retaliation in the shape of a blow designed to crush the enemy *flagrante delicto*. Hence, from the very first word throughout the service it was this sort of thing: ‘Dearly beloved (smack) brethren (smack),’ &c.” (ibid., 337-8).

¹⁵ Mary Whishaw spelt ‘show’ as ‘shew’ throughout her diaries, an archaic form which reflects her immersion in the world according to *The Book of Common Prayer*. It had long since been superseded in common usage.

From the point where the priest intones “O Lord save the Queen”, the ‘us’, ‘we’, ‘thy Ministers’, ‘thy chosen people’, and so on which follow become synonymous with those people who acknowledge a single monarch: the Queen – the English Queen. God, in concurrence with this, ‘fighteth’ for those who acknowledge the English Queen as their Sovereign. God is on ‘our’ side. ‘We’ are the English. This is a big part of the continuing close connection between Anglican communities abroad and in the homeland in the *longue durée*. The association of God with Anglicanism continues and is strengthened in the five following ‘Collects’, which include one begging for the grace to live well, but which are principally devoted to requests for defence against “all assaults of our enemies” (called “The Second Collect, for Peace”), and protection for “the Queen’s Majesty” and the Royal Family and finally a Prayer of St. Chrysostom which reminds God of his duty to grant the requests of any assembly of at least two or three “gathered in thy Name”. “Thy chosen people” are inseparably linked to the entity comprising the subjects of the English monarch, and this is “daily to be said and used throughout the year” – or at least it is so instructed. The ‘we’ of the gathered assembly and global Christian congregation, the “thy people” of a Christian God, the ‘we’, “the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand” (ibid., 44), is transfigured significantly into a ‘we’ that had daily relevance for Anglican congregations everywhere: ‘we’, the subjects of our gracious sovereign. It is also a ‘we’ that requests victory against ‘our’ enemies and expects God’s support in such warlike undertakings. In other words, the most highly profiled and embrative ‘we’ in use in the community was one which included all British Anglicans and excluded other Christians who were not subjects of the monarch who was head of the Church of England, and even excluded subjects of the monarch who did not accept that monarch as ‘head’ of their church but assigned this role to God (i.e. most Nonconformists).

This understanding clearly informs the Reverend Edward Law’s otherwise somewhat inexplicable statement, already quoted above, in which the spiritual leader of the community asserts the correlation between testifying “our Allegiance to the King of Kings” and manifesting “our Allegiance to our earthly Sovereign” (GL 31,782, 1). No republican could also be an Anglican, so much is certain, and most forms of British radicalism had their roots in areas of strong Nonconformist influence: the Midlands, Wales, Scotland. As well as endorsing a stratified social order, adherence to the doctrines of the Prayer Book was also a statement of monarchism. The fixing of such statements by the mass and unchanged printing of religious doctrine and order of service for over three centuries represents a powerful metacultural insistence on tradition. Those Protestant sects who rejected the patently human-discursive doctrines of *The Book of Common Prayer*, who denied the validity of a governing ministry of bishops in ecclesiastical matters, that is, who valorized the direct communion between the individual and God, and recognised the Bible – as the word of God – as the only spiritual authority (overlooking the long term effects which idiosyncratic usage and interpretation were bound to introduce, particularly among the illiterate), had none of the same machinery designed to prevent the encroachment of innovation, and perhaps no interest in doing so; as I said, the links between radicalism and Nonconformism are unquestionable.

Although there is evidence that services in the Petersburg English Church were less frequent in summer when so many of the congregation were absent, Mary also includes in the leaves of her diary for 1891 the Lenten church programme, which was a full one, with regular

“Special Offertories” for missions in “darkest Africa” and “darkest England” at which it was “earnestly hoped that the liberality which has marked the contributions of our community for so many years will be maintained”. Ash Wednesday offered five services, two of which celebrated Holy Communion; Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays offered Matins at 10.00 a.m.; on Wednesdays and Fridays this took place at 11.30 a.m., with the addition of the Litany or General Supplication asking for mercy, redemption of sin, protection of the self and the gracious Queen etc. Evensong was held daily and Sunday services “will be as usual”, which meant, according to Mary’s diary, a fairly gruelling day.

1st Sunday in Lent. Went to Early Celebration [of Holy Communion]. Read &c. Went to Matins. Talked & read &c. Went to the special service invented for Lent of the Litany & a reading. Home to afternoon tea, & after a rest went to Evensong. Tired. (10.3.1891 – she was not an exciting diarist, but this is an unusually dreary little entry.)

Mary was a more regular attendee than most of the community; she often mentions which of her large immediate family have gone to church with her, which would seem to indicate that they did not always do this. On the other hand, the ‘Alfred Whishaws’ did not operate as a family unit in all things in any case, and often she does not seem to have known what the others were doing and is surprised to find them in the same place at the same time, so they may have made their own ways to church. She comments when the Church is packed, and knows to get there early to get a seat at the major events such as Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas, and mentions that there were “ever so many communicants” at Early Celebration on Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter (29.3.1890). However, she frequently also remarks on the poor turn out. On Christmas Eve 1890, with the temperature at -8° C, Mary “drove off” (she usually walked) to 10 a.m. Matins

and only Miss Rayne [of the “tremolo” singing voice] and Carrie Wilkins there besides. [This possibly only refers to those people she ‘knew’, or to other “She Choir” members, it is hard to say.] Lots of the girls turned up after service & we decorated the church. Only the Altar vases &c, stands, the priests’ desks & the font were decorated. Ella & I went to buy the flowers. 25 Rs went in no time, prices ruinous. (24.12.1890)¹⁶.

The fact ‘the girls’ came to perform what was a regular duty to the community and its church, but could not be bothered to come to what amounted to a duty to God, indicates a certain order of priorities. Besides, decorating the church was fun. On the second Monday in Lent earlier in the same year, she writes that she went to Evensong at 5 p.m.

After service (at which by the way there were only 3 other people: How curious it is that we people don’t go to church more often, it’s just as if we didn’t really believe in anything) went to Effie’s and she gave me more afternoon tea. A splendid wind, on the bridge it was hard work not to be blown away. The river rising so fast that the water got above the ice at

¹⁶ This, incidentally, displays one of Mary’s commonest ‘we’ usages before she was married: ‘we the young unmarried women of the community’, who hung out together in a pack, running in and out of each others’ houses, clothes shopping, visiting galleries and theatres, and getting up projects and schemes of all kinds together.

the edge and floated the landing stairs upstream (26.2.1890).

It is apparent, not only that Mary seems to be mentally addressing someone as she writes – but whom? – but also that what Mary regards as ‘a splendid wind’, and other manifestations of Russian winter, discouraged all but the most committed churchgoers. It is also worth mentioning that it is in this kind of reflection that Mary and others use the ‘we’ of the whole community: “we people”. Although she herself attended church 78 times between the first Sunday in Lent – 18.2.1890 – and Easter Sunday on April 1st – or close to twice a day for six weeks – she still considers herself part of her “we people” who “don’t go to church more often”; she is an indivisible part of the community, even though she does not endorse the behaviour of the others in this instance. On the other hand, nor does she regard poor church attendance as evidence of generalised agnosticism; rather it is “just as if” agnosticism were to prevail – which, naturally, it does not. Other sources confirm this pattern of full turn out for the salient rituals and a decided shortage on other occasions. Edith Klockman, who married James Cattley in 1883, recalls in her memoirs, written in 1927, the English Church at Christmas.

One year some enterprising person brought some holly from England...It was also interesting seeing so many non usual attendants at Church. There were the uniformed ones, Captain Gregg, who clanked in in the scarlet hussar uniform of the Guards and several young Creightons in naval uniform¹⁷. Also there were some rare papas who accompanied their wives and families on Christmas Day. (LRA 1406.)

As a matter of record, Mary attended church 142 times in 1890, though more than half of these were during Lent. She was at Mourino from April 26th until September 26th when she did not attend the English Church at all, although there were weekly prayer meetings held at Jim Whishaw’s large dacha, with either Jim or Mary’s father reading the service, or, on three occasions, the Petersburg Minister coming to stay for a couple of days to take services and administer the Sacrament. This means that during the remaining 24 weeks of the year she attended church 64 times, mostly on Sundays, though occasionally on special Church holy days.

The conclusions which may be drawn from all this, is that the role of the Church of England in the lives of the members of the community was, almost certainly, of far greater importance as a standard-bearer than it was part of the spiritual lives of its congregation. Noteworthy in this respect is that even some Nonconformists attended the most important, and tending to secular, ceremonies of the year, particularly Christmas. Meta Muir’s family were in the latter category, and her attraction, as a child, to the style of service held in the English Church, compared to that of the Congregational Chapel is replicated in other accounts of

¹⁷ These would have been Samuel Greig, not Gregg, later a General, great-grandson of Admiral Samuel Greig who married Sarah Cook in 1768 and fathered Admiral Alexis Greig, all in Imperial service; and young Crichtons, not Creightons, a family first mentioned in the church registers on the baptism of Mary, daughter of Sir Alexander and Frances Crichton in 1805. Sir Alexander was head of the Imperial civil medical department and all four of his children baptised in St. Petersburg had their Imperial Majesties as sponsors (godparents). Later Crichtons diversified into other branches of Imperial service, such as the navy, and by the late-nineteenth century were probably “more Russian than English”, intermarrying freely with the Russian nobility.

Nonconformist childhood in Petersburg¹⁸.

Christmas was a glorious time...Then there was service at the English Church. We liked to go there because it was different from the bald service in the Non-Conformist chapel. We were puzzled by the rumble of the responses and rather awed. It was an incomprehensible noise, a holy noise. There was also the thrill of seeing Mr Alfred Cattley, whom we knew, in a white surplice (LRA 1015/115 – personal notes by Meta Muir, born 1863).

The whole issue of religious faith and degree of belief in Christian tenets in the community is a difficult one: it simply was not discussed. Mary holds no private communications with God anywhere in her diaries, though given that she was apparently quite devout, one might expect such soul searching. Certainly the diary of the Reverend Ralph Josselin discussed by Alan Macfarlane (1970), which was written in the seventeenth century, is largely devoted to minute examination of Ralph's personal relationship with God, with God's nature and God's immanence in the world. However, the degree of actual religiosity is somewhat irrelevant to the discussion of the role played by the Church of England in providing a community focus, and in preserving continuity with praxis and belief in the homeland, and a sense of stasis and maintained traditions. Certainly, a less than fervent belief in the word of God as it is presented in the Bible and a greater weight given to a 'rational', 'ordered' and compartmentalised conduct of religiosity (a *socially* compelled one), stands a better chance of forward acceleration in increasingly pluralist English worlds. There is no doubt that the texts of the Church of England Prayer Book were familiar to all, and that they are *human* doctrinal standards, devised by 'people like us', adds to the general weight of evidence in favour of the argument that a community is lodged in a matrix of circulating discursive artefacts that constrain and/or extend the options available to those who subscribe to that community.

Inadequate church attendance may not always have pleased the devout (like Mary), and certainly would not have pleased the Chaplains, but it was regular in the sense that all the important rituals of the year overfilled a church that held 600 people, out of an approximate 2,500 British subjects in St. Petersburg and its satellite industrial complexes at Schlusselfburg and Alexandroffsky towards the end of the nineteenth century (few inhabitants, apart from the industrialist owners, would have attended from the latter locations). The welding of the spiritual life of the community, whatever it may have been, to a much more salient secularism, which comprised an assemblage of understandings including that of trading worship for material benefit¹⁹, and regular reiteration of national allegiance and the sanctity of the social order, had the effect of both creating and endorsing discourses of exclusivity based, ostensibly, on membership in a sanctified association, but, more practically, on internally defined status and

¹⁸ Caroline Cummings' daughter, Lina, married Ernest Gambs in the English Church in 1870, but her children were baptised into the German Lutheran Church of her husband. Caroline wrote telling Lily Ramsay that one of the little boys had witnessed the Anglican clergyman preaching at a private house and had enjoyed it so much that he demanded to be allowed to attend the English Church thenceforth.

¹⁹ "Almighty God, who...dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen*" (A Prayer of St. Chrysostom, 53.) Daily to be said at Morning and Evening Prayer throughout the year.

nationality. Given local conditions of diaspora, the latter qualification could be relaxed if the two former were met; the first two seem never to have been relaxed.

As a brief epilogue to the thesis outlined here, it is interesting to take a look from the other side; from the perspective of the children of self-made merchant Archibald Mirrielees (importer of English haberdashery and co-founder of Muir & Mirrielees, Russia's largest department store), father of the Maida Mirrielees whose memoirs and letters are part of my primary sources. Archibald was an unyielding Congregationalist who had been a pillar of the British and American Chapel in St. Petersburg before his retirement to England at the age of 60. Brought up in an atmosphere of "embarrassing piety" and rigid puritan ethics, Maida hated what she calls the "h-dropping evangelicals" who visited her parents' house during her youth. "Most of my playfellows went to church and I thought chapel rather a plebeian institution meant for uneducated people. When we, coming back from chapel, met friends on their way to a kind of cheerful church parade in the park, I used to feel envious and ashamed." (LRA 1192/2, 6.)²⁰ Archibald "wished" that Maida's elder brother William should become a Congregational minister, which William reluctantly did after some years of study.

William began preaching but very soon his taste was offended by the unrefined people he had to do with and he felt he could never become a minister [Nonconformist]. He felt drawn to the better educated and more refined circles connected with the established church and asked my father's permission to be ordained a clergyman [C. of E.]. This request was refused and he was made to return to Russia and enter business for which he was quite unfitted and in which he took no interest. (LRA 1192/2, 23)

Maida and all her siblings married members of the Church of England either in Petersburg or Moscow and turned their backs firmly on Nonconformist doctrines, and the uneducated and unrefined circles connected with them. They all chose the communal world created by the people who are the subjects of this paper. It was a compellingly attractive one, absolutely sure of itself and its hierarchies of class and status, taste and refinement. It had created them over centuries of concerted attention.

WORKING ST. PETERSBURG INTO THE COMMUNAL WORLD.

Home is a double-barreled word. It conveys the notion of all that is already given – the sedimented lives of those who have gone before – but it also conveys the notion of what is chosen – the open horizons of a person's own life...

Home is always lived as a relationship, a tension. Sometimes it is between the place one starts out from and the places one puts down roots. Sometimes it is between the experience of a place when one is young and the experience of the same place when one is old. Home, like any word we use to cover a particular field of experience, always begets its own

²⁰ "There is abundant evidence of the association between social and religious cleavage in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. When the members of a community are divided into classes, always separate and often antagonistic, meeting only in relations of authority and subordination, it is futile to expect that they will meet in the same church." (McLeod 1974, 281.) Apart from questioning whether an entity fractured by class, religion and place of congregation deserves the title 'community', evidence from the primary sources used here validates that used by McLeod.

negation. Home may evoke security in one context and seem confining in another. Our consciousness shifts continually between home and the world, as in those Gestalt images where figure becomes ground and ground becomes figure (Michael Jackson 1995, 122-3).

...displacement is no less the source of powerful attachments than are experiences of profound rootedness...“no one lives in the world in general.” What could be truer of placed experience – secure or fragile, pleasurable or repugnant, comforting or unsettling – than the taken-for-granted quality of its intense particularity? (Feld and Basso 1996, 11.)

In the previous chapter, and in the section above, I examined what Barth describes as the “basic value orientations” of the community, identifiable in circulating discourses defining Englishness and Church of England worship, which I believe to have been protected and maintained in relative stability over the long term by metacultural comment valorizing tradition which travelled with cultural items in this area. I pointed out that metaculture which insisted on replication was closely associated with the public expression of unified group identity, both via moral self-definition and, more specifically, in the domain of sanctified group assembly and the discourses immutably fixed for such occasions. Both subjects dealt, more or less, with content and paths of talk which are generated and maintained in public domains, and therefore are most vulnerable to public control. This section looks at an area of everyday life in which community identity was not ostensibly invested, in which idiosyncratic individual experience and proclivity was not subject to the stringent critiques produced by the metacultural microscope to the degree that overt practice which reflected upon the community as a whole generally was.

It is no coincidence that it is a field of constraint and opportunity which this pragmatic group knew to be beyond their control: the topographical ‘place’ of St. Petersburg and its implacable climate which demanded the use of a number of ‘vulgar’ items of dress and practice, and offered a degree and variety of highly polished hedonistic diversion with which even London could not compete. It is also no coincidence that it is in the area of adaptation to foreign conditions, unprotected by a metacultural commentary which could favour or insist upon identical replication and reproduction of all existing cultural forms – on accelerating traditional configurations – that innovation and deviation was most easily ‘passed’ by circulating metaculture. As I have noted, by the middle of the nineteenth century circulating items of talk were shaping the communal world of English St. Petersburg into configurations that endorsed a ‘work hard, play hard’ mentality. Life was jolly, carefree, fun and revolved around the business of making money. The corollary, however, is that if ‘fun’ were allowed to be so much more fun than church going, for example, church going would suffer, though business would not²¹. In 1889 and 1890, before she married her clergyman husband, even Mary Whishaw had been known to miss Sunday services on the promise of a ‘snow-shoeing’ (cross-country skiing) outing at Mourino, courtesy of the luxury sled and horses belonging to Mr. Blessig. Maida

²¹ Even for Jim Whishaw, who had stated of his years studying to be a doctor at St. Barts. that he never let work interfere with pleasure, business always came before fun but even business was enjoyed. John Gellibrand Hubbard’s nephew wrote in 1917: “Superintending the ‘Brack’ of goods on the Petersburg quays was preferable to indoor office work [in London] and the journeys into the Interior and Siberia afforded sometimes exciting experiences ...buying grain in bulk at Rybinsk was more interesting than making a contract from a pint sample without stirring from your office stool” (LRA 1091/8).

Mirrielees, living with her mother, younger sister and retired, autocratic, Nonconformist father in England remembers the “curious feeling” when her brothers and older sisters visited from Russia and “one of them mentioned picnics and lawn tennis on Sundays, for such Sabbath breaking was unknown among our set in England, and we felt instinctively that even our sympathetic mother must not be told of these ‘lapses’” (LRA 1192/2). Not, one might say, relevant to discussion of Anglican practice, but the idea of the sanctity of the Sabbath was still alive and well in Anglican circles in England (see Best 1979, Chadwick 1970, McLeod 1974 et al.), and had been the norm for centuries in the Church of England generally. Fun had become too irresistible, however, and that available in St. Petersburg was subversively sensual: fast troika rides and ice-boating at exhilarating speeds across the gulf, the adrenalin rush of falling, on a light sled, down the face of a steep, glassy ice hill; ice skating on a perfectly maintained rink, directly in front of the English Church on the Neva, with club servants to attend to the removal of shoes and skates, and afterwards hot chocolate or something more stimulating in the warm building erected each winter on the ice for the English club members. On top of all this, a dizzying standard of local artistic entertainment could be enjoyed, with Tchaikowsky – “small man, very gentlemanly, greyish white hair” (Mary, 1.11.89) – or Rubinstein conducting their own compositions, Mathilde Kschessinska of the Imperial Ballet dancing her heart out for her lover the young Tsarevitch Nicholas, or Melba and her future husband, de Rezke, performing at the Opera House. Values and political/religious norms protected by a metacultural commentary endorsing replication lingered on, but what a foe replication found in the particularly enjoyable forms of innovation available to this community in this place. Thus, in this section I am going to be examining, to a much greater degree than elsewhere, the processes by which talk shapes praxis and praxis embodies the ‘truths’ contained in talk.

Steven Feld and Keith Basso, in their introduction to *Senses of Place* describe the terrain such sensing covers as: “the relation of sensation to emplacement; the experiential and expressive ways places are known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived, contested, and struggled over; and the multiple ways places are metonymically and metaphorically tied to identities” (1996, 11). This is a study of an English community, or informal colony, in a specific place. Its members’ worldview, the worldview of the group as a whole, had numerous commonalities with similar English communities scattered across the globe at a similar period of time and operating within the same global economic conditions and political relationships, but the specificities of group praxis were rooted in the particular place and conditions of its existence: urban and ‘summer colony’ nineteenth-century Russia. Their very bodies and the operation of those bodies were shaped by the particular type of ‘knowing’ that inheres in the body’s particular type of ‘learning’. Unconscious, yet very physically manifest, this embodied ‘knowing’ of the locale regulated many aspects of daily, seasonal and epochal existence: daily routines, clothes, food, housing, travel, perceptions of heat and cold; seasonal migration between town and country; pastimes and social life, trading schedules, conceptions of space and distance. On an individual level, personal memories and programs were inscribed unconsciously into the relationship created between the body and particular places.

This is demonstrated in the recollections of Meta Muir when she returned to St. Petersburg in 1887 after an absence of some years in England:

Lea, Father, Molly, Ken & I had a dismal drive to the old colony [Peterhof in the rain] which bored the young ones. To me it was intensely interesting for I remembered every corner of the old Datcha and the road through the wood to the gulf, and even the place where we used to play with the white sand round the roots of an old tree...[later] Molly and I walked down the Gallerny [Galernaya Ulitsa] and I succeeded in picking out our old house. The pavement, the waterspouts all looked familiar and reminded me of all sorts of forgotten things. So did the English Quay with its low granite wall (LRA. 1015/92).²²

The place, and places within the place, had significance engendered through the interaction with them over time. As Casey says, places “gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts. Think only of what it means to go back to a place you know, finding it full of memories and expectations, old things and new things, the familiar and the strange, and much more besides” (1996, 24). To stand again in a place which over a period of time has provoked and contained certain activities and the emotions and thoughts associated with those activities, and perhaps certain configurations of people in certain relation to those activities and thoughts and emotions, makes all these things, even if long gone, more tangible than their mere recollection in absentia ever can. I imagine that Meta Muir could look at the white sand round the old tree and feel her body smaller and kneeling, the grains perhaps warm and silky through her fingers, the sound of her brothers and sisters voices, sense that afternoon tea time was near – and of course the sun was shining²³. The water spouts of the Galernaya Ulitsa perhaps brought back the sound of the melting snow and ice as it rushed down through the pipes from the roofs in early spring, presaging the end of the long white winter. It is this sort of experience which is evidence for the continual affective quality of place, even when absence and return has not sharpened the impression of being transported to a wholly different era. A place exercises a

²² Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), recorded the hospitality of the Merrilies’ (sic) and Muirs on his visit to St. Petersburg in 1867, mentioning the “really remarkable kindness” of Mr. Merrilies giving up one of his days to take him and his companion, Henry Liddon, down to Peterhof. Carroll and Liddon had met Andrew Muir on the train journey to Russia and, with the characteristic encouragement community members gave to acceptable visiting compatriots, Muir had taken them both under his wing, though Carroll also had ‘introductions’ to other community members. Muir’s carriage was waiting for the party at the Peterhof steamer jetty to take them over the grounds of two imperial palaces: “For varied beauty, & perfect combination of nature & art, I think the gardens eclipse those of ‘Sans Souci’.” Carroll goes on to add that they called at the Muir house in Peterhof – that recalled by Meta in the above extract – for lunch “& saw Mrs. Muir & some charming little children, [he was a connoisseur of charming little children] & we finally returned to Petersburg with the indefatigable Mr. Merrilies, who crowned the many services he had done us during the day by procuring a droshky & making the indispensable bargain with the driver, a feat we might well have despaired of by ourselves, in the dark, hustled about in a mob of drivers and a perfect Babel of uncouth noises.” (1965, 981-2.) The Galernaya Ulitsa address was No. 61, also recorded by Carroll who visited it some weeks later, after an intervening trip to Moscow, when he required Muir’s services in the settlement of a dispute with the droshky driver who delivered him (ibid., 996). Carroll also visited Cronstadt, predictably staying the day with Mr. MacSwinney (sic), the Chaplain of the English Church there. The community passed their acceptable visiting compatriots around like parcels on similar tracks to those travelled by circulating talk.

²³ Long ago summers were always warm and sunny. Jim Whishaw, when recounting a Mourino anecdote begins: “One fine day in the summer – and Russian summers were always fine...” (1935, 145). This may be contrasted with the summer of 1890, admittedly one year when the Neva flooded Petersburg, when Mary recorded sufficient rain to prevent outdoor activity on 31 days between the beginning of June and end of August – and these were of the sturdy breed that disregarded a mere shower.

discipline over the person familiar with it, a compulsion to relate to it, by the means and in the ways and configurations which are customary. This is all so obvious. In much the same way that an inarticulate new-born infant 'teaches' even an inexperienced mother to fulfil its needs, a place rewards appropriate and punishes inappropriate behaviour in its purlieus, training the bodies of its inhabitants around its qualities. That these rewards and punishments are constructed and certainly construed via the talk of the communities that inhabit them – in other words, that humans help to constitute place as much as place may help to constitute humans – does not change the basic premise that a place 'trains' its inhabitants.

In the discourses which construe a place as 'home', a group constructs it as such, just as it construes and constructs certain practices into social institutions (religion, authority, kinship), and like all social constructs, the power to shape behaviour with which place as 'home' is imbued will endure long after the original construction workers have been pensioned off – as long as the discourses associated with the original construction are accelerated onwards, in fact. The situation here is complicated by a certain artificiality born of the diasporic relationship between the community and its home. The original English merchants came to a place already constructed and construed, but, one might say, by a construction team using technology unfamiliar to the new arrivals. In best postmodern tradition, wholesale borrowing went on, of the forms, but not necessarily the local meanings, of relationships between local place and locally emplaced bodies. Local lifestyle patterns and local ways of relating to the environment were borrowed, and entered the talk which circulated among old and new candidates for community membership, but they meant new things in the hands of their new users.

Cliché talks of the 'overwhelmingness' of first impressions of a new and very different place and culture, as though the newcomer is being bombarded by so many images and sensations that he or she is virtually swamped by them. In a culturally and geographically new environment the eye is not informed, by familiarity, what to notice and what is irrelevant to immediate purposes. Nothing and everything has salience. The more firmly a person is inculcated with, and ordered by, learnt categories embedded in quite different conditions – the more they are embodied and taken for granted, in other words – the more confusing and unsettling a situation which operates according to new categories is likely to be found. As complete disorientation wears off, an individual's first 'processed' impressions are likely to only make salient what the viewer is conditioned by natal enculturation and personal proclivity (an important and idiosyncratic variable), to notice. These perceptions, however, are actually unanchored, they have none of the layers of meaning behind them which they would have in a familiar setting, nor the understanding afforded by local *savoir faire*, and even the least reflexive spectator will be somehow conscious of this. It can be experienced as a pleasurable phenomenon, tending to heighten awareness of things – place, people, objects – as full of potential, as there to be given meaning or of having meaning discovered; or as ominous, the place, people and objects somehow frightening or distasteful in their emptiness and incomprehensibility, a response which tends to close off curiosity and limit further perceptions except of a limited and reinforcing variety. Both, however, are the responses of a newcomer. If life continues in the place, whether it has been initially received favourably or otherwise, meaning gets layered into perception and the whole manner of viewing phenomena changes. It is as though ocular vision is augmented, almost superseded, by vision of another, more

inferential sort that ‘sees’ things increasingly in terms of their relationships with each other and the self, no longer as things detached, *sui generis*, whose only relationship is with the self.

These layers of memory, and meaning, and the interconnectedness of things, are partly established through personal experience of the objects as they infiltrate the life lived around and among them, but the specific characteristics of the life itself is learnt from the talk and by following the actions of the ‘indigenous people’ – whether a natal group, or an adopted one. In this case, for the newcomer, it would have been members of either the Russian, the English or some other foreign community, depending on which group one’s purpose in visiting Russia led one to learn from. “Thus represented and enacted - daily, monthly, seasonally, annually - places and their meanings are continually woven into the fabric of social life, anchoring it to features of the landscape and blanketing it with layers of significance that few can fail to appreciate” (Basso 1996, 56). Hirsch decries the notion of a sharp distinction, which he attributes to Raymond Williams, between ‘insiders’ who ‘live’ their landscape (“rooted in nature”) and ‘outsiders’ who entertain an objectified concept of it (“understanding based exclusively on commercial/possession values”), asserting that “it savours of romanticism” (1995, 13). This basis of distinction in the relationship between insiders and outsiders to a place and its objects, i.e. that insiders are rooted and outsiders are endeavouring to exploit, is not precisely the one I am suggesting here (though it is not inapplicable, as it happens, to the relationship between the English merchants and their Russian hosts). I do, however, suggest that insiders bring knowing, memory and locally constructed meanings to viewing and outsiders do not – cannot – which results inevitably in a tendency to objectification, potentially exploitative, no matter how well intentioned the observer. This is repeatedly evidenced in the differences apparent between the reports of English travellers and short-term residents, and the discourse naturally produced within the community itself.

Basso disagrees with the suggestion that relationships to places are lived in contemplative moments of social isolation (*ibid.*). Put in that extreme way, so would I. They are the products of ‘living in contact’ and this can only be done as part of a group which experiences the landscape in certain culturally specific ways. However, as with the experience of all cultural forms, what I ‘see’ with my more (or less) than ocular vision is specifically my own. The “symbolic vehicles that give shape to geographical experience and facilitate its communication” (*ibid.*) may be shared, but the actual items stowed in the boot and back seat of the vehicle are mine, and clearly stamped as mine, and no one else can ever know how to use them as I do. Meta Muir could exclaim with pleasure over the old tree and its sandy roots, could describe to her younger siblings and her father what it recalled to her, and her father could add his own memories of sunny afternoons by the gulf to the moment, but that will barely change the way those who were not present on many earlier occasions view what is, quite simply, no more than an old tree with sandy roots. Such talk might, on the other hand, contribute to shaping the ways that hearers begin to relate to the local world in their own new experiences.

This, of course, is the principal problematic for the anthropologist working in any cultural or social field. Though “tangible representations of [place] are commonly made available for public consumptions...[though] men and women talk about them constantly and it is from listening in on such exchanges and then trying to ascertain what has been said that interested outsiders can begin to appreciate what the encompassing landscape is all about” (*ibid.*), this

incipient appreciation does not turn the tree with the sandy roots into a significant item in a web of other significant items. It remains a tree with sandy roots, albeit with markers of signification supplied, in this case, by older sister Meta. Which is lucky, really, because if the field-working ethnographer ‘saw’ as insiders ‘see’, the job of providing insights into the composite of many people’s reality – into communal worlds – would be even more difficult than that facing the anthropologist ‘at home’ who factors the problem into research. I do not think, as Miriam Kahn suggests, that it is curious that “it is while anthropologists themselves are most out of place that they attempt to gain an understanding of the place and placement of others” (1996, 167), because it is while one is most out of place that the placement of others is at its most salient. And at that point when the tree itself becomes only a marker for a personally created network of relationships between people, objects, places, times, activities, emotions, memories, sensations etc., when the tree, *sui generis*, virtually disappears, the anthropologist has lost the edge which is supposed to provide her/him with the authority for writing about ‘others’.

That is the moment, however, when the outsider becomes insider: when the relationships between things become more salient than the things themselves. The sun as a huge red disk, low in a dazzlingly colourless sky above a jagged horizon of solid black spruce forest will no longer be simply that, will no longer catch the breath for its sheer strange beauty, it will mean both more and much less: it will mean that daylight is going, the sledge roads are icy, the nearest posting station is at Shom-Ozorov which is twenty versts away, and it’s going to be a damn cold night. On the other hand, all this has been taken into account: the bottom of the six foot sledge is stuffed with hay pressed down hard and covered with a huge sheepskin rug, the passenger’s own *shoob* (fur coat) covers the head and ears, there are more sheepskin blankets to layer on top, feet are encased in spacious, straw-lined, felt *valinki* (boots – “the great secret of keeping your extremities warm is never to wear anything which causes pressure”), and the *yamshchik* (driver) can, if he chooses, ward off the cold by running along beside the horses’ heads from time to time (oh lucky man). The most pressing concern is whether the sheepskin rugs might be lousy, and the best thing to do is sleep (J. Whishaw 1935, 72). The aesthetic moment is submerged beneath a host of ‘signifieds’.

This many-layered understanding of the relationships between external objects, and the relationships of those relationships with the self, which develops over time, de-emphasises the externals of places, people and objects; they can no longer be simply entextualized in two dimensional strings of nouns and adjectives; they become eventful, processual, meaningful. “In other words, naturally occurring depictions of places [become] actualisations of the knowledge that informs them,...outward manifestations of underlying systems of thought,...native constructions wrought with native materials that embody and display a native cast of mind” (Basso 1996, 59). They also hint at personal and private networks of interrelationships engendered by personal and individually specific experience – constituting a triumvirate of “visible particulars of local topographies, the personal particulars of biographical associations, and the notional particulars of socially given systems of thought” (ibid., 84). This explains the concentration in the community’s circulating talk of implications or meanings of phenomena associated with specific ‘place’ in the extracts below, which may be contrasted with the newcomers’ and travellers’ purely descriptive passages.

Lt-Col. Maude was Military Attaché to the British delegation which attended the coronation

of Alexander II in 1856, and he spent a month or so in St. Petersburg before going on to the ceremony in Moscow. A series of letters written to his wife during this time provide vignettes of local life and impressions of 'place' from the detached perspective of a foreign diplomat.

I am disappointed with this place...The buildings are so vast and the streets and squares so enormous that in many places the grass grows from not being driven or walked upon...the magnificent looking Winter Palace...looks well at a little distance, but when you approach it you find the columns all tumbling to pieces and the mouldings fallen off in many places. Altogether I think it is a desolate looking city...The country is flat, marshy and uninteresting...These islands are all connected by bridges, and are occupied as country residences of the nobility; but they are very flat and, except where they are laid out as gardens, very uninteresting. (LRA 916/1: 8 -12)

It is apparent that Maude, a very short-term visitor, was not impressed. On the other hand, the artist, Robert Ker Porter, who was invited to St. Petersburg by Alexander 1 to paint a series of pictures of Peter the Great's accomplishments in 1805, stayed two years. His artist's vision recorded a different St. Petersburg.

If the city astonished me when under the glowing tints of an autumnal atmosphere, how much more striking does its present pale silvery light make it appear!...But no objects are so strangely beautiful as the trees...the repeated coats of snow thickening on their branches, form them into the appearance of white coral encrusted with a brilliant diamond dust...The surrounding winter scenery; the picturesque sledges and their fine horses...the superb dresses of the nobility, their fur cloaks, caps, and equipages, adorned with coloured velvets and gold; with ten thousand other touches of exquisite nature, finished the scene, and made it seem like an Olympic game from the glowing pencil of Rembrandt. (Robert Ker Porter, *Travelling Sketches in Russia and Sweden*. London, 1809, cited in Cross 1971, 281-6)

Thomas Dimsdale, a medical doctor, had been made a Baron by Catherine II in 1768 and in 1781 was invited back to Russia to inoculate the young Grand Dukes, her grandsons, against small-pox – a novel and daring proceeding at the time. He was accompanied by his wife Elizabeth who kept a diary of the visit. Elizabeth was, on the whole, favourably disposed towards Russia – her husband's Russian title would have cut little ice in England at the time and they were treated with honour and tremendous hospitality by the Russian Court – but she saw little to recommend the climate: "It must be confessed the Winter seems very long and tedious in these Northern climates, the whole Surface of the Ground being covered with Snow for six Months and upwards, and the Eye is tired with the unvaried Scene where nature herself seems dead for half the Year" (Dimsdale 1989, 81). Historian W. Bruce Lincoln wrote that: "Something about winter spurred the Russians to action, brought them to life, and gave them a sense of well-being that Europeans never managed to understand. Petersburgers found in winter a joy that no other season could equal" (2000, 72). The records left by bona fide members of this expatriate community indicate that they experienced Russian winter in similarly positive ways, something which, as an antipodean expatriate happy in the same kind of climate, I fully comprehend. Its extremeness provokes a passionate response.

Fred Wishaw, that child of the community who later chose England as home, writing about what he knew of Russia for publication in England in 1893, waxed lyrical over St.

Petersburg's gilded spires and domes, the "great, wide, cobble-paved streets", the huge stuccoed houses lining the canals and the "white waters of the Neva...a beautiful river, and it flows through a beautiful city!" (66-7), but he also mentions the "miles of dismal streets, depressingly dirty and uninteresting" which spread from the "dreary railway station, which is situated at the very outer edge of town" to the city's "fairer quarters" (ibid., 61). This narrative was meant for a wide, English reading public, yet even so, there is actually very little description of this type, of St. Petersburg as 'scenery' or 'landscape', and a great deal concerned with the practices of Russian peasants – their fasts and festivals, filth and friendliness – and British residents – principally the lifestyles at their summer homes and the gardening, picnicking, bathing, games, hunting, fishing and snow-shoeing which took place in Maude's "flat, marshy and uninteresting" countryside. Fred was familiar enough with the place to see its phenomena as related and these relationships were more salient to him than objective outward appearances – hence the 'introduction' to the summer settlement at Mourino which I quote in the previous chapter, with its repetition of the adjective 'English'. Incidentally, those who spent part of their lives in England, or who commuted between the two countries on a yearly basis, seemed to gained the greatest enjoyment from Russia – pleasurable impressions kept their freshness but familiarity allowed the extraneous or unpleasant to be avoided.

The residents who were not writing for publication, either contemporaneously, or later as memoirs, give very little evidence of what they thought about the outward appearance of their adopted city, though they would describe the insides of their winter apartments in diaries and in letters to friends who had not visited them, or when they themselves visited someone for the first time. 'Maps' of lodgings are common²⁴. The countryside was a different matter. One way to mitigate the lack of topographical demarcation of their residential areas in Petersburg was the summer colony – whether at Mourino, Ligova, Peterhof or Tsarskoe Selo – and the primary sources overflow with loving depictions of the landscape and the local attributes of the places where they went each summer. The dachas they lived in and their gardens, the lakes and streams and forests, the bird and animal life were all detailed and compared and jealously defended against other destinations. The dacha settlements, you see, were theirs (though not necessarily legally owned), they possessed and controlled them and they possessed and controlled the lifeways followed in the little enclaves. The Mourino package, and others like it, seemed to satisfy that peculiarly Western interdependence of 'we' and ownership. Mourino provided Mary and the other members of the colony with a focusing 'our' of just this nature, which was out of place with reference to 'town', despite residence there for the greater part of the year. The dacha micro-communities represented an unequivocal good, in a way that Petersburg, with its lack of an exclusively 'own' residential quarter could never do.

²⁴ Ethel Stevenson described the layout of a typical Petersburg lodging in a lecture she gave to a religious society meeting in England (LRA 856). "The usual inside of a Russian house is quite different to our English style. Every room has at least two or three doors; thus the circuit of the house can be made without making use of corridors and one can leave the drawing room without using the main entrance through which visitors are ushered. Rather a good arrangement this where callers are many. It allows one to vanish at a moment's notice when the lady of the house is unprepared for company." But imagine the magnitude of difference between the (sloppy) bodily orientation and identity this arrangement would encourage, and the multiple-identity management demanded by the (ordered) capsules-strung-on-a-corridor layout common in middle-class English homes in England!

By the nineteenth century, as I have noted, most of the English merchants lived, among Russian and other foreign neighbours, on the eastern end of Vassili Ostrof (V.O.), an island situated where the river separates and becomes the Little and Big Neva. The eastern spur of the island was comfortably residential and laid out on a grid pattern. The north/south roads were named according to their distance from the eastern end of the island – with its Exchange, Customs House, wharves and warehouses, and permanent stone Nicolas Bridge across to the rest of the city – as 1st Line, 2nd Line and so on to 27th Line. The east/west avenues which crossed the ‘lines’ were conveniently known as Little, Medium and Big Prospect – which implies something wider than a mere avenue. Most of the English merchants lived in the low numbered lines from preference – 1st to 8th. The lines decreased in desirability with distance from the Exchange and the Nicolas Bridge, and concomitant proximity to what were known as the ‘factory lines’, which provided accommodation for the British skilled workers and foremen in the large factories of Chekushi, on the south western bulge of the island. Most of the English lived in Russian-owned rented lodgings – large apartments in comfortable houses – “here people do not as a rule occupy one house, but stories (sic) or middle, low or high suites of apartments” (LRA 1406. Stephen Cattley II’s diary, 6.5.1850). Some of the wealthiest still owned houses on the English Quay – “the other side” – just over the Nicolas Bridge from V.O., but there was a tendency, and with good reason, to prefer one’s property investments to be safely situated in England and V.O. was where ‘we’ mostly lived. A final few found lodgings in Galernaya Ulitza which ran along behind and parallel to the English Quay, rather dark and seedy today in comparison with the light, rivy vista a block away, but a century ago the road held the only entrance to the courtyard of the English Church, with its Library, Committee Rooms, and Chaplain’s and ‘grace and favour’ accommodation; only the church’s large, stained glass windows faced the Neva, not its door.

These areas were certainly part of the “fairer quarters” of the city; even today V.O. has an almost village-like atmosphere though only separated from the hectic heart of St. Petersburg by the Neva, now crossed by two permanent bridges. Its streets and avenues are straight and regular, tree-lined, peaceful and peopled with University students. The imposing Exchange building, where most of the male breadwinners of the community spent their working days, was designed by Catherine II’s architect Quarenghi to replace the large wooden stage of earlier times and it still dominates the eastern tip of the island like the prow of a ship, looking upriver to the Peter and Paul fortress, while the Neva flows inexorably past on either side. No doubt the sensation may be attributed to something dull like the fact that the Neva here is broad and somehow ‘muscled’ while the land around is low lying, but standing there, on the ‘prow’, there can be no doubt that one is in the presence of an elemental natural force. Today, Petersburg bridal parties flock along the waterfront for photograph sessions. From the Nicolas Quay in the nineteenth century the English could look across to the Admiralty, the Winter Palace and their church on the other side of the river (also redesigned by Quarenghi in 1814, completed in 1817). Mary Whishaw records that it took her eleven minutes to walk from her home in the Cadet Line (which was even closer to the Exchange than the 1st line) to church over the ice in winter. While aesthetics have little to do with experiencing a place as home, the regularity with which English baby girls were named Neva during the late-nineteenth century indicates that the river at

least was considered both beautiful and focal to perceptions of the city²⁵.

Keith Basso notes that “ethnographic inquiry into cultural construction of geographical realities is at best weakly developed...little is known of the ways in which culturally diverse peoples are alive to the world around them, of how they comprehend it, of the different modes of awareness with which they take it in and...discover that it matters” (Basso 1996, 53-4). Reading the material produced by these English expatriates which has survived and been collected by both official archives and individuals, one cannot fail to be struck by how deeply Russia as ‘placeful’ was inscribed into their daily activities and annual routines, and consequently their perceptions of the passage of time. In a process which E. P. Thompson suggests began with the Middle Ages and was certainly fully in place by the nineteenth century, Westerners of their professional, trading and industrial backgrounds (of whatever social class) no longer viewed time in the ways that traditional peasant farmers might be conceptualised as viewing it. Instead of sensing time as cyclical, with the periods of ploughing, sowing, tending, harvesting, storing and mending succeeding each other on a circular, seasonal, and annual basis, the drift into industrialisation, particularly the centralisation of industry in massive mills and factories, had straightened time out into a linear progression of distinct compartments and had turned these compartments into saleable commodities (Thompson 1967). No business man went without his fob watch²⁶. However, for this community, the violence of Russian seasonal variation encouraged a reversal of this trend, producing a view of time that tended more towards the cyclical than it did for their Britain-based contemporaries.

From a mercantile point of view, the most crucial factor was that on some date in late November, sea trade between Russia and Britain was terminated by the disappearance of the Gulf of Finland under an ice pack, and there was nothing more that could be done in that direction until it chose to open again, in March perhaps, or maybe early May. Even the Anglo-Russian merchants were powerless to affect the date. None of their superior technology or their business acumen or their double-entry book-keeping had even the slightest effect on the forces of nature. Winters, therefore, became periods of relative leisure and routine commercial activity, though that was the season when most of the internal transport of goods in Russia took place along the speedy frozen sledge roads which became almost impassable in summer, so winter was also a period of contracting for goods for later export. Once Petersburg was connected to London by railway via Poland and Germany, parts of winter were often spent in England (see Appendix 3 for instructions for travelling from Petersburg to London written in 1843, prior to the railroad). Summers, on the other hand, though hectic from the point of view of international movement of goods, were so brief and so beautiful and so unhealthy in low-lying Petersburg, that withdrawal to the countryside was imperative. The men still had to get the shipping business of summer done, however, so either they commuted daily between the summer colony,

²⁵ Seven girls between 1870 and 1888 were named Neva. None, however, were from the families who were considered part of the community – the ‘aloof’ – who named their children according to a rather different system than that suggested by aesthetic appreciation – usually recognising antecedents and sponsors in name selection.

²⁶ A teenage Queen Victoria recorded her astonishment that her first Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, did not carry a watch, a practice which was so extraordinary that she taxed him with it. “‘I always ask the servant what o’clock it is, and then he tells me what he likes, said Lord M.’ - or so Victoria recorded him as saying” (Strachey 1951, 56).

easy enough from Tsarskoe Selo which had a railway connection, less common from Mourino where resident men usually only spent weekends and the free half day and evening of Wednesday when the Exchange was closed. This seasonally ordered migration, and the relationship between climatic and residential variation which constituted it, structured activities in every detail. Letters and diaries abound with references to the weather, the state of the sledge roads, the opening of navigation, the break-up of the Neva ice cover, the seasonal migration to the summer colony and return to town and the annual installation of the double windows on the winter accommodation.

Herbert Borrow, in St. Petersburg between 1833 and 1835 to transcribe and print the Bible in Manchu (the Emperor subsequently forbade the books to be taken to China, a typical English experience of perceived Russian ‘muddle’), represents what might be regarded as an intermediate position between the short term visitor and the resident. At first he lived with Egerton Hubbard (John Gellibrand’s brother) at 221 Galernoy (sic) Ulitsa, but finding the social life and the endless visiting of Hubbard’s friends interfered with his work he moved to independent lodgings. He loved the city, saying in 1862, in his book *Wild Wales*, “If I had my choice of all the cities of the world to live in, I would choose St. Petersburg” (cited in Brewster 1954, 39). Many English visitors commented unfavourably on the overheating and the stuffiness produced by the sealed windows in winter, but Borrow grew used to it and presumably regulated his layers of clothing and his expectations to conform with inside/outside temperature variations.

There is no spring, in our sense of the word, in northern Russia; one week, say the second or third in May, all the trees are bare, snow still lurks in shady places...A fortnight later summer is in full bloom or nearly so...

The cold when you go out in it cuts your face like a razor, and were you not to cover it with furs the flesh would be bitten off. The rooms in the morning are heated with a stove as hot as ovens, and you would not be able to exist in one for a minute; but I have become used to them and like them much though at first they made me dreadfully sick and brought on bilious headaches. – Herbert Borrow to his mother 1st/13th Feb 1834 (Jenkins 1924, 116).

Unlike the English visitor who was accustomed “to sit in a Room where the Cold condensed his Breath sufficiently to render it visible as it commonly does in England in frosty Weather” (Dimsdale, 80), the English residents in Russia, like their Russian hosts, preferred their homes to be warm when outdoor conditions meant that they would be spending considerable periods of time inside: “Thank God we are all well although we have had an unusually severe winter which confined ladies and children to the house” (LRA 1406 Letter from Robert Cattley to his sister Mrs Prescott of Whitechapel 6.1.1820). I will let the voices of the community members themselves describe their annual routines before discussing their implications, but note the duplication of framing of the discourses associated with the cycle: they could be the work of a single writer. I excuse the overall length of the extract sequence on the grounds that they describe, not only the yearly cycle as community members experienced it themselves, (as I cannot do, not having been there with them), but also because they demonstrate, as a whole, the way that the talk produced by a community can present an almost seamless unity.

We, like yourselves, had lovely sledge roads for a while, till horrid Catherine's Day when a thaw came on and deluges of rain which took all the snow away. Since Monday we have frost and today it is again snowing so I hope we shall soon have sledge roads again (Harriet Hardie to Lily Ramsay, November 1891).

To children in Russia the year is unequally divided between a long winter and brief lovely summer. The winter is by no means dull...the river was always full of interest. Large holes were cut in the ice, and water carts came and were filled by the slow prehistoric methods that suited the Russian character. A rectangular place was cleared and railed off for the English skating ground...After the long winter, some of which was very bright and not too cold, came a time when the ice began to break and the wind was cold and raw from melting snow, the roads cold and slushy, we were kept much indoors. Then came mild days and walks along the embankment (LRA 1015/115 - personal notes by Meta Muir, referring to the 1870s).

The next great event here will be the opening of the navigation. For days before this takes place the English colony may be seen gaping seawards in hopes of seeing ships from the old country. The arrival of the first English steamer is the signal for much enthusiasm among said colony (LRA 1406. James Cattley in Riga to Edith Klockman 21.2.1884).

In a little text book I have there are records of the dates of the opening and closing of the navigation (a most important event in Russia) and of the dates when the family removed to or returned from the 'datcha'. This move, even when I was in Russia many years later, was almost universal with people who had the means; some having 'datchas' or wooden houses of their own more or less near the city and others hiring such houses for the summer and taking what was necessary; our family moved mostly to Peterhof...(LRA 1192/2 - Maida Bernard née Mirrielees).

24.4.1890 – The trees are all coming out like anything, the oaks budding, the ash not thinking of doing so, so we ought to have a fine summer...the house is to be ready for us on Thursday [this was the summer when it rained so much the Neva flooded].

25.4.1890 – Rang Mr Watson's bell [the Chaplain] to say goodbye...Packed....Went to Druce's for two pairs of stockings...Packed. Went out with Evie & got things at the Chemist's. Packed. Miss Gaettens came & was very jolly & nice. Packed. Jim came to dinner. Packed Vi's box and we went to bed.

26.4.1890 – Packed up pillows, blankets &c & everything left in my room, Evie's box, a trunk for dresses & odds & ends. After breakfast packed another bookbox. Carts came: 4 town carts: two Mourino ones. Packed pictures &c...At 2 p.m. we started: Papa, Fan, Lil & Vi in one carriage; Evie, Norm, the bullfinches and I on a second & the servants in a 3rd. [Mother in England with sick son.] Carts came soon after 6 p.m. & we saw them unloaded. Papa went for a walk with Mr. O. Cattley who is down here just now. Unpacked & arranged things. [The next two days are a repeat of 25.4, only in reverse: unpacked, unpacked, unpacked – pictures, carpets, piano, books, curtains, linen, food stores, beer, wine, jam.] (Mary Whishaw's 1890 diary.)

I cannot imagine any place in England...where more delightful picnics could be taken than those we had from Mourino, for the country all round, though mostly flat, was exceedingly picturesque...Our first picnic generally took place on Whitsunday, when we always went to a place called Serki, where lilies of the valley grew in great profusion...Should we be near any village, the villagers invariably brought great bowls of milk and cream and, if late enough in the season, wild strawberries and raspberries. (J. Whishaw 1935, 64)

Like most families, we spent the hot summers out of town...As all necessary furniture and household stuff had to be transported, the move was both exciting and exhausting...Lovely woods, carpeted with lilies of the valley in spring, and rich with wild strawberries - followed by the exciting time of mushrooms. I still seem to hear the joyful shouts of ["grib", "grib"] as someone came upon a splendid specimen (Molteneo née Birse).

When I went to my room about eleven o'clock it was still light, but the mosquitoes had gone for the time being, and I could remove the net frame and breath the heady scent of the pinewoods just outside. The quiet of a June evening in Russia is something to be remembered with gratitude. (LRA 850/1 – Marie Brown, governess)

As the summer drew to a close our country house became too cold to live in and, by the end of August, or mid-September at latest, as a general rule we all returned to town (J. Whishaw 1935, 67).

By the end of August the summer was over and it was time to move back into town and get ready for a long and cold winter. First of all the double windows had to be put in. They were puttied in so no cold air could get into the house. A roll of cotton wool was put between the frames and a container with acid inserted to prevent the windows from freezing over too much. A good supply of birch logs, for cooking and heating, was stocked in the outhouse (LRA1278/2 - Violet Lehrs née Gibson).

The English seasonal routine was borrowed from their hosts, as it was borrowed by other foreigners in Russia, but shaped in ways peculiarly their own. Their concentration in a mere handful of summer locations where their only neighbours were other English families – facsimiles of English villages, in other words – was one specificity. Petersburg was too much the possession of others. The English community had their bits of it – the church building with its multiple functions was legally English, they had their 'all-English' clubs and facilities, their 'ways' were their own and jealously defended, as was their sphere of British trade – but, on the whole, their passion for ownership was poorly catered to. The summer houses, as I have pointed out above, helped fulfil this need: "...the rich merchant [in England] who may have possessed no more than a 'mere summer-house' in the country felt himself to be socially as well as materially superior to those who did not own such a plaything" (F. M. L. Thompson 2001, 11). In Russia the summer houses were more or less mandatory and, though very few actually 'owned' their playthings, the peculiar leasing arrangements allowed them to behave as if they did. Further, the summer colonies fulfilled the contemporary fantasy of the city as a place of labour and material reward and the country as a place which offered the potential of "an Arcadian, idyllic existence" (Hirsch, 1995, 3)²⁷.

Contemporaries and equals in England could not, on the whole, expect to own a summer house in addition to their main place of residence, so the comfortably placed (as opposed to very

²⁷ This dual attitude – appreciation of the town as the place where self discipline was rewarded with economic benefit, and an inchoate longing for the idylls of 'nature', albeit nurtured nature – was reflected in the popularity of landscape paintings in England at the time. Galsworthy's 'Man of Property', operating in a London of the last decades of the nineteenth century, was an "amateur" of pictures whose extensive collection of paintings "were nearly all landscapes with figures in the foreground, a sign of some mysterious revolt against London, its tall houses, its interminable streets, where his life and the lives of his breed and class were passed" (Galsworthy 1968, 59-60).

wealthy) upper-middle classes usually took their summer vacation at one of the holiday resorts which, by the early Victorian period, were being developed for a specifically middle-class family clientele – in Bournemouth, Eastbourne and Torquay. These holidays did not, however, offer the promise of Arcadian idyll; they were controlled, “with the full decorum of bathing machines and respectable promenades, and no naughty promiscuous gregariousness” (F. M. L. Thompson 1988, 256). The establishment of the highly sociable, waterside summer colonies within commuting distance of St. Petersburg was a distinct deviation from this pattern, approximating the practice of a higher social class in England than most community members were actually eligible to join. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that the summer houses, though they were large, landscaped and lovely, were not fully equipped with household goods; they were not ready to walk into as the second (or third) residence of the very wealthy in England were (where the servants were left on what were known as ‘board wages’). The packing of six or more carts turned the bi-annual promenades into major events and prominent seasonal markers, while grounding the apparent extravagance of two houses in sound merchant frugality.

Nor did the existence enjoyed at the summer villages conform to that valorized by their own social class in England, either. It was comparatively physically untrammelled. Mary, aged 23, and her younger sisters, could make a raft by themselves and ‘mess about’ in the little River Ochta which ran below the Mourino colony, wading upcurrent and along the bank dressed only “in our bathing gowns of course” (1890) and take “delicious”, unsupervised swims. These were freedoms which were only possible in private space in England – that is, on the great estates where norms governing maidenly behaviour could be relaxed somewhat. They were not available at all to their counterparts in England at the time (private land and private rivers there being the province of a higher class in both wealth and status terms). Along with other Mourino ‘colonists’ of different generations, Mary and her siblings and friends spent most of their waking hours outside, even when it rained: playing golf, cricket and tennis; walking and picnicking; fishing, crayfishing and shooting things that moved; sketching, painting, reading and practicing archery. In the evenings they dined casually in each other’s houses, or took late tea; they listened to one another sing, “strum” the piano or guitar, or read aloud; they played charades, enacted tableaux, and “worked” (if female) – sewed, mended or embroidered, depending on whether there were visitors from outside²⁸ – or played billiards (if male). At Mourino, where even the borders of internal domains were relaxed, Mary and her sisters could venture into the kitchen and experiment with baking bread and cakes, and it was here that they ‘put up’ the vast quantities of jam that was eaten throughout the rest of the year – cherry,

²⁸ Mourino is now connected to St. Petersburg by an extension of the underground city rail system and retains little that is recognisable from nineteenth-century descriptions. The River Ochta is a muddy creek twisting between rank and overgrown weedy banks – though one suspects it never had quite the dimensions which its centrality to local leisure activities lent it. The forests on the other side of the stream, once comprising the view from the balconies and lawns of their houses, are gone, though some woodland remains on the low bluff where their houses must have been – now junk-filled and scrubby. The present cottages are draughty-looking, unpainted wooden shacks, but many of them have incongruous features – a corner, a piece of gable, or an ornate window – which look as though they have been tacked on, or built around, and might have belonged to the English houses. I went there, intentionally pregnant with the myths and memories of the tens of people who have left behind them their attachment to Mourino, and I suspect I experienced a surrogate disappointment. It’s a forlorn place today.

strawberry, raspberry, gooseberry, and red and black currant²⁹. But, even though Mary Whishaw could write that “it is rather a treat for a week to do nothing but be frivolous” after spending “a very disreputable morning reading ‘Phyllis’ on the lawn” and a “very dissipated” afternoon finishing the book inside because it was raining (1890), country life was not an existence which was free of the structure of daily routine and behavioural expectations, or the contestation which characterised social relations in the metropolis. Days still followed a clock-conscious routine of morning prayers, meal ordering and meal times. It was, however, ‘relatively’ unstructured.

Mourino was part of the estate of the Vorontsov-Dashkoff family: “We paid practically no rent for the houses on the estate in which we lived, but we were bound to keep them in good condition” (J. Whishaw, 1935, 61). Edith Henley, née Feild, played the piano in summer for the prayer readings which the community held ‘religiously’ in one of the larger houses every Sunday morning. In 1887, in recognition of her contribution, her daughter writes that “she was presented with a sumptuously bound Hymn book, with her initials and Mourino 1887 in gold on the front ...& the signatures of (I imagine) most of the congregation” (LRA 811/25). There were thirty-five names in all: 6 Andersons, 5 Cattleys, 3 Feilds, 6 Whishaws, 5 Raitts, 4 Henleys, 3 Bennetts, 3 Blessigs – younger family members and some spouses are absent from the list. All of these were connected to each other by both blood and marriage and all lived in a cluster of houses and cottages separated from the Russian part of the village by a few hundred metres and from each other only by hedges and shrubs. “There were no doubt small tiffs at times, but these served perhaps to keep away the monotony” (J. Whishaw 1935, 63-4).

Here they could play out a representation of the village as community and community as a village which was largely denied them by their residential distribution in St. Petersburg. Relationships with the local Russian peasants appear to have been modelled on those in an English village: their coachmen, servants, gardeners and caretakers were drawn from the small local population (“over a hundred souls” or male residents); they patronised the local bakery (‘white’ bread a specialty) and other shops, one of which, a draper’s and sweet shop, was owned by a Mrs Whitely, presumably either English or the widow of an Englishman. “The ladies work for the Russian poor, and subscribe money annually for their needs during the winter, the funds being placed for distribution in the hands of the village priest” and “both moujiks and children are occasionally to be seen dressed partly à l’anglais (in cast-off English clothes)” (F. Whishaw, 1891, 41). This was a place the expatriates could shape, control and bring into order; it was a place they could ‘own’.

Predictably, given that the English summer inhabitants regarded Mourino (and places like it) as an ‘English’ possession, contesting legends about English ‘discovery’ and ‘initial’ settlement – and thereby accruing status – are woven into the history of settlement. The stories attempt to structure the relationship of the various families who orientated their annual routines around the place which was both Mourino as their own creation, and Mourino as a place where

²⁹ Though the girls sometimes might make a salad, the cooking they did was of the frivolous variety: cakes, bread, jam. The community women made jam in summer, Seville orange marmalade in March. Russian jam was a runny transparent syrup with the whole fruits and berries suspended in it; the English liked their jam thick and well stirred, which mashed the fruit in a way that Russians found unpleasing. Russians ate their jam from jam spoons, with tea, the English spread it on toast and scones, or baked it in tarts. Neither type was suitable for the other purpose (LRA 1278/8).

certain specific norms acted back upon the annual inhabitants, allowing them licence in some respects, restricting it in others. One contested point – in memoirs at least – was the generating family of this important connection. A regular visitor to Mourino in the 1880s and 90s, John Baddeley (a long-term correspondent for English newspaper *The Standard*), was not particularly partisan, though he identified three early families who still spent their summers in the place.

Mourino has for generations been the summer home of the Whishaws, Andersons, Cattleys and others, the core of the English colony...possessing the first and only golf links in Russia...with its river winding erratically between hilly banks...without doubt, one of the prettiest places within easy reach of the capital (Baddeley 1921, 11).

Most of the records by actual long term inhabitants, however, conspicuously claim ‘founding’ status for their own families. Jim Whishaw talks of his great-grandfather, Speedwell Whishaw, first coming upon the little village, hidden in its woodland, at a time when the “Count’s House” was still standing. This would have been at the end of the eighteenth century as well as I can compute, but the exactness of the year is not germane – that it is the earliest date connected with English habitation is the important point. Jim Whishaw goes on to assert: “At the time my grandmother mentioned, [approximately 1830-5] her father was living at what was called the Count’s House...and my father often told me how well he remembered seeing his grandfather sitting on a chair on this balcony, in knee breeches and shoes with buckles” (1935, 61). The Count’s House had since fallen into disrepair but Jim’s father and later Jim himself, lived in what he referred to as the “Old House” which gave it precedence over the newer, and sometimes larger, houses built by later comers such as the Blessigs (related several times by marriage). It was at the “Old House” (though Jim is the only one to give it this title) that the regular summer Sunday services were usually held – which bestowed a tangible distinction upon it, and its inhabitants.

