

Title: Three Different Redactions that Venture Onto the Coast of Utopia
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In my course, "Russian Thought, (Winter 2011), I assigned Berlin's *Russian Thinkers*, Herzen's *Past and Thoughts*, and Tom Stoppard's *Coast of Utopia*. After eleven weeks of close readings of Berlin and Herzen, we prepared to tackle the plays (which I had attended in New York). The students became entranced with Herzen and even relished discussions of his ideas; consequently, they became conversant with the main Russian thinkers of the period. They especially loved Herzen's opinions and playfully satirical portraits of his contemporaries. Therefore I felt that the students would be able to appreciate Stoppard's transformations of Russian intellectuals without difficulty. However, as we proceeded act by act through the play, I noticed that my text differed significantly from the students'. In spite of the fact that I requested the British three-volume set, the bookstore had ordered a one-volume (theoretically not abridged) version of the trilogy. As we went through the text, I noticed that the American version omits a great number of the intellectual discussions in the plays even though all else remains intact. And so the question arose: did the editors simply excise the "difficult" portions of the play ostensibly to prevent boredom, or did they think that American readers (and students) are not as qualified to understand and analyze great ideas as their British counterparts? And what about the Russian version? What remains in, and what do the translators omit? Also, do the Russian translators add nuances to the plays and filter out specific meaning through their decisions about what they consider the most appropriate Russian equivalents? Close comparison of the three redactions should provide clues not only about what possible motives lie behind specific omissions and translation choices, but also about the pedagogical value of the three in an American undergraduate classroom.

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