

Title: "New Man" on Rendezvous and His "Bourgeois Happiness": Towards the Search for the Positive Literary Hero  
Author: Victoria Thorstensson, University of Wisconsin, Madison

In his review of Turgenev's *On the Eve*, Nikolai Dobroliubov posed his famous question, asking: "When will the real day come?" when a new positive hero, a man of action — whose appearance was eagerly anticipated by all — would finally enter the literary scene. Chernyshevskii's "decent" and "peculiar" people, created as a debunking of Turgenev's Bazarov and his nihilist progeny, were immediately recognized by both an appreciative audience and progressive literary critics as the long-awaited solution. Situating the analysis of the type of "new man" in-between its roots in popular bourgeois literature as well as in the Russian literary tradition of positive heroes, this paper will explore "the fatal flaw" (using Nabokov's expression) of the literary ideal of democratic literature, and its immanent dissolution in either the utopian impulse or the contemptible "bourgeois happiness." Images of literary "new men" for this study will be furnished by works of such writers as Nikolai Pomialovskii (*Molotov and Bourgeois Happiness*), Nikolai Chernyshevskii (*What Is To Be Done?* and *The Prologue*), Aleksandr Sheller-Mikhailov (*You Can't Make an Omelet Without Breaking Eggs*), and Innokentii Omulevskii (*Step by Step*). The genealogy and consequences of "the new men" will be explored in the context of 19<sup>th</sup> century literary and critical responses to and parodies of the above-mentioned novels, especially *What Is To Be Done?*. The literary context will include Dostoevskii's *Notes from the Underground* and Leskov's *The Left-Out (Oboidennye)* as well as journalistic articles and reviews. Prior scholarship, including works by such 19<sup>th</sup> century critics (such as Akim Volynskii and Nikolai Strakhov) and literati (such as Leskov, Goncharov, Turgenev and Fet), as well as contemporary studies by Rufus Mathewson, Charles Moser, Irina Paperno, Natalya Starygina and others, will be acknowledged and analyzed.