The Cattleys were also contenders for the title of, if not first comers to Mourino, certainly primary owners. An anonymous “Family History” in the Cattley archives at Leeds University states that Robert Cattley, who arrived in St Petersburg in 1802 aged fourteen, and remained till his death in 1859, “owned a country seat” at Mourina (sic) where he “lived like a prince” (LRA 1406). One of Robert’s many nephews, Stephen, records in his diary 20 July 1850: “Just arrived from Uncle Robert’s Mourina (sic) where I spent a very pleasant two days from Saturday to Monday.” Some days later Stephen “walked to our country seat – it is about 15 versts, half way to Peterhof where Mr & Mrs Edward Cattley have their country residence” (LRA 1406), not to mention – and he did not – the Russian Imperial family. Stephen was only fifteen and newly arrived from England, his term “country seat”, even “country residence” is completely uncharacteristic of current community usage, but he had not had many encounters with community talk at that time and did not know better. He did, however, understand the pre-eminence granted by the inference that ‘Mourina’ was a Cattley domain.

The Hubbards also put in their claim to early Mourino ascendancy. They were closely connected by marriage to the Raitts and Bennetts who spent summers at Mourino from the 1870s onward. William Hubbard Jun. records that his father, William Egerton Hubbard (John Gellibrand’s brother), brought his bride to St. Petersburg in 1835 “where they lived in a small house on the English Quay, near the English church, and in summer at ‘The Count’s House’ at

Mourino. At Mourino my two sisters, Louisa and Ellen were born..." (LRA 1091/8). The Count's House would appear to have been a busy place in the 1830s.

This brief examination of the ways which Mourino figured in the lives of the families that were connected with it resonates with unarticulated attitudes towards possession, control and order which I postulated earlier. The arrangement of Mourino – the bakery with its special white bread, the only golf course in Russia, the winter charity fund, the shooting in the hands of an "English gentleman", the English houses, gardens, dogs and games – all stand in contrast to the untended disorder of the natural state of "the inhabitants of less fortunate villages" (F. Whishaw 1891, 41). Also illustrated here is a paradox in attitudes to Nature; Nature only has lustre when it is partially – or even extensively – curbed by human presence. "The Russian forest in winter is almost awesome from the deathlike silence that prevails. You feel so small a unit in Nature:...but it is a grand feeling all the same" (Whishaw 1935, 225). Nature was good stuff in its way; it provided a great deal in the way of huntin', shootin' and fishin' which were favourite pastimes, but essential to its enjoyment were the accoutrements of its control: a team of nameless beaters, bearers and woodsmen, 'snow-shoes', shooting lodges with further nameless attendants, thermoses of hot tea, hip flasks of good cognac and well-stocked picnic baskets. The summer settlements provided the opportunity to sample the delights of Nature, but were provided with the comforts of human civilization that divorced them from nature in the raw. They also provided a concentration of 'people like us' that divorced them from the realities of expatriate life in general, allowing an annual replenishment of their discursively created world, undiluted by the input of 'others'.



Picture 5: Jim Whishaw's summer house at Mourino, 1890s.

PART THREE.

CHAPTER SIX.

DISCOURSE PATHWAYS: COHORTS, KINSHIP AND OTHER CONNECTIONS.

THE PATHS THAT DISCOURSE TRAVELS.

Family relationships are conventionally taken as embodying primordial ties that somehow exist outside or beyond the technological and political machinations of the world, that suffer change rather than act as a force for change...The wider the network and the more extensive the reach of kin relations or the more emphatic the solidarity of the family, the more traditional they seem. It is, however, possible both to accept that conceptualisation of tradition and realise its contemporary force. Precisely because kinship is supposed to be about primordial relations, the fundamental facts it endorses have been intrinsic to the cultural enterprise built up *after* it. (M. Strathern 1992, 11, emphasis added.)

[Archibald and Jane Cazalet née Mirrielees] lived in a large rambling house; my first impression was of passing through several heavily padded doors and finding within them a row of bowing smiling servants who greeted us by our Christian names and patronymics...then a whole bevy of nephews and nieces and some of their young friends who are constantly in and out of that hospitable house descended on us. It was all very novel and cheerful and the pleasure in our arrival so genuine (Maida Mirrielees arriving at her sister's house on V.O. from London circa 1877, LRA 1192/2).

What I wish to consider in part three is the nature and operations of social organization and sociality within the group which enabled and facilitated the flow of intra-community talk and more or less disabled its passage into other worlds. Obviously, “the precondition for community-wide circulation of discourse is a community of interacting individuals. This is the *sine qua non* of culture” (Urban 1996a, 251). Not only does circulating talk create, solidify and endorse social relations, roles and the structure of connection between them, but, as Urban also notes, “social organization is the objective field in which, through which, and by which discourse circulates” (ibid., 25). In part two I demonstrated the processes by which communal worlds are built out of repeated contact and transmission of discursive cultural artefacts in identical, paraphrased, or ‘appropriately’ transmogrified format. Discourses concerned with ‘ethnic’ identity, with values and expectations attached to that identity, with the replications required by the entextualized practice of the established religion, with the idiosyncratic, but nonetheless generally uniform response to the place which was Petersburg, are all examples of the way in which truth-values are established and become solid forces within the lives of those operating within their reach.

The relations between circulating talk (culture) and the paths and modes by which it moves (the social organization of community) is a hermeneutic one, and it would be artificial and misleading to separate the two, but in this section, rather than attempting only to explicate *how*, precisely, discourse as culture reproduces culture, I will be concentrating more on discussion of the specificities of this community's discourse pathways: In what did social organization –

facilitating, dictating or denying interaction – consist in this community? The specialized workings of the British Factory – comprising the community’s all-male merchant sphere – with their direct impact on the operation of the power structure specific to this particular community, will be discussed in Part Four, though, naturally, the division is one of analytical convenience. The recorded talk in that locus never directly referenced the incredibly dense network of kin relations which connected the male merchant members of the community (particularly those from the most influential families) any more than it made much reference to the sociality that went on outside the closed door of the Factory Committee room. Analysis of contestation within the Factory makes it evident, however, that splintering and alliance occurred along kin lines, so one of several explanations may be postulated. Perhaps, as Evans-Pritchard (a product of a similar social world) suggested, “the relations between the sexes and between children and adults...belong to an account of domestic relations rather than to a study of political institutions” (cited in Yanagisako 1987, 88), and, by extrapolation, so did the fact that almost everyone could claim kin relationship in some degree to everyone else. Males of the community may have consigned discussion of its ramifications to other community domains than the politico-economic one represented by the Factory and the Company¹. Yanagisako also cites Maurice Bloch’s suggestion that “‘domestic kinship’ is characterized by natural constraint, which is negated in the politico-jural domain” (ibid., 87), which may also be relevant to its absence of profile in Factory and Russia Company deliberations.

W. M. Williams, in his study of the English village of Gosforth points out that while “consanguinity is a prerequisite for the development of extensive social relations based on kinship, a high degree of biological connectedness does not, *per se*, result in the use of this base for a system of social relations” (1969, 69). Another possibility would be, therefore, that kin connections, even where dense “biological connectedness” was the norm, did *not* “result in the use of this base for a system of social relations”. In the absence of recorded explicit reference to kinship connection in this field, the objective data available nonetheless overwhelmingly indicate that kin ties *were* operative in ordering business relationships, and unavoidably present in the selection of partners in sociality, if only because virtually everyone was related to everyone else, if at several removes. In the latter area, however, as Mary’s patterns of sociation indicate, personal preference overrode degrees of kin connectedness. Yet another alternative is that kin relatedness was taken so much for granted that it had lost its salience. Elements of these explanations are probably jointly responsible for the absence of reference to kin ties by the males of the community in their all-male domain. In other words: 1) maintenance of kin ties *qua* biological connection was considered a female domain; 2) although kin ties were operative in alliance they did not override the more highly valorized interests of wealth production and boundary maintenance; 3) it was a given thing that kin relatedness was dense and choice could

¹ In 1868, author Wilkie Collins outlined the likely topics of the ‘talk’ of upper-middle class Englishmen when he wrote: “The guests present [at a dinner party] all being English, it is needless to say that, as soon as the wholesome check exercised by the presence of the ladies was removed [‘ladies’ left the ‘gentlemen’ to their after dinner port and retired to the drawing room to await their coming], the conversation turned on politics as a necessary result. In respect to this all-absorbing national topic, I happen to be one of the most un-English Englishmen living. As a general rule, political talk appears to me to be of all talk the most dreary and the most profitless” (1994, 282). Not so to the Gentlemen of the Factory, however, though it was politics of a very immediate and local variety.

be exercised in activating the possibilities offered by various degrees and type of relationship.

Marriage, or rather, choice of marriage partners, is the greatest problematic associated with kinship in this community, as it naturally predicated the creation of all other kinds of kin tie, and it is one examined in more detail below. In his discussion of the connections between inheritance, family and the role of women in European history, Jack Goody demonstrates that kinship relations, particularly in 'dowered' marital arrangements, allocate roles to women on the basis of "arrangements over marital property" (1976, 35), rather than on the basis of biological attributes. He is here explicitly arguing that gender and generational asymmetries are not linked *only* to biological reproduction, a connection stressed by early anthropologists at the expense of a broader understanding of how connections of any kind are locally understood. Collier and Yanagisako point out that the notion of "kinship as a discrete domain of analysis" (1987, 2), along with domains of 'politics', 'economics' and 'gender formation', for example, has been directly challenged by theorists querying "how such domains come to be constituted in particular ways in specific societies and with what social consequences" (ibid.).

I will be returning to this below but it is unarguable that the first 'domains' and 'categories' used by anthropologists were drawn from Euro-American traditions, created over centuries in the particular context of Western spatio-temporal-technological development. One can assume, in a laudable effort to reduce ethnocentric bias, various domains were gradually stripped back to their least cluttered meanings, which left kinship with a purely genealogical basis; economy with 'making a living'; politics with power; religion with metaphysics and so on. The net result is a series of bounded domains which may have little or no applicability to other cultural configurations, and which likewise have limited explanatory power in Western worlds, despite being generally accepted 'folk' categories that help order those worlds in the minds of their inhabitants. Using a discourse-centred approach to tease out the various contexts in which terms and stretches or snippets of talk are deployed is a powerful aid in avoiding the risks of oversimplification created by the application of *a priori* categories in any field of anthropological research.

Having said all this, the group under analysis *was* one which understood and endorsed a genealogical approach to kinship, though reported practice does not provide evidence that genealogical terms had single consistent meanings, or even referents. It was for me, however, somewhere to begin research into the social connections operating within, and out of, the community. Inevitably, I have worked with ideas about kin constitution and relationships which are so familiar to English users that their finer shadings are obliterated. I have also, inevitably, worked with a set of terms which are probably the first linguistic categories learnt by English speaking infants and which also provided the categories used by early anthropologists to approach the study of kinship. As Strathern notes: "Here is the common background to the intimate connection between indigenous [English] models of kinship and the way in which scholars over the century between the 1860s-1960s have described society and the nature of social relationships, especially the way in which anthropologists have approached and reflected on kinship systems themselves" (1992, 26).

I have drawn most of the objective data about biological and affinal relations from the successive Registers of the English Church from 1706 until the early-twentieth century. The Registers themselves are curious cultural objects (examined from a comparative perspective),

which can be conceptualized as existing on the cusp of ‘culture’ and ‘metaculture’. They record the rites of passage of every person who submitted to local cultural norms in the St. Petersburg Anglican community: the parental decisions to baptise infants and their choice of sponsors; the mutual decisions of future spouses and close family members to link two families in marriage and the community members invited to ‘witness’ the union; family decisions to bury a corpse by the rites of the Church of England in consecrated ground in the Smolenski Cemetery on V.O. All these are cultural acts, the performance of which imply metacultural approval by participants. The Registers themselves are cultural items, but they also represent “culture which is about culture”, or metaculture. All are copies (the originals were kept for local reference) which were deposited at the Diocese of London after 1816. Implicit in the insistence on the accuracy both of originals and copies – witnessed at the foot of every page and at the end of each (financial) year by the Church Wardens (Factory Treasurer and one or two other Factorians), the Consul-General and the Chaplain – is the importance placed on historical record, but, more importantly, of this particular kind of record: marriage alliances, group solidarity – evidenced in the lengthy lists of witnesses that accompanied high profile marriages, the perfunctory listing of two names when the marrying families were of no account – and the inheritance rights accruing from ascertainable parentage and ascertainable death. In this alone the Registers have a lot to say about the understandings of kinship in a community which kept this kind of record so meticulously².

This chapter also draws a great deal of its subjective data from the recorded worlds of the community’s women. Women were the chief agents in maintaining sociality and organising the events at which people maintained social relations, whether of a purely familial or much broader nature (though, in the case of this community the two were often inseparable). It is no exaggeration to say that circularization by the women of the community was dizzying, particularly given that it all took place without the framework of salaried employment or other regulating occupation. In 1890, the year before her marriage, Mary Whishaw's diary records 1,753 interactions (outside her immediate family and its servants) with 195 people (not counting the very young), 77 of whom are mentioned more than ten times and may be regarded as significant in her personal social world. This is a conservative figure because, of some types of event, she might merely say “there was quite a crowd” or, “it was well attended”. She records 350 visits to other people’s homes, of which 158 were ‘organized’: musical evenings, dinner parties, afternoon teas, evening teas (less substantial substitutes for a dinner party), suppers, balls, chocolate parties, theatricals, singing lessons (with the wife of a first cousin), sewing parties, and winter picnics at summer residences involving skiing and brisk walks with the beloved dogs who also wintered there. Her family home hosted at least 116 ‘organized’ functions of a similar nature, some of which were in her mother’s domain (married ladies’ sewing parties or teas, and dinner parties for married couples), some of which were joint family undertakings, some of which were limited to Mary and her sisters’ age cohort. Not unnaturally, not a single all-male affair was mentioned anywhere in any of Mary’s diaries until after her

² ‘An Act for the Relief of the Poor’ passed in the time of Elizabeth I in 1601(43 Eliz.1.c:2), ruled that the Churchwardens of every Parish be “nominated yearly in *Easter* Week, or within one Month after *Easter*” (users.ox.ac.uk/~peter/workhouse), and this was the annual programme still followed by the Factory in its ordering of the business of the English Church in the nineteenth century.

marriage, when her husband occasionally joined male associates for dinner at the Hotel Angleterre and came home “festive”. In addition to exchanged visits, other sources of interaction were provided by Church attendance, choir practice, Bible Class and philanthropic meetings³, along with activities conducted in ‘English’ public space: ice-hilling, skating parties, golfing (on Russia’s only golf course – which the Mourino English residents had created); and finally in the wider world of Petersburg itself⁴: concerts, the opera, ballet, visits to the Hermitage, the Academy, shopping at the *Gostinnoi Dvor*⁵ and Watkin’s (the English book shop), and hot chocolate and cakes in Berrins Tea Rooms. The letters and memoirs of other community women reflect a similar preoccupation with social circularising.

The challenge was to get past my own assumptions of the inherent meaning of kinship and other terms referencing social relations which I have used unreflexively for years. In my attempt to do so, I have used subjectively recorded data from the primary sources to examine the placement and connections of terms and stretches of talk which reference both close consociates and the acts and relations of associating with them. The project discloses

the “bundle of rights and duties” we call a role. We infer it from the discourse articulations, in this case kin terms...Were we to study all the discourse interrelationships into which *yug* [father] enters, superimposing them like transparencies laid atop one another on an overhead projector, we would have our fullest possible image of the role of “father” at P. I. Ibirama. (Urban 1996a, 118)

Obviously, the “fullest possible image” does not operate in all situations involving a specific kin term in the community. Different circumstances may call for only one, or perhaps a few, of the transparencies, something which becomes a matter for empirical investigation. This is a pragmatic approach to kinship and association as it is practiced, rather than an attempt to classify groups of people who stand in a certain specific relationships to an individual or another group via the application of *a priori* genealogical terms. David Zeitlyn suggests that it is “safer, sounder, to examine linguistic usage in an attempt to determine the categories of people that are talked about and the words used to do so. It is not obvious that the results of this approach will

³ The Factory, by 1890, was publicly referred to by the community as ‘the Guild’, for reasons I discuss in later chapters. The activities of ‘the Guild’ (as opposed to ‘the Factory’ which continued a subterranean existence), were philanthropic in nature. Based on the evidence of many sources it would seem that the women and even the children of the community played an active part in this work. The married women seem to have been under the direction of the wife of the current Factory Treasurer; Mary seems to have been the driving force in the group of unmarried women of her own age at this time, and her youngest sister, Eve, was in charge of the girls. All were busy with what was invariably referred to as ‘work’: the making of craft articles and the embroidery of what were called ‘Guild strips’ which Mary assiduously distributed among her cohort and chivvied them to complete. The articles were then sold at regular Church Bazaars and the money distributed among deserving ‘objects’.

⁴ It is no accident that the wider world of Petersburg appears low on the list of possible sites for sociality. Apart from its purchasable commodities, including its enviable ‘High Cultural’ artefacts, the city itself was a backdrop to English lives and rarely referenced by name except in memoirs – unlike the summer destinations, whose names crop up repeatedly in contemporary letters and diaries.

⁵ *Gostinnoi Dvor* was an Aladdin’s cave of little shops and merchants in a grand building on Nevsky Prospect, which has been recently renovated and is now back in operation after a long hiatus. Various accounts of it in Mary’s time depict it as a scene of extraordinary mercantile activity and Mary and her friends seemed to have shopped there for almost all their finery requirements.

resemble an analysis of a kinship terminology” (1993, 205). This understanding sits well with the purpose of an analysis of association from the perspective of establishing the paths of discourse, rather than establishing the meanings of biological reproduction and its resultant genealogical relationships, *a priori* categories of human understanding which may well not be salient in every human group. Paths that discourse travels (i.e. communication networks), the existence of items that travel far and fast, or which are confined to specific cells within the larger entity for reasons of interest or power, and their effects on the creation of structure within a group, however, can legitimately be conceptualized as human universals.

There is no doubt that, as a group and as individuals, the Petersburg English merchant community was intensely conscious of genealogy and kin relatedness, despite its absence of mention in the Company and Factory records⁶. In her 1889 diary, Mary mentions an ongoing project of drawing up a Whishaw family tree in 1890 and 1891, a document that is still extant. It measures 3.295 metres in breadth, by 18 centimetres in depth (they were prolific breeders), and covers eight generations (though only the Petersburg Whishaws are fully detailed)⁷. Her cousin Jim produced a book just months before his death titled *A History of the Whishaw Family* (1992[1936]) which contains a plethora of sanitized family memories and exhaustive family trees. The Hubbards, Thorntons, Moberlys, and many more produced genealogical reconstructions, sometimes years after St. Petersburg had become Leningrad, which have turned up in various archives. The Cattleys produced a surprise (which should not have come as a surprise), in that they currently maintain an extraordinarily extensive Cattley family web page on the internet which has filled the very few gaps left by the largest archival collection of memorabilia of a single family held at the Brotherton Library at Leeds University.

Bouquet suggests that ‘pedigree’ was an operative concept in English attitudes to genealogy. By ‘pedigree’ she means “the emphasis on the written (and graphic) record, as the guarantee alongside biology of control over procreation” (1993, 187)⁸. Though *all* records aim

⁶ This comes as no surprise. They were part of a much broader discourse community which was likewise fascinated by the subjects. “British social anthropologists, particularly during the first half of the twentieth century, made kinship the classic focus of their empirical research and theoretical ambitions. This interest is usually traced back to nineteenth-century legal thought and the significance of kinship in evolutionary theory” (Bouquet 1993, 12). It amused me to note that W. H. R. Rivers and Jim Whishaw overlapped each other in their medical training at St. Bart’s Hospital where Jim “never let work interfere with pleasure” (1935, 31). Jim went on to become an Anglo-Russian merchant like his forebears, and Rivers to ‘genealogise’ kinship in British anthropology. Upper-middle class England was a small place at the time, though I am not suggesting the two were acquainted.

⁷ This piece of data recalls the hilarious evidence offered by Charles Darwin’s less astute son, George, in support of his contention that, in England “same-name marriages, when they take place, are due to the consanguinity of the parties”. His quantitative analytical method was as follows: “Observing the great regularity of the curve, I continued it beyond the fiftieth surname by eye...and then cut out the whole (drawn on thick paper), and weighed the part corresponding to the fifty surnames, and the conjectural part. The conjectural addition was found to weigh rather more than one-tenth of the other part...” (George H. Darwin 1875, 155). The evidence was incontrovertible.

⁸ Bouquet raises the point that although British anthropology ‘genealogised’ kinship and British anthropologists have always consulted genealogical experts in fieldwork locations as a matter of course, they will have nothing to do with professional genealogists when working ‘at home’; indeed, being eager to disassociate themselves from an emphasis on ‘factual’ ties in favour of the ‘imaginary’ (1995, 188, she references Firth et al.). The latter strategy seems obvious. But compare it to the practice of consulting experts in ‘exotic’ locations, and a worryingly ethnocentric perspective is uncovered. Why should a

to ‘control’ events – past present and future – I feel that the written and graphic genealogical records of community members themselves, as opposed to the formal ones comprising the official Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, were produced to track horizontal connections more than to highlight procreation and descent. All the records are markedly more horizontal (as Mary’s 3.295 metres wide graphics indicate) than they are vertical. While all emphasise Ego’s line, for reasons of personal significance, all become broader the closer the generation is to Ego, i.e. the more operative the relationship becomes in the daily life and consciousness of Ego. On the other hand, the institution of ‘the Family Bible’, with a unilineal pedigree inscribed in its fore-pages⁹, was a very widespread phenomenon that articulates with ideas of control over procreation rather better than the short and shady family trees produced by community members. Although Mary’s ‘pedigree’ – and she calls it that, or ‘the Whishaw genealogy’ – extends back eight generations, descent in collateral branches only commences with William ‘Speedwell’ Whishaw and his wife, Constancia Fock – the genitors of the Petersburg Whishaws and her great-grandparents. The pedigree conspicuously lacks data on incoming female lines. The Thornton family tree, as deposited at the Brotherton Library, covers five generations, beginning with James Thornton, the first of the manufacturing Thorntons to settle in Petersburg and likewise excises all reference to the ancestry of incoming females. The Hubbard and Moberly descent reconstructions are similar. The Cattleys’ web page goes back a great deal further and extends considerably more widely, but that is a late twentieth-century production – and, even so, it does not wander into the labyrinth of maternal kin lines. The Cattley family data at the Brotherton Library (produced in the nineteenth century) fills in a little background to the first Petersburg Cattley, ‘Stephen of Camberwell’, and goes on from there.

W. M. Williams, in his Gosforth study (1969), notes that the duration of physical proximity is one of “the most important factors in determining the closeness of the association between relatives” (70), going on to note that when kindred are scattered across Great Britain and other countries, those relatives who live within reach of regular contact will be regarded as tied more closely into personal kinship frameworks than those with whom contact is sporadic, regardless of biological linkage. This was particularly true of the English in Russia prior to construction of the Warsaw Railway from Petersburg to Wirballen, when the sheer geographical inaccessibility between London to St. Petersburg, the length of time it took to traverse the distances or for mail to arrive (see Appendix 3), meant that contact and a sense of kinship with ‘kin’ *qua* kin, was concentrated on those relatives who lived locally, regardless of closeness of biological tie. As Jim Whishaw notes: “The consequence of our having been aliens in a foreign land for a long period must have been that William [Speedwell Whishaw] could very rarely have seen his

professional genealogist in a western context be (rightfully) suspected of providing kinship scenarios of dubious operative relevance, while a similar professional ‘in the field’ be given credence for exposing the local kinship world as it ‘works’? Am I alone in thinking there is something odd about this?

⁹ No data is available. Did the ‘Family Bible’ pass down the generations on principles of primogeniture? It’s a fascinating thought because, as a cultural object, the Family Bible must have become the repository of great signification. It represented commitment to one of the highest-profile and longest enduring icons of a very broad social world that extended far beyond the borders of the Church of England – the Biblical myths – and also a valorization of continuity and the integrated part that a specific familial line had in that continuity. Younger sons perhaps purchased their own ‘Family Bible’ if they had dynastic aspirations. They must have done so if the sheer proliferation of the objects is anything to go by.

brothers and sisters, for travelling so long ago meant a great deal of consideration” (1936, 131).

Jim Whishaw’s *A History of the Whishaw Family* – a book with a rather different agenda to the family genealogies already mentioned, but with similar preoccupations – was written after the Whishaws had been divested of their Petersburg lives and natal communal world, and their property, investments and status in Russia. He appears to be trying to write a re-focused history – both for himself and his descendants – of Whishaws in a new land (England); to be rewriting his past to fill the gap which the loss of his Anglo-Russian world had left in his life, and consequently examines family antecedents over a much longer period, concluding without irony that, “Few families in the English peerage to-day can claim a more exalted pre-Tudor origin” (1992, 7). Pointing out that, “Every step of a pedigree, if you want it registered as proved, must be traced” (Whishaw 1992, 136) he follows recorded Whishaw lineage back to a couple of parcels of land bequeathed to the sons of Cecilia de Whistlesagh by Ralph de Cranage in 1358. “The spelling of Cecilia’s name is unusual, but Cranage is well within the Whishaw tract, and I think that Cecilia may fairly be claimed as ‘one of us’” (ibid., 20, emphasis added). He traced (male) family lines through until his death in 1935, leaving the final collation of his work to his son-in-law, Maxwell Leigh. Jim struck a problem, however, when it came to the Petersburg generations in which he was most interested, in that the “infallible guides in the way of copies of transactions entered into by members of our family, copies of Wills, of Indentures, of legal processes, of the purchase and sale of lands, &c.” (ibid., 132) were all lost in the hurried exit from Russia in 1917 (a problem I also encountered). Nonetheless, in Jim’s case, the histories of members of the generations descended from Speedwell and Constancia Fock are fleshed out by reference to stored family memories, “such matters as I heard long ago from *my father and my uncles*” (ibid., emphasis added)¹⁰.

Perceptions of kinship in the Anglo-Russian merchant world seem to have followed male lines and valorized males as physical repositories of family histories¹¹. English laws – particularly that of male ownership of family property – were both a product and a bulwark of the valorization. Goody cites Guichard’s model of differences between oriental and occidental kinship structure in which Guichard postulated that one of six major differences between the two is that the occidental system of descent is clearly “bilineal (great importance given to the maternal family and to marriages (*alliances*)), (bracketing and emphasis in text) as opposed to the oriental system that is “[s]trictly patrilineal (only kinship in the paternal line counts)” (1985, 11). Perhaps I am exhibiting ethnocentricity but it seems to me that the projects of creating models, categories, bounded entities – so much part of western cultural praxis – may be universally human. I feel, however, that humans generally make use of the tools at their disposal

¹⁰ Conversations which I have held with descendants of community members as well as Jim Whishaw’s constant reference to “my father told me”, “my uncle remembered”, “my great-aunt said”, indicates that transmission of family legend over time is not only alive and well in twentieth- and twenty-first-century western worlds, but may be a qualitatively measurable variable in valorization of continuity, connectedness, kinship, even perceived social orders. This is the stuff that contributes to a metaculture of tradition – as long as a discourse community survives.

¹¹ As I indicate below, it was a system within which many alternate strategies operated. There was leeway for discontinuity between what was verbally approved, and what actually went on, as there is in all cultural constructs. The patriarchal head of house, however, *embodied* the network of relationships that he represented.

and if maternal connections are socially, economically or politically elevated (according to local valorizations) and those connections are willing to share some of their elevation, offspring of the female line will not be slow to take advantage of the availability, no matter that ‘the model’ suggests that “only kinship in the paternal line counts”. Likewise bilineal valorization may give rise to a variety of outcomes. I also suggest that the proposed ‘importance given to the maternal family’ in ‘occidental’ kinship structure is problematic. It is true that, as with English kinship understandings more generally, this group had bilineal characteristics: in the Church Registers the bride’s family was specified by name at marriage ceremonies; the bride’s father was usually one of the witnesses; the bride’s maiden name was occasionally noted in the baptismal records of the children resulting from a union.

Looking at the institutionalized structure of (pre-twentieth-century) English middle-class marriage objectively, however, the bleak truth is that the “paternal line counts” and the female line is something in the nature of a bagatelle – or a bag of sentiments – which may or may not be brought into play. I am trying to look at the practices of this group as they might appear to an outsider: the taking of the name of the paternal line; the tracing of descent through the paternal line; the transmission of property, particularly land, largely through the paternal line; the privileging of the first born son over later sons so as not to diversify the paternal line (or, in this merchant case, a single son, regardless of seniority); the usual absence of public profile of the matrilines of any public figure in recorded history – in short, the invisibility of all but the most powerful matrilines after ties born of sentiment and sociality between immediate individuals have withered: that is, when mother’s mother, and mother’s father, and mother’s siblings and mother herself have died. This specific community, in a set of constraints partially born of the nature of the means of wealth production, particularly valorized paternal connections.

The community was, however, so interconnected by biological kinship that even Jim Wishaw saw the need to provide brief chapters on the Anderson, Hill, Yeames and Fock families, as they had provided so many Wishaw brides over the century and a half – genealogies which are also plotted from the perspective of the patriline. The Hubbard family empire in Petersburg was also partially managed from the 1840s until 1917 by descendants of the sisters of John Gellibrand Hubbard (later Lord Addington), in a business/family arrangement that enlivened both kind of connection. Implicit throughout the substantial re-production of genealogies, and the limited depth of generational memory, is the valorization of *broad* family ties, even if the very structure of a ‘family tree’ disallowed the antecedent tracing of incoming female family connections. The pedigrees were not produced in order to call attention to illustrious kin ties – just extended ones. They all seem to be saying, “Look, all these people are ‘one of us’”. Related families represented resources: potential spouses, business partners, investment capital, influential sponsorship, influential connection, moral and economic support, hospitality and obligations of recognition. This was all vital to social operation. Written and graphic records attempted to solidify past ties in order to inscribe them into the present and future.

All this reflexively produced genealogical material exhibits a consciousness of *biological* understandings of English kinship terms associated with the nuclear family: brother, sister, father, mother, son, daughter. Beyond this nucleus, understandings rapidly become more flexible. Even usage of the words associated with the most regularly referenced family

relationships proved, on investigation, however, to subsume contradiction and muddle. Another common characteristic of the material was an apparent determination to present images of family harmony that resonate strongly with standard Victorian family photographs in which the subjects posed themselves in tableaux of mutual amity and good fortune (or the fortune they were attempting to emulate) and held those positions for the time it took for an image to be recorded for posterity. They were highly reflexive about the whole operation. It is all part of the energetic strategizing aimed at dealing with the paradoxes central to the articulation of such a fantastical social creation as idealised, upper middle-class, Victorian family life with somewhat grimmer reality. Many strategies implemented by this group (as exemplars of a wider world), work to circumvent the risk of clashes and discontinuity between discursively created worlds and actual practice. These I will discuss as they arise in connection with various relationships explored below.

Michael Peletz notes that, “Anthropology’s love affair with kinship has cooled in recent decades...[a trend that]...has been construed by some observers as a clear (if not relieving) sign that the study of kinship is dead or moribund” (1995, 345), but goes on to point out that this would be a misleading conclusion. The study of kinship has not died, but rather: 1) has become less clearly bounded as mainstream anthropology has accepted that kinship and other traditional subfields “cannot be pursued in the isolated terms of what are ultimately functionally defined institutional domains”; and 2) in a concurrent trend, has been reconstituted under other rubrics than anthropology (*ibid.*). Nor is it any longer adequate to delineate and circumscribe a single genealogical principle like descent or marriage and postulate it as the principal factor in the social organization of any specific group. While I endeavour to analytically separate certain facets of ‘kinship and other connections’ in order to present the data in comprehensible form, I have found it neither possible nor desirable to discuss, for example, sibling relationships excised from reference to marriage, status, gender roles, concurrent horizontal social groups, parent/child connections, relations to the production of wealth etc. I have endeavoured to ‘theme’ the following sections to make them easier to follow, while at the same time illustrate the absence of any single causality in any social construction – the latter project was considerably simpler than the former.

I begin by examining the hypothesis that there is no inevitable connection between: 1) accepted understandings of the meanings of genealogical kin terms (as emically produced) in any social group (including a quintessentially ‘Western’ one); and 2) these same relationships in practice. This is an even more remarkable dichotomy than the one that “contrasts the logical relationships constructed by anthropologists with those which are continuously practised, maintained and cultivated” (Bouquet 1993, 43 *pace* Bourdieu). However, in both dichotomies, the theoretical potential equates “with the theoretically possible roads and routes on a map, as opposed to the actual network of beaten tracks and paths which are in constant use” (*ibid.*, 43). I begin my examination by focusing on a single connection, that operating between sisters, and then move on to explore the meanings associated with the term ‘father’ as one which has more diverse implications, both in practice – and in the hypotheses, connected to the approach used here, which analysis of practice helps to produce and illuminate.

Following this I move on to investigation of ‘significant’ social circles (of those who have left posterity their records), as they operated in practice, beginning where Mary Whishaw’s

extant diaries begin: during the hectic social years in a young woman's life before she married. The group with whom Mary spent most of her 'maiden years' – her closest and densest discourse community and most frequently referenced 'we' at that time – were young women in the same position as she was, with whom she had grown up and, given the nature of kin connectedness in the community, to whom she was at least distantly related via affinal and/or consanguineal ties. Her references provide a guide to her 'significant others' - people with whom she exchanged the most talk and who featured most prominently in her lifeworld.

Marriage, and the business alliances it created or cemented, forms the subject of chapter seven, as I plot the connections between the merchant families as they spread across the community and out into wider worlds. In both chapters discussion of gender and age relationships provides an accompanying theme. To use Chris Gregory's formulation: "In terms of the theory of kinship, I am concerned with the politics of valued relations rather than the logic of kinship structures" (1997, 3); nonetheless, regularities inherent in patterns of partner selection and association make for illuminating exploration. Certainly those families who gave both brides and grooms to each other formed the most enduring business and social alliances, and were most likely to be drawn into supporting members of connected families involved in contestations of various kinds¹²; conversely, as I will briefly demonstrate, even members of core families, such as Mary Whishaw, who chose to marry an outsider in terms of both kin connections and profession, could not count on support when support might have made all the difference. Jane Austen "took for granted the idea that having connections was an attribute of social status, her sketches of family life incorporated a critical scrutiny of other assumptions...To have a pedigree is well bred; yet to have connections is to have managed one's life circumspectly, selected one's companions judiciously." (Strathern 92, 92). The selection of a spouse from outside the boundaries assumed in community discourse was neither a judicious nor circumspect undertaking.

'SISTER' IN REPRESENTATIONS AND IN PRACTICE.

It is now widely recognized that static, highly abstract formulations and models of "official" rules and principles of social structure, such as those for which Lévi-Strauss is justly famous..., don't take us far toward understanding social actors or the myriad contexts in which they organize themselves, relate to one another, acquire and use resources, or create order and meaning in their lives (Peletz 1995, 351).

¹² In 1787 a split occurred in Factory ranks when a Commercial Treaty between Russia and Britain expired and a group of Factorians decided to join the First Guild of Russian Merchants: Raikes, Cavanaugh, Cramp, Cazalet, Birch and Cattley were the names mentioned (GL 31781/1). Noticeable is the extent to which members of this group were connected by affinal ties, both past, and soon to be celebrated: Tim Raikes was married to John Cavanaugh's sister; William Cramp was married to Noah Cazalet's sister; one of Thomas Birch's sons would marry Noah's daughter Maria while his other son would marry William Cramp's daughter Jane. Stephen Cattley, at this stage, had fairly limited local connections because he and two of his brothers had all chosen to marry their first cousins in England - sisters Frances, Marianne and Mary Cattley – though the next generation would remedy the situation and marry the son and daughter of Stephen Cattley's then partner John Prescott (and a few more first cousins) and the following generation would marry widely across the community (see Diagram 1, page 204).

Within the middle- and upper-middle-class English kinship system of the time the discursively constructed roles and relationships associated with father/son, mother/daughter, brother/brother, brother/sister are all fraught with potential friction. These are relationships in which hierarchy is inherent, with all that a refusal to accept the dictated norms might (and did) entail. I have chosen to examine the sister/sister relationship in the greatest depth simply because it is, of all nuclear family relationships of the era and class, the one that would *appear* to be the least complicated by such considerations. Like other nuclear family terminology, ‘sister’ had a discursively constructed existence that appeared to be relatively unthreatening, universally accepted, and one that was much as might be expected¹³. Depending on the whether the sibling was male or female, the relationship was framed as involving caring and sharing, nearest and dearest, loyalty, companionship and above all consistency and durability. A sister is a sister and always a sister¹⁴. Mary was very close to the sister who was closest to her in age, Fan; less close to her twin sisters Lil and Vi, whose relationship with each other meant they did not ‘need’ her in her role of ‘eldest sister’, which she assumed both as a right and on the delegation of her parents when they were both absent; and had a more maternal than sisterly interest in her youngest sister, Eve, seven years her junior. Although Mary socialized more with other unmarried women of her own age in the community than with her sisters, there is an implicit understanding in her references that family belonged together and was part of a unit. Jim put into words what was probably a generally accepted idealization of family relationships: shared ancestry meant shared heredity and inalienable attachment, despite occasional conflict (1936, 167-171).

But lo! examination of recorded practice across the community also produces an alternate and rather different set of relationships and behaviour indicating that *two* sets of roles can be conceptualized as associated with the term ‘sister’: those moral expectations lodged in the circulating metacultural evaluations of the community (and also English society of a similar type in general, because kinship as a cultural field did not exhibit much locally produced variation from the homeland beyond, perhaps, a slightly higher degree of endogamous marriage), and those actually implemented in practice, which sometimes violated accepted norms. When these ‘realities’ clashed, mediation was required, either by an authoritative figure or another kind of referential talk. In either case, the protagonists always understood and

¹³ Analysis of the contexts in which the term was conventionally used produced nothing surprising: on the whole, the relationship was construed much as it is in English today, though did not admit of the possibility of personal animosity - about which contemporary usage is more flexible. “Something of the world” has got into the construction over the ensuing century. Tönnies wrote in the 1880s, in all sincerity, “Relatives and married couples love each other or easily adjust themselves to each other, they speak together and think along similar lines” (1955, 55). This discursive representation was in broad currency in bourgeois circles of the time, despite regular discrepancies in practice. Incidentally, Tönnies’ translator notes that “his eldest brother was engaged in trading with English merchants” and that Tönnies had first hand contact with “the world of the merchant whose soul is in the profits of his trade” (ibid., x).

¹⁴ Mrs Gaskell’s *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, read and discussed by Mary’s circle, provides a classic and heart wrenching depiction of sisterly solidarity and devotion which avoids the saccharine – “what Charlotte could have borne patiently for herself she could not bear for her sister” (1920, 148) – by its undeniable grounding in harsh truth. Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Sense and Sensibility*, which were also read, actually produce a more ‘realistic’ image of sisterly conflict and incompatibility, though in both novels resolution and the mending of rupture are achieved – which detracts somewhat from the realism.

accepted the cultural creation of ‘sister’ (or other biological relationship), often restating the circulating formula as part of a defence – thereby accelerating onward a replicated discursive construction of the term, like a breath accelerates a soap bubble. If the discourse of kin roles did not fully dictate its practice, people generally attempted to *narrativize* their actions in concordance with its dictates, with its accompanying metaculture, endeavouring to discursively shape what was actually happening or had happened, either to fit the bubble, or to frame the sister as unsisterly herself – a non-sister¹⁵. The latter course, a desperate act of self defence, could only result in a fracture of the relationship. Such fractures were not infrequent and could be long lasting, because they cleft discursive paths and were, in any case, often a final statement of inherent familial animosity which neither party could be bothered to mend. The moral expectations raised to the standard of norms by this community, and other English groups like them, were not easy to live up to. Failure to do so required adept manipulation of discursive items, and some situations could simply not be made to ‘fit’ even then. Strathern notes that as late as the early-twentieth century, the naturalness of the procreative act was less salient in defining kin than the naturalness of social status (1992, 52). Kinship was also about the social reproduction of parents by their offspring – and, by analogy, the social reproduction of siblings by each other, and even that of children by parents. A shameful relative (or relatives) ran the strong risk of not being a relative at all.

Another aspect of the muddle emerges when application of apparently fixed biological terms are examined in actual context of use. The ‘sisterly’ bond can exist in the absence of a sibling relationship and can also be emptily deployed with regards a biological sibling in the absence of any real feeling. Baroness Lily Ramsay and her unmarried sister, Jane Cummings, were the daughters of James Cummings and his first wife, Jane Tangate, who was Harriet Hardie’s maternal aunt. Lina Cummings was the daughter of James and his second wife, Caroline Frobelius (who had apparently been the first family’s governess). When Lily’s husband, Baron George Ramsay, was wounded during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877, Lina (now Gambs) wrote to her half-sister Lily:

If you should make up your mind to come here [Petersburg], you must come and stay at our house. We shall be so awfully glad to have you with us & will do all we can to make you feel as comfortable as possible; we shall do all not to make you feel so lonely. You will be able to see Jane [full sister] so often & news will reach you so much quicker & we shall both be so happy to take care of you, dearest sister. (21.10.1877.)

It is a letter full of ‘natural’ sisterly affection, as if Lina had pulled the trigger cocked by discursively created social expectation. Actually, the two half-sisters very rarely saw each other; Lily never stayed with Lina in Petersburg – though she visited the city regularly and spent considerable periods of time there – and did not do so after this invitation, remaining in Helsingfors with her children to await news of her wounded spouse. The passage, however, is a typical expression of the stylisation of the sisterly bond.

¹⁵ In *Wuthering Heights*, when Isabella Linton eloped with the ‘villain’ Heathcliff, Emily Brontë had Isabella’s brother Edgar Linton say, “Trouble me no more about her. Hereafter she is only my sister in name: not because I disown her, but because she has disowned me” (1955, 114).

Harriet Hardie, who imputed a similar stylized sisterly bond in her relations with her well-married cousin (while often circumventing it with regards her own sisters), chastised Lily on occasion for her lack of reciprocation:

You do not deserve to hear the name of relation for it is too bad your never finding time to write to people whom you once professed to have an affection for. However, you see I cling to you always in hopes of some day getting a line in return. Your husband is to luncheon with us this morning before starting home...(undated letter of approximately 1874).

Sixteen years later, Harriet was still writing in the same vein: "...now that we are older nothing is more pleasant than to be surrounded by our relations & those one loves best & I for one regard you my nearest & best friend. I prefer being with you even to going abroad" (11.10.1890, emphasis in text, and of course, Finland was not 'abroad' in relation to Russia at the time). In 1896 Harriet notes that "I always tell both my husband and friends here that no one stands so high in my opinion as you do, that my own sisters are not as kind to me" (3.12.1896). Sisterliness, as it was built out of approved items of circulating talk, might be strategically invoked where it was not actually practiced, and it might also be invoked where the precise genealogical relationship was absent. The key here might be Lily's husband, Major-General Baron George Ramsay, who mixed with the Russian 'Imperials' and who would be promoted to commander of the newly established Finnish army a few years later. The Ramsays were wealthy, titled, influential and a considerable distance above the Cummings, Gambs, Hardies, Chidsons (Harriet's natal family) and Tangates on any local social scale – whether English or more general. Sisterliness was a rewarding discourse to implement in relations with Lily.

Harriet Hardie also had a number of biological sisters, two at least of whom were employed as governess-drudges by German-English families (and greatly pitied but not materially assisted by Harriet)¹⁶, and Isabel, who married a merchant, Nicholas Rosinsky (English mother), on the same day in 1865 as Harriet married William Hardie – both in the

¹⁶ She writes that her sister "Betsy has grown young since her situation, she decks out more than ever and still hopes to please, it is fortunate for her that such trifles amuse her, as she has, poor thing, very little to look forward to" (undated, about 1874). Poor Betsy Chidson was ten years older than Harriet, who would later visit someone who lived in the same building from which Betsy had been dragged, screaming, to end her life in the Nicholai Asylum in 1889. Harriet would not be able to repress a shudder at the memory. Mary Chidson, a year younger than Harriet, and Alice, ten years younger, remained in the family home and nursed first their father and then their mother through their final illnesses. Harriet visited regularly from the comfortable lifestyle her husband had provided her, and felt most unhappy about the whole business. "Poor Mary is quite knocked up & not only looks wretched but is also quite unwell. I can't tell you how miserable I feel...Mama died in great agony. Mary and Alice nursed her all along" (18.6.1880). Harriet was so upset by the experience that she went to stay at one of the Marshalls' summer residences in Peterhof (this was before the Hardies had their own), and then took a long recuperative trip with her husband to Helsingfors and Stockholm. Mary and Alice, the two youngest daughters, were 43 and 34 respectively in 1880. Presumably any emoluments died with their parents. They lost the family lodgings at Kazan Bridge and Mary also died in the Nicholai Asylum, four years later, while Alice existed for the rest of her life on the edge of penury. In 1894 Harriet excuses her lack of aid to the youngest of the Chidson sisters, Isabel (recently bereaved), in a letter to Lily, by saying that already she helps Alice "*in a way*, and she has such poor health that very likely some day I shall have to provide for her, as goodness knows how long she will be able to keep the miserable situations she generally gets" (14.7.1894, emphasis added).

English Church, so presumably in a double wedding. Isabel and Nicholas produced eight children. The first son's second name was 'Hardie', which would normally indicate that Harriet's husband was a sponsor, though did not in this case (two Chidsons and a Rosinsky filled the roles). It was, in any case, an indication of closeness and there can be little doubt that the sisters were intimate at this point. And yet, something happened, one assumes a business rupture between Rosinsky and Hardie males, but whatever it was, it parted the sisters completely. This absence of detail is a common pattern. Ruptures occurred in the community, and in community families, and their *effects* are referenced, but the *details* of unresolved, deeply divisive disagreements are often lacking. This particular split was only mentioned by Harriet in 1887 when she tells Lily that she has been invited to a dinner party where she expects to meet two of Isabel's children – a son, unnamed, and a daughter, 'Isa', who has been earmarked as Lily's son's future bride: "so I shall at last see Isa as a grown up young lady. The two boys have been to call on us several times and dine with us but I am rather afraid of asking them as I believe the children are forbid to visit us which now that they are growing up must appear strange to them..." (14.1.1887).

The rupture was not fully mended between Harriet and Isabel until "that terrible husband" of Isabel's died in 1894, leaving Isabel with two teenage daughters, an infant daughter, and little else of a material nature. Isabel received 1500 Rs from her husband's former employers, a German merchant house, and managed to secure a pension from the Exchange Committee¹⁷ of approximately 15 Rs per month, representing a per annum income of about double what Harriet considered normal for having an evening gown adjusted. This may be contrasted with Harriet's disparaging remark to Lily, when Rosinsky had been made a director of the Russian Insurance Company in 1888, that, with the added increment of 3,000 Rs p.a. to the Rosinsky income, "poor Isabella is a little better off" (dateless). Only "a little better off" with the addition of 3,000 Rs per annum – where did that leave her with a total income of 180 Rs per annum? Harriet was horrified as yet another of her siblings descended into penury and wrote querulously to Lily about the threat it posed her personally.

All sorts of things are being said and people talk without any consideration. People suggest for me to adopt Maria [the infant daughter], now I do not see that at all as at my age I should have to change my life and my husband would never agree to such a thing. He, as it is, is much prejudiced against the Rosinsky children, besides I think it is much more natural for one of her sisters taking her than me, her aunt. [Isa was now married to Lily's son, Edward, and living with the Ramsays at their waterfront estate in Helsingfors. Lily probably did not relish Harriet's implication.] (14.7.1894.)

This is an interesting stretch of text that illustrates the thesis being expounded here rather well. Firstly we have the ever present power of the items of talk which circulate within a given milieu: "all sorts of things are being said". Harriet knew what was being said and tacitly acknowledged a certain validity in the circulating items, *per se*, but was quick to point out that they were being transmitted "without any consideration". "People" *suggest* she should adopt

¹⁷ It is unclear whether the 'Exchange Committee' was a multi-national one servicing all the merchants who were engaged in international trade out of Petersburg, or the British Factory under a different title.

infant Maria¹⁸, an idea that Harriet understands might appear reasonable to members of her world, and against which she must produce convincing objection – *acceptable* objection, objection framed in terms that will resonate with locally circulating formats. She launches into an ill-conceived activation of all the discursive items that come immediately to mind in her own defence. Not possessing a great deal of subtlety, she blurts out her own most cogent consideration first: “I should have to change my life”¹⁹. This was clearly inadequate and she finished the sentence by deploying the husband ‘object’, placing the poor fellow in a rare position of marital ascendancy. He was not someone often referenced by Harriet over the decades, and even more rarely in favourable terms. Nonetheless, a ‘husband’ was someone of importance in metaculturally approved circulating discourse. A ‘husband’s’ views had weight. Harriet only invoked his supposed proscriptions when there was something she knew that people would think she *should* do but which she did not care to²⁰. She then lurches into invocation of genealogical relationship: sister versus aunt, ignoring the fact that the adoption of Maria would assist her own sister, Isabel. A sister was owed more than a niece in local kinship arrangements. One can imagine Harriet producing the same sort of justifications for everyone in her circle who would listen.

Harriet was very conscious of the rights and duties which her discourse world attached to various roles, but curiously unreflexive. A couple of years later, after Isabel had taken an apartment large enough to rent rooms to lodgers as a source of livelihood (an unending drudgery of an existence), Harriet writes, with no detectable sense of shame:

I was seeing Isabella lately, she has no lodgers poor thing & is roasted alive in her rooms, you have no idea of the heat there, it is simply weakening. Vera is staying at the Swartzes who took pity on her but both Sonia & Maria are at home & I suppose will remain there. [Sonia and Maria’s godparents²¹] are all away. I fancy Isabella expected some of them

¹⁸ Adoption of a child of a close relative by a childless couple was not unknown in the community, though very little data is available and the Registers only mention ‘adopted child of’ on four occasions, though this is not an infallible guide. Andrew Handyside and his wife, Anastasia née Henley, both descended from the ubiquitous Bernhard Fock, were childless and in middle age adopted one of the daughters of Andrew’s brother, Dr. James Handyside, who was a sister of Oswald Cattley’s wife. The Handysides, though predominately a medical rather than merchant family, were densely connected to, and completely a part of, the community – one of few largely non-merchant families to ‘enjoy’ this distinction throughout the nineteenth century. The Fock connection was operative. The adoption would have been currency.

¹⁹ Harriet complained of boredom if she had not exchanged visits or attended an organized social function for more than two days. By 1894, however, she was 58 and ‘set in her ways’ and had obviously come to the conclusion that children were expensive and might even deny one the luxury of maintaining a carriage.

²⁰ She also invokes tender solicitude towards her husband as her reason for visiting the wealthy Marshalls at Ligovo while her mother’s deathbed is being attended by sisters Mary and Alice. “It is with a heavy heart that I leave town yet I do not like to leave my husband sitting in town these holidays, he is so much in the office & occupied that he must have a little recreation” (7.9.1880).

²¹ Each child had three sponsors or godparents, two of the same sex, one of the other. It is an area I am not going to examine in any detail. These spiritual kin often provided one of the infant’s names, as did biological relatives, and there is some evidence to indicate they may have sometimes maintained a lifelong connection with their godchildren. The evidence seems to point more, however, to their importance at the time of baptism, as representing the recognition of valued connections to the infants’ parents.

would have taken pity on her children, but no! The rich are the meanest of all.....We have fixed to move to the country next Thursday, at least the servants & loads, we ourselves on Saturday. (14.5. possibly 1896.)

All the Anglo-Russian merchant families vacated the capital in summer. Most, as I have noted, regarded their summer residences as their principal 'address'. Mary's family, and others living at Mourino, frequently had extraneous children and adult guests staying with them for weeks at a time. Harriet 'should' have asked her sister's children to stay at the Hardies' Peterhof summer residence, which she had described glowingly to Lily as having plenty of accommodation when extending an invitation to the Ramsays to visit 'any time'. She had an Anderson daughter, various Marshall sons, Lily's daughters and many others to stay in a single year, but she never had any of her closest consanguines. Perhaps they could not afford the train fare.

Undoubtedly, Harriet practiced a meagre sort of philanthropy towards her siblings. Her husband occasionally paid the fees for the permits which foreigners had to renew each year²². The trouble that would have ensued had this not been done would have been more expensive in the long run. She presented them with gifts at appropriate times: boxes of soap and toilet water, the calico to make six nightgowns (a coarse fabric that, according to Wilkie Collins (1994, 155) made up "a plain servant's nightgown"); she lent her sister a bonnet when Isabel had important begging calls to make. When one of Isabel's daughters was poised to marry, Harriet recounts that her husband instructed her "to order the dress at Ozeroff's and pay for the making" (9.10.1896); it was, after all, a public family occasion. When the wedding was cancelled at the last minute, Harriet hurriedly retrieved the fabric and gave it to the bride's sister, Isa, married to Lily's son, and a more rewarding recipient of a gratuitous gift²³. On the other hand, when Daisy Marshall, the daughter of her husband's employer²⁴, was marrying in England, Harriet had found "a lovely silver bread basket" to send "over", which she hoped the bride would like (30.11.1892), though she had never mentioned the girl in her correspondence before.

Sister Alice, meanwhile, struggled on without even the putative safety net of children who might one day earn (and both Vera and Sonia Rosinsky passed an entrance test which earned them clerical jobs in the Telegraph Office in 1897), or whose godparents might occasionally assist. It was a fairly disastrous world that the educated children of the economically unsuccessful had to face, particularly the daughters, who were circumscribed in movement and opportunity. Shaped by certain discourse worlds, they were obliged to re-lodge themselves in

²² "Aliens are...compelled, under the police regulations of the Empire, to pay a tax upon their passports, different and in some cases higher, than the tax imposed on passports issued to native subjects of a similar class. Thus, all aliens above the social status of an artizan, pay, at St. Petersburg, 7 r. 15 c. annually for a ticket of residence; mechanics and artizans pay 2 r. 86 c.; nurses and ladies' maids are charged 1r. 43 c., and labourers 60 copecks" (T. Michell 1871, 16).

²³ "I had to go and countermand the dresses but they were all begun, even the wedding dress, at least the waist was not cut out but all the skirt tacked and the lining bought. Do not mention a word to Isa until she tells you herself, we have presented her the white silk as what was the case of keeping it and as she has no dress for the coming balls, she is welcome to this one, she will only have to pay for the making of it" (3.12.1896).

²⁴ The Marshall's were a large and hugely wealthy mill-owning clan based in Leeds, with a local office in Petersburg, which William Hardie apparently managed. Though not self-employed, it was obviously a remunerative position, and gave the Hardies social entrée to wealthy local circles.

milieus that had been the subject of universal disparagement in their youth. We do not know how Alice felt, but Harriet was pleased when the children's maid in the household in which Alice was employed returned from an extended holiday because it allowed Alice "to be a little free now. For the time she replaced her she got 35 Rs and now is on 15 a month, such a miserable pay, only equal to our stable boy, servants now have more pretensions (sic) and are decidedly better paid than educated people" (25.10.1891). On the other hand, Harriet regularly informed Lily of the attentions which she paid to Lily's full sister, Jane Cummings, whose circumstances were not much better than Harriet's own sisters, though Lily apparently gave Jane some sort of annuity which enabled her to keep a room at the Smolenski Institute. "Your sister Jane has given us a fright she has been so poorly. I rushed off to see her yesterday but she was so much better that she came and dined with us and we had a long talk together. Her health is not any good and her limbs are so stiff, poor old dear" (10.5.1894). This may be contrasted with Harriet's displeasure when it reached her ears, some ten years prior, that Jane was hoping that her sister Lily might offer her a permanent home: "I plainly told her you could say nothing as you have your husband to consult & I hardly thought he would like to have Jane in his house for always" (10.8.early 1880s). Lily's house, connections and hospitality were Harriet's domain and she would not have enjoyed finding Jane ensconced in the Ramsay's Helsinki mansion in privileged permanence.

One of the points being made here is that the biological tie of 'sister', to which circulating discourse ascribed fixed value and meaning under a metaculture of tradition, in practice was considerably more fluid, and greatly affected by factors which had nothing to do with biological connection or the discursively created cultural object which was a 'sister'. Harriet's siblings were penurious: two sisters were deemed fit for a lunatic asylum and both died there, her eldest brother was an invalid living on a small pension of some sort (possibly inherited), a younger brother was almost permanently unemployed and could not keep a job once he got one. Then Isabel, who had seemed to be in comparatively comfortable circumstances (and also out of contact for unspecified reasons), was rendered both instantly destitute and once again accessible to social contact by the death of her husband. These were not relatives to introduce into the circle to which her own marriage had introduced her and, indeed, Harriet never did so. Hypergamy, in the English context at least, produced complicated asymmetries in the relationships between the wife and her consanguines, a subject with which the novelistic literature of the times frequently dealt. Male writers, portraying women as the weak and sentimental creatures they were known to be, suggest that the greatest burden of indigent and vulgar affines was born by the husband: the wife was usually too foolish to realise how inferior her erstwhile family truly was. Women writers, such as Jane Austen, did not subscribe to this fallacy. Austen credited women with the ability to both distinguish between different worlds and to strategize accordingly. In *Mansfield Park* she describes Fanny Price's reaction to her family home after some years spent in the socially elevated establishment of her hypergamous aunt, Lady Bertram. Re-entry into the parental domicile on an extended visit was a rude shock for tremulous Fanny: "It was the abode of noise, disorder, and impropriety. Nobody was in their right place, nothing was done as it ought to be. She could not respect her parents as she had hoped" (1994, 394). Fanny began to favourably reassess the attractions of a rejected suitor from her aunt's social milieu.

Is this snobbery? The English middle and upper classes are often designated by this enveloping and pejorative term. Or is it that talk, as a concrete cultural artefact, moving through people in any discourse community, inserts itself into the fabric of that world, as I suggest throughout this study? Harriet had to choose between confrontational discourse worlds. The one of which she was a member by virtue of marriage, attached considerable value to hierarchy of every sort. In this case, valorization of social hierarchy, metacultural approval and acceleration of discursive items such as “the common people” found in informal records, and “the lower classes” or “orders” which appeared in nineteenth-century Factory discourse were incompatible with introducing one’s sister - governess to German/English merchant/commission agent Augustus Plincke²⁵ (himself a part of the lower mercantile stratum) – to the Marshalls, Cazalets, Cattleys, Ebsworths, Whishaws, Andersons and all the other luminaries to whom Harriet was pleased to offer hospitality. Alice’s focal concerns were making very distant economic ends meet in the middle. When the Plincke’s *bonne* took a holiday, Alice had to double up and do both duties: teach the children and care for their material needs, which meant doing the kinds of things no ‘lady’ could be paid to do and remain a ‘lady’. More relevant to the point being made here, many of the most salient discourse items that Alice processed and transmitted – lack of private space in her employer’s household, untreated illness, worn out clothes, the delight in a half-day holiday, aggressively recalcitrant children, a disagreeable diet – had no mode of entry nor subsequent pathways in the upper stratum mercantile world where they possessed only horrifying signification. How could the two worlds talk to each other? They did not share a language.

Here is one place where the circulating items of talk in the English merchant community at St. Petersburg came to a halt in two directions, for different reasons. Baroness Lily Ramsay, with her membership in a vital and different world, was only interested in community talk which referenced her immediate family and a few of old friends, not in community metacultural judgements as a whole. The discursive framings of the community died a natural death in the face of her indifference. On the other hand, Isabel Rosinsky and Alice Chidson had nothing valuable nor even recognizable to contribute to circularized framings and represented a distinct impediment to Harriet’s acceptance in the world which she valued. Harriet, in a potentially liminal position herself, was a boundary keeper. She voluntarily prevented the reciprocal passage of talk between the community and her sisters, by not allowing the two worlds to mix. Highly relevant to this is that a formal ‘introduction’ was accompanied by an obligation to ‘recognize’ the person so introduced in future encounters. People who had not been formally introduced could be socially invisible to each other. Mary Whishaw records being introduced to

²⁵ Augustus Plincke was German on his father's side, with an English mother, Mary Ann Andrews. His father, Henry, had been baptised at Westminster in 1814, so may have been a naturalized Briton. This was quite sufficient to allow one of the English clerks of the English Magazine (department store), to write: “Well, the Mag. was to liquidate and a gentleman, Mr. Plinke, who had a great resemblance to Herbert Spencer, and tremendous flat feet, arrived to superintend it. He was a real English gentleman, quiet and reserved...” (LRA 1182, 17). Incidentally, the knowledgeable reference to Herbert Spencer by a shop clerk is an interesting one that indicates that English newspapers were very widely read by all the English in St. Petersburg. Newspapers in the nineteenth century showed much smaller differences in language and style than contemporary newspapers; the same level of literacy was expected for the readers of *The Times* as the *Sheffield Evening Star*, aimed at the Sheffield working classes (Brown 1985, 101).

one Mrs. Mackie, when delivering an invitation from her mother to Mrs. Raitt née Henley, (therefore a consanguine). “I was not very thrilled,” Mary notes tersely (6.2.1890). The Mackies were a part of the lower stratum of English merchants in Petersburg, not the ‘lower classes’ exactly, but not ‘one of us’ either; part of the sector into which Harriet had been born, in fact, and members of an aggregate to whom Mary did not wish to be introduced - the same unrecognized social aggregate as the always nameless ‘shouter’ who disturbed Mary, Mim and Ella's choir practice²⁶. Introducing a person from a world perceived to be different, and worse, inferior, could be framed as irritating, insulting, at the very least inconvenient. People with loyalties in two camps had to choose. Harriet had chosen. Harriet became a self-appointed bouncer. There must have been dozens of similarly self-appointed guardians dotted around the ‘fringes’ of the community. I have encountered, in the primary sources, many different specimens: those who forbade their adolescent daughters to associate with the daughters of Russian nobility because of the contagion of moral laxity (Mrs Henley née Lindes); the Factory which only allowed Britons into their ranks; Jim Wishaw who removed his family to England when he perceived that the community no longer offered sufficient of the kind of people he wanted his daughters to meet; Mary who removed herself from the Choir Pew to the body of the Church whenever ‘the shouter’ was ensconced; those who avoided the ‘h-dropping evangelicals’ associated with Nonconformist Protestant faiths, and so on. Harriet did not cut her penurious family dead, but she severed the discourse pathways of which she was guardian.

