STYLING RUSSIA

Multiculture in the Prose of Nikolai Leskov

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Preface

The kind of literary exploration carried out in this book is best described as pluralistic. By combining key concepts from modern literary theory and semiotics, as well as from anthropology and the theory of culture, it seeks to render possible not only the image of human life as construed by one particular nineteenth-century Russian author, but also the attitudes that form the basis of his portrayal of society throughout the Russian Empire. I believe that such a fusion is well suited for my chosen subject: multiculture in the prose of Nikolai Leskov (1831–1895), a writer who was a fervent patriot and believer in the uniqueness of the Russian people, yet who also represented, or *styled*, ethnic identity as unstable and permeable. Of course, sceptics may argue that any attempt to take over methodologies developed within cultural and social anthropology simply repeats the mistakes of those who have sought to develop the type of "cultural studies" that discards both literature and sociology and favours an emphasis on the semiotics of popular culture. It is not my aim here to develop such a type of studies; rather, my line of inquiry, though recognizing more than one ultimate principle, should be understood as having a distinct centre of gravity, whilst, at the same time, criss-crossing different perspectives. This will result in a multiple exposure of the literary work as an aesthetic experience, "empathic" and "expansive" in the Deweyan and Ingardenian sense, which, I hope, is able to help reassert the anthropological importance of literature in our lives.

When we scrutinize literary works as abstract objects, we discover that they are inevitably a repository of different mental representations, and in this sense they form cultural objects. The responsibility for interpreting these representations falls on us as inquiring, *heteronomously* minded readers, whose approach to the text involves its extraliterary fac-

tors (historical, biographical, institutional and psychological), and whose susceptibility to culture may or may not enable us to see through the attitudes thrown up by our everyday world.[1] More often than not, we tend to read in order to be elsewhere, to be different from how we actually are, to extend ourselves as human beings; once infused with elements from our own "reality," literary works move us in such a way that we experience things we do not experience in that normal everyday reality, offering what Nelson Goodman once called "ways of worldmaking."[2] And for this reason, the formal properties of a given work, its intentions and functions, must be identified and explored according to one's purpose in reading it.

My readings concentrate on literature as a generator of cultural meaning by raising anthropological questions and by trying to answer some of them. Whether a given work of literature, or of culture, is enjoyed and "remembered" longer than others, ultimately depends on the discovery, intuitive or intellectual, of the interrelationships between its formal properties; only then may the formal properties of literary representation become something that the human mind can attribute to the work and exploit. However, the relationship between what fictional speakers say and what real-life authors think, as well as that between events recounted and situations in the world, is also always a matter of interpretation. In this book, as elsewhere, my wish is to contribute positively to the revitalized reading of nineteenth-century Russian literature and culture, to the history of Russian moderate conservatism and Slavophile thought, as well as to discussions of the representation of national identity in the late nineteenth century. In sharing my own enthusiasm for writing about selected works by Nikolai Leskov I do not aim to trumpet or try to impose any one set of uncontroversial "truths," but rather to provoke reflection and debate in other readers as they revisit his works.

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1 Of course Leskov's works are the focal point of my analysis and discussion. That said, I also believe that any literary object represented by a given work invariably exhibits spots of indeterminacy; consider here Roman Ingarden, 1973, *The Literary Work of Art: an Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic and Theory of Literature*, Evanston, for whom each literary work is a heteronomous object dependent on an act of consciousness with which the reader approaches it. In the process of reading the reader fills out the indeterminacies (structural gaps), an activity which may be called "concretization."

2 Nelson Goodman, 1978, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Indianapolis.

It is a pleasure to thank those whose support has made this book possible. As this work began as my doctoral thesis, I would first like to acknowledge the kind help of the three committee members: Catriona Kelly, Professor of Russian at New College, University of Oxford; Hugh McLean, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Berkeley; and, Hans Erik Aarset, Professor of Comparative Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim. With their eminent judgement, these scholars have offered me the best advice and criticism.

My thesis was completed in 2000 with the liberal assistance of the Faculty of Arts in Trondheim, from which I received funding for research, travel and manuscript preparation. I am also very grateful to the Institute of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, for supporting my visits to Russia, England, and the USA; in particular, I am indebted to my erstwhile colleagues at the Department of Comparative Literature for providing mental stimulus and companionship, and for creating an atmosphere that made teaching and research mutually beneficial. The completion of the present book was made possible by the financial backing of the Norwegian Research Council, the Bergen University Fund and the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, University of Oslo.

I owe my principal debt to those teachers at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, who have shaped my basic approach to literature: most notably, Faith Wigzell, from whose lips I first heard the name Leskov and who kindled my interest in literature from Old Rus' and Medieval Russia; Arnold McMillin, who responded to my ideas, enthusiasms, and doubts with patience and cool encouragement; and, Catriona Kelly, whose fine-grained readings and scholarly integrity I have tried to emulate in my own work. I have also benefitted immeasurably from attending seminars, conferences, and guest lectures arranged within the framework of the Nordic Academy for Advanced Study (NorFA) network for doctoral students in Russian literature (1994–2000), and the Programme on East European Studies of Cultures and Societies (PEECS) at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (1997–2000). Special thanks are due to Tomas Hägg and Jostein Børtnes, directors of the project "Rhetoric and the Translation of

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My warm thanks to colleagues and friends at the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, University of Oslo, as well as to Fiona Björling, Włodzimierz Bolecki, Astrid Brokke, William B. Edgerton, Kristin Eikeland, Ingvild Folkvord, Sissel Furuseth, Suzanne Fusso, Karin Grelz, Peter Alberg Jensen, Jadwiga Kvadsheim, Renate Lachmann, Alexandra Leontieva, Evgenya Lezova, Sissel Lie, Priscilla Meyer, Gary Saul Morson, Audun Johannes Mørch, Leonard Neuger, György Péteri, Tine Roesen, Gabriella Safran, Ole Michael Selberg, Irmhild Christina Sperrle, Krzysztof Stała, William Mills Todd III, Vera Tolz, Dirk Uffelmann, Gunhild Vidén, Andrew Wachtel, Nina Witoszek, Susanna Witt, Igor Zhevagin and Petter Aaslestad, who were all invaluable in helping this book see the light of day. Ingunn Lunde, general editor of Slavica Bergensia, without whose perserverance it would never have materialized, knows that I am more grateful than I can say; but I would like others to know that too. Above all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor Jostein Børtnes, on whom I have always relied as my most helpful critic, colleague and friend.

Portions of certain chapters have appeared in earlier versions in *Celebrating Creativity: Essays in Honour of Jostein Børtnes*, 1997; *Cultural Discontinuity and Reconstruction: The Byzanto-Slav Heritage and the Creation of a Russian National Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Slavica Norvegica 9), 1997; *Scando-Slavica* 44, 1998; *Dialogue and Rhetoric: Communication Strategies in Russian Text and Theory* (Slavica Bergensia 1), 1999; *Short Story Criticism 96*, 2007. I am indebted to the editors of these publications for their useful suggestions and comments, many of which were incorporated into this book as well. Finally, I wish to thank Ursula Phillips, whose expert editing of the various manuscripts has made my text incalculably better than it was; Tore Bjørn Grimstad, who has inspired my work in less direct but crucial ways; and Henrik Lous, who continues to have the most welcome influence, not just on the current book, but on my life.

Knut Andreas Grimstad
University of Oslo, 2007

Note on translations, names and transliteration

For the convenience of the reader who knows no Russian or very little, references, wherever possible, are given to existing English translations.

Citations from *On the Edge of the World* are from the translation by Michael Prokurat (New York, 1992). For *The Enchanted Wanderer*, I cite David Magarshack's translation in *Selected Tales* (London, 1962). All page numbers are indicated in brackets. As readers of Leskov in Russian know, his style is anything but smooth and accessible. Since the published translations of his texts are usually smoothed out and sanitized for general consumption, I have frequently amended the wording of a citation for accuracy or to make it easier for the reader to follow my argument. Whereas translations of citations from *Childhood Years* are my own, references to *Cathedral Folk* and *The Sealed Angel* are very loosely based on the somewhat inadequate, but sole existing, translations by Isabel F. Hapgood (Westport, Conn., 1971) and by David McDuff (London, 1987), respectively.

All citations from the Russian original are from Nikolai S. Leskov, *Collected Works in Eleven Volumes* (*Sobranie sochinenii v odinnadtsati tomakh*, Moscow, 1957–58), volumes 4 *(Cathedral Folk*, *The Sealed Angel*, *The Enchanted Wanderer*) and 5 (*On the Edge of the World*, *Childhood Years*). Here too, page numbers are given in brackets.

I have followed a modified version of the Library of Congress system of transliteration to render Russian words and names, substituting commonly used anglicized forms where they are more familiar (Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Gorky). All Cyrillic quotations are transcribed according to the new (post-1917) orthography. All Orthodox deity titles and corresponding adjectives in Russian are capitalized.

Introduction:
"The most quintessentially Russian of writers"

The central theme of this book on Nikolai Leskov is simple: his concern with manifold cultural borderlands and confrontations. As fictional texts referring to our metafictional world, each novel, each tale of his describing the multiethnic world of the nineteenth-century Russian Empire can also tell us something about our own lives and worlds. This is so because every time one of his works is experienced by us as readers, it becomes recreated anew, not merely as an experience within the reading subject, but rather as something occurring as subject and object converge; in this process, the work's external references are being made part of the work as a whole. That said, in order to read Leskov "aesthetically" and with pleasure, it is neither possible nor necessary to know everything about the way his literary works fit into nineteenth-century life, about how and why they were written and read, and what relation they had to other competing texts and cultural institutions.[1] What *is* necessary is an awareness of the Russian Empire's cultural multiplicity as well as of the many intricacies contained in the language Leskov uses to represent it; the numerous infelicities, errors and misunderstandings caused by unaware translators responsible for "handing him down" testify to this. Tellingly, the research carried out during the past half-century does

1 By implication, therefore, I disagree with Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller, who, amongst others, suggest that Leskov would be counted among the "classics" only by readers with a very intimate knowledge of the literary and cultural tradition. Cf. Malcolm V. Jones & Robin Feuer Miller, 1998, "Editors' Preface," *The Cambridge Companion to the Classic Russian Novel*, eds. M.V. Jones & R.F. Miller, Cambridge, p. xiii. See, also, Hugh McLean, 1977, *Nikolai Leskov: The Man and His Art*, Cambridge, Mass., pp. ix–x, and Kenneth Lantz, 1979, *Nikolay Leskov*, Boston, p. 7.

not really address the problem of Leskov's accessibility, nor does it question to a serious degree why his fiction has more or less slipped from the curriculum (and from many scholars' minds), or why it remains largely undiscovered.[2] If he is read at all, he is often categorized as delightfully exotic, but secondary—that is, noteworthy within the Russian tradition, but not canonical in the Bloomian sense.

Whether or not Leskov's "charming" prose works will speak to a modern student of literature, be it in the Russian original or in translation, depends, I believe, on the choice of perspective, on the questions asked and the tools employed in order to achieve one's critical purpose. It is one thing to observe the different formal properties of a given literary text; it is quite another to implement the knowledge drawn from discourse analysis, so that the text tells us something of importance about human nature and human relationships. Here my delving into "the most quintessentially Russian of writers"[3] has a double focus: one stylistic, probing the texts' rich structure and broad scope with regard to the generation of cultural meaning; the other anthropological, exploring the image of humankind and its origins, institutions, social relationships, religious beliefs and identities, as construed in Leskov's "Russian" prose. Scholarship on this writer's place in the context of one of the world's great literary cultures and on his so-called Russianness boasts a fairly long and varied tradition, and a definite statement on this has yet to be written. This is not that book. The present study proposes instead something at once more modest and more challenging: to examine the multiculturalist tendency in five of Leskov's works (1870–75) from the perspective of what might be called *a twofold styling*. Surely, Leskov himself is the literary craftsman who directs himself to the medium of words, working and reworking them into an intriguing texture, as well as an instrument of subtle communication in the face of an absent and indeterminate audience. However, the relationship between what his heroes say and do and what Leskov as *styler* really thinks about his fellow Russians in the multiethnic Empire remains a matter of our interpretation. This renders us in turn

2 James Muckle rightly considers Leskov "probably the least well known of all the great Russian 19th-century prose writers." James Muckle, 1998, "Nikolai Semenovich Leskov 1831–1895: Prose Writer," *Reference Guide to Russian Literature*, ed. N. Cornwell, London, p. 499.

3 David McDuff, 1987, "Introduction," N. Leskov, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk and Other Stories*, trans. D. McDuff, London, p. 7.

complementary "stylers," and privileged ones at that; in order to win the maximum prize, we, who are among his readers, must participate with our entire repertoire of knowledge, reason, will and sensibility. In so doing, we can describe and interpret Leskov's texts in relation to the stylistic conventions which generate them and the historical and sociocultural situation which brought them into existence,[4] but our individual minds will always be inhabited by a large number of ideas that determine our own interpretation of the cultural voices in his works. My own reader's mind is inhabited by (among others) ideas of Leskov's multicultural representation of Russia that caused me to write this book. In addressing readers who are newcomers to Russian literature, history and culture as well as those who are well versed in the field, I hope to convey some of the "human" meanings inherent in Leskov. But I shall return to the issues of styles, cultures and multiple readings in a moment.

It has been asserted elsewhere that everyday life (*byt*), as the source of all social change and activity, forms the basis of an unsystematizable or "prosaic" literary creative process.[5] If so, few Russian works of literature would seem more creatively prosaic than those of Leskov, whose first-hand experience of folk culture, provinciality, and the multifarious aspects of Russianness is generally considered to be a well-established fact.[6]

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4 See Roger Fowler, 1981, *Literature as Social Discourse*, London, pp. 174ff.

5 Designating a theory of literature that favours prose in general over the poetic genres, the Bakhtin-inspired neologism of *prosaics* pertains to a form of thinking that presumes the significance of *byt* or the daily grind, of the habitual and ordinary, the "prosaic." See Gary Saul Morson & Caryl Emerson, 1990, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*, Stanford.

6 See Leonid Grossman, 1945, *N.S. Leskov: zhizn'—tvorchestvo—poetika*, Moscow; V.Iu. Troitskii, 1974, *Leskov-khudozhnik*, Moscow; Irina Stoliarova, 1978, *V poiskakh ideala: tvorchestvo N.S. Leskova*, Leningrad; and Aleksandr Gorelov, 1988, *N.S. Leskov i narodnaia kul'tura*, Leningrad. For a more recent examination of Leskov's provinciality as "something fundamentally Russian," consider Nina Kaukhchishvili's "Provintsiia v nekotorykh povestiiakh N.S. Leskova," *Russkaia provintsiia: mif—tekst—real'nost'*, eds. A.F. Belousov & T.V. Tsiv'ian, Moscow, 2000, pp. 233–40. As to the view that provinciality was to remain a key component of Russian identity, see also Anne Lounsbery who argues that for ninteenth-century writers even the Empire's urban centres may become "province," as "only a place that felt itself to be forever on the margin could so persistently question the very idea of a center." Anne Lounsbery, 2005, "'No, this is not the provinces!': Provincialism, Authenticity and Russianness in Gogol's Day," *The Russian Review* 64, pp. 259–80; p. 279.

Opinions and approaches

Now firmly established among specialists as one of the most original nineteenth-century Russian prose writers, Leskov is regarded as an accomplished creator of short stories and novellas rather than long novels. To be sure, he wrote several novels, but what characterizes his œuvre is his predilection for experimenting within the shorter genres which, in turn, bear witness to an incessant generic search: "biography" (*biografiia*), "rhapsody" (*rapsodiia*), "anecdote" (*anekdot*), "paysage and genre" (*peizazh i zhanr*), "feuilleton-story" (*rasskaz-fel'eton*), and so on. A multitude of narrative forms and a rare, innovative approach to language and narrative style come together in a complexity which, according to D.S. Mirsky, makes him stand out "in striking contrast to the habits of almost every other Russian novelist."[7] From this vantage point, three prevailing lines of inquiry may easily be distinguished.

Firstly, Leskov's literary talent is described above all as narrative. Among the Russian and Soviet scholars, Boris Eikhenbaum (1964) declares that without Leskov's narrative art, "there would not have been what Leskov himself liked to call *zhanr* (by analogy with genre painting), and this 'genre' would not have been created so colourfully, with such diversity, and, in its own way, so poetically."[8] The ability to depict vivid scenes from daily, ordinary life is also stressed by Leonid Grossman (1945) and re-emphasized by Aleksandr Gorelov (1988), while Irina Stoliarova (1978) believes that the writer's individualized form of storytelling was nurtured as a result of Leskov's personal contact with the common people of the Empire.[9] In the Western tradition, too, the impact of Leskov's fiction is explained in relation to its "liveliness," "colourfulness," and sheer excitement, the "hallmark of his narrative art."[10] As early as 1921, Thomas Mann brands him as an "amazing yarn-spinner,"[11] a label that anticipates

7 D.S. Mirsky, 1949, *A History of Russian Literature*, London, p. 316.

8 Boris Eikhenbaum, 1964, "N.S. Leskov (K 50-letiiu so dnia smerti)," *O proze: sbornik statei*, Leningrad, p. 348.

9 Cf. Stoliarova, 1978, pp. 3–8.

10 For these epithets, see Adolf Stender-Petersen, 1957, *Geschichte der russischen Literatur*, Munich, p. 450; Lantz, 1979, pp. 147ff; Richard Freeborn, 1989, "The Nineteenth Century: 1855–80," *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, ed. C.A. Moser, Cambridge, p. 298; Victor Terras, 1991, *A History of Russian Literature*, New Haven, p. 362; Faith Wigzell, 1998, "Cathedral Folk. Soboriane," *Reference Guide to Russian Literature*, ed. N. Cornwell, London, pp. 501–503; Muckle, 1998, pp. 499ff.

11 Thomas Mann, 1961, "Russische Anthologie," *Thomas Mann*: *Altes und Neues*, Frankfurt

Walter Benjamin's well-known essay (1936); here the Russian writer is hailed as one of the last great storytellers, his technique being equated with the *Ur-Erzählung* and with the craftsmanship of Herodotus, "the first storyteller of the Greeks."[12] North American voices have added to this legacy: Kenneth Lantz (1979) concludes that Leskov's main concern was "to capture and hold the attention of his audience"; Hugh McLean (1977) states that in making the sphere of the ordinary acceptable material for literature, he "always had an eye for a good story"; Victor Terras (1991) restates that "never at a loss for a good story," Leskov would create "a narrative voice and let the story speak for itself."[13]

Secondly, and more specifically, Leskov's fiction has been established as stylistically original. Both scholarly traditions emphasize the writer's unique knowledge of the Empire's dialects and sociolects, his skilful use of folk etymology to reinvent words and phrases or to create idiosyncratic macaronics and hybrids, which often result in different kinds of non-existent words (*slovechki*), that is, neologisms. Maxim Gorky (1953) refers to Leskov's "subtle knowledge of the Great Russian language (*velikorusskii iazyk*)," proclaiming that his prose is free of any foreign linguistic influence. The implication seems to be that linguistic originality is closely linked to an all-pervasive, perhaps undefinable, yet distinctly Russian quality. Here, Grossman (1945), allowing for a possible "foreign" influence, expresses his admiration for the breadth of the writer's lexical and stylistic material, such as Medieval Russian, Church Slavonic, Ukrainian and Polish, officialese, religious literature, archaisms and colloquialisms; in a similar vein, Thomas Eekman (1986) suggests that Leskov combines the old and time-honoured with the new and original, Russian and non-Russian, in such a way that his "stylistic innovation" becomes the main attraction of his prose for readers and writers alike.[14] Perhaps one of the most significant and well-established characteristics of Leskov's verbal artistry is his predilection for the *skaz* (literally, "tale"; from *skazat'*, to tell); defined by the Russian formalists as a technique modelled on the

am Main, p. 449.

12 Walter Benjamin, 1992, "The Storyteller: Reflections of the Works of Nikolai Leskov," *Illuminations*, ed. H. Arendt, London, pp. 89ff.

13 Lantz, 1979, p. 147; McLean, 1977, pp. 95–96; Terras, 1991, p. 362.

14 Maksim Gorkii, 1953, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 24, p. 235; Grossman, 1945, pp. 270–94; Thomas Eekman, 1986, "Ob istochnikakh i tipakh stilia N.S. Leskova," *Revue des Études slaves* 58 (3), p. 306.

storytelling manner of an oral narrator of the simple folk, representing the argot of a profession or a craft, or rather styled according to the hypothetical notion of such a narrator.[15] In this respect, Irmhild Christina Sperrle (2002) highlights the interrelational aspect of Leskov's stylistics, explaining that "in his *skaz* stories, he re-creates the atmosphere of a fictional oral performance; his 'listeners' will interrupt, ask for clarification, make comments, and thus redirect the story."[16]

Thirdly, and most importantly, Leskov's fiction is considered to be quintessentially Russian. With his knowledge of the multifarious aspects of Russian everyday life, the writer emerges in the minds of many as the indisputable master portraitist of "the depths of the Russian people," of national types, mores and manners. Bearing witness to Leskov's popularity among Russian modernists,[17] the poet Marina Tsvetaeva writes in 1930 that "of all Russian writers, he is my favourite, he is a native force, a native source," his prose is "a force greater than magic—it is sanctity." Following Gorky, who provided the canonical Soviet view of Leskov as a writer who was "Russian through and through" (*naskvoz' russkii*) and had a privileged understanding of "that ungraspable thing called 'the soul of the people'," the majority of Soviet and Russian scholars has since adopted and elaborated the Russocentric stance: most notably, Dmitrii Likhachev, the late specialist on Russian medieval literature, asserts that Leskov is "a *Russian* family writer (*russkii semeinyi pisatel'*), even very Russian," that without him "Russian literature would have been deprived of a significant share of its national colouring and national way of defining problems" (1997);[18] Vladimir Zakharov, in an article on "Russian

15 See Jurij Striedter, 1989, *Literary Structure, Evolution, and Value: Russian Formalism and Czech Structuralism Reconsidered*, Cambridge, Mass., p. 44. For two most instructive discussions on the various aspects of Leskov's technique (phonetics, morphology, syntax and lexicon), consider Hugh McLean, 1954, "On the Style of a Leskovian *Skaz*," *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2, Cambridge, Mass.; and, Irmhild Christina Sperrle, 2002, *The Organic Worldview of Nikolai Leskov*, Evanston, Ill., pp. 159–64.

16 Sperrle, 2002, p. 161.

17 It is commonly acknowledged that twentieth-century Russian Modernist writers with a penchant for the unconventional, especially for the imaginative, religious world of the "folk," found inspiration in Leskov's stylized narrative discourse (consider Sologub, Remizov, Zoshchenko, and Zamiatin). See, for example, Mirsky, 1949, p. 476, and Jean-Claude Marcadé, 1986, "Les premières versions du *Clergé de la collégiale* de Leskov: *Ceux qui attendent le bouillonnement de l'eau* et *Les Habitants de la maison de Dieu*," *Revue des Études slaves* 58 (3), p. 364.

18 Marina Tsvetaeva, 1995, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, Moscow, vol. 6, p. 388; Ma-

national ethnopoetics" (1997), holds Leskov forth as an "expert" on the Russian religious consciousness;[19] Gorelov, focusing on the role of folk culture, explains that Leskov creates "a portrait of an old Russia (*Rus'*) which is disappearing," whilst, at the same time, expressing "traits of an old Russia which is not fading;" while Stoliarova (1996) appears to settle the matter in stressing that Leskov "comes from the very heart of Russia," and thus "depicts Russia in all its social diversity."[20] On a very different note, Aleksandr Kuz'min (2003), speaking of Leskov's "washing out of national stereotypes by means of carefully considered literary patterns," argues that his high concentration of both *non*-Russian characters and multinational encounters is unique in Russian literature.[21]

In the West, where until recently there has existed a firm belief that the essence of "enigmatic Russia" is best laid bare in an aphoristic formulation, normally as contradiction and paradox—the wild and the tame, violence and the cult of beauty[22]—Leskov has been approached in terms of his (quint)essential Russianness in various ways. William B. Edgerton (1954) emphasizes the universal traits of "this most Russian of Russian writers," V.S. Pritchett (1962) writes that Leskov, with all his knowledge of Russian life "is Russia, as Gorky was Russia or as the elder Breughel was medieval Europe," and Geir Kjetsaa (1979) insists that Leskov is "the most Russian of all Russian writers" and that "no one has equalled his

rina Tsvetaeva, 1994, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, Moscow, vol. 5, p. 313; Gorkii, 1953, pp. 237, 228. See also Maksim Gorkii, 1939, *Istoriia russkoi literatury*, Moscow, p. 279; Dmitrii Likhachev, 1997, "Slovo o Leskove," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo: neizdannyi Leskov*, Moscow, vol. 1, pp. 16, 18.

19 Focusing on what he regards as the "undeniably Orthodox nature" of Russian literature, Vladimir Zakharov proposes "the study of national peculiarities as exemplified in different literatures, and of their place in the global literary process." Cf. Vladimir Zakharov, 1997, "Orthodoxy and the Ethnopoetics of Russian Literature," *Cultural Discontinuity and Reconstruction: The Byzanto-Slav Heritage and the Creation of a Russian National Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. J. Børtnes & I. Lunde, Oslo, pp. 28, 13.

20 Gorelov, 1988, p. 283; Irina Stoliarova, 1996, "Leskov i Rossiia," in N.S. Leskov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1, Moscow, pp. 7, 9. As to the established view of Leskov's œuvre being part and parcel of Russianness, it is tempting to cite Mikhail L. Gasparov who suggests that the Russians themselves are no more than "a group of specialists on the Russian language." Quoted in Catriona Kelly, 2001, *Russian Literature: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, p. 117.

21 Aleksandr Kuz'min, 2003, *Inorodets v tvorchestve N.S. Leskova: problema, izobrazheniia i otsenki*, St Petersburg, pp. 115–18.

22 For a sophisticated and more nuanced approach, see Catriona Kelly et al., 1998, *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, eds. C. Kelly & D. Shepherd, Oxford.

ability to depict the peculiarities of the ways of the Russians." More significant issue-related contributions have been made by James Muckle (1978), who claims that Leskov's work is "free of the sententious drivel about the sacred destiny of Russia, or the unique quality of the Russian peasant, but it is accompanied by an awareness that these questions are vital for the society in which he and his readers live";[23] Faith Wigzell, who traces the influence in Leskov of imported hagiography (Byzantine) and seventeenth-century prose tales (West European), as well as the indigenous folkloric and oral traditions (1985, 1988, 1997);[24] and by Sperrle, who argues that "the nature of [Leskov's] 'Russian mind' is lurking in the notion of organicity," indicating a close link between the writer's mind and Russian religious philosophy as well as the Eastern patristic tradition.[25] Moreover, Vera Tolz (2001) reminds us that Leskov's works were written at a time when the idealization of the "common" or "simple" people (*narod*) in populist art reached its peak; and Catriona Kelly (2001), in a similar vein, maintains that his treatment of the Russian provinces is "an extraordinary retrospective Utopia."[26]

But although Leskov's prose is praised for its storytelling, stylistic and national qualities, its "verbal wizardry" still raises some problematic issues. The nineteenth-century idea of an exuberant prose writer who "could not keep his talent in bounds," whose stories consist of "too many good things" (Leo Tolstoy),[27] has been largely accepted with acquiescence by modern scholars.[28] Many of his longer prose works are considered

23 William B. Edgerton, 1954, "Introduction," *Nikolai Leskov: The Intellectual Development of a Literary Nonconformist*, doctoral thesis, Columbia University, New York, p. 15; and 1980, "[Review of] H. McLean, *Nikolai Leskov: The Man and His Art*," *Comparative Literature* 32, p. 313; V.S. Pritchett, 1962, "Leskov," *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 10, p. 18; Geir Kjetsaa, 1979, "Leskovs kjærlighetsdrama," in N. Leskov, *Lady Macbeth fra Mtsensk*, Oslo, p. 7; James Muckle, 1978, *Nikolai Leskov and the "Spirit of Protestantism"*, Birmingham, p. 152.

24 See Faith Wigzell, 1985, "The *staraya skazka* of Leskov's *Soboryane*: Archpriests Tuberozov and Avvakum," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 63 (3), pp. 321–36; 1988, "Leskov's *Soboryane*: A Tale of Good and Evil in the Russian Provinces," *Modern Language Review* 83 (4), pp. 901–10; and 1997, "Bludnyie synov'ia ili bluzhdaiushchie dushi: 'Povest' o Gore-Zlochastii' i 'Ocharovannyi strannik' Leskova," *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 50, pp. 754–62.

25 Sperrle, 2002, p. 204.

26 Vera Tolz, 2001, *Inventing the Nation: Russia*, London, pp. 70, 87–88; Kelly, 2001, p. 146.

27 Mirsky, 1949, p. 316.

28 Many of Leskov's contemporaries, aspiring to give the reader the illusion that he or she was experiencing the events described ("high realism"), were dismissive of Leskov's "ob-

brilliantly narrated, but weakly composed; generically composite, they come across as either too leisurely, too uneventful, too placid, or diffuse and incoherent.[29] Grossman holds that Leskov's disregard of the unity of style and "the wholeness of artistic writing," as well as "the mixed character and the heterogeneity of material infringes upon the artistic manner";[30] certainly, if we consider Leskov's bricolage from the point of view of his blatantly complex language, current criticism is similarly influenced by the opinion that a disunity of style somehow undermines the unobtrusive stylistic standard that is assumed to be characteristic of mainstream nineteenth-century Russian realism.[31] On the whole, due to their verbal compositeness, or "mosaic," his works are usually regarded as less accessible, thought-provoking and relevant-to-life than the canonized masterpieces of Russian literature, say, the novels of Gogol, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

On this I take an altogether different view. If treated as an essential poetic and rhetorical feature, the many-levelled amplitude of Leskov's works becomes a crucial factor in producing a fuller experience on the part of the reader.[32] Our heteronomous experience of Leskov's wide compass can transform each one of his texts into a different work; to be sure, our literary experience of Leskov must not rest only on the work itself and be supported by other experiences and works, but also, I believe, be part of our experiences as such, that is enter into and blend with our general feeling for life. Thus my total experience of Leskov's Russia may be both uniquely mine and something I share with other readers experiencing the same event. To many readers Leskov has created the pithiest image of

trusive style" which they considered to be "stylistic reactionism" (cf. William B. Edgerton, 1969, "Introduction," N.S. Leskov, *Satirical Stories of Nikolai Leskov*, New York, p. 11).

29 These phrases are used by Mirsky (1949, p. 317) and Terras (1991, p. 362), respectively.

30 Grossman, 1945, p. 159.

31 Cf. Victor Terras: a "genius" of linguistic originality, whose prose takes on an "ephemeral quality, so that people no longer read him." Here Terras (1991, p. 364) seems to subscribe to the opinion of Tolstoy, whom he half-paraphrases.

32 Consider here Walter Benjamin (1992, p. 89ff.), who championed Leskov as the prime example of how narrative, as opposed to mere "information," is productive and inexhaustible already from its conception, since it "achieves an amplitude that information lacks." Conversely, dealing with Leskov's texts primarily in terms of a "syntagmatic" narrative system, where the writer's creative imagination is considered to focus "more on the story line than on the structure and the meaning of the whole," Terras (1991, p. 362) seems to miss the point.

the Russian national character and culture which are distinct from their West European counterparts; here I am inspired by Hugh McLean, who, whilst refuting Dostoevsky's view that Leskov's language is "unrealistic, too perfect, too quintessential," indicates its many differing voices in terms of cultures and mentalities.[33] In a word, I am interested in Leskov's multiculturality—his focusing on the problems which different, clearly distinguishable cultures have within one society, that is within multiethnic Russia.[34]

It is perhaps time to recognize that the Russianness of Leskov's fiction cannot simply be subsumed under such oppositional categories as typicalness-atypicalness, innovation-conservatism, fortuitousness-plannedness, East and West, the kindred and the alien, but should rather be approached in terms of *an original, aesthetic disharmony*. In view of Leskov's portrayal of Imperial Russia, where ethnic identities are almost always unstable and permeable, I would like to ask, therefore, whether his texts may not be styled so that they conceal their multicultural secrets in other, sometimes more subtle ways—and need to be examined, or "co-styled," accordingly.

Multiculture and the resonance of styles

When dealing with styles, we are, as shown by Robert Alter, establishing "a mental set in which we as readers imaginatively reconstruct the personages, their actions, their motives, the moral and psychological meanings of the narrative." Of course, no style can absolutely determine my response; different readers will pick up different emphases and draw different inferences. Nevertheless, styles will always elicit a certain way of thinking and feeling about the narrative data, "a certain predisposition toward the distinctive pleasures of the verbal medium provided by the writer in question."[35] By implication, therefore, when Benjamin concentrates on Leskov as being a master who allows the reader to organize matters and establish the psychological connection between events as he or she understands them, who keeps a story free from interpretations

33 Hugh McLean, 1967, "Russia, the Love-Hate Pendulum, and *The Sealed Angel*," *To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday, 11 October 1966*, eds. M. Halle et al., The Hague, vol. 2, p. 1334.

34 Wolfgang Welsch, 1999, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, eds. M. Featherstone & S. Lash, London, pp. 194–213.

35 Robert Alter, 1989, *The Pleasures of Reading in An Ideological Age*, New York, p. 91.

while telling it, he bespeaks an interpretive potentiality which reflects the author's collation of stylistic registers.[36]

It is paramount that Leskov's fictional universe unfolds on an axis between two stylistic extremes. First, there is a positive tendency, which takes the form of affirmation or edification, where the focus is on the confirmation of something as "true," authentic and beneficial. Second, there is a negative tendency, which takes the form of social criticism, where the focus is on the discrediting of something as false or harmful. As I will show in the following chapters, elements of these two tendencies, of *both* the sociocritical and the affirmative-edificatory, coexist in Leskov's works, so that his various modes of writing—for example, sentimentality (appealing to romantic feelings), comedy (playing with such emotions) and irony (destabilizing the text's potential for truth and meaning)—bring about a corresponding vacillation between different worldviews. Although a verbal-ideological centre to Leskov's fictional texts does exist, the lack of a unifying language or style should be viewed as a higher order of style, a "style of styles."[37] The diverse languages of everyday life are orchestrated into a heterogeneous whole, whilst the author, as the creator of this whole, cannot be found at any one of the text's language levels; the author is, as Mikhail Bakhtin insists with regard to the novel, "to be found at the center of organization where all levels intersect."[38] Understood in this light, the stylistic mixing and confrontation in Leskov must be perceived as part of a fundamental heterogeneity, as a textual *modus operandi* pertaining to various levels of design and designation.[39] Also, his two stylistic tendencies account for the fact that these works have left themselves open to diverse interpretations.

