



# HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

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## DISCUSSION

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### **Comments on *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia*. By Laura Engelstein. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.**

#### **1. Naoko Hirooka**

The author begins this book with the statement “Sex was a political subject in late imperial Russia”(p. 1). It may be distinguished from many previous books about Russian women and the family by Western historians. First, those earlier books mainly related the thoughts and lives of educated feminists and revolutionaries. Much recent work differs in the respect that it treats the lives of lower-class women, including factory women, prostitutes, and especially peasant women. The themes are diverse and the results are excellent. However, this reviewer thinks the methods of both types of writings are not so different from each other. The authors all hunted through archives and published sources and sought out the silent voices which had been buried in piles of time.

Since the appearance of two books, Richard Stite's *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* and the David L. Ransel edited *The Family in Imperial Russia* (both 1978), research into Russian gender roles has steadily increased. And yet in Soviet Russia herself this subject was received very noticeably with indifference. Efforts in this area might still be insufficient, compared with the history of this field in France and England, which are far ahead of Russian historians in this respect. However, it does seem to have taken root in Russian history. Russian women have appeared on the stage as main characters, but the stage itself has been marginalized and isolated. “The mainstream” of Russian history has not been under heavy pressure from it to change its perspectives. Nowadays, information on women has accumulated. It is certainly gratifying and we still more feel a need for a variety of information. However, it is high time for us to reconsider the methods and perspectives of research into gender roles throughout the entire history of Russia.

Researchers engaged in the history of Russian women from the late 19th century to the early 20th century may easily find many articles full of sexual depravity and many ‘sexy’ advertisements in journals, and so on. But they are just beginning to discover or locate this information. Nobody else had previously searched for these things. In this sense, Prof. Engelstein's work is monumental, and it seems to me to be very important and spurs me to much reconsideration, especially in regard to methods of research.

In investigating the history of people who had been kept silent, what materials needed to be utilized — that question is decisive. They had not previously told of themselves. Source materials were generally written or compiled by the educated

(usually men only), and often told of nothing more than the witnesses themselves. Now historians are easily seduced into discovering *objective* sources in archives, especially statistics of the 'silent people' and so on. Instead of those, however (although plenty of those are carefully cited in this book), the author mainly uses a great many discourses in law and medicine, which "represent the two disciplines most central to the constitution of the modern sexual regime in the West, and to the steps taken in that direction in Russia"(p. 10). Toward the end of this book are mentioned the plots of 'boulevard fiction' which "freed itself from the tutelage of cultural elites and relied instead on the wiles of the marketplace, arousing and thriving on desire"(p. 11). The intent of this author is to describe not the history of Russian women, but the history of sexuality which is intertwined with modernization in the entire Russian society and therefore is one area where political authority intervened.

With regard to the contents of this book, we soon become aware that it is studded with gems. Here, however, space permits me to mention only a few of this book's brilliant, wide-ranging subjects of discussion.

First, Prof. Engelstein masterly points out the uniqueness of Russian discourses about syphilis, namely the ideology of бытовой сифилис. "Medical observers without exception characterized syphilis as endemic to the peasant population and nonvenereal in origin"(p. 177). "Insofar as Russian physicians adopted the European association between syphilis and illicit sex, it was in keeping with a view of their own cities as islands of Westernized culture"(p. 211). At the Fin-de-Siècle, syphilis performs a distinctive symbolic function by which we can compare, for example, France (which was investigated by Alan Corbin),<sup>1</sup> where the urgent need for new regulations toward prostitution was combined with the clamorous public opinion for their enactment, and Russia. Prof. Engelstein gives us an imaginative perspective on changing women's status connected with modernity in Russian society's entrenched patriarchal system:

[The edict of 1863 of] women's exemption from corporal punishment "functioned, in fact, as a mark of the peasant male's improved standing... and reinforcing the wife's "private" status"(p. 74).