This all may be seen to resonate with what Strathern notes (*pace* Firth, Hubert and Forge) as still being a feature of English kinship in the late-twentieth century: that, in practice, relatives are specified as individuals rather than roles (1992, 82), and W. M. Williams’ observation that “just as every individual [in Ashworthy] has an unique set of actual kin so too does he have his own unique view of which persons do or do not constitute his kindred and of their particular relationships” (1963, 152). Individuals, in English perceptions, are made up of elements which can be conceptualized as belonging to different domains – status, generation, wealth (in this wealth-oriented community particularly) and compatibility – as well as kin relatedness. All of these, under a valorization of the self-ownership of the individual, may be taken into account when selecting kin relations to nurture. “People can choose those kindred they wish to associate with and those they wish to ignore” (*ibid.*, 165), though I would suggest, along with Urban (2001, 5), that something of the idea – in this case circulating metacultural depictions of correct kin behaviour – gets into the world of actual kin behaviour and vice versa.

‘A ROLLING TERM GATHERS MUCH WEIGHT’: CROSS-DOMAIN USAGE OF ‘FATHER’.

The relationship of sister, however, was considerably less complicated than that which operated between children and father. In twentieth- and twenty-first-century English kinship practices, people may also choose whether they acknowledge parents as close kin (even though

²⁶ Two years later Mrs. Mackie was still making an occasional appearance, to Mary’s disgust. “Went to the working party. At 4.45 went to have a stroll on the Quay with Mrs. Wilding to get away from Mrs. Mackie who was making us sick talking about her weaning proceedings” (24.3.1892). This was during the famine when Harriet Hardie records that the ladies were meeting in groups of sixty or more at the church to make clothing for the victims. The gatherings would not have been ‘select’.

in the unrewardingly narrow definition of kinship as ‘blood tie’ pure and simple, this is an impossible statement); this was not the case with the family patriarch of nineteenth-century bourgeois worlds. Unlike a socially undesirable sister, the fathers of the community could not easily be disregarded; they could control and direct the life trajectories of their children, and seem to have done so repeatedly. As fathers, they were also inevitably husbands (for the span of their wives’ lives), a duality of roles which was by far the most powerful combination provided by the genealogical tables of the community. The despotic husband, however, seems to have been considerably less common than the despotic father. Archibald Mirrielees forced Maida’s brother William “to return to Russia and enter business for which he was quite unfitted” (LRA 1192/2, 23). William Hubbard Jun., on the other hand, on finishing his University career “wished to go out to business in Russia, but was bidden to accept the opening my Uncle John offered me at St. Helen’s Place.” (LRA 1091/8.) Jim Whishaw’s grandfather would give his quarrelling sons a cane each with which to continue their disagreements and “whichever gave in first, he thrashed – Spartan treatment, no doubt, but well devised” (J. Whishaw 1992, 141). Jim’s father, unable to tolerate paternal despotism, left the family firm of Hills & Whishaw in Petersburg when he was 21 (legally of age), and built up a business of his own in Archangel, not returning until after his father had retired. In his turn, Jim found his own father “unusually hot tempered” (*ibid.*, 165) and on failing medical school, Jim, like his elder brother John, was passed over for inclusion in the family firm and both took jobs with uncles: John in New Zealand, Jim in Petersburg.

The contrast between the categories of sister and father helps illustrate what I believe to be fundamental attributes of discursively constructed cultural objects. An item of talk is an evanescent thing composed of sound and breath or lines marked on a surface of some sort. It gathers weight and substance only as it is taken up by recipients and transmitted forward. It grows as it is passed from person to person and from group to group, as it is subjected to metacultural evaluation that layers it with meaning. Such evaluation is not produced as a response to the item in isolation, so to speak. It is produced by the way the item ‘fits’ into the worlds it traverses as it is transmitted. The more ‘relevant’ it is deemed to be by those worlds, and the greater its explanatory, assistive or ordering powers are perceived to be, the weightier it becomes. This is an understanding that is implicit in any evangelical or proselytizing project, whether of a religious or political nature. The greater the number of people who endorse a particular stretch of discourse, particularly if they are considered to be influential, the greater becomes the ‘truth’ of the thing. If the item is endorsed by the most powerful sectors of a world, it will be in the interests of those people to ensure its continued valorization; it will be protected from the advances of modernity or plurality under a metaculture which endorses it as part of a valuable ‘tradition’. The discursively constructed fields which persisted in this community from its inception: the Established Church and its doctrines as presented in the Prayer Book, business integrity, principles of hierarchy, valorization of economic wealth, ownership of self and ancillary family (by males), and so on, were all protected by metacultural judgements favouring continuity and exact replication. Those who did not benefit from these traditions, or who suffered under them, were much more likely to welcome plurality of discourse and practice – not, probably, in conscious reaction, but rather because there was no reason not to do so. Thus the ‘lower classes’ of Britons in Petersburg chose life trajectories that appealed, or that seemed

convenient, or that appeared to offer the likeliest chance of satisfaction – or which were, quite simply, inevitable. The economic wellbeing of the wives, sisters, daughters and even sons of the traditionally valorized patriarchy, on the other hand, were very closely allied to maintenance of tradition and mostly worked towards its preservation²⁷.

This suggests another quality of discourse-that-travels, which has nothing intrinsically to do with its actual content, which may be empirically observed and recorded, and which highlights hierarchies of value within a communal world in a comparatively objective way. It is a quality that goes beyond that of the numerical quantity of people which its circulation and failure to circulate transforms into various ‘wes’, and beyond the types of fact and event noticeable in community discourse and the meanings they are assigned therein, and even beyond the valorization which is inherent in the continued replication and accompanying approval of discourse, all attributes somewhat open to the interpretation of the analyst with its attendant risks of solipsism. Let me try to explain.

Whether or not a group (of whatever size or type) divides its own world into the categories of Western worldview (practices concerned with politics, economics, religion, family life and so on²⁸), it is unarguable that certain areas of activity are valorized over others in all social groups. These are the ones which are created as the huge volume of circulating talk is allocated domains by its users: domains of value, domains of endeavour, domains of belief about the natural world and the practices of its human inhabitants, domains of role expectation. As layers and histories of circulating evaluation build up, the domains become very real, very detailed and very palpable. They are experienced as the available opportunities and restraints of those (and descendents of those) who were their creators. They comprise, in fact, part of the structure of any communal world, which may be investigated empirically, provided *a priori* categories and domains do not blinker observation²⁹. The degree to which a term or stretch of talk has salience

²⁷ Upper- and upper-middle-class women in England fought actively against women’s suffrage, as members of the Women’s Anti-Suffrage League, which operated between 1908 and its incorporation into the men’s anti-suffrage league in 1910. The League, under the leadership of Lady Jersey, attracted a large number of prominent and successful women: mountain climber/explorer/historian Gertrude Bell, acclaimed author Mrs Humphrey Ward, Beatrice Chamberlain, even Violet Markham, who was quick to contest the Mansfield division of Notts as an Independent Liberal when suffrage was extended to women in 1918. Though independent high-achievers, they felt that the political inexperience of women in general would hamper men in running the increasingly complex global hegemony enjoyed by Britain at the time

²⁸ These are difficult ‘folk’ categories to evade as even anthropologists who have endeavoured to do so have discovered (see Collier & Yanagisako 1987, Comaroff 1987). The world which is being investigated here was one which understood its surroundings in terms of such domains. *Natural Law and the Spiritual World* (Henry Drummond) was in its 29th edition when read and discussed by Mary in 1890. Drummond, attempting to synthesise the undeniable scientific evidence of evolutionists and geologists with Christian faith, wrote *against* the objection that “even a basis in Law is no warrant for so great a trespass as the intrusion into another field of thought of the principles of Natural Science”, by asserting that the “Physical Politic of Mr. Walter Bagehot [is] but the extension of Natural Law to the Political World...the Biological Sociology of Mr. Herbert Spencer but the application of Natural Law to the Social World... Will it be charged that the splendid achievements of such thinkers are hybrids between things which Nature has meant to remain apart? Nature usually solves such problems for herself. Inappropriate hybridism is checked by the Law of Sterility.” (Preface 1890). Drummond was considered cutting-edge by Christian thinkers for his suggestion that ‘fields of thought’ might be bridged by Darwin’s evolutionary theories; the fact is that such fields have always been bridged by key ideas.

²⁹ John Comaroff disputes this optimism, noting that it “implies that data may be gathered in such a way

and meaning in different domains, and thus its potential accelerative energy, is directly correlative with its valorization as part of the traditions and structure of the group – or its valorization as ‘something good/new’, where metaculture endorses plurality and innovation. ‘Sister’ may be conceptualized as carrying meanings of immediate relevance to rather few domains in the total socio-cultural world of the Anglo-Russian merchant community: it had biological connotations, it incorporated social expectations of the role, which, however, were not expected to override other more salient social considerations such as hierarchy and community boundaries; and of course it carried worlds of personal and idiosyncratic significance. Thus it may be seen to comprise “transparencies” from perhaps only three salient domains. ‘Father’, on the other hand, in this Christian, merchant, English social entity, may act as exemplar of items of talk which carry meanings drawn from their deployment in a large number of highly valorized domains. The pile of “transparencies” associated with the term ‘father’ is as thick as a brick. As Rayner Rapp points out in her study of the gender politics of Euro-American kinship analysis, although “a familial role like ‘father’ appears constant...its meaning shifts up and down class lines, responds to political transitions, and summarizes current cultural thinking about such ‘distant’ institutions as the labor market, the health care system and the courts” (1987, 124). She notes that the language of family life is highly political and may provide “some of the normative ‘glue’ that holds other institutions, and public policy, together” (ibid.). This is not an observation whose relevance should be limited to “the language of family life”, however.

If any item or stretch of discourse gathers weight, truth and reality as it is passed through increasing numbers of people, so also, on a different analytical level, does it gather weight as it crosses the boundaries of domains and appears in circulation under different conditions in different contexts, thereby also re-tying categories back together into the semblance of a unified system. The Prayer Book with its universal applicability; its instructions on duties to parents and neighbours; its solutions to the inevitability of death; its usefulness in time of storm, warfare or famine; its sketches of social structure and the properly constructed hierarchy of government, and so on, was an example of a rather long stretch of discourse which could cross all domain boundaries: economics, politics, kinship, religion, social organization. The term ‘father’ had similar properties on a smaller scale.

that, once unworthy assumptions are set aside, the facts will speak out. Yet, as has been repeatedly noted, there are neither facts nor any basis for their interpretation without a preexisting conceptual repertoire.” (1987, 59). I am not suggesting a mere accumulation of observations, as by now should be obvious, but rather the investigation of relationships between observed discursive creations, a course of research which more closely approximates the one Comaroff himself advocates, i.e. attempting to understand “discrete domains” - where they occur - by analyzing them “in their own right, within their appropriate historical and cultural contexts” (62). He worries that even this latter programme stereotypes pre-capitalist orders in which “history happens under the impact of external forces”, implying that they are without historicity of their own and that their people are “marionettes acting out a structurally scripted tableau” (64). I firmly believe that the evidence of this paper contradicts that assumption. Although this was a literate group who frequently relied on their written records to justify courses of action by framing them as reproduction of the past, it is repeatedly obvious that something of the contemporary world works its way into that ‘fixed’ historicity, as much as historically layered structure pulls the strings of its marionettes. I can see no possible justification for suggesting that exactly the same kind of process has not taken place in every human group for as long as humans have been social animals. It is just that centuries of literacy opens the process to easier investigation.

A brief overview of some of the contexts in which ‘father’ operated will illustrate the point I am making about the high degree of performativity which accrues to terms deployed in multiple contexts. Important domains in the worldview of the time were the governmental, the legal, the Christian doctrinal, the economic, and the domestic (with the understanding that, in practice, these were complementary and coterminous), in all of which ‘father’ (and ‘husband’), had accumulated considerable cultural luggage. Examination of the deployment of the terms in these domains exhibits the understandings that accompanied their usage – and also why ‘Papa’ might be a preferred designation in the purely domestic context.

Barbara Bodichon née Smith was the product of a radical Dissenting family in England, whose domestic arrangements indicate that the conformity sometimes understood by our own contemporary Western world to have operated in the middle-class worlds of the Victorian era had its cracks and loopholes. Her paternal grandfather, an MP and member of the landed gentry, had worked closely with William Wilberforce (also on the Russia Company’s Court of Assistants) in his drive to abolish slavery; Florence Nightingale was her first cousin. Bodichon and her four siblings were the illegitimate children of Benjamin Smith and Ann Longden, a 25-year old milliner when she and Smith met. The couple never married, possibly because Smith felt strongly that marriage converted women into chattels, and after Ann Longden died, Smith attempted to bring the children up in terms of equality, though University was denied the girls because none took female students at the time. Barbara was enabled, by the unconventionality of her domestic setting (coupled, naturally, with the economic independence which her father’s unorthodox will provided her), to view her world from an idiosyncratic, rather than conventional, perspective. She formed the first Women’s Suffrage Committee, whose petition was presented to the House of Commons by John Stuart Mill, and gave evidence before a House of Commons Committee that was the force behind the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, which allowed divorce to be gained through the courts rather than requiring the expensive undertaking of a Private Act of Parliament.

In 1854 Bodichon produced a document entitled “A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women.” (Victorian Women’s Writers’ Project Library, web page). The document begins by detailing the only roles of any influence open to women in mid-nineteenth-century England: that is, Sovereign or, if they wished to take part in the government of a great Empire, major stockholder in the East India Company. A seduced woman had no remedy against her seducer, though the seduced woman’s *father* had remedy at law if he could prove – “*as being her master and she his servant*” (ibid. emphasis added) – that the seduction had deprived him, even slightly, of her services. Bodichon went on to note that “a man and wife are one person in law...her existence is entirely absorbed in that of her husband; she lives under his protection or cover, and her condition is called coverture. A woman’s body belongs to her husband; she is in his custody, and he can enforce his right by a writ of habeas corpus.” Therefore it was usual before marriage for the father of the woman to secure both her and her future children against the power of the husband by making a settlement (with the husband’s consent) of some property on the wife. All her earnings belonged absolutely to her husband and though she could, with the particular permission of her husband, make a will of her personal property, this permission could be revoked at any time. “*The legal custody of the children belongs to the father.* During the life-time of a sane father, the mother has no rights

over her children, except a limited power over infants, and the father may take them from her and dispose of them as he thinks fit" (ibid., emphasis added).³⁰

The novels of writers such as the Brontës, Mrs Gaskell and George Eliot (all read widely in the Anglo-Russian community) after the 1840s may be seen to be both products of, and contributing to, a growing awareness of the rights of both children and women. They were produced during the same period as the Factory Acts reduced the working hours of women and children; Bedford College and Queen's College London were established for women who intended to teach; a Women's Suffrage Petition and one agitating that women should retain rights in their own property after marriage (organised by Bodichon and with 26,000 signatures appended), were presented to the House of Lords (and were both rejected). Talk of women's rights was certainly on the move in England – J. S. Mill's *Subjection of Women* had been published in 1869 and the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 finally abrogated a husband's rights in his wife's property – but there are no references to women's rights, or women's suffrage in the primary sources left by this community. The quarterly allowance granted Mary and Arthur by their marriage settlement was dispensed by Mary's father (later her brother), from the family business in an arrangement reminiscent of Goody's description of Arab marriage in which "a father or brother may act as 'banker' for a sister or a daughter" (1990, 389), where "patrilineal recruitment to descent groups...is perfectly consistent with the transmission of property to women as well as men" (ibid., 363). The continuing role of the bride's male relatives in her economic status, and the bride's family in general in her social and physical wellbeing, provided a marital infrastructure that also did much to prevent neglect, cruelty or economic deprivation. I am aware that these latter were specificities that worked well in this particular community, which was so densely interlinked that everyone knew everyone else and discourse pathways were abundant – and would not have operated so effectively in their absence. Mary noted, for example, that as late as 1891 she and Arthur had discussed the 'Clitheroe Case', in which an English husband had retrieved his runaway wife by force and then incarcerated her. This common law right was overturned by the House of Lords, who set the wife free (www.webroots), though unfortunately Mary did not record either her own or Arthur's opinion on the judgement. Reactionary lawyers at the time predicted that it marked the end of marriage.

The legal luggage carried in the circulating vehicle of 'father/husband' (ownership, in a word), may be contrasted with Bodichon's references to 'sister', which consisted only in the rights of a woman if her father and mother died intestate: all siblings take an equal share of personal property, the eldest brother (if there is one) takes the real property; but "if, however, she have sisters only then all the sisters take the real property equally" – a predictably ancillary deployment of a virtually non-performative kin relationship in the legal context of the time and place.

Another powerful domain from which 'father' collected baggage was, of course, the Biblical one. I have discussed the position of the domestic 'father' in the social hierarchy as explicitly stated in the Prayer Book, but 'father', as a referent, has a considerably greater field of

³⁰ Full paternal rights over all children had been somewhat ameliorated by the Child Custody Act of 1839 which made it possible for a mother to gain custody of such of her children as were under seven.

relationships in the Bible itself, as the lengthy genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1 (King James Version) makes apparent. Approximately forty generations of men (and four named women), led, through Abraham and King David, to the ‘begatting’ of “Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ” (Matt. 1:16), which demonstrates a curiously unexplained shift from a detailed patriline to a child born of a mother, mysteriously impregnated by a father (God in the shape of the Holy Ghost) who patently could have no patriline. As Christianity firmly endorses the Father/Son connection between God and Christ (Ephesians 3:14-15 proclaims that “I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named”), Christ’s ‘genealogy’, culminating in the Virgin Mary’s husband (who, however, had no claims to the status of genitor), indicates an extraordinary subplot of valorization of the role of ‘pater’ and the legal as well as biological understanding of descent through male lines in Christian worldview – or why detail the male ancestors of the man who only stood *in loco parentis* to Christ? The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, talks of God’s “son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3). Presumably Christians could make the leap of faith required to accept that God, via the Holy Ghost, fathered Christ, but could not do away with the requirement of a male pedigree of some sort. The hierarchy implicit in descent is restated repeatedly in the Bible. In I Corinthians 11:3, for example, (when Joseph’s pedigree is disregarded), Christians are reminded that “the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

The ‘Lord’ made it quite clear to Moses that if a man made a vow or an oath he was bound by it, a tenet that had a high profile in the community (and was buttressed, for security, by signed contracts and the weight of the law). On the other hand, the vow or bond made by a daughter still in her father’s house could be disallowed by her father on the day that he heard of it and “not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her for her father disallowed her” (Numbers 30:5). Exactly the same followed for a woman with a husband: “Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void” (Numbers 3:13)³¹. While it might be stretching credibility to suggest that Biblical discourses, certainly by the end of the nineteenth century, were in daily and everyday circulation, they were entrenched in the formulations of many understandings and were part of the social fabric. Their rulings were also reproduced in secular literature, even of the romantic variety with popular writers such as Walter Scott delineating heroes and heroines who conformed to the patriarchal ideals³².

³¹ In a laughable contemporary web page which advocates valorization of ‘patriarchy’ as an antidote to the ills of the world and castigates “feminism for the devil’s lie that it is”, it is stated that “God made mankind to mirror his character and attributes, and he made human relationships to reflect the order that exists eternally in the godhead. Patriarchy is good because it reflects the very relationships that exist among the Father, Son, and Spirit and thus brings glory to God.” (www.patriarch.com). The construction seems to have stood the test of time in certain milieus, despite the pressures provided by changes in domains associated with government, law, domestic family life, and modes of making a living.

³² A typical depiction of the romantic heroine is Scott’s Lucy Ashton, “the Bride of Lammermoor”: “for Lucy Ashton’s exquisitely beautiful, yet somewhat girlish features, were formed to express peace of mind, serenity, and indifference to the tinsel of worldly pleasure...The expression of the countenance was in the last degree gentle, soft, timid and feminine, and seemed rather to shrink from the most casual look of a stranger, than to court his admiration. Something there was of a Madonna cast...”(n.d., 52). It is

Both ‘sister’ and ‘father’ found the same audience in the nineteenth century Anglo-Russian merchant world. Centuries of use of these, and of an infinite number of other discursive constructions moving along the same paths had produced a ready and receptive audience of users. ‘Father’ and ‘sister’ are salient in some of the same domains. The difference lies in the cross-domain relevance of the terms, and the ‘fixing’ powers, and interest in ‘fixing’, of their most influential users. The empirically observable social fact of the relevance of ‘father’ to, and applicability within, many of the most important socio-cultural domains of this ‘type’ of group in this era and set of circumstances, and the inescapably hierarchical meanings it encompassed in all fields, lends tremendous weight to this apparently tiny item of talk. ‘Father’ – “the patriarchal head of house”, as Lord Addington’s obituary described him – was a snippet of discourse that crossed into political, economic and legal domains, gathering weight and fixity as it moved. Fathers owned the family property and managed and allocated family resources; wealthy merchant capitalist fathers were not constrained by the possession of landed estates (affected by the laws of primogeniture), to leave their property other than where they chose, and were legally supported in their choice of successor; conceptions of ‘God the Father’ as the pinnacle of notions of hierarchy and physical ownership of the bodies of his family by the patriarch – all these layer meaning into a word that cannot be defined in simple biological terms. In addition, the place of ‘father’ at the nodes of discourse circulation in this society allowed the censorship and acceleration of substantial volumes of discourse as it passed across those network points – though, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that there were areas of discourse transmission of which they had very little cognizance, and from which they could be excluded with little difficulty. The following section examines the making of such fields.

ROLE AND COHORT SOCIALITY.

Jan. 24th/Feb. 5th. [1890]

Wednesday. Wrote extracts. Prayers. Ordered dinner. Went to Effie’s to ask her not to fetch me to go to Nika’s till 4 p.m.: she kept me there till 11 a.m. & then we went together to see Minnie, & then to Dedie. Rushed home and found Mim had already arrived for lunch. Talked. Went off together to the A. Cattleys to see if we could get up another Reading, but they would not receive, so we left cards. Called on Mrs. John Henley [Nika’s cousin] with Mim: Nika there too. Walked as far as the 2nd Line w. her. Read till 4 p.m. when Effie turned up & we went off to Nika’s. Dedie & Minnie were there already. Talked bosh. Why is it that if a lot of us get together we invariably talk about nothing? In couples we generally are pretty sensible. Read “Wanda”. Wrote extracts & Papa read to us.

Jan. 25th/Feb. 6th [1890]

Thursday. Wrote extracts. Prayers. Ordered dinner. Went to Emy’s for my 22nd Singing Lesson: Edith came there to play my accompaniment over before Emy so that we shld. go well together for the Baldock’s Musical Evening. Had 4th music lesson, got on pretty well. Went out with Mother, we called at the Hubbards (out), Durrants (n[ot] rec[eiving]), J. Andersons (out), Miss Blessig’s (out), at Mrs. Alfred Cattleys & she was in: Mrs Hubbard, Mrs. J. Henley & Mrs. Peele were there too: Mrs. C. said that Mr. C. had taken some plays

notable that such stereotypical, virginal-maternal ineffectualness is considerably less salient in the heroines of Austen, Eliot, the Brontës and other ground breaking women writers of the era.

over to Mim so I tore off there afterwards & Mim & I arranged that we should read them over tomorrow & that Mim should lunch with us. Nika was there too, she & I arranged to go to Usupoff's with the Henleys. Went to the Raitts while Nika put on skating clothes: then went to Dedie's to see if they would go; they cldn't make up their minds. Rushed home to ev[ening] tea & then drove off to the Henleys & got there at about 9 p.m. Had a most delicious time, it got colder gradually: band jolly. Mr. Marshall, Mr. Primrose & Reg Bennett were there too. Walked to the Henleys w. them & had some tea &c. & talked bosh, all our ears were half frozen. Drove Nika home & from there w. Stephania [Whishaw maid] home.

Here we have delineated the schedule by which life was expected to be regulated: 'wrote extracts, prayers, ordered dinner' – mindless repetition which inscribes in the body valorized routine, daily discipline. 'Extracts' refer to stretches of printed text from different sources which Mary regarded, *pace* community metaculture, as being of a morally elevating nature and which she transcribed, on a regular basis, for various purposes. Her cousin, another 'Con', from yet another Whishaw branch, had made a profitable concern out of publishing little booklets of extracts from 'improving' authors: "She [Con] is best known as the compiler of *Being and Doing, Precept and Practice*, and other books for daily reading which have had a large sale" (J. Whishaw 1992, 189). The work of producing little volumes of 'extracts', whether for publishing, or to distribute among friends as Mary did, helped to inflate and puff forward such metacultural judgments as the compiler felt were applicable to the circumstances of the receiver.

The next feature of the two days' activity is the high degree of sociality exhibited, which was standard practice. It was of an energetic nature, if all the 'rushing about' is taken into account. A 'Reading' refers to a 'Penny Reading' (also common in England at the time) which comprised a series of short amateur performances – music, poetry, short plays – with a small entry fee to spectators which went to charity; these were regular community events. On Thursday Mary and her mother were making 'calls', an almost daily practice of married women in the community unless they were busy with their own 'afternoon', usually on a set day each week, when they were at home to all (acceptable) comers. The social status of the hostess – which might vary over quite short periods of time – could be adjudged by all (including the hostess herself) based on the number of callers who congregated over sandwiches, biscuits, cakes and tea. Usupoff's was a pleasure grounds in the gardens of Prince Usupoff, containing an ice rink and a stage for musical performances which was illuminated on Thursday evenings and a popular destination in Mary's 'maiden days' – always under chaperonage, in this case by the Henleys and the Whishaws' housemaid, Stephania. Despite all the activity, the amount of 'talking' that was recorded is also substantial; Mary's diaries regularly record "Talked" as an activity like any other. On one winter sleigh ride to Mourino, Mary noted that she and her co-passenger "talked about music, musical instruments, books, Walter Scott, Wedell Holmes, Edna Lyall, Sir J. Lubbock, Epictitus, Marcus Aurelius, Eternal Punishment, Kingsley, the Cambridge Society &c. &c. It was very interesting as Mr. Marshall is by no means a fool" (11.2.1891). They spent a great deal of their joint activities in the exchange of talk, whether of the 'bosh' or 'sensible' variety, and the visits made with her mother meant that Mary was also exposed to the talk of the married cohort above hers, whose behaviour and conversations would provide the

template for her own post-marital practice³³. Community talk was kept in constant circulation, shaping and being shaped in the process.

An interesting contrast is provided here between the people Mary ‘rushed around’ with on 24.1., and those she and her mother endeavoured to encounter the following day. Most of those on the 24th were almost exactly her own age group: Effie, Nika, Minnie, Dedie and Mim; many of those the following day belonged to Mrs. Whishaw’s circle: Miss Blessig, Mrs. Alfred Cattley, Mrs. Hubbard, Mrs. J. Henley, Mrs. Peele (the wife of an Embassy attaché). The institution of marriage required different relationships with associates, made manifest in naming practices. It distanced them and produced more formalized relations, as the world of a conjugal pair and their offspring became a world that was recognised as an island in a communal sea, that required more solid bridging structure to reach. It also underlines the degree to which status, and therefore title, accrued to a woman on marriage. Both Mrs. Durrant and Mrs. John Henley were granddaughters of Sarah Whishaw and Henry Hill and therefore Mary’s second cousins; as were Nika (Mary Edith Raitt), Minnie (Mary Hill – Mrs. Durrant’s youngest sister) and Mim and Ella (Mary and Harriet Henley). Dedie and Effie Carr were rather more distant but were connected affinally to Mary either via the Wilkinsons and Cattleys, or, more distantly, via Wilkinsons, Hubbards, Durrants and Hills (see Diagram 3, Appendix 4). All the friends who bore nicknames rather than titles were within a year of Mary’s age, or younger, and all were single. Even Dedie and Mim, after marriage, were often given their titles: Mrs. George Field and Baroness Bruun, as were Edie Field (Mrs. George Henley) and Edith Henley (Mrs. Fred Raitt). The act of marriage swallowed the diminutive names women had been allocated before their marriages, even seeming to obliterate their own patrilineal connection. As I have noted, however, Mary continued to call women who married her Whishaw cousins by their first names or diminutives after their marriages into the Whishaw patriline, despite age gaps of up to a decade (see Table 2, following page)³⁴.

³³ In the project of stimulating sociality, the women were undoubtedly assisted by the quasi-kinship relations most of them seem to have had with key family servants. This is an aspect of ‘family’ interaction which is largely overlooked by a contemporary focus on the class asymmetries apparent in the ‘master/servant’ relationship, and stereotypes of the ‘upstairs/downstairs’ variety, but it is clear that many families included long term governesses, nannies and housekeepers in roles within the family that were no more asymmetrical than those which may be postulated as operating between husband and wife and less than that between father and children. Ferdinand Tönnies, product of the era, takes for granted the “community of domestic life in which nonrelated members or servants participate” (1955, 45). The ‘O. Cattleys’ had an English governess who had been with them for some years and who Mary talked of as a respected, well-loved friend. In Jim Whishaw’s family his youngest sister “was brought up by our dear friend Miss Potter” after his mother’s early death (1992, 179). Miss Potter lived with the family for years and it was to her little cottage in England that Jim’s father went for care during his last fatal illness (*ibid.*, 166). Mary kept her children’s “Nurse” for over twenty years, throughout her years in Cronstadt and later Yusovka and wept with her when it looked as though they might have to part because of the move. “Nurse” had the first class railway carriage with the two boys during the trip while Mary and Arthur slept next door in a second class half coupe. A photograph of Mary, Nurse and infant taken in the courtyard behind the English Church (page 196) is clearly a ‘family snap’ which would reproduce the same kind of domestic image if Mary were to substitute for Nurse and Arthur to substitute for Mary.

³⁴ Beatrice Webb née Potter, social researcher, reformer and influential Fabian, kept voluminous diaries for seventy years of her fascinating and influential life. Her only entry for her wedding day, 23 July 1892, was “Exit Beatrice Potter. Enter Beatrice Webb, or rather (Mrs) Sydney Webb for I lose alas! both names” (1982, 371).

Contacts	Prior to marriage	After marriage	Kin or other status
Mrs. Wilding, (née Isabel Henley) b. 1850	129	42	2nd cousin
Dedie (Mrs G. Feild née Carr) b. 1868	123	79	affinally connected
Mrs O. Cattley (née Maggie Handyside) b. 1854	116	14	3rd cousin
Nika (Mary Edith Raitt) b. 1869	113	12	2nd cousin once removed
Jim Whishaw b. 1853	98	16	1st cousin
Mrs. John Blessig (Helen Anderson) b. 1857	88	10	1st cousin's wife's sister
Emy (Mrs. Bob Whishaw née Gisiko) b. 1857	81	33	wife of 1st cousin
Effie (Ethel Carr) b. 1868	80	37	affinally connected
Mim (Baroness Bruun née Henley) b. 1866	73	8	2nd cousin
Uncle Bernard (Whishaw) b. 1848	62	11	paternal uncle
Mr. O. Cattley b. 1850	62	8	affinally connected
Berns (Bernard Whishaw) b. 1867	58	3	1st cousin
Edie (Mrs. George Henley née Feild) b. 1863	56	27	2nd cousin once removed
Fan (Mrs. Jim Whishaw née Anderson) b. 1858	53	6	wife of 1st cousin
Minnie (Mary Hill) b. 1868	49	4	2nd cousin
Con (Constance Henley) b. 1870	37	5	2nd cousin
Ella (Harriet Henley) b. 1869	35	8	2nd cousin
Mr. Wilding b. 1842	34	13	husband of second cousin
Mr. A. Cattley b. 1845	33	16	affinally connected
Mrs. Fred Raitt (née Edith Henley) b. 1851	29	14	2nd cousin
Gert Anderson b. 1867	28	5	1st cousins's wife's sister
Mr. John Blessig b. 1849	27	0	affinally connected
Mrs. E. Durrant (née Amy Hill) b. 1858	26	15	2nd cousin
Dr. Clemow n.d.	20	159	husband's associate
Alfie (Mr. Alfred Carr) b. 1869	11	33	affinally connected
Aunt Rebecca (Miss. Fishwick) b. 1823	0	27	aunt of husband's associate
Mrs. E. Reynolds (née Charlotte Jasinsky) n.d.	0	61	wife of husband's associate
Mrs. Revillon (née Julia Whistler) n.d.	0	32	wife of husband's associate
Mr. Edward Reynolds n.d.	0	27	husband's associate
Mr. J. Handyside b. 1835	8	15	3rd cousin
Mrs. Nairn (née Sophie Strahlborn) b. 1866	1	19	wife of husband's associate
Mr. John Hughes n.d.	0	18	husband's associate
Mrs. Steveni (née Elizabeth Goryazin) n.d.	0	16	wife of husband's associate
Mr. Bob Fishwick n.d.	0	14	husband's associate
Mrs. Bob Fishwick n.d.	0	12	wife of husband's associate

Table 2: Mary's most regularly mentioned contacts for the three years before and after her marriage to Arthur Riddle on 5th august, 1891.

Mrs. Wilding tops Mary's list of most frequent pre-marriage contacts, largely because she appears to have been instrumental in the engagement between Mary and Arthur Riddle, who was a distant cousin of Louisa Wright, Mrs. Wilding's mother. Mary devoted considerable time over a six month period to the courtship, much of which was conducted under Mrs. Wilding's chaperonage. The regularity with which the Cattleys, Blessigs and, to some extent, the Jim Whishaws appear before marriage was a result of their attachment to the summer colony at Mourino; Mary saw all of them every day, though obviously did not list every encounter. Emy Whishaw née Gisiko, cousin Bob's wife, was the daughter of a wealthy Petersburg banker (also descended from Johann Fock, Mary's ancestor), and a personal favourite of Mary's, who took her singing lessons from her³⁵. By 1901, after her marriage appears to have alienated some of her kin connections, Mary regarded Bob and Emy Whishaw as "by far the most cousinly of my cousins (except the Frank Hills [he was partner in her father's firm of Hills and Whishaw and occasionally lived in the household before his marriage])." By this she clearly meant that they were the closest, the most loving, the most conforming to her conception of family ties. The rest of Mary's most frequent contacts between 1888 and June 1891 were her own age and gender cohort: Dedie, Nika, Effie, Mim, Minnie, Con, Ella and Gert. Of the 437 people whose names Mary saw reason to record in the period, 359 were family connections, that is, known and welcome guests in the parental home or met in the company of such people, including 51 Whishaws, numerous other relatives in various degrees, business associates of her father's or parental friends and their children³⁶. A further 41 'contacts' were assistants in the shops and businesses patronised by Mary and her family, 29 more were Russian servants or German governesses in her own and other people's homes and 8 were women Mary met either at a German choral group of which she was a member in 1890, or at Choir practice at the English Church (therefore 'known' to her parents), but whom she did not meet in other contexts.

For a couple of years after her marriage, the Riddles spent summers at the Cronstadt vicarage and winters in Petersburg before they decided to base themselves permanently at Cronstadt, so the regularity with which she saw her friends was partially affected by geography, but many of her new circle also lived in Petersburg, so her married state was more influential in her change of social partners. Gradually contact tailed off with all but close relatives as Mary's old circle was replaced by the wives of Arthur's friends and associates. Mary continued to see her closest pre-marriage girlfriends, but without Arthur, so for short periods of time, and never in the usual venue for married sociality: the dinner party. Arthur, although Oxford educated and from a similar 'class' background to the merchant community, seems to have chosen his friends

³⁵ Note in the diary extracts cited above Mary's underlining her music lesson: this was to keep track of money and services owed. Mary was a good merchant's daughter and kept her accounts meticulously.

³⁶ Of these 359, a tiny minority were of 'foreign' extraction: Baron Wrangel with whom Mary occasionally danced at balls; Count Vorontsov on whose estate Mourino lay; Baroness de Bode, who was a Cazalet cousin; the Blessigs, who were regarded as an English family; Mim and Ella Henley's mother née Lindes and Mim's future husband Baron Bruun; Emy Whishaw née Gisiko (whose mother was the daughter of the Rev. Edward Law, and whose father was Mary's distant cousin in any case); Mrs G. Carr née Ebel, Mrs H. Carr née Chamot and her sister Miss Chamot, Mrs Frank Hill née Sagemehl and Oscar Strahlborn – approximately 14 all together. The Whishaws, a core community family, did not mix with 'outsiders' socially, and, though many of Mary's father's associates must have been 'foreign', he did not introduce them into his family circle. After Mary's marriage this was to change dramatically.

on a much more eclectic and individualist basis than was the norm locally³⁷ – as demonstrated by Mary’s record of pre-marital association. One of Arthur’s closest friends, John Hughes, godfather to their firstborn son and later Arthur’s patron, was also a close friend of news correspondent, John Baddeley³⁸, who wrote that Hughes had begun life as a pit-boy in a Welsh coal mine and, despite founding “one of the most important industrial towns in Russia – Yusovka” (1921, 39), was virtually illiterate all his life, only able to read print with difficulty. Hughes did a great deal of business with the Russian Government and spent periods of time in Petersburg, staying at the Hotel d’Angleterre, one of Arthur’s favourite haunts³⁹. In community terms, Hughes was well beyond the boundary, as were Arthur’s industrialist cronies with their foreign born wives and somewhat flamboyant lifestyles⁴⁰, and the ‘Cronstadian’ (though

³⁷ Some of the Anglican Chaplains at Petersburg and Cronstadt during the nineteenth century, such as Law and McSwiney, espoused the merchant community’s creeds and became long-term, supported and supportive members of the community. Law’s three daughters married into the community, his short-lived son had joined the Cattley merchant house before his early death. McSwiney was supported against local diplomatic attack, as described in chapter ten. Others did not find the worldview to their liking, fought with the Factory and left swiftly. Though his tenure was over two decades, Arthur – and it was largely a matter of proclivity and personality – was an independent who was not sufficiently interested, or politically too unaware to conform to local practice, and he chose his circle injudiciously.

³⁸ John Baddeley was born 1855 and educated at Wellington College. Invited to Russia by the then Ambassador to England, Count Shouvaloff in the 1870s, he spent many years in Petersburg and Moscow as correspondent for *The Standard*, also trading in the Russian Far East.

³⁹ Baddeley, who met Arthur through Hughes, describes him as “the jovial parson Riddle, a modern Friar Tuck in appearance...There was a fairly large garden attached to the parsonage, but it grew only one flower – characteristically enough – for Riddle was a lover of good cheer, and the flower was borage, wherewith to flavour the delectable hock or claret cups, with which he regaled us...” (1921, 35-6). The suggestion that the garden grew only one flower was a gross calumny, as Mary’s exhaustive detailing of their annual seed sowing and flower and vegetable crops attest (she never mentions borage, though she often mentions serving ‘cup’), but the rest was probably reasonably accurate. It fits with Mary’s oblique references to her husband’s predilection for ‘dining out’ and coming home ‘festive’.

⁴⁰ Arthur’s most common complaint to Mary after their marriage concerned the food Mary could teach or persuade her current cook to produce. Sometimes Arthur was so disgusted that he activated either a ‘biscuit tin Dutch oven’ or a chafing dish affair that enabled him to cook over the study fire, producing ‘exotic’ dishes like ‘shashlik’ which Mary thought “looked like cat’s meat, but tasted quite delicious” (10.9.1894). These are the only references in all the primary sources to a man doing ‘women’s work’. Mary recounts dismal tales of mutton stew, fish cakes, rissoles, stuffed vegetable marrows, boiled potatoes and cauliflower, with bread and butter pudding or baked custard to follow: the kind of domestic food one assumes she grew up on, and straight out of Mrs. Beeton’s guide to household management which is known also to have been the model in the Henley household to which Mim and Ella belonged. Summers, when the Riddles ate the berries, peas, tomatoes and salads from their own garden, must have been thrilling. Dinners at the Hotel d’Angleterre, and in the homes of the Revillons, the Chamots, and the Durrants, on the other hand, were of a very fine standard: “Zakuska. I had some delicious fresh caviar. The dinner was very good. Turtle soup (clear), Gatshina trout, turkey stuffed with truffles, roast snipes with salad, tournedos with foie gras and green beans, Nesselrode pudding, stilton and celery, fruits.” (3.10.1891.) This dinner was soon after her marriage, and it was the first full menu Mary ever described in all her detailing of everyday routine, despite her daily mention that she “ordered dinner”. Talk about food had not been the practice in Mary’s house, nor, as far as I can tell, in the houses in which she and her parents regularly dined. The menus at those very English tables would have been of the variety described by Mary as a ‘very nice little dinner’ in a context of impromptu hospitality: herring, mutton broth, chicken and salad potatoes, spinach and eggs, strawberries, cheese and coffee (11.07.1901), though the institution of ‘zakuska’ had been universally adopted. A ‘gala’ dinner seemed mostly to feature a ripe imported leg of English mutton, a standard item on bourgeois English menus of the time – that, or a saddle. This was a different and “rather amusing” (ibid.) world that Mary was getting to know.

English) Doctor Clemow in charge of the British Seaman's Hospital there, not to mention the British ships' captains who always visited the vicarage when they were in port, bringing Mary welcome gifts of legs of mutton and boxes of Pear's Soap from England.

Mary proved surprisingly open-minded about the change. Her life was still regulated by Christian ritual; Arthur as a clergyman held Matins every morning in the Cronstadt Church, often with only Mary, and later their sons, as congregation. With that aspect of her spiritual existence on a firm basis, Mary seems to have experimented in other areas of her life. She took to social gambling with enjoyment, for example, regularly recording games of "vint" and poker in various households and her losses and winnings (usually measured in copeks). When Arthur, Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds and Dr. Clemow played on Sunday, however, Mary described it as "naughty" and played "patiences" with the Reynolds daughter (6.10.1891). Although comments about new acquaintances begin to record, as a matter of course, whether they spoke English, and degree of fluency (something which was never salient before her marriage), Mary seemed to enjoy the expanded horizons. As the 'parson's wife' she was expected to entertain people from circles quite outside her previous experience. She had "afternoon tea and a chat" with a governess who called to ask Arthur for advice about finding a 'place' (8.10.1891); a Captain from one of the British ships docked in Cronstadt called one afternoon soon after her marriage and Mary "was awfully alarmed, he is the 1st visitor I've received alone & he was 'dangerous' as I'd never seen him before, but I got on all right" (26.5.1891), but she no longer expected the people she met to conform to the mold she had taken for granted before her marriage. An evening at the Revillons in November 1891 provided "an awfully swagger dinner & a tremendous amount of fun. Never enjoyed myself more at a dinner." Mr. Revillon was French, his wife English. Mr. Steveni was of French extraction, Mrs. Steveni née Elizabeth Goryazin, presumably Russian. The Stevenis married in the English Church at St. Petersburg, however, and Mary recorded their first visit to the Riddles in their Petersburg lodgings a few weeks later: Mrs. Steveni was "tall & very pretty, but doesn't speak English" (7.11.1891), though she found "Mrs. Steveni delightful" when she met her two months later (8.1.1892). The Reynolds lived at Cronstadt, which was not practice among the Petersburg merchants, who usually sent younger relatives to the port to conduct required business. Mrs. Reynolds was of Polish extraction and a generation older than Mary (though not, perhaps, than Arthur) but they became some of the Riddles' most regular contacts over the years, possibly through mere propinquity.

I feel that Mary was not regarded by her old circles as having married well or judiciously. Jim Wishaw and his wife Fan (and consequently Jim's affinal connections, the Andersons, the Cattleys, and the Blessigs) began to treat them with a chilly distance that became an outright rift over the course of a decade, but Mary does not appear to have been aware of the implications of rupture with the most powerful sectors of the community until 1902. Her diaries indicate that Arthur was probably the first man who proposed to her, and she clearly wanted to escape from her father's house, exclaiming on several occasions before her marriage that she wished that there were something she could do to make some money of her own. One younger sister gained a B.A. from London University (despite being "hooted at" by the male students⁴¹), and opened a

⁴¹ "Lil has passed her B.A. 1st Class & only 2 girls passed 1st Class" (17.11.1895).

school in England, another wrote novels about being English in Russia, which were poor but published, a third attended an art academy in Petersburg for a few years; none of them married. Mary, however, seems to have held conventional views and, though mildly impressed by the B.A., thought that Lil's school, funded by her father to tune of £3,000, was a terrible risk.

If her pre-marriage references to "darling little babies" can be taken as indicative, Mary wanted a husband and children, against the wishes of her father who, family legend has it, regularly told his daughters not to consider marriage as they were much more comfortably situated at home. Close reading of Mary's diary for 1890 (when Mary was 22), indicates that while Mary's parents were absent in England for a month, a courtship may have sprung up between Mary and her first cousin 'Berns' Whishaw, son of Mary's father's brother, Bernard. Berns came in to visit for hours every day bringing Mary presents of jewellery, books of sonnets and silk sashes; he took her skating and shopping and they teased each other flirtatiously: Mary was "unkind" to him and wouldn't go out for a walk so he went away and came back later to spend the evening (19.4.1890). Mary's Papa, however, returned from England a day earlier than expected (the wily old fox), and when Berns arrived as usual, he was sent off by Papa to ask his father to come in with him. Mary was lukewarm about her father's return, in contrast to her delight when her mother came back a fortnight later. There are indications, however, that Mary was not so repressed that she would not at least *attempt* to take matters into her own hands.

The day following her father's unexpected reappearance, Mary and the eldest of her younger sisters, Fan, avoided going on a day-trip to Mourino with the rest of the family by claiming a desire to attend Morning Service, but they returned from Church to find that Papa and the younger children had not left Petersburg after all: "Papa could not get a carriage, somehow" (22.4., an unlikely story), Mary recorded sceptically. Papa "forbad" her to go to Church again that evening and she dutifully remained indoors. Berns did not feature in her diary again until two weeks later, after the family removal to Mourino, when Papa was working in Petersburg and "Berns turned up to spend the night" (7.5.1890). The next day they evaded Mary's younger siblings and spent a "blissful afternoon on the river, reading, talking, eating sweets & drinking milk which we got nr. the Cadets [military camp]." Mary notes that she was reading Walter Scott's *Betrothed*⁴². One can see the appeal of first cousin marriage in the formalized worlds created by this social class and those like them in England. First cousins in the same age cohort would have played together as children, could, with a measure of propriety, spend time together as young adults, and were products of precisely the same social worlds built from precisely the same talk and practice. The friendship between Mary and Berns, however, seems to have come to an abrupt end. After their blissful afternoon on the river, Mary escorted "Berns up to the village a little way, on his way up to town. Talked to Fan [sister]. Blues." And

⁴² "The main idea is excellent: the hopeless and pathetically honourable love of Damian and Eveline, living hard by each other, in constant communication through messengers, and never seeing each other's faces. According to his wont, Scott treats this touching love-affair with the strictest reticence: he only indicates the wearing out of life and strength under the passion which is never expressed." (Lang, 1901, xi.) The two lovers come together in the final pages of the book and with their "unhoped-for union...ended the trials and sorrows of THE BETROTHED" (Scott 1901, 454). Surely Mary was inserting a coded message for herself, because *her* diaries are also treated with the strictest reticence, so much so that one feels certain that either they were being read, or she prepared them so that they could be read if required.

Berns is barely mentioned again until after Mary's marriage.



Picture 6: Mixed gender 'age cohort' at Mourino, c. 1894 – 'going fishing'.

Mary's next courtship, with Arthur Riddle, was conducted away from her home, under the roof and in the chaperonage of her father's cousin's daughter, Mrs Wilding. Mary seems not to have apprised her parents of her intentions until after Arthur had proposed by letter 12.3.1891. It indicates a remarkable amount of freedom of manoeuvre if her parents really were unaware of the frequency which Mary and 'Mr. Riddle' met in the months between November 1890 and mid-March 1891 but Mary notes, after she has talked to her sister Fan, and thought about things, that she had finally "told Mother about the letter & that my answer was going to be 'yes'. She was awfully nice about it." She never mentions her father's response, but things had been allowed to 'go so far' that he must have been presented with a *fait accompli*. There is incontrovertible evidence here that women were not passive pawns in a dynastic game involving arranged marriages between the parents of the future spouses, though also that freedom of choice could be curtailed on the wishes of an autocratic father, unless careful strategy was deployed. It is evident that young single women of the community enjoyed a measure of independence which does not seem to have been typical of their 'sisters' in England. Maida Mirrieles escaped from her dictatorial father only at his death but then, obviously in possession of a generous allowance, she wrote of the years 1878-1883, "And now, free to shape my own life, I spent five winters in Russia, returning for the summers to visit my English relatives and friends". She made the trips both ways alone, often spending time in Paris or other European

destinations en route. She lived with an unmarried brother in Petersburg and records that

Fred and his many men acquaintances gave me a very 'good time'. One especially cold winter I joined the boys in ice-boating. An ice-boat consists of a triangular framework placed on runners and furnished with sails which, when unfurled, enable it to skim along at a terrific speed over the ice. These sails and a rudder have to be managed just like those of a sailing boat on water and in this work I entered with great zest, even rather enjoying being from time to time violently thrown overboard when we crashed into 'cat-ice' or caught a runner in one of the holes left for fishermen. It was great fun. (LRA 1192/2).

While her father lived, however, Maida lived with him, and by his ways. Only marriage or the patriarch's death provided any surety of escaping 'His' jurisdiction, should 'He' wish to exercise it..



Picture 7: Mary, Nurse and infant in the courtyard of the English Church, 1892. A domestic scenario.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

MERCHANT MARRIAGE.

PARTNERSHIP AND ALLIANCE IN MERCHANT KINSHIP.

For as much as *N.* and *N.* have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and in this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth either to other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of a Ring, and by joining of hands; I pronounce that they be Man and Wife together, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. (The Solemnization of Marriage in *The Book of Common Prayer*, 218).

A high population growth-rate with a large proportion of males is essential for the continued prosperity of a merchant family. This is the only source of managerial labour for running the various businesses. Large sums of money have to be handled, and relatives are the only people who can be trusted. (Gregory 1997, 150.)

The standard family history of many members of the community revolved around the arrival in St. Petersburg in the mid- to late-eighteenth century of a literate younger son of a Midlands yeoman, factor or minor mill owner, either as an independent entrepreneur or in the employ of a London-based concern. Those who were sufficiently dynamic made a quick fortune, set up their own trading houses and trained – or had trained *for* them by office managers – junior male members of their families with an eye to their later filling managerial positions involving high levels of trust. Successful founders often returned to the homeland and opened branches, or established partnerships, in London's square mile of business and banking. Many with sufficient wealth gentrified themselves through a variety of strategies including marriage into the traditional gentry or aristocratic classes, diversification of purely merchant interests into the more prestigious pursuit of merchant banking, the purchase of a country residence, entry into Parliament, the disavowal of familial connections who had not advanced with the same rapidity, and the education of their own offspring at the highest ranking of the English public schools (see, for example, Lord Addington's trajectory, discussed in chapter four). Those who remained in Russia relied on boundary maintenance and the innumerable kin connections that marriage practices within the community had produced to distance themselves from people who were not 'one of us'.

Though kinship systems among eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British merchants bear little superficial resemblance to those in the twentieth-century Marwari merchant groups in Central India which Chris Gregory examines in *Savage Money* (1997), certain interesting commonalities emerge on closer analysis which are worth noting¹. Gregory discusses the notion of 'territoriality' which lies at the heart of merchant capitalism: "the idea that mercantile profits are made by buying cheap *here* and selling dear *there*. Human relations mediate this space..." (ibid., 164). "Territoriality is a form of consciousness that binds people together...the union of

¹ They are (or were) the product of different conjunctures of values, circumstances, times, places – different discourse worlds, in other words. With this in mind, the similarities of strategy between the two groups (and, no doubt, many more like them) become striking rather than negligible.

consanguinity with contiguity that defines an *ethnic space*” (ibid., 165, emphasis in texts). In chapter four I discussed the rules and hierarchy of values which were perceived to operate within the specific ethnic space (here understood loosely) of this Anglo-Russian merchant community, but Gregory suggests three principles which he considers defines ethnic space in terms of the territoriality of “capital accumulation of a specific mercantilist kind” – or non-sedentary merchants *universally*. These are: home, endogamy and commodity specialization². “The notion of place at the heart of territoriality is defined by the link between homeland and tradeland” (ibid., 166). The homeland is the principal site of accumulation of family goods and the cultivation of prestige, with the tradeland representing the salient domain of profit. This represents “an *expansion of territoriality* rather than migration” (ibid. 167, emphasis in text)³. The rules of endogamy, which Gregory postulates as the boundaries of capitalist merchant ethnic space, include marriage rules which describe the nucleus of territoriality; language which delimits the outer boundary; but “most important of all, the principles governing the transmission of mercantile credit within these circles and over time” (ibid., 166). Merchants who base themselves in the tradeland but retain their ties with the homeland have a pressing need for both local and long distance credit networks, and endogamous marriage allows for the expansion of possible sources of investment money when required. Gregory also plots how, over time, expansion of Marwari territoriality “has weakened the physical link with the homeland but not the ideological links” (ibid., 168).

These formulations resonate strongly with the group under analysis here⁴. The greatest salient difference in mercantile practice – and it has significant implications – seems to lie in the fact that Jain families operating as joint venture traders are linked in father/son(s) partnerships leading into partnerships of the sons as brothers – whereas such relationships seemed to have incorporated unacceptable risks of fracture among the Anglo-Russian merchants. A worldview that valorized independence of action, entrepreneurial drive and innovation, and also valued patriarchy – was not one which was conducive to amity in close family business partnerships. The bottom line always had a sum total under it and in a clash between profit and the discursively constructed roles of father/son, brother/brother, profit seems generally to have won,

² Gregory downplays the latter principle – commodity specialization – saying that it is “an observed tendency rather than an ideological principle” (166). However, he notes that strata of discrete groups tend to cluster around commodities of different value; and the poorer the stratum, the more limited the territoriality (172). In the case of the Anglo-Russian merchants, the export trade from Russia provided much greater wealth than trade moving in the other direction; much greater status naturally accrued and the territoriality of families so engaged was often global, as I will discuss in chapter eight. Their worlds were made of different stuff.

³ As I have said elsewhere, the prudent Anglo-Russian did not invest in property in Petersburg unless he was wealthy enough to maintain establishments both in England and Russia. However, a degree of prestige gathering went on locally, as it did among Gregory's Jains who “not only build mansions in their places of origin, they also build them in their places of residence” (1997, 171). Mary's grandfather, Bernhard Whishaw “moved from St. Petersburg to England...on account of a reduction in income which would have prevented their living in the proper style in Russia” (J. Whishaw 1992, 143). Status maintenance was very important to the Factorians in their ‘tradeland’ – Russian Petersburg – and naturally more publicly contested locally than homeland status.

⁴ Also like the Jains, the wealthiest of the Marwaris, British merchants prided themselves on their moral rectitude, were known for their mobility and monopolised trade wherever they established themselves (see Gregory 1997, 167).

at the expense of family relationships. Meta Muir records her grief and embarrassment over the lengthy litigation which her brothers and father instigated when Andrew Muir, partner in Muir and Mirrielees Moscow department store and import business, passed over his own sons and appointed as successor his stepson by his wife's first marriage – Meta's half-brother, Walter Philip. Philip later sacked the Muir brothers and Kenneth and Martin put in a claim in the Commercial Court in Moscow for wrongful dismissal in 1893. It went to the Senate and Philip won the case, but the Senate's decree was overturned in 1899 and the whole business started again. It was litigation that was to devour a large chunk of the family fortune and leave Meta's mother in straitened circumstances in London for the final few years of her life (LRA 1,015/94).

Mary noted her horrified astonishment when visiting a friend who was expecting her first infant, to be told that her friend's husband had just been thrown *out* of the family business by his older brother and *into* dire financial circumstances (1897). Mary should have understood. Her own father and the eldest of her three brothers were at loggerheads from the time Bertie left Rugby, failed at Oxford, tried and failed medical training at St. Thomas's Hospital and "never settled down to any regular profession. He was good at lawn tennis and other games" (J. Whishaw 1992, 192). According to Mary, Bertie was actually confined with a keeper at some point in 1893 (a not uncommon occurrence among those wealthy enough to avoid the horrors of the lunatic asylums). "Bertie is giving Papa so much trouble" she noted circumspectly. One assumes that he drank, 'or worse'. Mary's father must have continued to give Bertie an allowance as he never "settled down to any profession", but 'Papa' was not prepared to let him earn it by tarnishing the name and probity of the family firm. The second brother, Richard, succeeded to the business and was the only one of the three brothers to marry. The Cattleys were equally impartial about dismissing family members after a period of trial if they were found wanting.

The obvious strategy exercised here was to avoid business partnerships with family members whose relationships were fixed in circulating discourse in ways that did not make for smooth rift resolution. Alienation within close family (in classic nuclear kin relationships), once it had occurred, had no impersonal mechanisms by which it could be fixed and ostensibly forgotten. It required idiosyncratic treatment, which concerned parties might not have the interest, commitment nor personal strength to set in train. Siblings might jointly operate family businesses but almost invariably were based in different cities; sons often inherited from fathers but not until fathers retired and meanwhile had separate spheres of activity; nephews were a popular choice of concurrently operating junior partner. Petersburg partnerships for which data are available, however, were mostly linked by affinal relationships: brothers-in-law were very commonly in business together, and partnerships between the biologically unrelated (or distantly related), were frequently cemented by a marriage. The affinal relationship was defined by the law, a pre-nuptial agreement, and a marriage contract, not by discourses involving sentiment. The end of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth centuries exhibit repeated dissolution and re-formation of partnerships, which gradually settled as business alliances were cemented by marriage alliances, though obviously, as Strathern points out, these were not alliances "in the sense that is described for alliance systems in the anthropological corpus" (1992, 79). They created allies, however, and, consistent with English fluidity of social operations (a pattern in itself), objective analysis of marriage choices demonstrates the

regularity with which business connection was thus cemented – combined with a regularity of exception. As I will shortly demonstrate by the device of genealogical ‘pedigrees’, affinal connections had a great deal to do with social status security in the community.

Choices of marriage partners by core families was conspicuously endogamous to the community and its extended connections in Britain and other Russian centres of trade in Archangel, Moscow, Odessa, Riga and Pärnu, though as Goody notes, “Strictly speaking, the designation [endogamous] is incorrect since the technical term refers to the obligation to marry a member of the same group which we find, for example, in Indian castes” (1983, 31). People did marry out, but until the end of the nineteenth century, it was not a prevalent practice. Examination of the Church Registers also indicates that those prominent community members of foreign extraction who had previously belonged to other churches had, as part of the process of becoming accepted into the community, married local English women – usually the daughters of business partners or associates – by the rites of the Church of England, and remained part of the congregation from that point on, baptising their children, and being buried, as Anglicans. A further few, who married Englishwomen, but did not become Anglicans, were socially acceptable only because of their wealth and international connections, and their names do not appear in a broad range of archival contexts. On the other hand, those ‘foreigners’ who *were* accepted into the community, were fully integrated and their original nationality forgotten. Thus Mary could say in 1890 that gossip was being spread that her second cousin, ‘Ella’ (Harriet) Henley, was engaged to a ‘foreigner’, and note that the rumour had upset Oscar Strahlborn, “who was rather gone on her”. Oscar Strahlborn, despite his name, was *not* a ‘foreigner’⁵. John Blessig (married to Helen Anderson, three of whose sisters were married to Whishaw cousins), was Factory Treasurer for two periods of six and three years respectively, a role that was the closest the community came to having an officially elected ‘head’. Church of England Bishops, visiting Petersburg to conduct confirmation ceremonies, stayed with John and Helen Blessig and held court from the comfort of their hospitality. Blessig also had a large dacha at Mourino though he and his wife spent less time there than the other families, being both somewhat wealthier and childless. He had extensive property in England and was one of the few English merchants in Petersburg in 1905 who read the writing on the wall correctly and promptly sold his Russian assets and retired to England. He was unquestionably an accepted and highly respected member of the community. Notably, his wife Helen was the only one of seven Anderson sisters, some of whom were older than she, whom Mary addressed with the title ‘Mrs’. Admittedly three of the others were married to Mary’s Whishaw cousins, but three of them were not and still had names like ‘Do’ (Dora), and ‘Gert’ (Gertrude). This singularity was based on John Blessig’s local status and business acumen.

I include two diagrams in this chapter to assist in illustration of marriage practices that seemed to have been common in the community: diagrams 1 and 2 (pp. 204-5) are simplified genealogies for the Cattley and Whishaw families, indicating two different patterns of marriage which operated in the community. A third alternative was that which lacked any notable systematicity and seems to have encouraged selection of marriage partner on the basis of

⁵ His sister, Sophie, would later become one of Mary’s more frequent contacts as Mrs. Nairn. Ella did, in the end, at the older-than-average age of 33, marry a ‘foreigner’ – Boris Hoyningen Huene, “a Russian Baron of Teutonic descent” (J. Whishaw 1992, 154). The family re-settled in Helsinki after 1917.

individual proclivity. This ‘strategy’ is obliquely demonstrated in diagram 4 in the following chapter, which maps kin connectedness between the Factory Treasures over more than a century. Members of the most influential ‘nodal’ families of the community who were Petersburg-based, mostly married members of other local families, not necessarily, but often, from families of similar influence. Those who did not remain in Petersburg, or who did not return to Petersburg after an English education, were more likely to marry English spouses, though, once again, these tended to be from families connected to Petersburg in some way, whether through business or earlier kin ties. Families who indiscriminately married ‘in’ or ‘out’, seldom achieved substantial influence in the community, and perhaps had no desire to do so. Examples of the latter were long-term medical families such as the Wyllies, Lees, Hallidays, and Handysides who intermarried with merchant families consistently, though far from exclusively, over the generations. However, whether reproduction of marriage strategy is apparent on the basis of *post hoc* objective assessment – as it seems to be with the Whishaws, Cattleys, Hubbards, Moberlys and many more – or not – as with the Carrs, Hills, Raitts, Henleys and others – an enduring pattern across the community core is the regularity of first and second cousin marriage.