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36 To be sure, it was not Benjamin's intention to contribute to Leskov criticism in particular, let alone to the discussion on Leskov's style (which would require a knowledge of Russian). Cf. Paul Keßler, 1983, "Walter Benjamin über Nikolaj Leskov," *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 28 (1), p. 95.

37 Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 17.

38 Mikhail Bakhtin, 1990, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Austin, pp. 48–49.

39 Here, accumulation—inventories of stylistic qualities listed according to some predetermined scheme—concerns me very little, partly because such extensive analyses are available elsewhere, and partly because my ambition is to provide a more "synthetic" account, to examine the heterogeneity of styles which underlies Leskov's representation of multiculture in the Empire. For in-depth analyses, see, for example, Wolfgang Girke,

As products of an author, Leskov's fictional texts evidence particular stylistic attitudes and operations which point to a purpose, although this purpose may not be verbalized in the text itself. Rather, any one of his texts has a context which may be understood to comprise immediately neighbouring signs, that is, the biographical, social, cultural, and historical circumstances in which it was made, including the intended reader. In this connection, I would like to cite two well-known and related contextualist concepts, both of which involve the prevailing sociocultural forces that dominate all linguistic discourses, including literature. As opposed to the primary representation of reality in language, Bakhtin's secondary speech genres are characterized by their double-voicedness—the word of the other is refracted in the speech of one's own.[40] This implies a dialogic communication process, the aesthetic experience of which lies in the other's vision of reality. More importantly, the same dialogic principle can be applied to the writer-character relation within the fictive world of prose: the word of the writer describes his work as simultaneously representing the other from the inside—as the other sees himself or herself—*and* from the outside—as the other appears to his surroundings. The "message," however, is always ambiguous; it always presupposes participation on the part of the reader, on his or her experience of the work, its functions and intentions. In a similar manner to Bakhtin and his theory of secondary speech genres, Iurii Lotman takes complex sign systems to exemplify secondary modelling systems.[41] His definition of literature as *model* implies a revaluation of the traditional notion of literary art as *Abbildung*: structured as a semiotic text, a work of literature is a means of both cognition and of communication. In this way, with the emphasis on the opposition

1969, *Studien zur Sprache N.S. Leskovs* (Slavistische Beiträge 39), Munich; and Robert Hodel, 1994, *Betrachtungen zum* skaz *bei N.S. Leskov und Dragoslav Mihailović* (Slavica Helvetica 44), Bern.

40 See Mikhail Bakhtin, 1986, *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, trans. V.W. McGee, eds. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Austin; and 1990, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," *Art and Answerability: Early Philosphical Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, eds. M. Holquist & V. Liapunov, trans. V. Liapunov, Austin. Bakhtin's dialogic "speech interference" is based on the fundamental linguistic phenomenon of quasi-direct discourse (*erlebte Rede* or *style indirect libre*), that is, a form of statement which allows a third-person narrative to exploit a first-person point of view, often with a subtle effect of irony. Cf. Jostein Børtnes, 1993, *Polyfoni og karneval: Essays om litteratur*, Oslo, pp. 55ff.

41 Jurij Lotman, 1977, *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (Michigan Slavic Contributions 7), trans. R. Vroon, Ann Arbor, pp. 50–92.

between text and context, literary inquiry may be directed towards the forms of understanding that constitute the basis of Leskov's representations of Russia, as well as of our interpretations of these representations.

Moreover, it is not surprising that Lotman focuses on the rhetorical trope as a minimal model for the text as a "generator" of meaning. In order to function as such, a text must consist of at least two subtexts principally different in structure, and a mechanism on the metalevel which connects both subtexts and their mutual translation. Every text is dual in that it represents at least two languages; for example, it may be doubly coded and therefore appear now in one, now in another organization, depending on the perspective of the reader. As is particularly clear in cases of stylistic hybridization and confrontation, the literary text becomes a semiotic space where different, hierarchically organized languages interact and interfere with each other, and where the result is a play of meanings. Within a heterogeneous structure similar to that of human consciousness or a given text, the tropes may thus be seen in relation to the basic, meaning-advancing principle of juxtaposition which is operative in any discourse.[42] For example: in Leskov's works, when the resonating style, or discourse, of an Archpriest, a Bishop, a monk, a serf or a sectarian[43] is juxtaposed with elements of "other" resonating styles (national, religious, ethnic, social, and so on), the rhetorical level of the text as a whole is activated, creating a destabilizing effect: the "other" styles that are mounted into the discourse function as codes and contexts for the reinterpretation of the hero's "own" word, providing it with additional, often unexpected meanings.

Although Bakhtin does not elaborate on the relationship between rhetoric and culture, we may conceive of rhetoric dialogically by linking it to his key concepts of "otherlanguagedness" (*inoiazychie*) and "multilanguagedness" (*mnogoizaychie*).[44] Just as the idiolect and sociolect of an

42 Yuri M. Lotman, 1990, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans. A. Shukman, London, pp. 11–17, 36ff.

43 The protagonists of *Cathedral Folk*, *On the Edge of the World*, *Childhood Years*, *The Enchanted Wanderer* and *The Sealed Angel*, respectively.

44 For an interpretation of the dialogue and its role in literature from the point of view of rhetoric, see Renate Lachmann, 1994, *Die Zerstörung der schönen Rede: Rhetorische Tradition und Konzepte des Poetischen*, Munich; 1999, "Die Rhetorik im dialogischen Denken Bachtins," *Dialogue and Rhetoric: Communication Strategies in Russian Text and Theory* (Slavica Bergensia 1), ed. I. Lunde, pp. 102–24.

individual may be understood as a focusing on the word of the other and on the reproduction of the speech of the other (the word of the other being refracted in one's own speech), so too the simultaneous presence of two or more national languages (for instance, Russian, Polish and German) interacting within a single cultural system (the multiethnic Empire) may be said to govern *the operation of multicultural meaning*. Different languages, or cultures, do not exist independently in mutual isolation, but open up, influence and enrich each other. Similarly, while a work of literature is a model, and the creative work of the writer a modelling of reality, the same work of literature is an open system where ambiguousness rules and the reader is the co-creator of meanings. The aim of the text is not semantic unambiguousness, but to create an inner conflict, thwarting any reading based on a single meaning. Having thus set out the governing concept of the rhetorical trope as a mediating force between themes, styles and cultures, involving both the author and the reader, I will now elucidate my multivoiced understanding of culture and cultural analysis.

Whereas a field of culture is typically perceived as a spatial whole with borders and an inner territory, I would like to focus on the relational position of a given culture within Culture perceived as a global, open system. Indeed, culture may be viewed as a phenomenon altogether situated on the borders, depending on its in-between existence in order to be alive and thrive; for "removed from its borders it loses its fertile soil, becomes empty, arrogant, degenerates and dies."[45] As to my exploration of Leskov through the lens of anthropology, the main target will therefore be "Russian" culture in the context of other, "neighbouring" cultures, the way in which it collides and acts in close relation with several other different perspectives upon the world. Significantly, the Empire's social and ethnic diversity—which provides a myriad "zero-points for human perception"[46]—determines Leskov's heroes as multicultural beings, as individuals capable of both possessing, creating and participating in multiculture.

45 Mikhail Bakhtin, 1975, *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*, Moscow, p. 25.

46 In conceiving of cultures not as empirical unities but as "perspectives upon the world" or "zero-points for human perception," Kirsten Hastrup, 1995, *A Passage to Anthropology: Between Experience and Theory*, London, p. ix, emphasizes the investigation into how such cultures, with all their differences, meet through contiguity, blending, dominance or destruction.

Conceiving of semantic forms as dynamic and interactive, Bakhtin suggests that words and utterances move in groups resembling living populations: "[…] the living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads."[47] It should be emphasized here that the multitude of utterances or voices refers not just to living things but to *social* things, which interact and recombine to create sequences of larger entities which we recognize as cultural forms. From the perspective of such heteroglossia, Russian literature cannot easily be seen as a surface manifestation of Russian culture or as an unchanging essence (as implied, for example, by the notion of a Russian "ethnopoetics"). By the same token, Leskov's prose fiction cannot be said to express positively the nation's soul or some "quintessential" Russianness. As the anthropologist Lars Rodseth has suggested, cultures as such are not stable but changeable "populations of meaning" and therefore "historically particular and internally diverse." Components of culture are variably distributed within a given cultural group, and every person "carries but a varying fragment of the meanings distributed in the larger collectivity."[48] Such a distributive and personalistic model of culture offers a radical alternative to any traditionalist and essentialist reading of culture in Leskov's works.

National romanticism and national literature

With their motley collection of people and societies, Leskov's works constitute a fictional representation of the Russian Empire. I stress fictional, because my concern is not with how Russia actually worked, or how imperialism and nationalism should be understood as "tangible" entities with regard to literature, but with the imaginative world of Empire and the emergence of Russia through stories, views and explanations that are invented and become acts of fictionalization. Central to my attention are the processes of imperial thinking—the so-called "practices of Empire"[49]—the voices of religious and cultural minorities, the signifi-

47 Bakhtin, 1981, p. 57.

48 Lars Rodseth, 1998, "Distributive Models of Culture: A Sapirian Alternative to Essentialism," *American Anthropologist* 100 (1), p. 56.

49 Jane Burbank & David L. Ransel (eds. 1998) use this apt term in their "Introduction," *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire,* Bloomington, Ind., p. xv.

cance of various kinds of borders and frontiers, the definition of social and cultural identities, above all on the Empire's outermost boundaries, the peripheries. Obviously, for such an undertaking the emphasis will be on the image of Russia as a *Vielvölkerreich*, that is, on ethnic diversity rather than on similarity, on cultural multiplicity rather than on Russianness qua Russianness.[50]

For nineteenth-century Russians, two notions were inextricably intertwined: that of "nation" (*narod*), which could mean both "nation" and "people" (in the sense of the "common" or "simple" people, *prostoi narod*), and that of "empire" (*imperiia*), reflecting the prototypes of both Western Rome and Eastern Byzantium. The Empire conceived of itself as a "Russian" state (*gosudarstvo*) with a hegemonic Russian people, national language, culture and religion. At the same time, however, non-Russian peoples were thought of as being fully incorporated into the state, meaning that policies of Russification and conversion to official Orthodoxy were conducted in a rather haphazard manner; all the peoples of the Empire were already supposed to be symbolically integrated into the Russian state.[51] In turn, these circumstances are reflected in what have been the three predominant ways of defining Russia and the Russians: the Russian encounter with the West; Russians as members of the community of Eastern Slavs; and, Russians as creators and preservers of a unique multiethnic community. It should be emphasized here that the Russian Empire referred to a Christian empire and to the heritage of the Byzantine emperor as the defender of Orthodoxy. Therefore, the expansion of empire (in Leskov often represented by missionaries), both literally and symbolically, confirmed the image of supreme power and justified the unlimited authority of the Russian emperor (*tsar'*), his moral dominion being enhanced by a strong religious, eschatological element. As we shall see, this notion of a Christian *quasi-unified* culture is significant in Leskov's rendering of human activity in various corners of the Empire.

As the action is set mainly in locations remote from the urban capitals, it follows that the portrayal of Leskov's Russian heroes relies heavily

50 Andreas Kappeler proposes to look at the history of Russia through a "multiethnic lens" so as to challenge, or broaden, the Russocentric view ("to complement the Russocentric approach to the history of Russia with a multiethnic one"). Andreas Kappeler, 2001, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, trans. A. Clayton, Harlow, UK, p. 6.

51 Catherine Evtuhov et al., 1997, "Introduction," *Kazan', Moskva, Peterburg: rossiiskaia imperia vzgliadom iz raznykh uglov*, eds. C. Evtuhov et al., Moscow, pp. 11–14.

on the dramatization of various sociocultural differences found in the provinces, drawing, as it were, on the ethnic heterogeneity of the Empire at large. For instance, official Orthodox churchmen come into close contact with local government officials who are of Polish or German extraction; or, they are "wanderers" (*stranniki*), who encounter during their travels representatives of various minorities (Gypsies, Tatars, Greeks, and Ukrainians). Here, Russia as a multinational Empire becomes a semantic interface, where any one-sided meaning concerning Russianness and the national character of the Russian people (*narodnost'*) is challenged.

It is important to bear in mind that Leskov nevertheless shared the aspirations of many Russian nineteenth-century writers and thinkers, the so-called "national romantics," who took upon themselves the revitalization of what they considered to be genuinely Russian and traditional values. Russian culture always appeals to "the old ways" when it makes its most radical and definitive breaks with the preceding period; as a reaction to the continuous translation of Western European cultural institutions inaugurated by Peter the Great about 1700, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev and Chekhov would all turn, in various ways, towards the remnants of the marginalized pre-Petrine Orthodox cultural heritage, which by then had come to lead a rather anonymous existence in the form of a *gesunkenes Kulturgut* among the lower, uneducated layers of society. Inspired by Johann Gottfried Herder's theory that every nation has its own national spirit and culture, the highest expression of which is found in language and folk poetry, the aim of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, too, was to contribute towards the creation of a literature in which *narodnost'*, the national character of the Russian people, could find its expression. In this sense, Leskov belongs to the creators of a Russian national literature (*Nationalliteratur*) in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Small wonder, therefore, that when tracing the "national romantic" undercurrents in Leskov's texts, the idea of Russian society as a world apart and different from that of all other nations frequently reverberates. Hence the characteristic simplicity (*prostota*) and the sensibility (*chuvstvitel'nost'*) of so many of his provincial heroes. Pertaining to a lifestyle where religion is paramount, these ideas seem, however, to encompass *both* what is considered to be most distinctive about Russian culture and institutions *and* to embody an ideal model for contemporary society based on and extrapolated from such elements. As these two meanings

are inseparable, the "Russian Idea," as a phenomenon of culture, is perhaps better viewed as *a set of ideals*;[52] suffice it here to say that the friction between the ideal and the real is reflected ideologically in the division between "Westernized" and "native Russian"—in traditionalist, so-called Slavophile sentiments on the one hand, and liberalist views, on the other. Of course, Russia's agonizing ambivalence over its relationship with the West inevitably raises the question of its relationship with the East, the "Orient." Our writer's perception of Russia's relationship with Asia is determined by his perspective on Europe, only that whereas many Russian artists and intellectuals in the nineteenth century regarded the Empire as a European nation, viewing themselves as culturally and politically superior, Leskov, amongst others, would seem to assert Russia's equally close affinity with Asia.[53] Common to the thinking of all nineteenth-century Russians, however, the future of the Empire was closely linked to the understanding of the potentionally antagonistic relationship between things past and present, to having *faith* in Holy Rus' or in a secular and more civilized, modern Russia (*Rossiia*).

The centrality of belief yields a cultural and social paradigm of tremendous currency in Leskov's fiction, where a main theme is that of Christianity. Exposed from an early age to various aspects of Russian Orthodox life and tradition, as well as to a variety of religious sects and minorities, the writer appears to have struggled with the question of faith throughout his life.[54] A close reading of his texts reveals an active concern for Russia's future as well as for another, and related issue: the state of the contemporary Russian Church. In this respect, Leskov's "national romanticism" would seem to indicate a profound awareness of the Orthodox heritage or—to use Pushkin's definition—"the Greek creed," as being the *differentia specifica* of the Russian national quality or character.[55] Writers and thinkers also raised these problems against the back-

52 Tim McDaniel, 1996, *The Agony of the Russian Idea*, Princeton, p. 24.

53 As put by Tolz (2001, p. 151), "throughout the nineteenth century, most Russian nation-builders regarded Russia as a European nation, and looked at Asia from a position of unquestionable cultural and political superiority."

54 See Andrei Leskov, 1984, *Zhizn' Nikolaia Leskova po ego lichnym, semeinym i nesemeinym zapisiam i pamiatiam*, Moscow.

55 Jostein Børtnes & Ingunn Lunde, 1997, "Foreword," *Cultural Discontinuity and Reconstruction: The Byzanto-Slav Heritage and the Creation of a Russian National Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Slavica Norvegica 9), Oslo, p. 9.

ground of a mainstream nineteenth-century literary criticism whose tenets were "revolutionary," anti-religious, atheistic, and did not consider *narodnost'* to be a cultural phenomenon but something innate, just like the physiological characteristics of a nation. But despite Russia's embracing romantic ideas from the 1820s onwards and its keenness to dispose of the predominance of French culture, enlightenment elements of Western European Baroque and neo-Classicism seemed to linger in the "Russian" cultural memory throughout the century.[56] In this connection, Leskov's portrayal of the multicultural Empire, with all the independent and ambiguous views of its Russian heroes, stands out in bold relief against the traditional understanding of the early nineteenth-century preoccupation with "the language question."

Why was the language so important? Because within the realm of theological thinking language is directly linked to the most essential characteristics of reality. And the "language question," with all its ideological divisions and subdivisions, emerged from the millenarian idea that Russia needed a radical and definitive change, which would create a new order and a new language at the cost of a total removal of the olden times or a full restoration of them.[57] Briefly stated, the linguistic and literary debates hinged on the difference of opinion concerning the Enlightenment (*prosveshchenie*), especially as introduced by the Lomonosov legacy of the preceding century.[58] At the same time, however, the attitude of every Russian writer sprang from the sense that he was engaged in a common nation-building project as well as a great cultural enterprise.

On the one hand, there was the conservative and Slavophile "Symposium of Lovers of Russian Literature" (*Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova*),

56 Børtnes & Lunde, 1997, pp. 7–8.

57 Boris Uspenskii, 1994, "Spory o iazyke v nachale XIX v. kak fakt russkoi kultury ("Proisshestvie v tsarstve tenei, ili sud'bina rossiiskogo iazyka'—neizvestnoe sochinenie Semena Bobrova)," *Izbrannyie trudy*, Moscow, vol. 2, p. 343.

58 Mikhail Lomonosov (1711–65), for whose odes the empire and the nation of Russia (its greatness, its promise) were the main topic, was not only inspired directly by liturgical texts, but also built his grandest poetic edifices on the foundation of the literary language, Church Slavonic. Moreover, Lomonosov perceived the world as divided and irreducible to one single, all-embracing principle; also, he believed that harmonious beauty in nature was derived from atoms, while *in society there are only conflict and contradictory interests*. On this and most other points, he parted company with the neoclassicist Aleksandr Sumarokov (1718–77), who insisted on literary norms, a system of rules and taboos, stylistic simplicity, a particularly strict view on genres as well as for literature in general.

whose members included its founder Aleksandr Shishkov (who, incidentally, was not a professional linguist) and the poet Gavrila Derzhavin. According to their view, the Russian national literature should take its direction from Church Slavonic, "the root and foundation of the Russian language," and from medieval Russian liturgical books, folklore and the oral narrative tradition, these being the main prerequisites for all literary creativity in Russian as well as an important bulwark against the damaging Western influences. Here they praised Russia's great past, advocated the principles of tsardom and Orthodoxy as an integral part of Russian nationality from time immemorial—while rejecting the ideas of the Enlightenment, as expressed, especially, in the Western "mannerist" literature which was too concerned with the trivialities of the heroes' inner lives. On the other hand, there was the liberal group which has gone down in history under the name of "Arzamas," whose literati were connected more or less closely with the anti-government Decembrist movement, a revolutionary liberal effort and an expression of social protest. Among them were the nestor of Russian prose Nikolai Karamzin (author of the famous novella "Poor Liza" (*Bednaia Liza*, 1792)), Vasilii Zhukovskii and Aleksandr Pushkin, writers who were either too individualistic or too talented for their Western-oriented group ever to become such an established union of literary allies as the patriotic and nationalist-oriented Symposium. Most Arzamassians shared in the enlightenment ideals of cosmopolitanism, education, and justice. Commonly perceived as lucid and clear-cut, the ideological struggle between the "archaic" Symposiasts and the "innovative" Arzamassians should, however, be understood in less dualistic terms than simple affirmation of Russophile traditional values or promotion of liberal Western ones, or their mutual exclusivity.

Before we examine Leskov's styling of Russia, we should observe that there was a third grouping in Russian intellectual life, one which found its bearings in the continuation of the enlightenment tradition, notably in the Rousseauan belief in the goodness and sociality of human nature, as well as the high moral and aesthetic value of man's natural condition. Standing outside the Empire's status-advancing professional and social networks, these writers often felt compelled to join ideological groupings whose views they could not fully espouse. Hence the many cases of vacillation and transition from one antagonistic camp to another, as well as the constant search for various "centrist" programmes; indeed, many

nineteenth-century Russian intellectuals were neither consistently pro-Symposiast nor pro-Arzamassian, but criticized Derzhavin, Karamzin, the Church-Slavonicist traditionalists and the cosmopolitan liberalists in equal measure. In fact, such in-betweenness is evidence that the exact nature of the great linguistic schism, which Boris Uspenskii calls "a fact of Russian culture," was never entirely clear to many writers.[59] And thus the "language quarrel" likewise resonates throughout the second half of the century: we could say that henceforth "literary language finds its bearings in the individual text, which is distinctly undefined and potentially open, not in a system of normative rules"; also, that the problem of stylistics, naturally and predominantly, tends to orient itself towards *speech* or towards "text" in the wider meaning of the word.[60] Bearing in mind the above considerations, Leskov would seem to be just another Russian voice of "centrist" vacillation. Or would he?

An autodidactic writer with strong Slavophile leanings, well-versed in the Orthodox tradition, liturgical books, folklore and the spoken language of *byt*—Leskov is also a liberal "enlightener" with a keen interest in Protestantism, Catholicism and the religions of the East, as well as an avid student of eighteenth-century Western European fiction. True, in contrast to many Slavophiles who took a romantic view of the unconditional originality and cultural exclusivity of every individual nation, our writer opts for a middle ground; here Leskov, like many *moderate* Slavophile writers, in looking back to "Eastern" Russia before the time of Peter the Great, did not seem to be concerned about the fact that imaginative literature itself was a Western concept, since he felt it was possible to combine pragmatically the best features of Western and Russian "Enlightenment." (Considering his fascination with the capricious and cosmopolitan split vision of Laurence Sterne, we may note that the Symposiasts ridiculed the English "sentimentalist" because they considered literature to be a

59 More precisely, Uspenskii argues that the two circles influenced each other mutually, while neither of their leading figures was any more defined and consistent than the other in his likes and dislikes, and that the antitheses "Russian" and "the West" on the one hand, and Church Slavonic (that is, bookish, written language) and Russian (that is, colloquial, oral language) on the other, were not absolutes in the contemporary understanding of the key issues in the language and literature debate (besides, Church Slavonic and Russian elements were tied up with West European in an interrelationship of fluidity).

60 Uspenskii, 1994, p. 393.

serious matter best served by the traditional epic genres).[61] As to the more specific question of his "national romanticism," we shall see that Leskov's fictional prose reflects strong identification with an Orthodox Christian anthropology, that is, with the idea of the salvation of the soul, the concepts of suffering, atonement and transfiguration, *but also* with a wide range of heterodox, non-Orthodox and even *un*-orthodox views of humankind and culture. Thus, with respect to the Slavophiles' anti-historical "historicism"—or their aspiration to rebuild the Russian national character on the basis of an Orthodox churchdom—he takes a different path.

In fact, there are two areas of contention which distinguish Leskov of the early 1870s and his representation of Christianity in the Empire from that of his contemporaries:

1. multiethnicity is thematized as a religious problem; that is, *multiculture* or cultural conflicts are viewed in a religious context
2. Orthodoxy is placed in a series of oppositions:
   i. external: to Oriental, non-Christian cultures; to Roman Catholicism and Protestantism
   ii. internal: where the institutionalized Russian Church is opposed to sectarians (the Old Believers, the *staroobriadtsy*), where official Orthodoxy is opposed to the idea of a "natural" and more spiritual Christianity

On the whole, the idea of a "real" essential Christianity is part of the lay theology which was characteristic of Russian religious thought in the nineteenth century and which in many ways opposed the institutionalized, official Russian Church and its "imperialistic" Orthodoxy (consider the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky). But as I have already mentioned, the Leskovian hero is often a representative of the official Church who, through his contact with the members of his multicultural parish or society, experiences a conflict of conscience with regard to the doctrinal teachings of the Church; or, he belongs to that particular set of protago-

61 According to Neil Cornwall and Faith Wigzell, textual production in medieval Russia was wholly dominated by ecclesiastical needs. See their "Literaturnost': Literature and the Market-place," *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881–1940*, eds. C. Kelly & D. Shepherd, Oxford, 1998, pp. 37ff.

nists who, as we shall see, most richly express the multivalent and contradictory understanding of Russian identity elaborated by the writer: the wanderers and simple yet emotional inhabitants of distant provincial places. Therefore, to conceive of Leskov's representation of Russia in terms of a "Russian national ethnopoetics," to use Vladimir Zakharov's essentialist coinage, seems to me rather inadequate. Instead of asking what renders the writer's literature specifically Russian, I therefore propose to look into how its Russianness participates as an important semantic category in the generation of cultural meaning.

What this book does

My reading of Leskov's works rests on two assumptions already mentioned in the Preface: first, that they are repositories of mental representations, "cultural objects," to be interpreted by us as interdisciplinary readers; and, second, that the author is a moderate ("centrist") conservatist who never represents ethnic identity as somthing solid, absolute and one-sided, but always as something fluid and permeable. To my knowledge, Leskov's characteristic heterogenity has never been seriously considered in terms of its anthropological implications. Likewise, the relationship in his fiction between styles, rhetoric and cultures has hitherto been hidden or read in an inconclusive or too conventional way. Following in the footsteps of Kelly, Kuz'min, McLean, Rodseth, Sperrle, Tolz and others, I feel the need to address the multitude of social and cultural voices in Leskov's texts, which are difficult to understand or to tackle productively for many modern readers. In the course of the following pages, I shall argue that Leskov challenges the contemporary view of Russia as a multiethnic state as well as a homogeneous nation held together by the hegemonic force of Orthodoxy.

As to exactly how this is brought about, I will consider four significant *styling strategies* which further distinguish Leskov's fiction of the early 1870s: the making and the un-making of national myths; the invention of the imperfect idyll; the processing of multiethnicity; and, the adaptation of Christian texts. The ambiguous workings of mythopoeia, idyllization, ethnic and religious diversity will first be examined separately, as signposts or indicators of multiculturalist itineraries, with reference to Leskov's chronicle-novel (*Cathedral Folk*, 1872), then jointly, as an interactive assemblage, in relation to four of his tales (*povesti*). It is imperative

here to consider each work's intertextual intention, that is, the way in which various textual elements are buried in a given text (quotations, allusions, reminiscences, and so on) and relate to one another. Moreover, as each of Leskov's texts also participates in, repeats and constitutes *an act of memory*, it exemplifies being a "product of its distancing and surpassing of precursor texts."[62] Thus their intertextuality reflects the inner movement of a culture as such: by organizing, storing and transforming diverse information in the collective consciousness of a people, a culture continually rewrites and retranscribes itself.[63]

The rhetorical function of the Orthodox heritage is particularly revealing here: whilst Leskov's characters typically combine components from various Christian texts (the Scriptures, the lives of the saints, sermons and so on) to suit their own interpretation of the provincial environment to which they belong, their remembering and forgetting of national myths—Russian as well as non-Russian—contribute to an ambivalent representation of culture.[64] Throughout this book, my main concern will therefore be with the creative potential of Leskov's synchronization of heterogeneous styles. I will concentrate on the semantic and cultural experience accumulated within them, or rather: on the resulting "lines of uncertainty" that help create fluid frontiers in his Russia[65]—a generative quality which dominates the five texts to such an extent and on every narrative level that we may speak of *an ambiguous stylistics of confronta-*

62 Lachmann does not consider Leskov's fiction, but she describes the interrelationship between "old" and "new" texts following the presentation of three inseparable models of intertextuality: participation, troping, and transformation. Renate Lachmann, 1997, *Memory and Literature: Intertextuality in Russian Modernism*, trans. R. Sellars & A. Wall, Minneapolis, p. 17.

63 For the organization of culture as collective intellect and the non-heritable memory of a social group, see Iurii Lotman, 1985, "Pamiat' v kul'turologicheskom osveshchenii," *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach* 16, pp. 5–9.

64 In this process, the hybridization of cultures is reflected in the confrontation of various stylistic and rhetorical patterns; multiethnicity is mirrored by "multilanguagedness."

65 For a sociohistorical perspective on such a "middle ground," see Thomas M. Barrett, who, in his article on the frontier and the Empire in process of formation, does not discern the starkly dichotomized conflicts evoked by the rhetoric of colonization and anti-colonial struggle, but conceives instead of peripheral Russia as an arena of shifting possibilities for individuals and communities. Thomas M. Barrett, 1998, "Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the Northern Caucasus," *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. J. Burbank & D. L. Ransel, Bloomington, Ind., pp. 148–73.

tion.[66] In thus charting the different contextual relations between styles, rhetoric, and cultures, my ambition is to provide a "synthetic" account of Leskov's representation of the Empire where I try to explain the nature of the multicultural interrelationship between Russianness and other, non-Russian cultures as portrayed in his literary efforts.

The five core texts have been selected according to two main criteria: first, a dramatic energy must result from the "alien in Russia" theme, that is, from the confrontation of the dominant culture with at least one non-dominant or "foreign" one; and second, the main action must take place within Imperial Russia but away from its urban capitals of St Petersburg and Moscow, in more or less remote areas, and/or in a multitude of places.[67] In turn, the prerequisites of foreignness and provinciality have led me towards the years 1870–75, a period of great social and political upheaval in the Empire. It was then that the revolutionary movement first became prominent; that the anarchic creed of "nihilism," stressing total personal emancipation, especially for women, combined with the new religion of populism (*narodnichestvo*); that writers-thinkers Aleksandr Herzen and Nikolai Chernyshevskii presented their political programme of "critical realism"; and, that young members of the intelligentsia decided to "go to the people" (*khodit' v narod*), eventually forming an empire-wide conspirational organization.[68] For Leskov, too, the first half of the 1870s was a time of great intellectual tension and change. Indeed, we may surmise that our five texts reflect, partly in response to this social and political upheaval, a gradual transition in the author's own mindset: after a well-documented intellectual and religious crisis in 1875, he betrays more scepticism not only towards the Russian State Church, but towards Orthodox Christianity as such. In the end, after 1887, he was to become a Tolstoyan, having arrived in fact at many of Tolstoy's positions

66 Renate Lachmann (1997, pp. 122–36) has shown how the mixing of styles, or syncretism, prevents the consolidation of any one meaning.

67 For this reason alone, such well-known works as "Lady McBeth of Mtsensk" (*Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda*, 1865), a gory story of deceit and murder which is eternalized by Shostakovich's opera, and "The Left-Hander" (*Levsha*, 1881), about a left-handed blacksmith who is sent to England by Tsar Nicholas I to impress the British, are not included.

68 The latter event marks the climax of the Russian populist movement, whose revolutionary strategies for "reknitting the torn fabric," for "bringing state and people closer together," had largely failed by 1877. Cf. Geoffrey Hosking, 1997, *Russia: People and Empire*, Cambridge, Mass., pp. 345–66, 390.

before Tolstoy himself did. With these extratextual elements in mind, I intend to show how a semiotic web is created in each one of Leskov's texts through the interplay of the four multicultural strategies mentioned above, all of which point in many different directions and produce an unfinalized universe of national, religious and cultural meaning.

This book is organized as a running narrative in chronological order. In the course of two main parts, each consisting of four chapters, I examine five of Leskov's better known works of fiction from the early 1870s from various positions reflecting an anthropological sensibility in literary scholarship. Inasmuch as the selection of texts has also been guided by the availability of material in English, it is a compromise between practical and aesthetic considerations. Following this Introduction, Part One examines four fundamental styling strategies in Leskov's prose fiction with examples taken from the chronicle-novel *Cathedral Folk* (*Soboriane*). In continuation, Part Two turns to the following tales: *The Sealed Angel* (*Zapechatlennyi angel*), *The Enchanted Wanderer* (*Ocharovannyi strannik*), *On the Edge of the World* (*Na kraiu sveta*), and *Childhood Years* (*Detskie gody*). An Epilogue, in which I expand on the challenges of cultural and religious diversity as portrayed by Leskov, suggests some themes for further inquiry and proposes hypotheses based on the conclusions of this book.

Myth-making Movements

> I would have spoken on a text by Kirill of Belozersk […] What am I to do? When one cannot proceed by the direct road, willy-nilly, one must follow the example of Father Ignatius Loyola.

Leskov's most celebrated novel may be described as composite, in the sense that, fragmentary and anecdotal, it does not form a novelistic whole, but is held together structurally by smaller units.[1] Subtitled "a chronicle" (*khronika*), it concentrates on the Cathedral's ecclesiastical quarter (*sobornaia popovka*) in the imaginary, provincial town of Stargorod ("Oldtown"). The lives of two priests and a deacon are presented in endearing and sympathetic terms, whilst the negative characters, mostly local quasi-nihilists and officials of foreign extraction, are subjected to satirical and often derisive treatment. But Leskov is not a typical satirist; unlike Mikhail Saltykov, whose *History of a Town* (*Istoriia odnogo goroda*, 1869–70) reads like a dystopic denunciation of Russia's rulers disguised as a mock-chronicle about the make-believe town of Glupov ("Stupidtown") and its frivolous governors, Leskov is more subtly subversive. With its acute vision, his chronicle-novel *Cathedral Folk* is distinguished above all by its sympathetic eccentricity, quaintness and originality.

There is rhetorical weight in the treatment of the central character, the Archpriest Savelii Tuberozov, who, although rendered fallible and flawed, hopes to bring about a reform of the Russian Orthodox Church from within. As he responds actively to the moral corrosion of Imperial

1 In his book *Roman und Romanchronik: Strukturuntersuchungen zur Erzählkunst Nikolaj Leskovs*, Cologne, 1970, Bodo Zelinsky argues persuasively that though anecdotal and composite, *Cathedral Folk* is not structurally formless, as its individual units are skilfully woven together by devices such as "perspectivistic narration" ("perspektivistisches Erzählen") and by a complex overlapping between chapters, parts and paragraphs.

Russia, his life story takes on the form of a struggle; eager to improve the Stargorod congregation and to bring the official church closer to the real needs of the people, he is led into a series of confrontations with the ecclesiastical and civil authorities alike. Unlike Tuberozov's many allies, notably, his faithful wife, the exuberant Deacon, an old noblewoman and her household dwarf, the government bureaucracy cannot tolerate his independent thinking. Having delivered a final, eloquent sermon on the need for ideals, tradition and the renewal of faith, the Archpriest is therefore denounced to the authorities as a seditionist by a mercenary civil servant from St Petersburg, is removed from his post, lives in sequestration for months, and dies soon after his homecoming.