Progressive lawmakers "chose to extend legal protection for women as a sign of cultural progress... Yet such attitudes may be said to mark the persistence of their attachment to the traditional social structure"(pp. 94-95).

In relation to this, the author notably draws attention to a dilemma of European liberalism toward women.

"Special treatment for women based on the peculiarities of their physical and, in particular, sexual constitution endorsed their civil subordination at the very moment when the weakening of formal status barriers challenged the legal subordination of lower-class men"(p. 95).

In general, liberalism demands statutory law and under it egalitarianism. Simultaneously, though, it generates the existence of *unequal* treatment and therefore the need to "protect the rights and serve the needs of less powerful social groups."

However, we have to reconsider how the peculiarities of physical and sexual constitution came to be associated with “less powerful.” Is it *a priori*?

Barbara A. Engel, who studies peasant women in the same historical period as this book, writes in her recent monograph: “Peasant men regarded women as potentially unruly and subversive... It seems clear that peasant women were hardly passive ciphers... It was the husband’s responsibility to keep these disruptive impulses in check by ‘instructing’ and controlling his wife.”<sup>2</sup> According to Prof. Engel, peasants felt women to be “disruptive” and beyond the rationality of men. In the Russian countryside, within the very system of patriarchy, for example, through the peasant calendar we see the conspicuous worship toward the powerful fertility of nature, the Mother-Wet-Earth, that is women, although their civic rights were restricted. There also seems to be a delicate but important difference as regards the images of women between the intelligentsia and the peasantry.

Prof. Engelstein points out that in Russia, incest was given a wider definition, and that “suited a peasant society composed of extended, patrilocal families, in which kinship mapped a wide network of obligation and authority”(p. 45). Here I will introduce one tradition from Russian folk culture of the system of godfather and godmother, *Kumovstvo*,<sup>3</sup> and because of it much more incest taboo actually existed in the customs of the peasantry than the writings of Orthodox canon law. When bread was not available, a peasant ran to *kum i kuma*, that is his or hers godparents, first. The godparents also had the right to have a say about upbreeding and discipline of their godchild and, in the case of his or her becoming an orphan, trained him or her for *muzhik ili baba*, that is to be a peasant. To *kum i kuma*, great respects were paid. The godchild necessarily visited them at big feasts, especially at Easter. They were indispensable attendants in the godchild’s home celebrations. They (particularly, *kyma*, that is a godmother) were the main guests at their godchild’s marriage; if they had died, their roles were even succeeded to by their children in turn. This system should be only expressed in “obligation” and “authority”?

We cannot help repeating this time-worn problem in Russian history, but without resolving it we are eternally lost in a mysterious deep forest, “Russia.” Prof. Engelstein expresses her opinion that “Though imbued with Western values, most educated Russians nevertheless thought of folk culture as the core of national identity” (p. 98). It is said that in Russia, patriarchy consists of three systems: church, state, and family, and is a unified system. Between the system itself and the system accepted by the people, of course, a difference exists.<sup>4</sup> For example, church doctrines and the Orthodox peasant’s faith, *bytovoe pravoslavie* as dual-belief, often showed significant discrepancies. From the view point of folk culture, a strong faith in pre-Christian nature worship, that is in the severe, powerful, and tender-hearted Mother-Wet-Earth was present throughout the peasantry. I do not wish to deny the importance of patriarchy’s meanings in Russian society. These are perhaps the head and tail, the sunny place and shadowy place. It is necessary for historians to decode and elucidate not only the superficial patriarchy but also this co-related system in Russia.