The history of consanguineal marriage in England follows a different path to that on the continent, simply because, in order to marry his fifth wife Catherine Howard (first cousin to his second wife, Anne Boleyn, and therefore forbidden under Roman Catholic law), Henry VIII introduced a number of marriage reforms, one of which was to legalise marriage to all first cousins, not merely cousins of marriage partners (Goody 1983, 172). Elsewhere in Europe, and among the Puritan settlers of New England, marriage prohibitions extended past second cousins in some cases and included those standing in the same relationship to either spouse, limitations that could only be circumvented by expensive dispensations until 1844 (Sabeen 1998, 442). In England, on the other hand, first cousin marriage appears to have been quite common, among the wealthier classes at least, from considerably earlier (though I am unable to take George Darwin’s supportive statistics on the subject seriously, despite Sabeen’s apparent acceptance of them as a data source (1998, 441)). Writers such as Jane Austen and the Brontës treat first cousin marriage as a norm, with Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* marrying first her father’s nephew (an unhappy alliance) and then her mother’s (providing redemption and closure). Metacultural judgment on the socio-cultural ‘fact’ of cousin marriage which has been recorded, (i.e. which was produced by the literate classes in English history), offered encouragement to the practice until at least the last decades of the nineteenth century when the possibility that close kin marriage might have detrimental effects on offspring (an idea born of Charles Darwin’s accelerations of nebulous circulating ideas about biological evolution, and prompting his son George Darwin’s ‘studies’), began to become more salient⁶. Among members of this

⁶ Jim Whishaw records that his cousin Reg Whishaw, son of his uncle Alexander, and a successful medical doctor, “married his cousin Isie, and I am glad to remember that I was instrumental in overcoming the scruples he felt about consanguinity. The marriage was a very happy one...” (1992, 190). This was written in 1935, in hindsight. It is hard to say to what degree such issues were salient in the community in the nineteenth century, but first cousin marriage was clearly on the decline in the final decades. It is noteworthy that Reg and Isie’s first child was born ‘delicate’ at about the time Mary’s father seems to have discouraged the development of a relationship between Mary and her own first cousin, Berns. Connection between the two incidents is conjectural, but the marriage of Isie and Reg would have

community, at least, the practice seems to have declined from that point, though Sabeau notes that all studies made of European consanguineal marriage “concur in the description of a high point in consanguineal marriages reached between 1880 and 1920” (*ibid.*, 431). The practice in the group under analysis seems to have peaked and begun to decline already by this date. I pointed out above that such marriages offered certain advantages to the spouses in terms of ease of companionship, which facilitated pre-marital courtship, and increased the likelihood of post-marital mutual understanding. It also offered considerable economic advantages to families in which descent understandings privileged the single family line that connected with the ‘family name’ – the patriline. The preponderance of cousin marriage took place within the male lines of descent.

Sabeau notes that the best correlation of cousin marriage throughout the eighteenth to late-nineteenth centuries in Europe was with wealth: “the poorest, including the new group of factory workers, were relatively disinclined to marry kin” (1998, 379). A further characteristic was that marital alliance between matriline did not systematically occur; rather cousin marriage “developed in a context of agnatic connections, which were in turn rooted in male productive routines and political practices” (*ibid.*, 381). This was also true of the British in Petersburg: I cannot verify a single example of cousin marriage within the artisan-mechanic classes – not a single ‘same-name’ marriage, nor one that is connected via the matriline so far as the records demonstrate – though spiritual kin (sponsors and witnesses to life-cycle rituals) were often drawn from the same small circle of families over several generations. Presumably these were not families which dowered daughters and sisters and, consequently, they operated in marked and fluid contrast to the higher mercantile stratum, which certainly did⁷. Goody notes that, “from the standpoint of the controlling generation, there are two contradictory pulls at work in dowry systems”, which operated in nineteenth-century bourgeois social worlds such as this one: “to get a spouse of the right standing for one’s offspring there has to be...a specific settlement from the estate...On the other hand, this process of pre-mortem transmission weakens the control of the senior generation over their very livelihood” (1976, 28).

In the context of British mercantile practice, where ‘the estate’ lay in capital and access to credit, linked indissolubly to a company’s public reputation for honesty and probity in business praxis, cousin marriage had as much (or more), to recommend it as among the landed gentry who wished to keep their real property intact. Among the former, however, the laws of primogeniture, which applied only to real property, did not operate⁸; merchant houses tended to

been the subject of generalized family discourse, and Mary’s father would, no doubt, have held an opinion on the matter. The infant died within five months, a not unusual occurrence, but there seems to have been nothing ‘wrong’ with the remaining four sons.

⁷ It would also seem that the bulk of the British ‘working’ classes in Petersburg with any marked religious allegiance at all, belonged to Nonconformist faiths – Maida Mirrieles’ “h-dropping Evangelicals” – though they often married and baptised their children in the English Church, possibly because the C. of E. Register constituted an official community record, sent to, and stored in, London. Marital prohibitions in Nonconformist faiths were broader than those in the Established Church, and, though legal in Britain, first cousin marriage could well have been the subject of metacultural disapprobation in many ‘dissident’ congregations. Yet another factor militating against endogamous marriage was the plurality of life trajectory; as with the upper stratum, they married their associates, but their associates spanned much broader, less trammelled worlds.

⁸ Thirsk notes that even the ‘laws’ of primogeniture were frequently evaded, as writers on the subject as

devolve to the management of the fittest of the following generation. The *principles* underlying primogeniture – that of holding family assets as a bloc and preserving “a class of people with authority” (Thirsk 1976, 184) – were still valorized, however. Thirsk goes on to note that, in contrast to European practice, “in England primogeniture had penetrated more deeply into the ranks of society below the nobility” (ibid.) to the point when even yeomen farmers declined to divide up their holdings equally among their offspring. The merchants of this community also preferred to select only one among their male descendants to stand as head of house and family, another incentive to keeping marriage within the male line: should one’s own sons not prove worthy, a patrilineal nephew married to a daughter was an excellent substitute. As Goody also notes “the availability of one’s own women as possible wives does appear to be positively associated with the fact that they and their offspring are carriers, potentially at least, of one’s own property” (ibid., 32). Goody makes this point in reference to marriage in Arab societies, as he suggests that Europe rejected the ‘logic’ of close marriages at the level of kinship. This putative ‘rejection’ of close marriage logic does not seem to have been the pattern in this group, nor, I would suggest, in England in general at the time⁹.

Yanagisako and Collier note that an understanding of the commonsense meanings available to people is gained by moving “back and forth between an analysis of how structures shape people’s experience and an analysis of how people, through their actions, realize structures” (1987, 44). Looking at the Whishaw and Cattley genealogies comparatively, two rather different strategies seem to have emerged to address the problem of what Goody calls the ‘divergent devolution’ of family assets. Both patterns endured for a sufficient number of generations to be postulated as ‘structures’ which shaped each family’s experience and were realized in the actions of ensuing generations. The Cattleys, for at least the two generations in which they were ‘on the rise’, married almost exclusively within the patriline¹⁰ (Diagram 1). The first mercantile Cattley, Stephen I, born 1725, *walked* to London from his native Yorkshire where his family were lowly tenant farmers, and found himself a position in a counting house, where one assumes he proved energetic and motivated. He started his own merchant house and married the daughter of his landlord, Anna Bode (with a generous dowry), and, while it is unclear in which order these two events occurred, one could hazard a guess that in this case marriage came first. Stephen produced a number of girls and a boy, John, who survived to adulthood, but he passed over his direct heir and sent for his brother’s son, Robert, to join him in his London business, which Robert eventually inherited. Robert’s younger brother, Stephen II, was sent to Petersburg to train in a London trading house in 1772, and he went on to open Cattley & Co. in Petersburg

early as the seventeenth century in England were aware. However, “by the very fact that [legal scholars] were writing down something on the law, they were pressing for its acceptance and promoting conformity...they wrote in the conviction that primogeniture was the right and proper practice for great families...each spoke with authority, and helped to harden attitudes in its favour” (1976, 179-80). This is how communal worlds are made.

⁹ It must be confessed, however, that there is only the *post hoc* evidence to support my opinion: here is one of many ‘holes’ in recorded talk (sexuality, bodily functions, doctrinal doubt being others), where the fieldworker has yet another undeniable edge over the historical ethnographer. Exegesis, while it might not produce universally accepted ‘truth’, certainly exhibits the parameters within which ‘truth’ is negotiated.

¹⁰ The Cattley family details are drawn from the Cattley family collection at the Leeds Russian Archives (LRA 1406), the Registers of the English Church in St. Petersburg, (GL 11,192 B, GL 11,194/1, GL 11,192 C, GL 11,194/4), and the Cattley Web Page.

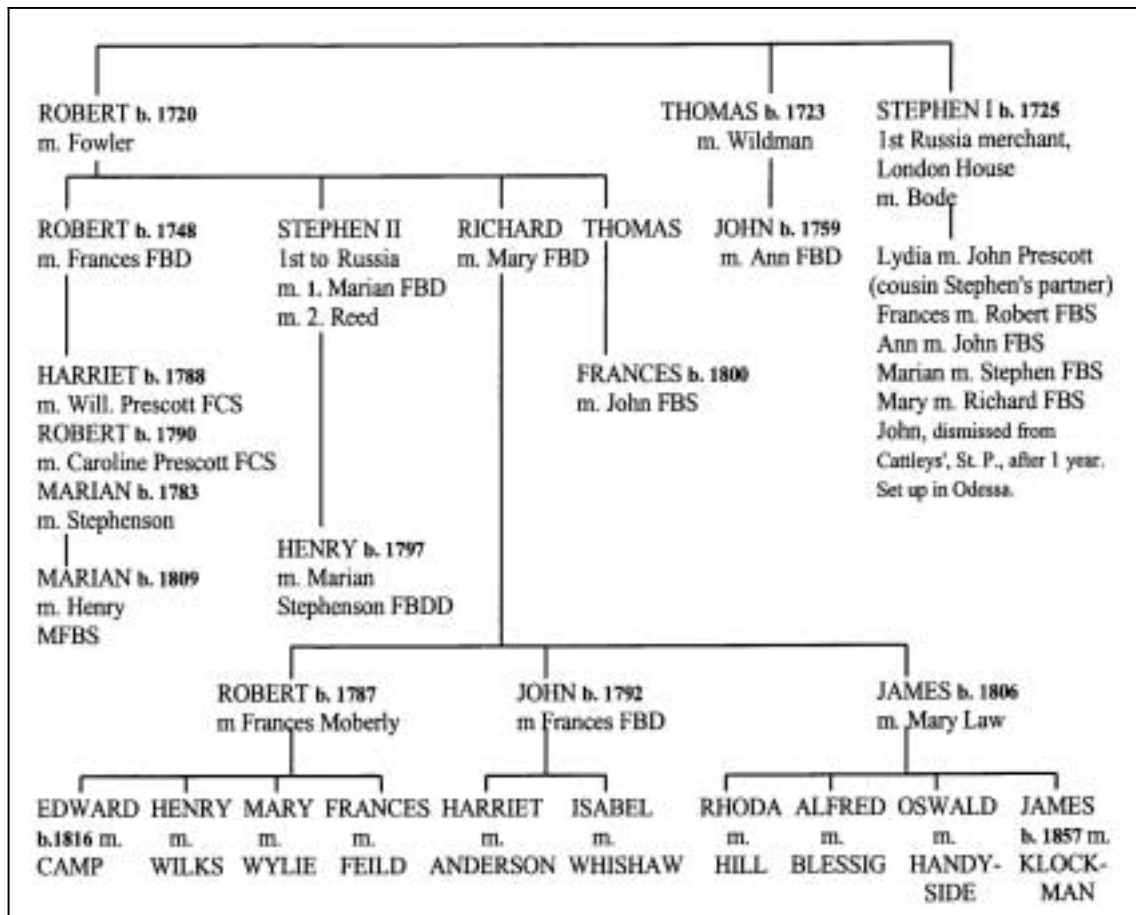


Diagram 1: Simplified Cattley family 'tree' indicating those who spent most of their lives in Petersburg. (M=mother; F=father; B=brother; S=son; D=daughter; C=cousin)

in 1784, in partnership with his brother Robert in London and John, the 'passed-over' son of Stephen I (therefore his first cousin and brother-in-law), as his local partner. By this stage, Robert, Stephen II, and their third brother, Richard, had all married daughters of Stephen I, (Richard became a wine trader in Hull, and an agent for his brothers), as had yet another cousin John, son of Thomas (who also joined Cattley's in London). Subsequently Stephen I's son John was found unsatisfactory by Cattley & Co in Petersburg and dismissed after a year. The multiple kin relationships between this John and Stephen II did not carry sufficient weight to ensure John's continued employment, and not even his own father seems to have intervened on his behalf. John Prescott (son of a Cattley partner in London), joined Stephen II in the Petersburg business and subsequently married Stephen I's final daughter, Lydia (sent out to look after the widowed Stephen II's children).

The daughters of Stephen I and his richly dowered wife were a sensible marital choice for their cousins, because the Cattleys were self-made men of yeoman Yorkshire stock¹¹, who

¹¹ Not only had the first Stephen been obliged to walk to London in the absence of means to pay for his travel, his brother Thomas, b. 1723, who had a leasehold farm in Yorkshire, drew up an agreement with his son Thomas junior (not entered on the table) before he died, in which he handed over his tenancy

would have had difficulty in procuring themselves heiresses of that stature on the broader marital 'Exchange'. Stephen himself, with a son whom he found valueless, would have seen distinct advantages in marrying his daughters to his brothers' sons, all of whom were successful merchants, running businesses under the Cattley name. What the girls thought, no one knows.

The pattern is there, and is repeated over the generations: Robert of London's daughter, Marian, married her father's partner, Stephenson; the other two children married two of Lydia Prescott née Cattley's children. The next generation married back into the patriline, with the exception of Robert II who married very well in Petersburg, in the shape of Frances Moberly, and James who married the daughter of the Petersburg Chaplain, Edward Law, also well-connected in merchant circles in London. It was not until the fourth generation that the Cattleys began to practice 'exogamous' marriage as a preferred mode, though marital partners continued to be drawn from well-placed community families. By the time of Edward's maturity (the oldest of the fourth generation, more of whom anon), the Cattley's had a solid base of family contained wealth and a wide-ranging network of affines among the core families in their communal world.

The Whishaw pattern was initiated under different constraints and opportunities¹².

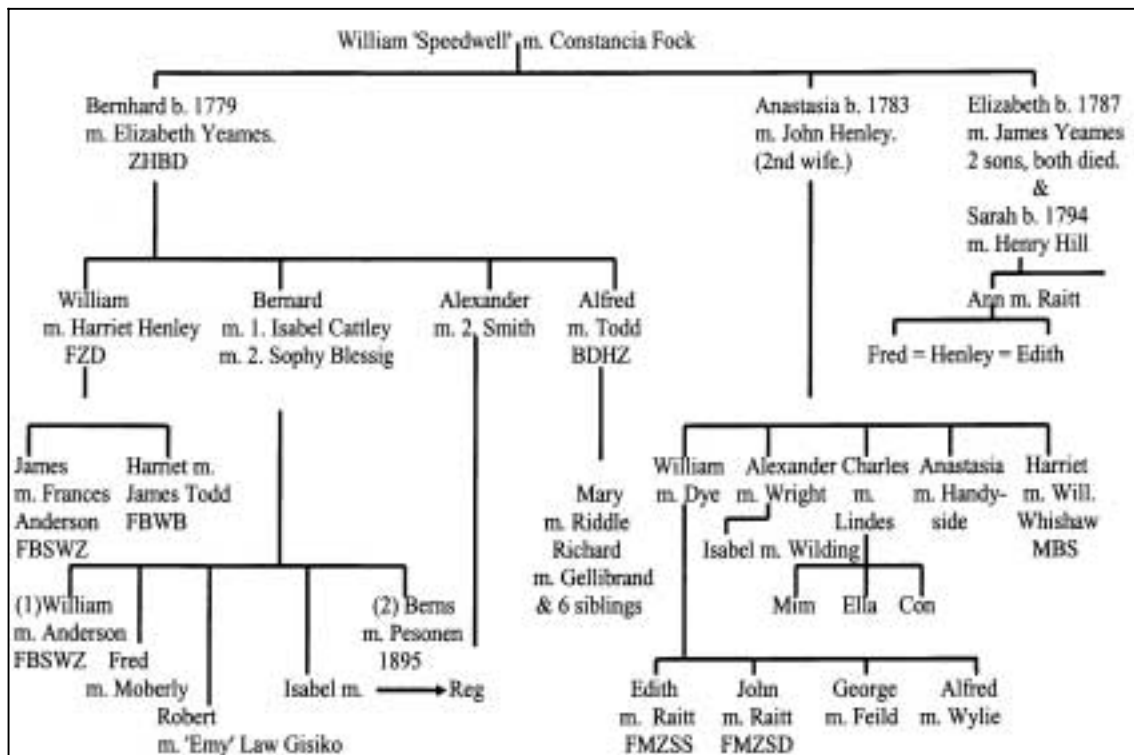


Diagram 2: Simplified Whishaw family 'tree'. (Code as above plus Z=sister).

rights in return for a bed (and presumably a place to put it under the family roof). This practice, as Goody notes (1976, 29), had been common in all parts of England since medieval times. Thomas junior died worth £2,800, a comfortable but inconsiderable sum. Thomas's merchant cousin Richard, on the other hand, dowered one daughter alone (not entered on the table) to the tune of £10,000.

¹² Whishaw data are drawn from the Church registers (see above), Mary's diaries and her 'Whishaw pedigree', and J. Whishaw 1935 and 1992.

William ‘Speedwell’ Whishaw had no local family connections and his male English relatives were lawyers, so there was no family business potential in that direction worth nurturing. He married a local bride, the daughter of Dutchman Bernhard Fock, well-placed in Russian Government service, whose other daughters married some of the most successful British merchants in Petersburg in the latter quarter of the eighteenth century. William and Constanca may have set a pattern for their male descendants of careful selection of connected brothers-in-law, even in the absence of patriline-endogamous marriage, because over the ensuing three generations this type of alliance was salient among the Whishaws. Speedwell’s only son to reach adulthood, Bernhard, married his brother-in-law’s niece. Bernhard’s eldest son William (Jim’s father), married a first cousin; the second son, Bernard (Fred and Berns’ father), married first a Cattley then a Blessig, both from powerful families; the third son, Alexander, went to Oxford, was ordained and only returned to Petersburg on visits; the fourth son and Mary’s father, Alfred, married Rhoda, the sister of his business partner, James Todd (who later married Jim Whishaw’s sister and “lost his reason”); the next brother, James, did not marry; Charles married someone unknown and ran his own modest flax business in the interior of Russia (died early and childless), and the final brother Henry emigrated to New Zealand. On the other hand, the descendants of Anastasia and Sarah, Bernhard’s sisters, who had married men of little influence but comfortable social standing in the community, either married within the matriline or according to proclivity; they were no longer Whishaws and neither the Hills’ nor the Henleys’ marriage practices exhibited any systematicity – hence, perhaps, the fact that their respectability was not accompanied by positions of influence¹³. Of the fourth Whishaw generation, Jim (son of William), William (son of Bernard), and Thomas (son of Henry – not shown), all married daughters of the wealthy and very influential Robert Anderson, a fourth daughter of whose was married to the even wealthier John Blessig. Robert (Bob) married the granddaughter of the Rev. Edward Law (first cousin to the powerful Alfred, Oswald and James Cattley trio of brothers); Fred chose a Moberly bride; Reg married his father’s brother’s daughter; Mary’s brother Richard went for a Gellibrand, closely connected to the Hubbards who were uncrowned kings of the community at the tail end of the nineteenth century; Mary and Berns both married ‘outsiders’.

A final point to note concerning the Whishaws is the predominance of unmarried women produced by the generation to which Mary’s father, Alfred, belonged¹⁴. The four brothers entered on Diagram 2 produced a total of 15 sons and 19 daughters who survived to marrying age. Of those, ten sons married, five remained single; while four daughters married and *fifteen* remained single. The Cattleys are more difficult to examine because the generations became ‘staggered’ to the point that Edward was born in 1816 and his final cousin was born in 1857, but

¹³ The stylised diagram of connections between Factory Treasurers over the century or so (Diagram 4 page 234), indicates in very truncated form, that while both Hills and Henleys married into families of influence, neither ever produced a Treasurer.

¹⁴ Bernhard, Mary’s grandfather, produced ten children all told: seven sons and three daughters, one of the latter unmarried, one married and childless, and an earlier Mary who married Dr. Wilson and produced Edward Wilson, the Antarctic explorer who died with Scott on their ill-fated race to reach the South Pole ahead of Amundsen. Bernhard’s sister Anastasia was Mrs. Wilding’s grandmother, who was in turn the grandmother of Michael Wilding, actor Elizabeth Taylor’s first husband. The community nurtured some dauntless characters.

the same pattern does not seem to have occurred. This may have been a Whishaw strategy for keeping money within the patriline: only one daughter from each family married and took a settlement out of the family assets. The only one of the four about whom I have any detailed data is Mary, and it is clear that she and Arthur were not given a lump sum on their marriage, because Mary ‘drew’ quarterly sums of money from the family business in Petersburg. The marriage settlement must have specified an allowance rather than the loss of substantial investment capital. The diagram I have placed as appendix four, provides empirical evidence at least, that Whishaws were not adverse to accepting brides from a wide range of families, but the only family, other than Riddle, to whom they gave an unreciprocated bride, was Hill, who were closely related to the Whishaws in any case, as well as having extensive kin connections throughout the community. That Whishaw daughters were encouraged not to marry for economic reasons is conjectural, but the pattern may be contrasted with the children of the youngest brother, Henry, who emigrated to New Zealand at the age of twenty (“no great scholar”, as Jim euphemistically phrases it), and farmed in an entirely different socio-economic milieu: of his four sons and six daughters, all but one son married and reproduced.

Marriages between, and within, merchant families of this status that exhibit pattern and continuity over time inevitably carry dynastic overtones, but it is an assumption that should be explored before being automatically accepted. I believe it would have been understood that parameters of choice, for both men and women, were as broad as the social circle, and it was the job of the women of the community to keep that circle functional, as can be seen from the high degree of sociality and the nature of activities organized: all involved as many people as the venue would hold. The boundaries inherent in ‘people like us’ kept the circle select, and the companionship that had endured between close connections from birth, compared with the formality expected between new acquaintances and the virtual non-existence of those who had not been ‘introduced’, tended to make courtship self-selecting.

Many of the marriages in the community during the nineteenth century were between individuals (and their families) who had known each other most of their lives, often as kin in some degree. Goody records that from the perspective of the Christian Church “the consensus of the couple, as distinct from that of the parents, was an essential condition of entering a union, in contrast to the ‘arranged marriages’ on which parents, especially the nobility, often insisted” (1985, 25). Letters and diaries produced by community members indicate that conjugal affection was the norm¹⁵. Harriet Hardie (who may not have been easy to live with), occasionally comments that her husband is gloomy and she is bored, and Bernhard Whishaw, married to Elizabeth née Yeames and living in England in his retirement years, seems to have found his wife’s temper trying: one of his diary extracts notes that he was not in an easy mind because of

¹⁵ It may also be remembered that the greatest icon of the age, Queen Victoria, married ‘suitably’ – also to her first cousin, Albert, Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha – and the marriage developed into a passionately devoted union in which imperious Victoria declared herself not a queen but a wife (Strachey 1951). Albert’s early death left Victoria distraught for decades. Even romantic love and its bestowal may be shaped by prevailing discursive norms. How else to explain the passion for contemporary screen and rock idols (or ‘celebrity’ in any place and time) which is so easily diverted to more readily available potential partners who conform to those norms of appearance and behaviour – or whatever has been publicly valorized? Metaculture approves and group members, who contribute to that metaculture, naturally put its dicta into practice.

“E.W.’s ill health and unkind behaviour to me” (cited in J. Whishaw 1992, 145). Walter Philip, Meta Muir’s half-brother, appears to have had considerable trouble with his wife’s extravagance, writing to her in 1905 that “Russian funds have completely collapsed & the quotation today is 82 for what a short time ago was 93...be as careful in your expenditure as you can”. A few days later he added, “It is the small daily expenditures that you never give the attention required...Excuse my making these remarks but I want to impress upon you the necessity of preparing against worse times” (LRA 1,015/146), which seem reasonable requests, framed in a reasonable manner, given the broader context in which it was rare for a married woman of the middling classes to enjoy financial independence at the time. Imagine Walter’s alarm upon hearing a few months later that Laura had run up unmanageable debts:

I was not able to write to you yesterday being still too much under the impression of the information you sent me. I gave orders at once to send you a remittance of £500¹⁶, for debts must be paid. What troubles me most in all this is that my confidence is shaken. From what you say, I gather that this debt has been accumulating for some time & that you have hidden it from me in the hope, as you say, of being able to arrange matters somehow. Have I merited such treatment? And is it fair that I should be kept in ignorance?...You seem powerless to exercise self restraint & quite unable to make any forecast of your expenditure. (ibid.)

Laura was not conforming to the valorised practice of maintaining detailed accounts and planning her expenditure (as Mary Whishaw was meticulous about doing) and Walter’s complaint, given the size of the sum and his prior warnings, is more that of a caring, deeply alarmed partner rather than a disgruntled overlord. One appreciates the nicety of his waiting a day before responding, to let his temper cool. After a quarter of a century of, presumably, trusting marriage Walter had his confidence in his wife shaken. He could note that she should be sufficiently in control of herself to exercise self-restraint in her spending. He expected her to have the ‘power’ to do so.

Mary’s diary extracts outlining female sociality (see above) do not produce a gendered image of housebound domestic subservience; diary references to Arthur ‘allowing’ her to do something in the first months of her marriage (1891) are not to be taken seriously and are soon discarded. Mary’s marriage patently became a happier and more fulfilling one with every passing year. She was deeply attached to her Friar Tuck of a husband. On those evenings when they were not dining out or entertaining at home, Mary found it ‘very jolly’ or ‘very cosy’ to sit and sew while Arthur read to her, or they discussed the English news, or did Russian exercises together – after the “dear little chaps” had been put to bed by Nurse (“such a treasure”). Their family life was a model of middle-class domestic harmony, particularly after Mary had learnt not to be late with meals and she stopped underrating her own ability to keep Arthur amused in the absence of guests. Both Arthur and Mary gave the boys lessons to supplement their education at Miss Matthieu’s little local school in Cronstadt – Mary taught them to play the piano and sing English children’s songs and hymns, Arthur taught them Latin and Greek; in winter they took frequent family *kibitka* (sleigh) rides across the ice to Oranienbaum to visit

¹⁶ £500 in 1905 is estimated to have the purchasing power of approximately £34,600 in 2001 (Richards, 2002).

friends, the boys driving the horse “and enjoying it thoroughly”, and went snow-shoeing together or for long walks. In the warmer months Mary and Arthur gardened together (with the assistance of gardeners, naturally), from early spring until after the last dahlias of autumn, and played tennis and cricket with their children and younger guests almost every afternoon the weather allowed. Mary even taught herself to ride the bicycle (after innumerable falls and shortening her skirts) so she could ride with the boys, though her interest in that activity was not long-lived.

In 1898 Arthur had to spend a few weeks in Petersburg when the curate of the English Church was ill and Mary hurried up to town to spend part of each week with him in his dusty lodgings and she noted on one occasion that “Arthur was at home & had prepared tea for me & we enjoyed it awfully together. So jolly to be together again” (17.3.1898). In 1901, when Arthur had to visit a throat specialist in London for a month, Mary was disconsolate, and nothing was ‘very jolly’ the whole time he was away. “It was horrid parting & I did a little weep driving home. I felt so horribly lonely without him” (16.4.1901). “If I’d known how much I would miss him I don’t think I could have let him go alone. Did accounts and felt very lonely” (1.5.1901). Mary wrote, some years later, of a discussion she had with a Mrs. Balfour on the subject of “the relative happiness of Russian and English marriages”: “An English husband is an honest person and must be treated in the same honest way in which he treats you,” Mary concluded (4.01.1904). James Cattley’s letters to his future bride are likewise deeply loving and provide no evidence of impending domestic imbalance in gender roles. He told Edith that his affairs were now hers also, and that she should always feel able to ask him anything; he confidently expected they would be very happy together and ended one letter saying, “and believe me Dearest, I shall ever do my utmost to secure your happiness and so long as you are happy I shall be so too” (28.2.1884) – which indicates a prevailing frame of mind at least, if not reliable prediction.

It is true, of course, that for women, the economic alternatives to marriage were usually not attractive. As Harriet Hardie (who knew), noted in a letter to Lily, “it is far better a girl has however a humble home to being obliged to give lessons or take a situation, as we have an example in poor Alice who is never appreciated” (dateless, early 1892). Maida Mirrieles’ mother had married Archibald Mirrieles when she was 33 and living on sufferance with an aunt in London, and he was a widower of 54 with two adolescent sons. She later told her daughters: “I had great esteem for your father; I knew he was a really good man, and such esteem is the best foundation for love” (LRA 1192/2). Maida noted that she and her sisters thought that a much warmer feeling was needed, and they classed their parents’ marriage as an ‘old-fashioned’ proceeding, but Maida’s mother had herself written to her own sister from Petersburg, in 1847, that: “I am sure I could nowhere have found a kinder husband...I find the longer we are married, the happier I feel myself; the transition from single blessedness to matrimony is the least agreeable part of it” (LRA 1192/1). The Petersburg English merchant world was one in which women had the possibility of considerable physical exercise, high degrees of sociality and cultural diversion and the option of spending periods of time in England, or even re-settling there while their husbands ‘commuted’, with the legitimate excuse of overseeing the education of the children – all factors contributing to a sense of freedom within marriage likewise enjoyed by other colonial wives in the Victorian era, and almost certainly lacking in the same milieu in the homeland. If any proof of the desirability of the

matrimonial state from the male perspective were required, it may be found in the incidence of remarriage of widowers, which was almost universal.

Goody notes two features historically common in marriages in Western Europe generally: firstly that the mean age of marriage tended to be a late one and, secondly, the age gap between spouses was expected to be fairly narrow (1983, 129). Goody goes on to cite Laslett's linking these factors with "marriage tending towards the companionate" (ibid.). None of Mary's closest pre-marital female friends married younger than 23 years of age and age gaps between spouses were generally no more than about six years. There were twenty years between Mary and Arthur, but Mary does not seem to have been conscious of it. On the other hand, Maida Mirrieles, who had a clearly 'companionate' marriage with the Moscow Anglican Chaplain, recalls of her parents who married in about 1845 with the same age gap:

I have often wondered how my mother, who was such a very high-spirited girl and had had so much liberty of judgement and action, brought herself to be so gentle and submissive a wife...My father, being of a dominating character naturally and having managed two wives before, no doubt made all the household decisions and mother became accustomed to refer everything to him. (LRA 1192/2, 19.)

This was not quite customary, however, as Mrs. Mirrieles' sister noted in a letter to an unnamed recipient:

She [Mrs. M.] is not nearly so decided in her management as you would expect from her natural character, and I think gives Mr. M. far too much of his own way, and he has been so much accustomed to rule that some wives who are blessed with easy, good-humoured husbands as I am, would think Mr. M. a little despot in his way. At the same time he is so benevolent... (ibid.)¹⁷

On the whole, even in the case of Mrs Mirrieles, male spouses of the latter half of the nineteenth century, in this educated, economically solvent, frontier-type community, seem to have been *allowed* to play the role of senior marital partner as much by the connivance of their wives as through any widespread view of innately superior male qualities. This resonates with the conjugal relations described by Yanagisako as common in second generation Japanese marriages in North America in the second half of the twentieth century: "the idea that male leadership and strength is a contingent social phenomenon, dependent upon women's eliciting behaviour and their consent, is a clear thread that runs through the comments of the Nisei" (1987, 102). The reason for these similarities in such diverse socio-cultural entities, I would suggest, is that in both cases the socio-cultural fact of marriage was being changed by external

¹⁷ Archibald Mirrieles was not really representative of the group by the second half of the nineteenth century, though his children became so. Although many of the community families came from very ordinary backgrounds in England, they had gentrified themselves before the start of the nineteenth century. Mirrieles was a latecomer who "was not very communicative about his early years but he would tell us a little about his Spartan upbringing...[the son of a man] looked on askance by some of his 'godly' neighbours because he read with interest Tom Paine's 'Rights of Man' and other revolutionary or unorthodox books" (LRA 1192/2). Archibald, unlike his children, was strongly antagonistic to the Established Church.

pressure: in nineteenth-century English bourgeois circles by legislation giving women greater marital equality at law (combined with the specificities of the Petersburg expatriate experience), and among second generation Japanese women in North America a century later by their integration into a different culture with different praxis and precedents. In both cases the external ‘events’ were treated according to existing frameworks, resulting in outward female complicity with tradition until metacultural evaluation had processed the new circumstances, and prepared the ground for acceptance of further development.

CASE STUDY: THE LOGIC OF A SUITABLE CHOICE OF SPOUSE.

Social control is, and always has been, exercised by those with authority, whether that authority has spiritual, military, political, legal, educational, or financial roots, since it is the interest and business of its holders to maintain and preserve the social order within which their authority exists; and it has never been exercised with unanimity and agreement among the various agencies of authority, nor with complete effectiveness, for otherwise social changes could not have occurred. (F.M.L. Thompson 1981, 206.)

When one contrasts the apparent systematicity of choice of marriage partner in the Whishaw and Cattley (and other) genealogies, with the norm of conjugal affection, one is left wondering why and how regularity might have developed. Obviously, the practices of boundary maintenance and of intense sociality within those boundaries meant that spouses were usually drawn from a range of potential partners that were universally considered suitable – unlike in the more fluid social arrangements of lower stratum families such as the Cummings and Tangates where engagements may have been based on proclivity, though more likely, if Harriet’s oblique references to her own marital contentment are any guide, on expedience of a different kind – a man needed a housekeeper, a woman needed economic support to avoid the fate of Harriet’s sisters, mutual attraction was a bonus. Inheritance in less wealthy families, however, was not an issue and boundaries were not actively maintained. Harriet was delighted to have married comfortably, and possibly somewhat envious of her cousin Baroness Lily, who had married even better¹⁸.

While young adults within the upper mercantile stratum which is the focus of this study do not seem to have been treated as pawns in a dynastic game, there is no doubt that parents, particularly fathers, were not slow to nip unsuitable friendships in the bud. Meta Muir’s elder sister was sent back to school in England (the only one of the sisters to be so educated) when she developed an unsuitable *tendre*, at the age of sixteen, for one of her father’s clerks; Mary’s father seems to have discouraged the growing closeness between her and her cousin Berns, and there are occasional references in Mary’s diaries to parental censure of one or other of her girlfriend’s dancing too frequently with a dashing officer, or sitting a dance out in a dark corner with a young man, or riding alone on an *isvo* with one, even when Mary and a sister were following close behind. Mary’s choice of Arthur – or her acceptance of his choice of her –

¹⁸ I was told, by one of Harriet’s descendents, that George Ramsay had pleaded with his father to be allowed to marry Lily, asserting that her accomplishments, kindness and beauty were much greater than might be expected. Upper-middle-class Swedish families were also aware of boundary-maintenance.

seems to have been one that slipped through the net. Here I wish to look briefly at the concrete disadvantages that might accrue from a 'love match' made without prudent consideration of the values and priorities of the communal world of which Mary, but not Arthur, was part. The diagram in Appendix 4 indicates how marginalized Arthur was, in community terms, compared to the Whishaws as a 'clan'. He was the only local spouse ever married by a Petersburg Whishaw who did not have ongoing and active connections into the community. Not only could he not find ready support when it was required, he was a newcomer in terms of the shaping effects of circulating talk so did not understand the tenets of the communal world.

The Revd. Arthur Riddle was appointed to the Cronstadt Chapel in 1881 (at the age of 34), on a salary of £200 per annum. Cronstadt, as I have mentioned, was the deepwater port (and Russian naval base) downriver from St. Petersburg; the Anglican Chapel there had traditionally serviced the crews of the British ships which docked there in the course of trade. In the past, the crews had been dragooned up through the town (past the much more enticing alternatives always on offer to sailors in a busy port) to the little white church¹⁹, in public demonstration of British respectability. Such coercion was no longer an option by the 1880s, and attendance had dropped immeasurably, though ship's captains and their families were still regular visitors. The Factory and the Russia Company were in two minds what to do about the considerable investment which the Cronstadt Church and its large Parsonage represented: on the one hand, the 'respectability' of the merchant community in Petersburg relied on such public manifestations of English prestige for their business profile; on the other, Anglo-Russian trade was gradually declining, fewer British ships docked at Cronstadt, church attendance by the British sailors could no longer be enforced and was negligible, the number of English merchants and their families actually resident in Cronstadt had shrunk to a congregation of 75 in 1878 (GL 11,749, 457), and the investment and running costs were an unwelcome drain. Arthur was not appointed a permanent Chaplain, merely a Curate, without tenure (GL 11,745, 90). He held this position uneventfully for four years, also acting as Curate to the Petersburg Anglican Church during winter, when Cronstadt harbour was closed to shipping.

In 1885 the Petersburg Chaplain recommended that Mr. Riddle be appointed permanent Chaplain at Cronstadt at a salary of £350. The Company, whose ranks now almost exclusively comprised senior members of Factory families (Hubbard, Anderson, Cattley, Gellibrand, Todd, Morgan and Harvey – the latter two being collateral branches of the Hubbards), declined to make the appointment permanent but raised his salary to £300 per annum (GL 11,741/14, 190). For the next few years he was reappointed annually, a precarious situation for a man of forty without either influence or local connections. Less than a month before Arthur proposed to Mary, the Company again declined to make the appointment permanent and he continued on the same salary (*ibid.*, 222). The connection between these two events can only be conjectural. After his marriage to Mary Whishaw, three years followed in which no references to the Cronstadt Chaplaincy are recorded in the Minutes of the Russia Company in London. It seems probable that his attachment to a local family of influence bought him (and Mary) a period of grace. Certainly Mary understood that their situation was a permanent one and she dismissed the growing coldness between her new family and her old connections as mysterious but not

¹⁹ Still extant in 2003, though now a printing house. The Parsonage has gone.

important.

On 15 April 1895, however, the axe fell and Mary wrote: “while we were at lunch Arthur got a letter from the Russia Company saying Cronstadt Church is to be given up & his services are only required until November, and salary for December at his disposal. How generous!?! We were utterly overcome & couldn’t realize it a bit.” Unfortunately, almost a century later, their daughter Grace Riddle saw fit to excise almost every reference to the controversy that resulted from Arthur and Mary’s subsequent fight to retain their home and living. Grace destroyed the following two months of entries and most of the remainder of the year so we can only imagine what went on between the April notification of termination of tenure and the Russia Company meeting in November when it was recorded that “Strong representations, however, have been made from St. Petersburg against any final decision being taken in this matter this year, accompanied by a memorial signed by the captains and crews of merchant vessels trading at Cronstadt on behalf of Mr. Riddle...After some discussion and criticism by Mr. Thornton, Mr. Cunningham and others”(who were friends and allies of Arthur’s), it was decided that the grant be continued for the years 1896-7 “pending a final settlement of the question being arrived at” (GL 11,741/14, 257). Presumably, in the meantime, Arthur and Mary had been canvassing for support, and had found sufficient to postpone the final decision for two years at least.

At this point it might be noted that, not only had Mary’s father been so lukewarm about the marriage that he had threatened to cancel it upon hearing some gossip being spread by Arthur’s only biological connections to the community, the Miss Wrights, that Arthur had been involved in shady land dealings in England before accepting the Cronstadt curacy. The Miss Wrights withdrew the slander and the marriage went ahead but presumably some of the community still gave the rumours credence and Mrs. Wilding (whose mother had been a Wright), and who had been close to Arthur and Mary during their courtship, had very little contact with them after it. Relations cooled with the Jim Whishaws, the Andersons and the Blessigs; Mary no longer went to Mourino and lost touch with the ‘large family’ it comprised, and few of their new circle belonged either to the Factory or the Company. In addition, Arthur, educated at Oxford and influenced by the Oxford Movement, was High Church, calling himself an Anglo-Catholic on occasion, whereas Lord Addington, whose son was now Governor of the Russia Company, had declared that the greatest disappointment of his life was when the Church he had built in Holborn, planned as an Evangelical or Low Church institution, had been taken over by Anglo-Catholics. Arthur and Mary had few sturdy bridges into the community beyond a couple of friends and possibly Mary’s immediate family.

Grace Riddle also excised most of Mary’s 1896 diary, apart from visits to high status locations like the palace of the Countess Carlow,morganatic wife of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, an afternoon spent aboard the Royal Yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, moored in the Neva at Petersburg, and Embassy dinners. 1897 is missing completely. However, on 3rd March 1897, the Court of the Russia Company discussed a Resolution which had been passed at a meeting of the British Factory that “in the opinion of the British Factory and of the British Community it is very desirable to continue the Chaplaincy of Cronstadt” which also asked the Company to raise their present grant of 4,000 Rs per year to 5,000 for ten years from 1st January 1898 (GL 11,741/14, 266). This received the careful consideration of the Court upon which it was

resolved that the grant would not be raised but that the “Russia Company is willing to confirm this for ten years conditionally on their being satisfied with the conduct of the Chaplaincy”; the Parsonage, however, should be sold. “This resolution met with the active approval of Mr. John Blessig and Mr. James Whishaw²⁰, Members of the British Factory, who were present at the Court during the consideration of the affairs of the Cronstadt Church Establishment” (ibid.). The sale of the Parsonage was placed in the hands of Alexander Fishwick, the British Consul at Cronstadt, and a close friend of Arthur’s. This amounted to a temporary stalemate as Fishwick was still assuring Arthur in 1901 that he would never find a buyer, while Blessig and Jim Whishaw had an interest in demonstrating that the conduct of the Cronstadt Chaplaincy was unbecoming.

The Chaplain of the English Church in St. Petersburg died in 1898 and a petition signed by “several members of the congregation in St. Petersburg in favour of the Revd. Arthur Riddle” to replace him was discussed in a meeting of the Russia Company, but their choice fell on a Revd. Armstrong – who lasted less than a year – whereupon Arthur was again passed over in favour of a Revd. Macleod. By this stage John Blessig was Treasurer of the British Factory and he sent a telegram approving Macleod’s appointment in advance. In the tantalising absence of the diaries of the relevant years only conjecture may fill in the downward spiral of Arthur’s relations with the Factory, based on occasional references in Mary’s diaries of 1900 and 1901, which Grace did not notice or did not see fit to destroy. From these it is apparent that Arthur was fighting with Macleod and what Mary refers to as “the Factory clique”. There is a curious reference to a bitter letter Arthur wrote in August 1901 to Mr. Blessig in which he “complained how badly he had been treated because they wanted to marry a Miss Anderson, & for the ignominious way in which he was dismissed from town”. The only Miss Anderson to marry in the period was one of Jim Whishaw and John Blessig’s sisters-in-law, to a third Whishaw cousin in 1898²¹, but while the Church Register indicates that Arthur officiated, in Mary’s diary for the period the fortnight on either side of the relevant date has also been excised so one can only assume that something scandalous occurred and Arthur was ‘ignominiously’ dismissed from town (Petersburg). Arthur and Mary then boycotted the Petersburg Church and, on Jim writing to ask him to officiate at a funeral in Petersburg in June 1901, Arthur refused.

A month later, one of Arthur’s few friends on the Russia Company Court of Assistants, Mr Cunningham, asked Arthur to send a letter to him with his grievances (10.7.1901) which he would put before the Company at the next meeting. Meanwhile even Mary’s immediate family were withdrawing support. “Papa is very funny,” Mary wrote (17.7.1901). “He seems to think it would be to our advantage to get the sack from here and get a very doubtful pension of 1,000 Rs.” Papa, who was a Factory member himself, presumably knew what was coming and perhaps was trying to prepare them. On 31st July 1901 William Egerton Hubbard reported what he had been told by Factory Treasurer on a recent trip to Petersburg “in re. the Cronstadt requirements

²⁰ Blessig had been the original transmitter of the slander which had almost prevented the Whishaw-Riddle marriage (his wife, Helen Anderson, was also connected to the Miss Wrights), and Jim had developed an unexplained dislike of Arthur; Jim’s wife Fan, Blessig’s sister-in-law, had become “glacial” according to Mary. Without the Parsonage, the position was no longer one suitable for a married man with a young family.

²¹ The bride was considerably older than the groom, who later suffered some sort of breakdown and was repatriated to England.

for church work” (GL 11,741/14, 298). Mr. Cunningham – “the only one of our friends there to speak for us”, as Mary wrote – spoke on Arthur’s behalf, but it was decided that the Chaplaincy would be terminated in March 1902.

Whereupon Arthur wrote his “bitter” letter to Mr. Blessig, though Mary begged him to soften it, knowing there would be “ructions” (15.8.1901). She knew the local world much better than Arthur did, and understood that if even her father had given up on them, there was little left but to give in gracefully and hope “the Factory clique” would be shamed into generosity. Three days later, Papa visited them in Cronstadt and produced a letter from Jim stating the whole Factory was insulted by Arthur’s letter to Mr. Blessig and asking that it be retracted so it would not have to appear in the Factory Minutes. “Papa said it was a pity Arthur had ever written the letter” (18.8.1901). “To please Papa” Arthur agreed to withdraw but not retract it, and he wrote a less inflammatory version.

For the remainder of the year Mary and Arthur prepared to leave Cronstadt, but the question of Arthur’s pension was still open and Arthur, based on precedent, probably did not behave during that time with the subservience of demeanour expected of him by “the Factory clique”. He finally proved beyond all shadow of a doubt that he would not conform to the norms of the communal world and acted in a way that actually threatened to split the community. Once again, the final two months of the diary have been removed but a later reference in Mary’s diary recalls that Arthur was asked to speak at the Annual Cricket Club Ball in December 1901, a mark of genuine generalized community liking, and “brought the house down”. He was apparently a very amusing speaker who always entertained at dinner parties and his speech had obviously made the Factory, the Russia Company and the Revd. Mr. Macleod the subjects of his wit. A Factory meeting was called by Blessig and one of the Hubbards in January 1902 to discuss his pension – and was held at the house of Mr. Macleod so, therefore, on ‘enemy territory’. According to Mary, Blessig and Hubbard

said that he had ruined the Church in Petersburg & Mr. Macleod was met by opposition at every turn & Church was badly attended thro’ Arthur having made the Church & Factory unpopular. Arthur denied the whole thing & said he had always upheld Mr. Macleod & had done no harm to the Church; it was their own untrustworthiness & unfair treatment of him that made all the mischief...The Cricket Club Ball & Meeting, with Arthur’s reception, they considered a demonstration against them. (13.1.1902.)

Arthur was offered 1,500 Rs per annum (about £150 or £10,386 by 2001 standards), which Hubbard told him he would forfeit if he remained in St. Petersburg without attending Church or if he made the Factory, and through them, the Church, unpopular. In other words, Arthur had to conform to Factory rules for his conduct or his pension would be cancelled. There was nothing for Arthur to do in Petersburg, though his pension and Mary’s settlement would probably have been sufficient for them to live in unostentatious comfort, that is, no carriage²². The Factory had blocked his ‘promotion’ to the Church in town, obviously because Arthur did not conform to the world as it was understood by its most influential members. Mary knew how to avoid ‘ructions’;

²² Mary, despite grieving over the loss of the very commodious Cronstadt Parsonage and the little traditions of their life there, would have been happy to relocate, and to return to her summers at Mourino and winters in the social heartland of Vassili Ostrof.

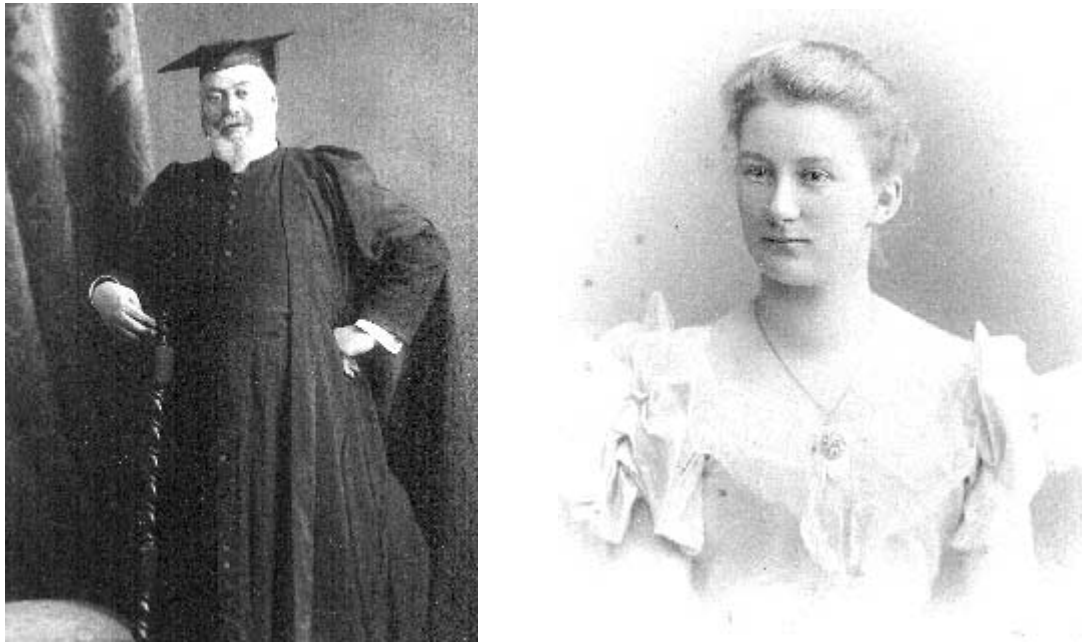
it had been bred into her over years of encounters with the powerful discursive artefacts emanating from the Factory and approved en route though her shifted allegiance meant she no longer endorsed emanations which impacted on the new family in negative ways. Arthur – with his liking for eccentric characters (that is, people from many walks of life and background); and eccentric modes of male behaviour (his cooking and Greek lessons); his Oxford education and probable disdain for mercantile pursuits and those who pursued them; his Oxford Movement leanings; his lack of respect for the pillars of the local community; his lack of connection within the community and his evident neglect of those with which his marriage might have provided him – never stood a chance against the profit-motivated ethics of that community, though he does not appear to have understood this. If he *had* nurtured his connections and become an active and approving member of discourse circulation, he would have *known* that the Curate of an expensive and no-longer-rewarding piece of Factory property did not stand a chance, and he might, in any case, have been able to draw on influential contacts and secure the semi-tenured position as Petersburg Chaplain on the two earlier occasions when it had fallen vacant. In February, Mary and Arthur dined at Francis Marshall's, an old friend though also a member of the Factory, and Mary noted afterwards that "Arthur & Mr. Marshall talked over our affairs....He says everything is arranged before a Factory Meeting & they have to vote as they are told more or less" (13.2.1902).

Peter Blau makes the relevant point in his study of power in social life that "[u]niversalistic standards give rise to differentiation of social status, since attributes or performances that are universally valued give prestige and power to those who have them" (1964, 266-7). The Factory had, by dint of over a century of exertion, contrived to maintain universalistic standards within their small domain, which kept them – as those richest in the valorized attributes and performances – in the primary positions of status and power in the community. Arthur, by introducing different standards, and worse, finding tacit support in certain sectors of the community for those standards, threatened that hegemony. He, like those who came before him who had threatened to introduce plurality (see case studies in chapter ten), would have to go, or publicly acknowledge hegemonic valorized standards as his own, in a gesture public self-humiliation "the Factory clique" could be fairly sure he would not make.

Arthur Riddle took a 'locum' Chaplaincy in Archangel during the summer of 1902 where the family found themselves in an extended circle of Mary's friends and relatives. Mary lost her third child within hours of its birth back in Petersburg in October. The Petersburg community raised a generous subscription for the family of 3,800 Rs, perhaps representing conscience money, and also gave them a couple of handsome gifts of monogrammed silver. Mary and Arthur did not attend the Cricket Club Ball that year. In December the family and Nurse trekked off across the Russian Steppes to Yusovka, the Donetsk Basin mining town built by John Hughes, Arthur's friend and their older son's godfather. Hughes and his Directors (he had named his mining company "The New Russia Company", presumably to irritate the old one), started a Chaplaincy there for Arthur, and the family, with the addition of daughters Gytha and Grace, remained in Yusovka until Arthur's death in 1911. It was not a life which Mary had been led to expect: conditions were hard, housing was very modest²³, the climate was extreme, there

²³ They lived in a row house with a small patch of garden in front and behind, but the construction must

were a lot of dissenters of Welsh extraction in the small town which made for friction, and though it was inevitable that there should be other families living there who were connected with the Petersburg community, Mary seems to have never had another female friend whom she addressed without the title 'Mrs.'. She felt 'blue' on occasion, but she never complained and never, by even slight implication, indicated that her choice of spouse outside her natal group had not made life easier for her.



Picture 6: Arthur Riddle (Friar Tuck) c. 1896 and Mary Whishaw in 1890.

have been poor: "The Glazounoff family has come back so now Baby must behave or they will hear her crying, the wall is so thin" (8.5.1904).

PART FOUR.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

THE BRITISH FACTORY.

INSTITUTING THE ORGANIZATION.

A sixteenth-century company engaged in foreign trade required not only a constitutional basis for its operations, but also an institutional structure through which those operations could be conducted. A charter and a grant of privileges merely gave to a body of men the legal right to do certain things, they did not ensure that those things would be done. To take advantage of that legal right a company had to set up an organisation which would operate within the framework of its charter and its privileges. Such an organisation formed the institutional basis for the company's activities. (T. S. Willan 1956, 19.)

....it is impossible for men to live together, associating in industry, without acquiring a sentiment of the whole formed by their union, without attaching themselves to that whole, preoccupying themselves with its interests, and taking account of it in their conduct. This attachment has in it something surpassing the individual. This subordination of particular interests to the general interest is, indeed, the source of all morality. (Durkheim, 1960, 14)

In this and the following chapter I want to examine the ways in which the British Factory was 'talked' into its various incarnations over its nearly two centuries of existence. The Factory was the closest local approximation to a 'governing body' which the community produced, and the processes by which they¹ attained and maintained their role may be illustrated vividly by the actually occurring instances of talk in which their influence and ways of wielding it are framed by interested parties, both allies and enemies. 'Behind the scenes' discussion was made manifest in the Minutes Books of their meetings in specific recorded items listing aims, grievances, intentions and (temporarily) final resolutions; sometimes, when gravity demanded, accompanied by a list of signatures. Exploring the role and practice of the Factory in the community involves exploration of how their power base, and the rather more exclusive power base of the community's leaders within the Factory, was maintained over the centuries against frequent attempted interference and curtailment of their activities from various outsiders – individuals, institutions and organizations – and occasional schism within their ranks. I have already touched on the power they could exert over those whose salaries they paid, in discussing the fate of the Revd. Arthur Riddle in the previous pages. Chapter ten further illustrates the discussion with three concrete case studies, documented in detail at the time, involving protagonists who did not rely directly on the Factory for their livelihood. Although the Factory was a tiny organization, controlling a small, somewhat inchoate community in topographic terms, evidence indicates that their relationship with larger worlds replicated, in microcosm, the operation of hegemony in nineteenth-century England, and indeed, that of more recent times, as Williams' study of

¹ Though it may sound odd to refer to an institution/organization as 'they', that is how 'they' referred to it themselves e.g. "The British Factory established at St. Petersburg...*have* determined...*their* conduct as a Body" (GL 31,781/1, 23.1.1777, emphasis added).

Ashworthy (1963) demonstrates. As with other distinctively 'local' but undeniably 'English' institutions (such as the Church in its religious and secular roles; the hierarchical valorization of moral qualities; the patterns of marriage, association, everyday life and residential choices; the social 'classing' of individuals and groups), the rather precise temporal and spatial commencement points of the Petersburg versions of 'English' talk and praxis, and the record-keeping that accompanied genesis and development over the decades illuminate, I firmly believe, the processes by which such institutions take (and change) form and content over much greater dimensions of space and time.

The environment in which the British Factory established itself was a complex one. They functioned within uneasy parameters created by a volatile yet consistently repressive Russian political regime; a conservative, wealthy and influential parent body in London; shifts in parliamentary British policy regarding trade restrictions and mercantilism which were relayed to those affected by locally deployed diplomatic representatives; a discontinuity of individual (though not familial) membership both in their own organization and in the community they claimed to speak for; and frequent and ongoing discord between their own and their host nations. Under these conditions, an organization which attempted to further the economic interests of its members, and simultaneously keep a grip on the facilities, profile and everyday operations of 'their' community, faced a daunting task which the Gentlemen of the Factory executed with conspicuous success through generations of membership.

Although the Factory had an inaugural 'moment' – probably in 1723, (in fact there seem to have been several during its lifespan, though occasionally under different denominations) – they were connected by tenuous though unbroken paths of communication back over time to the earliest mercantile records, and probably beyond, as my earlier discussion of the first coming of organized English merchantry to Russia indicated. All human constructs are rooted in prior worlds and draw their accelerative potential from the prior acceptance and circulation of verbal reconstructions and representations of those worlds though later historiography may ignore the roots in favour of the fruit, thereby implying a *moment* of creation. This idea of creation *ex nihilo* is one which a broad-based diachronic study of circulating discourse artefacts can never endorse. The British Factory is a case in point: they unarguably 'created' and 'recreated' themselves at various points during their nearly two centuries of existence as they were subjected to the reverberations of 'other' worlds and internal contestation, yet, to do so, they drew on precedent and circulating talk both in their own and in broader worlds. Like the larger community of which they were part, they survived in closely articulated incarnations until the nation in which they were located summarily ejected them and locked the door as they left. They survived because of the skill manifested by their more or less hereditary leaders in bringing historically valorized discursive constructs to bear effectively on novelties which impacted upon them, shaping the 'new' into formats that both Factorians and the greater world could recognise, laying unobtrusive fresh surfaces onto familiar paths which a 'unanimous' majority could follow without much demurral. The summary ejection in 1917 defeated these skills in its sheer magnitude and exteriority.

The Russia Company, or titular 'parent body', was originally created a joint-stock company. In other words the company itself traded as a body and the members did not, or were not supposed to, trade individually within the area of the company's monopoly...Thus

the joint-stock company's organisation was designed, not for laying down general rules for the conduct of trade by members individually, but for actually conducting trade on behalf of the company as a whole. (T. S. Willan 1956, 20.)

Chris Gregory notes that "the joint stock company is without doubt the most important institution in the [economic?] world today" and also that, while in many cases, "this has been at the expense of the joint family company...the relationship between the two types of organisation can sometimes be very close" (1997, 164). It is interesting, given the success with which the British conducted trade with Russia over the next 350 years, that the progression was reversed, with a joint-stock company making way for independent families trading in partnerships with each other, but not, apparently, as joint-stock concerns. In chapter three I discussed the elaborate precautions taken by the Russia Company to prevent its members and 'servants' privately trading on their own behalf, though the regulations were frequently ignored, sometimes with the Company's compliance. In addition, there was little that the Russia Company could do to combat 'interlopers' who found favour with the Russian Emperor, and several did, and although lobbying to have imperial favourites of this nature thrown out of Russia was intense, it was also invariably unsuccessful. Elizabeth I and her parliament attempted to force treaties that would exclude all 'outsiders' from using the northern sea route 'discovered' by Richard Chancellor and underwritten by the Company, but it was in Russian interests to encourage a broad range of merchants and merchandise from all trading nations, which also included English interlopers. Merchants operating outside the supervision of the Company, of whatever nationality, were more likely to disregard the airy promise Elizabeth I made to other European powers, that England was not exporting her superior armaments for Russia to use in her wars against them². Russia also understood that a Company trade monopoly raised prices of imports artificially, while keeping a lid on the prices of Russian exports; and Ivan regarded the English interlopers to whom he had granted independent trading privileges "as a useful weapon to be employed against the Company when occasion arose" (T.S. Willan 1956, 130)³.

At the Russia end, the views of the merchants operating outside Company monopoly may be seen as templates for much later views expressed by the Factory about attempted Company interference in local operations. Richard Relph had been a Company apprentice but had gone into trade on his own behalf, in partnership with another 'Companyes servant', also an

² "In order the better to 'crepe into the favour of the said Emperour' the interlopers practised 'to bringe into the said countries, artificers and workemen of dyvers works of great ymportance nowe occupied and used in this realme of England'. Despite 'friendlie and gentle admonytions' to desist from their 'lewde practises and wicked devyses', interlopers continued to leave England for Russia. The Company therefore asked for a writ to prevent them from doing so, on the ground that they were not merchants 'or such whome the lawe doth permytt to departe out of theis realme'." (Lansdowne Manuscripts 16 no. 20, partially cited in T. S. Willan, 143.)