Mingling, conflict, and syncretism

I have already formulated my approach to the novel's multiplicity of styles seeing it as part of a fundamental heterogeneity, as a textual method of operation pertaining to various levels of cultural design and designation. And Leskov, as the creator of this fictional text, stands at the centre of its organization of language levels, at the point "where all levels intersect." In *Cathedral Folk*, as Hugh McLean has revealed, the main hero's discourse (*skaz*) typically blends "priestly" archaisms, colloquialisms and Slavonicisms with more ordinary specimens of "inside" professional jargon:

> *The sexton Evtikheich* [the patronymic is colloquial, somewhat condescending: sextons are far beneath priests in status; the unusual form of the Greek name Eutyches is uneuphoneous, slightly ridiculous, in Russian] *returned from the provincial capital* [literally, "from the province," an old colloquialism] *and reported* [archaic colloquialism] *that between the Bishop* [an in-group and emotion-laden term *vladyka*, literally "master," also a mode of deferential address] *and the governor there took place a certain contention* ["certain contention" is bookish] *over a reciprocal call* […] *The governor, on his appearances in the cathedral on the Tsar's name-day and birthday* [the governor, a German, only attends church on official state occasions when his presence is required], *has the custom at such time of conversing rather loudly. The*

> *Bishop resolved* [archaism in the deferential third-person plural] *to* […] *ask His Excellency to conduct himself more decorously.*[2]

This is far more than a colourful description of a small-town conflict. The stylistic variety of these lines indicates a characteristic feature of Leskov's multicultural thinking with regard to religious as well as national belonging. A better example of how this process operates is the passage where Tuberozov depicts a humiliating encounter with a certain Pole.[3] The rhetorical build-up of his text is prepared by a couple of pathetic exclamations, in which he stresses the unselfish nature of his battle with the enemies of the Empire: Оле мне, грешному, что я только там вытерпел! Оле и вам, ближние мои, братия мои, искреннии и други, за срамоту мою и унижение, которые я перенес от сего куцего нечестивца! (34).[4] The pathos culminates with the Russian Archpriest addressing the main culprit, the German Governor's Polish manager (*pravitel'*) who has accused him of anti-government sabotage: Оле же тебе, ляше прокаженный,
ем царю моему упрекаешь! (34).[5] In alluding to the Polish Uprising of 1830,[6] Tuberozov here signals a keen interest in topical issues concerning

2 See McLean, 1977, pp. 195–96.

3 Playing no small part in Leskov's writings as a whole, the Polish "theme" appears in the sketches "From a Traveller's Diary" (*Iz odnogo dorozhnogo dnevnika*, 1862) and "The Russian Society in Paris" (*Russkoe obshchestvo v Parizhe*, 1863/67); in the novels *No Way Out* (*Nekuda*, 1864), *The Bypassed* (*Oboidennye*, 1865) and *At Daggers Drawn* (*Na nozhakh*, 1870); in the tales "The Islanders" (*Ostrovitiane*, 1865), "An Enigmatic Man" (*Zagadochnyi chelovek*, 1870) and "Laughter and Grief" (*Smekh i gore*, 1871); in the play "The Spendthrift" (*Rastochitel'*, 1867), as well as in the stories "Kuvyrkov" (1863), "The Unmercenary" (*Bessrebrenik*, 1869), "A Russian Democrat in Poland" (*Russkii demokrat v Pol'she*, 1880), "Interesting Men" (*Interesnye muzhchiny*, 1885), "Antuka" (1888) and "The Lady and the Wench" (*Dama i fefela*, 1894).

4 "Woe unto me, sinner that I am, what did I not undergo there! Woe unto you also, my intimates, my brethren and my sincere friends, for the shame and humiliation which I underwent at the hands of that hardened reprobate!" In relation to the author's main argument, it is worth noting that Dal' lists *kutsoe plat'e* as a synonym for "German" (in the sense of foreign) dress, and that *kutsyi*, used on its own, is a word for a mongrel dog. Vladimir Dal', 1955, *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka*, Moscow, vol. 2, p. 228.

5 "Woe unto you, you leprous Pole—to think that you, with your crafty conscience, should upbraid me with resisting the will of my Tsar!"

6 I am thankful to Hugh McLean for pointing out to me that although the Polish Uprising of 1830 ("Powstanie listopadowe") would be the only one known to Tuberozov, for the readers of 1872, the January Uprising ("Powstanie styczniowe") a decade earlier was much closer and palpable, thus forming a hidden layer of association.

both Imperial Russia and his own personal life. Curiously, a *bathos* is then achieved with the reference to Ukrainian culture: Однако я сие снес и ушел молча, памятуя хохлацкую пословицу: «скачи, враже, як пан каже». (34).[7] This is rather the voice of self-awareness; after the extremely agonizing row with the Polish Catholic manager, an almost self-ironical Archpriest ponders on the consequences of ecclesiastical hierarchization. Sceptical about his own competence and perserverance, Tuberozov reflects upon his exposed position as a Russian Orthodox clergyman, but soon indulges in the caresses of Natal'ia Nikolaevna, his tender-hearted wife (*popad'ia*), the safe haven of domesticity. The tone is now exalted, now smugly humorous, as his tendency to lean on national myths becomes more conspicuous. Going on to glorify Russian women and Russian simpletons (*iurodivye*), the Archpriest deals with his wife's good-natured pranks and their sad childlessness, but also the more prosaic challenges of a provincial *pop*, such as the lack of appropriate vestments and stimulating literature.

As indicated by McLean, the concentration of "coloured" language in the speech of the Leskovian hero-narrator brings together voices from different eras, cultures and milieus, thereby informing the text with a larger resonance.[8] To my mind, the *linking of stylistic diversity to cultural difference* seems even more valuable if considered within the bounds of a rhetorical theory of the text.[9] In Leskov's fiction, the blending of stylistic levels—oral, written, secular, religious, provincial, urban, church, non-church, archaic, contemporary—can be said to compete with a decorum-oriented system, thus suspending the border between the rhetorical spheres of the official and the unofficial on the one hand, and the native and the foreign on the other. In turn, this boundary crossing allows two or more contexts, or utterances, to enter into conflictual contact, so that a semantic difference is released, which is likely to disturb any

7 "However, I bore it in silence, calling to mind the Little Russian saying: 'Jump to it, O enemy, as the master (*pan*) commands.'"

8 McLean, 1967, pp. 1333–34; 1338. See also Irina Mirsky-Zayas, who states that Leskov's "fictional world is similar to that of the folktales but with an added cultural diversity." Irina Mirsky-Zayas, 1994, *An Old Fairy-Tale or a New Legend: A Study of Leskov's Mythologizing Fiction*, doctoral thesis, Brown University, p. 82.

9 Josef Kopperschmidt, 1990, "Einleitende Anmerkungen zum heutigen Interesse an Rhetorik," *Rhetorik*, vol. 1: *Rhetorik als Texttheorie*, ed. J. Kopperschmidt, Darmstadt, pp. 1–31.

reading based on a single meaning. Conceived as a motley representation of people and society in Imperial Russia, *Cathedral Folk*, then, may be said to resonate with a multiplicity of meanings caused by rhetorical transgression.[10]

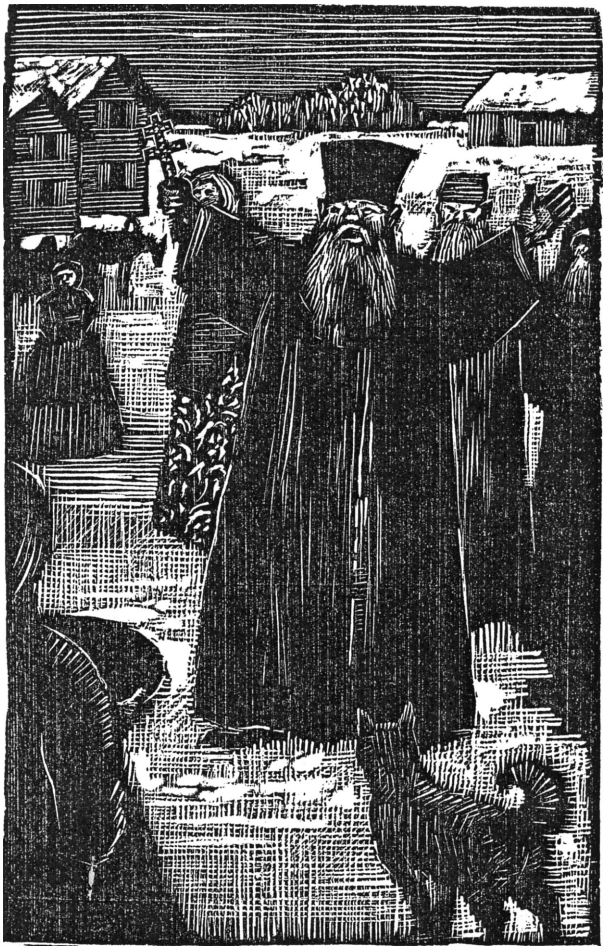
In so far as *decorum* as a stylistic criterion locates itself finally in the beholder and not in the speech or text (no textual pattern per se is decorous or not), it may be described as a kind of intuitive judgement dependent on patterns of inherited, "tacit" knowledge. Such a judgement is not only a rhetorical criterion; it becomes a general test of basic acculturation. For example, in order to establish the decorum of a particular situation, say, somewhere in the Russian provinces, the fictive character of a priest or deacon (and the "beholding" reader) has to learn to find his footing in that culture. This cognitive process will always involve the assimilation of cultural traits belonging to other subgroups.[11] In thus understanding rhetoric as a cultural model, a way of both possessing and creating culture,[12] our main interest in the representation of Russia is motivated by the productive prospects of multicultural communication.

In Leskov's fictional universe there is a tendency to depict life from the "positive" side, that is to confirm something as true and beneficial. In the chronicle-novel, the town and its inhabitants are presented in a picturesque or idyllic light, with occasional sentimental undertones; people and society are portrayed as symbols of "the ideal Russia" of old, often amplified through an idealization of the feudal eigteenth-century Russian way of life, which was believed to be a paradigm of tranquillity and harmonious love; typically, both narrators and characters display

10 Cf. Irmhild Christina Weinberg [Sperrle], who argues that Leskov's focus on exceptional situations and characters is the organic expression of his worldview: "[…] to find the theory, the one word, that explains it all. For Leskov, the meaning of life is in finding the appropriate word for this very moment, and for this we have to know a lot of words to choose from." Irmhild Christina Weinberg [Sperrle], 1996, *The Organic Worldview of Nikolaj Leskov*, doctoral thesis, Columbia University, New York, p. 339.

11 I have borrowed the phrase "find one's footing" from Clifford Geertz, who locates the centre of anthropology in something resembling classical decorum. "Although one starts any effort at thick description, beyond the obvious and superficial, from a state of general bewilderment as to what the devil is going on—trying to find one's feet—one does not start (or ought not) intellectually empty-handed." Clifford Geertz, 1993, *The Interpretation of Culture*: *Selected Essays*, New York, p. 27.

12 See Renate Lachmann, 1978, "Rhetorik und Kulturmodell," *Slavistische Studien zum VIII. Internationalen Slavistenkongress*, eds. J. Holthusen et al., Cologne, pp. 279ff.



Hans Gerhard Sørensen · 1958

a nostalgia for the past, for some hypothetical state of love and peace which has somehow been lost. But there is also a negative tendency which takes the form of social criticism, where the focus is on the discrediting of something as false or harmful.[13] Present in the novel throughout, the main hero's denunciatory attitude is particularly strong in his diary, where he addresses problems connected with the ecclesiastical authorities, the official Church, the many levels of bureaucracy, and the effect these have on Russian religious and cultural life. The negative elements are represented by local characters who have been corrupted by "un-Russian" ideas, but also by urban visitors and by people of foreign extraction, representing the Empire's many ethnic minorities. As we will see, elements of the two stylistic tendencies, of both the sociocritical and the affirmative-edificatory, coexist.

In talking about styles we are also talking about the rhetorical choice between the various shades of meaning that cluster around a given type of discourse. While *Cathedral Folk* is permeated by the "rhetorical choice" of the Russian Orthodox heritage, its stylistic mingling reflects a collision between different value judgements, worldviews, or ways of understanding culture, as well as the possibility of competition and exchange between them. As the Archpriest Tuberozov resorts to Russian Orthodox literature, wishing to consolidate his idea of a great national tradition, he is just as prone to exploit *non*-Russian, *non*-Orthodox journals from abroad. By the same token, the Deacon Akhilla expresses his wish to emulate the moral attitudes of his devout superior, whilst advocating "atheist" ideas acquired from his St Peterburg friends. In both cases, the hybridization of styles[14] points to the phenomenon of *syncretism*, which not only presupposes a confrontation of antithetical stylistic attitudes, but also requires further textual instances showing how these conflictual attitudes are intertwined with the cultural models with which they cor-

13 I first developed the idea of Leskov's oppositional leaning in my article "The Rhetoric of an Archpriest: Nikolai Leskov and the Orthodox Heritage," *Cultural Discontinuity and Reconstruction: The Byzanto-Slav Heritage and the Creation of a Russian National Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. J. Børtnes & I. Lunde, Oslo, 1997, pp. 217–36. See also Sperrle (2003, pp. 20–21), who makes a similar division between Leskov's "denunciatory (*oblichitel'nnyi*)" and "constructive (*polozhitel'nyi*)" attitudes.

14 Stylistic mingling understood as conflict can be linked to Bakhtin's concept of "hybrid construction," which may contain a stylistic plurality, as well as a number of axiological belief systems. See Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 304ff.

respond. As Renate Lachmann explains, "in the intertextual text, syncretism brings about the synchronization, as well as the contamination, of both heterogenous styles and the semantic and cultural experience accumulated within them."[15] Stylistic mingling, then, appears to indicate an intertextual common ground where colliding views on humankind as well as culture are exchanged and mutually interfere.

Let me try to demonstrate how Leskov's representation of people and society in Imperial Russia is structured by a basic syncretism so that two opposite semantic potentials interact and are developed simultaneously: mythopoeia, that is, the creation of Russian myths, and mythic decomposition, the deflation of Russianness and ideas of national superiority. I will illustrate how various myth-making movements contribute to the design, or constitution, of the texts of the two central characters as well as that of the primary narrator. It seems useful to continue with the main hero's diary, which constitutes a "matrix" for the Leskovian stylistic material in, as it were, a distilled form.

Local discord and everyday heroism

Presented by the "chronicler" as a written life account, "whispered" forth by the diarist to himself (станем тихо и почтительно слушать тихий шепот его старческих уст, 29),[16] the *Demicoton Book* (*Demikotonovaia kniga*) combines the intimate and anecdotal.[17] Judging from the frequent use of hortatives and apostrophes, the Archpriest is imagining a reader: Оле и вам, ближние мои […]! (34); О, ляше правителю, будете вы теперь сию проделку свою помнить!" (56); О слепец! […] о глущец! скажу я тебе […] (57); Пей, бедный народ, и распивайся! (66),[18] and so on. As creating subject, he displays a rather self-conscious literary mind with a bent towards the confessional mode of writing. He attempts, in various ways, to come to terms with the "exasperated enmity and hatred

15 Lachmann, 1997, p. 123.

16 "We will begin, quietly and respectfully, to listen to the quiet whisper of the old man's lips."

17 Actually a religious calendar bound in a heavy cotton fabric used in Russia in the early nineteenth century, Tuberozov's diary (*Demikotonovaia kniga*, from the French "demicoton") connotes the quaintness and old-fashionedness of its author.

18 "Alas for you, dear friends […]!"; "O, you miserable Polish manager, you will soon have cause to remember […]!"; "O, how blind you are […] O, stupid man, I will say to you […]!"; "Drink, poor people, and get drunk to your hearts' content!"

towards faith" (ожесточенная вражда и ненависть к вере, 83), which he takes to be clear indicators of the steadily eroding fabric of Russian society, of its internal strife, corruption and lack of unity. For our own purposes, we may observe that the second entry, where Tuberozov recounts how he is reprimanded as a young, newly ordained priest by the bishop for alluding in his sermons to real life, points to his preoccupation with style and the various means of expression: […] дабы в проповедях прямого отношения к жизни делать опасался, особливо же насчет чиновников, ибо от них-де чем дальше, тем и освященнее. (30).[19] The quoting of these semi-ironic, admonitory words reflects a certain homiletic standard by which the Archpriest measures his pastoral work. As we shall see, the problem of religious "naturalness" and the urge to communicate the ideals of Russian culture's pervasive spirituality (*dukhovnost'*), lie at the core of a whole sequence of confrontations that he describes: between those who *genuinely* cherish their faith and those who pay lip-service: кои официально за нее заступаются. (83).[20]

In this process, Tuberozov tends to confront the corruption of moral and religious ideals in Imperial Russia with an idea of genuine Russianness, the stress being on religious sensibility, on the values of simplicity, sincerity and sensitivity (*prostota, iskrennost', chuvstvitel'nost'*). For instance, his all-sacrificing wife and the town's simpleton and latter day Holy Fool (*iurodivyi)* are both portrayed as bearers of the Russian Orthodox tradition, of what he terms the *staraia skazka* (literally, "the old fairy-tale").[21] Both characters emerge as innocent personifications of an imaginary, "tender-hearted *Rus*'" (мягкосердечная Русь, 36) of bygone days, but also as natural evidence of "our being constantly transfigured" (всегдашнего себя преображения, 36), that is, of the spiritual importance of ordinary, everyday life (*byt*). When Tuberozov is reprimanded a second time by his superiors for having "improvised" a sermon

19 "[…] so that I took care in my sermons not to make direct references to real life, especially with regard to the officials, for the more one keeps away from them, the more pleasing to God it is."

20 "who officially defend it."

21 As Faith Wigzell (1985, p. 321) points out, the term *staraia skazka* defies adequate translation. Wigzell's suggestion "old fairytale" is to be preferred to Isabel F. Hapgood's rendering "old tradition," where the tone of enchantment inherent in the Russian word *skazka* is lost. Cf. N. Lyeskov (Leskov), 1971, *The Cathedral Folk*, trans. I.F. Hapgood, Westport, Conn., p. 197.

scandalously dedicated to a "live person" (живое лицо), he refuses to be a preacher working under duress: he cannot express himself through "rhetorical exercises" (риторические упражнения, 43) and insists on creating "living speech" (живая речь, 43). As seen in an apostrophe to contemporary writers and thinkers, the rhetoric of his narrative continues to be informed by a yearning for "real life" (Ах, сколь у нас везде всего живого боятся! 43)[22] and a wish to stress the relevance of the quotidian:

> Ведомо ли тебе, какую жизнь ведет русский поп, сей «ненужный человек» […]? Известно ли тебе, что мизерная жизнь сего попа не скудна, но весьма обильна бедствиями и приключениями, или не думаешь ли ты, что его кутейному сердцу недоступны благородные страсти и что оно не ощущает страданий? (57)[23]

As his anti-dogmatic crusade against the official Church unfolds, a stylistic juxtaposition is developed in the text between a positive and a negative sphere, and—its rhetorical corollary—between the genuine and the artificial:

> Воду прошед яко сушу и египетского зла избежав, пою Богу моему дондеже есмь. Что это со мной было? Что такое я вынес и как я изо всего этого вышел на свет Божий? Любопытен я весьма, что делаешь ты, сочинитель басен, баллад, повестей и романов, не усматривая в жизни, тебя окружающей, нитей, достойных вплетения в занимательную для чтения баснь твою? Или тебе, исправитель нравов человеческих, и вправду нет никакого дела до той действительной жизни, которою живут люди, а нужны только претексты для празднословных рацей? (57)[24]

22 "Ah, how we fear everything which is alive!"

23 "Do you know what sort of a life is led by a Russian priest, that "useless man" […]? Is it known to you that the wretched life of that priest is not wanting but abounding in disasters and adventures, or perhaps you think that noble passions are inaccessible to his consecrated heart, and that it feels no sufferings?" Incidentally, Tuberozov's ironic use of the word *kuteinyi* ("consecrated"), a comic or derogatory sobriquet for members of the clergy (Dal', 1955, vol. 2, p. 227), is a perfect example of his doublevoicedness, or, in this case, of his quasi-direct discourse, where he is indirectly quoting the language of a disrespectful lay reader.

24 "I have passed over the sea dry-shod, and I have escaped the malice of the Egyptians,

In paraphrasing the words of the prophet Isaiah and Psalm 104, the Archpriest sees a parallel between his own plight as a struggling Archpriest ("I [have] come out of it into the light of God") and the lofty mission of the two biblical figures ("I have passed over the sea dry-shod […] I will sing praises to my God as long as I live").[25] It is important here that Moses is not only a majestic leader and lawmaker, who guides his wandering people towards the Promised Land, but also the person who communicates most intimately with God.[26] Similarly, the sacred songs of King David are an expression of faith in national salvation within a larger divine scheme as well as of personal joy and sorrow. In alluding to the two heroes of the Bible, whilst, at the same time, exhorting Russian writers of literary fiction to avoid "empty-worded lectures" and to pay heed to "the actual life which people live," the Archpriest brings together the "official" scriptural text and his own "unofficial" text in such a way that the real-life relevance of both is highlighted. As a consequence, he himself emerges as an advocate of genuineness and sincerity, as a bearer of that great old Russian tradition which he is prone to ascribe to his wife and to the town simpleton.

However, the dual "pre-text" of a prophet well known for his condemnation of religious hypocrisy and moral corruption on the one hand, and of a king who repeatedly succumbs to wordly temptations on the other, challenges the intended intertextuality. Especially so, since the allusion to Moses as a model leader is also dubious: the fact that Moses' wish to be shown the divine glory of God's face is never fulfilled,[27] indicates a case of somewhat unsatisfactory communication. Considering that the Archpriest aspires throughout his life to preach a "natural" faith to his

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therefore I will sing praises to my God as long as I live. What is this that has happened to me? What have I endured, and how have I come out of it into the light of God? I'm very curious to know what you do, you writer of fables, ballads, stories and novels, if you cannot find, in the life which surrounds you, any threads worthy of being plaited together into a readable fable? Or you, reformer of human morals, are you really not concerned with the actual life people live, but need only pretexts for empty-worded lectures?"

25 Is. 11:15–16, Ps. 104:33, Is. 2:5.

26 "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (*И говорил Господь с Моисеем лицем к лицу, как бы говорил кто с другом своим*, Ex. 33:9–11). Hereafter, all quotations are from the Authorized Version.

27 Ex. 33:23. My thanks to Ingunn Lunde for drawing my attention to this point.

countrymen (христианство еще на Руси не проповедано, 59)[28] but only too often resigns himself to trivia and spiritual indifference, the significance of the parallel as "intertext" lies primarily in the production of semantic difference. The ambiguous composition of mythic naturalness is reinforced with the arrival of the new deacon, Akhilla Desnitsyn, who appeals immediately to the Archpriest and his ideal of "a very heartfelt sincerity" (весьма добрая искренность, 68).

Racing around like a Kirghiz horseman, the "Cossack-like deacon" (казаковатый дьякон, 65) steals, fights, and lashes out; he bestows unwarranted blessings on the parishoners, teaches children absurdist verse to be performed for the town mayor, acts in a scandalous amateur play, and, to top it all, sings in a Polish Catholic choir. Although he ends up condoning the behaviour of his factotum, Tuberozov finds it difficult to accept fully such uncontrolled levity. An interesting tension now emerges in the text as the mythopoetic line is blurred between the natural responsiveness to feelings—which Tuberozov attributes to the Deacon (Сколь детски близок этот Ахилла к природе, и сколь все его в ней занимает!.. 75)[29]—and the emotional, yet highly mundane, "propensities"—which underlie the outrageous actions of "his Achilles" (живые наклонности моего любезного Ахиллеса, 69). Given that the Archpriest is constantly subjected to ridicule and degradation, the craziness of the larger-than-life Deacon reflects back on him, upsetting the more ambitious side of his aspirations—both personal, as a husband, friend, and Christian fellow being striving for self-improvement, and social, as a "useless Russian priest" struggling for the religious reform of both his own parish and Imperial Russia as a whole.

The ambiguousness of the Deacon in the context of myth-making is modified with the homecoming of one of the Archpriest's worst enemies, the young seminarian Varnava Prepotenskii.[30] Through a series of anecdotes, Tuberozov describes how the "nihilist" cynically corrupts schoolchildren with foreign ideas, conspires with other scheming

28 "Christianity has not yet been preached in Russia."

29 "How childishly close to nature is this Akhilla, and how he is absorbed by everything in it!.."

30 A similar ambiguity is identified by Konstantin Kedrov, who holds that the deacon is both a mythic "ancient Achilles" and a contemporary, "simple-hearted Akhilla," one *mask* not being recognizable without the other. Konstantin Kedrov, 1983, "Fol'klornomifologicheskie motivy v tvorchestve N.S. Leskova," *V mire Leskova*, ed. V. Bogdanov, Moscow, pp. 60–61.

"free-thinkers" in the town, socializes disgracefully with Polish officials, even condemns the Empire's expansion in Poland. Severe disapproval and outrage underlie the Archpriest's account of how the "enlightener" (просветитель, 74) boils the bones of a drowned man "in the interests of enlightenment" (в интересах просвещения, 82). Just as the Deacon is described as a trusted friend in terms of idealized old "Russian" virtues, so the seminarian is represented in the image of the traditional demonized arch-enemy—"teacher of filth" (научитель пакостей, 73); "the foe/Satan" (супостат, 73); "venomous enemy/Devil" (ехидный враг, 74). Typically, whilst local discord is a driving force behind the myth-making movements of his storytelling, Tuberozov interprets people and events "antithetically" by opposing the emotional to the rational, the familiar to the foreign.

If we turn for a moment to the primary narrator's rendering of the confrontations in Stargorod, the cathedral folk seem to emerge as truly heroic only when they are trying to maintain the rituals of the daily grind, family life and local community as the most important imperatives. Any challenge to the familiar routines and idyllic way of living provokes a strong counter-reaction. (As already indicated, prime references to such simple heroism abound in the diary representation of Tuberozov's matrimonial life.) However, in order to vary the monotony of their provincial existence, the main heroes are frequently engaged in noisy disputes or, in the words of the chronicler, "scenes of slight enmity and misunderstanding" (сцены легкой вражды и недоразумений, 11). In the case of Akhilla, there is an heroic dimension to most of his "scandalous battles," all of which stem from the trivia of everyday interaction.

One such battle involves three walking-sticks donated to the cathedral staff by the local Marshal of the Nobility. Two of the sticks have golden heads, signifying the rank of priests, the other has a silver head, and is meant for the Deacon. To the latter, this social distinction does not go down well: вы сами знаете… отец Савелий… он умница, философ, министр юстиции, а теперь, я вижу, и он ничего не может сообразить и смущен, и даже страшно смущен. (12).[31] Harmony is temporarily restored, however, when Tuberozov takes steps to make the sticks more

31 "you know yourselves… Father Savelii… he's a clever man, a philosopher, a minister of justice, but now I perceive that he cannot understand anything and that he's confused—greatly confused in fact."

suitably hierarchical, confiscating Akhilla's altogether and having his own and Father Benefaktov's inscribed with appropriately different scriptural quotations.[32] While reflecting the outspoken vanity of the Deacon as well as the Archpriest's own conceit (Это был образчик мелочности, обнаруженной на старости лет протопопом Савелием, 19),[33] Akhilla's behaviour in the Battle of the Staffs is important. The incident marks an early stage in the representation of his spiritual development and, as will become clear in a later chapter, it contributes to a strengthening of the "Russian" father-son alliance between the two men.

A different kind of battle originates in Akhilla's fury over the human bones that are carried off by the schoolteacher Varnava for educational purposes. Unable to tolerate this deviation from church rules, the Deacon's impulsive mind is set on giving the deceased body a Russian Orthodox funeral. Amounting to little more than a squabble between two juvenile pranksters, this protracted anecdote has, however, clear symbolic implications: reflecting the nineteenth-century antagonism between science and religion, atheism and Christianity, Akhilla's "feud" develops into a war of heroic proportions within the habitual world of his home town (Перебью вас, еретики! 121).[34] This dissonant mingling of ideological "sounds" or voices is carried to unpleasant lengths, only to reach its climax in a carnivalized "public scandal" (публичный скандал, 129): the Deacon-*bogatyr'* ends up chasing "a devil" (черт, 306) who desecrates Tuberozov's grave, unaware that this is the vagrant Danilka in disguise. Representing a non-Russian cultural intrusion of both internal and external origin, the Battle of the Bones introduces such characters as the scheming town ladies Mme Biziukina and the Postmaster's wife, as well as the most potent of the urban "intruders," the atheist and ex-revolutionary civil servant Ishmael Termosesov. The chronicler's portrayal of Russian everyday heroism fuses great virtue with trivial vice, the lofty with the lowly, as local discord plays an important role in "the great Stargorod

32 The paraphrased quotations both refer to Israel as God's chosen people: "For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (Ex. 7:12); and, "[…] behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and blossoms, and yielded almonds" (Num. 17:8ff).

33 "This was a specimen of the pettiness displayed, in his old age, by Archpriest Savelii."

34 "I'll kill you, you heretics!"

drama, which constitutes the theme of our chronicle" (великая старогородская драма, составляющая предмет нашей хроники, 23).[35]

Meaning in-between styles/texts/cultures

The depiction of Varnava's "un-Russian" provocations takes on additional meaning when viewed in the light of the many diary references to the Marshal of the Nobility as "this Voltairian of mine" (вольтерянин-то мой, 76). In the heat of the battle, Tuberozov demands from his collaborator ("a man of this land, not a hireling, and who will [therefore] take pity on it"; человек земли, а не наемщик, и пожалеет ее, 75) that the seminarian be reprimanded. As his problems are greeted with sympathy but little action, his tone becomes more ironical: Сей Туганов, некогда чтитель Вольтера, заговорил со мною с грустью и в наидруженнейшем тоне (80).[36] Then, he seems to recognize insincerity and indifference in the Marshal's speech: Какая сухменность в этих словах, но я уже не воздражал… Что уж делать! Боже! помози ты хотя *сему неверию*, а то взаправду не доспеть бы нам до табунного скитания, пожирания корней и конского ржания. (80).[37] His attitude towards "Voltairian" thinking and to other forms of foreign, or Western, influence is, of course, far from unequivocal.

Further evidence of Tuberozov's ambivalence towards reason and rationality emerges in his appetite for illegal books, which he, interestingly, has to borrow from his enemies, from Polish and German government officials. One example of such *unofficial* literature are the memoirs of the eighteenth-century Russian woman intellectual, Princess Dashkova ("I agree with Mme Dashkova on many points"; с мнениями Дашковой во многом я согласен, 64); the fact that Tuberozov has read Dashkova also points to his taste for *Francophone* Russian literature. More importantly, his clandestine reading includes the "nonconformist" writer Laurence Sterne:

35 D.S. Mirsky (1949, p. 316) stresses the humorous aspect of Leskovian heroism: "[…] the more heroic his heroes, the more humorously he treats them. This humorous hero worship is Leskov's most original feature."

36 "This Tuganov, who used to be an admirer of Voltaire, talked to me sorrowfully, and in the most friendly tone."

37 "What lifelessness in these words! But I made no objection anyway… What can be done? O, God! Help Thou but *this unbelief*, or in truth, we shall end up a wandering horde, devouring roots, and neighing like horses."

> Припоминая невольно давно читанную мною старую книжечку английского писателя, остроумнейшего пастора Стерна, под заглавием «Жизнь и мнения Тристрама Шанди», и заключаю, что по окончании у нас сего патентованного нигилизма ныне начинается *шандиизм* […] которое, по Стернову определению, «растворяет сердце и легкие и вертит очень быстро многосложное колесо жизни». И что меня еще более убеждает в том, что Русь вступила в фазу шандиизма, так это то, что сей Шанди говорил: «Если бы мне, как Санхе-Пансе, дали бы выбирать для себя государство, то я выбрал бы себе не коммерческое и не богатое, а такое, в котором бы непрестанно как в шутку, так и всерьез смеялись». (80)[38]

In quoting the life and opinions of two foreign, non-Orthodox novelists (Sterne, Cervantes) to back up his "conclusion" with regard to the state of affairs in present-day Russia, Tuberozov blends together a variety of stylistic levels. Thus the register of Russian apocalypticism ("nihilism is at an end […] Shandyism is commencing"; "*Rus*' has entered upon the phase […]") *and* the references to the witticisms of "the Reverend Sterne" are linked to the Russian priest's conviction concerning the moral frivolousness of his own people. Rhetorically, we might say that he resorts to the style and ideas of the enlightened English writer with the purpose of identifying the ills of the Empire as well as of describing his own predicament within it. In spite of his clear prediction that one non-Russian evil ("nihilism") will be followed by another (Shandyism)—and that these elements hamper the revival of Russian moral rectitude—Tuberozov's understanding of the nation's future originates, intertextually, *in between* a multitude of opposing ways of understanding culture and the world: sincere-artificial, emotional-rational, foreign-Russian, official-unofficial, Orthodox-non-Orthodox, Western-Eastern, and so on. Consequently,

38 "I suddenly remember a little old book which I read long ago, by an English writer, the witty Reverend Sterne, entitled The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, and I draw the conclusion that now that licensed nihilism is at an end with us, the day of Shandyism is beginning […] which, according to Sterne's definition, 'opens the heart and lungs, and makes the wheel of life run very fast'. And what further convinces me that Rus' has entered upon the phase of Shandyism, is what Shandy says: 'Was I left like Sancho Panza, to choose my kingdom, I would not choose either a mercantile or a wealthy one, no, it should be a kingdom where people were incessantly laughing, both in jest and in earnest.'"

whilst the Archpriest's interpretation complies with the usual antithetical pattern, his favourite myth of Russia's unique place in history, and, ultimately, his idea of himself as a defender of unique "Russian" values, is no longer unshakeable, but is punctured and tends towards decomposition.