In chapter 9, Prof. Engelstein discusses abortion in detail. However, she did not mention the famous discourse of Lenin following the 1913 Pirogov congress “To decide to be a mother or not for herself... is ABC of civil democratic rights.”<sup>5</sup> I think the

author must have been aware of it and dared to ignore it. It is not directly connected with the subjects of this book, but does relate to its methodological framework. In an article “Combined Underdevelopment: Discipline and the Law in Imperial and Soviet Russia,”<sup>6</sup> Prof. Engelstein more explicitly describes her theoretical foundations; commenting about it, Rudy Koshar explains: “she (Engelstein)... contrasts Russian society with a model of Western liberalism that, unsurprisingly, always finds Russia wanting. Her historical narrative depends on a register of deficits in which ‘bourgeois culture,’ ‘the monarchs of Western Europe’ or simply ‘Europe’ is the yardstick.”<sup>7</sup> Even though the discourse of Lenin which did not fit into Prof. Engelstein’s framework was dismissed or merely ignored, this implies an excessive simplification of history. History is a field which overlaps both social science and humanities. Historians who lean toward social science may be under somewhat uneasy at this book’s methodology despite the numerous, carefully cited primary materials. They may regard it as being overly literary-philosophical, that is, *subjective*.

This book is truly original, creative and impregnable — especially for a young student such as myself. In fact this book, which was published in 1992, has already received plenty of praise. I hope Prof. Engelstein will continue to express her bold theses on these aspects of Russian history. The above review presents a few arguments which came to mind and which I have set forth.

- 1 Alan Corbin, *Les Fille de Noce; Misère sexuelle et prostitution (19<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, 1978. Translated into Japanese in 1991.  
Incidentally, may I remark that in Japan, mandatory medical check for prostitutes’ venereal disease was first introduced at the demand of the Russian Navy, which called at Nagasaki in 1860. [see Kazue Morisaki, *Karayukisan*, Asahibunko (1980), pp. 56-62.]
- 2 Barbara A. Engel, *Between the Fields & the City: Women, Work, & Family in Russia, 1861-1914* (1994), p. 23.
- 3 T. A. Listova, “Kumov’ya i kumovstvo v russkoi derevne,” *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, No. 2 (1991), pp. 37-52.
- 4 Before the Revolution, peasants in Gadishi village in Novgorod province (where a detailed survey was made) did not celebrate nor take holidays on coronation day of the tsar and birthdays of the tsar and his family members, which were national holidays in Imperial Russia. [M. Ya. Fenomenov, *Sovremennaia derevnia*, I (1925), p. 256.]
- 5 *Pravda*, 16 June 1913.
- 6 With comments on it and a reply; see *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (April 1993), pp. 338-381. This was given to me by Prof. Engelstein in Sapporo.
- 7 *Ibid.* p. 360.

## 2. Mitsuyoshi Numano

As a person basically engaged in the study of Russian literature, I will limit

myself to some aspects of Prof. Engelstein's book directly connected with the methodology of literary studies. From the outset, I must make clear that I am not competent to discuss *The Key to Happiness* in its entirety.

#### 1. In Search of a New History of Russian Literature

I found Prof. Engelstein's book *The Keys to Happiness* very interesting and stimulating precisely because I think what she has achieved in her book can be applied fruitfully to the writing of a new history of Russian literature, in order to open up fresh perspectives.

Personally, I have keenly felt the need to develop some new perspectives on the traditional way of writing a history of Russian literature. By "the traditional way" here I mean the simple arrangements of the biographies of major writers and the titles of their works in chronological order.

Written in such a "traditional" way, a history of Russian literature does not really differ from an encyclopedia of Russian literature, the only essential difference being that the former is arranged in chronological order while the latter is arranged in alphabetical order. Although there have been attempts to improve this deplorable situation, little has been done, in my opinion, in the field of Russian literature. True, there have been many "fads" in the methodology of literary studies: Russian formalism, structuralism, semiotics of culture, deconstruction, and contemporary French thought (including Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault).

But strangely enough, all these seem to have hardly affected the way of writing a history of Russian literature: people have adhered to the matter-of-fact principle that is meant to be neutral. But are they really neutral?