³ A new broom sent out to Russia in 1584, Robert Peacock, wrote to the Company that, "Instead of being 'cowtenanced, assisted, and furered' by the Company's servants, he found that 'they strained their wittes, practisinge by wiles, howe thy might most cunninglie deceive...theire shameless dealinges'" (Lansdowne Manuscripts 52 no. 37, partially cited in Willan, 195). His assistant, John Chappell, "had certainly engaged in private trade in Russia in the past, but the Company was never averse from employing the former poacher as gamekeeper, especially as Chappell was 'acquainted bothe with the contrey and language'" (ibid., 189).

interloper. In a letter he wrote to his partners in 1584, he complains that private traffic had become, to the most recent crop of Company servants in Russia, “so odious unto them as a toade” (ibid., 190). He advised his friends that they could trust none of the Company's servants in Russia, who were being changed regularly to avoid local contamination, and also mentioned that he had been ordered out of Russia to London, to “sweare and stare like a dyvell and to accuse all men which I knowe hathe used pryvie traffique” (ibid., 191) – an invitation he declined. “The new agent and his assistant [Peacock and Chappell] looked ‘lycker promowters [informers] than marchants, and spye so heare at the shippes that there dareth neither purser not maryner trade, no not so much as a cap cloth” (ibid.). Relph had a large stock of goods at this time for which he was trying to find a buyer but the (temporary) Company efficiency had closed his usual means of export carriage – ‘pursers and maryners’ returning to England from Russia. Nothing daunted, Relph organised a deal whereby he sent his goods back to England with an associate of Sir Jerome Bowes (an English Ambassador to Russia), who claimed licence to import into England goods bought during his stay in Russia - some of which were nevertheless confiscated by the Company on his arrival in England. This was less than a quarter of a century after English merchants settled in Russia and already a contestative discourse between the homeland and the ‘new’ world was in place. What is consistently astonishing throughout the centuries is the easily accomplished switching between the discursive worlds that each place demanded of its locals. By the end of the eighteenth century, the local merchant leaders were intimate with Russia Company members, they dined together in London and Petersburg, married each others relatives and yet, in one place, “thus” was so, and in the other, “anti-thus”. Allegiance to either Company or Factory framing of circumstances and events was largely a voluntary choice based on personal assessment of the advantages to be gained from either alliance and could change frequently in a man’s working lifetime.

By the end of the sixteenth century various, obscure refinancing operations and other machinations within the Russia Company had led to the monopoly being effectively reduced to twelve men, a “monopolie within a monopoly” (Willan 1956, 211), and dissatisfaction with the arrangement was rife. It was reorganised into a regulated company in the seventeenth century, in which

members traded, either individually or in partnerships, with their own capital. They were free to conduct their businesses as they wished, subject to the general rules laid down by the company...Its organisation existed for the protection of the supposed interests of its members, interests which were held to include the maintenance of monopoly...(ibid, 19-20).

The Commercial Treaty of 1734 between Russia and Britain (discussed in chapter three), the encouragement provided trade and industry by Catherine II through much of the later part of that century, and also the gradual establishment of local community structure, were responsible for a remarkable increase in British merchants eager to enter the Russia trade evidenced by the lengthening lists of names of those who were made free of the Company over the following century and a half (GL, 11,741, vols. 3 ff.), many of which never appeared in any further community records. In 1824 Robert Cattley wrote that the British Factory was first mentioned by that name in 1716, while still based in Archangel; that the connection between the Factory and the Company was not made until 1728; and that the Factory voluntarily became “the chief

branch in this country” of the Company only at that time (1824, 10). Cattley’s hyperbole is not to be relied upon as ‘fact’ – indeed, he erroneously denies that there had ever been a commercial treaty between Russian and England prior to 1766 in the same ‘pamphlet’ – but it was a framing which would be drawn upon later in the nineteenth century.

It is apparent that the Factory were in correspondence with the Company throughout the middle two quarters of the eighteenth century, though it was not until January 1777 that the talk of the times suggested to members of the Factory the expedience of constructing a constitution ascertaining the “general rules of their Conduct as a Body”, going on to add that “the obligations under which they naturally bond themselves be pointed out and explained and subscribed to by those who now are, and by each Individual who in time coming may be admitted as a member thereof” (GL 31,781/1, 23.1.1777)⁴. Each individual or House desiring to be a member of the Factory had to be prepared to “resign into the common stock a small portion of his natural independence for the sake of securing the greater good”; only British subjects were to be admitted members or be permitted to attend Factory meetings; and the regulations were to be recorded in a book that all future members would be obliged to read and sign before being accepted. Further regulations lay down the guidelines by which regular and special meetings could be called, and any “bye law – regulation, decision or admission” may be rendered “obligatory and effective”: requirements which amount to a two thirds majority of those at a meeting, which had to comprise two thirds of those convened at any meeting by an annually elected committee of three. The committee was to comprise the Treasurer and the two Church Wardens as had been the case since 1759.

This is not an example of Derrida’s performativity account of the creation of a ‘people’ (cited in Urban, 2001, 94) extrapolated to an organization, by which the adding of signatures to a document constitutes the establishment of the group ‘instituted’ by that document – any more than the statement of a ‘we’ in the American Declaration of Independence instantaneously instituted that ‘we’ at the moment of signing. That ‘we’ of the members of the British Factory already had a history of an exhibited consciousness of themselves as a ‘we’, particularly in dealings with the Russia Company (you) where it was exclusively and repetitively used⁵. The

⁴ The announcement of a United States of America by a self-appointed Continental Congress the previous year may have given the Factory something to think about, though internal Factory dissent seems to have helped generate the decision, because a letter from the Company a few months later expressed “great satisfaction” at the “prospect of restoration of that harmony on which your importance as the Brittish (sic) Factory chiefly depends, and which we as Members [of the Russia Company] have with infinite concern seen interrupted by some of your body” (ibid., 7.9.1777). The disharmony seems to have stemmed from disagreements over commissions and charges on exported goods, which Timothy Raikes, for example, felt should be competitive and which other houses, both local and London-based, preferred to be fixed. About three weeks after the proposed constitution had been discussed there is an entry that records that “Mr. Timothy Raikes has absolutely refused to sign the above Constitution, because he does not approve thereof. says (sic) he will bind himself to no regulations respecting Commissions, Charges, which he himself in his own Individual does not approve” (GL 31,781/1, 24.3.1877).

⁵ On the death of Samuel Swallow Esq. – “His Majesty’s Consul & *your* Agent at this place” – the Factory wrote to the Company as follows: “As the interests of the trade by this event are no longer under the immediate care of any one person *We* think it is *our* duty to assure *you* that its general concerns shall be objects of particular attention to all, till *your* pleasure with regards to the appointment of another Agent be made known. *We* beg leave further, as Persons who from *our* situation may be supposed more immediately sensible of the great importance of that office, to entreat *you* particular care in the choice of

terms of the proposed constitution, however, are all framed in the third person (plural): “the general rules of *their* conduct as a Body”, “the obligations under which *they* naturally bond themselves”, “*their* Meetings” (op. cit.). Not only does third person plural usage highlight Factory perceptions of their ‘Body’ as comprising independent individuals rather than a single entity, it simultaneously gives force to the idea of the ‘Body’ as an organization not dependent for its existence on its *immediate* members, but rather representing a disinterested institution above and outside the interests of any single individual or faction operating under its aegis. The latter is a useful fiction which resonates with widely disseminated representations of British Parliament (by it and its allies) in the nineteenth century. Such third person usage helps to accelerate, over the long term, a representation of an organization such as the Factory (or British Parliament) as standing in the same relationship to everyone who talks about it: ‘they, the Factory’ discursive items can be generated within the Factory, by Factorians, and travel outward in unchanged and acceptable form to community members whose connections with the Factory might be tenuous and not necessarily advantageous.

The signing of the Factory constitution does seem, however, to mark a new incarnation in the history of the community generated in response to the threat of fragmentation of its unity by a few insiders. The current signers, and those envisaged as future signers, created, through the conjunction of certain phrases valorized for the signs they were understood to carry⁶ with common legal practice, something more solid than perceived to exist before. The creation of a constitution and its majority acceptance set a salient boundary within which was a protectorate while beyond ‘there be dragons’. Ensuing events, and the controversy and fever they incited, indicate that in the perception of Factory members the next step in the establishment of an ‘ordered’ and independent Factory would be the acceptance and replication in circulating discourse of the new regulations. Without widespread replication of the terms and conditions, illustrated both in talk and behaviour, the creation would resemble that ‘Republic of Texas’ (currently a non-starter), which Urban (2001) discusses in contrast to that of ‘The United States of America’ which received, virtually from its inception, considerable acceleration in global talk.

The 1766 Commercial Treaty between Britain and Russia expired, according to the Factory Minutes, on April 1st 1787, in a flurry of concern among Factorians and England-based members of the Russia Company alike, and in political conditions that made its immediate renewal seem unlikely. A letter from Lord Camarthen of the Foreign Office to British Consul General Shairp in Petersburg requested that he “communicate the Termination of our Commercial Treaty with Russia to the Gentlemen of the Factory and the rest of His Majesty’s subjects in Russia as soon as possible, in order that they may adjust their concerns with the smallest delay to the present situation of the two Countries in respect to Commerce” (GL 31,781/1, 16.3.1787), though it was expected that trade would probably still flourish. The

Person to whom the charge shall be entrusted, and as *we* conceive the character of Consul necessary to give weight & efficacy to the negotiations of *your* Agent, *we* shall be happy to see both again united in one Person...” (GL 31781/1, 7.1.1776, emphasis added). They no longer endorsed the last sentiment eighty years later.

⁶ Phrases such as, “una[ni]mity and good understanding”; “common interests of all”; “jointly for the general interest”; “concurrence of a Majority” etc.

principal disadvantage to be foreseen at this stage (given that British merchants were no longer in any sort of monopolistic situation vis à vis Russian trade and were also required to pay duties like other trading nationals), was that one half of these duties would now have to be paid in Rix dollars (Reich's Dollars – Dutch currency) rather than in local specie, which meant considerable inconvenience and losses in exchange (other nationals were obliged to pay *all* duties in Rix dollars). Meanwhile, Catherine II had made the entrance into the First Guild of Russian merchants⁷ by foreigners considerably more attractive than it had been in the past and, within a few weeks of the expiry of the Treaty, the Factory and Company were shocked and alarmed that some Factorians took advantage of her encouragement and “inscribed themselves as foreign guests”, which provided them with an economic edge over their British competitors of 10 to 14 per cent (Cattley 1824, 12). On 22.5.1787 a ‘particular’ meeting by those Factory members who had not broken ranks was summoned at Mr. Cayley’s (the Factory Treasurer), to discuss the situation. Those who had declared their intention to ‘desert’ were *not* summoned and it was resolved to recommend the Factory to the protection of the Russia Company and to adopt “such Measures as *they* (the Russia Company) may deem proper to prevent the Evils *we* have cause to apprehend from such a measure” (GL 31,781/1, emphasis added). A week later a further meeting of Factorians discussed a letter which had been drafted by a Factory committee to the Consul-General, Walter Shairp, to be forwarded by him to the Company⁸, in which they wrote:

it is with regret *we* must inform you that the following Gentlemen: Mr Timothy Raikes, Mr Noah Cazalet, Mr Stephen Cattley, Mr John Cavanaugh, Mr Wm. Cramp, Mr Thos. Birch⁹ thought proper...to enter themselves in the 1st Class of St. Petersburg Burghers under the denomination of Enostrannie Gosti, that is Foreign Guests, in Order by the Payment of an annual Tax upon the Capitals *they* declared, the same as is paid by the native Burghers, to enjoy the Privileges and Advantages granted to the latter, and at the same time to avoid the additional Charges which *we* are subject to since the Expiration of the Late Treaty of Commerce...[It is impossible to see the consequences of these Gentlemen’s steps] in thus separating themselves from *our* Body...but *we* cannot help expressing *our* concern that *they* should have taken such a Resolution...as the Success [of the New Treaty] might have been facilitated by Steadiness and Unanimity in the conduct of the British Factory. (ibid., 29.5.1787, emphasis added to delineate a new group of ‘others’.)

The last sentence of the letter offers what must clearly have been a restatement of a vital principle in the operation of the British abroad, not only in Russia but everywhere that colonies of Britons, whether trading or Imperial diasporas, established themselves on foreign soil: steadiness of purpose and unanimity in the face of outside threat or contagion. It is a cultural construction which continued to receive strong metacultural approbation and acceleration for at least a further century and a half, providing a cornerstone of British practice abroad in that time, vestiges of which still circulate in ragged expatriate coagulations represented by the ‘Brits’ in Helsinki at the end of the twentieth century (Karttunen, 2000).

Simmel, discussing the specific conditions which apply to the life of a group which develops within a larger one – such as the Factory within the English community, and the

⁷ There were three Guilds. Membership was based on capital assets.

⁸ As an ‘ex’-partner of Shairps & Co., Walter Shairp had probably had a hand in that drafting

⁹ The affinal relationships between these men are discussed in the previous chapter.

English community within larger Russian worlds – makes the point that such a group will usually expect to subsume as members *all* those who fulfil the eligibility criteria for group membership. “In these cases the axiom applies, ‘Who is not for me is against me.’ And the person who ideally, as it were, belongs to the group but remains outside it, by his mere indifference, his non-affiliation, positively harms the group” (1964, 95). In this case there was the generalized harm that dissent and secession causes any body or organization, both in their own perceptions of themselves and in those of their ‘significant others’; there was the rather more specific damage that lack of unity and steadiness of purpose was perceived to jeopardise negotiations of a new Commercial Treaty; and there was the very specific complaint that the renegades could set their own commissions charges and undercut the rest of the English merchants. An oblique reference to the latter fear in a letter from the Russia Company appears to have provided reassurance that Company members would not take advantage of the cheaper commissions offered by the ‘foreign guests’, though there is no recorded follow-up.

The Russia Company responded with an unusually exhaustive list of questions regarding the nature of the Russian Guilds and the advantages and disadvantages accruing to membership. One senses the hand of the Foreign Office and strong political interest in their shaping. Among other things, the questionnaire asked if the position of ‘foreign guest’ could be reversed; what oath or allegiance to the Russian Government was required; whether the Russian Government seem to have made it an object of their attention to entice foreigners to become guests in the Russian Burghership; and whether “it has been much the practice of Foreigners of Character and Substance of Those Nations who had no Treaty to become Russian Burghers”¹⁰. The letter concluded, “I can at present only add that I must feel a very sensible Regret that a small number of Gentlemen should have suddenly taken an important Step, contrary to the Opinion of so respectable, so experienced and so numerous a Majority of their Fellow Subjects” (ibid., 13.7.1787). Answers to these questions were discussed at a Factory meeting in October, at which John Cayley Senior informed members of his having been appointed His Britannic Majesty’s Consul-General and Agent to the Russia Company on the sudden demise of Walter Shairp. The answers, as framed by the Factory, do not specifically state that those becoming ‘foreign guests’ also became Russian subjects, though a renunciation of prior national allegiance is implied. They also imply that the process may not be reversible (soon proved false), and conclude with: “That it is an object with [the Russian] Government, that Foreigners should become guests or burghers is sufficiently clear from their holding out such Terms as they imagined would be an Inducement for them to enter themselves as such” (ibid., 20.10.1787). Not apparently considered at this point but quickly becoming a source of further aggravation was that some of the English *Gosti* continued to collect that percentage of the tolls traditionally charged by British merchants on goods exported from Russia in British ships (by far the largest merchant navy operating out of Russia) which was allocated to the Factory’s Church Fund, but the taxes they were collecting remained in their own pockets¹¹.

¹⁰ There is evidence of misinformation here: the renegades had *not* become ‘Russian Burghers’ or subjects – entailing a tacit betrayal of the homeland – but ‘foreign guests’, i.e. they had only broken ranks with their local commercial colleagues, not with the British nation as a whole. The tool of talk!

¹¹ The Factory did not have the authority to deal with this infringement and it was two years before the Company came up with the solution that all Church money was to be collected from every British ship,

Meanwhile, the British Ambassador had conveyed to the Gentlemen of Factory, via Consul-General John Cayley, “the most thorough approbation of His Majesty’s Ministers of their conduct since the expiration of the Treaty of Commerce”; and it had been answered, via the same route, that the Factory was “deeply impressed with this mark of the part His Majesty’s Ministers take in our situation and I feel great Consolation in having our Conduct approved of by so High an Authority” (ibid., 6.3.1789). At about this time His Britannic Majesty recovered from an illness that had been causing concern to his subjects and a letter drafted by the Factory in congratulation delimits the boundaries of their ‘we’ under the circumstances: “Your Majesty’s loyal and Affectionate Subjects *the Clergy & Members of the British Factory* residing in St. Petersburg & Cronstadt in the Empire of Russia - Altho (sic) situated at a remote distance from our Country, *we* are alarmed at every unprosperous event that befalls it...” (ibid., 26.4.1889, emphasis added). Merchants who were no longer part of the ‘we’ of the British Factory had forfeited their right to be included as part of the ‘we’ of high profile communications from the community, such as this one¹². Six months later it is tersely recorded that

the following Houses having been written up amongst the Enostrannie Gosti, but now being no longer Burghers, and having applied to become members of the Factory again, be received.

Messrs Cattley, Prescott & Co

Mr John Cavanaugh Esq. (ibid., 1.11.1789).

There is a gap in the factory records from 1791 until 1802 but by the beginning of the nineteenth century most of those who had deserted the Factory were being written up as attending the regular meetings, though whether they were still ‘inscribed’ as foreign guests is not clear. In an ironical twist, as Robert Cattley notes:

The negotiations between the ambassador and the court, for a renewal of the treaty of commerce, which expired 13-25 March, 1807, were not attended with success; and, consequently, on the 20th June, O.S. (2d July, N.S.), 1807, the greater part of the members of the Factory became foreign guests, in compliance with the manifest of the 1st of January, 1807, intituled, “An Imperial Manifest, concerning the new rights and privileges granted to the Merchants (1824, 16-17).

They appear to have remained ‘foreign guests’ – entered “into not a full [Russian] citizenship”, and paying 1¼ per cent on capital declared above 50,000 Rs (ibid., 19) – from that time forth, because the manifesto limited operating as an ‘itinerant’ foreign trader to one year. The ‘compliance’ was close to unanimous, however, and therefore perfectly acceptable.

without any distinction as to whom it may have been addressed, by the Company Agent who would personally place it in the Church fund (ibid., 9.5.1790).

¹² Jane Austen, sketching one of her satirical caricatures in *Pride and Prejudice*, wrote: “Sir William Lucas had formerly been in trade in Meryton, where he had made a tolerable fortune, and risen to the honour of knighthood by an address to the King, during his mayoralty” (1954, 14). OED defines satire as prose or poetry “in which prevailing vices or follies are held up to ridicule.” Folly it may have been to value the right to sign an address to the King, but it was one that was clearly prevalent.

FACTORY MEMBERSHIP AS A “SOCIAL COMPACT”.

Superficially, one could argue that the merchants who acceded to the constitution instituted by the Factory in 1777 had accepted and were accelerating Rousseau’s doctrine enunciated in ‘*Le Contrat Social*’, published some fifteen years prior, that:

“Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.”

At once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains votes, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will. (www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm, book 1, emphasis in text).

But compare the wording of the Factory version enunciated in their 1777 ‘constitution’:

The object of every Factory meeting being to deliberate, determine, and act jointly for the general interest of the Trade, in subserviency to which every member will upon the whole be enabled most effectually to promote his own, it becomes necessary for each individual to resign into the common stock a small portion of his natural independence, for the sake of securing a greater good...in all points under discussion not only each House but every qualified partner of each House have a right to speak and to vote. (GL 31,781/1, 23.1.1777).

Discounting the obvious difference that Rousseau’s doctrine was aimed at producing a large-scale Republic while the Factory’s deliberations ostensibly only affected those involved in Anglo-Russian trade, the second of these two passages appears to resonate with the first and, indeed, it is certain to have been framed in the light of the discursive items produced by Rousseau and in wide circulation in Europe and North America at the time. There are, however, crucial differences in the type of agreement proposed. Rather than being under the “supreme direction of the general will” each member will be “in subserviency” to the Factory, as represented by its three-member committee¹³, in the kind of hierarchical arrangement which had a permanent place in the circulating talk of the community and the understandings that were associated with being ‘English’. On the other hand, there is no suggestion of each person putting “his person and all his power” (Rousseau), into the common pot, nor that the individual would be an indivisible part of the whole. Quite the contrary: in return for resigning “a small portion of his natural independence” (Factory Constitution) each member would be better able to promote his own interests. Independence being the “natural” state for an Englishman, it was a sacrifice to relinquish any of it and one which would only be made in a genuine trade-off for a greater (material) good. This resonates with Tönnies’ theory of *Gesellschaft* (dealing with “the artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings which superficially resembles the *Gemeinschaft* in so far as the individuals peacefully live and dwell together”) in which “[b]y means of exchange each individual disposes of value not useful to him in order to acquire an equal value

¹³ Recall the plaintive statement made by Francis Marshall, referenced by Mary Riddle and quoted towards the end of my previous chapter: “everything is arranged before a Factory Meeting & they have to vote as they are told.”

that he can use" (1955, 79). Tönnies, it must be remembered, was familiar with English merchants.

In 1777, at the signing of the constitution, Timothy Raikes and his partner James Saffree¹⁴ refused to do so because, Raikes said "he will bind himself to no regulations respecting Commissions Charges, which he himself in his own Individual does not approve" (GL 31,781/1 13.2.1777). Raikes and Saffree were back on the list of attendees at meetings three years later, in time for Timothy to defect again along with Cattley, Cazalet, Birch and the others in 1787, all of whom also gradually trickled back to the standard with only a neutral mention of their return recorded in the Minutes, despite the furore caused by their departure. So, the questions I have explored have been: what was the appeal of the Factory for the British merchant in Petersburg? Who, in fact, comprised the Factory? How central to the community and its local world was it as an institution, and how actually desirable was it to be a member? There is often a tone of self-congratulation in the Factory Minutes when there was a large turn-out for a meeting and fines were imposed for non-attendance by members who were not abroad when a meeting was held, so there is a detectable element of duty involved in being a Factorian, which the wealthy and respectable were expected to fulfil, even against possible inclination – "He who is not for me is against me."

It is clear that attending Factory meetings gave Factorians insider knowledge of local trading conditions that affected them, and provided them a forum in which to raise issues of concern with some degree of likelihood that their combined influence would bring the required pressure to bear on whichever institution was causing them grief. Analysis and tabulation of data from a variety of sources¹⁵ produce incontrovertible evidence that merchant houses and individuals who were members of the Factory had the highest cash turnovers of all the English merchants trading out of St. Petersburg (see Table 3, 230-1). However, there is not quite the simple causal connection between Factory membership and generation of wealth that this would indicate. In fact, it is likely that the connection between wealth and Factory membership worked more directly the other way. Membership was *expected* of the wealthy, rather than producing the wealth, though the respectable profile to which Factory membership contributed generated trust in potential trading partners. In mercantile communities, wealth generally equates with prominent social status for complicated reasons also involving the putative probity and self-discipline of the successful merchant¹⁶, and membership of the Factory was limited to those who

¹⁴ Saffree died in 1781 and Raikes did not take another partner, though one can assume he retained an interest in the welfare of Saffree's widow and two daughters, one of whom married future Consul-General Sir Daniel Bayley in 1790, with Raikes as a witness – evidence that internecine Factory disagreement did not notably spill over into wider community practice.

¹⁵ These sources include the Factory Minutes which list attendees at each meeting; Russia Company Minutes, which indicate those who were Factory members; the Church Registers and any other sources which illuminate consanguineal and affinal relationships and spiritual kin (witnesses and sponsors to marriages and baptisms); and the figures produced by the Russian College of Commerce in 1797, cited in Tooke, Vol. III, 1801 pp. 655-661, which detail the amount of goods imported and exported by over 200 merchant houses of different nationalities whose turnover was sufficiently significant to be recognised.

¹⁶ See, for example, Chris Gregory's analysis of Jain merchants in late 20th-century Kondagaon: "The fact is that outright plunder is not profitable in the long run. Money making of a mercantile kind, then, must have its own morality if it is to survive. This morality is closely tied up with the prestige of the family and the need to maintain appearances" (1997, 187).

satisfied these criteria at about the time these figures were produced. It will be remembered that a new member had to be proposed by at least three established members, which meant that membership could be limited to those who were *generally* approved because sponsorship of the unworthy provoked hostility. Also apparent is the degree to which marriage connections were divided along similar lines as wealth, with the exception of members of the oldest (and wealthiest) companies (see Table 3, following page). Most of the main partners of the two companies with the greatest turnover at the beginning of the nineteenth century – Paris, Warre, Thomson, Peters and Bonar – did not marry in Petersburg, hence their spouse’s connections are unknown, though Thomson and Bonar both had their families with them, according to the list of English residents in Petersburg 1782-3 in the Church Register for that year. Mr. Warre produced a ‘natural son’, Thomas, who was baptised in 1799 in the only example in over two centuries and more than 10,000 Register entries of an illegitimate child being listed under the father’s name, with no reference at all to the mother. Mr. Warre could apparently get away with publicizing his indiscretions and though Mr. Warre had an English butler, there was no Mrs. Warre resident in Petersburg.

Notably, though all but the Harveys of these two biggest early companies seem to have based themselves in England during the nineteenth century (in that the names do not reappear in the Church Registers after the trade hiatus caused by the Tilsit Agreement of 1807), they do appear throughout the century as Governors and members of the Courts of the Russia Company. They had made their fortunes, and the local Anglo-Russian world was ever an incipient one compared to the rewards of power and recognition that their wealth and status would guarantee them in England. Henceforth, though various lists still record their names, such as the list of signatures appended to the Address to George IV on the occasion of his coronation in 1821, their marriages, baptisms and funerals took place outside the community. Two generations of Thornton women married the 6th and 8th Earls of Leven and Melville, respectively; John Hubbard’s son married the daughter of the 8th Lord Napier. The Treasurers of the Factory over the next half century, however, were largely drawn from the companies (apart from the top two) with the greatest turnover at the beginning of the century, though gradually changes crept in as some families disappeared or their female lines were absorbed, and their places were taken by others¹⁷. These were the families whose interactions and marriages helped forge the paths along which the talk of the community would pass, slowly shaping a world which looked and felt as meaning-full as the homeland.

In this context it is also notable that of the 29 houses or merchants who belonged to the Factory around the turn of the eighteenth century, all but three were predominately engaged in exporting Russian goods to Britain, many almost exclusively (see Table 3). Of the remaining 27, 17 were predominately or exclusively importers. The wealthiest firms knew British markets and most had head offices in the City of London, managed by senior family members or connections who sat on the Court of Assistants of the Russia Company; the talk of the Factory with regards trading matters focused almost exclusively on problems connected with export – the bracking or quality control of Russian goods prior to shipping; the “unfounded” complaints

¹⁷ John Westley, who marks the lowest earner at this time to later become a Treasurer, did so on the strength of joining Shairps and Co. as a partner by 1815.

Merchant earnings 1799.	Rouble Turnover	Factory Member	% of turnover in exports
Paris, Warre, Harvey & co	4,131,249	■	73%
Thomson, Peters, Bonar & co	3,858,509	■	82%
Cattleys, Prescott & co	1,701,407	■	96%
Thornton, Smalley, Bayley & co	1,681,601	■	99%
Thornton & Cayley	1,076,259	■	94%
Shairps & co	966,447	■	77%
Carr & co	960,280	■	99%
Anderson, Brown & Moberly	933,408	■	60%
Jones & co	776,609	■	78%
Bayley, Daniel	737,921	■	100%
Smith, E.J. & co	716,790	■	83%
Glen & co	597,747	■	90%
Bulkeley, John M.	538,611	■	93%
Porter, Brown, Wilson & co	525,254	■	81%
Birch, George	500,505	■	89%
Busk Brothers	497,969	■	72%
Rogers & co	495,885	■	42%
Raikes, Timothy	481,836	■	79%
Venning, William & George	421,647	■	99%
Barwick, William	376,901		58%
Whishaw & Henley	311,526	■	49%
Scougal, George	279,094	■	76%
Barnes, John Samuel	226,188	■	100%
Cavanaugh & co	202,190	■	30%
Forsyth, David	151,239	■	84%
Bond & Littledale	141,945	■	94%
Cox & co	140,958		96%
Higginbotham, John	138,250	■	100%
Newel, Robert	130,360		14%
Vernon, Thomas	125,030		92%
Hamilton, Archibald	123,652		55%
Whitaker, James	99,779		10%
Pipping, Joseph	94,759		1%
Henley, Samuel	92,717		0%
Forrester, Robert	86,688	■	61%

Auld, Robert	81,153		95%
Gilmore & co	74,555		98%
Gardner, Francis	65,890	■	100%
Westley, John	52,523	■	82%
Gilmore, Peter	47,878		80%
Wagnon, Henry	38,213		0%
Drury, Anthony	31,013		1%
Little, James	25,942		98%
Borall, Joseph	17,824		0%
Pickersgill & co	16,135		0%
Cramer, Benedict	15,636		2%
Lange Brothers	13,619		0%
Mackintosh, John	13,600		33%
Chambers, Anthony	11,960		72%
Mercer, Thomas	11,086		0%
Smith, Thomas	10,452		100%
Wilkins, Caleb	9,191		0%
Holliday, John	8,332		0%
Swan, Thomas	8,234		18%
Hawkesford, Samuel	7,437		0%
Anglo-Russian trade 1797	25,155,637		
Total Russian trade 1797	51,816,970		

Table 3: The turnover, factory membership and percentage of export trade of the English merchants listed by the Russian College of Commerce in 1797. (Data is drawn from Tooke, 1799 and GL 31,781/1 & 2, GL 31,782).

from England about commodities such as tallow and flax; possible means to prevent “Principals in England throwing goods on the hands of the Agents here” when fluctuations in the exchange rate pushed up a quoted price, and so on (GL 31,781/2). The value of the goods which Russia imported from England was considerably lower than that of goods moving in the other direction as I have noted earlier: the Hubbard ships brought lead and tin from Cornwall to Russia in the early part of the century, though after 1842, when Britain relaxed the embargo on exporting machinery used in the textile trade, there was more scope for importing British goods to Russia because the demand for British technology in Russia’s burgeoning industrial revolution was insatiable (LRA1091/8). Luxury goods which the Russian nobility required – spices, fine fabrics, coffee, silverware, china, fashion – were fiddly and handled in small volumes. The smaller English merchants lacked the large scale organization required to shift Russian imports on arrival in Britain to destinations like the Admiralty – or onwards around the globe – necessitating a focus on goods which could be shipped from England to the order of Petersburg-

based traders.

The Church Registers for the community provide a less than dependable source of data, because families who have no primary entries, that is, no recorded marriages or baptisms, nonetheless keep reappearing throughout the century as witnesses or sponsors, so presumably kept marrying and reproducing elsewhere while remaining sufficiently active community members to be asked to participate in the rituals of others. However, the families represented by the non-Factory, lower earning names in Table 3 had no recorded contact as spouses, witnesses or sponsors to any of the wealthier Factory families throughout the nineteenth century with the exception of the Hamiltons who married into the Birch, Cazalet and Anderson families and sponsored a Gwyer baby¹⁸; a Jane Little who married Charles Carr in 1865 and an Elizabeth Drury who married Octavius Hill in 1857¹⁹. There was notable exchange of services and names between the Littles and the Drurys. The rest of the names on Table 3 had haphazard, unpatterned marriage, sponsorship and baptism partnerships over the ensuing century with frequent marriages recorded to ‘outsiders’ from other churches and national origin – which often marked the last Register entry for the person concerned. There appears to have been a concrete dividing line between the two strata which would have severely impeded the passage of discursive artefacts. The world of the upper stratum was being bounded and scoured constantly by its own talk; that of the lower stratum was, on the evidence, considerably more porous and relaxed²⁰. None of the lower stratum was ever influential in the way that the families of Cattley, Anderson, Moberly, Prescott, Harvey, Carr, Birch, Whishaw, Hubbard and the late joiner, Blessig were – all of whom continued to run the Factory (and, through it, community services), and intermarry throughout the nineteenth century²¹. Over the ensuing years the Factory Treasurers (Senior Church Wardens by default) present a carousel of names that comprised representatives of the most influential local families, almost all of whom could trace affinal and/or consanguineal connections with each other of fewer than three links (see Diagram 3, page 234).

Another marked feature of successful British trading practice was the incorporation of most of the top earners. Out of 194 merchants (or merchant houses) listed by the College of Commerce in 1797, only 55 or approximately 28% were English (all were limited to citizens of a single nation); yet 17 of the English houses had a turnover of approximately 500,000 Rs per year or more, compared to only 10 of other nationalities. Of these 17 English operations, only three were in the hands of a single individual whereas, apart from the English, there were only

¹⁸ The Hamiltons were an aristocratic British family, so this comes as no surprise.

¹⁹ Hills do not appear on the College of Commerce list in 1797, though James was already in residence in 1782. Perhaps he was trading with Whishaw and Henley, as his son went on to marry William Whishaw’s daughter in 1814 and produce the Octavius who married Elizabeth Drury. Hills were never Factory Treasurers, but they exerted a high degree of connectivity between many families who were. The Drurys, on the other hand, had first come to Russia at the time of Peter the Great and if they were not very successful merchants, they always had a General or two in the family, which stood in their favour.

²⁰ By about 1870, one branch of the Pickersgills, for example, lived above Walter Bray in Chekooshi – the factory quarter of V.O. in a milieu where Walter recalls: “we had goose on Xmas Day and, the next day, Mrs. Bill got hold of the remains; and I watched her, her mouth and fingers greasy, going for the pickings” (LRA 1182, 5). Mary would have refused to notice such behaviour, let alone record it.

²¹ It is possible that Factory membership reflected the class(es) that would have been eligible to vote in England during the course of the century. This point raises itself in the case studies in the next chapter.

five other partnerships or companies operated by merchants of standing in Petersburg. Of the other 139 merchants of other nationalities listed by the College of Commerce in 1797, ten had annual turnovers of in excess of 500,000 Rs, of whom eight were operating as individuals, though these all had Germanic names and were, presumably, members of an organization referred to by the Factory as “the German merchants”, which also had a Committee and a Burgermeister (GL 31,781/1)²². This kind of turnover in the hands of a single individual presumably represents more in actual profit than that earned by most single members of even the wealthiest Factory partnerships²³, but incorporation provided the safety net of considerable access to investment capital. There is not much data on the subject but each company or merchant seemed to specialise – the Whishaws in flax, the Hubbards in tallow and grain for example²⁴ – and fluidity of cash flow would have been vital in keeping new competition at bay. It also must be remembered that this was international trade and the sheer bulk of goods required for export would have needed considerable investment. The larger the consignment, the cheaper the price and the less likely that a small merchant could compete. Various sources, including Jim Whishaw (1935, 139) and William Hubbard also note the lengthy periods of time that money was tied up in the Russia trade:

...the Hubbards would lay out their capital in the autumn of each year in buying goods and storing them or advancing a large part of the cost to Russian merchants for delivering in the spring; in either case their money was locked up in goods eight or nine months before they could be shipped and nearly a year might elapse before payment was due in London (LRA 1091/8).

Partnerships increased the possibility of borrowing capital for such long term investment. In addition to the likelihood that partners in a firm would cement their economic relationship by the legal bonds and contracts which accompanied a marriage to one of the daughters or sisters of another partner, marriages were also frequent between the families of different firms, which would have further broadened the range of possible sources of borrowed capital (see Diagram 3, following page).

²² One of the remaining two was a father/son concern and the second was Blessig and Kummell. As I have noted, the Blessigs became a prominent ‘English’ family in the latter half of the nineteenth century, intermarrying with the ‘top’ English families and putting in several periods as Factory Treasurers. The two largest earners, Bartelink and Shumacher, both provided wives for English merchants over the years, as did the Mollwo, Severin and Richter families, who produced turnovers of 748,165 Rs, 797,074 Rs and 904,626 Rs respectively.

²³ An unknown factor, however, is the amount of profit accruing to the larger companies from trading interests in other parts of the globe, and that made by ‘selling on’ Russian goods to other destinations after British landfall.

²⁴ The Hubbards also had a valuable timber concession in Onega in the middle of the century and a lumber business in Joensuu, Finland, in the latter part of the century which they eventually sold to Messrs. Gutzeit.

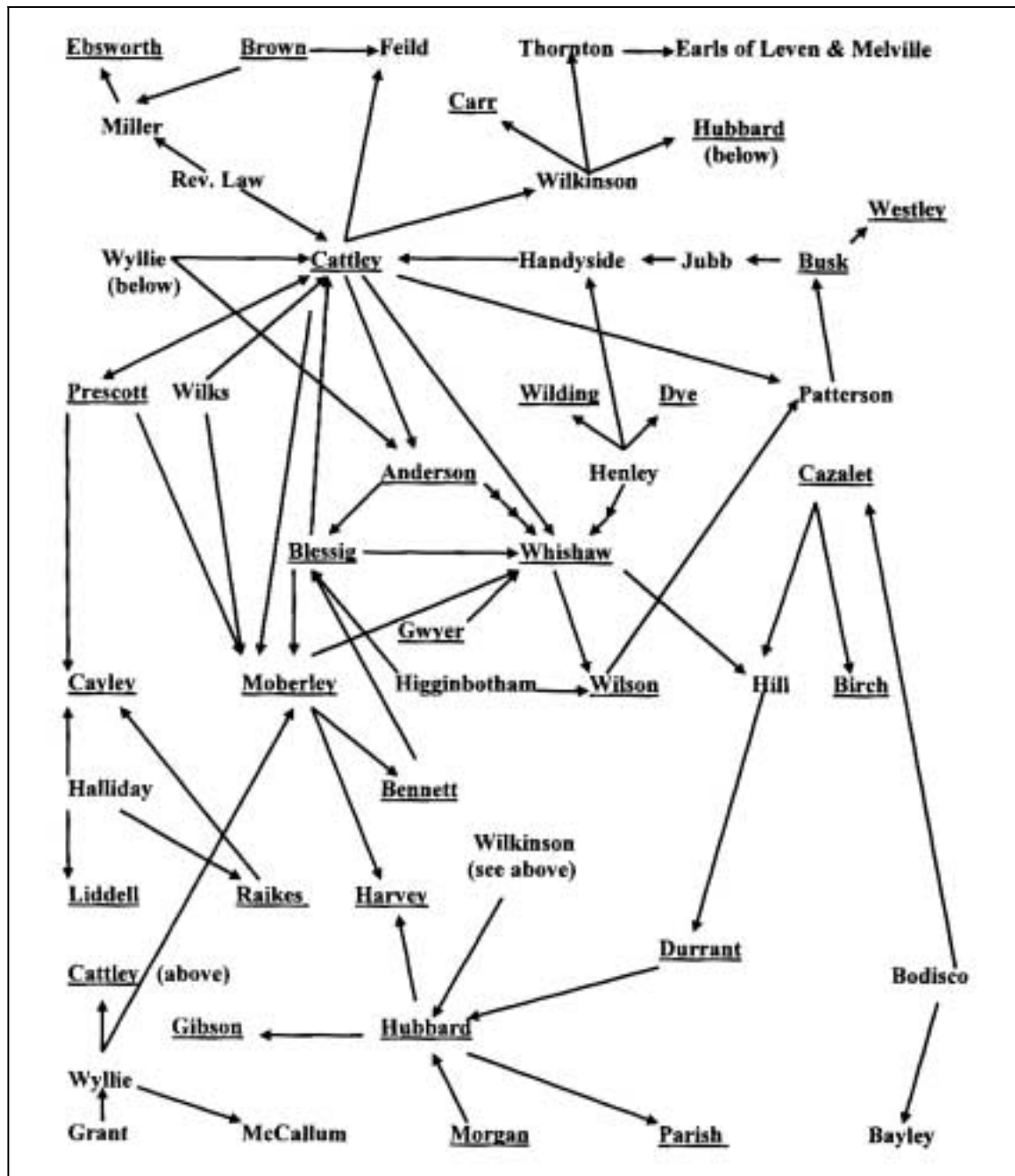


Diagram 3: Simplified kin connections between influential community families; underlined names representing families which produced factory treasurers, arrows representing the movement of women.

The economic advantages to be gained by being part of a carefully vetted, high status organization in a mercantile community of this kind were not therefore, negligible, though they were indirect. But there was more to Factory activities than the kind circumscribed by the search for profit. Though relinquishing a measure of independence was framed as an exchange made for the purposes of greater profit for all, it would be unreasonably deterministic to suggest that the possibility of greater *material* good was the only centripetal force acting on those in Factory

purlieus. It cost 100 Rs to become a member in the first instance and Factorians were obliged to contribute to the support of the British destitute in the shape of the Poor's Fund (and occasionally a percentage of their profits when extraordinary sums were required)²⁵, and also had to conform to Factory regulations concerning their commissions (a tiny part of which contributed to the Church fund), which tied their hands in ways antithetical to mercantile competition. Timothy Raikes was not alone in his dislike of interference in his business practices. It is notable, however, that even the 'renegades' who threatened to fracture Factory unity by their departure to the First Guild of Russian merchants in 1787, did not sever connection with broader community praxis.

The same year, one of the defectors, Noah Cazalet, buried his first wife Charlotte and married his second, Maria Bodisco²⁶, both rituals being conducted according to the rites of the Petersburg English Church ("the Chapel of the British Factory"), and he also had various children baptised (and occasionally buried) during his period of estrangement from the Factory. John Cavanaugh was a witness at the wedding of his daughter Elizabeth to William Cayley (son of the Consul-General/Company Agent) in 1792 and Timothy Raikes witnessed the wedding of William's brother, John Cayley Junior, the same year. Seven years later, after the death of his first wife, John Cayley Junior actually married Timothy Raikes' daughter, Harriet. By then the strays were back in the fold and the leaky breach in the surrounding wall had been plugged and reinforced by marriage. Certainly, the renegades and those of their descendants who remained in Russia became enthusiastic Factory members from that time forward, with Cattleys, Birches, Cazalets and Raikes' all serving as Factory Treasurers and Churchwardens on more than one occasion during the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly the conviviality and privileged meeting place of Factory foregathering also contributed to its appeal, but, perhaps most importantly, membership allowed individuals in the upper stratum to exercise their growing perceptions of their right, as part of a class which was emerging as powerful political force in England at the time, to control their social environment. As I have elsewhere noted, they were excluded both by local conditions and inclination from participation in the political world of their hosts, and they made do, once again, with the material to hand.

²⁵ These sums were based on a percentage of the duties on imports and exports each house paid the College of Commerce (GL 31,781/1, 13.4.1783), but most of the money was actually stored in investments which could be called upon for almost any 'unanimously agreed' project. The sum amassed was considerable.

²⁶ Maria was the sister-in-law of the wives of William Whishaw and Francis Gardner, and the aunt of the wives of John Bulkely and Sir Edward Bayley (brother to a slightly later Consul-General, Sir John Bayley).

CHAPTER NINE.

CONFLICT AND HEGEMONY: THE DISCURSIVE DEPLOYMENT OF VALORIZED SIGNS.

DEPLOYING THE CHURCH AS A SECULAR WEAPON.

Moreover the Church has always been an essential part of parish life...it gave the parish its existence in the first place and unified at least one aspect of its life. Baptism, marriage, burials, the payment of tithes, moduses and Easter dues, the election of churchwardens – in all these things the people belonged to Gosforth Church and through her, to one another. (R. M. Williams 1969, 165.)

In 1823 an Act was passed in British Parliament concerning marriages that had taken place among British subjects in St. Petersburg since “the British Factory at *St Petersburg* was, by the Manifesto of the Emperor of *Russia*, declared to be abolished from and after the Twentieth Day of June in the Year One thousand eighthundred (sic) and seven” (GL 11,749, 571, emphasis in text). The new Act went on to declare that the marriages which had been solemnized since 1807 “by the Chaplain of the Russia Company in the Chapel of the said Company” were as “good and valid in Law” as if solemnized before “the Abolition of the said Factory” (ibid.). This tacit acceptance by British Parliament in 1823 that the British Factory at St. Petersburg had not existed since the Imperial Manifesto of 1807, probably seemed particularly harsh in that the Factory regarded themselves as attaining a hundred years of age in 1823 and, defiantly, there was still talk in November of “an entertainment proposed to be given in celebration of the Centenary Existence of the Factory” (GL 31781/2). Obviously, Factorians did not share the opinion of British Parliament that they belonged to a defunct organization; as far as they were concerned, the British Factory was very much alive.

In May 1824, Robert Cattley, who had not been idle in the meanwhile, wrote to his “dear brother William” (Moberly, to whose sister Robert Cattley was married), troubling him with a commission “and one which will perhaps make you smile. It is one, however, which is concerning a matter that is considered of consequence by many of us Factorians...” (LRA 1406). Cattley went on to assume that his brother (-in-law) must have seen the Act of British Parliament of the previous June “concerning marriages at St. Petersburg, the very title of which (oh horrible) abolishes the Factory – with one stroke of the pen” (ibid.). Insisting that the body of the Act contained statements not founded on fact, Cattley confided to Moberly that he had “ventured to write a little historical sketch of the history of the Factory” which he was sending with his letter: “have it printed privately and for private circulation only...All this is entirely entre nous. I wish to do good if I can, but should be extremely grieved were my name to appear as writer, a title to which I have no pretensions” (ibid.). Despite his avowed desire for anonymity (which he repeated three times in the course of the letter), one copy was to be sent to the Governor of the Russia Company, one to each of the members of the Court of Assistants, and a further eighty were to be sent back to Russia where “I mean to distribute them among my neighbours and fellow Factorians” (ibid.). What he probably meant was that he did not mind it informally getting about that he was connected, but that he was ready to deny the connection should trouble ensue. The stained and dusty little booklet now in my possession has no sign of

his authorship beyond a certain familiar tone in his phraseology.

Copies of parts of the pamphlet have been retained in the Russia Company boxes of 'miscellaneous documents' (GL 11,749, 9) and are quite unequivocally attributed to Robert Cattley, so his desired anonymity had not been sustained¹. The parts retained refer principally to the rights of the Factory "proved by reference to their records & even to the Russia Company Charter" to maintain and order their Church Establishment by levying Port charges on British ships and the goods exported in them. Cattley also drew attention to the fact that the Factory continued to raise its Poor's Fund by a tax levied on the amount of duties paid by each merchant house to the local authorities. The 'pamphlett' goes on to say:

It has been shewn that the Factory existed as an organised body in 1718 [this is the only reference to this date, while 1723 was in wide circulation]; the Factors having united for the purpose of regulating the charges on Goods and ships, chiefly in order to raise the necessary funds for their Church Establishments, which was done entirely independent of the Russia Company, and without any reference to them. On examining the records it will be seen that such was the original object of their existing as a body, and from that period up to the present day, no change has taken place in the nature and object of their institutions... (1824, 31-2).

Cattley admits that the Russia Company had offered considerable pecuniary assistance in both purchasing and rebuilding the Church building in 1753, that they had provided a further £4,000 in 1813 towards repairs required after the long neglect dating from the Tilsit Agreement in 1807, and that the Company had procured a grant in the same year of £5,000 from British Parliament to the same ends: "With that munificent assistance, the Factory have enlarged the Chapel, Chaplain's residence, Library and other Offices, and furnished them in a manner which reflects honour on the British nation" (*ibid.*, 34). Cattley, however, asserted that "the property in the Church Buildings is their [the Factory's] own and the right of electing a Chaplain to perform service in their Chapel rests with them, and has been shewn most clearly, by the extracts which I have made from the Factory Records" (*ibid.*, 38). Although the Russia Company had disputed those rights at the end of the eighteenth century, "the circumstance, although much to be regretted in many other respects, was beneficial to the Factory in a material one; for it had the effect of substantiating those rights, and rendering them, 'like gold, better for the proof'" (*ibid.*, 38-9). This is a statement which brilliantly illuminates certain aspects of this community's praxis: contestation has the material benefit of substantiating the truth claim of the 'winner' as will be demonstrated in the case studies in chapter ten; the 'winner' is often only equivocally so (as in this particular case, as I will describe), but may be confirmed as such by adroit reinterpretation of events; and even gold (an ultimate 'good') is better for being proved.

One can also track the repeated shaping of circumstance connected with ownership and administration of the Church via the ownership discourse that threads its way through the Church Registers, specifically in the tiny snippet of talk concerning the name by which the Church would be recognised. Moscow records are kept from 1706 but in 1723 Thomas Consett,

¹ There was also a reference to his project in the Factory Minutes (29.12.1824) when it was noted that Robert Cattley's 'Pamphlet' entitled, 'Sketch Drawn from the Records of the British Factory at St. Petersburg' had been read and it was resolved that thanks should be offered the author (GL31,781/2).

Minister, writes:

Trade, by order of his Imperial Majesty of Russia, being removed from Archangel and Mosco to St. Petersburg, and the Factory obliged to repair thither, I also left Mosco the 8th of June and arrived with my wife at St. Petersburg the 23rd of the said month, where, by favour of the British Factory, I am settled as *their* Minister (GL 11,192 B, emphasis added).

At this stage the Register states that it is a record of “all the Christenings, Marriages and Burials in the English Congregation at St. Petersburg.” In 1763 this had become “the British Congregation at St. Petersburg”. The Register notes that the Reverend William Tooke was “elected” 3.3.1774, rather than appointed by the Russia Company². The Church Register records that “the Gentlemen of the Factory” had permitted Tooke and his replacement, Percival, to take several stretches of leave during their terms as Chaplain, though on Percival's death in 1798 it is stated that “the Revd. L. K. Pitt was recommended by the British Factory to the Russia Company to succeed [Percival] in the office of Chaplain and resumed the Ministerial Offices till the final decision of the Russia Company could be known” (ibid.), a statement that appears to contain tacit submission to Russia Company authority. It was not meant to be taken at face value, however. This entry appeared between 21.5 and 5.6.1798, but in September of that year there is the sour postscript: “The Russia Company, having thought fit totally to neglect the recommendation of the British Factory, *they* [the Factory] resolved to act on the original and long established system and the Revd. London King Pitt was appointed *their* Chaplain on the 10th day of September 1799” (ibid., emphasis added). ‘Influence’ was all about rights of patronage at the time, and to be as jealously guarded as rights to property. There is a gap in the Factory records for the latter part of the 1790s, but the Minutes of 1802 indicate that the controversy was still active three years later. There it is stated that “the Factory consider the appointment of a Chaplain to *them*, as unconnected with the rights of the Russia Company [and] that the Factory having long ago elected the Reverend Mr Pitt to *their* chaplain, there is no necessity to apply to the Governor and Court of Assistants to appoint him” (GL 31781/2, 25.9.1802, emphasis added).

In the first of these three extracts (taken from the Church Register), in the apparent confidence that the Factory's ‘client’ would be endorsed, there is an absence of possessive pronouns: “in the office of Chaplain” being a neutral designation of Spencer's future position. In the following two, one extracted from the Register, one from the Factory Minutes, possessive pronouns appear³. Ownership equals private and inalienable rights over whatever is owned, to

² The same procedure took place with regards applicants to other jobs in the Factory's beneficence: various names were put forward by various Factory members, a vote was taken and a nearly unanimous result generally reached, apparently based more on the standing of the sponsor than the volunteer, though there is one occasion when a high status sponsor was reprimanded for putting forward the name of someone unsuitable for the post on offer.

³ Predictably, the possessive pronouns are in the third person. This is the package that gets handed around. In all the recorded cases of ‘addresses’ to persons of note, whether of commiseration or congratulation, the pronouns are in the first person plural; in requests for assistance when the Factory is feeling the pinch, the pronouns are also in the first person plural. When the Factory demands, or admonishes, or refuses requests, it presents itself as a third person (though plural), ‘Body’ whose rights the writers may appear to defend in the interests of impartial justice.

the degree which the owned item permits, based on circulating definitions of the item being owned (e.g. the meanings inherent in “my wife” and “my husband” depended more on the nature of the noun than the pronoun, and are also affected by the personalities and character of the individuals involved). Conversely, whoever lays the most convincing claim to such rights may also lay claim to usage of a possessive pronoun in relation to it. The ownership implied when a possessive pronoun described both real and moveable types of property was one that gave the owner absolute and undivided rights to do with it as he pleased and to reap all benefits that possession might offer⁴. This much is made clear by the metacultural approbation of the connection between claims of ownership of the Church and the rights of absolute control over its offices and facilities. In that, at least, both parties to the contention agreed wholeheartedly – there was nothing to contest without that underlying ‘truth’.

The Factory’s defiant refusal to accept the Company’s candidate is made considerably the more remarkable by virtue of the fact that the Russia Company normally paid at least half the salaries of the Church of England Chaplains in Russia and actually continued to pay their own candidate’s salary in full in England until February 1813, while the Factory must have paid the whole Petersburg stipend themselves. Factorians were not prone to acceding to unnecessary economic drains, so they clearly felt very strongly on the subject. The pattern of the ‘Gentlemen of the Factory’ granting regular leave to their Chaplain continued, according to the Register; the temporary replacements, if the surnames are anything to go on, usually being relatives of prominent community members. The slightly ludicrous situation of the dual Chaplains continued until 1813 because Cattley records (in 1824), that the “unfortunate differences between the two bodies in 1798, which lasted for fifteen years” ended “when, to the great satisfaction of all parties, the Russia Company confirmed the Factory’s choice of a Chaplain, and perfect harmony was restored between them” (GL 11,749, 9). The ‘Factory’s choice’ referred to the Revd. Dr. Pitt and Russia Company Minutes of January 1813 indicate that the members of the Company had reached the conclusion that confirming him in the role he had played for fifteen years was “the only effectual means of putting an end to the misunderstanding that has so long existed” (GL 11,741/12, 29.1.1813). They offered their own candidate a golden handshake and he resigned his claim to the Petersburg Chaplaincy which he had never in practice held.

Pitt died in April 1813 (one suspects that the Russia Company knew of his failing health when they finally agreed to endorse him), and the Anglican clergyman from Moscow, Dr Beresford – obviously evacuated from the old capital on the appearance of Napoleon in the neighbourhood – took over as temporary Chaplain. In the Factory Minutes of 25.4.1813 (the first documented meeting since 1807), wherein Pitt’s demise is recorded along with the resolve to defray the costs of his funeral (widow permitting), it is also resolved “that a letter be written

⁴ In terms of the ‘world’ as created by community members, the actual facts are more or less irrelevant, and, in any case, hard to establish. However several sources state that when Count Sheremetieff’s house was bought in 1753 – and exactly who supplied the cash is a moot point, though at least a third was apparently provided by the Russia Company – it was registered in the name of the then British Consul, Baron Wolff. On his death, it was proposed to register the property in the name of the British monarch. Perhaps the merchants foresaw possible confiscation in times of war, or perhaps other obstacles intervened, but in 1761 “there is a minute of its having been transferred in the city books to the name of the Governor and Court of Assistants of the Russia Company” (Cattley 1824, 10).

by the Church Wardens to the Consul expressing the Factory's desire that the Russia Company would appoint a Proper Person to succeed Dr. Pitt" (GL 31,781/2). One also suspects this conciliatory request was connected with the moiety the Company paid towards the Chaplain's salary because three months later the Factory records its satisfaction and gratitude on the Company resuming this assistance – which did not prevent it being noted in the Church Register that "The Reverend Nicholas Spencer A.M. of Exeter College Oxford, Vicar of Halse in Somersetshire, and Domestic chaplain to Earl Spencer, was elected *Chaplain to the British Factory* at St. Petersburg" in July 1813, commencing official duties in March 1814 (GL 11,192 B, emphasis added). No longer was the spiritual guide to the Anglican community denominated 'Chaplain to the English Congregation', or even the British one: the local voice of the Lord spoke to his congregation by virtue of his election by the local association of British merchants. From that point on, the annual statements testifying to the veracity and accuracy of that year's copy of the Register were always signed by the Consul-General, the Chaplain, and the Treasurer and Church Wardens of the 'British Factory Chapel at St. Petersburg'.

In 1818 Spencer resigned as Chaplain for reasons unspecified, though he refused the "Offer of a Piece of Plate...which answer and my motives stand recorded" in the Factory Books, "unaltered & unrepeated by me" (GL 11,192 B). Now this obvious contretemps is another mystery, stemming from some type of disagreement which did *not* stand recorded in the Factory Books, having, presumably, been excised for reasons of respectability in a move that replicates Jim Whishaw's request that Arthur Riddle withdraw the bitter letter he wrote to the Factory after his dismissal 84 years later. What *is* recorded is that the Factory had agreed with Spencer to destroy his previous letter, "wishing to be on friendly Terms with their Chaplain" (GL 31,781/2) and Spencer still titled himself, despite his refusal of their proffered gift of silverware, "Chaplain to the British Factory" when recording his resignation. Spencer was replaced briefly by John Randolph before Edward Law was 'elected' in 1819, to remain in the community for the next forty five years, to marry his daughters to a Cattley, a Miller, a Gisiko (major banking family) and a Robinson respectively, and to leave his son, a daughter and four of his grandchildren in the Smolenski cemetery on Vassili Ostrof.

There is no doubt that the Petersburg Anglican Church Establishment possessed iconic secular status at least in the eyes of the merchant members of the congregation. A letter recorded in the Factory Minutes Book 9.5.1818 thanks the Governor and the Court of Assistants of the Russia Company "for the great Attention & Care which they have bestowed on an Object, which is of so much Consequence to the Comfort and Respectability of the British Community at St. Petersburg" (GL 31781/2). This was after the grants by Parliament and the Company in 1805 had been held for a decade of diplomatic and economic insecurity (presumably at advantageous interest), and then expended on full church renovation *pace* "Chevalier Quarenghi's new drawings for the Front & for the fitting up of the interior" (*ibid.*)⁵. Flying against their usual practice of stinginess it is recorded that in February 1817 the Factory borrowed money from some of their members to complete the improvements: ten thousand roubles each from Thomson, Bonar & Co., Thornton, Cayley & Co., Cattley, Forrester & Co.

⁵ Quarenghi was responsible for many of the most glorious of Petersburg buildings and had also, incidentally, expressed his intention of permanently leaving Petersburg some 25 years prior (Parkinson 1971).

and James Liddell & Co. (the passing of two decades had refigured alliances and introduced some new names). The discarded furniture from the Petersburg Church was handed down to the Anglican Church being built in Cronstadt. On 5.6.1824 it was 'resolved':

That the Factory, being thoroughly convinced that the support of our Church Establishment is the strongest bond of union amongst the British Subjects in this Empire, has witnessed with the most heartfelt satisfaction the measures adopted on the opening of the Cronstadt Church whereby the celebration of that event was conducted in a manner most congenial to the feelings of Englishmen, and calculated to ensure the respect and good-will of the Authorities and Natives of this Empire, and the Factory takes the earliest opportunity of offering to Her Majesty's Consul General Sir Daniel Bayley and to Her Majesty's Vice Consul in Cronstadt John Booker Esq. its sincere thanks for the Zeal, Kindness and Hospitality which they displayed on that occasion (ibid.).

This resolution adopts and accelerates Cattley's phraseology in his pamphlet, written some weeks earlier, though not yet published:

the church establishment has always been the bond of union in the Factory; and there is not a doubt but that their respectability in the eyes of the government of this country, and of all classes of the community, has been materially heightened, by the manner in which that establishment has invariably been conducted (1824, 7).

Not only can we see here the sense of real property ownership which the Factory and its members felt towards their House of God, but also a restatement of perceptions that respectability was a value within the community of an almost spiritual order: "an Object, which is of so much Consequence to the Comfort and Respectability of the British Community at St. Petersburg" (9.5.1818), resonates with: "the celebration of that event was conducted in a manner most congenial to the feelings of Englishmen, and calculated to ensure the respect and good-will of the Authorities and Natives of this Empire", and Cattley's references to the Factory's respectability in the eyes of the Russian government and people, written six years later. A handsome, well-appointed building in a prime location, encompassing ritual practices of an impressive, yet controlled and ordered nature, was seen as the most salient way by which the influential members of the community could demonstrate both their own 'respectability', and that of the sphere they dominated. Within the framework of British practice, a successful assertion of legal ownership of the physical structure was the surest way of attaining this. It gave the owners control over the appearance and condition of the building, over its officiating Chaplain (which meant they could dictate the type of Anglicanism to be practiced under its roof), and over who could use facilities such as its subsidised accommodation, meeting rooms and library⁶, which enabled the public statement, 'they are not one of us' to be made about

⁶ It was decided, at the conclusion of the Church's extensive renovations in 1818, that "British residents, although not Members of the Factory [were] eligible to become Subscribers to the Circulating Library and to the Reading Room [only] on being proposed by three Members of the Factory" (GL 31,781/2, 28.11.1818). Those applicants wishing to subscribe who were unable to interest three sponsors in their request were effectively branded outsiders and openly excluded from "the strongest bond of union amongst the British Subjects" in St. Petersburg, which the Factory (at least) was convinced that "the support of our Church Establishment" represented. At the same time an annual subscription of "not more

people who were regarded as detracting from local British prestige. This attitude reflects Factory practice of preferring to repatriate certain of their compatriots who became destitute – “to carry her out of the country” – rather than paying out the monthly pittance that others of ‘respectable character’ were awarded, and is part of their repugnance generally when it came to the ‘lower classes of our Countrymen settled in this place’⁷. Robert Cattley spoke for everyone when he vetoed the Diplomatic suggestion that a free English school be established in the Church building, offering as his reason that the move “would in all probability encourage great numbers of British workmen of the lowest rank to come hither with their families...What might be the effects of such an addition to the English Community here, I need not attempt to point out, for they are so obvious they may be foreseen by all” (GL 31,782, 2.3.1822).

Cattley’s 1824 pamphlet is one of innumerable examples of discursive representations in the community’s records that attempt to solidify a fluid situation in favour of whatever views are held by the writer – this is what humans do with words. By saying something is ‘thus’, and by achieving general circulation for ‘thus’, ‘thus’ becomes a factor to take into consideration, it becomes ‘knowledge’, it may even become ‘truth’ – in the sense of becoming a new reality⁸. Circulation of ‘thus’ certainly establishes very palpable structure demanding certain types of response. One can see this kind of contestation of ‘thus’ and ‘anti-thus’ in the regular shifts in the ‘official’ name of the English Church in Petersburg even more clearly than in the pronominal designation of its various appurtenances. In 1816, at the wish of the Factory, a copy of the Church’s Register, dating back to the “names of all the persons of the English Congregation at Mosco from the year of our Lord 1706” was deposited in the Registry of the Bishop of London and the Church was brought into that Diocese. For most of the eighteenth century the Register references the “British Chapel in St. Petersburg”, with the Chaplain generally styling himself ‘Minister’, though after the Russian Burgher contretemps in 1777, and the creation of a constitution for the Factory, the frequency of reference to “Chaplain to the British Factory” increases (GL 11,192 B). By the time of the dispute with the Russia Company over the endorsement of the Revd. Dr. Pitt (1798-1813), the Church had become unequivocally

than 100 Rs” per year was set by the Library Committee, which effectively excluded, for example, Factory pensioners, who received approximately 240 Rs per year at Factory discretion.