In the subsequent entries, Tuberozov gives his version of how the Russian epic hero (*bogatyr'*) Akhilla takes it upon himself to combat the "madness" (безумие, 75) of the seminarian Varnava.[39] The latter has now made the bones into a skeleton and hung it up in his window, directly "opposite the sanctuary of the Church of St Nikita" (против алтаря Никитской церкви, 82). This is particularly distressing to his mother, "my widow of Nain" (моя вдовица наинская, 118), as Tuberozov brands her:

> Бедная и вполне несчастливая женщина эта молилась, плакала и, на коленях стоя, просила сына о даровании ей сего скелета для погребения […] в отсутствие сына […] закопала эти кости под тою же апортовою яблонью, под которую вылито Варнавкой разваренное тело несчастливца. Но […] ученый сынок обратно их оттуда ископал, и началась […] новая история, еще по сие время не оконченная […] Похищали они эти кости друг у дружки до тех пор, пока мой дьякон Ахилла […] взялся сие прекратить и так немешкотно приступил к исполнению этой своей решимости, что я не имел никакой возможности его удержать и обрезонить, и вот точно какое-то предощущение меня смущает, как бы из этого пустяка не вышло какой-нибудь вредной глупости для людей путных. (82–83)[40]

39 Akhilla is frequently referred to as *bogatyr'*, a hero from Russian folklore (86, 298, 304).

40 "This poor and utterly miserable woman prayed, wept, and besought her son upon her knees that he give her that skeleton for burial […] during her son's absence, she […] interred the bones under the same Oporto apple tree under which Varnavka had poured out the boiled body of the unhappy man. But […] her learned son dug them up again, and a new story began, which to this very day has not ended […] They kept stealing these bones from each other, until my Deacon Akhilla […] undertook to put an end to the whole matter, and proceeded so promptly to the execution of his resolution, that I had no possibility whatsoever of holding him back and bringing him to reason. And now I'm troubled by some kind of foreboding, as if a stupid act that may injure sensible people will be the result of this trivial affair." According to Dal's dictionary (1955, vol. 1, p. 20), Oporto apples were a specially large and luscious desert variety and, by connotation, of the Hesperidian-paradisical kind.

There is, to continue in a Sternean vein, a striking resemblance between the larger-than-life Deacon of the diary and the expansive Uncle Toby of *Tristram Shandy*. In view of the former's incredible fighting form and the latter's burlesque military career (in fact, he would not hurt a fly), both emerge as innocent soldiers in an incongruous Theatre of War. Just as Uncle Toby learns "the truth" about womankind—when Widow Wadman shows an interest in his crotch, he takes this at first to be a sign of great compassion—so too Akhilla is fooled into drunkenness by his "nihilist" adversaries. Similarly, both characters are described in terms of a metaphorical musicality; it is as if Toby's habit of whistling *Lillabullero* whenever something particularly tries his temper or understanding has rubbed off on the depiction of Akhilla, whose *basso profundo* rings out whenever the emotional stress seems to become to intense for him.

However, with this productive anecdote ("and a new story began […]"), the myth-making movements of the diary text have become more complicated. The Archpriest's appeal to the Deacon's faculty for rational argument ("bring to reason") juxtaposed with the "learnedness" of the widow's son, raises doubt about the positive myth of Russian religious sensibility. With his half-crazy "resolution," Akhilla may appear to be an expression of Russianness, and the boisterous, frivolous Varnava the embodiment of foreignness, "an empty, but harmful man" (пустой, но вредный человек, 81), but actually *both* men are involved in the same trivial *pustiak*, The Battle of the Bones, thus falling into the category of "incessantly laughing" people. In Tuberozov's account of this local scandal, the collaborator and the antagonist exemplify jointly the "new success of buffoonery" (шутовства новое преуспеяние, 80), which contradicts his idea of a Russian "natural" and heartfelt sincerity.

On the level of stylistic mingling, the ambiguousness of the Deacon and the seminarian point to the tension between two "psychic tendencies"[41] in Russian cultural mythology, the creative potential of which underlies the diary text as a whole: religious maximalism and secular scepticism. While the maximalist streak in Tuberozov's text is best sensed in the dominant myth of eschatology, or in "the sense of an ending,"[42] the

41 David M. Bethea, 1998, "Literature," *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, ed. N. Rzhevsky, Cambridge, pp. 162ff.

42 Denoting different modes of apocalyptic thought, this apt phrase is taken from Frank Kermode's book, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, New York, 1967,

scepticism comes to the fore in the voice of social conscience, or of conscientious opposition to the Empire's *status quo*. Again, the Archpriest fluctuates between two stylistic tendencies, or worldviews, so that his self-structuring is permanently wedged in a no-man's-land between a multitude of cultures and ideologies. In turn, this conflict indicates a semantic openness which is already present in the early entries where his two homiletic ideals are expressed, genuineness of feeling and the relevance of the quotidian:

> Какая огромная радость! Ксендзы по Литве […] проповедуют против пьянства […] Ах, как бы хотелось в сем роде проповедничать! […Я] говорил бы по мысли Кирилла Белозерского, како: «крестьяне ся пропивают, а души гибнут». Но как проповедовать без цензуры не смею, то хочу интригой учредить у себя общество трезвости. Что делать, за неволю и патеру Игнатию Лойоле следовать станешь, когда прямою дорогой ходу нет. (65–66)[43]

Tuberozov's readiness to improvise "some underhand way" makes him refer to the down-to-earth wisdom of a venerated Russian Orthodox monastery elder (*starets*) on the one hand,[44] and to the pragmatism of Polish Catholic priests on the other. More importantly, as he follows the example of the "enlightened" Jesuit founder in order to avoid official censorship, the semantic and cultural experiences accumulated within the heterogeneous stylistic levels—which all represent different voices co-present within Imperial Russia—are interchanged and contaminate one another. We might say that the confrontation of cultures in Tuberozov's diary is brought about syncretically by the novel's structuring mecha-

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which explores the relationship of fiction to the age-old conceptions of chaos and crisis.

43 "What immense joy! The Polish Catholic priests in Lithuania […] are preaching against drunkenness […] Ah, how I would like to preach in that fashion! […] I would have spoken on a text by Kirill of Belozersk: 'The peasants drink, and their souls perish'. But as I dare not preach like that without permission from the censor, I'll think of some underhand way of setting up a temperance society here. What am I to do? When one cannot proceed by the direct road, willy-nilly, one must follow the example of Father Ignatius Loyola."

44 As for the practical slant of Kirill of Belozersk's edificatory writings, he is described as "a man, not only sensible, but also sufficiently educated and with a good command of his native language." Metropolitan Makarii (Bulgakov), 1995, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, Moscow, vol. 3, p. 290.

nisms as a whole (myth-making, idyllization, multiethnic processing and the adaptation of Christian texts). In turn, in this crossing between the official and the unofficial, myths are made and unmade, while every rigid notion of national superiority is counteracted. As will become clear, the activation in the priest's text of an outside, non-Russian cultural reservoir contributes to the establishing of a transformed, albeit non-permanent, neo-Russian culture, which comes into being especially "when one cannot proceed by the direct road."

As regards the primary narrative, "the great Stargorod drama" is brought to a climax with the incorporation into the text of the Archpriest's fiery sermon, the ensuing controversy that leads to his downfall, his lengthy sequestration, the loss of his wife, and, finally, his own death. It is significant here that the chronicler too may be viewed in relation to mythopoeia and mythic decomposition, or more precisely as the reflection of Tuberozov's tendency to mythologize. Like the medieval annalists, the chronicler seems to be guided by a divine and incomprehensible salvational scheme which informs his "historical" tales, and therefore pays little heed to the explicatory burden of evidence.[45] Towards the end of his life, the Archpriest has the Deacon move in with him:

> Так они и остались жить вдвоем: Аилла служил в церкви и домовничал, а Туберозов сидел дома, читал Джона Буниана, думал и молился […] Он действительно все *собирался* и жил усиленной и сосредоточенною жизнью самоповеряющего себя духа. (274)[46]

Although the two are typically described in Orthodox eldership terms as spiritual father and son, the Archpriest's turning to the spiritual allegories of John Bunyan[47] signals another passing beyond the bounds of the

45 This type of chronicler has taken on a secularized guise: in question is less the accurate linking up of individual events, and more the manner in which these are arranged and represented, the tendency being towards interpretation and semantic openness. Cf. Benjamin, 1992, p. 95.

46 "And so they remained and dwelt the two of them together: Akhilla served in the church and kept house, while Tuberozov sat at home, read John Bunyan, meditated and prayed […] He was *preparing himself* and lived the intensified and concentrated life of self-verifying spirit."

47 With his Puritan allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1677), John Bunyan offended the establishment as well as alarmed his co-religionists by his bold disregard for sectarian protocol. More importantly, the edifying author conceives of Christians as spiritual

Russian Orthodox tradition. Like Tuberozov, this Protestant lay clergyman attempted zealously to solve the personal problems of his troubled congregation, whilst being repeatedly confined by high officials for his subversive preaching. On the level of the text, the constant transgression in terms of rhetoric and styles reaches another high point when the Deacon leaves domesticity in the cathedral town for the Synod in St Petersburg as part of the bishop's entourage. Inserted into the main narrative like the diary, his letters to Tuberozov are "orginal and strange, no less than the whole cast of his life and thought" (оригинальные и странные, не менее чем весь склад его мышления и жизни, 274).

Akhilla's communications are full of contradictory elements. On the one hand, he admits to melancholy and homesickness, recognizing his own lack of education as well as his superior's provincial ignorance (вы этого, по своей провинциальности, не поймете, 275). On the other, he recounts how he is "sincerely reconciled" (искренно […] примирился, 276) with Varnava, who has become the editor of a St Petersburg newspaper. It is interesting that the Deacon sympathizes with his former enemy, partly because the latter is "cruelly unhappy" (жестоко несчастливый, 276), partly because he has been apparently transformed into a different, more devout man (готов бы даже за Бога в газете заступиться, 276).[48] As soon as Akhilla is reunited with Tuberozov back in Stargorod, he continues his stylistic mingling in the form of a storytelling frenzy: это все выходило пестро, громадно и нескладно […] Ахилла кстати и некстати немилосердно уснащал свою речь самыми странными словами […] (277).[49]

Then, with a sensitivity to style and rhetoric similar to that of the main hero, the chronicler describes how the Archpriest at first listens to the Deacon's anecdotes "with tender emotions" (с умилением, 278), only to lose his patience, appalled at the excess of language: "Why have you learned to insert such empty words?" (Зачем ты такие пустые слова научился вставлять? 278). In responding spontaneously to the Deacon's "mixed, vast and incoherent" speech, Tuberozov must relate to the "un-Russian" artificiality of a person to whom he is attached (consider the

wanderers, which is close to how Tuberozov sees himself in his own life.

48 "Prepared to stand up for God in the paper."

49 "it all came out mixed, vast and incoherent […] Akhilla, opportunely and inopportunely, adorned his speech mercilessly with the strangest possible words […]."

similar diary description of Varnava as an insincere person, "empty, but harmful"), but also to Akhilla's confession that he has become an atheist:

> —Что ты врешь, Ахилла! Ты добрый мужик и христианин: перекрестись! что ты это сказал?
>
> —Что же делать? Я ведь, голубчик, и сам этому не рад, но против хвакта не попрешь.
>
> —Что за «хвакт» еще? что за факт ты открыл?
>
> —Да это, отец Савелий… зачем вас смущать? *Вы себе читайте свою Буниану и веруйте в своей простоте*, как и прежде сего веровали.
>
> —*Оставь ты моего Буниана и не заботься о моей простоте*, а посуди, что ты на себя говоришь?
>
> —Что же делать? хвакт!—отвечал, вздохнув, Ахилла. (278–79)[50]

According to the chronicler, the Archpriest is extremely provoked by the results of the "enlightenment" the Deacon has acquired in St Petersburg (петербургская просвещенность, 279). Whereas Akhilla dismisses both the English Protestant writer and the Russian Orthodox ideal of simplicity ("You read your Bunyan, and believe in your simplicity"), Tuberozov is actually defending both of these ("Let my Bunyan alone, and don't you worry about my simplicity")—before the person whom he has earlier identified negatively with the former, and positively with the latter. Here the syncretism of Akhilla's speech upsets the mythopoetic function of the overarching rhetorical principle in Tuberozov's "maximalist" text, the juxtaposition of antitheses, in such a way that the relationship between the traditional binaries old/new, Russian/non-Russian and true/false, remains ambiguous. The Archpriest then attempts, gradually, to "deurbanize" the Deacon by means of instruction:

50 "'What lies you are telling, Akhilla! You are a good Russian man and Christian: cross yourself! Why did you say this?'/'But what can I do? You see, my dear friend, I'm not happy about it myself, but you can't flout the khvakt'./'And what is this "khvakt"? What "fact" have you discovered?'/'Well, yes, Father Savelii […] why should I embarrass you? You read your Bunyan, and believe in your simplicity, as you have hitherto believed'./'Let my Bunyan alone, and don't you worry about my simplicity, but consider what you are saying, compromising yourself'./'What can I do? It's a khvakt!'—Akhilla answered with a sigh."

—Стань поскорей и помолись!

Ахилла опустился на колени.

—Читай: «Боже, очисти мя грешного и помилуй мя»,—произнес Савелий и, проговорив это, сам положил первый поклон.

Ахилла вздохнул и вслед за ним сделал то же. (281)[51]

In describing how the two men, arms linked, walk out of the house and into the wintry night, the primary narrator thus contributes to the mythopoetic process, or rather to a reaffirmation of Orthodox faith: pointing to the cross of the provincial cathedral, where both men have served so long at the altar, Tuberozov commands Akhilla to repent of his sins and then joins his soulmate: Проповедник и кающийся молились вместе. (281).[52] Although the two clergymen may be depicted as brothers with arms locked and legs out of step, and their relationship modelled on a "marriage of opposites" (as seen in the pairing of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, or, indeed, of Uncle Toby and Walter Shandy), the chronicler's main concern is to render accessible the message of Orthodoxy, or rather to synchronize the Christian faith with the attitudes of his contemporaries.

Complexity in simplicity or, a "Russian" Russia

In this initial chapter, we have discussed the aesthetic function of verbal compositeness within Leskov's prosaics, what we referred to in the Introduction as a stylistics of confrontation. I have looked at the first of four characteristic strategies, the various myth-making movements which, underlying the chronicle-novel's "mosaic," form a highly ambiguous depiction of life in the Russian provinces.[53] Harmony is always disturbed by an un-Russian disharmony. As we have seen, the mingling of styles may be explained in terms of an intertextual confrontation engendered by this mythopoetic activity. Here the stories of Tuberozov, Akhilla

51 "'Begin at once to pray!'/Akhilla went down on his knees./'Recite: "O God! Cleanse thou me, a sinner, and have mercy upon me,"' said Savelii, and having uttered this, made the first bow to the ground himself. Akhilla sighed and did the same after him."

52 "The preacher and the penitent prayed together."

53 Although Mirsky-Zayas (1994, pp. 81–82) ascribes to Leskov's fiction "a multi-layered and multi-dimensional quality, where interpretations of the text are supplied by many subtexts," she does not pursue the meaning potential of myth-making in terms of intertextuality and stylistic confrontation.

and the chronicler can be said to be *styled* by way of syncretism, or to be more precise: by the semantic and cultural experience that accumulates within the heterogeneous styles. In fact, the Archpriest and the Deacon emerge as examples of hybrid consciousness; their "confrontational" speech contributes to new meanings created in between styles and texts in the novel as a whole. *Cathedral Folk* may thus be construed as an aesthetic expression of complexity in simplicity, a rendering of motley provinciality in a manner that is anything but unreadable.

By seeking out the stylistics of confrontation in this way, we discover that the making and un-making of national myths in the novel imply two kinds of cultural meaning potential that are alternately developed: concretion and accumulation, dispersion and fragmentation.[54] Ideas of Russian grandeur and superiority are inflated and deflated, Russianness is never only Russian. In turn, the text's possibility of repeatedly transgressing rhetorical boundaries motivates a number of different readings of people and society in Imperial Russia that suspend monologized or official truth. As the splitting of singular meaning is an essential trait on all the levels of the primary narrator's storytelling, the effect of the myth-making movements would seem to be that "Russian" culture never comes to rest; indeed, because the syncretic text refuses to reproduce any culture, culture as such cannot congeal or take on any definite contours but must exist within a multiplicity of many conflicting, neighbouring cultures. The same inconclusiveness applies to the invention of the imperfect idyll, a styling strategy which is embedded in the novel's language of feeling.

54 Both aspects of meaning-production are implied in Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogicity.

Idyllizing the Russian Provinces

> I too began to sing, and in my rapture, fell to weeping with emotion. In those healing tears, I alleviated my vexations, and realized how stupid was my grief, and for a long time thereafter I was lost in amazement at the wonderful way in which Nature heals the ills of the human soul!

By the second half of the nineteenth century, many Russian writers were seeking to answer the so-called "accursed questions" hoping to revitalize their Orthodox belief in the direction of a less dogmatic, more "natural" Christianity. Thus joining the Russian tradition of (heterodox) lay theology, they would represent religious problems in fictional literature in such a manner that conceptions of faith were creatively transposed into "realist" literature. Theological principles such as regeneration, resurrection, and a New Life were openly developed in stories and novels that no longer wished to represent merely the love between human beings, but a transcendent aspect to this love, aspiring to overcome death. Although in this process, the (pre)romantic sentimentalist shift from "head to heart" played a substantial role, Russian realist prose instigated its own version of *Empfindsamkeit* which was nurtured, stylistically and rhetorically, by the edificatory writings of the *Philokalia*. Intended for lay people living in the world as well as for monks, this "neo-Hesychast" anthology of early Christian and medieval texts combined the ascetic and mystical with the corporate and social aspect of monastic life. In particular, it laid emphasis on the idea of the heart as the embodiment of the whole person, comprising both intellect, will and emotions; on the practice of the continual "prayer of the heart," which was offered spontaneously by the whole of one's being; and, on the need for obedience to a *starets* or elder, to whom

the "spiritual son" (*dukhovnyi syn*) could reveal each of his thoughts.[1] It is precisely elements of the Hesychast tradition which inform Leskov's texts of the early 1870s: the values of emotionality, or the spontaneity of feelings, shape the representation of contemporary Russian characters, whose spiritual power to observe and understand life in its simple everyday manifestations is often idealized as a specifically Russian trait (consider *dukhovnost'*).[2] In this light, the strategy of imperfect idyllization has an intriguing effect in *Cathedral Folk* on the level of cultural meaning.

A language of feeling

I propose to focus on one salient feature of Leskov's texts, the critical opinion of which includes everything from praise to pity: that is, his sentimental mode of writing.[3] Here Victor Terras' description of his narrative prose as "funny, entertaining, moving, and wholesomely sentimental"[4] is actually quite useful, as it points to the competitive relationship between the power of arousing pity or sorrow (pathos) and of sudden ludicrous descents from the elevated to the commonplace (bathos), which is typical of the writer's humorous hero-worship.[5] However, to my mind, the degree of sentimentality as such, of indulging excessively in or appealing directly to emotions, seems less important than the rhetorical implications of the sentimental dimension in Leskov's fictional universe. Before embarking upon our analysis, it will be instructive to pay due attention to

1 Timothy Ware, 1997, *The Orthodox Church*, London, pp. 117ff.

2 Margaret Ziolkowski has observed that the rendering of the people's *love of simplicity* in its holy men is characteristic of Leskov's fiction. Consider the narrator in "The Little Things in a Bishop's Life" (*Melochi arkhiereiskoi zhizni*, 1878–79): "Popular memory preserves the names of "simple and very simple" prelates and not of the magnificent and important. In general our people never consider the "unsimple" (*neprostye*) either righteous or God-pleasing. The Russian people like to look at splendour, but they respect simplicity" (N.S. Leskov, 1957, vol. 6, pp. 398–538). Margaret Ziolkowski, 1988, *Hagiography and Modern Russian Literature*, Princeton, p. 173.

3 For example, Stoliarova (1978, p. 86) writes about "the warmth of feeling" and "the emotional surplus" of the fictive heroes, linking the manifestation of emotions, especially of romantic feelings, to the Russian national character, while McLean (1977, pp. 120, 144) states that certain works "veer perilously close to sentimentality" or are "sentimental and lacking in psychological validity."

4 Terras, 1991, p. 363.

5 Mirsky, 1949, p. 316.

the primary setting not only of *Cathedral Folk*, but also of the other four core texts: the Russian provinces.[6]

In order to appear "real," and to take on the function of a memory site (*locus*), this non-urban setting must be recognized as distinctly Russian and provincial through well-established, easily remembered, descriptive features. The idea is to use certain topoi, which implement a mode of narration that is capable of evoking a social response, of creating an illusion that may be perceived by more than one reader. Rhetorically speaking, the sentimental dimension in Leskov's representation of life in the *uezdy* is thus geared towards the creation of an accessible fiction, capable of inspiring the reader's receptiveness and sympathetic disposition. Furthermore, it informs the attitude of the narrator in the storytelling process thus intensifying the emotional charge of the events narrated; the narrator does this not by modifying the manner or content of the narrative itself, but by leaning on the response of the reader to effect a more intense receptivity. In brief, the fictional world of the Russian provinces is designed to affect the reader's moral sensibility and yet it should give *the impression of* a truthful, unmanipulative representation of reality. We might speak of the sentimental dimension in Leskov's "realism" as a kind of fictionalizing impact-making.[7] Interestingly, this impact works not only in relation to the memorableness or "sociability" of the text as fiction, but also in relation to the tendency of groups or persons to live in communities and develop social links, as represented in the fictional text.

While Leskov's Russian heroes are particularly disposed to associate with their fellows, they are also compelled to form new and surprising alliances, be it in terms of class, religion or nationality. A striking example is Akhilla's reconciliation in St Petersburg with Varnava, the "impious" schoolteacher, or Tuberozov's socializing with members of the Polish Catholic community in Stargorod. In this sense, sociality is

6 I shall understand "the provinces" (*provintsiia*) less as a literal or concrete term, referring to clearly defined administrative and territorial units, and more as a kind of *metaphor*, capable of easily absorbing both contiguous and intersecting notions. In being thus enabled to acquire a much wider meaning, the word "provinces" will involve "a different stylistics, the laws of which allow it to accommodate almost the entire semantic spectrum associated with the ideas of Russian peripheral culture (*kul'tura russkoi periferii*)." Cf. L.O. Zaionts, 2000, "Provintsiia i provintsial'nost'," *Russkaia provintsiia: mif—tekst—real'nost'*, eds. A.F. Belousov & T.V. Tsiv'ian, Moscow, p. 19.

7 For various kinds of "impact-making," see Wolfgang Iser, 1989, *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*, Baltimore, pp. 262–84.

always a controlling influence on Leskov's manner of writing,[8] which is committed to the resources of a *language of feeling* in order to represent necessary social bonds.[9] Far from being a facile indulgence, this mode of expression can be said to indicate the difficulty that a multicultural Empire has in imagining the nature of social relations. Hence the importance of Hesychast ideals, the notions of heartfelt sincerity and emotional response to deep and tender feeling (*umilenie*) that are so characteristic of the manner in which the fictive characters think, act and express themselves. In other words, Leskov's intention in moving the reader's heart through the use of provincial characters, appears to be to convey a sense of the moral beauty that affects the way human beings relate to one another across cultures and how they perceive these relations. As we shall see, the *idealization of responsiveness to emotion* in Leskov's texts seems to reflect, on the one hand, the "national romantic," affirmative notion that the simple people of the provinces share a "natural" Christian faith in the divine scheme; on the other hand, the case for emotional spontaneity implies the more critical view that non-urbanized man too has moved from a state of primeval innocence, virtue, happiness and freedom, to an enlightened and over-civilized society that is morally depraved. In this way, the realization of various "sentimentalist" figurations in the text contributes to a peculiar kind of affective verisimilitude,[10] the tensions in which ultimately guide our modern interpretation of Leskov's fiction in terms of anthropology.

The imperfections of the societal idyll

A book of both seriousness and laughter, *Cathedral Folk* depicts the ups and the downs in the everyday lives of a clerical trinity, the members of which are simple, ingenuous, caring, sharing a sense of affinity with surrounding nature, myths and traditions. As indicated by the opening

8 "Sociality" should be understood here in its most general meaning: as an innate human propensity, intellectual and emotional, for mutual engagement and mutual responsiveness. See Michael Carrithers, 1992, *Why Humans Have Cultures*: *Explaining Anthropology and Social Diversity*, Oxford, p. 55.

9 John Mullan, 1989, *Sentiment and Sociality: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, pp. 2ff.

10 I here use Michael Bell's term, which denotes "the unstable tensions within literalistically conceived fiction that has a manifest moral design upon its reader." See Michael Bell, 1983, *The Sentiment of Reality: Truth of Feeling in the European Novel*, London, p. 3.

pages, they lead their humdrum existence in a sleepy, little ultra-Russian town, far away from the urban societies of Moscow and St Petersburg. The initial appeal to the reader's imaginative powers, the use of the folk-colloquial *zhit'e-byt'e*, in the meaning of the daily grind or the quotidian, as well as the highlighting of the Archpriest's advanced age, strikes a nostalgic accent which serves as preparation for the narrative cohesion of the "chronicle" as a whole. By the same token, the quaint, slightly obsolete-sounding names of the two priests and the Deacon—Tuberozov, Benefaktov and Akhilla Desnitsyn—evoke respectively the fragrance of tuberose (Latin *tuberosa*), charity (*bene factus*) and loyal service (from the Church Slavonic *desnitsa*, "right hand"), thus alluding both to low clergy tradition[11] and to the world of the Scriptures. As a memory site, the "ideal Russian town" (идеальный русский город)[12] takes on symbolic value as a microcosm pointing to the glory of medieval *Rus'*, whilst the topos of the Cathedral, the *sobor*, signals the centrality of religious unity. In brief, the chronicler has established an associative field of traditionalism, ecclesiasticism and provinciality.

Typically, the ageing Tuberozov is presented to the reader as an attractive man whose head is "as handsome as handsome could be" (отлично красива, 5) and whose eyes have both a "capacity for lighting up with the presence of intellect" (способность освещаться присутствием разума, 6) and for yielding "a flash of joyous rapture, clouds of grief, and tears of emotion" (блеск радостного восторга, и туманы скорби, и слезы умиления, 6). The Archpriest and his fellow townsfolk aspire to social justice, truth and progress, though in their day-to-day interaction, so the chronicler tells us, they are striving to "to vary their life by those scenes of slight enmity and misunderstanding, which beneficially arouse the natures of men lulled by the inactivity of provincial existence" (разнообразить жизнь сценами легкой вражды и недоразумений, благодетельно будящими человеческие натуры, усыпляемые бездействием уездной жизни. 11). Amounting to little more than various ways of diverting themselves through "quarrelling in order to become reconciled" (ссорились для того, чтобы мириться, 129), such interaction permeates the representation of Tuberozov's parish: ночь в тихом городке рано соби-

11 Lennart Kjellberg, 1964, *Den klassiska romanens Ryssland*, Gothenburg, p. 152.

12 This is how the author himself describes the town of Stargorod (Leskov, 1956–57, vol. 10, p. 279).

рает всех в гнезда свои и на пепелища свои […] Из далеких лесов доносится благотворая свежесть. (23).[13]

Characteristic of the style of life depicted in the novel are the numerous references to rural "quietness" and "fresh" existence, which point to a fundamental *idyllizing vision* manifested in the different tonalities and different levels of narration. Bakhtin describes the provincial novel as a genre which is influenced by the idyll and therefore dominated by idyllized time and space (the idyllic "chronotope").[14] The same applies to *Cathedral Folk*, where Stargorod people and society are defined primarily by the unity of space; a blurring of all temporal boundaries contributes to the creation of a characteristically cyclical rhythm, the events of habitual life take on importance and acquire thematic significance, whilst the heroes are rural clergy, craftsmen, peasants and schoolteachers. To the extent that the modern reader recognizes life in the cathedral town as specifically Russian and provincial, we may infer that our response results from the impact of the sentimental dimension. If we "believe" in the religious sensibility of the characters portrayed and their stories, this is also an effect of the chronicler's *re-presentation* of Tuberozov's own emotionalized idyllization: запел и я себе от восторга и умиленно заплакал. В этих целебных слезах я облегчил мои досаждения и понял, сколь глупа была скорбь моя, и долго после дивился, как дивно врачует природа недуги души человеческой! (36).[15]

Covering more than 35 years of his life, Tuberozov's diary is animated by sensitivity throughout. The text is motivated by a distinct preoccupation with harmony, tender emotions, an affecting love of humankind, and an enlightened generosity. It is significant that although these properties fit well within the scheme of the sentimentalized idyll,[16] they come nowhere near an all-permeating, definitive poetic genre, but should be seen as recurring traces of such a genre, or, better still, as transformations

13 "night, in this quiet little town, gathers all to their nests and hearths at an early hour […] From the far-off forest wafts a beneficial freshness."

14 Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 224–42.

15 "I too began to sing, and in my rapture, fell to weeping with emotion. In those healing tears, I alleviated my vexations, and realized how stupid was my grief, and for a long time thereafter I was lost in amazement at the wonderful way in which Nature heals the ills of the human soul!"

16 Gitta Hammarberg, 1991, *From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin's Sentimentalist Prose*, Cambridge, p. 50.

or hybrid forms of the idyll in contrast to the idyll *senso stricto*. The idyll proper serves as a reservoir, out of which the idyllization can feed on different narrative levels, as it is constructed from topics originating from a traditional grammar of forms, imagery and stylistics. In this manner, idyllization in the novel becomes something variable and unstable.[17] In fact, it is highly ambiguous. For example, as a provincial hero opposing both the ecclesiastical and secular authorities, the Archpriest is also a courageous preacher who repeatedly breaks away from the enclosed world of his environment, an action which is mirrored by his pupil, the Deacon Akhilla, who sets off for the big city only to return to the bosom of the family where he resumes his parochial living. Given that the sentimental dimension is instrumental, above all, in the representation of the alienated individual, the tendency to idyllize the Russian provinces does not work without its contradictions. As a world-image turned aesthetic object, *the idyllic* here becomes an intellectual theme suited to various kinds of development and adaptation; or, to use Ernst Robert Curtius' definition, an "extended topos."[18] In the chronicle-novel's representation of provincial life, both feelings and ideas are treated within an idyllic macro-image of human society.

In his work on the idyllic as a way of organizing fictional reality, Virgil Nemoianu establishes the *societal model* as a compact, non-utopian microcosm, which is to a great extent isolated from the wide world outside.[19] Likewise, the world of Stargorod presents a secure and protected society in close contact with nature, though not subordinated to it or identified with it, the townsfolk simply following its rhythm on a human level. Since fertility, growth and slow obsolescence are part of the pattern of life, the idyllic universe is, as Nemoianu points out, sceptical of rush, violence, abnormal and oversized actions, seeking to keep the whole together by moving slowly. However, the interference between the micro-

17 Wolfgang Preisendanz, 1986, "Reduktionsformen des Idyllischen im Roman des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Flaubert, Fontane)," *Idylle und Modernisierung in der europäischen Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts*, eds. H.U. Seeber & P.G. Klussmann, Bonn, pp. 81–82, has shown how the idyll in the nineteenth-century narrative literature is a plotless text capable of appearing only as a partial aspect of represented reality, establishing a "semantic field" in the reality model of the text, which stands in opposition to other "semantic fields."

18 Ernst Robert Curtius, 1948, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*, Bern, p. 77.

19 Virgil Nemoianu, 1977, *Micro-Harmony: The Growth and Uses of the Idyllic Model in Literature*, Bern, p. 18.

cosm and the world is always troublesome. Similarly, the representation of the fictive characters in *Cathedral Folk* appears to be governed by a co-presence of different, separate laws—sacred and secular, irrationalist and rationalist—so that certain "oversized" actions, emotions and moral states are *not* excluded: on the contrary, ecstasy and despair, heroism and sainthood, interfere with the desired regularity and predictability. Just as the representation of Russian provincial life is generally marked by a heterogeneity of "texts," styles and cultures, or syncretism, so the bent towards idyllization itself consists in imperfection. Within the novel's idyllizing vision, the non-idyllic elements trigger a creative dynamism that works on the level of semantic suspension.

One example of such idyllic imperfection features Tuberozov's factotum, the unbridled Deacon. As indicated by the incongruous interior of his dwelling, Akhilla represents a multiplicity of mythic values from both the Orthodox and folkloric registers of culture; he is, as we have seen, an epic hero (*bogatyr*'),[20] a free-roaming Cossack, a warrior for the faith, both fierce and feeble, internalizing, as it were, the tension between the idyll and the non-idyll. The essential variability within the idyllic microcosm is more clearly illustrated in the chronicler's depiction of a bathing scene, which, imbued with false mystery and mock-epic stature, opens with a description of the somnolent morning mood: На всем еще лежат тени полусвета, и нигде, ни внутри домов, ни на площадях и улицах, не заметно никаких признаков пробуждения. (84).[21] It is important that the gathering of Stargorod bathers, who meet daily at the riverside, represent all social strata of the town. Collectively, they form a sentimental-romantic complex consisting of easily recognizable folk types from Russian literary and oral tradition.[22] Typical of "the simplicity of life in Stargorod," the uncomplicated action of this "landscape and genre picture" (Этот пейзаж и жанр представляли собою просто-

20 As to the description of Akhilla as a Russian epic hero, Wigzell suggests that Leskov's view of the past is a *nostalgic* one. Although the epic qualities of the *bogatyri* were too exaggerated in a latter day hero, "their strength, spontaneity, basic decency and love for country make them sympathetic figures […] and help to create the nostalgic view of Old Russian life purveyed in *Cathedral Folk*." Faith Wigzell, 2001, "Nikolai Leskov, Gender and Russianness," *Gender and Sexuality in Russian Civilisation*, ed. P.I. Barta, Amsterdam, pp. 105–20.

21 "Over everything lay the shadows of twilight, and nowhere, neither inside the houses, nor on the squares and in the streets, were any signs of awakening perceptible."

22 Wigzell, 1988, pp. 901–10.

ту старогородской жизни, 89) is developed, in a similar vein, around one picturesque event: the assisting of the elderly Prefect in his morning bath! The innocent naturalness of the characters being complete, Mother Felisata, the only woman in the group, is at ease among the naked men: различие пола для нее не существовало, (90).[23] The weather is fine, time stands almost still, and, as the simple-hearted Konstantin ("Kotin") Pizonskii puts it: […] без новостей мы вот сидим как в раю; сами мы наги, а видим красу: видим лес, видим горы, видим храмы, воды, зелень; вон там выводки утиные под бережком попискивают; вон рыбья мелкота целою стаей играет. Сила Господня! (91).[24]

Although the idyllized description of nature is further amplified by elements of Christian rhetoric, or vice versa, the emotional words of Pizonskii, the latter-day Holy Fool, seem to carry an omen. Behind the peaceful atmosphere of what the chronicler refers to as a northern mysterious saga looms the wide world outside full of people incapable of appreciating such perfect harmony; if an intruder should arrive, "everything will seem wrong to him, and he will go and pick things to pieces…" (все это ему покажется не так, и пойдет он разбирать… 91). When the dwellers of Stargorod go on to discuss the God-given privileges of living and dying in provincial tranquillity, Akhilla turns out to be extremely provoked by the "nihilist" Varnavka's refusal to return the skeleton, so the Deacon can arrange an Orthodox funeral for it (ты помни, что я духовна я особа! 92).[25] Soon, he ends up boldly accusing one of his fellow bathers, the District Doctor, of agnosticism, declaring that he himself is prepared to take necessary measures to curb this widespread tendency—especially, since Father Savelii apparently "doesn't know how to manage" it (он не умеет, 93). After a series of provocations, he grabs the frightened doctor and hurls himself with him into the water. Pathos and bathos act together; in the mildly ironical words of the chronicler: Так дьякон Ахилла начал искоренение водворившегося в Старгороде пагубного вольномыслия (93).[26]

23 "to her, there existed no difference of sex."