It is obvious that those writers who are admitted to the pantheon of literary history are only "first-rate" writers (or, more precisely, those who are considered first-rate according to the evaluation system inherent in the discipline of literary history). As a result, "second-" or "third-rate" writers are eliminated (for example, Verbitskaya and even Artsybashev). This is how the hierarchical system of evaluation operates in the writing of a traditional history of literature. It cannot be a neutral description of all writers regardless of the literary merits of each. So today, a history of literature (or what is believed to be one) is still merely a history of hierarchically top-ranked writers. And so the vast, fertile background which exists beyond (or below?) the highest elite literature is lost.

Given such a traditional and deplorable situation of this sort of literary history, Prof. Engelstein's monumental work is significant and stimulating in that it sheds totally new light on Russian cultural history by selecting sexuality (or gender) as its pivotal topic. This instantly reminds us, literary scholars, that we badly need to write a qualitatively new history of literature, using sexuality as its axis. As Prof. Engelstein shows clearly in her book, sexuality is a deeply individual issue as well as a political problem. Precisely the same can be said about literature, which is both individual and political. I think this parallel is not accidental. The fact is simply that sexuality in Russian literature has been unjustly ignored because of a time-honored tradition of sexual prudishness. (I'm not saying that the writers themselves were prudish; rather, the critics, scholars, and the evaluation system itself were

“prudish.”)

Secondly, Prof. Engelstein’s book is an exemplary study of an interdisciplinary nature which required the author to have a very wide intellectual scope and deep knowledge, as well as to have done intensive research work in various fields. On this point I can only congratulate Prof. Engelstein on her truly unprecedented work.

By its nature sexuality is ubiquitous: it exists wherever human beings dwell. So if one wishes to write about sexuality in actual human context (and not in abstraction), one eventually must confront the various fields of human endeavor which are all saturated with sexuality. In Prof. Engelstein’s book three fields are essentially covered: medicine, law, and literature. Of course, these three disciplines are already well established, and they have their own autonomous histories; perhaps these fields are not so willing to welcome strangers from other disciplines. But Prof. Engelstein brilliantly succeeds in breaking through the barriers between different disciplines with energy, insight, and meticulously accomplished academic abilities; the result is that the intellectual scope of this book has no analogous work, as far as I know, in English, nor even in Russian.

In my opinion, this interdisciplinary strategy can be fruitfully applied to the study of literature, which is confronting the danger of sterility due to its concentration on autonomous texts as something detached from the social contexts. By its very nature, literature in general, and the modern novel in particular, is a very “impure” product of the era in which it is being written. As Prof. Engelstein aptly showed in her book with the example of Verbitskaya’s *Kliuchi schast’ia*, a novel can be a “department store.” Although I am not against “formalism” *per se* it would be a great pity if literary specialists do not take the opportunity to explore such a rich mine containing everything.

## 2. Treatment of Literary Works in History

Having paid homage to Prof. Engelstein’s book, which I sincerely consider to be a real breakthrough in Russian socio-cultural history, I would now like to turn to some methodological questions (not necessarily criticism) which came to mind as I was reading *The Keys to Happiness*.

The first question concerns with the use of literary works as primary sources of historical studies. Needless to say, literary works cannot (or should not) be used as primary sources for elucidating historical facts. As Roman Jakobson once said, if a critic sees only sociological aspects in literary works, the critic is using literature as merely second-rate material for sociological study. And to be frank, I cannot rid myself of the feeling that in this book, too, literature is used as second-rate material for purposes not directly connected with literature.

I am not voicing criticism, but what strikes me here is the fundamental difference between the historian’s use of literary works and the literary scholar’s approach to them. The starting point for the historian is “what is written?,” while the starting point for the literary specialist is, roughly speaking, “how is it written?,” because only this makes literature literature and distinguishes literature of durable value from literature that has only ephemeral life.