⁷ This was also the law in England: successive Acts for the Relief of the Poor made assistance offered to the poor (those who because of age and infirmity were incapable of work) a parochial responsibility raised by compulsory taxes at the parish level – resonating with British Factory compulsory contributions to the Poor’s Fund. The Statute of Legal Settlement (1 Edw.VIc.3) condemned “foolish pity and mercy” for vagrants; the Settlement Act of 1662 (13 & 14 Car.IIc.12) allowed for the removal from a parish – usually back to their parish of birth – of newcomers deemed likely to be chargeable to the parish poor rates, though this was relaxed in 1795 to prevent the removal of poor persons until they actually became chargeable (35 Geo.IIIc.101). Becoming ‘chargeable’ usually meant segregated incarceration in workhouses, which were designed to be so repellent that they would not offer an incentive to laziness (Workhouse Life, www.users.ox.ac.uk). The Factory never even considered the possibility of establishing a workhouse for unemployed Britons, though they later founded a home for elderly British governesses of impeccable character.

⁸ “We have established that philosophy is a conception of the world and that philosophical activity is not to be conceived solely as the ‘individual’ elaboration of systematically coherent concepts, but also and above all as a cultural battle to transform the popular ‘mentality’ and to diffuse the philosophical innovations which will demonstrate themselves to be ‘historically true’ to the extent that they become concretely – i.e. historically and socially – universal” (Gramsci 1980, 348).

“the British Factory Chapel at St. Petersburg”, though Pitt’s successors, including the long-serving Dr. Law, continued to sign themselves merely ‘Minister’. However, during Factory discussions of a possible successor to Law, a motion had been proposed, seconded and passed by 17 votes to one that “In as much as the Chaplaincy of the British Factory is an office held at the will of the community, it is expedient that the clergyman elected to it should subscribe to this condition” (GL 11,749, 267). This interpretation was forwarded to the Russia Company who, incensed, set their own interpretive machinery in motion with little delay. Given their broad spheres of influence in Britain, the machinery produced a letter from the Bishop of London’s Registry in which it was officially pointed out that according to the Act passed by George IV in 1823, marriages of British subjects in Russia were only to be solemnized by “the Chaplain to the Russia Company or a minister officiating for him” and the “Register should in future be called the Register of the Chapel ‘of the Russia Company’ instead of ‘of the British Factory’ the same having been abolished [the last five words are underlined in red pencil]” (GL 11,749, 305, emphasis in text). For the next eight years, however, the Revd. Thompson disregarded the injunction and titled himself “Minister of the Chapel of the British Factory”.

In 1876, the scenario changes again. The computation of the numbers of baptisms, marriages and burials at the end of each year begins “Baptisms...solemnized in the Chapel of the Russia Company, St. Petersburg, in the Year One thousand, eight hundred and seventy six.”⁹ The words “British Factory”, imperfectly erased, are just visible underneath the title “Chapel of the Russia Company”. The data for 1876 was copied and verified in 1878 and was signed and sealed by F. Cremer MA, “Chaplain at St. Petersburg under the Russia Company” on the 28th of August. Cremer had replaced Thompson in that year, to be replaced in his turn by C. Hardy Little in 1880 when the “Chapel of the Russia Company” reverted to the “Chapel of the British Factory” (GL 11,192 C). This went on throughout the remainder of the century with the name of the Church see-sawing between “Chapel of the British Factory”, “Chapel of the Russia Company”, and very occasionally “British Church” in Church documents.

Two things are illustrated by this: not only the attempts of the leaders of the community to crystallise their world in words, but also the empowerment of particular phrases *sui generis*, with ‘ownership’ of the House of God being, in this case, the cultural item under repeated re-definition. That it should be the Church which was the object of most heated ‘ownership’ contestation was natural for a variety of reasons, none of which, as far as the records show, are connected with spiritual imperatives. As expressed in the extract from the Factory Minutes quoted above, the Church was the flagship of the community, the strongest bond among the British in Petersburg. It was the one place where all who were regarded (and who regarded themselves) as part of the community could meet and trade talk and generally access prevailing discursive commodities. Transcendent experiences (in the Kantian sense) connected with the Church are not mentioned in any of the records left by these people. References to Church attendance, however, abound, usually coupled with secular detail: who was there, what was said, arrangements made. The Factory Committee Room also functioned as a venue for Sunday Schools, Bible Classes and the philanthropic sewing (‘work’) parties of the community women;

⁹ In that year the format of the Registers also changed, and started to include a great deal more detail: “abode” of the subject(s), their “quality, trade or profession”, the age of marriage partners and the rank and profession of their fathers.

frequent amateur theatrical and musical performances were held in the Library which functioned much as a village hall did in England. It was here that petitions and addresses were left to collect community signatures and where extemporary charity was dispensed after the occasional Petersburg ‘inundation’.

While the religious activities of the Church were nominally under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, in practice, the congregation of the St. Petersburg English Church never called upon the Bishop for clarification of theological problems; Church controversy never touched on the liturgical or doctrinal aspects of group worship. This is unlike the British Church of Moscow, which was torn by internal doctrinal strife throughout most of the nineteenth century, with temporary cessation of services when the battle between “every shade of opinion amongst Churchmen and Dissenters; Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Non Conformists, Baptists, Methodists &c” (GL 11,749, 355) overpowered the congregation’s genuine desire to worship; when epithets of ‘ritualism’ and ‘heresy’ were being tossed about among the congregation’s members and back and forth between St. Petersburg and London, and the Bishop of London was called upon by the Russia Company to make a doctrinal ruling in a vain attempt to settle disputes. The ‘anti-ritualist’ party refused the interference and the Moscow British Church only found peace when the generation of worshippers, born and brought up during the evangelical period of English religious praxis (approximately the 1790s to the 1860s), was replaced by the laissez faire generation of conventional rather than impassioned worshippers in the final decades of the century. But none of this occurred in the English Church in St. Petersburg for the combined reasons that there was a greater variety of alternative places of Protestant worship in the capital, and because the Factory insisted on their right, by virtue of their ‘ownership’ of the property, to approve local ministers and only endorsed those whose beliefs and manner of conducting service coincided with their own.

Factorians did not only guard this creation of ‘fact of ownership’ against Company encroachment; the incumbent himself was not to forget to whom he owed his living. In 1845 the spectre of an English School reappeared to irritate the Factory Gentlemen via an unadvisedly high handed letter written by Dr. Law directly to the Company in London. According to protocol, communications between community members (even those belonging to the Factory) and the Company passed through the salaried (rather than Consular) Company Agent in St. Petersburg who was selected from influential Factory families and worked closely with them, and was thus in a position to ‘filter’ the passage of talk. Bypassing the Agent, who at this point was Charles Moberly, Law wrote that he proposed to establish an Asylum for the British poor (a workhouse, no less) in St. Petersburg and had agreed to the purchase of suitable premises in the neighbourhood of the Church for 60,000 Rs, 7,000 of which had been raised by a recent Church Bazaar (selling articles made by the women of the community), with further liberal donations and subscriptions anticipated. An additional 50,000 Rs would allow for the establishment of an English School “which has long been a great desideratum, and would be of immense advantage to the Mechanics and others of the middle ranks of our British population, who would gladly pay for the education of their children such a sum as would more than cover all the incidental expenses” (GL 11,749, 102, 7.1.1845). Law proposed that if the Company contributed substantially to the project and made an annual payment for its maintenance, the property would be made over to them “upon appointing their Agent and their Chaplain to superintend the

Establishment” (ibid.).

This gratuitous trespass on what they regarded as their territory created an uproar in the Factory ranks. Charles Moberly apparently received an unofficial reply (referenced but no longer extant) from the Secretary of the Russia Company vetoing Law’s proposition, though the communication must have also stated (for the record) that Law’s letter would be laid before the Governor and the Court of Assistants at their next meeting. Moberly replied to this by outlining the Factory’s stance in unequivocal terms:

As the manner in which Dr Law has thought proper to act, in his proposed matter of the Asylum, has been very extraordinary, and as no endeavour of any of the Members of this Factory were sufficient to make any impression upon him, it appeared to me to be the more requisite to let him see your letter, and as he made some observations upon not receiving any reply to his applications to the Governor [as with outward correspondence, so with incoming from the Company: it was supposed to pass via the Agent], I put yours of the 20 February into his hands, and which it is to be hoped will shew him that in his position here, he cannot with propriety, in any general matter, act independently of the Factory.

In consequence of an unanimous Resolution of the Committee, the Dr has given up his first intention, but from what has come to my knowledge, he is still endeavouring to establish something of the same kind, upon a much smaller scale – entirely of a private character.

Unfortunately, the occurrences which have taken place have essentially changed and reduced that feeling which ought to exist between the Congregation and their Pastor.¹⁰ (GL 11,749, 104, 18.2.1845.)

Law, however, evidently persevered with his ‘second intention’ – the School – because the Russia Company archives contain the “Sixth Annual Report of the Committee of the British School at St. Petersburg” (GL 11,749, 158) which is dated 1853, so it must have been established in 1847. In 1849 Law is recorded as taking a long leave in England, and soon after this the Company made a grant of £250 towards a British School in Petersburg and promised an annual £50 towards its running costs. Almost certainly Law would have called on the support of his not inconsiderable connections while in England,¹¹ because the Governor of the Company actually wrote to him directly, and in the friendliest of terms, informing him of the grant, though with the cautious proviso:

In making this Grant the Court of Assistants have been determined not only by a desire to mark their appreciation of the services of the Committee of the British School but also by the belief that they are acting in Concert with the Committee of the British Factory in contribution towards the expenses of its establishment and of its support (GL 11,749, 125).

There is no record of the members of the School Committee, but a list of subscriptions to the school’s “Exhibition Fund and General Purposes” in 1853 displays many of the usual suspects: Andersons, Birch, Blessig, Cazalets, Cattleys, Henley, Jubb, Moberly (though not

¹⁰ No reference here to the affinal connection Moberly had with Law, one of his brothers-in-law being married to one of Law’s daughters. Sentiment of this nature did not interfere with business.

¹¹ Law was the nephew of Lord Edward Law Ellenborough, who was three times President of the Board of Control of the East India Company and Governor-General of India, whence he was recalled after a mere two years for his attempts to personally monopolise trade.

Charles), Mirrielees, Whishaw etc, though the most substantial contributions, labelled as annual commitments, come from owners of mills and factories, presumably the employers of the British “mechanics and others of the middle ranks” in and around the capital. Law had probably canvassed support for his scheme from among the industrialists – the Cazalets, Bairds, Marshalls, Coates etc. who had a vested interest in the education of their workers’ children¹² – and then drawn Factory members into the project on the understanding that it would not cost the Factory (‘in its corporate capacity’) anything. This is conjecture but supported by the facts that there is no record of a corporate Factory subscription in 1853, though the Russia Company fulfilled its promise of £50. The contributions of key Factory names such as Moberly, Whishaw and Cattley are risibly small (£2-£5) and not of an annual promissory nature (GL 11,749, 158), indicating that the project still did not find much favour among influential Factorians¹³.

What conclusions may be drawn from the nature of the discursive constructions which were accelerated and the uses to which they were put by the various parties to the contestation over Church ownership and control?¹⁴ Firstly, while not wishing to be trapped by the pitfalls of facile functionalism, it is apparent that the Church, as a central place, was also a focus of community cohesion. Items of talk which passed around the community – both those concerning contested ownership, and those concerning the rights of the community to select their spiritual guide – combed community viewpoints into some kind of consensus. This is illustrated by the controversy arising out of the selection of Law’s replacement when he retired in 1864. The curate, Arthur Thompson, temporarily took over the Chaplain’s duties and was found so agreeable by the Factory that they duly elected him on the strength of eleven votes out of the seventeen members present at the meeting where discussion took place – “subject to the confirmation of the Russia Company” (GL 11,749/268, 21.4.1864). Presumably the Gentlemen felt that earlier precedent had established that this was a battle they would win. The Company did not agree and replied, some eight months later, “that having considered the testimonials of the Revd. Thompson and of three candidates of whom the Factory were not cognizant, they find the qualifications of the Revd. C.M. Church superior...and propose nominating him as the Chaplain of the Russia Company at St. Petersburg” (ibid., 279). This communication was dated 14.12.1864 in London, and yet by 29.12. (New Style, i.e. Gregorian calendar) – only a fortnight later – over four hundred Petersburg-English signatures had been attached to a “Memorial”

¹² Evidence points to a closer and more equal relationship between the skilled British workers of British owned factories and the owners than may have existed in contemporaneous Britain. The children of owners and skilled workers associated together in the ‘compounds’ surrounding the larger factories and works, and, in the Thornton’s compound at least, were actually schooled together. Thorntons did not contribute to the British School, almost certainly because they were funding their own local projects.

¹³ There is little data on the school from this point. The report of 1853 records that the ‘Girls’ School’ side of the establishment had been obliged to close through lack of numbers, and that there were 42-55 boy students between the ages of seven and fourteen years. The syllabus comprised religious instruction, English, Russian and German, ancient English and sacred history, geography, written and mental arithmetic, mercantile penmanship, mechanics and mathematics. Mary Whishaw mentions in 1890 that the then incumbent, the Revd. Mr Watson, his curate and one of the teachers brought forty children – girls and boys – to Mourino for the day, so the school was still extant in some form at that time.

¹⁴ I discussed in an earlier chapter the symbiotic relationship between Established Church and State in Britain. It is conjecture but perhaps the Factory also felt that in its self-appointed role as the local ‘power’, control of the local Church was their natural perquisite.

which began:

Hearing that the Russia Company have not confirmed the election made many months ago by the British Factory of the Revd. Arthur I. Thompson as Chaplain to their Chapel here, we, the undersigned British Residents, Members of his congregation, *but not of the Factory*, are anxious to testify our cordial approbation of his choice (ibid., 280, emphasis added).

Although the timing was propitious (the busy Christmas season in the Church), it still represents an impressive mobilization in a very short space of time. I can establish almost all the names on the list, with absolute certainty, as affinal or consanguineal kin, ritual kin, employees or similarly connected to active Factory members, demonstrating the control which their central positions in the networks of circulating discourse gave them over community opinion, community praxis and community affairs in general. Thompson was confirmed by the Company as Chaplain.

Disputes with outsiders (the Russia Company, Britain-based trading principals, the Foreign Office, the College of Commerce etc.) over strictly trade-related matters did not attract sufficient common interest to marshal the whole community, something which Church-related controversy managed effortlessly, even among rare attendees. Other topics or items of talk tended to circulate in, and reinforce, cellular structures: within single families or groups of families, age cohorts, interest groups, exclusive to Factorians and so on. The Church had been endowed with emblematic status for the whole community by the unrelenting Factory attention to its upkeep, its ownership, its 'respectable' profile, by its role as discursive 'market-place' and by the Factory's original choice of its prestigious, conspicuous location and imposing dimensions – as much as, or more than, by its ostensible purpose as a place of Anglican worship. Talk which concerned it found ready reception and the way the content of the talk was structured into certain repetitive forms (such as its official title and possessive pronominal designation), helped simplify its acceleration and connect the cellular structure of the community into an organic whole. Once achieved, the acceleration of a particular discursive item in circulation is indicative of interest in the subject matter of the item and increases its salience; continued movement re-talks and re-writes the local world into general conformity, producing perceptions of structural regularity by encouraging the movement of similar items along similar paths, promoting a feeling of belonging among those who adhere to prevailing framings and pinpointing those who do not. This then allows those who do to further unite in common efforts to exclude dissent. In short, such accelerated circulation of items of general interest produces what Silverstein refers to as "'local language communities'...as dialectically constituted cultural forms" (1998, 401). Silverstein goes on to add that

through social action, people participate in semiotic processes that produce their identities, beliefs, and their particular senses of agentive subjectivity....Studying cultural process – viewed at whatever temporal scale – thus reveals culture, indexed by people's working through matters of practical social concern visible in individual, aggregate, and corporate perspectives. In such cultural process, moreover, language is at once an aspect of people's focused concern as agentive subjects, as well as perhaps the very most central semiotic medium or modality through which those cultural processes are, as it were, articulable and articulated.(1998, 402).

The English Church in Petersburg was a focus of social action throughout the life of the community, and a principal source of a collective sense of agentive subjectivity. It is quite apparent that contestation with outsiders over Church control was welcomed by the Factory; certainly they embarked on it with gusto and a categorical refusal to accept defeat. They seemed to enjoy locking horns with their counterparts in the Russia Company, many of whom were their own business associates and even relatives. As I suggested above, it satisfied the urges for both ownership and political influence – so much a part of the attitudes of the burgeoning bourgeois in Britain – which were largely denied them by their place of residence: few merchants risked property investment in Russia, and none involved themselves further in local politics than the occasional “enthusiastic expression of loyalty and attachment to the Imperial Family from all quarters, and in which Foreigners residing here have earnestly united”¹⁵ (GL 11,749, 321). Indeed, as Robert Cattley pointed out in his pamphlet:

the origin and nature of the Factory are entirely unconnected with politics, it being merely a body of factors, united for the purposes of providing for their church establishment, and for the British poor; and making arrangements relative to mercantile charges...but without interfering in the slightest degree with the laws, statutes or ordinances of the Russian empire (1824, 35).

Although I am not suggesting that the Factory consciously deployed controversy over Church ownership, with its concomitant rights of management, to maintain a cohesive power base and sphere of influence within the community, contestation in this area tended to have this effect, as the case studies in the chapter ten indicate. The community split which threatened over the dismissal of Arthur Riddle in 1902 was a sign of the times. Church attendance became increasingly perfunctory as the century drew to a close and the role of Church as emblem to the community had to compete with the personal proclivities of community members much more than in the past. The influence of the Factory over community affairs and their own commitment to the community in general were also on the wane and Arthur’s undoubted popularity with a wide range of people, including those like Francis Marshall who were wealthy Factorians, was sufficient to introduce a real element of risk that the community’s congregation might take matters into its own hands and break the Factory hold on the management of this aspect of community affairs. The third of the case studies in chapter ten will explore the rights of the congregation, as parishioners, to do so. The Factory, however, was simply too experienced and too skilled in the shaping and manipulation of salient values to be defeated by anything less than the revolutions of 1917.

¹⁵ This is drawn from the explanation made by Edward Cattley (Robert’s son) to the Russia Company of an address which was presented to Alexander II, via the British Ambassador, on the occasion of “the recent dastardly attempt” on his life in 1866.

HEGEMONY IN THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONTEXT.

It would be interesting to study concretely the forms of cultural organisation which keep the ideological world in movement within a given country, and to examine how they function in practice...An historical act can only be performed by 'collective man', and this presupposes the attainment of a 'cultural-social' unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world, both general and particular, operating in transitory bursts (in emotional ways) or permanently (where the intellectual base is so well rooted, assimilated and experienced that it becomes passion). Since this is the way things happen, great importance is assumed by the general question of language, that is, the question of collectively attaining a single cultural 'climate' (Gramsci 1980, 341-2, 349).

Analysis of the influential role which the Factory played in the structure of the community may be fruitfully conducted on terrain created by the synthesis of Antonio Gramsci's notions of hegemony as the practice of all classes who rule by virtue of 'majority consent', with the discourse-centred approach to socio-cultural construction which I explore throughout this paper¹⁶. An inherent part of Gramsci's discussion of ideology as the intermediary through which hegemony is brought about is the certainty that "a collective will and a certain degree of homogeneity" are born of an immense aggregation of "books, pamphlets, review and newspaper articles, conversations and oral debates repeated countless times" (1980, 194). He also notes that "Culture, at its various levels, unifies in a series of strata...a greater or lesser number of individuals who understand each other's mode of expression in differing degrees" (ibid., 349). These are two principles which also underlie the conception of human worlds as created by circulating talk of all descriptions.

Chantal Mouffe believes that the key to understanding the gramscian conception of hegemony lies in his analysis of three different moments of political consciousness that contribute to "an evaluation of the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organisation attained by the various social classes" (Gramsci 1980, 181). The first 'moment' lies in self-perceptions of a group's common *professional* interests (which correlates with the initial formation of the Factory the early eighteenth century); followed by consciousness of *class* interests but expressed only at an economic level (corresponding to their creation of a 'constitution' whereby a portion of independence would be sacrificed for the greater profit of all); culminating in *hegemony*, where the ruling group manages to fuse its own interests to that of the wider society in which it operates (Mouffe, 1985, 222). Most of the period of the nineteenth century after the Factory reconstituted itself in 1813, and all the lobbying that went on over Church management and, later, control of the charity funds (see following chapter) may be postulated as falling into this third category of self-awareness and ambition. They took the interests of the wider community into account in the formulation of their public disseminations, were grudgingly ready to part with funds from the charities they managed to assist certain unfortunate members of that community, and were obviously willing to devote considerable

¹⁶ Although Gramsci's political stance, that of a committed Marxist revolutionary, has no relevance to this discussion, much of his work is elliptical – due to his incarceration and rigid censorship at the time of his greatest production – and lends itself to analogical use.

time and organizational energy to the day-to-day running of the services over which they exercised jurisdiction. They were more than ready to mention these ‘sacrifices’ whenever the opportunity arose. One could hardly suggest, however, that they ‘genuinely’ adopted the interests of the popular classes, which Mouffe asserts is what Gramsci had in mind for “successful hegemony” (Mouffe 1985, 223). Basically, the Factory articulated the interests of the wider community to its own in order to neutralise them – which Mouffe labels “passive hegemony” (ibid.).

Adding these qualifying terms – ‘successful’, ‘passive’ – introduces a strong ideological element to the definition of ‘hegemony’ which I feel is problematic in the light of Gramsci’s understanding (particularly evident in his Prison Notebooks) that hegemony was not just a strategy by which the ‘popular classes’ might take over leadership but, in fact, precisely the kind of leadership exercised by the dominant bourgeois class in most of Europe at the time that he was writing¹⁷. This kind of elective leadership may be said to have come of age in Britain with the gradual extension of suffrage during the nineteenth century, though, as Gramsci noted, there had never been an English revolution which pitted a united ‘popular’ mass against a united elite, so it could be argued that rule in the nation had always been hegemonic rather than absolute. The interests of subordinate groups in England, however, had never been ‘genuinely’ articulated to those of the leaders, according to Mouffe’s conceptualization of “successful hegemony”.

The Factory, as exemplar of the regulation of industry, commerce and government by elite classes in England, stood firm against most requests for a salary increase by their workers – warehousemen, labourers, brackers, clerical staff – throughout the half century period for which their Minutes still exist (e.g. “in consequence of the labourers having again presented a petition for the increase of their wages of day labourage from 15-20 [copeks] on account of the dearness of all kinds of provisions, the same was thought improper and rejected for the present” (GL 31,781/1, 8.4.1787)). In contrast, an increase in the expenses of the Petersburg Church (that “strongest bond of union”), required in 1803 that each mercantile house charge each homeward bound British ship ‘Church money’ of 16 Rs 20 copeks (a raise of 8 Rs), “to be added to Port Charges” (GL 31,781/2, 16.04.1803) and then again, in 1820, on account of “the great rise of price of every article in this place, its neighbourhood, and the consequent dearness of living” the allowance to Cronstadt Church was increased by 300 Rs per year (ibid, 6.5.1820). They knew that the rising cost of living was devaluing the workers’ earnings and resisted the remedy; the requirements of their ecclesiastical status symbol were another matter. Their public pronouncements, however, and even the discourse behind the closed doors of their Committee room, regularly touches on the assistance the Factory provided and the care they took of the interests of their countrymen in Petersburg. Robert Cattley, in the debate about the establishment of a school for the children of the English poor in 1822, framed Factory efforts as follows:

¹⁷ He was writing in the era of Hitler and Mussolini – exceptions to the elective bourgeois governments in other parts of Europe – who, though Fascist leaders who could be conceptualised as ruling through domination rather than consent, had harnessed popular interests to their juggernauts better than most elective governments generally do. According to Gramsci, Mussolini had even managed to get Italian trains running on time.

If you will only take the trouble to reflect upon what has been done by this Body, in assisting the lower classes of our Countrymen settled at this place, during the last ten years, I am convinced that you will feel as I do – that every proper assistance has been given to them – and to the extent which has attracted the admiration of all other foreigners resident in this city. (GL 31,782, 78.)

Gramsci insists that any unit or cultural movement wishing to grasp or maintain hegemonic leadership (rather than dominating by force), has two specific necessities: firstly “[n]ever to tire of repeating its own arguments [ideology]...repetition is the best didactic means for working on the popular mentality”; and secondly to ensure that elites – the ‘speakers’ of any group, on whatever basis the group is established – remain in contact with the rest “to become, as it were, the whalebone in the corset” (Gramsci 1980, 340). This was a small community whose few services were controlled by an internally elected association of merchants, not a State with a governmental-coercive apparatus ruling over a geographically bounded nation – the principal focus of Gramsci’s reflections – but the analogy I draw between the two is defensible. The Factory never tired of restating their position and their claim to speak and act for the community, and that they could mobilise such a substantial proportion of it on such short notice as evidenced by the ‘Memorandum’ in support of their chosen Chaplain, the Revd. Thompson, indicates that their self-assessment was largely approved (if only passively) by the ‘corset’ of which they comprised the ‘whalebone’. According to Mouffe, Gramsci implied that ideology is always inscribed in practices which produce subjects (1985, 226), and was explicit that the dissemination of ideology requires material and institutional structure encompassing “schools, churches, the entire media” (ibid., 227). This formulation is compatible with the understanding that metaculturally approved items of talk, by their very continued circulation, are agential in producing both social structure and a sense of ‘people like us’ – a ‘we’ – though not total identity or homogeneity. It would seem that the Gentlemen of influence within the Factory were also conscious of the disseminating power of institutions, hence their alarm over the Lancastrian School which allowed a “promiscuous admixture of foreigners of all Nations and persuasions”. Consul-General Sir Daniel Bayley summed up general perceptions when he said: “I for my part firmly believe that such Schemes as this, if fostered by us, will, like the Adder in the Fable, sting us to death, and subvert everything which we hold most valuable as both Britons and Christians” (GL 31,782, 75).

Although the Factory had no formalised governmental status, Gramsci notes the role played by “the ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private’” (1980, 12) in maintaining social hegemony, and this is exactly how the Factory may be conceptualised. Among these ‘private’ organisms Gramsci includes political parties, trade unions and cultural associations, designating their aggregate as “civil society”, which “operates without ‘sanctions’ or compulsory ‘obligations’, but which nevertheless exerts a collective pressure and obtains objective results in the form of an evolution of customs, ways of thinking and acting, morality, etc.” (ibid., 242). The Factory lacked the coercive apparatus of ‘the State’ but nonetheless represented the locally “dominant fundamental group” (ibid., 12) capable by common consent of imposing general direction on Anglo-Russian social life. Gramsci suggests that “this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production” (ibid.). As noted above, the Factory

comprised the wealthiest of the merchants, those who required the most clerks and bookkeepers, agents, warehousemen, house servants and other employees, as well as the greatest quantity of professional services from bankers, lawyers, shipping companies etc. who were also substantial employers, and provided the largest consignments of exports with which to fill the greater proportion of visiting British ships. They had intimate connections with major manufacturing employers in families such as the Cazalets, Carrs, Thorntons and Hubbards, who also had substantial interests in international trade, and most of those Britons in Petersburg who were not merchants or dependent on merchants for wages, worked as skilled artisans and foremen in local British mills. The Factory were thus in a position to coerce a significant number of the lower stratum of English in St. Petersburg. Apart from Mary and Arthur's understandable bitterness towards "the Factory clique", I have not encountered many references that suggest that portions of the community were not happy with Factory hegemony but it would be surprising if there had not been some dissatisfaction, one expression of which I will discuss in the next chapter. The bulk of evidence, however, indicates that the interests of most community members were well-served by Factory control, which is to be expected given that the networks of kinship and ritual kinship were so broad and embrative. The rest (those such as Caroline Cummings, the Swanns, Walter Bray and other British residents who were peripheral members of the Anglican congregation and who have left records but whose kin networks did not overlap with those of the Factory) expected the Church would be there when they needed it, and that pensions (however pitiable) or repatriation assistance would be available in dire necessity and apparently had no ambition for active participation¹⁸ – not that it would have got them very far if they had.

In 1824, St. Petersburg was flooded to depths of up to fourteen feet, causing great hardship and loss of life. "To assist the Emperor's benevolent views, a subscription was entered into, and the British residents came forward, as usual, with their wonted liberality" (Robert Lee, member of a long-term community family of mainly medical bent, cited in Cross 1971, 372). The Factory immediately appropriated 12,000 Rs out of the Poor's Fund "for the assistance of the sufferers" and appointed a committee of seven to distribute the sum. The committee based itself at the Library to "consider claims and give immediate relief to those of our Congregation who may be in want...giving a preference to those connected with the Trade and who may have no other means of obtaining succour" (GL 31,781/2, 13.11.1824). As it was found that "the calamity may have reached some who are in the better stations of life", assistance could be

¹⁸ In his "Passato e presente" Gramsci uses the term "self-government" in English and asserts that, as an institution, self-government – by which he meant "the phenomenon whereby...certain functions elsewhere carried out by the State are devolved onto formally autonomous local bodies or institutions" – had been possible in England, alone out of European countries, because of the existence of a social stratum there which did not work for wages, which had a tradition of experience in public affairs, which had never been in savage conflict with the population nor the possessors of "great corporate military traditions" and which, furthermore, "enjoys a certain prestige among the popular masses for its rectitude and impartiality (and also for certain psychological qualities, such as its ability to exercise authority with dignified firmness, but without haughtiness or arrogant detachment)" (footnote in Gramsci, 1980, 186). He was referring specifically to the great Whig landowners, but this was a class to whose traditions and worlds the most influential of English merchants aspired, often successfully. These are the qualities – the rectitude, impartiality, dignified firmness – which the English of this class ascribed to themselves. I have queried elsewhere the objective accuracy of these self-ascriptions, but, in an interesting demonstration of his own thesis, Gramsci appears to have been convinced.

granted to ‘Individuals’ without making their names known (*ibid.*) – a common illustration of the concepts of ‘shame’ and ‘honour’ as they were understood in the merchant community. The receipt of charity was an almost ineradicable stain upon the character of the recipient. Subscriptions brought by unaffected community members to the Library to swell the fund amounted to 14,124 Rs; a collection taken at the following Sunday’s church service raised a further 5,010 Rs; the Russia Company donated £3,000 (approximately 20,000 Rs at the time), and the Dowager Empress subscribed 2,000 Rs (*ibid.*, 3.12, 29.12.1824). There was so much money, in fact, that the “British Charitable Fund” donated 5,000 Rs to the “committee for relief of German and other foreign mechanics and artisans” and, in April of the following year, still had most of the Russia company grant left over, which presumably made its way back into the Poor’s Fund and represented something of a profit on the whole affair. There is no denying the organizational contribution which the Factory made to the community.

Gramsci’s discussion of the “capitalist entrepreneur” makes the point that such an individual “must have a certain technical capacity, not only in the limited sphere of his activity and initiative but in other spheres as well...He must be an organiser of masses of men; he must be an organiser of the “confidence” of investors in his business, of the customers for his product, etc.” (1980, 5). Gramsci also asserts that it is essential that at least an elite amongst a group of entrepreneurs has, in addition, the capacity to organise the “general system of [social] relationships external to the business itself” (*ibid.*, 6), in order to create the most favourable of conditions for the expansion of its own class and its entrepreneurial activities. The Gentlemen of the Factory saliently possessed these skills, particularly in their corporate capacity, and also the confidence and self-assurance to use them to the full, in any sphere that occurred to them. In Mary’s time, when John Blessig was serving several lengthy stints as Treasurer, his wife (née Anderson, who was sister-in-law to three Whishaw men) was delegated to mobilise the women of the community into their philanthropic ‘work parties’, harrying those who were tardy contributors with commissions that could not be ignored. It was presumably a role that was often taken by the female connections of the local men of influence, because a Church Bazaar (of women’s craft items) which had raised 7,000 Rs was mentioned by Law in 1847, and Harriet Hardie shows remarkable honesty when she recounts in a letter to Lilly Ramsay that she had been to a grand Bazaar “where there were no end of people and fancy, they realized 1,500 Rs from a lot of trash made by us ladies” (27.5.1895). During the major famine of 1891/92 the ‘ladies’ seem to have frequently congregated in numbers of more than fifty at a time in one of the rooms in the Church building (also mentioned by Mary), and Harriet wrote that “We have already made over 600 garments for the poor so you may think how everyone works” (November 1891). When that crisis passed numbers dropped back to normal and the sewing parties removed to Mrs Anderson’s – another sister-in-law of Mrs. John Blessig – “as we are but 18 or 20 members and it is not worth opening the Church” (1895). Articulating women’s worlds to the Factory sphere, even in such ancillary roles, extended Factory influence, and Factory-disseminated talk, deeply into the community to reach people whom they wanted to influence, but would not have as members..

Gramsci adds a second important determinant to Marxist theories of the basis of domination by a particular social class. Although hegemony “must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of

economic activity” (ibid., 161), he stresses the role which is played in leadership by ideology. Majority acceptance of specific leaders and their policies, he points out, measures something other than the “banal commonplace” that an elective system gives the same weight to every member of the group who has the right to vote. What a majority of votes actually measures is

precisely the effectiveness, and the expansive and persuasive capacity, of the opinions of a few individuals, the active minorities, the elites, the avant-gardes, etc...it is untrue that all individual opinions have ‘exactly’ equal weight. Ideas and opinions are not spontaneously ‘born’ in each individual brain: they have had a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion...” (ibid., 192).

A nucleus within the Factory kept its hold on community services for more than a century by maintaining its position as the centre of “formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion” throughout that period. It ‘led’ rather than ‘dominated’. Possessing no sanctions over those whose salaries they did not pay beyond, perhaps, social ostracism or vocal disapproval, control was exercised through the successful manipulation and deployment of stretches of talk – valorized by tradition, but open to innovative use and re-presentation in novel circumstances. Re-sited in new configurations such discursive configurations helped ‘gel’ contested or inchoate areas of local epistemology in patterns *apparently* conforming with past practice and knowledge, while often actually working in the other direction – inserting the present into the past, rewriting history in conformity with present usage. These processes may be demonstrated on a community-wide scale by following the passage of items of talk in a broader sphere than I have done thus far; plotting the role the items’ re-presentations played in shaping and promoting attitudes to new issues in novel contexts and simultaneously exploring the interrelationship between talk, event and individual agency. In the following chapter I propose to track the discourse, events and personality clashes over time which culminated in the Factory’s losing its title – once again, and this time permanently in terms of public usage¹⁹. I do this via the dissection of a series of three connected incidents that have been sufficiently well-documented to indicate both the interest and excitement they raised in the community, and also to provide the data necessary for reasonably broad case studies.

“VALUES HAVE VALUERS”²⁰.

People, then, are both subjects and makers of the values that guide human actions and influence human destiny, The value problem arises because people have different values and those of the dominant usually, but not always, triumph at the end of the day. For any given historical period and region, then, a limited range of values are in the ascendancy. These values give a time and a place its recognisable cultural unity...The value perspective enables one to dissolve, rather than resolve, the problems posed by these categories [peasant/capitalist, class/caste etc]. It does so by posing new problems in a different

¹⁹ As I have mentioned before, and as Mary’s reference to “the Factory clique” indicates, “the British Factory” continued to be both effective and affective at a subterranean level. “The British Benevolent Guild” was window dressing.

²⁰ Chris Gregory 1997, 32

theoretical language. Values involve both the *is* and the *ought*, the fact and the norm. Values determine the question posed, the mode of description, the evaluation of that description, and the normative judgements that follow. Values are often equated with *ought*, the norm or moral, and separated from *is*, the fact. I do not see it this way. For me fact and norm are part of a dialectical unity mediated by value...(Gregory 1997, 5-6, emphasis in text).

I have not dealt in any detail with the endless discussions which took place at Factory meetings of local trading conditions, ways of bettering them and resulting resolutions and actions. They concerned circumstances such as building of new warehousing; commissions and charges on imports and exports; the operations of salvage companies; the 'brack' (quality control) on exported items such as flax, hemp, furs and tallow; the wage scale and employment conditions of the local wharf hands, warehouse workers, brackers, and clerks in the merchant houses; appointments to senior positions in these fields, (or at least the signing of "papers of recommendation and attestation of character" to be sent to the Duma when that was the selecting body, such as in the case of ship brokers) in patron/client arrangements²¹; the management and recipients of pensions from the charitable funds; petitions, donations, addresses and replies to the Duma, other 'Foreign Merchant' bodies, Customs House, College of Commerce, Petersburg government and similar bureaucratic officials in their orbit; the maintenance of the Churches, the Library, almshouses for indigent governesses, the school and myriad other issues that touched upon the world they called their own. In the context of the centripetal role of the Factory in the community, the pension allocation, the employment control they exerted and the 'myriad other issues' produced the discursive items that travelled furthest and had the greatest acceleration, spilling out of the Factory and even the community itself and into other worlds which touched upon their own, such as the local British diplomatic service, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Office in Britain and the extended families of community members in England.

Issues which were not specifically trade-related naturally had much greater interest for broader circles than the community nucleus of Factory members, and nurtured paths of communication that, for example, the commission to be charged on "Iron Drillings, Ravenducks, fleams & Hareskins" (GL 31,781/1, 12.10.1777) simply lacked the general appeal to do. In the course of deliberating about the behaviour and character of various community members who came directly within their orbit of control – the Chaplains in Petersburg and

²¹ For example: "Palairret's petition to be a Broker agreed to be postponed until he shall appear to be sufficiently qualified to fulfil the duties of his office" (GL 31,781/1, 18.4.1779). In the case of vacancy among hemp brackers Joseph Simkins be recommended "on account of his Exertion to qualify himself for that post, provided those Exertions and his good behaviour continues" (ibid.); "...the said Grey [Church clerk] has in various instances acted in a manner extremely reprehensible...the Treasurer be desired to reprimand him in the name of the Factory for such conduct...further, that should the above reproach and admonition be received disrespectfully by J Grey, the Church Wardens dismiss him from the Office" (GL 31,781/2, 13.6.1808).

On the other hand, the patron/client arrangement was not to be abused and it is recorded that a personal interview was to had with Mr. Wyllie to explain "the evil tendency and consequences to trade in general, of such high patronage being extended to unqualified persons to fill situations of great power and trust" (ibid., 8.12.1819). Mr Wyllie had proffered a candidate for a post who was regarded with disfavour by other Factory members.

Cronstadt, first and foremost, but also the clerks, librarian, stewards and organists for the Churches, the clerk to the Factory itself (a highly confidential position), the school teachers, and so on, and even senior community members such as the long-term British Consuls-General and others not actually part of the Factory – the Factory produced discursive items and accompanying metacultural evaluations which, accelerated onward via the tens of centrally placed men of influence and connection comprising the Factory, combed their way through the collective worldview and identity of the community. Thus Crisp (not *Mr.* Crisp) who had “a stain on his character that he could not clear” was not to be considered as a hemp bracker (GL 31,781/2, 10.10.1818), while Mrs Brown “in consideration of ...the good character she has borne in the service of several English families in St. Petersburg” was to be allowed a pension of 25 Rs per month (ibid. 7.7.1824). The bases of character assessment, though not clearly delineated in the Minutes and Copy Books (they were too well understood to require elaboration), were clearly common currency. This was as true of the interpretations made by the Factory of event and of selected spoken and written items as it was of character.

In the final chapter, via the device of deconstructing three cases of conflict involving the Factory, I am going to examine the conjuncture of the four main ingredients which I believe contribute to creating a distinctive worldview and distinctive praxis in any group, features central to the sensing of community both by a group’s members and by outside observers of an entity. These elements and the quadric relationships between them are the foundation of culture as movement. The most affective of them I believe to be the discursive topics circulating within a group, or, rather, the ways such topics are deployed and framed – which, though often contested, are of vital importance to group identity and worldview. This is what the group notices, shaped in ways that seem ordered and systemic within the context of previous encounters with circulating items that are framed as belonging to the same categories. These are the concrete items of talk which, in circulation and replication, provide very solid restraints and enablements. Things which cannot be said are, at the very least, uncomfortable to think and do; things which are said often, and in identical or very similar form, parallel a facilitation of behaviour that accords with long term discursive replication.

The second element is the organization or structure which has sedimented out of a history of discourse deployment, structure by which ongoing talk may be disciplined, and which talk illuminates and continues to work on²². The third is the individual and idiosyncratic agency which is brought to every conjuncture: the personalities, powers, charisma, effectualness, personal networks and so on of parties to event and discourse transmission. The fourth is the impact of the external – the unpredictable, uncontrolled, ‘wild’ element of human existence (physical environment, coercive outsider, technological development, whatever) which must be corralled and domesticated within the parameters of the communal worlds on which it impacts.

Chapter ten, therefore, comprises the examination of three similar and partially overlapping

²² Here I am thinking of institutions (within this specific community) as varied as marriage, domestic expectations, trading practices and the international market, schools, the diplomatic corps, the church and the worship conducted therein, the summer colony, suffrage, origin myths and the British Factory, all of which (and many more) were present at the end of the century, as they had been at the beginning, but all of which had undergone extensive changes, if not outright revolution, as they were talked through the decades.

series of incidents which demonstrate the type, scope and method of resolution of comparatively large-scale conflict between Factory-supported factions and the local representatives of the British Government – members of the British Foreign Office-appointed diplomatic corps. Such disputes were well-documented, which allows for detailed and fairly multi-faceted analysis. Conflict and its resolution appears to be a vital generating factor in social process and change; it also plays perhaps the most central role in maintenance and change in relations of hegemony and the hierarchizing of values. Collier also notes that “it is in situations of conflict that inequality is revealed, negotiated, realized or resisted” (1987, 199). Though data about the “lower classes of our countrymen here” is very limited, examination of these three conflicts help to demonstrate exactly how the Factory maintained its local hegemony against pressure from a power bloc which might be conceptualised as superior in fire power to a localised association of merchants – the British Government, or, at least, its local representatives. One can be assured that these were the same methods used to ward off encroachment by ‘the lower classes’ onto terrain the Factory and its faction regarded as rightfully their own.

CHAPTER TEN.

THEORY IN PRAXIS.

CASE STUDY A: “THE RULING VALUES ARE THE VALUES OF THE DOMINANT.”¹

The story, as with all stories involving humans, has no single moment of generation. Various events, or, to be more precise, re-tellings and re-inventions of events, contributed to outcomes which also provided no closure, though they appeared to do so at the time. That said, the three interrelated series of event and interaction which comprise the plot of this story can be said to begin, for the moment, in 1857², with “an appeal to the sympathies and liberality of the British Public” for donations towards “a suitable edifice properly fitted for Hospital purposes” to be erected at Cronstadt for the care of “the fever wracked and suffering” English merchant seamen “who risk the dangers of the intricate Baltic, and the rigours of its Climate to carry on the commerce of England”³ (GL 11,749, 211). This touching plea, which stemmed from the Revd. McSwiney (the Cronstadt Chaplain who preceded Arthur Riddle), and the British Consul-General, Charles Eastland de Michele⁴, was forwarded to the Russia Company 12.2.1857 and also printed in *The Times* 12.3.1857, with the hope that it would tap into the same philanthropic vein that had brought assistance to the British soldiers of the Crimean war at Scutari and Smyrna. Although Russia Company Minutes merely record that it was resolved to await the opinion of the British Factory on the matter (GL 11,741/13 2.3.1857), their reply to Michele was prompt and discouraging, stating that after talking to the Foreign Office, the Governor felt that there would not be any funds available for the project and also that the suggested plan of meeting future running costs by a toll on the tonnage of visiting British ships would only be feasible in unprecedentedly busy years such as the one immediately prior (GL 11,749, 215)⁵. This implies that the Foreign Office had vetoed the plan but it is

¹ Chris Gregory 1997, 32.

² One can go back even further, to 1820, when it was noted in the Factory Minutes that there was no hospital for the reception and treatment of British sailors at Cronstadt, and that it was “highly necessary and proper, as well for the comfort of the sick, as for the respectability of the Factory, that there should be” (GL 31,781/2, 14.10.1820), but nothing more seems to have been done about it at that point. That the hospital was deemed to be as important to Factory respectability as to the patients it might be expected to treat is no surprise.

³ The letter notes that the present arrangements “reflect disgrace upon *us*” (emphasis added), the only instance of a first person plural pronoun embracing the “British Public” which I encountered in all the records and primary sources – but natural considering it was to be printed in *The Times* and was aimed at exciting a sense of involvement among potential donors.

⁴ The Russia Company Minutes generally refer to him simply as ‘Michele’. He called himself *Eastland de Michele*, presumably to underline his connection with the Eastland Company, “the oldest British Establishment in the Russia Trade” (GL 11,758), which had ceased operating in 1713. There is no explanation for the ‘de’, but it is typical of the kind of personal re-invention that goes on among expatriates everywhere.

⁵ This story impinges, naturally, on other stories going on in other worlds. The Crimean War had finished the year before and Cronstadt was filled with British ships which had been banned from Russian ports for the duration of the hostilities – hence there had been 2,000 British seamen *in situ* during the shipping season, many of them sick and lacking facilities for their care. The world of the Russia Company had also been changing with the abolition of their long-held right to collect

clear from the Minutes that it was the Russia Company who were very much against the idea of adding a further tax on ships carrying on the Anglo-Russian trade from which they were not going to benefit (GL 11,741/13, 8.5.1857). The Governor's letter goes on to suggest that Michele should either make arrangements with the "admirable" local Russian hospital or "take it up with the British Factory in St. Petersburg" (GL 11,749, 215).

This latter suggestion must have been made tongue in cheek because, meanwhile, Michele had crossed swords with the Factory who were refusing re-impose that portion of dues on Russian exports carried in British ships, collected at Cronstadt, which had traditionally accrued to the Consul-General⁶. This had not been resumed after the Crimean war when the church dues began to be collected from British shipping once again, as Michele did not return for more than a year⁷, and, in any case, the Factory was tired of having the local Consul-General also hanging about their necks as titular Company Agent. The Factory now proposed not to resume the consular toll at all, because, they claimed, ship owners were strongly objecting to its reintroduction after so long a hiatus. According to an outraged letter of complaint Michele wrote to the Company, Samuel Gwyer, who was Factory Treasurer until April, had assured Michele that the March meeting at which the discussion had taken place had been calm "and certainly indicated no personal hostility to me [Michele]" (GL 11,749, 216). However, the 'real' Company Agent, Charles Moberly, who would most certainly have attended the Factory meeting, wrote to the Russia Company that, "It is impossible not to suspect that the difficulties in this matter are vastly increased from personal feelings" (GL 11,749, 218). This is

dues on goods arriving in Britain from Russia, their principal source of fresh, unearned revenue.

⁶ These were part of the same dues which the Factory had been distressed to notice were being pocketed by the 'renegades' the previous century. The Russia Company had suggested that they be collected directly from the ships by the British Consul-General. Half of the money went to the Factory Church Fund, half to the Consul-General who, in a complicated bit of by-play between the Foreign Office and the Russia Company, was also the Company's 'official', though by the mid-nineteenth century, merely titular, representative. He held the courtesy title of 'Company's Commercial Agent'. The Consul's share of the dues comprised half his salary, the remainder being paid by the F.O. On the other hand, the 'real' Company Agent, always a reputable Anglo-Russian merchant drawn from Factory ranks, was paid a salary from Company funds, acted as liaison between the Factory and the Company and was responsible for the actual management of Company affairs in Petersburg – with a bias towards the Factory angle.

⁷ During the war, the British navy blockaded the Black Sea, the White Sea, the Danube and the Russian end of the Baltic, though raised the Danube blockade early in 1855 (GL 11,741/13, 1.3.1855). Nesselrode, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, informed Michele 9.4.1854 that "all British Consuls & Vice Consuls residing in the Empire must...cease from the functions that are confided in them, that among them, who are employed by the Government of the Queen will receive their passports [i.e. will be obliged to leave], but those belonging to the class of merchants who carry on here their commerce or trade will be free to remain in Russia under the protection of our laws by conforming to their rules. You will find enclosed a declaration published by the Imperial Government which establishes the guarantees offered during the War to English & French subjects residing in Russia relative to their persons and their property" (GL 11,741/13, 8.8.1854). Anglo-Russian trade, though curtailed, continued, with goods moving overland to Prussian ports for transport to Britain. For that matter, so did the financial involvement in Russia of the English banking house of Baring and Company "whose profit motives apparently were not greatly inhibited by adverse public opinion or political considerations" (Blackwell, 1968, 243).

Incidentally, Michele had been submitting reports, on orders, to the F.O. in Britain, of all "foreign ships of war" within his jurisdiction since at least the end of 1852, noting destinations, state of readiness, nature and calibre of guns etc. (PRO FO 65 434).

transparently an example of the fine English hand of prevarication. The Factory, particularly its younger members, did not see why a toll distasteful to the owners of the ships in which their merchandise was carried should go towards paying the local Foreign Office consular appointee, who was only a token representative of the Russia Company, who provided them with frequent headaches, and towards whom they had perhaps developed a personal aversion⁸. According to Michele, Gwyer had apparently added that “non collection of dues would make no difference in my income because the amount of course would be made up to me by the Government” (*ibid.*). This sounds like British humour at its most savage because even Michele did not comment beyond his underscoring ‘of course’. It was, however, true that the Factory felt that the Foreign Office should foot the whole salary bill for their local Consul-General (GL 11,749, 206), and within a few years that arrangement was instituted.

Michele, obviously incandescent with rage, wrote two letters to the Russia Company in the month after his letter about the proposed Cronstadt Hospital, in which he framed the Factory refusal to countenance a re-imposition of dues collection as an act of defiance against the Company. Having been resident in Petersburg for a number of years, he was competent, if not skilled, in the use of the same sign carrying vehicles which had been deployed and understood by the Company and Anglo-Russian merchants for centuries: the weight of tradition (which also inheres in the British institution of Common Law), the inviolable rights and duties invested in systems of hierarchy, the mention of economic sanction. Thus he talks of the dangerous and suicidal course of “questioning the long established rights of the Russia Company”; “the collection of dues which had been unquestioned for upwards of 125 years – a period sufficiently long to give a prescriptive right to their enforcement” (GL 11,749, 216); “it is not competent to the Factory to question the authority of the Company or to do otherwise that acquiesce in their reasonable and lawful instructions”; “the Factors, as subordinate members of the Company, are liable to punishment (by fine or otherwise) for non-compliance with the wishes and orders of the Governor and Court of Assistants” (*ibid.*, 216, 217). He finished his first letter with the plaintive remark that he was “at a loss to comprehend what has given rise to the opposition to these dues that has latterly been manifested by some of the younger members of the factory here...”. In an unusual twist in his second letter Michele

⁸ Additionally, Michele was probably considered to have an ineradicable “stain on his character” for getting caught with his hand in the till. In a letter to the F.O., 29.1.1855, written upon the ‘request’ of the Earl of Clarendon – Secretary of State – Michele wordily endeavours to justify a tawdry incident in which he had “taken charge”, in 1853, of a locally disputed Bill of Exchange of 2,300 silver roubles. Of course, by January 1855, Michele had been expelled from Russia, with no firm expectations of ever returning, which deepens the stain. The disputed Bill was the savings of an eccentric English miser who died in apparent penury. Her nieces, first on the scene, had pocketed the document but, in trying to realise the cash it represented had been apprehended by Michele, who had demanded they hand the document over. He justified its non-return by invoking Russian law which allowed creditors up to two years to make claims against a deceased’s estate. He was merely ‘holding’ the money until that time. He was firmly rapped over the knuckles by the F.O. and ordered to “remit the proceedings of [the] Estate, without delay, to the person legally entitled to receive them” (PRO, FO 65 461 no. 7). This affair would not have done much for his standing with the Foreign Office any more than it would have endeared him to the Factory and its associates, who prided themselves on their public probity.

claimed local legal rights for the British Factory to regulate Port charges on their ships – “in conjunction with their Consul” – as stipulated by the Treaty of 1801 between Britain and Russia (*ibid.*, 217). This then forced Moberly into the contrary position of suggesting that, in fact, the Factory were *not* acknowledged by the Russian government – an uncharacteristic admission which is particularly interesting in light of the insistence to the contrary in Robert Cattley’s pamphlet in 1824, and the conflict outlined in case study C below.

The Company prevaricated. Moberly, in England on a visit, teased them by suggesting that in the case of a ship’s captain refusing to pay the charge for the Company’s so-called Commercial Agent certain unacceptable problems must arise.

In case of resistance it is difficult to point out the mode of proceeding. To stop the Captain or to arrest the Ship and Cargo would be attended with heavy responsibility, even if referred to the Consul for justification, whose assurances to the Russian authorities it may be presumed would be considered sufficient, but not so by the parties who incurred the risk or suffered a loss by their detention – this is a question of law upon which I am quite incompetent to give an opinion. (GL 11,749, 219, 6.4.1857.)

This is an amusing stretch of composition in terms of the understandings Moberly cleverly invokes while veiling them behind an apparent ingenuousness:- “it is difficult to point out the mode of proceeding...I am quite incompetent to give an opinion.” He raises the spectre of the drastic measures of arrest and detention of persons and property which enforcement would require, which, as many of the Court of Assistants were shipping magnates and all were involved with the Anglo-Russian trade, must have sent a collective chill down their mercantile spines. He suggests that Consular approval might mitigate the act with the Russian authorities, which is a double-bladed threat because not only had Michele been sent packing by the Russian authorities once already, it was anathema to all Anglo-Russian merchants, whether based in Britain or Russia, to draw the unfavourable attention of the Russian authorities for any reason at all⁹. He winds up his little lesson with a salutary mention of ‘the law’ which contains the inference that detained parties would not hesitate to make use of it in order to redress any losses incurred by their detention, something that would involve law suits both in Britain and, in all likelihood, Russia as well – the latter being a particularly drawn out, inconclusive, expensive and uncertain proceeding. Masterful! Charles, aged 70 at the time, belonged to one of the nodal families in the community. The Moberlys, like the Cattleys, might have served as a matrix for community understandings. Charles Moberly himself – with a Cayley mother, with two marriages and sets of offspring with women from equally long-term, though not quite so central, families; with a history of maternal and paternal relatives serving on the Court of Assistants of the Russia Company in London; and having served as Superintendent of the Petersburg and Cronstadt Churches since 1820 and as salaried

⁹ The collapse of internal accord in the Moscow British Church had led to the calling in of the Russian police to break up a meeting judged illegal by the Moscow Chaplain. Company reaction to the Chaplain’s action was one of outrage.

Company Agent since 1834 – was like an old wise spider at the centre of his web: he knew when it was worth pouncing on his prey and when it was not, he knew exactly where his prey was located within his network and he knew the most efficient (not necessarily the shortest or most direct) route by which to reach it.

The response was immediate. The Company reply was dated the day after Moberly's communication (indicating the postal system was better in London in those days than it is today). The Russia Company were seriously alarmed that the Factory might hint of coercion in the matter of dues collection but also retaliated by suggesting that such a course would jeopardise "other items in the scheme of Port Charges" – i.e. the church monies – "all of which now stand on the broad basis of common consent" (*ibid.*, 219, 6.4.1857). Moberly had dextrously lobbied the responsibility for the final decision of reintroducing an unwelcome toll squarely into the Company's Court but the Company refused to allow its authority to be invoked for the object in question and shifted the responsibility for reinstating the unwelcome toll back to the Factory – knowing that the Factory were determined to continue collection of the church subscription; knowing that, despite Moberly's hints, the Factory had tremendous influence over the ships' captains by virtue of providing them with homeward bound freight and, almost incidentally, conceding the Factory its local supremacy. The Factory capitulated grudgingly, adding the proviso "that before paying to the Russia Company's Agent any sums collected for the said Charge the Treasurer be directed to obtain from the Russia Company distinct authorization to do so" (*ibid.*, 220). The key here was that the 'final authority' would, by default, be the one obliged to deal with all objections, resistance and complaints. Michele would appear to have won his battle; but he did not win the war.

In a postscript to Michele's part of the tale: in November of the same year one of his daughters, Blanche, married Frederick Hill, the only one of de Michele's five children to 'marry in' to the community. Hill's mother was a Whishaw and his siblings were married into families central to community affairs: Cattley, Raitt, Drury, and others who linked Petersburg families though based in England¹⁰. Perhaps the timing was merely fortuitous. Witnesses to the wedding included Samuel Gwyer (whose tenure as Treasurer was over), Charles Bell (a previous Treasurer), Richard Wylie, John Jubb, and William Henley – all older members of long-term Petersburg families – and a couple of short-term diplomats. Interestingly, no Hills appear as witnesses, making the marriage one of a negligible number among community families at which a family member of both sides did not sign the Register as witness. Also notable was the absence of every single name which was to appear as Factory Treasurer for the remainder of the century – in effect, all "the younger members of the factory here" (*op. cit.*): no Cattleys, Whishaws, Carrs, Hubbards or their connections, nor any of a half dozen other families. Despite the marriage, and his apparent victory in the dues dispute, de Michele was marginalized by the Factory from then on; his name no longer appeared as witness to prestigious community weddings as it

¹⁰ Jim Whishaw writes of Fred's parents: "Henry Hill and Aunt Sarah were responsible for twelve children – James, Anne, Emily, Henry, William, Edward, Alexander, Frances, Frederick, Nicholas Stanton, Alfred Octavius and Charles James, and (now be prepared for a shock and do not faint!) sixty grandchildren!" (1992, 159.) It was a good broad net to get caught in – though Fred and Blanche did not, as it happened, produce any of those sixty, second generation descendants.

had regularly done before the Crimean War and there are only a couple of ominous references to him in the Company Minutes Books for the ensuing eight years.

In April 1858 his and McSwiney's Cronstadt hospital plan, repeated in a new round of letters to the Company, was rejected by the Court in favour of one put forward by Moberly, apparently on Moberly's personal authority because it did not receive later Factory endorsement. Nonetheless, in a laconic statement that might be postulated as summarising how their world functioned, it is recorded beside the resolution favouring Moberly's plan that "Mr Charles Moberly, the Company's Agent at St. Petersburg, attended the Court" (GL 11,741, 26.4.1858). Michele did not 'attend the Court'. Michele's signature as Her Britannic Majesty's Consul General did not appear again in the Church Registers but was replaced by that of Acting Consul Frederick Hill, his son-in-law, and in 1865 (i.e. validated in 1866), by that of Acting Consul John Michell whose brother, Thomas, became Consul-General in 1866, relegating John to an unspecified role at the Embassy (subsequently John re-took over from Thomas in 1875). By 1866, unrecorded machinations had led to a *volte face* on the part of the F.O. and the Company Minutes note that Lord Clarendon could no longer allow Her Majesty's Consul in Petersburg to remain the Company's Agent, the disputed dues were finally abolished and a letter sent to Michele dispensing with his services. Michele waited for a pension from the Company. It was sternly refused and all formal connection with him denied¹¹. It was suggested that he direct his request to the British Government which, according to the Company, had allowed the dues in the first place and was now responsible for ordering their cessation. Michele must apply to them. This he obviously did as a letter from the Foreign Office to British Ambassador Buchanan in St. Petersburg, 30.5.1866, reported that Michele's affairs had been arranged with the Treasury, apparently at Buchanan's instigation (UNL Bu 20/57).

Exit Charles Eastland de Michele.

CASE STUDY B: "ENGLISH GENTLEMEN WILL NOT WISH ME TO DWELL LONGER ON THIS FACT."

Commonplace contradiction does not imply incommensurability. To get the measure of human values behind these contradictions one must move from an analysis of the dominant culture to the analysis of the power relations between valuers (Gregory 1997, 11).

Act II, enter new Consul-General, Thomas Michell.

Tom was the eldest of three sons of John and his wife Amelia née Bishop who married in St. Petersburg in 1834. I have found no details of John the father prior to this date – or after it, for that matter – but the Bishops were not a high ranking family in the community and tended to marry 'out', principally to members of the German Lutheran Congregation. Amelia's brothers married a Reichert and a Tönnius of the Lutheran

¹¹ They conveniently forgot the pension they had provided the relict of Sam Swallow who had held the same position some eighty years earlier.

Church and Tom's cousin Frank married a Mankoffsky of whom nothing more is known, so the Bishop connections were worthless in community terms. Amelia's marriage to John in 1834 marks the first recorded appearance of the Michell family in Petersburg so there were no local allies in that direction either. John and Amelia must have done quite well, however, because their sons Thomas and John's consecutive F.O. appointments as Consuls-General indicate they must have been educated at some expense in England (private education being a diplomatic requisite at the time). Both Tom and his brothers John and Robert were, according to the memoirs of journalist John Baddeley, fluent in Russian "at a time when that was a very rare accomplishment for Englishmen" (1921, 392), although, also according to Baddeley, they were "notoriously anti-Russian in feeling" (*ibid.*). This latter assessment is endorsed by F.O. references to a speech made by Tom early in 1866 where he spoke out against the Russian Government at an event which British Ambassador Buchanan insisted was "not a public function" (UNL Bu 49/117). Michell received an F.O. caution about his conduct, though Ambassador Buchanan was obviously so reliant on his assistance – saying that the Russians looked on Michell as a native and that his services were invaluable – that he personally excused his outspokenness (UNL Bu 49/149). From the perspective of metacultural commentary in the English merchant community, the possibility that the Russians looked on Michell as a native, that his antecedents did not accrue him local status, and that he had publicly expressed anti-Russian sentiments – anathema! – provided the new Consul-General with some major drawbacks.