24 "[…] here we sit without novelties, as though we were in paradise; we are naked ourselves, and we behold beauty: we see the forest, we see the mountains, we see the temples, the water, the green; yonder are the broods of ducklings cheeping near the shore; yonder are the little fishes playing in a regular school. 'Tis the power of the Lord."

25 "remember that I'm an ecclesiastical person."

26 "Thus did Deacon Akhilla begin the eradication of the pernicious free-thinking which

This is but one of several humorous examples of how the cathedral folk "fight in order to become reconciled": within the imperfections of the societal idyll, they mostly remain friends. But although Akhilla's larger-than-life spontaneity may be amusing on the whole, the depiction of his readiness to combat "heterodox" influences strikes a more sombre note when related to the competition between different worldviews and value judgements—Russian/non-Russian, Orthodox/non-Orthodox, Christian/atheist, and so on. As signalled by the Deacon's reference to his spiritual father in the bathing scene, the clash of ideologies on the level of plot shows how idyllic meaning is constantly being disturbed on the level of the text. Pertaining to both the stylistic and the rhetorical registers, the *invention* of an imperfect idyll in the world of *both* cathedral men highlights antagonistic ways of understanding culture, which challenge any one reading of the novel in terms of meaning. At the same time, however, a counteractive strategy is implied, where meaning is advanced through boundary-crossing and transgression.

Orthodoxy as micro-harmony

Let us consider Tuberozov's lifelong struggle against the many ills that he perceives as threatening to the very foundations of Russian culture and society. Confronted by a multicultural Empire where the virulent ideological forces of his time collide, the societal idyll holds the provincial whole together. However, due to the imperfections of the societal model, it remains vulnerable and fragile, whilst chaos becomes a viable alternative. Eagerly awaiting a future renewal of the faith of his *own* people, Tuberozov describes repeatedly in his diary how he must deal with *other* individuals who upset the Stargorod harmony: the "nihilist" activities of Varnavka; the two scheming ladies, who are corrupted by "un-Russian" ideas; and, notably, Ishmael Termosesov, the mercenary St Petersburg official, who with animal-like and diabolic energy corrupts the simple towndwellers of both sexes into religious and cultural apostasy.[27] As for the Archpriest's apocalyptic interpretation of events, idyllization here seems to point towards a fictional "as if,"[28] an attempt on his part to

had established itself in Stargorod."

27 Wigzell (1988, p. 902) points out that the name suggests the Russian *tiur'ma* ("prison") plus *sidet'* ("to sit"), hence "jailbird."

28 Wolfgang Iser, 1993, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*, Baltimore, pp. 12ff.

bridge the gap between reality (the given) and perfection (the unfathomable). On a meta-level, we may note that as the Russian hero's downfall is brought about by the "foreign" intruder from the capital, his project of renewal is left unresolved in a semantic limbo between stability and change, closedness and openness. In the context of the novel's imperfect idyllizing vision, the language of feeling appears to be impelled by the need for an unattainable other world.

When approached through the lens of anthropology, the representation of idyllic imperfection in Leskov's novel could be seen in terms of a *micro-harmony*. This is a "bracketed-off" world which is achieved, above all, by way of a comprehensive mythopoetic backward glance on the part of the fictive character. Instead of reconstructing the catastrophe, the battling protagonist, behind whose back the world seems about to collapse, revives congruous elements of the *status quo ante*. Here Tuberozov resorts to mental images. In trying to tackle the multi-layered incongruousness of his time, he often evokes certain representations which for him (and the reader) stand for mythic Russianness: national pride, religious unity, moral ideals, a Golden Age, and so on. As will become clear in our analysis of one of Leskov's tales, this idyllic re-presentation of cultural used-to-be's—the calling back into presence of what is absent—resembles a mnemonic exercise, a way of remembering (the past) that produces an act of boundary-crossing, a doubling mechanism, where what has been overstepped (the present) is constantly kept in view. For the Archpriest and his friends, images of the Old Russian cultural heritage only acquire *mono*cultural meaning in the face of chaos and the threat of forgetting.[29] Hence the need for retrospective nostalgia.

A fundamental category is the Archpriest's own concept of the "old fairy-tale," the *staraia skazka*: Живите, государи мои, люди русские, в ладу со своею старою сказкой. Чудная вещь старая сказка! Горе тому, у кого ее не будет под старость! […] О, как бы я желал уме-

29 Among the most important "sentimental" fields of referentiality are the epoch of medieval Kievan Rus', when Prince Vladimir let his people be baptized in the Byzantine faith; and Muscovite Russia of the seventeenth century, when antagonism within the Russian Orthodox Church resulted in the Great Schism (*raskol*) between the "new" and the Old Believers (*starovery*). Common to all these intercultural *subtexts*, the Ukrainian city of Kiev, "the cradle of Russian Orthodoxy," functions as a monocultural backdrop for the representation of all the Stargorod characters as well as of their own reflections.

реть в мире с моей старою сказкой. (152).[30] An amalgam of traditional Russian virtues, the "old fairy-tale" seems to denote the moral and cultural values of the past, the legacy of every Russian; the little things, words, deeds and feelings that give meaning to the prosaic lives of ordinary people.[31] A web of allusions is activated so that the Archpriest's nostalgic approach counteracts various "intrusive" elements, be they of urban or local, Russian or non-Russian origin. From the point of view of his life struggle, Tuberozov's story may be likened to that of the schismatic Archpriest Avvakum (1620–82), who as an Old Believer protagonist in his own autobiographical *vita* also fights against the official church authorities as well as against "foreign" influences.[32] It should be emphasized that the Stargorod priest lacks the stern fanaticism and powerful sense of wrath that characterizes his Muscovite predecessor; by the same token, his "style lacks the crude vitality of Avvakum's, in the same way that the man lacks the stubborn strength of his predecessor."[33] We might say, therefore, that the representation of the "soft" Tuberozov (who weeps more easily) is an idyllized variant of an archpriestly prototype, the vitality of his speech of a more sentimental kind.[34]

30 "May you, O Russians, live, dear sirs, in harmony with your old fairy-tale. A wondrous thing is this fairy-tale. Woe betide him who does not have it when old age comes […], how I would like to die at peace with my old fairy-tale."

31 As observed by Wigzell (1985, p. 323), the *staraia skazka* is preserved most clearly in folklore, Old Russian history, literature and religion, the wide-ranging references of which, "once elucidated, cast light on the form and meaning of the novel."

32 Avvakum and his followers fiercely opposed the "Greek-oriented" reforms of Nikon, the Patriarch of the Imperial Russian Church. See Jostein Børtnes, 1988, *Visions of Glory: Studies in Early Russian Hagiography* (Slavica Norvegica 5), Oslo, pp. 270ff., who has demonstrated that the Old Believer archpriest used mythical patterns associated with the life of Christ as analogues for events in his own life (figural interpretation). Considerable attention has been given to the points of similarity between the life of the Archpriest in *Cathedral Folk* and the seventeenth-century vita of Avvakum. See for example, V.Iu. Troitskii, 1971, "Nekotorye siuzhety i obrazy drevnei literatury u N. Leskova," *Russkaia literatura na rubezhe dvukh epokh (XVII–nachalo XVIII v.)*, ed. A.N. Robinson; Wigzell, 1985; and Weinberg, 1996, pp. 147ff.

33 Wigzell, 1985, p. 335.

34 In an early redaction of *Cathedral Folk*, Tuberozov imitates the style of Avvakum, who appears to the priestly hero in three visions, summoning him to action. See, for example, Valentina Gebel', 1945, *N.S. Leskov v tvorcheskoi laboratorii*, Moscow, pp. 98, 134–36; and, I.Z. Serman, 1958, "Protopop Avvakum v tvorchestve N.S. Leskova," *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 14, pp. 404–405.

An example of "old fairy-tale" nostalgia is evoked in the representation of Marfa Andreevna Plodomasova and her two household dwarfs. As idealized by Tuberozov in his diary, the awe-inspiring noblewoman (*boiarynia*) emerges as the embodiment of noble, patriotic feelings associated with eighteenth-century Imperial Russia:

> Сия кочерга столь старого леса, что уже и признаков жизни ее издавна никаких не замечается, а известно только по старым памятям, что она женщина весьма немалого духа. Она и великой императрице Екатерине знаема была, и Александр император, поговорив с нею, находил необременительною для себя эту ее беседу; а наиболее всего она известна в народе тем, как она в молодых летах своих одна с Пугачевым сражалась и нашла, как себя от этого мерзкого зверя защитить. Еще же о чем ежели на ее счет вспоминают, то это еще повторение о ней различных оригинальных анекдотов о ее свиданиях с посещавшими ее губернаторами, чиновниками, а также, в двенадцатом году, с пленными французами; но все это относится к области ее минувшего века. (44)[35]

Notice how this entry uncovers the mnemonic function of Tuberozov's own storytelling. By invoking "ancient memories," "things […] are recalled" which involve several fields of referentiality: the "enlightened" rule of Catherine II (1729–96); the popular rebellion led by the Cossack Emel'ian Pugachev (1773–75); and, Napoleon's legendary failure to hold Moscow. In thus constantly remembering the glory of Russia's mythic past ("a repetition of […] anecdotes"), the Stargorod Archpriest seems bent on inscribing himself into this past. In a similar fashion, he introduces into his narrative the dwarf Nikolai Afanas'evich: Что бы сие, ду-

35 "This crone of such ancient stock dates so far back that for a long time past no sign of her life has been observed and all that is known are the ancient memories of her being a woman of no little spirit. She was acquainted with the great Empress Catherine, and the Emperor Alexander, who, when he talked to her, found her conversation far from burdensome. But she is chiefly known among people from the fact that in her younger years she fought single-handed with Pugachev, and contrived to defend herself against that loathsome beast. And if other things concerning her are recalled, they are a repetition of various original anecdotes about her encounters with diverse governors and officials who called upon her, and also, in the year 1812, with French prisoners; but all this belongs to the epoch of her past."

маю, за неведомая особа […] (44).[36] But although the "particularly small man" (нарочито небольшой человек, 44) seems inseparably bound up with Tuberozov's "fairy-tale" notion of Russian harmony, his ill-starred predicament under the noblewoman's authoritarian regime signals almost the opposite. When, at a later meeting, the Archpriest's "new friend" (новый друг мой, 53) tells the story of how Plodomasova—whose name begins with *plod*, Russian for "fruit," "foetus"—had amused herself trying to couple "her slave" (раб ее, 53) with a female dwarf for breeding purposes ("for the sake of plump, little midges, Father, he said," «А для пыжиков,—говорит,—батюшка», 53), the representation of the little man as an enchanting voice from the not-too-distant Russian past is seriously challenged: […] она желала маленьких людей развесть!.. Скажите, о чем забота! Еще ли эти, коих видим окрест себя, очень велики! (53).[37]

If we consider this un-idyllic allusion to sexuality in the light of the tradition of keeping dwarfs—in itself a Western import beginning with Peter the Great—the depiction of the in vogue fascination for "the deformed and the abnormal" underscores the imperfection of the diary's idyllizing vision.[38] It is interesting that the figure of the feudal noblewoman is never quite established on the level of Christian magnanimity; true, the "eccentric" (оригинalька, 44) is amply referred to as *matushka*, but as a Russian mother to her "child" (дитя, 45), she emerges as *both* pious and decadent. Within the parent-child relationship depicted in Tuberozov's text, the-kind-and-cruel Plodomasova may thus be seen as a carnivalized variation on the mother figure. Considering that this mother is not a mother,[39] and the child not a child, an ambiguity is revealed that desta-

36 "'Who may this mysterious person be', I said to myself […]."

37 "[…] she wanted to breed little people! Now, who ever heard of such a whim! As though the people we see around us were so very large!"

38 My thanks to the late Lindsey Hughes for her insightful comments on the tradition of keeping household dwarfs for entertainment in Imperial Russia. See her *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*, New Haven, 1998, pp. 257–60; for the same topic, see also Mina Curtiss, 1974, *A Forgotten Empress: Anna Ivanovna and her Era 1730–1740*, New York, pp. 30ff, 97–98, 180–81.

39 Plodomasova as a "real" mother appears as a central topic in the narrative *Old Times in the Village of Plodomasovo* (*Starye gody v sele Plodomasove*, 1869), where she first appears as a fifteen-year-old girl who is forced into marriage by a brutish middle-aged nobleman, then as a beautiful heroic widow looking after her infant son, only to to emerge finally as a female autocrat whose authority in her domain is absolute. But as indicated by McLean (1977, p. 187), Plodomasova's status as a maternal figure remains

bilizes the notion of an ideal, Orthodox past.[40] The idealization of the Russian noblewoman as a pillar of undeviating virtue in a corrupt society is counteracted further through a mingling of Russian and non-Russian cultural "texts," so that the semantic impact of her figure becomes even more unstable. But I will have more to say on this subject later.

A similar, although different, ambiguity emerges in the wistful representation of the Archpriest's domestic life. Here the establishing of a micro-harmony, by way of "remembering" Orthodox ideas and rituals, functions well in the chronicler's portrayal of the relationship between Tuberozov and his tenderhearted, all-sacrificing spouse, Natal'ia Nikolaevna:

> Протопопица сама никогда не ужинала. Она обыкновенно только сидела перед мужем, пока он закусывал, и оказывала ему небольшие услуги, то что-нибудь подавая, то принимая и убирая. Потом они оба вставали, молились пред образом и непосредственно за тем оба начинали крестить один другого […] Получив взаимные благословения, супруги напутствовали друг друга и взаимным поцелуем, причем отец протопоп целовал свою низенькую жену в лоб, а она его в сердце; затем они расставались: протопоп уходил в свою гостиную и вскоре ложился. (27–28)[41]

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ambivalent: "Marfa Andreyevna is conceived as a *pravednitsa*, a pillar of undeviating virtue in the midst of a violent and corrupt society. Yet she is a despot who uses her power to humiliate her son; and having become a grandee, she treats those beneath her with condescension or contempt."

40 The image of mother and child is particularly poignant to the Orthodox mentality: "The mother transmits life to the baby, not metaphorically and symbolically, but literally and really: She gives it the nourishment which is a presupposition of life, and with it the caress, the affection, the first words which are addressed to it; that is, she gives it the first possibility of relationship, the feeling of personal presence without which the baby can never enter the world of people, the world of language and symbols, of existential identity and names." Christos Yannaras, 1991, *Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, Edinburgh, p. 69.

41 "The Archpriest's wife herself never supped. As a rule, she merely sat opposite her husband while he had a bite, and rendered him small services, now handing him something, again receiving and removing a dish. Then they both rose, prayed in front of the holy picture, and immediately afterwards began to make the sign of the cross over each other […] Having received these mutual blessings, the husband and wife took leave with a mutual kiss, the Father Archpriest kissing his diminutive wife on the brow, and she kissing him on the heart. Then they parted: the Archpriest went to his parlour, and soon into bed."

The text is replete with idyllized descriptions where the narrative atmosphere is permeated by unpretentious love and companionship. Sexuality is mostly toned down—now child-like and playful, now serene, almost "angelic"—which, in turn, makes the ritualistic tenderness between husband and wife all the more conspicuous.[42] In Tuberozov's own sentimental-romantic depiction, the focus is on *kisses*:

> […] подхожу к ней спящей и спящую ее целую, и если чем огорчен, то в сем отрадном поцелуе почерпаю снова бодрость и силу и тогда засыпаю покойно […] я] чувствовал плохую женьку мою в душе моей, и поелику душа моя лобзала ее, я не вздумал ни однажды подойти к ней и поцеловать ее. (39–40)[43]

—and on *tears*:

> […] В тихой грусти, двое бездетные, сели мы за чай, но был то не чай, а слезы наши растворялись нам в питие, и незаметно для себя мы оба заплакали, и оборучь пали мы ниц пред образом Спаса […] Я] пал пред ней на колени и, поклонясь ей до земли, зарыдал тем рыданием, которому нет на свете описания. Да и вправду, поведайте мне времена и народы, где, кроме святой Руси нашей, родятся такие женщины, как сия добродетель? (38, 39)[44]

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42 Another "angelic" paragon of virtue and domesticity can be seen in Evgeniia Glavatskaia, a positive character in Leskov's "anti-nihilist" novel *No Way Out* (*Nekuda*, 1864). However, whereas the portrayal of the childless Natal'ia Nikolaevna is devoid of corporeality, this character is portrayed as an exemplary mother/daughter through the image of her suckling her dying father at her breast. Cf. Jane T. Costlow, 1993, "The Pastoral Source: Representations of the Maternal Breast in Nineteenth-Century Russian," *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture*, eds. J.T. Costlow, S. Sandler & J. Vowles, Stanford, p. 224.

43 "[…] I go up to her as she sleeps and kiss her in her slumber, and if I am pained at anything, in that consoling kiss, I drink fresh courage and strength, and then I go calmly to sleep. […] I felt my naughty little wife in my soul, and so long as my soul kissed her, it never once occurred to me to go to her and kiss her."

44 "[…] In quiet grief, we two childless people sat down to drink tea—but it was not the tea, but our tears that became our drink, and without noticing it ourselves, we both began to weep, and hand in hand fell down upon our knees before the Holy Image of the Saviour"; "[…] I fell on my knees in front of her, and bowing to the ground before her, I began to sob; it was a sobbing which no one on this earth can describe. Really and truly,

The ingenuousness of the couple's married life points to a simplicity that reveals an Orthodox subtext, or way of perceiving the world, which is linked to "the attitude of the ordinary man towards God, in his prayer and his moral life" (Fedotov),[45] to the naturalness, as it were, of life itself. However, just as the social innocence of Akhilla and the bathers is challenged by "foreign," non-provincial elements, so too the everyday bliss of Tuberozov. Cultural simplicity is countered by cultural complexity. Therefore, the Archpriest is continually trying to create micro-harmony through idyllization.

Degraded and frustrated, for instance, by the duty imposed on him by his church superiors to combat sectarianism, he pursues fortitude through various forms of affirmation. Eager to reinforce his opposition to the proselytizing policy of the official Church, as well as his struggle against the morally corrupt elements of the Empire (раскольники блюдут свое заблуждение, а мы своим правым путем небрежем; а сие, мню, яко важнейшее. 32),[46] he rejoices in the news of his wife's pregnancy. Typically, the Archpriest seeks temporary relief from overwhelming negativity by donning the mask of positive domesticity: Сегодня утром. *18-го марта сего 1836 года*, попадья, Наталья Николаевна намекнула мне, что она чувствует себя непорожнею. Подай Господи нам сию радость! (33).[47] Sadly, the pregnancy turns out to be the "the fruit of her kind imagination" (плод ее доброй фантазии, 38). At one point, his wife discreetly suggests they adopt any bastard child from her husband's supposed frivolous past ("Isn't there an orphan somewhere?"; то нет ли где какого сиротки? 39), her will to sacrifice herself to Tuberozov being so overwhelming that he gives praise to her and to the Lord, who has bestowed such a happiness upon him.[48] As the ideas of piety and moral rectitude are explained in terms of tears and kisses, that is, of simple

show me a time or a nation outside of our Holy Russia where such women are born as this image of virtue!"

45 George P. Fedotov, 1946, *The Russian Religious Mind*, Cambridge, Mass., vol. 1, p. 213.

46 "the schismatics live up to their errors, while we neglect our right path; and that, I think, is the most important."

47 "This morning, *March 18, 1836*, my wife, Natal'ia Nikolaevna hinted to me that she felt herself heavy with child. May the Lord grant us that joy!"

48 Inès Muller de Morogues, in her *"Le problème féminin" et les portraits de femmes dans l'œuvre de Nikolaj Leskov*, Bern, 1991, pp. 429ff. views Tuberozov's wife as a representative of the best in traditional Russian womanhood, describing their marriage as "an agreement of the heart" (*l'accord du cœur*).

and sincere emotions, the micro-harmony often takes on the form of an *Orthodox idyll*.

Here the interrelated images of children and parenthood, orphans and childlessness, so frequent in the speech of the novel's narrator and characters, are firmly established within an Orthodox anthropology. For all Orthodox Russians, the ultimate task in life is to create in themselves the likeness of God the Father in imitation of the archetype of Christ the Son.[49] This kind of Christian self-realization is carried out many times over in the portrayal of the interaction between the provincial characters: the father-son theme is introduced by Tuberozov in his idyllization of the *chudak* Pizonskii, "the nourisher of orphans" (сирых питатель, 37), who adopts the baby boy of a half-witted girl and whose simplicity of faith becomes a major source of homiletic inspiration; incidentally, the Archpriest's mild, but constant, patronization of "his simple-minded Natasha" (простодушной Наташи моей, 51) reflects in many ways a traditional spiritual father-daughter relationship.[50] The topos as father-figure, however, is most effectively developed in the depiction of his spontaneous love for Akhilla:

> […] я его смертельно люблю—сам за что не ведая […] Бог прости и благослови его за его пленительную сердца простоту […]; Чувствую, я со всею отеческою слабостию полюбил сего доброго человека. (65, 69).[51]

After the death of his wife, when the two men decide to live together, their profound companionship becomes patterned "sentimentally" on the Hesychast idea of monastic eldership as described in the popular *Philokalia* compilation. Tuberozov aspires to provide Akhilla with personal guidance and to let him hear the judgement of the Holy Fathers. More importantly, the representation of the *chudak*, the Archpriest's wife and the Deacon as epitomes of compassion and emotional simplicity

49 Yannaras, 1991, pp. 117–18.

50 But then again, Natal'ia Nikolaevna has the same name and patronymic as Pushkin's wife, who was widely seen by nineteenth-century Russians as a symbol of Westernized frivolity and self-indulgence.

51 "I love him terribly—without myself knowing why […] may God forgive and bless him for the captivating simplicity of his heart […] I feel that I have come to love that kindly man with a truly paternal weakness."

complements, on the one hand, Tuberozov's "reading" of his own life as an *imitatio Christi*, and on the other, the chronicler's depiction of his relations with Akhilla as the ultimate father-son relationship.[52]

Throughout the Archpriest's endeavour to understand his place as a priest in Stargorod society, idyllization serves as a way of world-making in order to postpone the inevitable ending. Therefore, considering that Tuberozov has a wife, but is deprived of a family—and tends to seeks other forms of sociality in, for example, his fellow countryman Akhilla and various officials of foreign origin—it is striking that his being *out of place* in the cosy company of Natal'ia Nikolaevna is actually confirmed. When she, at one point, dozes off—her husband's enthused speech on Russia's predicament being far beyond her understanding—Tuberozov seems to realize that a marginalized outsider like himself will always struggle alone: […] всяк, кто подальше брата видит, будет одинок промеж своих. 203).[53] Within the novel's sentimentalized rendering of Orthodox domesticity, the themes of children and childlessness, orphan- and parenthood are linked here to that of a more *universal* alienation, which, in marked contrast to the Russian Orthodox ideal of unity in multiplicity (*sobornost'*), represents rather un-Orthodox forms of being.[54] In this way, the struggle of the Archpriest, who as a fictive character is placed in an in-between sphere of two views on culture, one affirmative and closed, one negative and open, becomes another example of how an overarching idyllic imperfection is revealed in the text. As shown, the juxtaposition of heterogeneous cultural elements and discrepancies leads to a constant cleavage of *the idyllic*, which is one of the reasons why Leskov's text evades total harmonization. We might say that the author, unbeknown to himself, deconstructs the official image of Russia as a harmonious, multiethnic Empire.

52 For a further development of this idea, see my chapter "Adapting the Christian Text."

53 "[…] every one who sees a little further than his brother will be lone among his own people." One might argue of course that the childless Tuberozov, who makes such a fuss over Pizonskii's adoption of orphans whilst refusing to do it himself—unless he and his wife could find one with his own genes—is at least partly insincere. If so, the apparent hypocrisy of Tuberozov's celebration of Pizonskii's generosity could be said to pollute the idyll and, from the reader's perspective, to turn Tuberozov's sentiment into mere sentimentality (McLean, 1977, p. 197).

54 Ivan A. Esaulov, 1995, *Kategoriia sobornosti v russkoi literature*, Petrozavodsk, pp. 61ff.

Typically, the chronicler employs the rhetorical strategy of rendering "loyally" Tuberozov's idyllizing mind: having recognized the distance between himself and his beloved spouse, the Archpriest is immersed in the micro-harmony of the ordinary and the prosaic, now Christian in a more general sense: И старик тихо поднялся с кровати, чтобы не нарушить покоя спящей жены, перекрестил ее и, набив свою трубку, вышел с нею на двор и присел на крылечке. (203).[55] Here the crossing of boundaries in the text between separation and unity, openness and closedness, implies that idyllic meaning has been suspended. The thoughts and actions of the Russian parish priest emerge in an ambiguous light, which, in turn, suggests a number of different readings of the way Russian provincial life is represented multiculturally in the novel as a whole.

The multiple facets of sentimental idyllization

In accordance with our understanding of "sentiment" as the capacity for responding to emotion and impression, as well as a thought, opinion or attitude, the sentimental mode of writing in Leskov's novel fulfils several functions. First, it makes his prose sympathetic and accessible by creating an impact. The use of material which is easily recognized as Russian, provincial, and "of the Empire," facilitates the reader's emotional response to the text, so that he or she can fictionalize the characters and their interrelationships represented within it. Second, the "straddling of feeling and idea"[56] reflects the co-presence in the text of two prevalent ideological spheres, two sets of perspectives upon humankind and culture. On the one hand, we have a way of thinking that is informed by unity and integrity, roots and tradition, affinity and a given identity—on the other, one which is shaped by change and disruption, complexity, disorder, openness and unpredictability.[57] Here Tuberozov—with his love for "the old ways" of Russian culture and his suspicion of imported "un-Russian" fads and foibles—may be said to advocate a view of Russianness that is con-

55 "And the old man rose softly from the bed, in order not to disturb the repose of his sleeping wife, made the sign of the cross over her, and having filled his pipe, went outside and seated himself on the porch-step."

56 Bell, 1983, p. 121.

57 To be sure, we are not interested in dualities and binarisms as such, but in the space between, the middle ground, where styles, texts and cultural values commingle and establish relations, in "the playful mixing together of such heterogeneous elements." See Lachmann, 1997, p. 33.

servative (Slavophile); if so, his view is utopian in that it projects an ideal Russia distinct from and superior to "the West" that would influence all future generations of Russians.

However, in the novel as a whole, the friction between the emotional "national romantic" (irrationalism; religious maximalism) and the "realistic" enlightened (rationalism; secular "scepticism") is manifested on the stylistic level in the form of competing rhetorical tendencies, one edifying, the other critical; indeed, this friction is the hallmark of Leskov's "language of feeling." Thus the sentimental dimension, or the creative play on the emotions, in *Cathedral Folk* becomes important as a rhetorical force. The idyllic is structured according to its own rules using the societal model almost as if it were an epithet or a metaphor. As a hybrid form, the societal idyll in the novel can be seen as a macro-image made up of the several topoi and motifs, with different intellectual themes and fragments of worldviews. As I have shown, the sentimental idyllization of the Russian provinces often, therefore, takes the form of an Orthodox micro-harmony, whose existence is delicately dependent on the interplay of different textual elements (or codes) in the semiotic space of the text. In this way, the semantic tension as achieved by the styling strategy of the imperfect idyll contributes towards the novel's affective verisimilitude, or, to use Michael Bell's term, its *sentiment of reality*.[58]

Finally, bearing in mind the characters' striving to deal with chaotic reality, the constant failure of the text to establish the quiet recurrent predictability of an idyllic framework points to the changeability of provincial life itself. Here the constant crossing of *cultural* boundaries would seem to indicate that the semantic potential of sentimental idyllization, or micro-harmony, has many facets: it counteracts various aspects of the foreign or the strange (*chuzhoe*) within the complexity of the contemporary Empire. Moreover, we may discern here the contours of an "idyllic utopia" that takes on a critical function in relation to that everyday Russia where the characters live, work and travel (I shall return to the notion of a critical attitude being implicit in idyllization in Part Two of this study). The urge for cultural sameness is always doubled by the urge for cultural otherness, so that any urge to portray provincial Russianness as something uniquely spiritual and superior, is, if not belied, then blurred and seriously contested.

58 Bell, 1983.

The Problem of Multiethnicity

> For I am a Russian, and ought to deem delicacy with such people inappropriate.

Since the town of Stargorod is located somewhere in the Empire's provinces, with Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Tatars, Gypsies, Greeks, Germans and Poles living alongside one another, the cathedral folk are compelled to relate to multiethnic diversity.[1] As to the "chronicling" of their lives in this multicultural borderland, the idea of a Russian national character (*narodnost'*) seems less closely connected with the epithet *rossiiskii*, signifying the grandiose, cosmopolitan, and secular, than with the epithet *russkii*, relating to the humble, homely, and sacred. Hence the predilection for the provincial *byt*, the idyllization of simplicity and of sentiments which are supposedly held in common by all Orthodox Russians and meant to differentiate them from other nations. As a rule, Leskov's righteous heroes (*pravedniki*) of the early 1870s are inspired by the idea that the genuine tradition of Old Rus' has been corrupted by "invented tradition" and by the borrowing of foreign culture and ethos. Taken together, the above considerations might suggest a fixed idea of a distinctly superior Russian culture within the Empire. However, the incessant focusing

1 I return to the German "element" in my analysis of *Childhood Years*. See also "The Germans" in McLean, 1977, pp. 318–30; and 1974, "Iron, Dough, and a Kolyvan' Husband: Leskov Confronts the Germans," *Mnemozina: Studia litteraria russica in honorem Vsevolod Setchkarev*, eds. J.T. Baer & N.W. Ingham, Munich, pp. 267–79. For a detailed examinantion of the representation of Jewry in Leskov's fiction from 1875 onwards, see Gabriella Safran, 1998, "Evangel'skii podtekst i evreiskaia tema vo "Vladychnom sude" N.S. Leskova," *Evangel'skii tekst v russkoi literature XVIII–XX vekov*, vol. 2 (Problemy istoricheskoi poetiki, 5), ed. V.N. Zakharov, Petrozavodsk, pp. 462–70; and "Jew as Text, Jews as Reader: Nikolai Leskov" in her *Rewriting the Jew: Assimilation Narratives in the Russian Empire*, Stanford, 2000, pp. 108–48.

on ethnic multiplicity and the awareness of the problems of nation, faith and culture, indicate a far more complex stance.

In *Cathedral Folk,* ethnic confrontations are viewed in a religious context—that is, the Russian Orthodox hero is brought into contact with non-Christian, or non-Orthodox, Russians, but also non-Russians (*inorodtsy*). More specifically, Orthodoxy is often placed in a series of different *external* oppositions, notably to Oriental, non-Christian cultures, and to Roman Catholicism. In this process, myths of foreigners are juxtaposed with Russian national myths of ethnic origins and descent. One important myth is that of the "the Golden Age or Old Rus'" (how we once were noble and heroic); another is "the myth of decline or Westernization" (how we were conquered by foreign forces and decayed morally); and a third, "the myth of rebirth or the revival of Russian values" (how our faith shall be renewed and our culture restored to its former glory).[2] Given Russia's centuries-long national and religious struggle with Poland, the Poles are especially challenging: as "fellow" Slavs who have inherited part of the legacy of Kievan Rus', their Catholicism makes their pretensions doubly repugnant, whilst their culture, conspicuously aristocratic and Westernized, completes the picture of family perfidy.[3] Small wonder, then, that in the depiction of this particular non-Russian proto-nation, the myths comprise: Poland as a Westernized apostate, rebelling against Orthodox Russia; the "Mickiewiczan" yearning for liberty and Poland as a Christ-like nation; the Polish nobleman (*szlachcic*), as being handsome, but arrogant and corrupt.[4] Taking into consideration this perspective, Leskov's styling of Russia and Russianness will be examined as a consequence of his strategy of multiethnic processing.

2 Anthony D. Smith, 1986, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, p. 192.

3 Geoffrey Hosking, 1997, p. 28.

4 Poland developed a messianic tradition implying a contempt for Russia, considering itself a "victimized" missionary of the West, the *antemurale Christianitatis*, whereas the Russian Empire behaved in much the same way in its fight for cultural expansion towards Poland and the West, utilizing all the weapons of its own Eastern ideology. Spurred on by the legend of Old Rus' as "the Russian holy land," the imperial claims rested on religious as much as on secular grounds. See Wacław Lednicki, 1954, *Russia, Poland and the West: Essays in Literary and Cultural History*, New York, pp. 13ff.

Myth, manner, meaning

Let us first reinforce the significance of stylistic confrontation. As usual, a great deal is revealed in Tuberozov's diary, which we will analyse henceforth in light of the Bakhtinian concepts of "otherlanguagedness" (*inoiazychie*) and "multilanguagedness" (*mnogoiazychie*). The Archpriest's idiolect and sociolect may be understood as the focusing on *the word of the other* and on the reproduction of *the speech of the other* (the word of the other being refracted in one's own speech);[5] in his account, this process occurs in dialogues and inner monologues alike,[6] and, more importantly, involves a continuous confrontation with foreign (*chuzhie*) visions of reality. As we shall see, the main hero's manifold encounter with non-Russians and non-Russian cultures, that is, with other, foreign meanings, results in his engaging in a different kind of dialogue which "surmounts the closedness and one-sidedness of these particular meanings, these cultures."[7] In other words, the stylistic conflation (syncretism) of Tuberozov's discourse underscores an ambivalence towards the multiethnicity of the Empire, but also yields new meanings as regards his perception of human beings, culture and reality. Throughout the diary, traditional textual elements are constantly being inserted into his "new text." Iurii Lotman refers to this phenomenon as "stylistic hybridization and confrontation," showing how the introduction of quotations, allusions, reminiscences, paraphrases, and so on in a discourse can have a destabilizing effect and bring about new meanings.[8] Exactly how heterogeneous stylistic elements interrelate in the context of multiculture, may be illustrated in what might be called a preliminary "high" in the Archpriest's tackling of the ethnicity problem: his first interview with the formidable Plodomasova.

