

Footnotes for “Constance Garnett and the Real Russia”

¹ The quote is originally from Constance’s “unpublished memoir”—a document that is presumably made up of the notes she made for the planned Third Programme broadcast. As quoted on p. 126 of Richard Garnett’s biography of his grandmother, *Constance Garnett: A Heroic Life*.

² For a detailed and very readable account of the “Russian Fever”—not to mention a good overall study of how the literature of one language can influence the literature of another language through translation, see Gilbert Phelps’s *The Russian Novel in English Fiction*.

³ The marriage of Constance and Edward Garnett (who was seven years younger than her) was unorthodox but fruitful. By the second half of their lives together, Edward was openly living with his mistress Nellie Heath—a situation that Constance condoned to the point of encouragement. A friend and early supporter of Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, William Butler Yeats, and Stephen Crane (among others), Edward was also an early scholar of Russian literature, and wrote the introduction to *The Complete Tourgenieff*.

⁴ The Fabian Society—named after General Fabius Maximus, also called “The Delayer” for his peripatetic military tactics—devoted itself explicitly to the Marxist idea that the revolution would arrive slowly and then apparently erupt out of nowhere. It was presided over at the time by George Bernard Shaw, who later admitted (with his usual Pygmalian flair) that he had once considered proposing marriage to Constance Garnett.

⁵ Of all the authors Garnett translated, Tolstoy was the only one she met. During her 1894 trip, she visited him twice in his Moscow apartments, and was duly impressed; but later attempts to track him down for interviews concerning *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* led her to write to Edward that “These prophets are dreadful people to deal with.”

⁶ Of all the puzzling transcriptions of Russian surnames perpetrated by Victorian writers, this is my favorite.

⁷ A useful study of Garnett’s strengths and failings as a translator can be found in Rachel May’s exciting book on Russian literature in English, *The Translator in the Text*.