Although I am not an elitist who considers only “first-rate” works as worthy of

treatment in the history of literature and blithely ignores “second-” or “third-rate” works, I think it is possible and essential to draw boundaries between them. And what I’d like to emphasize here is that, although literature reflects social reality and ideology to a certain extent, and as such serves as material for historical studies, at the same time it also creates a certain cultural “institution” which continues to influence later generations.

Let us take, for instance, Tolstoy. I think it is an indisputable fact that he himself has become a “cultural institution.” When he wrote *Kreutzer Sonata*, it reflected the historical conditions of sexuality in that era; once that is accepted, it is no more a work merely reflecting the reality of a specific time, but becomes rather a work *creating* a new reality, because later generations take the work for granted and the work thus becomes historical fact. In this sense, we can say that Tolstoy’s work has durable value. However, in the case of Verbitskaya I doubt that the same can be said, because she was forgotten so rapidly. (By the way, I don’t know precisely how she was read and remembered in the Stalin era. Was she totally prohibited or simply forgotten?) The only hypothesis I can propose at this moment is that Socialist realism, while discarding ideologically unfavorable aspects of Verbitskaya’s writing, nonetheless appropriated some salient aspects of it: the accessibility of her prose style, concreteness of plot development, etc.

What I am trying to say is rather simple: on the one hand, from the viewpoint of literary studies, one cannot do without evaluation of each work discussed; on the other hand, for historical studies, or at least insofar as I can judge from the brilliant book by Prof. Engelstein, any literary work is equivalent, equipotential as historical source material for purposes other than the study of literature itself. Here many sources drawn from various fields—be they medical reports, newspaper advertisements, “high-brow” literature, or “boulevard” literature — are equally important. To a conservative critic of literature this might even seem blasphemous. Although I personally do not share such a position, I think there can be discerned both positive and negative aspects.

The positive aspect is, of course, that only in this way can we see literature in a broader context in which various social and cultural forces are contending with each other, and thus we can eventually rescue literature from the stupefying, esoteric atmosphere of literary academia. The negative (or precarious) aspect is that if we entirely remove barriers between various genres and “high” and “low,” we may not be able to distinguish anything from anything and eventually fall into the trap of relativism.

Another essential question about treating literary works in historical study concerns with the ambiguity of the message (if there is any) of each literary work and its reception by the readership. This ambiguity is precisely what makes literary texts different from other expository or scientific writings. As for the unpredictability of the readers’ reception, I call to mind an interesting example which Andrei Sinyavsky gives in “*Russkaia literatura i krizis sovetskogo obshchestva*” [Russian Literature and the Crisis of the Soviet Society], an essay written at my request for the Japanese literary journal *Bungei*. In that article, he says he is suspicious about the so-called didactic or educational function of literature because, for example, having read

Mayakovsky's poems, some young people may become dissidents while others, inspired by the same poems, might well shoot these dissidents. I think the same might be said of any literary work discussed in Prof. Engelstein's book. *The Keys to Happiness* by Verbitskaya can be demoralizing for some, but for others it can be simply uplifting.

Another kind of ambiguity lies in the author's message itself. Literary works can be very ironical (especially in the Romantic and Symbolist period), which means that we always must have certain reservations when trying to identify what the protagonist says with the author's message. And we cannot judge the author's political or moral position by citing separate fragments taken from the context of the whole work. Rozanov is a very good example of this. His paradoxical, venomous, and sometimes even blasphemous aphorisms, which are often contradictory to each other, cannot be taken separately as expressions of any ideological school. His originality consists in the very "process of thought" (as Sinyavsky put it) with fluctuations and ambivalence which are clearly represented in his whimsical style. Thus his original style does not fit into any school of literature; of course, in the broader social context one can certainly say he was a conservative, and not a liberal.