The fact that Tuberozov, who is full of awe for the noblewoman's wisdom and intellectual powers, precedes almost each new line with the underlined *I* (*Я*) or *She* (*Она*) indicates a keen wish to stress its consequen-

5 Bakhtin, 1990.

6 That is, in both primary and secondary speech genres. Bakhtin's emphasis on the word *chuzhoi* (cf. Gr. *xenikós*) in the meaning "stranger," "of foreign kind," "of the other(s)," is crucial for his theory of language and culture where *otherness* is central, and, in the context of cultural theory, his two key "linguistic" concepts are expanded and pertain to "language" in a broader, anthropological sense. Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 60–102.

7 Bakhtin, 1986, p. 7.

8 Cf. Lotman, 1990, pp. 36–53.

tiality: Лет двадцать уже никто из сторонних людей не может похвастаться, что он боярыню Плодомасову видел. (44).[9] Plodomasova begins by praising the "outsider" for his committed pastoral work, while, at the same time, hinting at the futility of his religious struggle; alluding to Christ who drove the money-lenders from the temple, she addresses the problem of spiritual laxitude in the congregation comparing the altar of their church to a "shop-counter" (лавочка, 48). She then touches sympathetically upon Tuberozov's longing for children, paraphrasing St Mark: Их есть царствие Божие (48).[10] Through allusions and references to both scriptural and socio-historical material or "texts," a stylistic overlapping is gradually achieved on two levels of juxtaposition: first, through the introduction of elements of social criticism and idyllization; second, through aspects of social reality as they infringe on Tuberozov's private aspirations as an Archpriest, on his personal, most intimate thoughts and confessions. The effect of this stylistic mingling is amplified as the dialogue unfolds and the Polish theme is broached:

> *Она.* […] всяк брат, кто в семье дальше братнего носа смотрит, и между своими одиноким себя увидит. У меня тоже сын есть, но уж я его третий год не видала, знать ему скучно со мною.
>
> *Я.* Где же теперь ваш сын?
>
> *Она.* В Польше мой сын, полком командует.
>
> *Я.* Это доблестное дело врагов отчизны смирять.
>
> *Она.* Не знаю я, сколько в этом доблести, что мы с этими полячишками о сю пору возимся, а по-моему, вдвое больше в этом меледы.
>
> *Я.* Справимся-с, придет время.
>
> *Она.* Никогда оно не придет, потому что оно уж ушло […] Перекачиваемся да дураков тешим: то поляков нагайками потчуем, то у их хитрых полячек ручки целуем; это грешно и мерзко так людей портить.
>
> —А все же,—говорю,—войска наши там по крайней мере удерживают поляков, чтоб они нам не вредили. (49)[11]

9 "For the last twenty years or so no outsider can boast of having seen Mme Plodomasova."

10 "Theirs is the Kingdom of God."

11 "*She.*'[…] every one of our sort, who looks into our family any further than his brother's nose perceives that he is solitary among his own. I also have a son, but I have not seen

In this meeting between two generations (Plodomasova has outlived five Russian sovereigns),[12] a typical stylistic juxtaposition may be observed between two of the novel's leitmotifs: one domestic (relating to "parenthood"), one sociopolitical (relating to "foreigners," here specifically to the Poles). Moreover, we are dealing with two ways of understanding or interpreting culture, one idyllizing—one critical, with two views on "foreigners" in Russia.[13] Plodomasova, with her dwarfs, may well be a representative of a bygone Russian mode of life that for Tuberozov constitutes a paradigm of tranquillity and harmonious love; but, as it turns out, she is *not* the obvious soulmate he has been craving for. An interesting tension arises as he continues to interpret "old" Russian culture, as well as the politically astute Plodomasova as a repository of this culture, in a glorifying or utopian manner. She, however, never ceases to debunk such an idyllization; the Archpriest affirms—the noblewoman negates:

> —Ни от чего они их,—отвечает,—не удерживают; да и нам те поляки не страшны бы, когда б мы сами друг друга есть обещанья не сделали.
>
> —Это,—говорю,—осуждение вашего превосходительства, кажется, как бы несколько излишне сурово.
>
> *Она.* Ничего нет в правде излишне сурового.

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him for two years, for it seems he is bored here with me'./*I*. 'Where is your son now?'/*She*. 'My son is commanding a regiment in Poland'./*I*. 'It is a valiant thing to subdue the enemies of the Fatherland'./*She*. 'I don't know how much valour there may be about our fussing about those horrid little Poles at the present time, but, in my opinion, there's twice as much fruitless bother as need be'./*I*. 'We shall set matters right in due time'./*She*. 'That time will never come, because it is already past […] We vacillate and amuse the fools: first we treat the Poles to a taste of Cossack whips, and then we kiss the hands of their crafty little Polish ladies; 'tis sinful and disgusting to spoil people so'./'At any rate', said I, 'our troops there are keeping the Poles from doing us mischief'." Plodomasova's reference to Russians kissing the Polish ladies' hands reflects the stereotypical Russian idea of exaggerated and insincere Polish politeness; her view seems to be that her compatriots are defiling themselves by adopting such a "foreign" custom.

12 On the various anachronisms in Plodomasova's impressive life, see, amongst others, Thomas Eekman, 1963, "The Genesis of Leskov's *Soborjane*," *California Slavic Studies* 2, pp. 121–40.

13 It should be emphasized that the non-Russians in Leskov are, as a rule, not legally foreigners. For example, his Germans are mostly Balts, while the Poles come from a country that had been annexed against its will by Catherine II.

—Вы же,—говорю,—сами, вероятно, изволите помнить двенадцатый год: сколько тогда на Руси единодушия явлено […] мы себя героически отстояли от того, пред кем вся Европа ниц простертою лежала.

Она. Да, удалось, как Бог да мороз нам помогли, так мы и отстояли. […] Все, отец, случай, и во всем, что сего государства касается, окроме Божией воли, мне доселе видятся только одни случайности. Прихлопнули бы твои раскольники Петрушу-воителя, так и сидели бы мы на своей хваленой земле до сих пор не государством великим, а вроде каких-нибудь толстогубых турецких болгар, да у самих бы этих поляков руки целовали. За одно нам хвала—что много нас: не скоро поедим друг друга; вот этот случай нам хорошая заручка.

—Грустно,—говорю. (49–50)[14]

Plodomasova's indeterminate interpretation of the Russians' role in their own history renders the Archpriest no choice but to reconsider the Polish impact on Russian life. However, the two conflicting views on culture and sociopolitical history presented here in the form of a dialogue are not only held individually by the two interlocutors; duality is also an inherent feature of Tuberozov's own thought as expressed in his writings. Having long attempted to maintain his mythic-patriotic apprehension of both "foreign intruders" and of Russian martial valour, Tuberozov enters, after his meeting with Plodomasova, a domain of thought where one-sided, homogeneous apprehensions of anything are problematic. The outcome

14 "'They aren't keeping them from anything whatever,—she replied,—and those Poles would not be a terror to us, either, if we ourselves had not taken a vow to devour each other'./'Your Excellency's censure seems to be somewhat unnecessarily severe', I remarked./'*She*. Nothing is too severe when it is true'./'You probably begin to recall the year 1812',—I replied,—'and how much unanimity of feeling was displayed then […] we heroically withstood the man before whom all Europe lay prostrate'./'*She*. Yes, it came out all right; since God and the cold weather helped us, we withstood him […] everything is accident, Father, and in everything which concerns this empire, with the exception of God's will, I have never seen anything but pure chance. If those schismatics of yours had surprised and done away with little Peter-the-Warrior, we would have been sitting to this present day on our much-lauded land not as a great empire, but looking like thick-lipped Turkish Bulgarians, and we would have been kissing the hands of the Poles. We may thank our stars for one thing—there are a great many of us: we shall be a long time devouring one another; that fact serves us as a good guarantee'./'It is sad,—I said.'"

of the interview is thus threefold: he is unable to uphold his idyllized image of Plodomasova and the feudal age she represents; he finds it difficult to maintain a firm opinion both on the history of the Empire and on his own work in and for this Empire; and, in consequence, he cannot but contemplate his own class and training as a priest. As if realizing that the answer to his "accursed questions" lies not in categorical thinking but in an altogether different way of relating to his surroundings, Tuberozov now begins to grapple more persistently with the problem of social belonging:

> А главное, что меня в удивление приводит, так это моя пред нею нескладность […] если о чем заговаривал, то все это выходило весьма скудоумное […] В чем эта сила ее заключается? Полагаю, в том образовании светском, которым небрегут наши воспитатели духовные, часто впоследствии отнимая чрез это лишение у нас самонеобходимейшую находчивость и ловкость в обращении со светскими особами. (51)[15]

The Archpriest's reflections on the importance of the clergy's contact with secularity point to his sensibility with regard to the perception of his own social status,[16] as well as to an increased awareness of social multiplicity. As opposed to the high, monastic or "black" clergy, who never marry, the *protopop* Tuberozov, who belongs to the low or "white" clergy, is married. At the same time, his social class renders him different from other, secular husbands, so he now finds himself in a borderline situation between two circles, the celibate high clergy and secular society. In fact, he stands at the intersection of several social circles, and, what is more, seems to intuit the significance of this indeterminacy. Here the ethnic and social amplitude to which Tuberozov has to relate accounts not only for the stylistic confrontation in his discourse, but also for other, additional effects.

15 "And the chief thing that astonishes me is my own incoherence in her presence […] if I began to talk about something, it turned out quiet imbecile […] In what does her power consist? I think it must be in her worldly training, which our ecclesiastical teachers neglect, the result being that frequently, through the lack of it, we are deprived of that presence of mind and adroitness which are absolutely indispensable in our intercourse with people of the world."

16 As Orthodox bishops were chosen only from the black clergy, the Archpriest Tuberozov cannot rise any higher in the church hierarchy than he already has.

As Tuberozov discusses Russian politics and history with Plodomasova, his dual, stylistic tendency of idyll and critique exemplifies an interesting border crossing, which, in Wolfgang Iser's definition, "features two worlds that are distinctly marked from one another by a boundary, the crossing of which can be effected only by donning a mask."[17] In opening up an unlimited number of possible relationships between two semiotic positions, the "doubling process," when maintained, ultimately creates a fluctuation of cultural meaning: Tuberozov's idyllic, through and through Russian world of the "old fairy-tale" is not only a counter-image encompassing what is excluded by reality, it is also doubled by an intrusive contemporary world, in such a way that the blending of myth and reality is made possible. The Archpriest's donning a mask is actually an act of "fictionalization," which allows him to act out either what he is denied in the multicultural, socio-historical world from which he comes, or what seems impossible even in the idyllic realm of artifice into which he crosses.

In the company of strangers (*otherness, foreignness*)

As we turn our attention more closely to the semantic complexities of multiethnicity, the depiction of Catholic Poles will be taken as symptomatic of the novel's depiction of ethnic minorities as such. Among all the non-Russians within Stargorod society, they appear more frequently and are more directly involved than others. Underlying the novel's representation of Polishness seems to be a specific understanding of proto-nations or, to use Anthony D. Smith's term, *ethnies*. On the one hand, there is a sense of the "aristocratic" ethnie, which commands the mechanism of the Empire, assimilating lower social classes and outlying ethnic groups into its multicultural heritage. On the other, there is a sense of the ethnie as a vertical, monocultural community, in which emphasis is placed on the ethnic bond uniting those that compose it against the *chuzhoi*—the "stranger" (*strannyi*) or "enemy" (*vrag*).[18] However, in describing Russians and Poles in the Empire's provinces, the chronicler fluctuates, as it were, between these two categories: the Russian hero may shift from one type of ethnie to another, identifying now with the superior culture in command, now with the inferior culture marginalized by the official policy

17 Iser, 1993, pp. 46–47.

18 Smith, 1986, p. 83.

of the Empire. From the first perspective, the Pole may be perceived as belonging to a dissenting unity (representing Catholic "foreignness"), from the second—to an official ruling-class layer of society (controlling Orthodox Russians). Consequently, depending on his ethnocultural position, the Leskovian protagonist cannot easily form a stable opinion of his non-Orthodox co-citizens, nor evaluate his day-to-day relationship with them. This "relativization" of ethnic identity points to an unstable interpretation of culture in *Cathedral Folk*, where the fluctuation can be understood as cultural mechanism, that is, as the displacement of one cultural type by another. The basic dichotomy that fuels this dynamic process is that between the "own" (*svoi*) and the "other" (*drugoi*).[19]

Before taking an in-depth look at various descriptions of Poles and Polishness in Leskov's text, let us consider for a moment the concept of "otherness" as reflected in the Russian language. Among the series of etymologically akin expressions that represent the semantic field of the "other," Renate Lachmann lists the following:

> other: *drugoi*; *drug*: friend
> strange (unfamiliar): *strannyi*; *strana*: country (the other country); *chuzhoi*
> foreign: *inostrannyi, chuzhoi*
> peculiar: *chudnoi*
> miraculous: *chudesnyi*
> monstrous: *chudovishchnyi*[20]

This connotative proliferation implies that the stranger (foreigner) has both an intracultural and an extracultural status: he or she may represent either a different ethnie (a potential enemy), or the same culture. The foreigner within a culture appears to be the representative of the spiritual or the imaginative world (as prophet, eccentric, Holy Fool); he or she functions as the "other" or stranger (*strannyi*) within the dominant culture. From *strannyi* is derived *strannik*, or "pilgrim," "wanderer."

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19 See Iurii Lotman, 1977, "The Dynamic Model of a Semiotic System," *Semiotica* 21, pp. 193–210; and, Iurii Lotman & Boris A. Uspenskii, 1971, "O semioticheskom mekhanizme kul'tury," *Semeiotike: trudy po znakovym sistemam* 5, pp. 144–66.

20 Renate Lachmann, 1996, "Remarks on the Foreign (Strange) as a Figure of Cultural Ambivalence," *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, eds. S. Budick & W. Iser, Stanford, p. 283.

The Leskovian righteous heroes are mostly pilgrims or wanderers, in the sense that they step out of their own sociocultural norms, rejecting their "own" system and institutionalized life in search of an asystemic authenticity and immediacy which is often attainable in an unworldly sphere. This identification of the un- or otherworldly with a foreign country, with the beyond, makes the enemy connote the Devil—the *vrag*. Typically, the "foreign" foreigner (the Pole) is feared, the "native" foreigner (the *strannik*) is respected, implying that intracultural reactions to both keep changing, since the attributes of both phenomena either fuse or interchange: for example, the Russian prophet may become an enemy, the Polish foreigner a prophet. The collision of native and genuine Russian culture, of its simplicity and naturalness, with Western culture and Catholicism, "creates a generative pattern of antagonistic duality that seems to be the very matrix of Russian culture throughout the centuries."[21] In each one of the five texts we analyse here, this duality is reflected in the Russian heroes who are attracted to non-Russian, non-Orthodox sources for moral guidance and inspiration, but who, at the same time, insist on the superiority of their own Orthodox tradition. So what is the significance of the Polishness in Leskov's representation of multicultural Russia? In so far as the cathedral folk vacillate in their myth-based understanding of foreignness, and antagonisms are typically left unresolved in an in-between sphere of affirmation and negation, the Pole emerges as *a figure of cultural ambivalence*.[22]

In the life of our "strannik," the Archpriest of Stargorod, the two coworking stylistic tendencies become particularly clear in the twin terrain of multiethnicity and religion: there are, on the one hand, the representations of positive episodes in the main hero's life, where he is on friendly terms with the "foreign" elements; on the other, there are the negative descriptions of the problems arising from the imperialistic policy of the official Church. As already shown, Tuberozov perceives the hypocrisy of the "secularized" ecclesiastical authorities, both local and central, as well as the many levels of corrupt state bureaucracy, as being disastrous for Russian cultural and religious life alike. This precariousness is often represented by non-Russians, notably Poles.

21 Lachmann, 1996, p. 284.

22 For a comparable approach, see Kuz'min's analysis of the Polish "theme" in some of Leskov's texts from after 1875 (2003, pp. 13–42).

The Polish theme is introduced as Tuberozov laments the presence of the German Governor's manager, before whom he repeatedly has to endure humiliation for the sake of his Russian co-religionists:

> Губернатор, яко немец, соблюдая амбицию своего Лютера, русского попа к себе не допустил, отрядил меня для собеседования о сем к правителю. Сей же правитель, поляк […] напустился на меня с криком и рыканием, говоря, что я потворствую расколу и сопротивляюсь воле моего государя. Оле же тебе, ляше проклаженный […] Однако я сие снес и ушел молча, памятуя хохлацую пословицу: «скачи, враже, як пан каже». (34)[23]

In this case, the Archpriest interprets the Pole according to the traditional and mythic role of the heretical adversary (and as the main target of his frustrations with impious non-Orthodox foreigners in general), because he feels threatened on both a social and a personal level. In using a derogatory word for a Pole (*liach*) and a Ukrainian proverb referring to Polish overlordship, he appears to be identifying symbolically with the "Little Russians" against the Poles.[24] However, since both Poles and Ukrainians are outlying minority ethnies within the "aristocratic" Russian Empire, the connection enemy-master (*vrag-pan*) leads to a blurring between victimizer and victim: in Tuberozov's rather xenophobic outburst, the enemy is both inside and outside his culture. More precisely, the Archpriest's aligning himself with one minority ethnie (the oppressed Ukrainian peasants) opposed to another (the oppressive Polish

23 "The Governor, being a German, and preserving the overweening pride of his Luther, did not admit the Russian priest to his presence, and ordered me to converse with his manager. And this manager, a Pole […] fell upon me with shouts and roars, saying that I was favouring the Schism and was resisting the will of my Sovereign. Woe unto you, you leprous Pole […] However, I bore it, and departed in silence, calling to mind the Little Russian saying: 'Jump to it, O enemy, as the master [*pan*] commands.'"

24 By the same token, Tuberozov expresses here a "national romantic" conception of Slav affinity and a *sub*-Russian Ukraine similar to that of the literary critic and ethnographer Nikolai Nadezhdin (1804–56): "[…] both her geographical situation and historical circumstances have disposed Little Russia to be the most festive expression of the poetry of the Slavic spirit […] Little Russia was naturally bound to become the Ark of the Covenant (*zavetnyi kovcheg*), in which are preserved the most lively features of the Slavic physiognomy and the best memories of Slavic life." Nikolai Nadezhdin, 1831, *Teleskop* 5, pp. 559–60, as quoted in David Saunders, 1985, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture 1750–1850*, Edmonton, p. 175.

lords) opens up the possibility of an interchange of semantic categories: appearing as "the foreign" foreigner with both an intra- and extracultural status, the Catholic Pole may now become a feared enemy, now a respected "prophet" or ally. In the diary as a whole, we find examples of both, depending on whether the diarist is defending himself against the corruption of the Russian Empire's "Westernized" officialdom—the foreign as threat—or wishing to contribute towards a religious and cultural renewal—the foreign as stimulus.

This initial encounter with the manager marks only the beginning of a series of degrading incidents, where he is humiliated by the Poles "to the point of tears and sobs" (до слез и до рыданий, 34). Significantly, Tuberozov's jeremiad is followed by a glorification of his spouse and of the tender compassion expressed by Pizonskii, the combination of which creates a dual rhetorical effect. Whereas his unambiguous praise of the holiness of Russian women (где, кроме святой Руси, подобные жены быть могут? 36)[25] forms an antithetical relationship with the scheming foreigners holding influential bureaucratic posts, complicating the Archpriest's life and corrupting his compatriots in equal measure, the Russian simpleton's message of unconditional forgiveness already hints at a generous and more tolerant strand in the Archpriest's fiery accusations. What is more, however, this positive description of Russianness shows how Tuberozov juxtaposes elements of Polish and Russian myths in order to place himself within multiculture—in *reading* the lives and minds of both his Orthodox and Catholic fellow towndwellers, he better understands his own. I refer here to the psychological concept of mind-reading, which designates a way of relating mentally to other people and which involves the ability to form a theory about the workings of one's own mind and of the mind of the other.[26] Considering the "other" Poles as having thoughts, plans, ambitions, and knowledge like himself, Tuberozov excels in this form of narrative thinking; mind-reading becomes paramount to him both as public priest and as a private person, because he needs to agree and cooperate with his fellow Stargorodians sufficiently to keep the

25 "where except in Holy Russia, can such women exist?"

26 See Michael Carrithers, 1991, "Narrativity: Mindreading and Making Societies," *Natural Theories of Mind: Evolution, Development and Simulation of Everyday Mindreading*, ed. A. Whiten, Oxford, pp. 1–19.

social flow moving. As we have seen, prejudice and misunderstandings often keep things moving all the more energetically.

As an archpriest in the Russian provinces, Tuberozov has a twofold task, the first half of which is imposed upon him by the official Church: to combat "intracultural" foreigners, the schismatics, in his parish through denunciations. Here he encounters the problem of social and cultural complexity head on: Расколу не могу оказывать противодействий ни малым чем, ибо всеми связан, и причтом своим полуголодным и исправником дуже сытым. (32).[27] Tuberozov cannot oppose the schismatics because his actions are circumscribed, first by the dictates of the police authorities, but also by his own clergy: part of their customary income comes from what were in effect bribes from the Old Believers to stave off persecution. This dilemma points to the second, self-imposed half of Tuberozov's task: to challenge the religious and moral corrosion in Imperial Russia caused, in his view, by *all* un-Russian elements, regardless of their ethnic belonging. In composing a memorandum to his superiors "for the good of the Church and the State" (для пользы церкви и государства, 56), he signals his sincere interest in the cultural complexity of the Empire. But whereas the government wishes to deal with the *raskol* not by persuasion, but by persecution, that is, arrests and exile, Tuberozov refuses to comply with this policy.

And so, despite all his claims of loyalty to the Sovereign, the Russian Archpriest is forced into a position of nonconformity and is turned into a subversive from the official point of view. Here his observation about the unavoidability of everyday interaction with religious and cultural minorities also holds true with regard to the Poles.

The accommodation of Polishness

Although Tuberozov's descriptions of how he tries to steer clear of the Stargorod Catholics (drawing on the Old Testament comparison, he invokes "the malice of the Egyptians") may be trivial and circumstantial, they are important for his understanding of self. In an apostrophe to writers and thinkers, he warns that the daily struggles of a provincial Russian priest should not be underestimated, emphasizing "the life that surrounds you, the threads which are worth weaving together […] the ac-

27 "I cannot offer an opposition to the Schism in any way, for I am bound by them all, and by my half-starved staff, and the very well-fed police chief."

tual life which men live" (жизнь, тебя окружающей, нитей, достойных вплетения […] действительная жизнь, которою живут люди, 57) and his own simple existence which is "not meagre but abounding in wretchedness and adventures" (не скудна, но весьма обильна бедствиями и приключениями, 57). The diary is full of entries where attention is given to "arbitrary" details and particulars, to small acts of ordinary people in everyday situations that do not necessarily fit into a fixed narrative pattern, but point to a mode of thought where the little things of the quotidian are of value in themselves. Indeed, the multiethnic surroundings of the Archpriest and his cathedral folk are made up of a multiple series of trivial everyday events, whose motives and function cannot be definitely understood, because they do not stand out as being unique or exceptional.[28] Tuberozov's description of his quarrels with the Poles is marked here by a *heteroglossia* which seems to grow out of his social experiences; moreover, these languages enter what Gary Saul Morson would call a "'Galilean' universe (there are many linguistic worlds, none of which is at the center)" and may thus be dialogized—they cannot hold "their status as the unquestioned way of speaking about a given aspect of life."[29] In this sense, prosaic sensibility plays a prominent (but not uncontested) role in the chronicle-novel as a whole. More importantly, however, the diarist can be said to describe the "Polish problem" (*pol'skii vopros*) by subjecting it to a kind of ambiguous accommodation.

In a heated controversy with the Polish manager over how landed proprietors prevent poor peasants from celebrating their religious holidays by forcing them to work even on the Twelve Great Feast Days (*dvunadesiatye prazdniki*), Tuberozov insists that the Russian people need a Russian leadership and an Orthodox clergy, not a foreign one. To this the "foreign" foreigner retorts: Не бойтесь, отец, было бы болото, а черти найдутся. (58).[30] In quoting the Pole's adroit application of this Russian saying, Tuberozov recognizes the allusion to the myth that everything Russian is a "swamp" and that Russians are "devils" (*cherti*)—which, in

28 The illogicality of everyday life can also be said to be reflected generically in the chronicle-novel's "mosaic" structure.

29 Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 299. See also Gary Saul Morson, 1998, "Philosophy in the Nineteenth-Century Novel," *The Cambridge Companion to the Classic Russian Novel*, eds. M.V. Jones & R.F. Miller, Cambridge, pp. 150–68.

30 "Never fear, father, wherever there's a swamp there will be devils!"

turn, connotes "enemy" (*vrag*). Subsequently, he returns the insult by pretending to deny what is really confirmed:

> «Кто сии черти, и что твои мерзкие уста болотом назвали?»—подумал я в гневе и, не удержав себя в совершенном молчании, отвечал сему пану, что «уважая сан свой, я даже и его на сей раз чертом назвать не хочу». Чем же сие для меня кончилось? Ныне я бывый благочинный, и слава тебе творцу моему, что еще не бывый поп и не расстрига. (58)[31]

In reading the mind of the Pole "extraculturally," the Russian priest seeks to strengthens his position in a cultural confrontation through irony. It appears to be consolidated by a return to one of his favorite myths: the pious women of Russia. Then, after three years of silence, the Archpriest makes two deductions: real Christianity has so far not been preached in Russia; and, all events repeat themselves and can be predicted (59). The first assertion becomes a lifelong inspiration for Tuberozov's pastoral work, while the second is a "rhetorical syllogism," in which the premises are only generally true—the Russian priest cannot foresee the full effect on his life of the approaching "invasion" of Poles:

> *Новый год 1846*. К нам начинают ссылать поляков. О записке моей еще сведений нет. Сильно интересуюсь политической заворожкой, что начинается на Западе, и пренумеровал для сего себе политическую газету. (59)[32]

31 "Who are the devils here, and what does your foul mouth call a swamp?—I said to myself in anger, and not restraining myself, I replied to that Polish *pan* that 'as I respected my office, I would not call him a devil even on this occasion'. And how has it ended for me? Now I am an ex-dean, and glory to Thee, my Creator, that I am not also an ex-priest, and unfrocked!"

32 "*New Year's Day 1846*. They are beginning to exile Poles to us. No news yet of my memorandum. I am taking a strong interest in the political enchantment which is beginning in the West, and have subscribed to a political newspaper." Tuberozov's statement echoes Leskov's view that the chief function of the clergy should be *preaching*, which is, of course, essentially a Protestant attitude. For the Orthodox and the Catholics a more essential function of a priest is celebrating the Eucharist (including effecting the miracle of transsubstantiation), hearing confessions, assigning penances, and granting absolution. The protagonist of *Cathedral Folk* is never seen doing any of these things. The exiled Poles in question seem to be connected to the Cracow-based insurrectionist activities of 1846, whilst the "political newspaper" is most likely Bulgarin's *The Northern*

This brief entry shows that Tuberozov is keen to monitor political developments abroad, because Polishness is part of his everyday life. Moreover, it is symptomatic of his openness to matters great and small that are *not* "genuinely" Russian; in reading about events in the "foreign" West, he exposes himself to non-Russian or Polish influence. This becomes clear throughout his diary, in mind-reading renditions of both dialogues and inner monologues, which involve the Russian parish priest in a process where confrontation with other languages and the realization of linguistic multiplicity play a crucial role. The word of the other anticipates his own by means of paraphrase, citation and reminiscences. In his writing, Tuberozov reproduces the "speech of others," voices and views from both abroad and inside Imperial Russia. As before, the diary is conditioned by the simultaneous presence of two or more national languages that interact within the Empire's cultural system; in other words, the "multilanguagedness" of the Archpriest's text mirrors the multiethnicity of the Russian Empire. In turn, the *otherness* of the languages involved affects his rhetoric, as does the stylistic confrontation between various "texts" (quotations, references), which now has a destabilizing effect and brings about an image of Russianness that is not wholly "Russian." Enter the Polish priest (*ksiądz*) Konarkiewicz and a certain Pan Ignacy Czemernicki,

> […] сей в летах самых юных, но уже и теперь каналья весьма комплектная. Городничиха наша, яко полька, собрала около себя целый сонм соотчичей и сего последнего нарочито к себе приблизила. Толкуют, что сие будто потому, что сей юнец изряден видом и мил манерами; но мне мнится, что здесь есть еще нечто и иное.
>
> 20-го ноября. Замечаю что-то весьма удивительное и непонятное: поляки у нас словно господами нашими делаются, все через них в губернии можно достигнуть, ибо Чемерницкий оному моему правителю оказывается приятель. (59)[33]

Bee, the only publication with permission to cover foreign political events.

33 "[…] the latter a very young man, but already a very thorough rascal. Our Prefect's wife, being a Pole, has gathered about her a whole crowd of her fellow-countrymen, and has become particularly intimate with the last-named. They say this is because the young man is exceptionally good-looking and charming in his manners; but I have a suspicion that there is something more than that./November 20th. I notice something very suprising and incomprehensible: the Poles who dwell among us seem to be becoming our

Underneath these stereotypical descriptions of Poles lies Tuberozov's "monoculturalist" fear of non-Russian contamination of his idyllized local world. He *suspects* that the outsider Czemernicki has become intimate with the Prefect's wife, that he has become friends with the manager; he feigns astonishment and disbelief at their arrogant behaviour. Finally, Tuberozov's reading of the associating "extracultural" foreigners drives him to dispatch a denunciation against them—and *not* against the "intracultural" schismatics—for ridiculing and disgracing the Orthodox liturgy during the Requiem Mass for the Warriors Slain on the Field of Battle:

> […] когда мы с причтом, окончив служение, проходили мимо бакалейной лавки […] то один из поляков вышел со стаканом вина на крыльцо и, подражая голосом дьякону, возгласил: «Много ли это!» Я понял, что это посмеяние над многолетием, и так и описал, и сего не срамлюсь и за доносчика себя не почитаю, ибо я русский и деликатность с таковыми людьми должен считать за неуместное. (60)[34]

To the extent that the canticle *Many Years* is both a liturgical text and a prayer for the long life of the Tsar's family, the disrespectful behaviour of the worldly wine-drinking Poles amounts to blasphemy and *lèse-majesté.* Therefore, Tuberozov is relieved upon learning that his denunciation has resulted in a lull in "Polish abominations against *Rus*'" (польские мерзости на Руси, 60) and that Pan Czemernicki, the Polish priest, the Prefect and his Polish wife have been forced to leave the town. But soon a new prefect, Captain Mrachkovskii, arrives in Stargorod. As if suspicious of the Polish-Ukrainian ring to this surname, Tuberozov points out that it is "derived from the word *mrak* ["gloom"]" (Фамилия происходит от

masters, and everything in the provincial capital is to be obtained through them, for it appears that Czemernicki is a friend of my manager mentioned above."

34 "[…] when the staff and I, after finishing the service, were passing the grocery shop […] one of the Poles came forth upon the porch with a glass of wine in his hand, and imitating the voice of the Deacon proclaimed: 'Is this too much?'. I understood that this was intended as ridicule of the *Many Years*, and so I described it, and am not ashamed of it, and I don't consider myself an informer, for I am a Russian, and ought to deem delicacy with such people inappropriate." The Poles' pun is lost in translation: the Russian for "Is this to much?" (*Mnogo li eto?*) sounds like the words of the canticle "Many Years" (*Mnogaia leta*).

слова мрак, 60) and, with the Czemernicki experience vivid in his mind, he wonders "when will something come to us from the light" (когда к нам что-нибудь от света приходить станет! 60). In using the biblical antithesis light-dark, which here implies native-foreign, the Archpriest attempts to fix his own position in multiculture by juxtaposing the myth of Polish worldliness with that of Russian spirituality.

In this process, Tuberozov's way of reading self through reading others fits poorly with his declared predictability of events. We learn that he is having "fryshtyk" (был на фрыштыке) with the Prefect and his wife, who now turn out to be "extremely amiable" (любезностью большою обладают оба, 60) and have a *vogue* for national lore and tradition: after having drunk a good deal, Mrachkovskii sings Russian patriotic songs, his son performs a Russian children's song and is dressed in a Russian blouse (*rubashka*). Indeed, with this patriotic display being "the latest fashion" (что-то новые новости! 61), the Prefect seems to mirror, if rather superficially, Tuberozov's own endeavours to secure his Russianness in the face of cultural otherness. Bearing in mind that the references to Mrachkovskii are preceded by seven consecutive entries, all of which describe various confrontations between the Archpriest and Polish officials (or their "ruffian" Polish wives), we can say that with the "dismal"/"amiable" Russian Prefect, the diary's Polish theme is continued.

But although Tuberozov seems to take delight in the domesticity of this Russian-Russian bonding, what really satifies him is talking to his host:

> Замечательность беседы сего Мрачковского, впрочем, наиболее всего заключается для меня в рассказе о некоем профессоре Московского университета, получившем будто бы отставку за то, что на торжественном акте сказал: «Nunquam de republica desperandum» в смысле «никогда не должно отчаяваться за государство», но каким-то канцелярским мудрецом понято, что он якобы велел не отчаяваться в республике, то за сие и отставлен. Даже невероятно! (61)[35]

35 "The peculiarity, however, of this Mrachkovskii's conversation lies, for me, in his story about a certain professor of Moscow University, who was dismissed—so he says—for having said, at the solemn graduation exercises: '*Nunquam de republica desperandum*', in the sense that 'one should never despair of the Empire'. But some wiseacre official understood that he was allegedly exhorting people never to despair of a republic, and so he was dismissed. It is fairly incredible!"

