

prominent people in English society and had easy relations with aristocratic and noble Russians. Like so many of his privileged compatriots, he was obviously taking part in his 'Grand Tour', and old enough not to need the administrations of a tutor. He professes himself much travelled, having visited "presque toutes les villes de l'Europe" (f. 9v.) and mentions *en passant* "mon premier voyage d'Italie" (f. 87v.).

One of the most intriguing pieces of information about the author are his words when he is about to leave England:

Ce pays devoit etre ma patrie! Destiné dès mon enfance à y vivre et mourir, mon sort s'y étoit toujours opposé. Le hasard m'y avoit conduit. Cette terre natale s'étoit présentée à moi avec toutes ses charmes. J'étois sur le point de la quitter – et de la quitter pour toujours" (ff.120-120v.).

Earlier during a conversation in Oxford he was asked his nationality: "Russe apparemment?" - to which he replied:- "à peu près, mais pas tout à fait" (f.87). How does one interpret these words? Could his mother have been an Englishwoman living in Russia but married to a Russian? He has some knowledge of English, but has amusing difficulties at times in making himself understood, mispronouncing, for instance, 'lemon' and 'pepper' (ff. 75v.-76). Was he perhaps Ukrainian, but if so, why the references to England as "patrie" and "terre natale"?