So even if Rozanov cannot be exonerated from the charge of "anti-Semitism" on the level of "what is written," on the level of "how" (that is, on the level of literature) such an accusation is not quite to the point, and this "how" is precisely what literature is all about. Similarly one may speak of Dostoevsky as a racist, of Tolstoy as a male-chauvinist, etc.; but such labeling does very little to make us better understand the essence of their writing. If I may borrow the expression of Prof. Engelstein criticizing Sinyavsky's evaluation of Rozanov (see p. 321), her labeling of Rozanov as an "anti-Semite" is not "false in a literal sense," but it is the question of "the choice of language" that matters here. If we attempt to evaluate Rozanov's position in a social perspective alien to the subtle interplay of irony and the elusive thought processes in his texts, we totally lose sight of his undeniable individuality, the power of which was doubtless mightier than that of any other critic of that time in the liberal camp.

\* Parenthetically, I would like to add an analogous example from contemporary Russia. There recently appeared a very gifted young writer named Dmitrii Galkovsky (b. 1960) with a work entitled *Bez konechnyi tupik*, which has not yet been published in its entirety because it is too huge a work. This is a Rozanovian collection of more than 900 fragments, ranging in content from autobiographical sketches to literary and philosophical discussions. When *Nash sovremennik*, a literary journal known for its nationalistic position, published (probably intentionally) parts of the work which contained rather offensive references to Jews (nos. 1-2, 1992), Galkovsky seemed to become an anti-Semite in the public eye. But later, as if in order to counterbalance the publication in *Nash sovremennik* the more liberal journal *mir* published completely different fragments from the same work without references to Jews (nos. 9, 11, 1992). This turned out to be a good lesson, teaching us how dangerous it is to evaluate a literary work by fragments selectively detached from the whole.

### 3. Treatment of Mass Culture

The final question I wish to raise here is that of mass culture. In this field, the study of Russian culture (and especially Russian literature) is very much behind, partly because of the traditionally "serious" Russian attitude toward literature. In the field of history, Richard Stites recently published one very useful book, but we still are in urgent need of a similar chartbook in the field of literature proper. The pioneering work by Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, is about the only exception, but it is a treatment of literature from the viewpoint of social history but not of literature proper.

As far as I know, there is no serious history of Russian literature where Verbitskaya is treated at length. Most literary historians will be at a loss if they are obliged to incorporate such "boulevard" literature into the established history of "high" literature. However, I think the real dynamics of literary history are epitomized by the competition of different genres, and especially in the 20th century the relationship between "pure" (high) literature" and "low (mass) literature" is becoming more and more real. The blurring of the borderline between high and low is a typical phenomenon of 20th-century literature; as far as I could understand from the book by Prof. Engelstein, it is not accidental that this "blurring" has occurred parallel to the blurring of gender boundaries, a process that was taking place in the world of sexuality.

In conclusion, I should perhaps add that what I have said here is not meant to be criticism, nor even objective comments. These are, rather, some thoughts inspired by Prof. Engelstein's extremely interesting and important book.

### 3. Ryo Nemura

*The Keys to Happiness* create a new dimension in the study of Russian liberalism, which has been the subject of much controversy. Numerous historians have argued about the political character of Russian liberalism. The main themes of these studies, however, have been the ideas of Russian liberal thinkers and the endeavors of political activists. Even J. P. Brooks' excellent dissertation "Liberalism, Literature, and the Idea of Culture," which dealt with Russian liberal attitudes toward culture, explained the cultural conscious of Russian liberalism from a political point of view. According to that dissertation, the idea of culture of Russian Liberalism was a reflection of its political straits. In other words, Brooks dealt with cultural ideology, or the political conscious of Russian liberalism.

It can be said that the study of Prof. Engelstein's study concerned with the political unconscious of Russian liberalism. In this book, there are few descriptions of the activity and thoughts of leaders of Russian liberalism; Instead we find how liberal intelligentsia and professional elites (physicians, jurists, psychiatrist, specialists in pedagogics and hygiene, etc.) had formed their political unconscious. These problems have heretofore been blind spots in the study of Russian liberalism. If not so, at least there have been few studies in this field. Through a brilliant analysis of a wealth of

historical materials, readers can learn about the political unconscious of Russian liberalism.