As read and retold by Tuberozov, the Prefect's anecdote on Russian reality is indicative of the Archpriest's own struggle. In quest of a truer Orthodoxy and a new Russian Church rendered more accessible and socially engaged, he is sceptical of all forms of official institution; in fact, he is himself continually "despairing of the Empire." As we shall see, Tuberozov's reflections on its cultural complexity, as well as on his own place within it, are informed by Stargorod's multiethnic reality—through his quoting of foreign "texts." In other words, the Russian priest's understanding of Poles in Imperial Russia is determined by his interacting with Polishness, as well as by his own interpretation of this interaction.[36]

For his denunciation of the Poles, Tuberozov has to endure yet another verbal attack from a high official in the provincial capital:

> […] я был руган и срамлен всячески и только что не бит остался за мое донесение […] «ты, дескать, уже надоел своим сутяжничеством; не на добро тебя и грамоте выучили, чтобы ты не в свое дело мешался, ябедничал да сутяжничал» […] каждое движение губ моих встречало грозное «молчи»! (61)[37]

Interestingly, Tuberozov believes that the motivation behind the high official's harsh scolding of him is the official's interpretation of events: the fact that the revelling Poles did not invite Tuberozov and ply him with liquor—to which, he adds, he is "not addicted […] thank God, anyway" (к чему я […] благодаря моего Бога и не привержен)—and that he, in consequence, is supposed to have felt revengeful. Considering the influential position of the Poles in the provincial capital, they seem to have insinuated this explanation to the high official who then berated him for his litigiousness. And thus the Archpriest, as a Russian representative of the

36 A comparable view is taken by Christina Sperrle, who, commenting on Leskov's character portrayal, holds that "a character […] is not defined by what he thinks, how he expresses himself to himself, but how he expresses himself to others, the world outside, in words and deed." Christina Sperrle, 2000, "Narrative Structure in Nikolai Leskov's *Cathedral Folk:* The Polyphonic Chronicle," *Slavic and East European Journal* 44 (1), pp. 42–43.

37 "I was reviled, and put to shame in every possible way, and all but beaten for my denunciation […] He said: 'We are tired of your litigiousness; it was a bad thing that you were taught to read and write, if you are going to use it to meddle with what is no business of yours, to inform on people and to engage in malicious litigation' […] every movement of my lips was greeted with a threatening 'Silence!'"

spiritual and the imaginative world, appears in the role of the "foreign" enemy within the dominant-"aristocratic" ethnie or culture. In turn, this episode instigates a train of thought, in which he recalls the French revolutionary Charlotte Corday d'Armont, who before her execution proclaimed that real patriotic fervour is rare in young and little nations. Slowly moving into an area of both Russian and non-Russian myths, the Archpriest concludes as follows:

> имея пред очами сих самых поляков, у которых всякая дальняя сосна своему бору шумит, да раскольников, коих все обиды и пригнетения не отучают любить Русь, поневоле должен […] думать, что есть еще у людей любовь к своему отечеству! Вот до чего, долго живучи, домыслишься, что и ляхов за нечто похваливать станешь. (62)[38]

For Tuberozov, who finds the patriotism of the Poles sadly lacking in his own people, it is difficult indeed "to deem delicacy with such people inappropriate."[39] Here the mingling of styles and "texts" yields a striking result: having quoted the French revolutionary, the Archpriest juxtaposes two minority groups, one religious (the schismatics), one ethnic (the Poles)—one "foreigner" in culture, one "foreign" foreigner—from the perspective, initially, of an "aristocratic" culture. At the same time, however, in his admiration for their nobleness of feeling (as "strangers," the Poles almost become respected "prophets"), he identifies with both, placing himself *in the middle of* a cultural binarism, becoming himself, as it were, both native and foreign. Hiding behind the Russian myth, he acknowledges through his "multiethnic" speech that this myth is problematic—that reality intrudes. The Archpriest's dialogic understanding of culture and cultural identity is underscored by the fact that whilst he is encouraged and consoled by the newcomer Mrachkovskii, other fellow

38 "[…] having before my eyes those same Poles, in whose minds every pine-tree, no matter how far distant, sighs for its native forest, and the schismatics, who cannot be forced by any insults or persecutions to cease to love *Rus'*, I am involuntarily obliged to […] think that people do feel love for their fatherland! These are the extremes that come with old age—that one will praise even the Poles for something."

39 I here agree with Hugh McLean, who has suggested to me that Tuberozov, in crediting the Poles with (Polish) patriotism, implies that he must be questioning the Russian annexation of Poland.

Stargorodians—led by a certain Mme Biziukina—call him "a calumniator and informer" (ябедник и доносчик, 62). Again, Polishness becomes a figure of ambivalence, denoting foreignness both within and outside Russian culture.

After another seven years a new Police commissioner arrives, wryly described by Tuberozov as "my friend the Pole, whom I denounced in the days of my youthful refractoriness" (друг мой, поляк, на коего я доносил во дни моей молодой строптивости, 63)—Pan Czemernicki. As to the returning Pole, who has now married an affluent Russian widow and become a landed proprietor, the Archpriest reacts according to the myth-based "pre-text" of Polish perversity, anticipating "an enemy, and a very grievous one at that" (враг и, вероятно, наидосадливейший, 63). However, his irony is neutralized and his suspicion softened by the friendship that gradually develops between the two men: soon the Archpriest exchanges kisses of reconciliation with the Polish official, receives gifts on his Saint's day, and is awarded, thanks to him, the *kamilaukion* and the Cross of St Anna. It is from him that Tuberozov borrows rare "Western" books, all written abroad and clandestinely distributed. Whilst regretting the kissing, which took place after a drinking session (apparently, the Archpriest enjoys his liquor after all), he is grateful for the delivery, and, as we have seen, appreciates having access to foreign literature. When, finally, "the arrogant Pole" (дерзкий этот поляк, 64) leaves for St Petersburg, Tuberozov, ambiguously likening the departure of the Catholic Poles to the Exodus of the Israelites, admits that his Polish friend leaves a vacuum behind him and that life will be duller without him.

Although the Poles upset the Archpriest's idyllized world, they are also accommodated as co-members of this world. (We have already shown how his everyday squabbles with the manager lead to an increased awareness of social multiplicity.) As the main hero himself realizes that he is particularly sensitive to "trivial things" (мелочи, 76), because he is "placed in trivial circumstances" (в мале и поставлен, 76), the chronicler addresses the ongoing wrangling both within and outside the imperfect idyllizing vision. In the representation of Tuberozov's struggle with the "foreigners," the chronicler too is just as prone to approve of everything related to Polishness as he is to deplore it.

In a tête-à-tête with the "lovelorn" (влюбленная, 165) Biziukina—whom the Archpriest holds co-responsible for the corruption of schoolchildren with "free-thinking"—the careerist-cum-atheist Termosesov from St Petersburg also expands on the Polish issue, or more precisely, on Polish women. They are, he claims, far ahead of "you, the women of Russia" (вы, жены, всероссийские жены, 169), to which the would-be emancipated Biziukina parries that Polish women are a very different matter, because "they love their fatherland, while we hate ours" (они любят свое отечество, а мы свое ненавидим, 169). From this, Termosesov concludes that whereas the enemies of the patriotic Polish women are all those who oppose an independent Poland, the enemies of Biziukina and her local sisters are all Russian patriots. Already preparing for the Archpriest's downfall, Termosesov apparently accepts Biziukina's declaration that Tuberozov is their "worst enemy" (злейший враг, 169), while he ridicules, at the same time, her concern that all the townspeople will support Tuberozov: […] весь город и весь народ? Термосесов знает начальство и потому никаких городов и никаких народов не боится, 170).[40] With the Archpriest's leitmotifs of "glorious women" and "patriotism" thus being distorted by these two "un-Russian" characters, emphasis is placed on the semantic binarism of foreignness within culture: as regards *both* Polish officials and Russian radicals, they are and are not "strangers."[41]

As witnessed by Tuberozov's own description of his inquisitiveness and unquenchable thirst for rare and foreign literature, non-Russian influence is not seen as exclusively harmful. In spite of his idealization of naturalness and simplicity, the heritage of a bygone *Rus'* alone will not, it seems, be enough to revive a genuine Russian national character. It is significant that the chronicler similarly vacillates in his representation of Polishness. Juxtaposing the Tuberozov-Termosesov showdown with the biblical "clash between Gog and Magog" (стычка Гога с Магогом, 182), he muses rhetorically: Кто устоит в неравном споре? (182).[42] With

40 "[…] the whole town and all the people? Termosesov knows the authorities, and moreover, he fears no towns and no peoples."

41 Of course, the fact that Termosesov blackmails his government superior by threatening to publish the latter's correspondence with "our brethren in the Vistula Provinces" (наши привислянские братья, 171), thereby relating the myth of "the revolutionary Pole," only adds to the sarcasm of the chronicler's account.

42 "Who will survive in the unequal conflict?"

this quotation from a chauvinistic poem by Pushkin, who addressed it to the European supporters of the Polish rebellion,[43] elements of Polish and Russian national myths mingle and confront each other in such a way that they occupy, as it were, even positions. For, on the one hand, the chronicler leans on the myth of Imperial Russia being forever threatened by Polish recalcitrance, which, in turn, complements Tuberozov's understanding of the arrogant Poles in his everyday existence. On the other hand, he offers a different interpretation of Polishness through the Deacon Akhilla, whose praise of a freedom-loving Polish Colonel in the secret police, a certain "good man" (добрый человек, 247) called Albert Kazimirowicz, parallels Tuberozov's own disrespect of Imperial officialdom: Поляк власти не любит, и если что против власти—он всегда снисходительный (247).[44]

The image of the enemy (*vrag*) has now become indeterminate: just as in the diary the dividing line between the "foreigner" in culture (Varnava, Biziukina) and the "foreign" foreigner (Czemernicki, the manager) is blurred, so too in the primary narrative the portrayal of radical Russians and ruling-class Poles represents both the negative *and* the positive currents within the Empire.[45] With the Archpriest himself emerging as an enemy in the eyes of official Russia, the two types of "foreignness" become blended throughout the work. In this respect, the novel's ambiguity—which is caused by the blurring of the borderline between two coexisting tendencies, that is, a positive and negative interpretation of culture and the world—can be related to the interaction found in all narration between the social and the personal, the outer and the inner "landscapes,"[46] one of action, one of consciousness—where changes of mind lead to changes in social relations and vice versa.[47]

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43 The line is from Pushkin's polonophobic poem "To the Slanderers of Russia" ("Klevetnikam Rossii," 1831), in which "the swaggering Pole" (кичливый лях) is opposed to "the true Russian" (верный росс).

44 "A Pole does not love the authorities, and if there's anything opposed to the authorities, he is always lenient with it."

45 Cf. Wigzell (2001, p. 144), who claims that Leskov's "Russianized characters are an amalgam of positive ideals drawn from traditional Russian culture and negative ones in the form of ethnic stereotypes."

46 Jerome Bruner, 1986, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Cambridge, Mass., p. 14.

47 Carrithers, 1992, p. 84.

For Tuberozov naturally relates to Polish officials both as a socially inferior Russian priest and as a private person, in the capacity of acquaintance or even friend, because he and the Poles belong to the same circles. In other words, the multifarious debates, fights, and quarrels he engages in with them influence his reflections on social and personal matters alike, as well as his preoccupation with foreignness within the larger scheme of a renewal (*obnovlenie*) of the Russian faith. However, considering the Archpriest's tendency to both idyllize and criticize, to render Polishness ambivalently, the problem of multiethnicity in the Empire seems to have no straightforward solution.

Processing cultural diversity

The Archpriest's unstable rendering of foreignness leads to an ambivalent understanding of national and cultural identity. In his lifelong struggle to both preserve and enrich the "genuinely" Russian character, including his own, he does not opt for an idyllized version of the Old Rus' values lock, stock and barrel; it is less a question of reviving the ethos of a glorious past, than of confronting the old with the new, the Russian with the foreign—through cultural meetings in an in-between sphere of different myths and mentalities. Tuberozov must relate to the Empire in all its cultural complexity, for he is bound up with them all. A good example is the way he depicts the conflictual relationship with non-Russians as experienced in the cultural borderland of the Russian provinces, as well as his own response to it. As if sensing that the answer to Russia's moral ills is not reducible to alien influence alone, that it lies somewhere in between the foreign and the familiar, he tackles the problem of multiethnicity through a kind of *processing*. In interpreting the minds of his Polish friends and foes alike, as well as his everyday confrontations with them, he models his own position in culture on other- and multilanguagedness, to use the Bakhtinian terms.

As we have seen, "the word of the other" incessantly anticipates Tuberozov's own; by means of various paraphrases, quotations and reminiscences, he reproduces voices and views inside and outside Imperial Russia, thereby creating his own heterogeneous "text." A multiplicity of languages affects the Archpriest's rhetoric; in fact, the rhetoric of the chronicle-novel as a whole is marked by an entire range of "languages": generic conventions, literary styles, ideas and views of life—all treated

from different perspectives. We can therefore say that other- and multi-languagedness inform the way the fictive characters interrelate, how they perceive this mutual action or influence, and ultimately, how they express their perceptions of people and places in anything but lucid reality. In turn, Tuberozov himself emerges as an "idea-processor," or a focal point where the tumultous ideas of his time collide; his processing becomes a model for the interpretation of multiethnicity. The fundamental state of his social world is a mess—making order of it is a "task" or project posited; the main hero is trying, as it were, to maintain cultural coherence in the midst of diversity.

As a fictive character, the Russian Archpriest manoeuvres in a landscape where the experience of multiculture is more normal than monoculture, posing the question: who are "we"? Thus the novel's syncretic treatment of other cultural texts, for instance, the Polish "Mickiewiczan heritage," exemplifies the impossibility of seeing the many cultures of Imperial Russia as bounded entities.[48] Against this observation one can set the fact that a sense of place is usually integral to a person's notions of his or her cultural identity, implying the undeniable role of imagination in anthropological interpretation. In the face of the complexity of multicultural life, where no ethnie is untouched by the plethora of meanings generated by others, most of Leskov's fictive heroes endeavour to construct for themselves relatively simple lives, within a single set of meanings. This becomes clear in the chronicle-novel, where the two central characters, the Archpriest and the Deacon, typically combine elements from various Christian texts to suit their own interpretation of the socially as well as culturally diverse environment to which they belong.

48 By the same token, Tuberozov's notion of an Imperial Russia in which Russia reverts to a pure ethnic unity remains problematic and utopian throughout. It appears to be impossible to form an empire without incorporating alien peoples.

Adapting the Christian Text

> I will bear forth on my head the Body and Blood of the Lord into the wilderness, and there, in the presence of wild stones, in my altar vestments, will I sing: "Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son," and may Rus' be preserved for ever, for thou hast been gracious unto her!

The juxtaposition of two texts within a general text has a destabilizing, generative effect: any "alien" intrusion into the text activates the rhetorical level of the text-structure as a whole. In this process, text and context make up complementary subsets of the set "work of art," since both the cognitive form that lies at the base of the sender's representation of the world and the recipient's interpretation of it, must be considered.[1] For example, in sacral texts, such as sermons and saints' lives, where the author's word is combined with passages from the Bible and the holy writings of the Church, the effect is that the other text mounted into the discourse functions as a code for the reinterpretation of the author's own word, often providing it with meaning which is then perceived by the readership as higher and spiritual.[2] Textual "intrusions" such as these are not isolated from the general text-structure, but, as expressed

1 Within his semiotic theory of culture, Iurii Lotman (1990, p. 37) has shown that when two non-equivalent, contiguous "texts" are juxtaposed within a larger context, new relations of similarity are established between them in such a way that the one text expresses the other. This mutual translation can only be imprecise, but is nevertheless one of the most important features of any kind of creative thinking. In fictional texts, the translation is realized in the form of rhetorical devices: "A pair of mutually non-juxtaposable signifying elements, between which, thanks to the context they share, a relationship of equivalence is established, form a semantic trope."

2 See my article on "The Anagogical Significance of the Kievan Caves Monastery in Nestor's *Zhitie prepodobnago ottsa nashego Feodosiia, igumena Pecherskago manastyria*," *Scando-Slavica* 39, 1993, pp. 37–51.

by Lotman, "enter into playful relationships with it, by belonging and not belonging."[3]

As regards the extensive use of Scripture in *Cathedral Folk*, this interplay of different textual elements or codes in the semiotic space of the text does not prepare the ground for the emergence of anagogical but of "prosaic" meaning. To be more precise, Leskov's technique of juxtaposing his characters' own tales with scriptural quotations, allusions and reminiscences is crucial for our perception of people and society in Imperial Russia, as represented in the novel. In this chapter, I shall try to establish the anthropological implications of this intertextual confrontation: just how does the adaptation of Christian texts reflect the Stargorodians' understanding of their Russianness, of their own multicultural lives and of themselves as human beings?

The social and the personal

Prior to our examination of the fourth styling strategy, it would be useful to elucidate the struggles apparent in the Archpriest's life story. As becomes clear from the Demicoton Book, he wages his war of cultural and religious renewal on two distinct fronts.

On a *social plane*, the diary deals with aspects of sociopolitical reality as they infringe on his aspirations and work as a clergyman. A critical accent is established already in the first entry, where Tuberozov is reprimanded by his superiors for relating his sermon to "real" life. He also complains about the poor living conditions of the rural clergy, for which the Bishop likens him to the "disrespectful Ham" (непочтительный Хам) and encourages him to read *The Imitation of Christ* by the German Thomas à Kempis, so that he may understand the importance of loyalty and modest humility (30–31).[4] Furthermore, he is critical of both the central and local bureaucracies, of the official Church's misconceived ideas of missionary work among the Old Believers, and of the general hypocrisy that Plodomasova refers to by calling the Stargorod altar "a shop-

3 Lotman, 1990, p. 50.

4 Commenting on the rigour of this much-translated edificatory work (1418), Ronald Knox warns that "if a man tells you that he is fond of the *Imitation*, view him with sudden suspicion; he is either a dabbler or a saint. No manual is more pitiless in its exposition of the Christian ideal, less careful to administer consolation by the way." Ronald Knox, 1963, "Preface," T. à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, transl. R. Knox & M. Oakley, London, pp. 7–8.

Hans Gerhard Sørensen · 1958

counter" (*lavochka*). Finally, for Tuberozov the *de facto* indifference to the Church among the civil authorities, who let "foreigners" play an influential role in the life of the Church by giving them high positions in the local administration, is a clear indication of the steadily eroding fabric of Russian society, of its internal strife, corruption and lack of unity. On the social plane of his struggle, Tuberozov also provides the first example of his reforming zeal by writing a comprehensive memorandum to his ecclesiastical superiors on how to improve the conditions of the Orthodox clergy "for the good of the Church and the State" (для пользы церкви и государства, 56). This, however, receives no response whatsoever.

On a *personal plane*, Tuberozov's auto-representation contains his private and most intimate confessions, his reactions to events and concerned reflections. Repeatedly ridiculed, humiliated and degraded, he admits to insecurity, and complains bitterly of his own pettiness and increasing spiritual apathy. He finds strength and inspiration, however, in certain affirmative signs and events, most notably, in the "vision" he experiences after having witnessed Pizonskii's generosity and compassion: appearing in the biblical role of the sower, his gaze directed upwards and his head illuminated by the sun, Pizonskii scatters the seeds in the form of a cross. His prayers on behalf on *all* sinners, на *произволящего*[5] и *неблагодарного*,[6] throws Tuberozov into transports of rapture, and, filled with tender emotion, he sheds soothing tears: умиленно заплакал (36).[7] On the following day, which is the Feast of the Lord's Transfiguration, he devotes his sermon to Pizonskii, a layman, and contrasting his own weakness to the strength and compassion of a *chudak*, he holds up this little man as "an example of strength and an image to be imitated" (в образ силы и в подражание, 37). With his sermon, he once again oversteps the mark by alluding to a living person, and focusing more on a moral issue than on the parishioners' relationship with God. Reflecting on the importance of preachers and priests for the future of Russia, the Archpriest arrives at this deduction: христианство еще на Руси не проповедано (59).[8]

5 The word *proizvoliashchii* has disappeared from contemporary Russian. According to Dal' (1955, vol. 3, p. 486), the verb *proizvolit'* means "to agree" (*izvolit'*), "consent" (*soizvolit'*), "permit" and "agree" (*soglasit'sia*).

6 "for *the permitters* and for *the ungrateful*."

7 "he began to weep with emotion."

8 "Christianity has not yet been preached in Rus'."

As is evident from his diary, Tuberozov's struggle is portrayed on both the social and the personal plane simultaneously. So as to understand this duality better we might recall Jerome Bruner's concept of a "narrative mode of thought," that unfolds across two landscapes simultaneously, one of action, the other of consciousness.[9] The two cannot, however, be easily disjoined. In order to fully comprehend the plot, it is important to have some notion of the peaks and dales in the inner landscape of thought, as well as in the outer landscape of events. Changes of mind lead to changes in social relations and vice versa. Similarly, plot cannot (or should not) be separated from character, which combines both individual and generic characteristics. Thus only by understanding Tuberozov as both a type and an individual, and by monitoring the changes in his status, the transformations in his relationships, attitudes and beliefs—*all* of which are knitted together into a larger, developing, narrative whole—is it possible to fully grasp the action. Hence the significance of the novel's focus on the everyday run of things, on the multitude of small and slight elements of seemingly minor importance which in themselves reflect an intriguing mentality.[10]

We have shown that the Russian Archpriest fluctuates between the chronicle-novel's two stylistic tendencies or worldviews, the idyllic-affirmative and the sociocritical. In turn, such instability is a principal feature of Tuberozov's way of thinking, seen for the first time when, having been reprimanded by the German governor and the Polish manager, he ponders the consequences of ecclesiastical hierarchization:

> Возвращаясь домой, целую дорогу сетовал на себя, что не пошел в академию. Оттоль поступил бы в монашество, как другие; был бы с летами архимандритом, архиереем; ездил бы в карете, сам бы командовал, а не мною бы помыкали. Суетой сею злобно себя

9 Bruner, 1986, p. 14.

10 In order to attain the necessary knowledge about the mentality (*mentalité*) of a people belonging to a given historical evolutionary phase, Aaron Gurevich believes it crucial to examine all aspects of human activity, emphasizing the historical source's sociopsychological aspect: "[…] a knowledge of its specificities, of the conceptual sphere, of the relationship to the world and habits of mind pertaining to the culture of a given epoch which lay in its subconscious substratum and which contributed to the creation of the historical source being studied by us, is a condition essential for the adequate decoding of its message." Aaron Gurevich, 1992, *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, pp. 4–5.

> тешил, упорно воображая себя архиереем, но, приехав домой, был нежно обласкан попадьей и возблагодарил Бога, тако устроившего, яко же есть. (35)[11]

Sceptical about his own competence and perserverance, he reflects critically upon his exposed position as a clergyman of the official Church. He then indulges, as is his wont, in the affection of Natal'ia Nikolaevna, the idyllic haven of domesticity, and affirms the simple facts of his situation by expressing thanks to God. Here we may note that Tuberozov, in evoking positive images of great poignancy, always represents his own humility in this manner, that is, within the idyllic "chronotope." The Archpriest's imagining himself to be an archbishop and an archimandrite is significant, because it points to his own recognition of a specific aspect associated with being an archpriest (*protopop*) in the Russian provinces. Since the episcopacy and the higher ranks of the ecclesiastical administration are reserved for the "black" or monastic clergy, Tuberozov is, as already mentioned, without any real prospect of promotion: he can never reach the "chief" stage of spiritual leadership.[12] Also, we learn that he receives only a minimal salary or sometimes none at all; much to his chagrin, he has to look to the parishioners for his principal source of income by charging for any sacraments he performs for them; he accepts gifts, but refuses to take bribes (30). Given that the Archpriest has a spouse yet has no children, it is interesting that his fluctuation between the two coexisting stylistic tendencies (or worldviews), affirmation and criticism, is coupled with a vacillation between the social and personal planes. More precisely, he transposes grief from one sphere to another. Having touched upon the topic of childlessness in the personal sphere of matrimony:

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11 "All the way home I lamented that I had not gone to the Academy. Thence I would have entered the monastic life, like the rest: in time I would have become an archimandrite, then a bishop; I then would have ridden in a carriage, I myself would have issued commands, they would not have harassed me. I comforted myself viciously with this vanity, obstinately imagining myself an archimandrite, an archbishop, but when I reached home, and was tenderly caressed by my wife, I gave thanks to God who has arranged things for me as they are."

12 Cf. Heb. 4:14, where Christ is referred to as "a great high priest" (Greek, *arkhiereus*).

> Чего эти слезы? […] жена добрая и не знающая чем утешать мужа своего, а утехи Израилевой, Вениамина малого, дать ему лишенная. (38).[13]

he transfers this same topic into the social sphere by alluding to the problem of promiscuity among rural priests:

> […] она сказала:—Нет, ты, отец Савелий, вспомни, может быть, когда ты был легкомыслен… Это она тщится отыскать мое незаконное дитя, которого нет у меня! (39)[14]

only to climax in an exalted generalization on the felicity of husbands and wives:

> Пришла мне какая мысль сегодня в постели! Рецепт хочу некий издать для всех несчастливых пар как всеобщего звания, так и наипаче духовных, поелику нам домашнее счастие наипаче необходимейшее. (42)[15]

With his focus on the small, everyday things that occur in his provincial life, Tuberozov's "narrative thinking" is quite revealing here. In referring to Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, who was too young to leave for Egypt with his brothers (when Joseph was sold as a slave), he upholds the traditional antithesis Israel/Egypt—Russia/"enemy," which has its basis in the biblical source text (consider the diary description of the Poles' cunning as "the malice of the Egyptians"). Furthermore, while executing circular, rhetorical movements of the kind idyll-reality-idyll, personal-social-personal, church-secular-church, Tuberozov interprets his vulnerable position as a Russian priest ("domestic happiness is even more indispensable to us") by superimposing onto it his own interpretation of the predica-

13 "Why these tears? […] kind wife, who is not able to comfort her husband and […] to give him the consolation of Israel, a little Benjamin."

14 "[…] she said:—Yes, Father Savelii, recall a moment where you were perhaps frivolous […] she was trying to discover my illegimate child, which does not exist!"

15 "What an idea occurred to me in bed today! I want to publish a recipe for all unhappy couples, of all classes, especially those belonging to the caste of the clergy, since domestic happiness is even more indispensable to us."

ment of others ("all unhappy couples"). By relating mentally to the needs of others, he better understands his own needs.

As is clear from his regular exposure to Polishness and to various kinds of foreign literature, Tuberozov, who is a representative of official Orthodoxy, readily consults authorities *outside* his Church and culture in order to cope with his problems, both social and personal. Just as he crosses cultural boundaries in order to understand the vicissitudes of his moral and religious struggle, so too, in his search for identity, he looks both within and beyond his own sociocultural community. But such outgoingness does not seem to make things easier for him. On the contrary, the "presence of mind and adroitness" he so admires in the secular Plodomasova often stands in direct opposition to his own muddled recording of external, as well as internal conflicts:

> *25-го декабря.* Не знаю, что о себе думать, к чему я рожден и на что призван? Попадья укоряет меня, что я и в сей праздник Христова рождества работаю, а я себе лучшего и удовольствия не нахожу, как сию работу. Пишу мою записку о быте духовенства с радостию такою и с любовию такою, что и сказать не умею. Озаглавил ее так: «О положении православного духовенства и о средствах, как оное возвысить для пользы церкви и государства». Думаю, что так будет добро. Никогда еще не помню себя столь счастливым и торжествующим, столь добрым и столь силы и разумения преисполненным. (56)[16]

Tuberozov is characteristically heterogeneous: first, he responds bitterly to the many absurdities inherent in his priestly office; second, he refers to his wife's "reproach" as a comforting corrective; third, he criticizes the ecclesiastical authorities for ignoring the everyday hardship of provincial churchmen; fourth, he posits work for the common good as a prerequisite

16 "*December 25th.* I know not what to think of myself, why I was born, and to what I have been called. My wife reproaches me for working even on this festival of The Lord's Nativity, but I find no greater satisfaction than this work. I am writing a memorandum about the conditions of the clergy's existence with more joy, and more love than I am able to express. I have entitled it: 'Concerning the Situation of the Orthodox Clergy, and the Means of elevating them, for the Profit of the Church and the Empire'. I think that will be good. Never do I remember to have been so happy before, so triumphant, so amiable, and so filled to overflowing with force and understanding."

for his own happiness and spiritual development. Thus his fluctuation between the positive and the negative on the one hand, and the social and the personal on the other, may be conceived of as a kind of *self-exegesis*; a constant urge on the part of the Archpriest to explain and interpret his own role in the multiethnic society of Stargorod.

I would like to stress that in his descriptions of everyday conflicts, of his allies and adversaries (his wife, the Deacon, the manager, the schoolteacher), Tuberozov tends to shift his focus consistently from the contemporary world towards the other, scriptural world. Rhetorically speaking, he makes a "metaphorical detour," which is Hans Blumenberg's term for our need to let our focus shift from one thematic sphere onto another that we assume to be revealing.[17] By employing this substitutional "technique of speech,"[18] Tuberozov is able to suspend his chaotic position as a human being. As we will show, both the Archpriest and the Deacon may, in anthropological terms, "extend themselves" by perceiving the Heavenly Kingdom in the sphere of the quotidian. Instead of understanding Stargorod life *as* Stargorod life, the cathedral folk understand it *through* something else. Seen in this light, let me demonstrate the function of the characters' adaptation of Christian texts by examining some of the numerous descriptions of their homiletic activity.

Transformation in imitation

The significance of sermons, prayers and instructions in the novel as a whole is signalled already in one of the first diary entries, where the young Tuberozov, who insists on preaching "the living word," is castigated by the bishop for alluding "to real life" (30). Aspiring to instill in his congregation a sense of the pervasive spirituality of Russian culture, the main hero is inspired by the idea of an "Orthodox naturalness." But homiletic elements also form an integral part of the mode of thinking of the secondary characters. A salient example is the deathbed scene with Natal'ia Nikolaevna, where the Deacon appears before her in a dream:

17 "Since our connection to reality is always indirect, elaborate, delayed, and selective, such a [metaphorical] detour implies an important substitutional process that enables us to perceive the given (*das Gegebene*) as something granted and the other (*das Andere*) as something intimate and easily available." Cf. Hans Blumenberg, 1986, "Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik," *Wirklichkeiten, in denen wir leben: Aufsätze und eine Rede*, Stuttgart, p. 116.

18 Blumenberg, 1986, p. 106.

> «Что же вы не помолитесь, чтоб отцу Савелию легче было страждовать?» —«А как же,—спрашивает Наталья Николаевна,—поучи, как это произнести?»—«А вот,—говорит Ахилла,—что произносите: господи, ими же веси путями спаси!»—«Господи, ими же веси путями спаси!»—благоговейно проговорила Наталья Николаевна, и вдруг почувствовала, как будто дьякон ее взял и внес в алтарь, и алтарь тот огромный-преогромный: столбы—и конца им не видно, а престол до самого неба и весь сияет яркими огнями […] (262)[19]

Natal'ia Nikolaevna's wish to learn how to pray for her husband's endurance, as well as Akhilla's instructing her how to do so using liturgical phrases reminiscent of the Gospels,[20] reflects a traditionally patriarchal worldview on the part of the simple-hearted woman, wherein the cathedral *men* have a privileged position. We also recognize the Archpriest's influence on her "thinking" when the Deacon, in the same dream, reiterates the idealization of Russian pious women, exclaiming: Вы не женщина, а вы *сила*! (262).[21] Further, with the linking of Akhilla's didactic exhortation concerning Tuberozov's suffering in this world ("utter it this way") to her own idea of a resplendent afterworld ("the altar reached to the very sky, and was all gleaming"), Natal'ia Nikolaevna's interpretation of life and death seems to rest on a fully harmonized set of Russian Orthodox values.

Not so in the case of Tuberozov. Compared to the Deacon's simple application of Scripture as portrayed in the dream of his wife, the Archpriest's own homiletic practice reveals a far more complex stance:

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19 "'Why don't you pray that it may be easier for Father Savelii to suffer?'—'But how?' asked Natal'ia Nikolaevna, 'teach me how to utter it'.—'Utter it this way', said Akhilla: 'O Lord, save him by the ways which Thou knowest!' 'O Lord, save him by the ways which Thou knowest!' said Natal'ia Nikolaevna devoutly, and suddenly seemed to feel the Deacon take her up, and carry her into the sanctuary, and the sanctuary was large, immensely large, there were pillars, and one could see no end to them, and the altar reached to the very sky, and was all gleaming with brilliant flames […]."

20 See, for example, Ps. 86:2, 16, "O thou my God, save thy servant that trusted in thee […] save the son of thy handmaid"; 118:25, "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord […]"; and, 139:4, "[…] O Lord, though knowest it altogether."

21 "You are not a woman, you are a *force*!"

> Сегодня я говорил слово к убеждению в необходимости всегдашнего себя преображения, дабы силу иметь во всех борьбах коваться, как металл некий крепкий и ковкий […] Говоря сие, увлекся некоею импровизацией и указал народу на стоявшего у дверей Пизонского […] который […] величайшее из дел человеческих сделал, спасая и воспитывая неоперенных птенцов [сирых]. […] Выговорив это, я сам почувствовал мои ресницы омоченными и увидал, что и многие из слушателей стали отирать глаза свои […] (36–37)[22]

In referring to Pizonskii who yields so easily to the emotions, Tuberozov addresses the old Russian Orthodox ideals and the importance of adopting these ideals into Russian contemporaneity. Stressing the emotional nature of the simpleton's compassionate act ("the greatest of human deeds, rescuing and bringing up unfledged chicks"), he preaches *adaptability* (consider, "transfigured," "forge ourselves," "improvisation") in such a manner that he obviously achieves an emotional response in both himself and his listeners ("my eyelashes were wet"; "they, too, were wiping away their tears"). From a cognitive point of view, the diary entry illustrates a significant aspect of Tuberozov's adaptation technique by which Christian texts are transferred into his subjective experience; that is, elements of the scriptural "source domain" (the sower figure, ideas of humility, compassion, "tender emotion") are represented in the "target domain" of his own life. In this way—I employ a term used by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson—the Archpriest's life story acquires meaning by being metaphorized as *a mapping* of the Gospel stories, in his own as well as in the chronicler's interpretation of it.[23]

In this respect the Archpriest's faith appears to be less a contemplation of God, and more a "natural" condition or *a state* of God, which is in

22 "Today I preached a sermon on my conviction as to the necessity of our being transfigured every day, that in all struggles we may have strength to forge ourselves into shape like strong and malleable metal […] As I said this, I was carried away into a sort of improvisation and called the attention of the congregation to Pizonskii, who […] has performed the greatest of human deeds, rescuing and bringing up unfledged chicks [orphans]. […] When I had uttered this, I felt that my own eyelashes were wet, and saw that many of my hearers, too, were wiping away their tears […]."