Ambassador Buchanan championed Tom in other ways with the F.O. Just before Eastland de Michele gave up the post of Consul-General, Sir A. Layard at the F.O. wrote to Buchanan that he had been told that "no man can live in St Petersburg like a Gentleman under £1,500 a year" (UNL Bu 20/47, 10.1.1866) which, Layard said, supported Michele's claim for a pay increase. Michell replaced Michele ("promoted", which indicates Michell had already been working at the Embassy before his appointment), and Buchanan began to lobby for a similar salary for his protégé, noting that although Michell was grateful for his promotion, the salary increase which came with it would not allow him to keep a carriage (UNL Bu 49/107, 17.1.1866). Keeping one's own carriage and horses was an important signifier of gentlemanly status, both in England and St. Petersburg of the time¹². Presumably a raise was not forthcoming and Buchanan records in a later letter to the F.O. that Michell has had to send his carriage away, and that he would not have married had he known he would have to do this¹³ (UNL

¹² Harriet Hardie mentioned her pride in her carriage and horses on several occasions and gave Lily Ramsay and her husband detailed instructions as to the method of leasing a carriage in St. Petersburg which could be passed off as their own. McSwiney complained pathetically in a letter to the Russia Company that "my predecessors could keep carriage and horses, I cannot make the place pay my expenses though I have neither horse nor carriage" (GL 11,749, 262). Mary's family, though they had a coachman, Alexander, did not have a carriage either and hired one as required for events like balls and dinner parties. Her cousin Jim, on the other hand, did keep a carriage, though Mary commented without much sympathy in 1891 that Jim must be having hard times as he had had to give his carriage up.

¹³ Michell had married the year before at the British Embassy in Berlin, staying with the Ambassador, Baron Napier, who had recently been transferred there from St. Petersburg. Nothing

Bu 49/109, 14.2.1866). Michell's salary was raised the following month from £500 to £800 per annum (well below the sum mentioned as being requisite for living in Petersburg like a Gentleman, but four times more than Arthur Riddle was offered when he began his stint at Cronstadt in 1881). Michell then presumably took matters in his own hands because three months later Baron Hammond wrote to Buchanan from the F.O., saying that he had received a letter from "Mitchell", which he had read with disgust, and warning that if any more letters of this nature were sent, he would have to inform the Secretary of State. Hammond concluded with the opinion that Michell's salary was adequate (UNL Bu 20/73, 13.6.1866). Thomas Michell seemed to have a knack of making enemies in the wrong places¹⁴.

The new Consul-General clashed with community opinion almost immediately; the arena in which the conflict was played out being the disputed Hospital for British Seamen at Cronstadt. In 1858, as mentioned above, the Russia Company endorsed the plan presented at a Court meeting in London by Moberly, rather than that of Michele and the Revd. McSwiney, which was to levy a toll on shipping¹⁵. Correspondence leading up to the Company resolution indicates that Moberly was suggesting that application be made to the local Russian Naval Hospital for a wing to be set aside for the exclusive use of British sailors, a poorly researched proposal because the Russian authorities would have nothing to do with it, but further indication that influence could effect decisions even against the weight of common sense and real circumstances. The Factory, meanwhile, had passed their own resolution that they would contribute one third of the 4,000 Rs required to set up a hospital in Cronstadt under the supervision of a Dr Schwanck, "a medical gentleman of talent and respectability at Cronstadt – where he has long resided & been employed as Police and Town doctor" (GL 11,749, 233). Moberly informed the Company

is known of his bride but Baddeley noted that his brother John married an heiress, indicating, perhaps, that Tom did not.

¹⁴ Baddeley recounts an anecdote told him by Count Shouvaloff some years later which described Tom Michell's final downfall and departure from Petersburg: "the Emperor had, or thought he had, reason to resent on the part of Tom Michell...not only political animosity but private and personal spite." In 1874, when the Duke of Edinburgh was guest at the Winter Palace, Tom entered the Palace to call on one of the Duke's suite but became lost and found himself in the Emperor's quarters, "face to face with offended Majesty". According to Shouvaloff, Alexander II complained that he could not even find refuge in his private apartments from Michell's distasteful presence. "Get rid of him...I won't have him here any longer. Arrange it any way you like. Let them make him a Duke, an Ambassador, anything – so long as he leaves Russia." (Baddeley, 1921, 393). Tom Michell left and was replaced by his brother John. An apocryphal story? Who can tell. Certainly Tom would not have found many supporters either among the community or at the F.O. to defend him against expulsion.

¹⁵ McSwiney alone stressed the moral aspects when he wrote to the Russia Company decrying the "most heartless proposition...that after the payment of monthly wage, and such observance as the Merchant Seaman's Act renders imperative, ship owners and merchants have nothing further to do with the thew and muscle of the material agent by which their prosperity is continued. I suppose no statesman would deserve well of the Republic who could fling in the face of the people such a pitiless piece of selfishness" (GL 11,749, 229, 16.3.1858). This view was not common discursive currency. What *did* travel were predictable references to the disgrace which the present arrangements reflected upon "us" (ibid. 211, 13.2.1857) and the need that the proposed hospital be properly equipped lest the high sounding title "British Hospital...should be found a burlesque" (ibid., 229, 16.3.1858) – once again, stress is laid on outward appearances that add lustre or otherwise to the British profile abroad.

in June that the Factory had agreed to pay *half* the 4,000 Rs if the Company would pay the other half and the Court of Assistants resolved that they would do so (GL 11,741/13, 30.6.1858)¹⁶. The Factory Minutes are not available for this period so it is not known how this decision was reached but later evidence indicates that it was also finally agreed by the Factory committee that some kind of toll *would* be levied on British shipping at Cronstadt to cover the hospital's future running costs, though this was referred to as "voluntary subscriptions" and was something in the nature of an experiment (GL 11,749, 345). Schwanck received these latter monies as revenue for the work and time he invested in his patients, though they were collected by the Cronstadt Vice-Consuls, Richard Fishwick and, later, Walter Maynard.

By 1865, Moberly was 78 and could no longer undertake the trips to Cronstadt, Moscow and Archangel required to oversee the Russia Company's church properties in those places, and Edward Cattley¹⁷ who, according to McSwiney, "alone of the various gentlemen in St. Petersburg has taken a lively interest...in the [church] premises or the relations between Chaplain and English Colony at Cronstadt" (ibid. 5.5.1865), was appointed Russia Company Agent in Moberly's place. Charles Moberly's sister, Frances, was Edward Cattley's mother. Cattley, as Acting Treasurer for the Factory in 1864, had been at the centre of the storm which blew up that year over the Company's rejection of the Factory-elected Revd. Arthur Thompson, and had withstood Company pressure to accept the Company's selection of Chaplain, but they did not seem to hold his victory against him. There were, after all, many members of the Court of Assistants to whom a Cattley could trace a kin or business connection. Edward doubled the stipend the Company was offering him for taking on the responsibility and wrote that he attached high value to the confidence placed in him by the Governor and Court of Assistants and that he would use his "influence for the benefit of the *Company's Chapels* in Russia" (GL 11,749, 304, 14.7.1865, emphasis added to highlight Cattley's flexibility of discourse use: only one year earlier he had fought the Company with the declaration that the Chapel was the Factory's property). That he was also free to preside as Factory Treasurer between the years 1869 and 1874 inclusive was not apparently regarded as constituting a conflict of interest.

The first recorded act of Consul-General John Michell, who was also Attaché and Translator to the Embassy, was to visit the English Hospital (as it was inevitably called in preference to its official name 'Hospital for British Seamen') in Cronstadt on 23rd June 1866, some three weeks after he took office. It had been in operation for seven years by

¹⁶ The Company may have regretted this expenditure when, two years later, after a seven year struggle against the Merchant Shipping Amendment Act of 1853 which abrogated their right to collect dues at British ports on Russian imports, they "voluntarily" extinguished the dues (GL 11,756, 32), leaving them only the dividends on their investments (which brought in approximately £2,000 p.a.) and reduced fees paid by those who still wished to become 'free' of the Company – no longer compulsory – because of the perceived advantage and influence gained by being a member of the organization. In a good year the dues had amassed approximately £6-7,000, plus perhaps another £1,000 in fees paid by merchants to become 'free' of the Company, as well as their investment dividends (GL 11,893, 6).

¹⁷ Edward was the eldest of his generation of Cattleys, as may be recalled from chapter six. With his family connections he confidently spoke for the whole community.

this stage, still under the supervision of the estimable Dr. Schwanck and a committee now comprising the Revd. McSwiney¹⁸, Walter Maynard (the local Vice-Consul), several of the more important ships' captains and the Consul-General himself. The purpose of the visit was apparently to establish that the present building was unsuitable and that a new one should be purchased. The first resulting ripple of discord was a complaint made by McSwiney to the Company in October of the same year that the proposed new building was damp, dilapidated and much too expensive¹⁹. He also objected being listed as one of the new committee by Chairman Michell as he had resigned after the first meeting on account of the treatment he and Dr Schwanck ("who was most coarsely addressed from the chair") had received. He asked for a year's leave to return to England and £50 towards his travel costs which was granted (GL 11,749, 335, 12.10.1866). Based on the number of documents retained and filed by the Russia Company concerning the controversy that was brewing, it can only have been equalled for general breadth of effect by the concurrent disputes in Moscow over charges of ritualistic practices being laid against the incumbent Chaplain by some members of the congregation which produced an enormous amount of vituperative correspondence between 1866 and 1873.

At least six different versions exist of the series of incidents comprising this strand of the story which, compared, provide a vivid illustration of the movement and negotiation of thematically similar discourse items over a period of approximately a year. They include, as well as the fairly terse references in the Company Minutes' Book and mentions of the incident in correspondence between Ambassador Buchanan and the Foreign Office:

1) A pamphlet printed by Dr Schwanck which purports to refute charges of negligence in managing the hospital and caring for its patients, and his misappropriation, or, at least, inefficiency in use of, the revenue collected from British shipping. It was published in response to a printed circular containing the charges which was laid before the British Factory by the new Chairman of the Hospital Committee, Consul-General Michell (a document no longer extant). Schwanck, a Russian citizen of Germanic background, stood to lose the most in this conflict in material terms as he was threatened with dismissal, and his composition largely reflects this perspective (GL 11,749, 345, 19.10.1866).

2) A pamphlet printed in response to #1 by Dr Carrick, the Embassy physician, who had accompanied Michell on his inspection on 23rd June and written the report concerning the state of the hospital on which Michell had based his charges of medical negligence (*ibid.* 25.11.1866).

3) A series of letters which passed between the Revd. McSwiney and Sir Andrew Buchanan, the British Ambassador to Petersburg²⁰, between the 18th and the 21st

¹⁸ McSwiney was a popular member of the Petersburg community. Though of Irish extraction he was regarded as an English gentleman, his sons went to a good Public School in England and he was often mentioned in the community records in affectionate and respectful terms.

¹⁹ There is no data on the subject, but it is likely, based on precedent, that the property was owned by someone of influence in the community who wished to part with it on advantageous terms.

²⁰ Buchanan persists in calling the Chaplain "Swiney" in his later correspondence with the F.O. – ignorance? spite?

November (on a matter affected by the dispute), and a refutation by McSwiney of the arguments published by Carrick. These items McSwiney had assembled and also published in pamphlet form 8.12.1866 (*ibid.*). The correspondence with the Ambassador touched on the real issue of the controversy, as far as it was perceived by the Englishmen involved: accusations of conduct unbecoming to an English gentleman which were made, or imputed to have been made, against Consul-General Michell in Schwanck's pamphlet. Poor Schwanck's livelihood does not appear to be of very great concern, even to McSwiney, though his 'good name' is referenced occasionally.

4) A long letter written by Ambassador Buchanan to the Foreign Office, 4.12.1866, supporting Michell to McSwiney's detriment, thereby drawing official circles in Britain into the controversy – a course of action guaranteed to deeply offend and irritate both Company and Factory circles. This document was forwarded to the Russia Company, presumably passing along their usual channels of influence, and kept in their files (*ibid.*, 342). It resulted in a Company request to McSwiney to explain the circumstances of the disagreement to them, adding that "as it is indispensable that the Chaplain of the Russia Company should be on friendly terms with the Representative of His Majesty at St. Petersburg", McSwiney should "open the door to a reconciliation in your reply by withdrawing any offensive remarks which, in the heat of the moment, you may have made" (GL 11,741, 15.1.1867).

5) McSwiney's very lengthy response to the Company request (GL, 11,749, 345), in which he refutes, point by point, charges made against him in a letter written by Michell to the F.O., presumably on *their* demand that Michell, as an officially appointed representative of Her Britannic Majesty, clarify *his* side of the disagreement. This is not dated but Company Agent Edward Cattley forwarded the document, with various evidentiary enclosures and a covering note on 1.2.1867.

6) A letter from Edward Cattley to the Company, also written 1.2.1867 (GL 11,749, 347) in which he summarises the controversy, presumably from the perspective of prevailing community attitudes. This final letter apparently provided some sort of closure because the subject makes no further recorded appearance beyond a brief note from the F.O. to the Governor of the Russia Company, 8.3.1867, thanking him on behalf of Chief Secretary of State, Lord Stanley, "for the trouble taken in the matter of the dispute between Mr. Consul Michell and the Revd. McSwiney" and concurring with the Governor that it was not a matter that should have been officially brought before the Secretary of State (*ibid.*, 351).

The events themselves are not really subject to dispute, though what was *said* to have been said by the various parties and how the events were interpreted and reproduced do vary substantially. Michell certainly took the Embassy Physician, Dr. Carrick, with him to inspect the Cronstadt hospital and Carrick certainly criticised the management of the hospital by Dr. Schwanck ("condemned our lazarette in an exaggerated report", was how the Russia Company Minutes re-phrased a letter received from McSwiney (GL 11,741/13, 4.10.1866)). Singled out for specific condemnation was the treatment – or lack thereof – of one seaman who, it is circumspectly implied, was lying insensible in his own urine as a result of the absence of a certain necessary "apparatus", presumably a catheter. Schwanck was absent on the day of the inspection, procuring said apparatus in Petersburg

as a result of McSwiney's own written remonstrance to Schwanck on the subject a day or two prior to the inspection – a remonstrance which McSwiney had made 'official' by also copying into the Hospital Committee Book. This letter McSwiney wished to withdraw, however, when Schwanck, who had procured the appliance in compliance with the Chaplain's letter, demonstrated that the apparatus was useless "while the man was in a state of Idiotcy" (#5). Some weeks after the inspection, when Michell, as Chairman of the meeting at which Schwanck was so 'coarsely addressed', refused to disregard the copied letter, McSwiney publicly tore it out of the records. This must have been quite a convocation.

Also not in dispute is that McSwiney and the local Vice-Consul, Walter Maynard, met Michell and Carrick in Cronstadt on 23rd June and attended them on their inspection until the *felsher* (hospital dresser) and Dr Frost, Schwanck's occasional locum, appeared, whereupon the Chaplain and the Vice-Consul left the party. Disputed is whether Schwanck had been informed of the projected visit, McSwiney concurring with Schwanck that he had not, Michell and Carrick asserting that he had, and that Dr Frost was "a medical man whom Dr Schwanck had deputed to attend upon us during his absence" (#5). McSwiney included, as evidence contradicting this, a letter from Dr. Frost himself in which Frost states that there was a standing order that he or another doctor were to be summoned in Schwanck's absence and that he "was ignorant that the Consul or anyone else was expected to visit, or inspect the Hospital" (*ibid.*). This is germane to the real crux of the controversy – the charges of dishonourable conduct – in that the inspection party finished up in the consulting room (minus Maynard and the Revd. McSwiney, who was, at that stage, still Secretary and Treasurer to the Hospital Committee), where Michell called for the hospital register and then examined it with the help of the *felsher*. As a result of the data he collected from that source, he charged Schwanck with making an exorbitant profit on the sick in his care, implying that Schwanck received 3 Rs 50 cop. per diem per patient (based on total revenues collected for the eight years) and expended only 50 cop. per diem on food, which the Consul claimed was the sum Schwanck had estimated each patient would cost per diem in 1858²¹. Michell had reached the figure of 3 Rs 50 cop. by making an estimate of ten days care per patient, based on the register figures for 1858 and 1866, distributed over a sum total of 996 'indoor' patients during the eight years (#1). Schwanck argues fairly conclusively that not only is the calculation based on inadequate evidence, it fails to take into account either outpatient treatment or all the other costs of running a hospital, most of which continue whether there are patients or not. His arguments, however, do not

²¹ Schwanck denied making any such estimate: the 50 cop. was the suggested subsidy by the shipmasters for the treatment of their sick seamen, the remainder to come from generally levied tolls. Schwanck added, in a more or less irrelevant aside, that he had originally proposed that "cases of syphilis should be attended without extra cost to the sick men, to prevent their appearing to [sic] late at the hospital. But the majority of [English] captains present objected, and considered that these patients in consequence of the cost of the medicines employed, the linen spoilt etc., and as the disease was brought on by their own misconduct, should pay at least part of the expenses, and it was settled that for *them*, the charge should be 60 *not* 50 cop. extra" (#1, p. 7, emphasis in text). Syphilis was not a topic to which an Englishman would have alluded in a public pamphlet. The attitudes of the English ships' captains were conventional.

constitute successfully ongoing discourse items in the context of the conflict as a whole and, in truth, poor Schwanck is rather overlooked from that point on. He was the outsider as far as every one else was concerned; his rhetoric was purely concerned with justifying his actions in order to retain his livelihood; and he lost his position in any case. The few lines in his twelve page pamphlet which most interested the English parties to the dispute were those concerning the ethics of investigating 'the hospital register' (according to Michell and Carrick) or Schwanck's 'private journals' (according to the Doctor himself and the Revd. McSwiney) in Schwanck's absence and without his permission:

The real number of patients could only be gleaned from my books, which until now, I have given up to no person. But Her Majesty's Consul, instead of applying to me, went into my consulting room in my absence, and after searching in my *private journals* extracted perhaps the information he required. *English gentlemen will not wish me to dwell longer upon this fact.* (#1, 6, emphasis added.)

The implications are unmistakeable. The introduction of the term 'gentlemen' juxtaposed to Michell's actions draws into play all the weight of meaning carried by the word in the sphere into which it was inserted. English 'gentlemen' do not read other people's 'private journals', or indeed intrude upon the 'private' space of their equals or superiors in any way at all (that of those lower down the status scale was not similarly sacrosanct). Michell searched in Schwanck's "private journals" in his absence and without his licence, therefore the accusation has been made that Michell is not a gentleman, or, at the very least, that he has behaved in an ungentlemanly fashion, an accusation made by a rank outsider – a Russian doctor²². Worse was to follow, but first, let us examine the meaning of the severity and breadth of eruption which resulted from the precise word choice and order used in Schwanck's publication.

This was something new. Or newish. The term 'gentleman' had always defied precise definition though until about the middle of the seventeenth century it had generally referred to a 'landed proprietor' (Stone & Stone 1984, 7-8). Like sumptuary laws, it was supposed to apply to an exclusive class of persons. Like sumptuary laws, it proved impossible to police. The eighteenth century saw an opening of ranks whereby an 'independence' from the connection between work and income which governed middle class life, and which was best afforded by the purchase of landed estates, gentrified many ambitious members of the non-gentry classes. The possession of land and the income derived from it helped float even younger sons into the mainstream of patronage and then their own personal influence. As "Trollope made Archdeacon Grantley observe in the mid-nineteenth century 'land gives so much more than the rent. It gives position and influence and political power, to say nothing about the game.'" (ibid., 14.) An independent income derived from family land in the early stages of career activities sanctioned by the 'gentlemanly' code – army, navy, law, divinity – was usually necessary

²² This fixation with the concept of 'gentleman' was not lost upon the Russian hosts of this English community. Interestingly, the word has been 'borrowed' directly into the Russian language, appearing as *dzhyentl'myen*, though the exact implications of the word when used by a Russian are no doubt rather different than when used by a nineteenth-century Englishman or Englishwoman.

to ensure a future competence and independence of one's own. "An eighteenth-century gentleman did not give out that he was looking for a 'job'" (W. J. Reader 1966, 5). As I discussed in chapter five, by the mid-nineteenth century, the first Reform Bill in 1832 which enfranchised the middle classes, and the educational institution in England known as the Public School, enabled a growing number of transformations of even the sons of wealthy tradesmen into gentlemen, at least in certain contexts. It must also be remembered that, as this comparatively tiny and marginalized negotiation of terms was being conducted in St. Petersburg, Cronstadt, the halls of the F.O. and the Russia Company, the second Reform Bill was being fought through British Parliament²³. The status of English 'gentleman' had never been so accessible or so poorly-defined, so broadly desired or so fragile.

Greg Urban points out that "consciousness" – in this limited case a consciousness of the weak links in the armour of marginal aspirants to the title of 'gentleman' such as Michell – "is, in some measure, at least, lodged in the overt meanings carried by circulating signs – especially publicly occurring discourse" (2001, 181). 'Not an English gentleman' was such a sign, and its selection as an insult was not an accident. Metacultural evaluations which informed and were informed by the structures of more stable cultural artefacts and events than this one – such as the institutions of hospitals, doctors and committees, consular and diplomatic services, church and chaplain, inspections and mass publication etc. – which endorsed or denigrated particular behaviour and qualities in individuals (and groups of individuals defined as belonging together), provided the accuser with knowledge of the surest route to effective retaliation. Forget the figures of profit and loss, Michell's inadequate empirical evidence or inaccurate math, Carrick's possible misjudgement about the leaking seaman or exaggeration of the hospital's poor hygiene – these items lost salience as the dispute progressed. The most offensive comment, and the fulcrum of the controversy as it spread into the larger local world, was the implication that 'Her Majesty's Consul is not a gentleman'. The conflict quickly became one, not about hospital hygiene and accounts, but about the definition of a gentleman, about who was, who was not, and why. It was a metacultural turbulence that was very situated in time and circumstance. The same insult would not have been received in quite the same way in periods of less fluid attachment of meaning to the term 'gentleman', nor would it be as applicable in the 'English' world today – one suspects it might be merely humorous. The aspersion gained additional profile from the fact that it was attached to an accredited representative of Her Majesty's Government – all such appointees were required to be 'gentlemen' (though membership of the General Consular Service never commanded the same degree of social prestige as that of the Diplomatic Service). Nonetheless, consular appointees were drawn from the professional classes and the majority had attended public school, though not, perhaps, Eton or Harrow (Hughes 2000, 102).

²³ Also salutary to remember, though having little bearing on the case-study under analysis, is that at about the same time Russia sold Alaska to the United States, President Lincoln was assassinated, the Prince of Wales and the Russian Emperor Alexander III suffered unsuccessful assassination attempts, the Suez Canal was opened and soon afterwards 'bought' by the British Government, the Franco-Prussian war and siege of Paris were undertaken. It was a busy globe.

By this stage in the community's history, the Factory was more of a focus of generalised mercantile/community concerns than the exclusionary body which circumstances at the beginning of the century had made appropriate. Lacking the Minutes of Factory meetings of this later era, this is conjecture, but inferences may be drawn from other sources that the Factory had become a looser knit organization, more inclusive of 'people like us', regardless of actual Factory commitment, but correspondingly more exclusive about those who were not 'us' in social terms. The criteria had changed, as the juggled worlds of 'home' and 'here' – or 'there' – had changed. Resonating, reflecting or replicating: the world of the Anglo-Russian merchants, in order that its members be identified with whom they wished to be identified, required that 'people like us' possess the qualities which were valorized in the world to which they attached their primary allegiance: the world of costly English education with its conferment of club membership in elite English circles, the ties to influential England-based families, yet with simultaneous understanding of local signs, local meanings, local metacultural comment²⁴. This was the bi-partite 'world' which the protagonists were endeavouring to explain and the world into which they were trying to launch their understandings, with the final outcome – the 'winning interpretation', so to speak – being inserted back into that world as a cultural artefact which would have to be reckoned with in the future.

This is how the 'new' works its way into the present in unobtrusive ways. "The innovator is an intersection point, so to speak, between two lines of motion: the historical motion of consciousness from person to person over time and space, and the movement of something from the world into the consciousness that beholds it" (Urban, 2001, 182). Urban goes on from this suggestion to demonstrate, via analysis of the form and forums of film reviews, the intersections and uncouplings of metacultural comment and the films themselves as cultural objects (though the latter also, naturally, incorporate metacultural comment of a less obvious sort). I employed much the same sort of method in this case study, with the undisputed series of incidents representing local culture at a primary plane (or conventionally structured 'reality') and the differing interpretations representing the metaculture which both intersected with (and travelled through its recipients relatively uncoupled from), the basic structure of event. Everyone involved, except Dr. Schwanck – ostensibly the prime protagonist – shared a consciousness of what was at stake²⁵; no one, with the same exception, was nearly as interested in the future of Cronstadt seamen's hospital and its medical supervisor as in the social definition of the local Consul-General, a definition that would operate in future categorizations of people and groups in the community's sphere, and it is with this latter subject that most of the versions concern themselves²⁶.

²⁴ It must be noted that the older adults of this particular era were, on the whole, probably not products of the elitist costly education to which I refer. They were, however, the parents who made the decision to pulp their offspring through that system, and there is no one so committed to an innovative course of action as the convert.

²⁵ Schwanck was like a blind man trying to find his way to the heart of a village: he knew neither where, nor what, the sign posts were. In his ignorance, he misused them, or used others which had no relevance to local topography.

²⁶ I imagine that the deployment and recognition of salient sign carrying vehicles in circulating talk act as a trigger that switches people into a mode of group recognition, perhaps at the expense of

I coded the content of the available material, sentence by sentence, listing references according to categories such as Schwanck's job prospects, hospital cleanliness, the accounts, honour, accusations of deceit, accusations of error and so on. Although the word 'gentleman' itself only appears in Schwanck's document and in Edward Cattley's final summation of community viewpoint, one can code as referencing the term a variety of accusations and counter-accusations: Michell's perusal of Schwanck's private/public 'books'; those which charge others with inaccuracy, exaggeration or outright falsehood or which frame the writer as entirely veracious; all mentions of honourable and dishonourable behaviour, status and official position; more general behavioural slurs such as the inappropriateness and harshness of Schwanck's humiliation at a public meeting, satirical or justificatory references to McSwiney's friendship for Schwanck, the Ambassador's bias, the regrettable nature of the controversy which has been 'forced' on the writer; and the requirement for apology on any of these grounds. Even Schwanck, although he focuses extensively on justifying the various accusations of hospital and medical mismanagement which Michell had levelled at him – 46% of his pamphlet is devoted to this and his resulting employment insecurity – understands that there are other issues involved, 52% of his commentary makes mention of Michell's dishonourable behaviour, his inaccuracies and the exaggerations of Carrick's medical report and he concludes by saying:

Mr Michell may be most disinterested in his efforts to establish another hospital, but those efforts could have been made without heaping invective upon me at a large meeting of Englishmen...and without endeavouring to blacken the character of a man, whose hair has grown gray in an honorable profession as a naval medical officer and private practitioner...(GL 11749/345, 9).

As with every single contributor to the record, Schwanck also refers to the breadth of dissemination of the scandal. Presumably, if accusations could have been contained within a tiny circle, no one would have felt the need to also go public; but once Michell did, with his public invective and the printed circular which he laid before the Factory, the whole situation entered the public realm and had to be resolved there, as each protagonist felt himself obliged to defend himself from repercussions.

Carrick's document followed close on the heels of Schwanck's. As physician to the Embassy, responsible for the medical report of the hospital and party to the inspection of the disputed 'books', he was bound to find Schwanck's document personally humiliating, as well as being a natural supporter of his Embassy colleague. 47% of his comments reiterate what he had initially reported about the material state of the hospital, though much of his reportage is coloured by implications that Schwanck was overreacting to perfectly reasonable criticism of the single case of the incontinent seaman and the generally dirty state of hospital doors and windows, though the details of the latter

personal inclinations. The process of recognition, perhaps of discussion leading to recognition, backgrounds immediate self-orientation in order to bring it into line with circulating talk. High profile incidents engendering much talk are, naturally, most effective in this department. Without the links which are part of the profile of relatively close/closed communities, individual proclivity has the greatest freedom (also noted by Tönnies 1955, 53).

“cannot be cited in this pamphlet”. Carrick had a better understanding of the ‘delicacy’ of his compatriots and potential audience than Schwanck and did not intend to alienate them by ‘coarseness’. 50% of Carrick’s composition throws accusations of falsehood and dishonourable conduct out of his own and Michell’s court and back into Schwanck’s. Carrick responded with thinly veiled fury to suggestions that he had exaggerated his report, making probably the most offensive remark of the campaign: “Dr Schwanck ...has borrowed largely from his imagination, which stands in the relation of father – for want, I presume, of a more legitimate and respectable parent – to most of his facts” (#2, 4). The allusion to the bastard nature of Schwanck’s rendition of the facts would not have been lost on any readers. He also expresses the view that the “grossly insulting insinuations – [the remark about “English gentlemen”] – with reference to the chairman’s examinations of the hospital books can only be atoned for by an ample apology on Dr Schwanck’s part” (#2, 12). Carrick also notes that if Schwanck’s pamphlet had been confined to the small circle involved he could have let it pass without answer but its large distribution among people unacquainted with the subject required Carrick to publicly defend himself from the erroneous statements it contained.

By the end of October it had become public knowledge that the most objectionable sentence in Schwanck’s document had not actually been written by Schwanck himself, but had been included at Mr McSwiney’s instigation when the Doctor asked his friend to review the letter before it was printed. This raised the temperature of the debate considerably. It was an *insider*, the Revd. Mr McSwiney, who had framed Michell as a ‘not an English gentleman’! Not an *outsider* who could not be expected to know any better and whose accusations could be dismissed as being made by someone who was himself a ‘not an English gentleman’ in any case. When the new committee under the chairmanship of Michell himself, called upon Schwanck to apologise for his accusation, McSwiney had come quickly forward to admit that he was personally responsible for the addition, producing both Schwanck’s initial manuscript and the one in which he had made his changes as evidence that Schwanck was innocent of the imputation which had caused the furore. This brought a range of new players and exterior events into the dispute.

His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, was due in St. Petersburg to attend the wedding of the future Emperor Alexander III to Princess Dagmar of Denmark, the Prince’s sister-in-law, and a deputation “had been selected at a public meeting” of the British Residents²⁷ (#3, 3), to be presented to the Crown Prince of Britain by the British Ambassador. High profile members of the community were authorized to add to their number by personal invitation. The Revd. Mr Thompson, the Petersburg Chaplain, had accordingly invited McSwiney who had accepted what he regarded as a courtesy due to his public position. A week later, McSwiney received a letter from Thompson in which the invitation was rescinded on the direction of the British Ambassador who would not

²⁷ Edward Cattley’s summarising letter, #6, indicates that, predictably, the so-called ‘British Residents’ were actually a Factory appointed committee. One of those chosen to be part of the ceremony was James Thornton, owner of one of the largest woollen mills in the Petersburg area, who, apparently “did not like the reception the Prince of Wales gave the deputation. I fancy it must have been the walking backwards which displeased him”, or so writes his son (LRA 1072/5).

present to the Prince of Wales a gentleman who had accused “Her Majesty’s Consul of dishonourable conduct with respect to a transaction in which his proceedings had received the entire approval of Her Majesty’s Government” (cited in #3). This might all sound like bad vaudeville but it was fast escalating into real trouble in the community and the inclusion of the Ambassador brought the Foreign Office and then the Russia Company into play as adjudicators.

McSwiney produced the greatest part of retained literature on the affair: his first pamphlet in which he publishes the barely civil correspondence between himself and the Ambassador on the subject of his exclusion from the deputation – which clearly deeply hurt him, though he frames it as a slur on his public position and the standing of his congregation – and a brief rebuttal of most of Carrick’s assertions; and a second, much longer essay sent to the Russia Company, in which he refutes, point by point, statements Michell had made in the public letter which sparked the controversy. 36 % of his total subject matter deals with the material state of the hospital and Schwanck’s role in it, mostly of a favourable nature, a decreasing figure which demonstrates how the focus was shifting from the original cause of argument to its repercussions. Over 6 % deals with McSwiney’s wrongful and ignominious exclusion from the public deputation to greet His Royal Highness, 3% regrets the breadth of dissemination of the disagreement while stating that he reserved the right to publish on his own behalf, and over 55% re-interprets the behaviour of protagonists in terms of honour and honesty, and discusses who should offer an apology to whom. No one is willing to do this. McSwiney denies that he meant to challenge the Consul with “dishonourable conduct”, saying that he only wished to imply that the examination of the private books of a respectable medical practitioner “was ungenerous and showed a want of delicacy”. He goes on to say, however, that if a stronger construction had been put upon his words than he meant he was prepared to withdraw the remark relating to the books, and express his regret if it should have conveyed more (#3, 10). Framed in opposition to the clearly ungentlemanly behaviour of examining a doctor’s private journals the withdrawal is a meaningless token.

At this point Buchanan wrote to the Foreign Office (UNL Bu 49/124, 5.11.1866) outlining the problem from his perspective and apologising for what he terms Michell’s “over-zealousness” in the matter of Schwanck’s pamphlet. Called upon to amplify the circumstances he wrote Lord Stanley (Secretary of State) a letter a month later in which he repeats verbatim what he had written to McSwiney about being unable to present to the Prince of Wales a gentleman who had accused Her Majesty’s Consul of dishonourable conduct, an accusation which, as I mentioned above, was passed on to the Russia Company who had then called upon Mr McSwiney for an explanation. Meanwhile, Buchanan launched his own retaliation, though only the outcome has been recorded. Presumably discovering that McSwiney did not possess a ‘licence’ from the Bishop of London he applied to the Russian Minister of the Interior to make this compulsory for practicing Russia Company Chaplains. This move backfired humiliatingly when the Revd. Edward Bindloss of Archangel also received instructions from the local Military Governor that divine service in the British Church in that place must be interdicted until he could likewise produce the correct licence. Bindloss was only licensed by the Bishop of Chichester, but he was also the brother-in-law of Arthur Clarke, a wealthy Petersburg-

based merchant, who owned the church building in Archangel and had influential community and Russia Company connections. Cattley records all this in a letter to the Russia Company, 22.12.1866, in which he also mentions the “painful discussions that have arisen” between the Ambassador and McSwiney. He notes, however, that Buchanan, on application by Arthur Clarke to remedy the situation had “kindly, and with promptitude, communicated with the Authorities” and prevented the Archangel interdiction from taking effect. Cattley further observes, without comment, that McSwiney is also liable to interdiction at any moment (GL 11,749, 344). The Secretary of the Russia Company, in a public gesture of support for McSwiney against Buchanan, personally approached the Bishop of London to expedite supply of the requisite licences (*ibid.*, 353).

The exchange of letters culminated in February with McSwiney’s laborious refutations of the accusations made by Michell in the original document, with attached corroborative statements from Dr Frost the locum, Mr Maynard, the Cronstadt Vice-Consul, Bernard Whishaw and Dr Handyside in St Petersburg (the two latter men being among the most nodal characters in terms of kin connections in the merchant community) and a memorial from 52 British Shipmasters testifying to McSwiney’s (Schwanck is no longer in the picture) constant and unwearied attention to sick British seamen.

Edward Cattley’s summary of the state of play at the end of the game was attached to this in the Company archives. In Cattley’s rendition of events Schwanck is briefly exonerated: Cattley is “vexed and grieved that the Father of a Family, a Gentleman and an officer of high standing in His Imperial Majesty’s Navy should have been thus attacked by a man so much his younger.” Cattley assures the Court that “There is no doubt that the books in question were private,” thereby reinforcing McSwiney’s indirect accusation of ungentlemanly behaviour. The Revd. Mr Thompson is condemned for denying to Buchanan that he had already invited McSwiney to attend the deputation to the Prince of Wales when Buchanan vetoed his presence. “[O]ur goodhearted Minister was cut to the quick; the Revd. Thompson should have scorned the shadow of an untruth...Thus you will observe that one error led to another and that Her Britannic Majesty’s Ambassador, the Second Secretary and Consul Michell, the Reverends Thompson and McSwiney – and Dr Schwanck got into a disagreeable dilemma.” McSwiney’s only fault lay in identifying himself with the pamphlet, an act of friendship and honesty which can hardly be condemned. “As to Consul Michell’s letter to Lord Stanley (a copy of which I have read) it is unworthy of an educated man and a Gentleman...The Revd. McSwiney is true to the core, he may be impulsive, or impetuous, or both but is wholly incapable of meanness or dishonourable conduct.” (GL 11,749, 347). Cattley’s tone is one of supreme confidence that his version will be accepted as the final arbitration, and his position in the community, his family connections, his frequent stints as Factory Treasurer and his status as Russia Company agent, all conspired to ensure that his version was, in fact, the one which was accepted.

The Court of the Russia Company forwarded all the documents to the Foreign Office with a covering note in which they state that Schwanck’s books were indeed private and Michell should not have attacked the doctor in public. They add that they deeply regret the slight passed upon McSwiney by the Ambassador’s refusal “to present him amongst

the deputation who waited on His Royal Highness with a loyal address” (GL 11,741/13, 1.3.1867). Two weeks later Buchanan apologised again to Lord Stanley at the Foreign Office for Michell’s conduct (UNL Bu 49/135, 13.3.1867). Neither Michell nor Buchanan had the local influence, nor network of alliances, nor understanding of local and international machinations nor even the personal charisma to shape circumstances according to their own designs. Michell, as I have said, seemed able to alienate important local factions: Factory leaders, the local Chaplains, the Russia Company, the F.O., even the Russian Emperor (if Shouvaloff and Baddeley are to be believed)²⁸.

Siikala notes that Marshall Sahlins implicitly endorses principles underlying a discourse-centred approach to cultural production and reproduction in that he “offers a parallel way of thinking about the relationship between social structure and the talk about it” (2000, 14). Sahlins suggests that “the historical process unfolds as a continuous and reciprocal movement between the practice of the structure and the structure of the practice” (1995, 72), a perception which is reinforced by all the case studies examined here. He notes that “signs can acquire new conceptual values: (1) insofar as they are placed in novel relationships with objects in the referential process; and (2) insofar as they are placed in novel relationships with other signs in the instrumental process” (ibid., 70). The “objective” world in which signs are deployed by a group in traditional ways has its own agenda and “refractory characteristics and dynamics” (ibid.) which can generate revaluation of signs in the process of their use. Sahlins does not specifically address the role of talk in the process, but the case study laboriously examined here illustrates that talk is the medium in which signs are lodged and that metacultural judgement of their application is the medium in which signs are revalued and redefined according to the logic inhering in prior cultural categories. The term ‘gentleman’ is a case in point. A highly valued sign-carrying vehicle, it had been contentious in English discourse for centuries. As I noted in chapter three, Sir Thomas Smith could say disparagingly as early as 1560 that “as for gentlemen, they be made good cheape in England. For whosoever...can live idly and without manual labour, and will bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called master...and shall be taken for a gentleman” (cited in Coleman 1973, 97). Three hundred years later the term was still

²⁸Buchanan was no better. In a letter written to the Foreign Secretary in 1877 (ten years later), as Russia and Turkey embarked on a round of hostilities, British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli noted that the “two principal places in these coming transactions will be Constantinople and Vienna – and in both posts we are singularly weak.” The Ambassador in Constantinople was in ill health and the Ambassador in Vienna was Buchanan:

“a hopeless case. He has been a public servant for ½ a century, and I knew him almost at the commencement of that time – at Constan[tinopl]e in 1830; I, therefore, can testify, that it is not age, which has enfeebled his intelligence or dimmed his powers. He was, and ever has been, a hopeless mediocrity...You ought to have no false delicacy in the business. Buchanan should be confidentially communicated with, and told that he should resign.” (cited in Monypenny & Buckle, 1929, 921.)

Buchanan retired to save the Foreign Secretary embarrassment, but complained pathetically that Disraeli had only recommended to the Queen that he be given a baronetcy in recognition of his years of service. He felt he should have been raised to the peerage – as Disraeli had been (UNL Bu 51/207-8). He was as unable to effect it, however, as he was to sway Factory opinion in Petersburg.

highly salient, and still under negotiation as the “objective” world offered new and refractory opportunities and constraints. This community, however, decided that attendance at the fairly recent institution of the English Public School and appointment as Her Majesty’s Consul-General did not, *per se*, confer the status of gentleman on Thomas Michell. ‘Gentlemen’ they decided, did not ‘coarsely’ address a respected member of the medical profession at a public meeting, nor did they run to the Foreign Office bearing tales of internal community discord. McSwiney, on the other hand, was “goodhearted”, “true to the core”, “wholly incapable of meanness or dishonourable conduct”, and these were the qualities which the sign of ‘gentleman’ was deemed to carry in local usage at least.

CASE STUDY C: “THE CHURCH IS IN NO RESPECT THE CHAPEL OF THE EMBASSY.”

The “juridical” continuity of the organised centre must be not of a Byzantine/Napoleonic type, i.e. according to a code conceived of as perpetual, but Roman/Anglo-Saxon – that is to say, a type whose essential characteristic consists in its method, which is realistic and always keeps close to concrete life in perpetual development. This organic continuity requires a good archive, well stocked and easy to use, in which all past activity can be reviewed and “criticised”. The most important manifestations of this activity are not so much “organic decisions” as explicative and reasoned (educative) circulars.” .. i.e. “organic continuity” (Gramsci 1980, 196)

It is 1873 and what appears to be the final act in the history of the British Factory is about to begin. This time the scene has moved back to St. Petersburg, the subject of dispute being once again ownership of the English Church though this time the Factory’s opponent was Sir Augustus Loftus, who replaced Buchanan as British Ambassador in 1872. Loftus had previously been Ambassador in Berlin after Napier, and had corresponded extensively with Buchanan in St. Petersburg, so presumably was cognizant with local Petersburg English politics, as well as the national British interests it was his primary job to protect. Loftus was a rather different proposition to Buchanan but his handling of similar ingredients was equally inept and uninformed. Apparently he was no more liked or respected by Disraeli than Buchanan had been, though for different reasons. In 1876 in letters to the Foreign Secretary, Disraeli referred to Loftus as “Pomposo” (Monypenny & Buckle, 983), “a mere Livadian parasite, and afraid even of G[ortchakoff]’s shadow²⁹” (ibid., 961). His actions and reactions with regards the Factory, coupled with his sense of self importance, would seem to reinforce Disraeli’s opinions.

As early as 1820, Robert Cattley had proposed the motion at a Factory meeting that

²⁹ Gortchakoff was the Russian Chancellor; the ‘Livadian parasite’ insult is obscure but Livadia was the favourite palace of the Russian Imperial family, situated outside Yalta on the Black Sea, and Loftus is known to have been a guest there, so presumably the remark indicates that Disraeli felt that Loftus fed off the Russian social world more than was proper.

no changes of any kind could be made to the Church without consultation with the Factory (GL 31,781/2, 1.11.1820). As my earlier discussion of the wrangles between the Factory and the Company through a large part of the nineteenth century indicated, the Factory was determined to assert their sole right to control the Anglican Church in St. Petersburg, whether actual title to the property was vested in them or not. Unlike the Moscow British Church, split for decades by doctrinal dissension, that in Petersburg, as I have mentioned, had none of this kind of trouble, so the only ‘enemy’ to harmony within the congregation, given the control the Factory wielded over its elements, was the Company. The Factory’s dismay and outrage when their jealously guarded rights came under fire from the totally unexpected direction of the British Embassy may be imagined. There had been rumblings, however, in 1869 when the Factory came under F.O. pressure to give up the port charges still levied on homebound freight which contributed to the Church and Poor’s Fund, with the British Government threatening the withdrawal of Ambassadorial protection for the English Church if the dues were not dropped.

Edward Cattley promptly and astutely responded by asserting that “the British Factory apprehend that the British Government are as much interested as they can be in preventing such interference on the part of the Russian Government” as would ensue if Ambassadorial protection of the Church were withdrawn. He concluded that it was the desire of the Committee of the British Factory to comply with the wishes of the F.O. and the Governor of the Russia Company “as far as they can, in justice to themselves, and as far as may be consistent with the decision of the general body of Merchants at this Port” (GL 11,749, 384, 16.8.1869), but that was clearly one of those token and fairly meaningless platitudes which the English language is so adept at expressing. The Factory was, however, willing to change the wording to show that the port charges made by shippers was actually a “commission on homeward freights”, to which all foreign merchants were legally entitled locally “for doing the business of their clients” (*ibid.*), and things went on as before on the principle that ‘a rose by any other name would smell as sweet’. Edward Cattley seemed quite fearless in his dealings with the Russia Company and the British Government, always confident of the influence he could bring to bear on events, and interpretations of those events, within his sphere.

On the 6th August 1873 Lord Loftus inspected work being done on the Petersburg Church, part of which involved moving the organ to a position which would require that another pew be chosen for the Embassy, presumably in a less well-placed location. He was attended by Edward Cattley as Factory Treasure and Chief Church Warden, and Edward Gibson and John Bennett, the two other Wardens that year. Cattley sent a report of ensuing proceedings to the Russia Company, framed so as to ensure a strong measure of discontent with Loftus’ behaviour in their ranks as well. According to Cattley, Ambassador Loftus was “extremely surprised” that any alterations would take place without his sanction. “He stated – that he considered that the proceedings of the ‘self-instituted’ [British Factory] Committee illegal”; he maintained that the Church was the Chapel of the Embassy and, as such, under the absolute jurisdiction of the Ambassador and that he alone could authorise repairs or alterations (GL 11,749, 411). One feels that his Lordship’s references to “self-instituted Committee”, or “self constituted body”, a term which Cattley also reiterates, rankled considerably, though it was, in fact, quite an

accurate rendition of the Factory's history. According to Cattley's report, Loftus then went on to propose the unthinkable: if work did not stop immediately, he would go to the Russian Secretary for Foreign Affairs and "apply to him for an order to have a forcible stop put to work by the interference of the Police" (ibid.), noting, in passing that "the proceedings of the so called Committee of the British Factory had given rise to grave feelings of discontent on the part of a large number of the Community"(ibid.). The Church Wardens, Cattley wrote, could not help but think that His Excellency was misinformed on the latter point; they had apologised to Loftus for their "unintentional" lack of courtesy in not keeping him informed but categorically denied that he possessed any authority whatever in reference to the arrangement of the Church Establishment, a position of authority never claimed by any of his predecessors (ibid.). In evidence of this, Cattley produced a letter written by Buchanan's predecessor in Petersburg, Napier (the Ambassadors followed each other from capital to capital around Europe), which had been written to the F.O. in 1864, in which Napier asserted unequivocally:

The Church is in no respect the Chapel of the Embassy. It is detached from the residence of the Ambassador; and it is not under his authority or control in any way; it is managed by an independent Committee and is frequented by a numerous and substantial congregation. A seat is merely provided in by the respect and liberality of the vestry – for Her Majesty's Representative. (GL 11,749, 410.)

It is not stated at this point exactly how much money the Factory held in their Church and Poor's Fund, money they had begun to collect and invest over a century earlier, but a Balance Sheet in 1880 records that on a balance of 278,143.13 Rs, principally invested in Russian railways, they expected to earn 17,615.39 in 1881, though their total predicted income would be 29,000 Rs³⁰ (the difference, presumably, still deriving from the percentage that merchant houses contributed of their taxed income) (GL 11,749, 545). The resentment engendered by the implication that any but the Committee of the British Factory had any rights at all to the allocation of this money may be imagined³¹.

Loftus was intransigent. The police would be called if work were not stopped. Cattley repeated the dire threat of police intervention three times in his letter to the Russia Company, rhetoric guaranteed to draw attention to a proposal which went completely against the practice of the English merchants in Petersburg, which had always been to maintain their profile of "respectability" in the host city, and to avoid any kind of

³⁰ This represented approximately £30,000 – over 2 million pounds by the reckoning of 2001 (Richards, 2002) – providing interest of approximately £1,800 with an additional £1,000 in contributions.

³¹ Four years earlier, just prior to making the minor compromise of changing the label of the money collected on homebound freight from "church support" to "commissions", Cattley had written: "With regard to the application of the accumulated Fund, held in Trust by the British Factory for the maintenance of Church & Poor...The Committee of the British Factory are of the opinion that no objection can justly be raised to the fact that by judicious management for upwards of a Century – a Fund contributed chiefly by the Mercantile body here, as already explained, has been formed, the interest of which is applied to its legitimate purposes. The accounts have always been kept with the greatest regularity, and are open to anyone, who is entitled to inspect them..." (GL 11,749, 384.)

entanglement of a negative sort with local authorities.

Your Church Wardens felt that it was most desirable to avoid an open rupture between a portion of the British Community here, and the Ambassador and the public Scandal which would be created were the Russian Police to take possession of the *English Church* at the instigation and request of the Queen's Ambassador (GL 11,749, 411 – emphasis added to highlight their unusual statement of allegiance to the Company – 'your' Church Wardens – and the introduction of the emotive 'the English Church' rather than the usual 'Chapel of the British Factory', though elsewhere in the letter Cattley points out that the Factory "had always exercised exclusive control in all matters concerning the maintenance of their Church Establishment". Nonetheless, the Russia Company was being asked to join ranks with the Factory to fight off an outside foe, i.e. the diplomats as representatives of the British government.)

The Church Wardens agreed to postpone work until the following spring and to bring the matter to the attention of the Russia Company for consideration by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs³². Loftus did not like this suggestion, but he accurately diagnosed his threat to bring in the Russian authorities as being the instrumental factor in causing the Wardens to temporarily postpone church renovations and acted accordingly. In a letter he wrote to Edward Cattley on the 9th September Loftus recorded, with thinly veiled triumph, that Westmann, the *Russian* Minister for Foreign Affairs – of whom he had inquired whether the British Factory, "which you claim to represent in the Capacity of Treasurer", had any legal position in Russia – had replied that it had ceased to legally exist in 1807 (GL 11,749, 413). Loftus asserted he had only taken this step as a result of Cattley's insistence that the matter be placed before the Company and F.O., but the dates in Westmann's communication indicate that Loftus had actually contacted the Russian authorities immediately after his Church inspection. Westmann went on to say that the Treaties of Commerce of 1842 and 1858, concluded with Great Britain, allowed the subjects of the contracting countries the same commercial rights as were allowed those of other nations. "*Dans ces deux actes aucune mention n'a été faite de la factorie anglaise à St. Petersbourg qui évidemment n'existait plus à cette époque, et n'a jamais été rétablie depuis*" (GL 11,749, 415). [In these two acts no mention was made of the English Factory at St. Petersburg which evidently no longer existed at that time and has never been re-established since.] This is an interesting claim because the Minutes of the British Factory for the first quarter of the nineteenth century recorded numerous occasions of official contact between the Russian Duma and the Factory: the Treasurer signed the petitions of those Englishmen applying for positions such as senior Brackers and Brokers and sent them to the Duma along with attestations of character, and

³² The extent and power of the connections of Factory members was always a major factor in the way they operated. Cattley we know about, James Bennett was a Moberly grandson and the nephew of the Bishop of Salisbury while Edward Gibson's uncle was John Hubbard, later Lord Addington, who was a director of the Bank of England, among his other credentials, thereby able to exert extraordinary influence on the British Government. It was Hubbard, for example, who told the Government in 1875 that the Bank could not and would not have acted as agents for the purchase of the Suez Canal, when there was controversy over procuring the required four million pound loan from the Rothschilds.

the Duma likewise applied to the Factory about the character of those Englishmen who petitioned them directly for employment. The Minutes also make mention of a correlative organization of “Foreign Merchants” which seemed to principally comprise their German colleagues and most successful mercantile competitors, and which filled similar roles as the Factory, including that of regulating German mercantile practice locally and of dispensing charity to impoverished German nationals. The British Factory, in this sense, only represented the operation of commercial rights allowed to other nations. However, when Westmann stated that the situation was “thus” to Loftus, particularly as it was what Loftus wished to be told, the situation was constituted as “thus”.

The Factory had learnt the hard way that Imperial proclamations of fact were (temporarily) final, and there is not one shred of evidence that it, or the merchant community as a whole, ever directly confronted such statements when they emanated from the Emperor or his/her advisors. For example, it is clear from Factory records that, after the British merchants returned in force to Petersburg in 1813, they were aware that their ‘favoured nation’ status was a thing of the past, and that perhaps the “British Factory” designation might not be such a good idea. On 25th May 1813 “Mr Anderson, the Treasurer of the British Chapel, requests the Representations of the Houses *which formed the Factory* to Meet at the Consul's tomorrow the 20th Inst at one o'clock on Special affairs” (GL 31,781/2, emphasis added). A year later, “Mr Littledale, the Treasurer of the British Chapel having sent to request the Attendance of the Representatives of the Houses *which formerly formed the Factory*, the Following Gentlemen met at his House on Thursday the 21 May 1814” (ibid., emphasis added). Six months later, however, British Parliament voted to contribute £5,000 towards renovations of the Petersburg Anglican Church and all the “formerly” references were dropped. The British Factory was back and, as I have said, appear to have had considerable official communication with the Russian Government during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, a period for which their records are still extant.

Loftus, however, took some pleasure in pointing out that Westmann had mentioned that, under Russian law, no associations, societies or brotherhoods were permitted without the knowledge and sanction of the Imperial Government, which had no “knowledge” of the Factory. In fact, Loftus had enjoyed this piece of information so much that he had taken the trouble to further investigate and had discovered that the Russian Penal code inflicted a penalty for violation and also rendered void the rules, regulations and resolutions of any such illegal organization, details he was careful to pass on. He reiterated that he was the “official guardian” of Her Majesty’s subjects in Russia whose jurisdiction over British Episcopal Chapels was the only one recognised by the Russian Government, therefore he was responsible for any proceedings taken within the premises of the “Church Establishment in this city” (GL 11,749, 413) .

Loftus goes on to modify his tone somewhat – he was, after all, an experienced diplomat – and suggest the necessity of constituting, “upon a legal and regular basis, a body representative of the British Community in this City.” This would be responsible for administering relief to the British Poor, establishing schools, maintaining the Library and administering “the valuable property which the Church on the English Quay has been endowed by the generosity of subscribers and the liberality of the Russia Company and

the British Parliament" (ibid.). The rest of the dispute might be said to hinge upon Loftus's choice of the word "representative". The Factory were certain that they were all the representation the 'British Community in this City' required, much as the gentry classes in England had been certain that their votes were all the representation that the English population required, prior to the expansion of suffrage. It also emerges that Loftus's antagonism at least partially stemmed from an undisclosed incident earlier in the year because he finishes his letter with an obscure reference to renewing the "offers of cooperation and assistance" which he had made the previous March "with reference to this subject". Presumably he had already tried to 'deal' with the Gentlemen of the Factory without notable success³³ (ibid.).

Some communications must have passed between the interested parties because Loftus wrote a more formal "Memorandum" for the Russia Company and the F.O. shortly afterwards in which he outlined his suggestions for the constitution of a "Benevolent Society" in which all the members of the Church of England of the entire British community in Petersburg would have the right to participate. In a series of proposed statutes Loftus repeatedly mismanaged discursive artefacts in a way bound to further alienate both the Factory and the Russia Company, occasionally referring to the Anglican Churches in Russia as 'Chapels of Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador', occasionally designating the Petersburg church the 'Chapel of the British Factory', while insisting that its managing Committee be elected annually and comprise three members of the body of English Merchants and two members from among the other "Classes of Her Majesty's subjects residing in St. Petersburg". As every British resident in Petersburg was to be eligible for membership in the British Factory on paying an annual subscription of thirty roubles, a dangerously low sum by 1873, and as there were estimated to have been upwards of 2,500 of these at the time, this must have been an intolerable prospect for Factorians, running completely counter to their history both in their own eyes and in those of the Russia Company.

The Factory mobilised quickly and Loftus added an addendum to his letter some days later in which he noted: "Since meeting the Gentlemen at my house on Thursday last, I have, on reflection, added some further suggestions..." (ibid.). Presumably he had been visited by a group of Factorians, which would certainly have included Edward Cattley and the two other Wardens for that year, Gibson and Bennett, and they had provided Loftus with material for reflection. Specifically, the 'Gentlemen' had made him see reason on the subject of the Church Fund. Three of those at present administering it, i.e. members of the established Factory, were to be named its Trustees and it was to be "held by them inalienably for the purposes of the Church Establishment" (GL 11,749, 414). The future 'elected' committee of the reconstituted 'Factory for Benevolent

³³ Surely this insistence on enlarging the basis of membership in what amounted to the instrument of local government as far as the community was concerned cannot have been unconnected with the passage of the Second Reform Bill six years earlier, which extended the franchise to the rate-paying members of the urban proletariat in Britain, an enormous extension of the suffrage? There are also clear links here with the severity of the dispute over McSwiney's 'English gentlemen' remark. At a time when legal boundaries were being eradicated, discursive ones became very important. Having said this, the element of personal animosity should not be downplayed, as I will discuss.

Purposes’ “would have power to deal only with such money as may in future be raised by subscription or otherwise” (ibid.). The Gentlemen had also persuaded Loftus that rules for the Benevolent Society should be the subject of negotiation between the Ambassador, the Russia Company and the Gentlemen at present administering the Church Fund, a triumvirate that I am sure they felt competent to handle. Finally, in a misstep which I can imagine provided the ‘Gentlemen’ some private hilarity, Loftus went on to add that it was necessary to obtain the consent of the Russia Company “to the transfer of the Church Premises (now registered in its name in the [Russian] Books of the Municipality) to the proposed British Factory for Benevolent purposes, in order a legal title may be acquired for those premises and property under the law of Russia” (ibid.). The ‘Gentlemen’ of the Factory were always prepared to change a label when required, but not the essence of their constructions. As for jockeying Loftus into insisting that the Russia Company part with its title to the Church property, a demand guaranteed to cause a flurry of blocking tactics on the part of the Governor and his Court of Assistants – it was, like many other examples of the skill which Factory leaders could bring to their strategising, masterfully executed.

Nothing of importance changed. There is no mention in Russia Company Minutes or retained documents that indicates any variation in the status of the Factory – communications continued to be passed between the Secretary of the Company and the Treasurer of the British Factory; there are no signs that any of Loftus’s instructions were acted upon. He had suggested a President and Vice-President for the Benevolent Society, plus annually voted Chairmen and Treasurer/Secretaries, but records make it clear that the Factory continued to operate with just a Treasurer and Committee, as it had always done, and that the Treasurer continued to be drawn from the same small clique of families. There is only *one* Balance Sheet for 1880, indicating that there was still only *one* Church Fund, operated by the same group who had always done so. The only difference apparent to posterity is that the Treasurers tended to have longer periods in office. Instead of changing annually, they might last five years or more, and, by the time of Mary’s diaries (beginning 1888), although the Russia Company and the Factory Treasurer still referred to the organization as the ‘British Factory’, its publicly broadcast name had settled into the ‘Benevolent Guild’, or ‘Guild’ for short. The Gentlemen had, presumably, taken note of the reprimand they had received from the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and acted accordingly, which merely pushed their non-Benevolent activities out of the public eye and created a kind of body, like the Masonic Lodges (of which many Factorians appear to have been members), which was empowered by secrecy. Certainly Mary, who never mentioned the Factory by that name until 1901, could unhesitatingly refer to “the Factory clique” as the author of their troubles when Arthur lost his livelihood.

And yet, as I pointed out above, Loftus’s accusations that the Factory and its Committee was a ‘self-constituted’ or ‘self-instituted’ body – which so offended Edward Cattley – was objectively factual. They had invented themselves and they continued to re-invent themselves as the century progressed and the macro circumstances in which they found themselves proved uncontrollable by other means. By the time of the dispute with Loftus which resulted in their more-or-less final public incarnation as a society for Benevolent purposes, they had been partially cut adrift by the Russia Company after it

had lost its right to revenue collected on Russian imports to Britain and, with it, a measure of interest in Anglo-Russian affairs; they had lost their own right to impose a Church toll on homeward-bound British shipping out of Cronstadt and Petersburg, re-labelling the money they continued to collect as ‘commissions’; they had known through most of the nineteenth century that they were not legally accepted as a corporate entity in Russia, as indicated by Moberly’s forced riposte to Michele which I noted above, that, in fact, the Factory were not acknowledged by the Russian Government; and even their own Parliament had tacitly disavowed them in the Act of 1823 which legalized marriages taking place in St. Petersburg since ‘the abolition of the British Factory’ there. Undaunted, they continued to privately refer to themselves as the British Factory and to behave as the Factory had always behaved: dispensing charity, salaries and judgments which continued to be accepted by the community at large.

THE STRUCTURE OF CONFLICT.

While examining the controversies discussed above, and entextualising them, the similarities in the structural composition and progression of events and interactions became very salient. These are merely three of many discords which reverberated through the community during its life span, and all of them are rather brief – at most about a year from commencement to accepted closure. That they were comparatively short-lived, and that they reached any kind of ‘winding-up’, can be credited to the skills of long-term, high-profile community members, such as Charles Moberly, Edward Cattley and their ilk, in implementing local (and London-based) discourses and the signs that were carried in specific configurations of such talk. Consequently, that British Factory factions either won, or were allowed the ‘final say’ in these controversies comes as no surprise. The Factory faction invariably had its way, though it might get there by a circuitous route. This is what hegemony is all about: skill in manipulation of talk and the signs and symbols inhering in particular discursive formats, in the manipulation of phraseology and emphasis to generate an emotional response in listeners or readers thereby increasing their receptivity to whatever is being ‘sold’ along with the successful framing. The Factory had no sanctions beyond the roles of members as local employers, their control over the Church and poor relief fund, and their positions as patriarchal heads of households. Their principal tool of control was talk and a monopoly of the most important paths along which talk was locally transmitted by virtue of valorized patriarchal roles and extensive kin connection..