But perhaps *The Keys to Happiness* can be read from many perspectives; my own is only one of them. As the subtitle “Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia” implies, Prof. Engelstein herself regards the main theme of her study as being a discourse on sex in Russia. In this work, the importance of sex is explained by the insistence of M. Foucault that sexual categories and norms constitute at once a system of power relations configuring the social body and a way of thinking about and organizing power through the medium of actual bodies. Thus, this book appears to have been written under the influence of the Foucault’s scheme. On this point I wish to raise several questions.

Firstly, Foucault studied modern western European history (*The History of Sexuality* was an exception) and the formation of modern power relationships. In autocratic Imperial Russia, however, this power relationship never took shape and the transition from the traditional old regime to the bourgeois capitalist order proceeded slowly, and after all was left unfinished. Thus it is difficult to apply the Foucaultian scheme to the case of Russia. Prof. Engelstein recognized the inapplicability of Foucault’s theory and emphasized the specific Russian character of the discourse on sex. Between such binary oppositions as traditional and modern culture, patriarchal and modern moral, rural and urban life, religious beliefs and scientific attitudes, Russian professionals preferred the latter term in each case, but their discourse always contained something ambivalent and ambiguous. It is that ambivalence which this author has analyzed, and I think it is the most interesting aspect of this book.

Secondly, readers of this work must keep in mind the differences in the evaluations of modern social systems between Foucault and Prof. Engelstein. For Foucault, the modern social system is a repressive power mechanism. Prof. Engelstein, however, does not take a negative attitude toward the ideal social model envisioned by Russian liberal professionals. However readers cannot know how the author regards Foucault’s attack on the modern social system and only can understand the peculiarly Russian characteristics of that modernization, which never formed a repressive mechanism as in the West.

Thirdly, the main theme of this book is the Russian discourse on sex, a subject which is among the most difficult topics in the human sciences. In vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*, even Foucault himself abandoned the project of vol. 1 (and sex mainly argued in vol. 2 seems to be not heterosexuality). Here we must keep in mind that the author’s usage of the word ‘sex’ in this book is unusual.

“The word ‘sex’ in this book’s subtitle is meant by its somewhat dated vagueness, to encompass two different terms. On the one hand, it refers to the complex of ideas about sexual conduct and sexual categories which Foucault includes in the concept of ‘sexuality.’ On the other, it engages the culturally variable understanding of the meaning and nature of sex difference, and in particular the political purposes accomplished by the creation of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as social categories — the burden of the concept ‘gender.’”

As a consequence of this dual usage, the book encompasses a variety of fields as its subjects of research. That makes the book fascinating and attractive, but at the same time difficult to understand as a whole. There are many topics; juridical, medical, moral, racial, literary, and so on. Through the 'prism' of sex, readers look at these topics and find themselves amid of the complicated structure of social discourse. Each reader must choose the style of his reading. I read it as a history of Russian liberalism, but this is not the only way. *The Keys to the Happiness* is that kind of book.

Lastly, I will raise one point in argument. The theory of criminology of the Italian school was already known in Russia in the 1860's but in the 1890's numerous works of Lombroso and Ferry were translated. The following excerpt from Lev Tolstoy's novel *Resurrection* indicates Russian acceptance of the idea of criminology held by the Italian school.

"All the latest catch-phrases then in vogue in his (assistant prosecutor's) set, everything that then was and still is accepted as the last word in scientific wisdom was included in his speech — heredity and congenital criminality, Lombroso and Tarde, evolution and the struggle for existence, hypnotism and hypnotic suggestion, Charcot and decadence."