Thus it was interesting to note the way that combined talk and action was repeatedly structured into similar series of stages in the format of contestation. These correspond, up to a point, with Victor Turner’s “main phases of public action” which he conceptualises as comprising “units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations” (1974, 37), though, I have to confess, that the apparent enjoyment engendered in bystanders to the disagreements, even the satisfaction of contenders in airing their views,

tends to militate against conceptions of ‘aharmony’ or ‘disharmony’³⁴. Setting up a polar opposition between the ideal types of peace and conflict obscures more about human behaviour than it illustrates, as blind acceptance of all socially constructed oppositions is wont to do. Cultural configurations, understandings, practices, institutions and so on undergo continuous, if usually micro, negotiation. It is both difficult and artificial to set some point along the continuum when such negotiation suddenly becomes disharmony. However, the cases studied here raised ire and publicly fragmented the unity of the “British residents at St. Petersburg”, even while they indicated who ‘belonged’ to the notional community, and who was, in local fact, just a ‘British resident’. More relevant to examination of processes within a community involving episodes requiring resolution are that all three case studies implement the full range of alternatives in reaching such resolution. Perhaps this could be regarded as some sort of criteria for deciding when peaceful negotiation has become outright conflict. The protagonists used every available technique in self-advocacy, and the episodes exhibited structural patterns that recurred whenever the breadth of involvement spread to embrace a much larger group than those who were part of an originating incident. I deviate somewhat from Turner’s four-step model, as I will indicate, but the abstract similarities between twentieth-century Ndembu practice and that of a bourgeois English merchant community of the nineteenth century in terms of conflict and its resolution are striking.

According to Turner, the first step in a broad-based controversy is signalled by a “[b]reach of regular, norm-governed social relations” between people and/or groups within the same system of social relations. This may be signalled by an “overt breach” or a “deliberate nonfulfillment of some crucial norm regulating the intercourse of the parties” (1974, 38, emphasis in text). I regard this as a convenient shorthand rather than a precise description because, inevitably, it is the ‘norms’ themselves which are the subject of dispute: their definition by each party and the acceptance of a single definition in order to provide closure. Each party to a disagreement naturally believes, or endeavours to make others believe, that the “deliberate non-fulfillment of some crucial norm” was occasioned by the behaviour of the opposing party. Turner goes on to assert that a “dramatic breach may be made by an individual, certainly, but he always acts, or believes he acts, on behalf of other parties, whether they are aware of it or not” (ibid.). I would also modify this a little to say that an individual, with only his own best interests in mind, is perfectly able to “frame” a grievance in such terms that it *appears* to be one of general relevance, to be a case of *generalised* injustice – or likely to become so – in order to enlist influential operators to his/her cause. This is a matter of skilled deployment of locally recognised signs carried in locally recognised discourse vehicles. In all the three cases discussed above, self-interest and/or personal animosity was the overriding cause of the first breach, though all the protagonists enlisted the interests of other parties as ostensible reasons for their actions. It is hard to say to what degree this is universal human practice,

³⁴ I am reminded of Jim Wishaw’s remark when he suggested that the life led in Mourino “was that of a large family. There were no doubt small tiffs at times, but these served perhaps to keep away the monotony” (1935, 64), and Robert Cattley’s summation that the dispute with the Russia Company over the Factory’s appointment of Pitt as Minister in 1798 had had the benefit of substantiating the Factory’s claim to local hegemony.

or an English specificity, but I suspect the former.

In Turner's model, the second phase is one of "mounting *crisis*" (ibid., emphasis in text), which needs to be contained if it is not to become co-extensive with other cleavages in the local social fabric. Turner notes that among the Ndembu "the phase of crisis exposes the pattern of current factional intrigue, hitherto covert and privately conducted, within the relevant social group" (ibid.) and also basic social structure, "less plastic, more durable, but nevertheless gradually changing" (ibid.), which comprises relations exhibiting "a high degree of constancy and consistency – that are supported by normative patterns laid down in the course of deep regularities of conditioning, training and social experience" (ibid. 38-9). I observed similarities in the crises examined here, but the action appears to me to fall into several analytically separable categories, each one involving different tactics and exposing different systemic properties: alliances and enmities, valorized tenets and beliefs, and power hierarchies based on successful colonization of both paths and interpretations of circulating discourse.

Thus, I am inclined to separate the 'crisis' phase into three steps, beginning with the period where parties to the original dispute put forward their interpretations of fact and event, always in written and sometimes in published form. In a highly literate society, the written deposition carries weight that oral transmission lacks, though one can be certain that considerable verbal negotiation also accompanied each step. The written statement, however, was an essential part of assessing majority opinion, as it allowed the matter to be discussed in various places and times, and in associated (often exclusionary) groups. This launches the talk into the broad community sphere of all those who care to take an interest, (or, more accurately, those who are allowed a say) – and repeated references to the numerical and spatial dimensions the disputes assumed indicate that this was a salient descriptive factor. Protagonists may publicly deprecate the expansion of dispute beyond its original nucleus, but they do so in a published pamphlet of their own. It seems to be understood that settlement will be a matter of perceived majority opinion so the greater the number of potential supporters who become involved in metacultural assessment, the better. This is an important period in that it identifies areas of support and opposition, sounds out community opinion and provides protagonists with the opportunity to exercise their skills in deployment of items of talk which may sway their readers or listeners – but the initial 'statements of fact' always undergo revision so it is not decisive in terms of outcome.

It is followed by a stage when terms are negotiated, where the parties respond to their opponents' 'statements of fact' – reshaping their arguments to deal with the formulations of the opposition – and endeavour to press home any perceived advantage. The longer this period lasts, the more likely it becomes for a fundamental principle to be exposed and debated, and the likelier that the fundamental issue which has thus been brought into play will be made the subject of final settlement (in whatever form that takes), thereby marginalising the original bone of contention. Benjamin Disraeli once said that in England – "a practical country" – great issues were generally tried on collateral points (Monypenny and Buckle, 90). He was referring to Parliamentary debate in the 1860s over the abolition of the obligatory nature of Church rates (where churchwardens and parishioners had voted for them in any given parish, they were compulsory for all

members of the parish, no matter their faith). This rates debate, Disraeli argued, was a minor point correlative to the disestablishment of the Church of England – the latter being the ‘great issue’. The same process of testing the meaning or importance of an underlying ‘great issue’ in marginally correlative contexts may be detected in all three cases examined above. In gramscian terms, this is where the hegemonic principles of the social group will make themselves felt. There are, however, several possible interpretations of how and why fundamental principles become articulated with apparently trivial episodes. In certain contrived circumstances it may be intentional, that is, one or both antagonists (or antagonistic parties) pick a fight in order to bring more important issues to the fore; but in the series I have examined it seems likelier that either the principle required attention and it forced itself into the controversies because of its salience in the minds of the protagonists or, because of its salience and sensitivity, it was mobilised by the parties, framed in ways likely to excite the greatest sympathy and enlisted as a weapon whose success depended on the skill of its wielder.

The final stage of the ‘crisis’ phase is when parties to a disruption call on historical precedent in some form: when they formally enlist allies who have previously proved successful, or who have long-standing connections who offer the promise of influence; when they recall formulae – discursive artefacts – which have proved convincing in the past and reproduce them, thereby accelerating them forward. This is how the underlying social structure is both exposed and, if endorsed, is reinforced for future operation. This is also where the fundamental principles are recognised, defined and enter the world of the community as cultural facts, inserted there by the work of the ‘winners’, who actually ‘win’ before final formal settlement.

Turner labels his third phase “*redressive action*” (ibid., 39, emphasis in text), which consists in the deployment of “certain adjustive and redressive ‘mechanisms’...informal or formal, institutionalized or ad hoc” (ibid.) which “may range from personal advice and informal mediation or arbitration to formal juridical and legal machinery” (ibid.). This should result in closure of some sort. Turner notes that it is important to “ask whether the redressive machinery is capable of handling crises so as to restore, more or less, the status quo ante, or at least to restore peace among the contending groups” (ibid., 41) and to examine how this is done – or, if the machinery is not strong enough to do so, to investigate the reasons why it cannot. In the cases discussed here, this period may be delineated for analytical purposes but actually, given the way conflict seems to have been orchestrated in this milieu, each move in the second phase contributes to final settlement, as the effectualness of deployment of sign carrying discursive vehicles, and actions, is judged in ongoing process. The actual denouement, if it is marked at all, is fleeting and pre-empted by the emergence of a majority opinion. Though majority opinion is shaped by the most influential factions who have become involved, the whole point of conflict is that, at the outset, there can be no absolute certainty as to which the most influential faction will prove to be.

Once again, I want to turn to Disraeli. He began his career as a prolific popular novelist and went on to become one of the principal statesmen and leaders in Britain during the middle two quarters of the century (though he almost invariably referred to Britain as ‘England’; he knew the emotive value of the word, and where the voters were

situated in terms of geography and class). Disraeli's skill with discursive artefacts was legendary – and it had to be, in order to overcome a major stumbling block to success in his place and time: he was Jewish in a Church of England world. Still discussing the suggested abolition of compulsory Church rates³⁵, Disraeli examined the position of the Dissenter or other non-Anglican, forced to economically support his local Established Church if the majority of parishioners voted to pay church rates:

In that case, if he be animated by the same feelings as any other Englishman – and I know by experience he is so – he yields to the opinion of the majority, for such he knows is the principle upon which our social system is established. If the majority is overwhelming, he yields without a murmur; if it be slight, he can exercise his influence if he chooses, so that next year the majority may change to a minority (cited in Monypenny and Buckle, 93).

Once again, I am not suggesting this as 'fact', any more, I imagine, than Disraeli would have. He knew that eventually the Church rates would become voluntary. He was merely restating, re-launching – accelerating – certain principles in a form guaranteed to appeal to the emotions of his listeners, in this case Parliament. Unanimity and majority rule, as I discussed under the rubric of 'what is English?' was a highly profiled element of the ethos. It had to compete with hierarchical norms, however, and when required – for example when dealing with the Anglo-Russian renegades' refusal to hand over the port dues to the Church Fund or the Company Agent/Consul-General – the Factory called on the Company to make a ruling, because the Company had the power to authorise the Agent to collect the money from ships in person. Besides, the renegades were in the minority. These were the redressive machineries.

Turner's fourth and final phase "consists either of *reintegration* of the disturbed social group or of the social recognition and legitimization of irreparable schism between the contesting parties" (ibid., emphasis in text). Thus he separates settlement from a period of reintegration or formalized schism. This suggests definite and definitive processes or events whereby new statuses or revitalised old statuses are marked or monumentalised in some public demonstration. This does not seem to have been the English way. Of the three cases studied, only the second one which pitted Michell and McSwiney fit the profile of intra-group conflict; the other two were more processes by which the community defended its own against outsiders, so perhaps the fourth step in Turner's paradigm is inapplicable for this reason. Examination of Mary and Arthur's conflict (and inevitable defeat) by 'the Factory clique' – with the Riddles taking up domicile in another place – 'fits' Turner's fourth phase rather better, though this seems to have been a rare scenario. The community schism, when the 'renegades' left Factory ranks to become 'foreign guests' in the 1790s, merely evaporated when those who had left came quietly back and their returns were recorded without comment in the Factory

³⁵ Disraeli was against making rates voluntary and fought the Bill, cautiously, until he became Prime Minister in 1868, by which time he could detect the swing of public opinion against his views and he no longer resisted as Gladstone pushed the Bill through. Disraeli claimed a victory even in his defeat by saying that his early resistance had put heart into the friends of the Church and restored the integrity of the Church itself (Monypenny and Buckle, 97).

Minutes. These and many other incidents point to the probability that ‘English gentlemen’ and their female equivalents did not, on the whole, push a victory nor fight a defeat within their worlds of understanding, to the point that chasms appeared which could not be bridged by politely ignoring the whole business as soon as resolution seemed probable. That seemed to be part of the definition of ‘being one of us’: outward and not very deeply felt conformity overlaying a strong sense of individualism. Conforming to majority community opinion, which, after all, they had helped to mold, and then moving quickly on, preferably before being forced to, seems to have been the *modus operandi*. Valorization of self-respecting attitudes helped to make this option the most painless. This resonates strongly with discursive artefacts like ‘keeping a stiff upper lip’, with the value placed on emotional control and bodily discipline, the loathing felt for making a public fool of oneself, the political principle of majority rule, the local social and economic benefits which accrued from maintaining a united (and respectable) front and so on – “the ways in which a whole complex series of cultural, political and ideological practices work to ‘cement’ a society in a relative – though never complete – unity” (Bennett et al. eds. *pace* Gramsci 1985, 192).

I am therefore, suggesting a modified version of Turner’s model of wide-spread social conflict which appears to be generally applicable to social dramas enacted in the Petersburg English community. I will briefly illustrate each phase with references to the three cases studies above: A, B and C. It may be noted that this method of analysis transforms ethereal talk into a solid-seeming progression of action, allying it with what may be regarded as structural features of community praxis. The conclusions which may be drawn from this should be obvious. There is always an ongoing dialectic between talk and structure/system. Each one is instrumental in creating and shaping the other. This general progression: breach of norms accompanied by personal interest or animosity; the drawing up of battle configurations; the mobilization of historical precedent and supportive networks; the delineation of underlying principle followed by a more or less gradual denouement as prevailing community opinion was shaped and then made itself felt is also the process followed in much more broadly documented conflict in Britain of the era. Debate and strategising (or outright subterfuge), in Parliament, between social-class or gender-based categories – or rather, the factions which purported to be speaking for them; between the divisions of low, broad and high church in the Church of England, between Established Church and dissident groups and so on all followed the same general pattern. The breach always seemed to be one which was waiting to happen; as though the battle lines and the principle came first (which indeed they did) and only the parameters of the dispute, the specific arena in which the opponents would struggle for hegemony was wanting. The outcomes could never be certain, though some time during phase four it would become increasingly obvious who was drawing on the most emotively successful discursive vehicles, with the most broadly appealing package of carried signs, and from that point (in hindsight at least) it is easy to pick the eventual winner.

Table 3. Applying the model of social conflict to the case studies.

<p>1. breach of regular social relations, usually motivated by personal interest or animosity but invariably framed in quasi-altruistic terms.</p>	<p>A. Factory refuses to re-institute the tolls traditionally collected for the Consul/Company's Commercial Agent, giving as their reason that the ship owners would not stand it. "Personal feelings" play a part.</p> <p>B. Consul-General Michell and Dr. Carrick visit the English Hospital in Dr. Schwanck's absence, produce and publicise a very negative report of conditions suffered by the English sailors treated there and Michell "coarsely" attacks Schwanck at a public meeting.</p> <p>C. Ambassador Lord Loftus inspects the English Church and refuses to allow alterations to continue in what he designates 'the Chapel of the British Embassy' and under his sole direction on behalf of the British subjects whose interests it is his responsibility to protect. He does not approve of plans to move the Embassy pew to a less central position.</p>
<p>2. the transmission of protagonists' versions of fact and event to the broader world, thereby establishing the parameters in which the underlying principle will be tested.</p>	<p>A. In a letter to the Russia Company Michele asserts that the Factory refusal is a deliberate act of defiance aimed at the Company. Factory representatives suggest H.M. Government would make up the deficit in Michele's salary.</p> <p>B. In a published pamphlet Schwanck denies charges of medical negligence, poor hygiene and economic mismanagement, complains that Michell examined his private books and that English gentlemen would not like to dwell on the fact, and that Carrick exaggerated. Carrick reiterates his claims of negligence and poor hygiene, calls Schwanck a liar and demands he apologise for his accusation of dishonourable conduct on the part of the Consul-General (which applied, incidentally, to Carrick's part in the affair as well).</p> <p>C. In this case phases 2 and 3 seem to have been concurrent, though we can be certain that there was a flurry of communication between community members after Loftus made his inspection and demands because Cattley acted with a confidence indicating he was certain of support.</p>
<p>3. recourse to historical precedent by recruiting supporters with proven influence and networks, deploying prior decisions and successful formulae – i.e. the 'norms' claimed to have been breached –</p>	<p>A. Michele invokes the "long established rights of the Russia Company" and the illegality of Factory refusal to acquiesce in their instructions but has no established networks to mobilise in this context. Moberly attends a meeting of the Russia Company's Court of Assistants.</p> <p>B. The Revd. McSwiney is drawn into the conflict in support of his friend, backs up Schwanck's version and admits he made the accusation in question, while denying that it implied dishonourable conduct. The Consul-General's mentor, the British Ambassador, refuses to present McSwiney to visiting British royalty. McSwiney canvasses centrally placed community members for character references and complains of the slight to the Russia Company. The Ambassador writes a long letter of complaint and justification to the Foreign Office. The Ambassador applies to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs to have McSwiney interdicted for not possessing a licence from the Bishop of London, in whose diocese</p>

exposing
underlying social
structure.

the Cronstadt Church belonged. The Revd. Mr Bindloss in Archangel gets caught in the same trap, and his influential brother-in-law Arthur Clarke gets the Ambassador to remedy the situation.

C. Cattley reports to the Russia Company focusing on Loftus' threat to call in the Russian police, and the accusation that the Factory "had given rise to grave discontent on the part of a large number of the Community". Cattley uncharacteristically refers to the Church Wardens as "your (i.e. the Russia Company's) Church Wardens", but also states the right of the Factory to exercise exclusive control over "their Church Establishment". Loftus asks the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs for a statement about the legality of the Factory as an organisation in Russia. This drew the lines of cleavage and established who was aligned with whom, at the same time as stating the parameters of the argument, which seem to have hinged on the Factory's legal status, and its profile within the community.

4. negotiation of
frames of
reference leading
to exposure of the
principle/s.

A. Moberly suggests the Consul might have the power of detaining non-payers of dues in the eyes of the Russian Government, though not in the eyes of those detained. Michele insists that the Factory has the authority to decide and collect dues on British shipping homeward-bound from Petersburg. The Russia Company refuses to have its authority invoked for such a purpose but hopes the charge will be resumed by "common consent". The Factory insists on "distinct authorization" from the Company before doing so.

In an inverted power struggle no one concerned wanted to take responsibility for re-introducing an unpopular toll that would only benefit an outsider, perceived to be the responsibility of the British F.O. At the same time, local hegemonic relations between the three involved factions was being reviewed.

B. As correspondence progresses and the extent of the conflict broadens, the original correlative subject, hospital hygiene and medical care, is marginalized and discussion centres on whether the books examined by Michell and Carrick were public or private – in other words, on definitions of probity, honesty, honour and who lacks or possesses these attributes. McSwiney insists he did not mean to accuse Michell of not being an English gentleman, merely wanting in "delicacy and generosity" and withdraws the remark without directly apologising for it.

Defining the term 'gentleman' and all that is implied by it proves to be the principle bone of contention.

C. Loftus suggest that the Factory must be reorganised on democratic principles and purely for Benevolent purposes, that all British residents be eligible for membership without Factory approval, that a committee of five be drawn from their ranks who would control the Churches and their facilities and manage and distribute the Church and Poor's Funds. The Russia Company must relinquish the property to the reconstituted organization.

One suspects that for Loftus the principle remained the Embassy pew, but from the perspective of the Factory and the Company the conflict

	<i>had become one in which they were fighting the principle of democracy, specifically democratically organized access to their cash and property.</i>
5. tacit community decision endorsed by the highest authority involved and the 'loser' "yields without a murmur", perhaps framing defeat as partial victory.	<p>A. The Company agrees to make the ruling. The Factory agrees to collect the dues. Michele is marginalized. The Consular dues are dropped by Parliamentary ruling seven years later and the Company refuses Michele a pension. The British Ambassador in Petersburg negotiates Michele a government pension when Michele fails to negotiate a consular re-appointment elsewhere (he had hoped for India).</p> <p>B. After waiting for a month or so for things to settle, Edward Cattley summarises the course of events from the community's point of view and passes his letter to the Russia Company. The Russia Company informs the F.O. that Michell was at fault and McSwiney blameless. Ambassador Buchanan apologises to the F.O. for Michell's behaviour, but not his own.</p> <p>C. There is no direct data as to final reactions, nor any stated recognition of the 'winning' party due to the absence of Company Minutes for this period. However, though the Factory seem to have changed their public name as a result of drawing unfavourable Russian Government attention, everything else went on as before in apparently unruffled calm.</p>

CONCLUSIONS.

TALK IS TO HUMANS AS SILK TO A SPIDER.

THE ENGLISH COMMUNITY AT ST. PETERSBURG.

The fascinating thing to me about diasporic community is that it is created as a joint effort by its members out of intangibles, without the assistance of a shared self-sufficient history in a delimited geographical location, which are the more common conditions in which a collective identity is likely to flourish. A diasporic community usually possesses a relatively short diachronic past because, over time, the will to replicate cultural forms which differ from those of the host culture tends to dissipate as the perceived differences between a diaspora and its new home become less salient in circulating metacultural assessments. This leads, almost inevitably, to absorption into the worlds of the receiving country, something that was acknowledged by members of core families in the English merchant community at St. Petersburg. One memoirist wrote that “If the Russian Revolution had not occurred it is likely that the main branch of the family would have become more Anglo-Russian and, in time, perhaps wholly Russian” (LRA 1072/25 James Thornton’s Family History, 2), while Jim Whishaw was frank in his desire to avoid that very contingency: “We naturally did not wish our children to become what we termed ‘St. Petersburg’ English, and I am glad to say that none of my daughters spoke with the curious accent acquired by even purely English people who rarely left the country” (1935, 121). This paper has explored the ways that the individuals and families who comprised the community created and kept re-creating – for almost two centuries – not only their sense of themselves as part of a collective entity, but also the substantive cultural praxis that set them apart from their hosts in concrete ways; in other words, not just their perceptions of a boundary, but also the stuff the boundary delimited. As I stated in my introduction, I feel that such an analysis of such a group also illuminates many of the causes contributing to the astonishing mercantile and political hegemony enjoyed globally by Britain in its imperial heyday, and has considerable general application to understanding the creation and maintenance of diasporic and ‘new’ communities in any time or place.

My theoretical departure point was that specific cultural configurations, and the collectivity that claims those configurations as its own, are constructed out of the items of talk which circulate – in the same way as any concrete cultural object – through the people who claim membership in the entity. At various points, both in social space and over time, talk no longer receives the acceleration to move it on, either because it is consciously retained in processes of exclusion, or because it is not of sufficient interest to the receiver to be transmitted forward. It is at these various points that cultural discontinuity occurs. This is not to suggest that the points can be joined up to make a neat, bounded shape. Most discursive items have different fields of appeal or exclusion: they may interest the ‘whole world’ in similar incarnations, or only a single instigator. When a vast number of fields of discourse circulation overlap, and their contents are understood in similar ways by more or less the same nucleus of people, it suggests the existence of a collective entity. The *type* of entity is, pragmatically, determined by its content, i.e. business association, Anglicans, English language speakers, kin relatives, or all these things and

more at the same time¹. This understanding simultaneously provided me with the methodology implemented in the paper: if circulating discursive items, as concrete cultural objects, construct worlds, then circulating talk also provides outsider access to those worlds. These are the basic premises of a discourse-centred approach to culture. Fortunately, this community left a great deal of transcribed talk behind it, and the worlds I have thus been enabled to recreate from it have become very vivid to me during research.

In chapter two I briefly discussed the criteria that various ‘community studies’ scholars produced in the mid- to late-twentieth century which attempted to define which type of human group might be classified as ‘a community’ and why. In essence these reiterated Durkheim’s “affinity of blood, attachment to the same soil, ancestral worship, community of habits” (1949, 278) while adding further specifications such as self-sufficiency, a multiplicity of social groups, organizational institutions, common language, relative permanence of membership and other predetermined variables. As I noted there, however, a collective entity may be studied simply as that; its size, scope, basis, origin etc. are open to research but should not categorise it; appropriate research questions and specific phenomena may be explored by means of its qualities but the concept of ‘authentic’ community should fall into the same category as that of ‘authentic’ culture – the one labelled ‘anathema’.

Objectively, although British merchants had been residing in Russia since 1554, and in St. Petersburg since 1723 (at least), it was not a stable population by any stretch of hyperbole. Throughout the history of the community only a small proportion of its members were born, married, solely reproduced and were then buried in Russia (according to the Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials kept of the English Church in St. Petersburg). Many more carried out some of these steps elsewhere, with the concomitant allegiances implied. The community was not distinguished by an enduring stability of membership²; nor an internal division of labour based on a broad spectrum of activities; nor singleness of background, place of birth or other ‘integrating’ features, and nor was it delimited by a geographically bounded residential area – there was not even a ‘Foreign Quarter’ in St. Petersburg as there had been in Moscow. In addition, every family had a summer residence in one of the English summer colonies established around the capital in places such as Mourino, Peterhof and Ligovo, which sparked a bi-annual upheaval as homes were packed up and transported back and forth: servants, pets, wines, kitchen equipment, clothes, rugs, linen, books, pianos and house plants all made the trip in May and September. Many families also maintained homes in England where wives and school-age children sometimes spent large chunks of time, socialising there with each other and the English representatives of Anglo-Russian families. I am inclined to agree with Robertson, however, that the fact that there are (and have been) groups able to equate home with a single and explicit locality “doesn't entitle them or their representatives to project their perspective onto humanity as a whole. In fact there is much to suggest that the senses of home and locality are contingent upon alienation from home and/or locale. How else could one have

¹ This entity was “all these things and more at the same time” but the approach to ‘community’ used in these pages bypasses the whole typological minefield created by community analyses since Tönnies, as I earlier noted.

² English villages of the time, according to work done by family constitution scholars in that milieu, such as Alan MacFarlane (1978), had little long term stability of membership either.

(reflexive) consciousness of such?" (1995, 39.)

English was the principal language of communication, to be sure, but French was used with facility to communicate with educated members of the host society and other 'foreigners', and junior family members from England being sent to learn the trade in the Petersburg counting houses were cautioned to learn German immediately, even before attempting Russian³. In addition, English as a native language, by itself, did not alone provide a passport to the community. As Weber points out, "taken by itself [language] is not sufficient to constitute a communal relationship" (1947, 138), though he goes on to say that "with the emergence of a consciousness of difference from third persons who speak a different language...the fact that two persons speak the same language, and in that respect share a common situation, can lead them to a feeling of community and to modes of social organization consciously based on the sharing of a common language" (ibid). No doubt the shared language has salience as an inclusionary/exclusionary principle but heteroglossia was the norm. Spouses of established members, usually wives, sometimes spoke English poorly without deleterious effect on their social inclusion *qua* 'wives'.

Far from the community containing a multiplicity of social classes, class was actually a perceived factor contributing to inclusion/exclusion. It was, however, class of a particularly ephemeral and porous variety, correlating with Weber's third type of class status: "social class", "composed of the plurality of class statuses between which an interchange of individuals on a personal basis or in the course of generations is readily possible and typically observable" (1947, 424), though overlapping with the second category in his typology, "acquisition class", in that they were "typically entrepreneurs: merchants, shipowners, industrial[ists], bankers and financiers;...members of the 'liberal' professions" (ibid., 426). Founding fathers of the older families were usually from yeoman, factor or minor professional stock in Britain who had risen from positions as clerks in London counting houses to ownership of their own trading concerns in Russia at a time when an incipient middle class in Britain was beginning to flex its muscles. "By the end of the [eighteenth] century City financiers and their associates, the merchant princes of London, had founded dynasties, acquired country estates, and been given titles" (Cain & Hopkins 1986, 513). Others, with less luck, diligence or sharp practice, became recipients of nothing more than Factory pensions, and once named on the Poor's List, all credentials to equality in the community were a thing of the past. There was nothing stable or permanent about their internal class or status categorizations and some families rose and fell socially in a couple of generations. As noted, there is no evidence that what were referred to as "the lower orders" or "the lower classes of our Countrymen here" (GL 31782, 73-8) comprised a kind of alternative *English* (or even British) community, though those who were affiliated with the American and British Congregational Chapel in St. Petersburg appear to have been part of a

³ "The busy time of the year in St. Petersburg is the summer, in the winter you will have a good deal of leisure time, which you must employ in undertaking to learn the German and Russian languages; but I recommend the German first, because the best Grammars, Dictionaries, etc., for acquiring the Russ are written in German, so that little progress can be made in the Russ language, without a previous knowledge of the German. Mr. Prescott will put you in the best way of obtaining helps of both Books and Masters to instruct you in the languages, but Remember that in this as in everything else, the greatest help will be your diligence." (LRA 1406, Copy of Hints to Robert Cattley, on his going to St. Petersburg, from his uncle Stephen Cattley, 1802. He was then not 15 years old.)

stronger community of *belief* than that generated by the High Church Anglican credo practised in the English Church.

Finally, as with all diasporic groups who settle in or among host nationals yet maintain boundaries between themselves and the inhabitants of a 'new' place, who consider themselves a community and are considered as such by others, they never were, and never aimed to be, self-sufficient or detached from the services offered by the host country. Their doctors and dentists were English; their purchasing power assured them of shops stocking English commodities; the Hotel Angleterre was a favourite haunt, and congenial eating places provided copies of *The Times* and other English newspapers; they provided themselves with their own Church, Library, school (for "the children of mechanics"), recreational clubs, and administrative association (who held and managed their charitable funds, among other self-appointed tasks); but they were governed by Russian law, fed largely by Russian food, waited upon by Russian servants, carried by Russian transport and in every major way dependent on Russian goodwill – ever a fluctuating commodity – throughout centuries of uneasy political relations, if not outright war, between their own and their host countries.

Impressive as this effort might be, it is even more so if it is remembered that it took place without the conventional connections of unbroken generational transference of learning assumed necessary to 'authentic' community or even 'authentic' cultural transmission – thereby arguing against Fortes's assertion that filiation is "the nodal mechanism...of intergenerational contiguity" (as cited by Urban 2001, 44). As emerged in the course of examination, ties with the homeland constituted an essential part of the character of the community and its members. England was the source of a wide range of social and cultural objects which were utilised routinely – everything from spouses to education (particularly in the last decades of the nineteenth century), vital commodities (such as coal⁴ and legs of mutton) to the all-important discourse items carried by British press and personally collected in return visits and from new arrivals.

THE DISCOURSE-CENTRED APPROACH TO CULTURE AND COMMUNITY.

The cultural analysis of meaning, however, cannot be isolated from the analysis of patterns of action. We do not view systems of meaning as ideational determinants of social organization or as solutions to universal problems of meaning and order. Rather, we conceptualize the interrelated, but not necessarily consistent meanings of social events and relationships both as shaping and being shaped by practice. Our refusal to dichotomize material relationships and meanings or to grant one or the other analytic priority derives from our conceptualization of practice and ideas as aspects of a single process. (Yanagisako & Collier 1987, 42.)

The world is not wholly and solely created out of talk. Our bodies teach us as do the places and spaces our bodies inhabit. The fact that discussion of the central theoretical thesis of this paper has tended to exclude these emphases does not suggest their absence. The reader may be grateful that I attempted to exclude anything from the carpet bag these pages comprise. But

⁴ Despite the superfluity of wood in Russia, the English insisted on their coal fires, and substantial quantities were brought out from Hull and Newcastle – also providing useful ballast for the lightly laden British ships moving in that direction.

places shape talk and bodies shape talk and then both are shaped in their turn. I am reminded of a crotchety Robert Cattley castigating his London tailor for the length of sleeve on his previous jackets. I include the long version of the extract because it carries so many of the signs by which this community may be recognised – by themselves, by me and, hopefully by now, by those reading this:

Once and for all pray take note that I wish to adhere to the steady quiet old fashion in which you have always made for me...the sleeves of all my coats have been rather too long these last two years. I have had them shortened by one inch – pray attend to this.

1 great Coat for winter wear. To be made of the best stated superfine Cloth of any dark colour, to be lined throughout with any warm stuffs to match the cloth – besides which to have between the two wash leather (chamois) in the sleeves and in the body part so as to cover the hips and loins. The sleeves to be full and much longer than any other coat and it must be made as to button up to the neck. It must be so long as to cover the calves of the legs. It might be made without any opening behind but in that case it must be made full as I cannot bear the scanty close fitting coats now being worn....The collar may be of velvet and the buttons had better be of the plain black ink as are worn for many years as they are more durable than silk. (April 1843 1406)

This is a stretch of text which provides evidence of the internal logic – the cultural system – which was a palpable product of specific discourse use over the long term, recalling, as it does, so many community values and concerns which appear and reappear in every context: the detail, the hierarchical resolution of the tone of the ‘order’ being made, the resistance to encroachments on this world by the fashions of that, the desire for quality without show, the conservatism, the teachings of the climate, the mention of the body in the third person, the prudent understanding that things should be made to last. This is the world as they made it and as they understood it.

As many scholars have noted, however, social processes may align themselves with the discursively created blueprint of a community to varying degrees but we should not expect them to be identical. “And, if they are never identical then the fundamental proposition of descent theory [and similarly essentializing theories] must be inverted. It is not the case that there are simply groups which the ethnographer discovers. It is that there are representations of groupness, naturalized in a greater or lesser degree.” (Urban 1996a, 149.) Descent is regarded in descent theory as a means of constituting groups, whereas in the approach utilised here it is rather a “means of constituting representations of group permanence” (ibid., 152). Patrick Joyce also notes that “[s]ome historians are in danger of defending history by assuming that a discourse is either a matter of fact or fiction, either a form of reference or ‘merely’ a discursive construction, which is to imagine that some texts can perfectly reflect the real” (1994, 8). He goes further to say that for “a fact to be accurate or not there does not have to be a relation of correspondence between the discourse and the real” (ibid., 9), suggesting, as an illustrative example, that “meanings cannot be derived from an originary ‘experience’ of poverty and insecurity, and what matters is the way in which people put this experience together in the first place. ‘Poverty’ and ‘insecurity’ are a part of culture then, not ‘experience’ [conceived as ‘the real’]. Their meanings are made and not found. In handling the real, they inevitably construct it.” (ibid., 12.)

Thus I do not endorse the model of ‘culture’ discussed in Keesing and Strathern (*pace*

Goodenough) as comprising a dichotomy of “patterns *of* behaviour” (which they assert should be correctly termed “sociocultural system”) and “patterns *for* behavior”, i.e. “systems of shared ideas, systems of concepts and rules and meanings that underlie and are expressed in the ways that humans live”, going on to “restrict the term *culture* to an **ideational** system...Culture, so defined, refers to what humans *learn*, not to what they do and make.” (1998, 16, emphases in text.) Approaching culture and community from a discourse-centred perspective reveals such an energetic dialectic between these two categories, carried on via incessant metacultural commentary, that separating them, even analytically, becomes an arid, pointless and process-denying project. Can one extract the ‘great issues’ underlying the conflicts described in the previous chapter from the mode of conducting contestation to its (temporary) closure and label the former a ‘pattern *for* behavior’ and the latter a ‘pattern *of* behavior’ – something humans ‘do’, thereby excluding it from ‘culture’ as so defined? Surely not. The things that humans make and do are also learned and most of that learning is transmitted in the medium of speech.

In speech, therefore, lie the shapes of communal worlds. These may be accessed by the analyst by careful attention to the relationships between discursive constructions and ‘objective’ worlds, and between discursive constructions themselves. Solipsism may be resisted by regarding circulating talk, not merely as description, as a transparent ‘window’ onto communal worlds, but as the world itself, whose connections, relationships, value hierarchies and so on inheres in the arrangement of words and stretches of talk. Establishing, for example, that ‘community’ is understood to exist in the minds of putative community members may be carried out, as I have done in this paper, by plotting the usage and circulation and application of the tiny terms ‘we’ and ‘our’, and examining the relationships in which they are deployed. Establishing the meaning of terms – identifying values contained in autodesignations such as ‘English’; kin terms such as ‘father’ and so on – may be achieved in similar ways. As I also noted in the latter discussion, a quality of discursive constructions which emerged in the course of such plotting was that the greater the number of institutional ‘domains’ in which a term or a stretch of talk has salience, the greater its ‘value’, ‘fixity’ and ‘weight’ in the communal world in which it circulates. This is less obvious than, but equally important as, the correlative quality of circulating talk – the further an item travels in spatial and numerical terms, i.e. the greater the number of people who accept an item in similar ways, the more weight accrues to it.

Another important quality of circulating talk is that not only *is* it culture, it is, as metaculture, also *about* culture, often simultaneously. Greg Urban postulates that change and innovation in communal worlds takes place under a metaculture of modernity, i.e. metacultural judgments which valorize cultural configurations or items because they are novel (though always incorporating, at least minimally, strands of what has been produced before). Metacultural judgments which approve configurations or items because they replicate exactly what has come before or proscribe new items because they do not replicate as they ought, Urban terms a metaculture of tradition. Working with these understandings throughout this paper I have concluded that it is essential that we do not understand that any social entity operates entirely with one or the other type of judgment, and that the type of judgment that attaches to any of the myriad cultural productions which make up communal worlds is both empirically observable and directly related to the degree of value placed on an object or institution. Thus, in this world, valorization under a metaculture of tradition pertained to religious practice, as

‘fixed’ for centuries by *The Book of Common Prayer*, and everything coming under its rubric: marriage, baptism, social hierarchy, political structure, morals incarcerated in the ten commandments and the thirty nine Articles, the inalienable rights of the individual (so far as these conform to notions of social hierarchy) and so on. Other cultural constructions, which can be plotted over centuries, are likewise valorized under a metaculture of tradition, though actual application, for example of the term ‘gentleman’ and all it entailed, naturally changed as the ‘objective’ world around the community changed.

I also concluded that although a metaculture of ‘modernity’ was adequate to describe valorization of the novel for the sake of its novelty, the epochal connotations of the dichotomy ‘tradition/modernity’ do not appeal to me. Change in this communal world was not always the result of incorporation of innovative practices related to temporally ‘new’ inventions, though the nineteenth-century Euro-American world arguably experienced technological development as great or greater than that of the twentieth century, which all had to be processed. Innovation also occurred, however, as the result of accepting local Russian and Petersburg-cosmopolitan ways into their world, ways which were different to praxis in the homeland, but not ‘modern’ in any temporal sense. Thus, I am inclined to suggest that the proper partners for metacultural judgments valorizing exact replication (tradition) are those which embrace plurality, wherever it originates in terms of time or space. The main point to be made, however, is that social process involving change occurs most rapidly in those areas of a communal world where plurality is allowed, with the concomitant understanding that all changes carry unexpected baggage which may, and probably always does, cross domain barriers into areas where exact replication is prescribed. Sunday fun, for example, edged regular church attendance aside, resulting in the gradual devaluation of the tenets of the Prayer Book as people simply became less familiar with them. Accepting that the earth was older than six thousand years and that humans were descended from apes, also cast the rest of Bible into the cultural arena of myth and moral guidance rather than fact and brought all its certainties into doubt. And so on.

I have noticed, as the reader has probably noticed, that the phraseology and vocabulary I’ve fallen into in the course of writing this is drawn from the world I have been writing about. It has amused me and I have only checked the most extravagant manifestations. It has also, along the way, reminded me that the central theoretical thesis of this paper is not erroneous: talk is to humans as silk to a spider. Talk spins the worlds we inhabit. The words of the inhabitants, the way they are put together so as to carry the realities of those who understand, of those who have encountered their juxtaposition with particular sensed and experienced circumstance (a huge and untrammelled ‘other’ world), also inevitably invade the world of the reconstructionist and weave their webs without specific invitation. But now, for me, it is ending. My relationship with the Cattley, Moberly, Whishaw, Carr, Hill and Feild clans and their connections, with the *shoobs* and *valinki*, the bear hunting and *isvochiki*, the majestic rippled or frozen Neva, the Mourino flowers indiscriminately supplied for the Anglican altar and the Orthodox ‘blessing of the waters’; with the heart wrenching song, blaze of candlelight on gilded icon and spiritual

blossoming of the rebirth of Christ after the darkness of Lent in St. Isaacs; with the *zakuska* and *piroshki*; the frozen bodies on the ice road between Cronstatd and Oranienbaum and stifling puttied windows of relentless Russian winter; with the quibbling over coat sleeves, marriage portions and the secular ownership of our flagship Church; with the certainty of enduring the burial of at least one child and the unarticulable need to urinate during the Supper of the Lord; with the jagged pavements and successive imperial and bureaucratic whimsy of the vast many faceted world of Imperial Russia – this is coming to an end.

I think, I can brush this world aside as irritated human fingers brush a spider's web from a favourite nook; as the wind blows away an abandoned spider's world. But, as successive anthropologists have clearly discovered, you cannot – for no matter what purpose – enter the world spun by others without getting caught in their web. And this is as it should be. Simplistically, I can say: they have taught me and now I move on. But we never move on from what we have been taught. The words which have taught us, the physical response and constraints which have resulted, stay with us forever. Sticky shreds of the original web adhere to our own 'personal' worlds and travel with us. It explains why and how we can return to earlier fieldwork, or earlier homes in other countries, years later; to the comfort – or irrational horror – we find in the company of our cell mates in those places. These are worlds of which we have been part. These are some of the shapes in which we have learnt to string our words and, through them, our thoughts and thinking. These are the webs we have also helped to weave. This is our human being.

Appendix One

The names of all the persons of the English Congregation in Mosco Anno domine 1706

Charles Whitworth Esq. Envoy Extraordinary from Her Majesty of Great Britain.

Charles Goodfellow, Her Majesty's consul

Dr Arefkin, chief Physician to the Emperor of Russia

Henry Stiles

William Lloyd

Robert Manwaring (sic)

Samuel Meux

Henry Bland

Thomas Habe

Jos. Meverall

Jos. Wilkins

Edward Bell

James Spillman

Samuel Martin

George Morley

Jos. Brookshanks

Gab Dowker

William English

Samuel Delannoy

John Ranson

Roger Mainwaring (sic)

William Parsons

Francis Beesley

Capt. John Perry

Doctor Richard Lee

Mr Henry Farquharson

Henry Krevett

Stephen Gwinn

Richard Grice

Henry Comer

Francis Morley

John Edwards

John Hope

Thomas Bowman

John Lindsey

Thomas Price

Wm. Glasscocke

John Franklin

John Goodman

Joseph Stone

Peter Hanbury

Mrs Judith Kellerman

Judith Stiles

Margaret Thirlby

Mary Smith

Bridget Jochens

Ann Morley

Bar. Morley

Ann Kennedy

Sarah Lindsey

Schreider and daughter

Added to the same congregation since
1709

Mrs Cath Meverell

Mr Charles von Plankenbergh and his lady

Joseph Fawthrop

Henry Hodgekin

- Burren

William Meverell

- Delannoy

- Baker

William Handerson

- Higgins

John Bond

Mrs Ann Remercey

Mr Joseph Bottom

John Bradley

Mrs Susanna Mohun

Rebekka Reddish

- Tumour

(GL 11,192 B)

Appendix Two.

List of all English residing in St Petersburg 1782-1783

Sir James Harris & fam	3	Mr Anderson	1
Walter Shairp Esq consul & fam.	5	Mr Innes	1
Rev W Tooke & fam	5	Messrs Moberley	3
Dr John Rogerson		Mr Yorke	1
- physician to Her Majesty	1	Mr Riches & his man	2
Dr Halliday & fam.	6	Mr Wilson	1
Dr Rogers	1	Mr Barwick	1
Dr Guthrie	4	Mr Theophilus Smith	1
Mr Ross & Mr Warre & fam.	3	Mr Hopkins	1
Messrs Porter & Browne	2	Mr Schultzen	1
Mr Bonar & fam.	6	Mr Hill	1
Messrs Coole & Smalley	2	Mr Sauer	1
Mr Rigail & fam. & Cattley	6	Mr William Smith	1
Mr Sutherland & fam.	6	Mr David Brown	1
Mr Glen & fam.	6	Mr Scougall	1
Mr Gardner & fam.	5	Mr Bramstone	1
Mr Weltden & fam.	5	Mr Burnet	1
Mr Cramp & fam.	5	Mr Stephens	1
Mr Raikes & fam.	4	Mr Cozens & fam.	5
Mr Edward J Smith & fam.	9	Mr Morgan & fam	4
Mr Cayley & fam.	5	Mr Robt Smith & fam.	7
Mr Hay & fam	4	Mr Thomas Smith & fam.	4
Mr Ramsbottom & fam	5	Mr Statter & fam	7
Mrs Laing & maidservant	2	Mr Busch & fam.	4
Mrs Saffree & her niece	2	Mr Meader & fam	4
Mrs Cavanaugh & fam	3	Mr Robinson & fam.	2
Mrs Brompton & fam	5	Mr Isaac Robinson & fam.	2
Mr Wroote	1	Mr Elmer & fam.	8
Mr Bedell & fam.	4	Mr Pickersgill & fam.	2
Mr Wilkins & fam.	7	Mr Simpkin & fam.	5
Mr Yeames & fam.	5	Mr Hynam & fam.	5
Mr Claxton & fam.	5	Mr Wishaw & fam.	4
Mr Vernon & fam.	3	Mr Colley & fam.	6
Mr Millar & fam.	3	Mr Nicol & fam.	6
Mrs Fogg & son	2	Mr Whitaker & fam.	4
Mrs Morgatts	1	Mr Dillow & fam.	2
Mr Gilmour & fam.	4	Mr Fawell & fam.	2
Mr Westley & fam.	4	Mr Gould.	1
Mr Cazalet	1	Mr Moffatt	1
Mr Capasser (?)	1	Mr Mowat (?)	1
Mr Steward	1	Mr Griffin & Schoolon(?)	2
Mr Leake	1	Mr J. Smith & fam.	4
Mr Bush	1	Mr Flaggett & fam.	2
Mr Weguelin	1	Mr Seymour & fam.	3
Mr Hugh Atkins	1	Mr Edwards & fam.	7

Mr Vernezobre & fam.	8	<u>English women married to foreigners</u>	
Mr Prockter & fam.	3		
Mr Frazer & fam.	4	Mrs Hero	1
Mr John Bailey & fam.	4	Mrs Gesler	1
Mr Bailey builder	1	Mrs Muir	1
Mr Cameron	1	Mrs Konig	1
Mr Higginbotham & fam.	6	Mrs Torkley	1
Mr Keller & fam.	4	Mrs Poggenpohl	1
Mr Everson	1		
Mr R. Wilkinson	1		
Mr James Best	1	<u>At Cronstadt</u>	
Mr McMillian	1		
Mr Davis	1	Admiral Greigg	5
Mr Weekes clerk & fam.	2	- Dugdale	3
Messrs Morwood	3	Dr Simpson	1
Mr Thomson & fam.	6	Mr Armstrong	1
Mr Snow & son	2	Mr Booker	4
Mr Angelo & wife	2	Mr Fishwick	6
Mr Elstob	1	Marker	5
Mr Walter Scott	1	Pinder	1
Mr Edwards	1	Cook	1
A Tanner & wife	2	Ingleden	2
Mr Lipka & fam.	5	Fox	6
Mr Clark & wife	2	Tisdale	4
Mr Clark & fam.	4	Wilson	2
Mr Paul Clark	1	Fagan	3
Mr Robt. Clark	1	Clawes	7
Mr Murphy	1	Hall	1
Mr Rhodes & fam.	4	Patrick	1
Grooms, names unknown	3	Bish	3
Mr Briggs & wife	2	Hunter	3
James, a gardener	1	Wild	1
Robert Haslem & wife	2	Fisher	3
Lichtenstein & sister	2	Keen	1
Mr Hill & man	2	Adam Smith	1
Mr Powel	1	Bruce	1
Mr Pithouse	1	Mr McKenzie	1
Mr Jn. Bottom & fam	7	O'Connor	1
Mr Peter Bottom & fam	2	Bates	1
Mrs Bottom wid & fam	5	Brazier	1
Miss Lowth	1	Nasse	2
Mr Gomm & fam	3		
Mrs O. Shannon	1		
Mrs Bladon	1	<u>Married to foreigners</u>	
Miss Ellis	1		
Miss Mead	1	Mrs Spilanoff	
Miss Peggy	1	Mrs Hiriafski	

(GL 11,192 B)

Appendix Three.

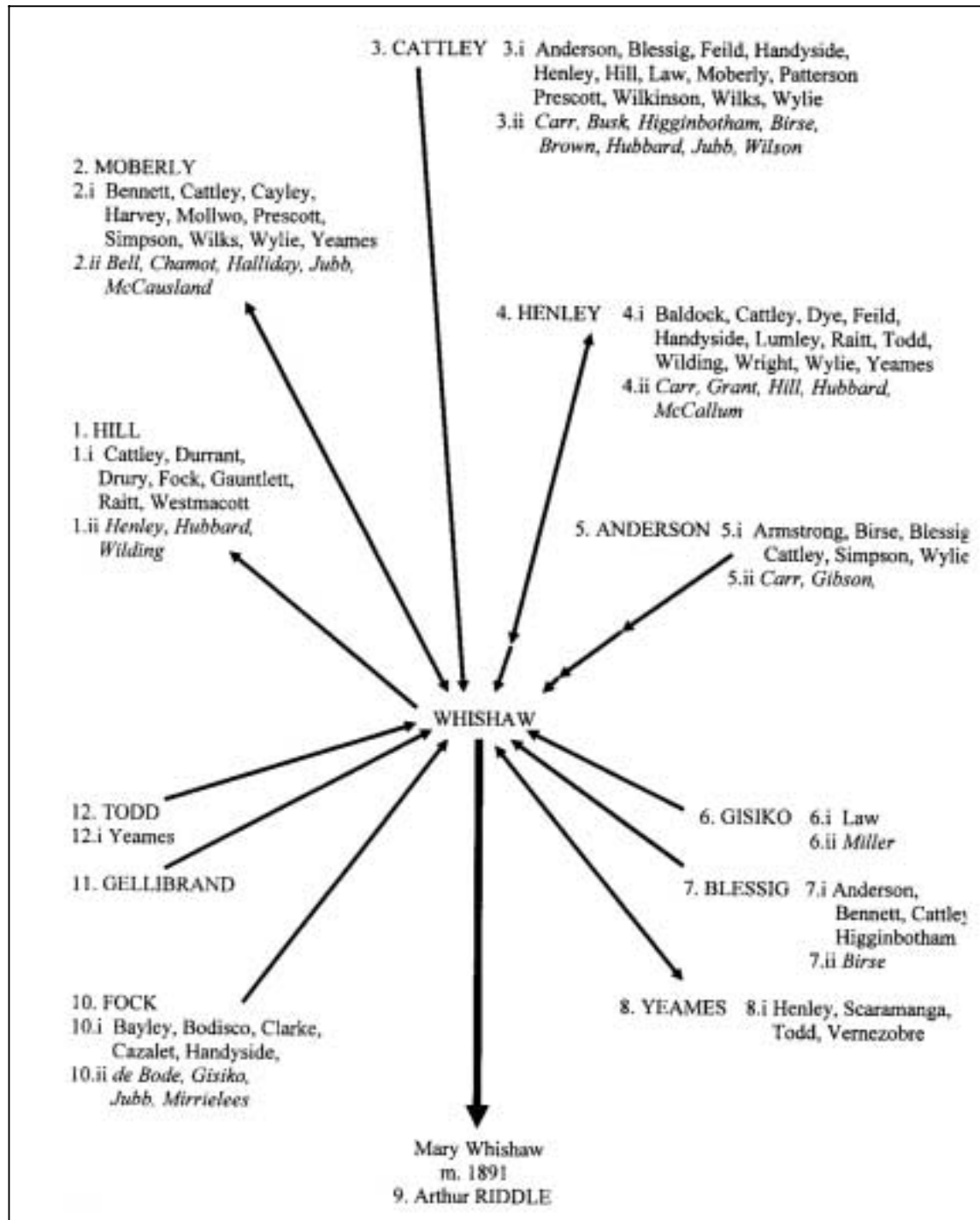
Advice for a Journey From St. Petersburg to London.
Mr. W. C. Gellibrand, October, 1843.

The Malle Poste is the best conveyance to the frontier (in witness whereof my father used to have pillow strapped over his head to serve as a buffer between his body and the roof of the carriage); the only attraction at Riga is the river which you cross at Tilsit; you will find comfortable accommodation at the new Hotel der Somme, Landlord Beyner; change your silver money for Thaler notes and small Prussian coin, the agio gives Beyner a fractional advantage; after reposing yourself for the night, travel by extra post to Koenigsburg, 9 to 10 hours journey; avoid the night diligence as the company is not the most select; take your quarters at Koenigsburg in the Deutsch Haus, the landlord is civil and the accommodation fair. I take the Schnell Post coach from Koenigsburg to Berlin, which is under excellent regulations and saves much trouble on the road, 58 hours journey; an English hotel has lately been opened on the Linden, the best situation. Take the railroad to Magdeburg, you will arrive in time to take a refreshing meal; Book yourself when you reach Magdeburg in the diligence via Minden to Cologne, the best route 36 hours journey; the Hotel Bellevue on the Rhine is well conducted. At Cologne you can ascertain when the Antwerp steamer starts for London, but, I prefer the passage from Ostend to Dover, avoiding all Steam Companies when I can advance by a Government administered steam boat. If the weather is stormy, you can approach the English coast nearer by taking the Diligence to Boulogne. Steam boats now ply from Boulogne to Folkestone on the Dover rail-road to London.
(LRA 1091/8.)

One can see why and how the community managed to build up such intense sociality and cohesion in the first half of the nineteenth century. The thought of going 'home' would not have been an appealing one.

Appendix Four.

Diagram showing Whishaw marriages over the duration of their lives in St. Petersburg, the direction of the arrows indicating the movement of women; (i) indicating the immediate affinal connections of primary families; (ii) indicating those families the immediate affinal connections were connected to. Arthur Riddle inhabits a singular space.



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ARCHIVAL MATERIAL:

ABBREVIATIONS

LRA – Leeds Russian Archive, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

GL – Guildhall Library, London.

PRO – Public Record Office, Kew, London.

UNL – The University of Nottingham Library. Manuscripts and Special Collections.

Leeds Russian Archive

Ms. 670 Macpherson Collection

670/6 – *Upheaval: reminiscences of Russia*. G.E. Macpherson.

Ms. 811 Whishaw Collection

811/25-7 – Edith Henley née Field's copy of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

Ms. 850 Brown, Marie Collection

850/1 – *This was Russia*. Marie Russell Brown.

Ms. 856 Ethel Stevenson Archive

856/1 – Notes for a lecture given by Ethel Stevenson to a religious society meeting.

Ms. 916 Maude Archive – Letters from Russia 1856.

Ms. 1015 Bagenal Collection

1015/87 – Letter from Meta Muir to sister in Edinburgh

1015/89 – Letter from Meta Muir to sister Eva in Edinburgh. 19.7.1887

1015/92 – Letter from Meta Muir to sister Eva in Edinburgh. 25.8.1887

1015/93 – Letter from Meta Muir to Mr Hogg. 10.10.1887

1015/94 – Resumes of a number of letters from Meta to sisters.

1015/115 – Personal notes by Meta Muir.

1015/146 – Extracts from letters from Walter Philip to wife Laura in London. 1905-6

Ms. 1058 Gudgeon Collection.

Ms. 1072 Thornton Collection

1072/1 – Transcript of letter from Rebecca Thornton to Mr John Thornton 6.6.1829.

1072/10 – Letters from Thornton's Mill

1072/20 – Transcript of letter from Bateman Thornton to Mary Thornton, 8.11.1892

1072/25 – James Thornton's Family History

1072/30 – The Graves of Our Fathers. Lily Tudeer née Bell.

1072/39 – Letters from Thornton's Mill.

1072/68 – Memoirs of Dorothy Shaw.

Ms. 1091 Hubbard Archives

1091/8 – *Some Account of the Hubbard Family*. W.E. Hubbard. 1917. Sevenoaks: Joseph Salmon. Private circulation.

Ms. 1110 Gellibrand Collection.

Ms. 1182 Walter Bray Archive.

Ms. 1192 Bernard Family Archive

- 1192/1 – A Spiritual Odyssey. Life and letters of H. M. Bernard, 1853-1908.
 1192/2 – A family record written for her three daughters by Maida Bernard.
 Ms. 1193 Mirrielees Archive.
 Ms. 1278 Lehrs Archive
 1278/2 – Moscow Winters Fifty Years Ago. Violet Lehrs née Gibson.
 1278/6 – A Russian Christmas and New Year. Violet Lehrs.
 1278/8 – Jam Making in a Russian Garden. Violet Lehrs.
 Ms. 1406 Cattley Archives (comprising 28 unnumbered boxes, items not catalogued), including:
 – Copy of Hints to Robert Cattley, 1802.
 – Robert Cattley's Diary, commencing 1817.
 – Letter from Robert Cattley to James Richard Cattley, 1827.
 – Speech given by Robert Cattley, 1837.
 – James Cattley's diary, 1839.
 – Stephen Thomas Cattley's diary, 6.5.1850.
 – letters from James E. Cattley to Edith Klockman, 1884.
 – The Cattley Family Tree. Researched by Gerard Norman Coveney. etc.
 Ms. 1387 Harden Collection
 – British and American Congregational Church St. Petersburg. Jubilee Commemorative Volume 1840-1890.

Guildhall Library.

- Ms. 11,192 B - London Foreign Register, British Factory in Russia, 1703-1816
 Ms. 11,194/1 - London Foreign Register, British Factory in Russia, 1816-1849
 Ms. 11,194/2 - London Foreign Register, British Factory in Russia, 1850-1866
 Ms. 11,192C - London Foreign Register, British Factory in Russia, 1867-1894
 Ms. 11,194/4 - London Foreign Register, British Factory in Russia, 1894 -1901
 Ms. 11,741/7-14 - Minutes of the Russia Company: 1756-1903
 Ms. 11,745 - Russia Company Correspondence: - out-letter book 1879-1885
- Ms. 11,749 - Russia Company, Miscellaneous Documents: List of Contents.
 9 - appointments of chaplains at St. Petersburg, 1824
 102 - proposed scheme for mechanics' children, St. Petersburg, 1845
 104 - proposed asylum for destitute British subjects in St. Petersburg, 1845
 125 - resolution of thanks to chaplain at St. Petersburg, 1849
 158 - annual report of British school, St. Petersburg, 1853
 206 - resumption of commercial agent's charges after the Crimean war, 1856
 211, 215 - proposed seamen's hospital, Cronstadt, 1857
 216-220 - resumption of commercial agents charges, 1857
 222 - history of Anglican chaplaincies in Russia, 1857
 229, 233 - proposed British seamen's hospital, Cronstadt
 262 - leave of absence of chaplain at Cronstadt, 1863
 267-8 - resignation of chaplain at St. Petersburg, 1864
 279-80 - appointment of Chaplain at St. Petersburg, 1864
 304 - appointment of agent to superintend Company property, 1865
 305 - keeping of registers by the chaplain at St. Petersburg, 1865
 321 - attempted assassination of Czar (sic) Alexander II, 1866
 335 - British seamen's hospital Cronstadt, 1866
 336 - address to the Prince of Wales, 1866
 342 - dispute between British consul and chaplain at Cronstadt, concerning British seamen's hospital and visit of Prince of Wales to St. Petersburg, 1866
 344 - Episcopal licensing of chaplains, 1867

- 345 - dispute between British consul and chaplain at Cronstadt, 1866
- 347, 351 - dispute between British consul and chaplain at Cronstadt, 1867
- 353 - Episcopal licensing of chaplains, 1867
- 355 - opposition to ritualistic practices at Moscow chaplaincy, 1867
- 384 - reduction in port charges at St. Petersburg, 1870
- 410-15 - repairs to the English church at St. Petersburg, and legal interest of British ambassador and British Factory, 1873
- 440 - printed copy of accounts of English Church, 1877
- 457 - list of British residents at Cronstadt, 1878
- 545 - printed balance sheet of British Factory at St. Petersburg, 1880
- 571 - Anno Quatro Georgii IV Regis CAP LXVII. An Act to declare valid certain Marriages that Have been solemnized at St. Petersburg since the Abolition of the British Factory there. 10th July 1823.
- Ms. 11,751 C – The English Church, St. Petersburg.
- Ms. 11,756 – Russia Company ‘General reference’ book; inventories of Company records.
- Ms. 11,758 – Eastland Company ‘general reference book’.
- Ms. 11,893 – Russia Company Treasurers’ Accounts Books.
- Ms. 31,781/1 – Minutes of the British Factory in St. Petersburg 1774-1790
- Ms. 31,781/2 – Minutes of the British Factory in St. Petersburg 1802-1825
- Ms. 31,782 – British Factory Copy Book
- Ms. 31,783 – Celebration of Banns in the British Church at St. Petersburg 1877-1900

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- Ms. FO 65 434 - from British Consul-General Michele to the Sec of State for Foreign Affairs, on request.
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- Letters from Caroline Cummings to Lily Ramsay. Private collection.
- Mary Riddle née Whishaw’s Diaries: 1888-1902. Private Collection.

The University of Nottingham Library.

Manuscripts and Special Collections.

Catalogue of the Papers of Sir Andrew Buchanan.

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- Bu 20/47 - Letter from Sir A. Layard, Foreign Office, London, to Sir A. Buchanan; 10.1.1886
- Bu 20/73 - Letter from Baron Hammond, F.O., to Sir A. Buchanan St. Petersburg, 13.6.1866
- Bu 20/57 - Letter from Sir A. Layard, F.O., to Sir A. Buchanan, St. Petersburg; 30.5.1866
- Bu 49/107 - Letter from Sir A. Buchanan, St. Petersburg, to Baron Hammond, F.O., 17.1.1866
- Bu 49/109 - Letter from Sir A. Buchanan, St. Petersburg, to 4th Earl of Clarendon, 14.2.1866
- Bu 49/124 - Letter from Sir A. Buchanan, St. Petersburg to Baron Hammond, 5.11.1866.
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Web Pages.

Cattley Family Web Page

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