Also translation of Max Nordau's *Degeneration* which was dedicated to Lombroso, was appear in 1893. That book became popular. For example, Anton Chekhov in his letters expressed his dislike of Nordau's book. Literary critic Ovcianiko-Kulikovsky used the theories of Lombroso and Ferry. Thus the criminology of the Italian school was popular in Russian literature. However, we could not know how Russian professionals received the theory of Lombroso and Ferry. Thanks to this book, we learn that Russian followers of Lombroso tended to emphasize the interaction between biology and society rather than the absolute priority of biology, and to stress social policy initiatives rather than the isolation and treatment of the decliquent as the most effective response to crime. This tendency reminded me of the manner of Russian reception of Darwinism. According to two books, *Darwin in Russian Thought* and *Darwin without Malthus*, Russian received the theory of Darwin, but the way of reception was different from that in western countries. In particular, Russians, despite their respect for Darwin and his theories, are somewhat in favor of Lamarckism, which emphasized the determinant role of environment. And for Russians, 'social Darwinism' was a dark side of Darwinism, so it was not popular in Russia. In western countries, social Darwinisim and Lombroso's criminology were very influential. Also at the end of century Francis Golton's eugenics which emphasized the role of heredity, became popular. In the name of eugenics, which warned of the degeneration and survival of feeble-minded people, even the policy of social welfare was rejected. Soon eugenics became combined with nationalism and racism. But in Russia eugenics was not popular and it was after the revolution of 1917 that Russian eugenics society was established. On this point differences between Russia and the West are clear. I wonder why the question of social Darwinism and eugenics in Russia was not addressed in this book, because sex has a strong biological ground. Of course, however, I

believe that this book represents a breakthrough in Russian socio-cultural history. Every chapter will stimulate our interest and productivity.

In Japan those scholars who study Russian history have generally not paid much attention to the theories of Foucault and to the New Historicism. I think the study of Russian history in the United States is far advanced. Now we must study new theory of history. *The Keys to Happiness* will stimulate our interest in the methodology of history.

## **Reply to Naoko Hirooka, Mitsuyoshi Numano, Ryo Nemura**

### **Laura Engelstein**

First let me say how honored I am by the attention of my Japanese colleagues. It is also instructive to read responses that reflect a range of scholarly points of view. Naoko Hirooka discusses the book from the perspective of the social history of women. She rightly notes that it differs from social history in exploring public attitudes not behavior. She fears, however, that it may be considered too literary by some readers because it analyzes texts not social facts. It is of course true that the lived world can be perceived only through the grid of documentary sources. Even in the *Keys to Happiness* one can discern quite a bit about the sexual habits of certain social groups. My approach may be considered “subjective,” in the sense that it tries to reconstruct cultural attitudes. It is, however, intended to be “objective,” in the sense that it maps the cultural landscape in a rigorous, scholarly way. As far as Lenin is concerned, I did not know of his comment on abortion. It is interesting to contrast what he said in 1913 (“A woman’s decision to be a mother or not is the ABC of democratic civil rights.”) to the words of justice commissar Nikolai Krylenko in 1936: “A basic mistake is made in every case by those women who consider ‘freedom of abortion’ as one of their civil rights.”<sup>1</sup> If Lenin sounded uncharacteristically like a liberal in 1913, his successors repudiated not only the freedom to make one’s own reproductive choices, but the very notion of civil rights on which such freedom depends.

Mitsuyoshi Numano, being a student of literature, does not complain that the *Keys to Happiness* is too literary. On the contrary, he fears it may not be literary enough. The kind of “interdisciplinary” textual analysis I have undertaken has also characterized the work of literary scholars who practice the so-called new historicism. They too work with a range of texts belonging to disparate cultural contexts, some formally “literary,” others not at all. It was not my intention, at least, to imply that all texts are equivalent: issues of purpose, context, genre all distinguish medical articles from novels, whether cheap or avant-garde. It was also not my intention to challenge the judgments that distinguish enduring literary texts from those of fleeting popularity. I did, however, want to demonstrate that artistic productions of incomparable aesthetic value and contrasting styles were nevertheless in dialogue with each other. It is true that one cannot understand what makes the “Kreutzer Sonata” work