23 For a full discussion of metaphor as cross-domain conceptual "mapping," see George Lakoff & Mark Johnson, 1999, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York, pp. 46–60.

itself a pre-eminently Orthodox idea.[24] Interestingly, the ideals of emotional responsiveness and of relating to real life directly influence the way in which he combines elements from Christian texts in order to suit the interpretation of himself as being "malleable" in his own sociocultural environment:

> Прошу вас,—сказал я с поклоном,—все вы, здесь собравшиеся достопочтенные и именитые сограждане, простите мне, что не стратига превознесенного воспомнил я вам в нашей беседе в образ силы и в подражание, но единого от малых […] грешний поп ваш Савелий, назирая сего малого, не раз чувствует, что сам он пред ним не иерей Бога вышнего, а в ризах сих, покрывающих мое недостоинство,—гроб поваленный. Аминь. (37)[25]

In contrasting the simpleton Pizonskii ("one of these little ones") to one of the Church's official heroes ("some highly-renowned warrior"), Tuberozov holds up the former as a personification of the essential qualities of righteousness: selfless love combined with self-reliance and everyday perseverance. Then, as he refers to his own personal shortcomings by juxtaposing the same lay person with himself, an unworthy parish priest of the official Church ("your sinful Savelii"), his *self* emerges, as it were, from behind the official priestly figure ("a ruined sepulchre […] stands within these vestments"). The comparison of himself to Pizonskii "the sower"[26] and to "Kotin the poor, Kotin, the nourisher of orphans" (Котин

24 I agree with Jean-Claude Marcadé (1986, p. 360), who states that in Leskov's novel "there is no desire for ethnographic, psychological, not even for philosophico-theological exploration. He presents a *state* and does not reflect upon this state. This is what I would call an *ethology*. Father Tuberozov is not trying the existence or the non-existence of God. His faith is a state of God and not the thinking about God; this is an "orthodox" idea *par exellence* (orthodox, in every meaning of the term)."

25 "'I beg of you',—I said, making a reverence,—'that all you respected and distinguished fellow citizens here assembled, will forgive me that in my address I have not held up to you some highly-renowned warrior as a model of strength and imitation, but one of these little ones […] your sinful priest Savelii as he gazed upon this little one, has felt, more than once, that he himself, in comparison with him, is not the priest of the most high God, but that within these vestments which cover my unworthiness stands a ruined sepulchre. Amen.'"

26 Cf. the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:19–20: "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which is sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. He

нищий, Котин, сирых питатель, 37), reflects Tuberozov's metaphorical approach to the text: as a sincere Orthodox believer he expects his listeners to share his susceptibilty to the allegorical style and not to take the Gospel story at its face value.[27] Moreover, it points to an ambiguous perception of the Empire's official "mentality" that is symptomatic of his thinking as a whole. Towards the end of the text, he elaborates on the joy of ministering to children who are not his kith and kin, who do not directly belong to his people. With the sermon being composed for The Day of the Lord's Transfiguration, the antithesis "one's own"—"strange ones" seems to indicate his own oscillating understanding of foreignness within Imperial Russia.

It should be emphasized that both the public and private events described in the diary take place before a revelatory experience, or "vision," when Tuberozov seems to be given a new lease of spiritual life. More and more deeply immersed in trivia and apathy, he moves gradually towards a turning point. The story of the Russian Archpriest's almost lifelong struggle, embedded in the narrative process dominated by the idyllic chronotope, may also be seen as a gradual, protracted *process of transformation*. For our purposes it is important that within this process the figure of the Archpriest is portrayed according to hagiographic patterns as an *imitator Christi*. By establishing a relationship between the socially engaged Archpriest as an image and Christ as the prototype, Tuberozov achieves two things. First, direct association with the cultural traditions of Old (medieval) Russia is made possible, drawing, as it were, the past into the present. Second, by introducing the Christian *Urbild-Abbild* relationship, the character of the Archpriest as an instrument of social criticism gains in pathos. As an aspect of his ongoing struggle, Tuberozov's *imitatio Christi* is dually represented, both on a social and on a personal plane. Moreover, we are dealing here with a process where two points of

that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

27 In a similar vein, Gabriella Safran (2000, p. 121) has demonstrated how the epistemological concerns expressed in Matthew 13:10–11, 13, become a yardstick for Leskov's representation of "true" and "false" Jewish converts, or Christian sincerity as such. The distinguishing line goes between those "metaphorical listeners who do not limit themselves to the letter of the story, but instead look for a deeper meaning," and those "who 'seeing, see not, and hearing, hear not, neither do they understand' […] pedantic listeners, who only see what lies on the surface, and can penetrate no deeper."

view—that of the main hero and that of the chronicler—do not oppose one another.

The turning point in Tuberozov's transformation occurs in the forest during a thunderstorm, in the form of an ecstatic vision. Having visited the more remote villages of his parish, he makes a stop in order to rest on his way home. Seeking refuge from the sultry heat in an oak coppice, he enters an in-between state, where he is neither awake nor asleep; significantly, he glimpses a mysterious saint-like figure in the distance, and notices a raven soaring above him.[28] Suddenly, there are peals of thunder, and the raven alights in the crown of an old oak near him; the lightning strikes, and a bloody flame falls downwards over the waters of a nearby spring, but then writhes upward to the sky. Awestruck by this exchange of flames between the terrestrial and the celestial, Tuberozov falls down on one knee, and, covering his face with his hands, surrenders—like Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane—his life and soul to God.[29] After the storm the forest becomes full of "idyllic" life (освещение теплое; с полей несся легкий парок; в воздухе пахло орешиной, 229),[30] but the raven lies crushed under the tree in which it had sought refuge. On a symbolic level, there has been an exchange of two flames: the old and weak Archpriest has been replaced by a new and invigorated one, the raven has died and an eagle has taken its place: Словно орлу обновились крылья! (229).[31] As a direct result of this renewal of faith, the Archpriest prepares the second example of his reforming zeal, a fiery sermon in which he condemns all the dignitaries of Stargorod for the emptiness of their reli-

28 In an earlier version of the thunderstorm scene in the forest, Tuberozov has three visions of the seventeenth-century schismatic Avvakum who summons him to action, while in the present and final text the precise reference is deleted, reduced to the Archpriest's wondering: «С кем я это здравствуюсь? Кто был здесь со мной»?—старается он понять, просыпаясь. И мнится ему, что сейчас возле него стоял кто-то прохладный и тихий в длинной одежде цвета зреющей сливы… (224) (""Who was I greeting? Who was it here with me?' he tried to understand as he awoke. And it seemed to him, that standing beside him had been a cool, quiet figure in a long robe the colour of a ripening plum…").

29 Stoliarova (1978, p. 102), who is less interested in the storm scene in terms of religious renewal, stresses its folkloric and legendary undertones as a reconfirmation of Tuberozov's "old fairy-tale," the myth of Russia's heroic-patriotic past.

30 "the light was warm; a thin steam rose from the fields; there was an odour of hazel bushes in the air."

31 "It was as though an eagle had acquired new wings!"

gion.[32] Regarding the novel's intertextual network, there is also a connection here, which is easily recognizable to a Russian reader: like the mortal in Pushkin's celebrated poem "The Prophet" (1826), who is transformed by a seraph into a prophet and admonished to "burn the hearts of men with the word," Tuberozov is now prepared to go out into the world.

With the aim of addressing Russian conditions, the Archpriest sketches an outline of a sermon around the opening lines of Psalm 72 ("Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son" 231), which emblematizes the thematic duality of its content: the religious and secular themes are already juxtaposed.[33] He begins by referring to the raven, crushed during the thunderstorm, as a symbol of ignorance. Then, with the antithesis "salvation"—"ruin" and the juxtaposition "theorizing"—"understanding," he points to the moral indifference and insufficiency of contemporary religious education, which lead only too often to an "erratic judgement of actions" (кривосудство о поступках (231). Resorting to the revered Archbishop Innokentii Khersonskii's edificatory text, *The Last Days of the Earthly Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, he offers two *exempla* of such distortion: the condemnation of Moses for his patriotic zeal (he killed an Egyptian who beat a Jew; consider Exodus 2:11–15) and the approval of Judas' betrayal of Christ as upholding the law. The traditional homiletic device of bringing the past into the present is then made explicit—Дние наши также лукавы (231)[34]—and the threefold focus of his sermon is drawn up: people are corrupted by secret enemies of the Empire, they are indifferent to the welfare of Russia, and their prayer on days of religious festivals is reduced to lip service and pure formality. Thus the crushed raven takes on still greater significance by

32 The chronicler seems keen to link the mood of this homiletic work-in-progress scene to that of similar descriptions in Tuberozov's diary: Ночь, последовавшая за этим вечером […] напоминала ту, когда мы видели старика за его журналом (231) ("[…] the night which followed this evening recalled the one when we beheld the old man with his journal").

33 As pointed out by Weinberg [Sperrle] (1996, pp. 153–54), this Psalm also establishes an important dichotomy between father (king) and son (heir apparent): "justice, that is, law, is static and primary and belongs to the father. But righteousness, which is the act of deciding what is right or wrong and behaving accordingly, is active and belongs to the offspring." For our purposes, we may say that this dichotomy reflects Tuberozov's own vacillation as regards his aspiration to become a "righteous" man in a renewed Christian faith: he is torn between overweening confidence and humility.

34 "Our days also are evil."

symbolizing not only the Archpriest before his spiritual renewal, but also the Russian people before a future renewal of their faith. At this point, we may speak of the "eventness" of the Christian text; it is crucial for the disillusioned, self-interpreting Tuberozov that Holy Writ is embodied, becomes something important, *an event*, in his life.

As Tuberozov sees it now, Russian churchgoers attend services out of fear, and prayer itself has become a commercial transaction, or as expressed by Tuberozov, a "trading in the temple" (торговля в храме, 232), without any inherent meaning. The motif of the official Church as a "house of merchandise" and a place of insincere and hypocritical worship has already been introduced in his diary, in the dialogue with Marfa Plodomasova, but the Archpriest amplifies the argument by alluding more specifically to the idea of the Church as "a house of prayer" (Luke 19:46) and to the story of Christ driving the money-changers from the temple with a whip of cords (John 2:13–25). Consequentially, Tuberozov does not concentrate here on the spiritual, but on the social aspect of the Christ-figure. As will be remembered, Christ's rebuking the money-changers for having turned his father's house into a "den of robbers" and his driving them out of the temple, was an action to which the Jews reacted particularly severely (Luke 19:45–48). Thus, by giving this episode such a dominant place in the sermon, a provocative comparison is achieved between the money-changers and the hypocritical officials of contemporary Russia on the one hand, and between Christ and the socially critical Archpriest on the other. As in the sermon dedicated to Pizonskii, the compassionate "sower," Tuberozov once again deviates from common Orthodox practice *as preacher*, in that he puts greater emphasis on the amelioration of this world than on the saving of souls for the hereafter.[35]

Through images invoked from the adapted Christian texts, Tuberozov creates another world by reading his life struggle metaphorically. In the landscape of his consciousness, he makes a connection between what happened to Jesus and his own situation, so that the former merges with the latter, "transforming his landscape of action into a variation on the theme developed in the Gospel story."[36] In this sense, the theme of trans-

35 McLean, 1977, p. 198.

36 Jostein Børtnes, 1998, "Religion," *The Cambridge Companion to the Classic Russian Novel*, eds. M.V. Jones & R.F. Miller, Cambridge, p. 121.

formation ("Transfiguration") may be understood as a cultural subtext, or rather, as a master *pre-text* which comes into play as it is transposed into the actual, manifest text.[37] Foreshadowed in the diary by reference to the manual of à Kempis and anticipated by the episode in the forest, Tuberozov's *imitatio Christi* is now, in the final part of the sermon, made explicit and internalized:

> […] Господь наш И.Х. не только возмутился божественным духом своим, но и вземь вервие и изгна их из храма.
>
> Следуя его божественному примеру, я порицаю и осуждаю сию торговлю совестью, которую вижу пред собою во храме. Церкви противна сия наемничья молитва. Может быть, довлело бы мне взять вервие и выгнать им вон торгующих ныне в храме сем, да не блазнится о лукавстве их верное сердце. (232)[38]

Tuberozov refers to his own pastoral role as a teacher and *arkhos* of his flock, and to his readiness to fight against unchristian elements which threaten the community of Russian Orthodox believers. However, in developing the comparison between Christ and himself, he makes clear that the words of his sermon are not merely rhetorical:

> Да будет слово мое им вместо вервия. Пусть лучше будет празднен храм, я не смущуся сего: я изнесу на главе моей тело и кровь Господа моего в пустыню и там пред дикими камнями в затрапезной ризе запою: «Боже, суд твой цареви даждь и правду твою

37 If we follow Renate Lachmann's (1997, pp. 25–35) ideas on the relation between an "intertextually" focused text and the dimension of reader response, *Cathedral Folk* may be seen as an implied text—a point of interference among the many preceding "texts" that have encoded cultural experience and passed it on in a communicative form. To be sure, as the "implied" chronicle-novel will itself always be a pre-text, or the subtext of another text that has yet to follow, its semantic potential may "only be defined approximately—in other words, according to our limited cultural horizon."

38 "[…] not only was our Lord, Jesus Christ, troubled in his divine spirit, but also he took a scourge and drove them out of the temple./Following His divine example, I accuse and condemn this trading with conscience that I see before me in the temple. This hired prayer is repulsive to the Church. Perhaps I ought to take a scourge of cords and drive forth those who today trade in this temple, so that the faithful heart may not be tempted by their guile."

сыну цареву», да соблюдется до века Русь, ей же благодеял еси! (232)[39]

The figure of the Archpriest may be likened to that of Christ in that they both introduce the motif of an empty or ruined temple, implying its restoration on new soil. When referring to the restored temple, Christ spoke not of an edifice, but of the temple of his body, thereby predicting his own resurrection. On a social level, Tuberozov uses the word "temple" symbolically in a similar manner, denoting Russian Orthodoxy itself. On a personal level, however, the allusion to the Gospel story, and especially to the severe reaction of the Jews, which led to Christ's persecution and crucifixion, further amplifies Tuberozov's role as an *imitator Christi*.

As another call for reform, the sermon has a devastating effect on Tuberozov's life, putting an end to his service in the Church. Implying that the Church will betray the faith it preaches if State and Church are to remain inseparable at all costs, he condemns public hypocrisy and the empty performance of ritual that the State practises and the Church condones. Significantly, the chronicler continues the story in a metaphorical manner similar to that of the central character: just as the Jews were outraged over Christ's interference in social and secular matters, and later mocked him for having said he would rebuild the temple in three days (John 2:19–21, 29; Matthew 27:40), so too the local bureaucracy of Stargorod and the ecclesiastical authorities of the provincial capital are both equally infuriated by the Archpriest's interference, and by his accusing them of hypocrisy. It is now Termosesov, that "moral monster who lacks convictions of any kind, religious, anti-religious, political or otherwise,"[40] delivers his *coup de grâce*: like Christ, Tuberozov is denounced, arrested three days later, and led off to ecclesiastical confinement.[41]

39 "Let my word take the place for them of the scourge. Rather let the temple be empty, I will not be disturbed thereat: I will bear forth on my head the Body and Blood of the Lord into the wilderness, and there, in the presence of wild stones, in my altar vestments, will I sing: 'Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son', and may Rus' be preserved for ever, for thou hast been gracious unto her!"

40 Hugh McLean, 1974, "Cathedral Folk: Apotheosis of Orthodoxy or Its Doomsday book?," *Slavic Forum: Essays in Linguistics and Literature*, ed. M.S. Flier, The Hague, p. 141.

41 As Konrad Onasch points out, one of the most prominent Russian preachers of the 1860s, the defrocked Archimandrite Aleksandr Bukharev (1822–71), insisted that the goal of the Orthodox faith was not merely to guarantee the parishioners' bliss in the afterlife, and stressed the importance of addressing their social consciousness by relating

Describing to Natal'ia Nikolaevna his future sequestration and inhibition in hagiographic terms as a "vita" (жизнь уже кончена; теперь начинается «житие», 235),[42] the Archpriest himself consciously constructs a parallel between his own life and that of Christ. The provocative tale of the Gospel has become an event in his life.

The adaptation of scriptural elements in Tuberozov's sermon implies the conventional dichotomy between good and evil forces: by drawing a parallel between himself as a parish priest and Christ on the one hand, and between the government officials and the biblical Jews on the other, he evokes an image of a Holy Russia which needs to be defended by pious believers from the contamination of infidels. This mythic interpretation of the supremacy of Russian Orthodoxy does not, however, fit the Archpriest's exegetic scheme as neatly as it might seem. We know only too well that the negative elements in the Archpriest's life frequently appear among "his own" (Varnava, Biziukina, the Postmaster's wife); after all, Ishmael Termosesov, his urban arch-enemy, is a Russian. Besides, Tuberozov's own attitude towards all things foreign is highly unstable, vacillating between rejection and approval, enmity and friendship. In the context of the Empire's multiculture, therefore, his plea "may Rus' be preserved forever" cannot simply apply to the Russian "victims" and their non-Russian "enemies." In other words, any attempt to read the Archpriest of Stargorod as a one-sided, Slavophile expression of Orthodox Russianness is problematic.

In Orthodox anthropology, the ultimate goal of life is to be formed in the image of God; Orthodox Christians "may consciously, by an act of their own free will and to the extent of their possibilities, enter upon the task of creating in themselves the likeness of God in imitation of Christ's archetype."[43] In a similar way, Tuberozov, whilst representing the external vicissitudes of his own life, shapes his "inner" self by identifying with the role of the shepherd and with the preacher's urge to act. Here we may

religious duties to contemporary life. This point may be compared to that preached by Tuberozov. Konrad Onasch, 1993, *Die Alternative Orthodoxie: Utopie und Wirklichkeit im russischen Laienchristentum des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts. 14 Essays*, Paderborn, pp. 96–97. For a discussion of Leskov in the context of Russian nineteenth-century lay theology, see also Konrad Onasch, 1987, "Die 'Gerechten' und 'Stillen im Lande': Zur Kirchenkritik des 19. Jahrhunderts bei Leskov und Dostoevskij," *Dostoevsky Studies* 8, pp. 135–41.

42 "our old life has come to an end; from now on life will be a *vita*."

43 Børtnes, 1998, p. 105.

observe the adaptation of Christian texts on the level of self-persuasion: in so far as Tuberozov's reformist aspirations remain unsuccessful, his final sermon may function as a "substitute" for "real" action.[44] In other words, within the *imitatio Christi*, his archpriestly life acquires additional meaning by being metaphorized as a "mapping" of the life of Christ.

After his controversial sermon, Tuberozov lives in sequestration for months, until the authorities agree to release the old man on condition that he submits and begs forgiveness for his insolence. A battle now ensues in the Archpriest between his stubborn pride and the humble side of his nature. Significantly, his confinement marks *a liminal stage* in his life struggle: about to move from one sphere of Russian Orthodoxy to another, he emerges as a "wanderer"; as an official "enemy" and, at the same time, an unofficial "prophet," he has himself become "a stranger in culture." Only when the dwarf Nikolai Afanas'evich, the voice of feudal Russia, persuades the authorities to *command* him to beg forgiveness does Tuberozov give in. Unwilling to yield to entreaty, he now shows obedience to severity. Unlike the seventeenth-century Archpriest Avvakum, Tuberozov is neither a "maniac" (*man'iak*) nor a rebel within the established Church, but submits to the authorities—although he does not accept what the authorities represent, he suffers defeat on the social level of his *imitatio Christi*, as indeed did Christ. This is significant, as it indicates a fundamental duality in the novel's symbolic hero: he vacillates between idyllic humility and a public struggle that goes beyond the idyllic world of the presbytery.

In what may be considered to be the final stage of his transformation process, Tuberozov emerges most clearly as a spiritual father. His role as a *dukhovnyi otets* is an important aspect of his *imitatio*, and is anticipated by the father-child or parent-orphan motif as seen in his contacts with such figures as Pizonskii and his ward, Marfa Plodomasova and her dwarf and, ultimately, in the Archpriest's own childlessness. Tuberozov's main concern as a spiritual father is clearly the Deacon Akhilla, with whom he

44 As regards the anthropological motivation underlying the sermon, we may cite Blumenberg's (1986, p. 135) point that "self-persuasion lies at the core of all rhetoric […] [it] seizes not only on the most general sentences which are practically efficient, but also forms a conception of self from self-externality."

feels affinity.[45] In fact, the Archpriest and the Deacon can be seen as two extremes, as a solemn and a comical variation on the same theme.

Let me suggest another pre-text which may come into play here: the steadfast spiritual endeavour that is represented in the medieval *Paterikon of the Kievan Caves Monastery*.[46] In a squabble over various patron saints, Akhilla and Father Benefaktov actually refer to one of the heroes of this compilatory work by agreeing that Moses the Hungarian should be addressed "in order to be delivered from sensual passions" (об избавлении от блудныя страсти […] преподобному Моисею Угрину, 150). Captured by an antagonistic prince and taken to Poland in fetters, Moses, who was a Hungarian by birth, and who served in the retinue of the legendary Prince Boris at the time of the prince's assassination (1015), encounters a Polish noblewoman who repeatedly attempts to seduce him. The man, whose ultimate dream is to become a monk, resists all her lewd advances over a number of years, and, during an uprising in Poland, eventually makes it back to Kiev where he settles in the Kievan caves Monastery.[47] More importantly, however, the people within this multinational monastic society of old constantly help each other on their journey towards "perfection'—to try again after each fall (they are persistently harrassed by tempting devils) in an unending process of "amending their lives" (*ispravlenie*). Just like the cathedral folk, they are aware that avarice and pride have to be rooted out completely and replaced by humility, that enmity and hatred have to be replaced by love and forgiveness. As the characters of the *Paterikon* are intimately involved in the social life of the city of Kiev, the depiction of their spiritual life is also interspersed with glimpses of everyday life beyond the monastery walls. A similar blending of heterogeneous levels (the sacred and the secular, the social and the

45 Theirs is a dyadic relationship, with the subordinate, more anonymous, Father Zakharii Benefaktov occupying the neutral middle position in the clerical trinity.

46 See Muriel Heppell's translation into English, *The* Paterik *of the Caves Monastery*, (Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature: English Translations, vol. 1), Cambridge, Mass., 1989.

47 Interestingly, Richard Pope has suggested (not uncontestedly) that the psychological portrayal of the Polish noblewoman in the *Paterikon* is close to that of Leskov's in "Legendary Characters" (*Legendarnye kharaktery*, 1887), where some of the monks are tempted by real women, others by female creatures of their imagination. Cf. Richard Pope, 1978, "On the Comparative Literary Analysis of the Patericon Story (Translated and Original) in the Pre-Mongol Period," *Canadian Contributions to the VIII International Congress of Slavists, Zagreb-Ljubljana*, ed. Z. Folejewskij, Ottawa, pp. 1–13.

personal) informs the representation of the Archpriest and the Deacon as Orthodox heroes in Imperial Russia. Since they share a marked, hierarchical spiritual father-son relationship, they also overlap and complement each other as symbolic figures.

One aspect of the complementary relationship between the two men is seen in Tuberozov's homecoming, when, immediately after their emotional reunion, he has the Deacon move in with him. Further, their relationship takes an interesting turn when the Deacon is summoned by the Bishop to accompany the latter as an observer to the Synod in St Petersburg. This trip may be seen as the beginning of the Deacon's symbolic "pilgrimage."

As Akhilla continues to play, throughout his journey to St Petersburg, the role of a buffoon and a comic Achilles, the first part of his pilgrimage should be seen in a parodic light. On the level of stylistic mingling, the crossing of rhetorical and cultural boundaries reaches another high point in his letters to Tuberozov, which are "original and strange, no less than the whole cast of his thought and life." (оригинальные и странные, не менее чем весь склад его мышления и жизни. 274). True, he makes a journey to a sacred place as an act of religious devotion, but the obligatory performing of a vow or obtaining of a blessing takes place only after his trip, once he is back in Stargorod. Nevertheless, his mock-pilgrimage is important, since even here the sacred provides a counterpart to the profane: Akhilla encounters shrines and holy objects, but is also exposed to temptations, such as worldly entertainments, dubious company and excessive drinking. In his own words: игра вся по-языческому с открытостью до самых пор, и вдовому или одинокому человеку это видеть неспокойно. (277).[48] As a "pilgrim" he has now typically moved away from the structured commitments of his daily life, and "his route becomes increasingly sacralised on one level, and increasingly secularised on another."[49] In the capacity of a pilgrim he visits both the Kazan' Cathedral and the Cathedral of St Isaac, where he prays not only for himself, but also whispers up the name of his spiritual father (друже мой,

48 "the play-acting was all rather heathen and so revealing it was disturbing for a widower or single man to watch."

49 Victor Turner, 1974, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca, p. 183.

отец Савелий, 276),[50] making complaints on behalf of the Archpriest about how he has been insulted. Thus Tuberozov, inhibited and unable to travel himself, is included in Akhilla's pilgrimage. With this reference to his defeat on the social level of his struggle, the humility theme is also reinforced.

As if sensing that his spiritual child has been exposed to both the sacred and the profane, and already exists in a threshold situation, Tuberozov takes Akhilla quickly inside upon his arrival and closes the shutters. He is horrified by the Deacon, who, in what is almost a reversal of the arguments contained in the Archpriest's blistering sermon, proceeds to argue for atheism (Это-то, батя, доказали… 278),[51] although it is not difficult for Tuberozov to convince him of God's omnipotence: he orders the Deacon to repent his sins, after which he accompanies his spiritual child:

> […] начались один за другим его мерно повторяющиеся поклоны горячим челом до холодного снега, и полились широкие вздохи с сладостным воплем молитвы: «Боже! очисти мя грешного и помилуй мя», которой вторил голос протопопа другим прошением: «Боже, не вниди в суд с рабом твоим». (281)[52]

As the *bogatyr*'-like buffoon yields to the repentant Christian, the praying Akhilla feels the earth quaking beneath him. In another example of the chronicler's partiality for parallelisms, this description of ecstasy echoes that in Tuberozov's thunderstorm experience: by the following morning the Deacon has attained a new wisdom (Немудрый Ахилла стал мудр, 282),[53] and feels as though he has taken on a heavy burden of which he does not wish to rid himself. On the contrary, he is fully prepared to take on the role as his teacher's disciple.

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50 "O my friend, father Savelii."

51 "That's what they did prove, father…"

52 "[…] one after the other began, in measured time, his repeated reverences of his burning brow against the cold snow, and great sighs poured forth with the sweet cry of the prayer: 'O God, cleanse Thou me, a sinner, and have mercy upon me', which the voice of the priest accompanied with another prayer: 'O God, enter not into judgement with Thy servant!'"

53 "The unwise Akhilla had become wise."

Akhilla's newly acquired insight is further manifested in his request to be instructed:

> —Научи же меня, старец великий, как мне себя исправлять, если на то будет Божия воля, что я хоть на малое время останусь один? […] что же я взговорю, если где надобно слово? Ведь сердце мое бессловесно.
>
> —Слушай его, и что в нем простонет, про то говори […] (282).[54]

Tuberozov is referred to here as an elder (*starets*). His role as a spiritual father and teacher is thereby amplified, and, by hinting at the Archpriest's imminent death, emphasis is placed on Akhilla as both his disciple and continuator. By alluding to Christ's words to Peter: "the hour is coming for thee, when thou shalt not gird thyself, but another shall gird thee" (John 21:18), Tuberozov, like his *Urbild*, predicts the death of his disciple. In so doing, a parallel is achieved between Christ the Teacher and the Archpriest on the one hand, and between the apostle Peter (Cephas), the rock upon which the church would be built, and the Deacon, on the other. On the level of Tuberozov's *imitatio*, this inclusive scene between teacher and disciple reflects the verbal aspect of the Orthodox Holy Tradition, the apostolic idea of the "handing down" of the Divine Logos.[55] However, as to the rendering of the Deacon's life story, his role in the Archpriest's transformation indicates a transformation process of his own.

Having instructed Akhilla as a disciple, Tuberozov is taken seriously ill and prepares himself for death. On his deathbed he comforts Akhilla and gives thanks to the Lord for having shown him the path to salvation. He then sheds "an old man's tear" (старческая слеза), which, as a hagiographic topos (consider the "tears of tender emotion"), takes on important symbolic meaning as a sign of his repentance, of his "inward contrition and of warm and sincere prayer."[56] First introduced in

54 "'Instruct me, my great elder, how I am to reform myself, if it be the will of God that even for a short while I shall be left alone? […] what will I pronounce when a word is needed? My heart is speechless, you know'./'Listen to it and speak of what it will groan out […]'"

55 See Panagiotis I. Bratsiotis, 1964, "The Fundamental Principles and Main Characteristics of the Orthodox Church," *The Orthodox Ethos*, ed. A.I. Philippou, Oxford, pp. 24–25.

56 Fedotov, 1946, p. 213.

the scene with Pizonskii, "the grace of tears" motif should be seen here in relation to the idea of humility (*smirenie*), which holds a central position in both the Byzantine and Russian religious traditions. Interestingly, it is Father Benefaktov, the living embodiment of meekness and humility, who now begs Tuberozov to humble himself and submit. Tuberozov, however, cannot forgive fully and wholeheartedly: ready to pardon those who have offended him personally, he still condemns those who represent the unchristian powers and adhere blindly to both ecclesiastical and secular law (букву мертвую блюдя… они здесь… Божие живое дело губят, 284).[57] Mirroring the dwarf Nikolai Afanas'evich, Benefaktov insists, however, that the Archpriest be reconciled and forgive the people everything. Eventually, Tuberozov submits, his last words anticipating a time that he himself will not live to see, a future enlightenment when the hardened, misled generation of Russia will be shown the right path: По суду любящих имя твое просвети невежд и прости слепому и развращенному роду его жестокосердие. (285).[58]

It is important that having suffered defeat on the social level of his *imitatio Christi*, when he gave in to the authorities' demand for an apology, on the personal level he now emerges victorious. Like Christ, who prays for strength to be humble and forgives his malefactors on the Cross, Tuberozov is strong enough to display true humility and forgiveness. His gaze turned upwards, the dying Archpriest is blessed by Benefaktov. He raises his hand to Akhilla's head, thus leaving, as it were, his pastoral work in the hands of his newly transfigured steward and disciple. As he concludes the reading of his life according to Orthodox spirituality and the Christian idea of self-realization, his "wandering" process reaches completion (consider the hagiographic topos of "amending one's life"). Here the theme of transformation may be described as a pretext "proper," in the sense that the self-interpreting Tuberozov places an imaginary world in front of the real one so as to conceal or protect himself from the brutal facts: his reformist mission has come to nothing. Since we are told that "the Archpriest Tuberozov had finished his *vita*" (Протопоп Туберозов кончил свое житие, 285), it becomes clear that he, like the biblical Moses before him, will not live to see his people enter the Promised Land.

57 "by observing the dead letter… they are here… destroying the living work of God"

58 "Enlighten the ignorant according to the judgement of those loving Thy name and forgive this blind and perverse tribe for its cruelty of heart."

However, the meaning of Tuberozov's demise is not simply that his vision of morally renewed Russians has been thwarted by amoral non-Russians. On the contrary, the "metaphorical" representation of the Archpriest's life, as well as his own understanding of it as a purposeful journey, appears to be conditioned multiculturally by Russian and foreign cultural elements alike.

"Imitation" as continuation

If we now turn to Akhilla, we will discover that the real goal of his symbolic pilgrimage appears to be the Cathedral, the *sobor*, in which he serves, and the idyllic microcosm of Stargorod itself. This becomes clear in the house of the late Archpriest during the celebration of the funeral service. Tuberozov, who has now received a posthumous absolution from his inhibition, lies in the open coffin clad in the full vestments of his office, wearing the characteristic velvet *kamelaukion* of honour. In accordance with local custom, the neighbouring clergy assemble, and, carrying tapers and wearing mourning vestments, they lift and carry the deceased on their arms three times (*sic!*) around the coffin. Akhilla prays assiduously, and after the somewhat sinister ritual, remains alone for three nights with the dead body of his spiritual father.[59]

The ritualistic aspect of the Orthodox funeral tradition is momentous, because, as Victor Turner has observed, "in all ritualised movement there is at least a moment when those being moved in accordance with a cultural script are liberated from normative demands […] In this gap between ordered worlds almost anything may happen."[60] The "gap" in which Akhilla now finds himself is a sacred chronotope where time and space have become ritualistic; he hovers in a transitional situation between life and death, an interim of "liminality" (consider the in-betweenness of Tuberozov's sequestration). Having voluntarily spent three nights alone in the company of the deceased Archpriest, he is on the verge of moving from one structure to another, from one type of time to another. Having become "an integral human being with a capacity for free choice," liberated from the obligatory everyday restrains of status and role,[61] the Deacon has temporarily attained a new kind of conscious-

59 This scene offers an effective contrast to the peaceful deathbed of Natal'ia Nikolaevna.

60 Turner, 1974, p. 13.

61 Here Akhilla exemplifies the Leskovian righteous "wanderer" (*strannik*) who, stepping

ness which enables him to comprehend what was earlier incomprehensible: Он теперь понимал все, чего хотел и о чем заботился покойный Савелий, и назвал усопшего мученником. (286).[62] Tuberozov's coffin has now become the central shrine of Akhilla's pilgrimage.

Reciting the traditional reading over the dead, hoping for contact with Grace and expecting a miracle to happen, he exclaims: Баточка! […] Встань! А?.. При мне при одном встань! Не можешь, лежишь яко трава. […] Батя, батя, где же ныне дух твой? Где твое огнеустое слово? Покинь мне, малоумному, духа твоего! (286, 288).[63] As he falls upon the breast of the Archpriest filled with disappointment, the Deacon experiences a vision: Tuberozov appears to be sitting up, holding the Gospels in his hands. Realizing he has disturbed the deceased, Akhilla opens the Gospels at random, and reads from John 1:10: В мире бе, и мир его не позна (288)[64] and from another passage (19:37): И возрят нань его же прободоша.[65] He is about to open the book again, when somebody pulls him by his hands. The Archpriest now shows himself to Akhilla in all his splendour, also reading from St John: В начале бе слово и слово бе к Богу и Бог бе слово (288).[66] After Tuberozov's visitation, the Deacon opens his eyes only to realize that he has been asleep, and as the red flame of the funeral tapers gives way to the rays of the rising morning sun, it becomes clear he has been transformed. Anthropologically speaking, he has gone through a rite of passage and his faith has been strengthened.[67]

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out of his own sociocultural norms, rejects his "own" system and institutionalized life in search of an asystemic authenticity and immediacy which is attainable to him only in an unworldly sphere.

62 "He now understood all that he wanted and that had so troubled the late Savelii, and he called the deceased a martyr."

63 "Batochka! […] Arise! Won't you… Arise, just before me alone! You can't, you lie there like grass! […] Father, dear Father, where is thy soul now? Where is thy fiery speech? Cast a little of thy spirit over me, the slow of mind!"

64 "He was in the world, and the world knew him not."

65 "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

66 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

67 Leonid Grossman (1945, p. 158) has pointed out that certain episodes in *Cathedral Folk* may well have served as a model for Fedor Dostoevsky. In this respect, Leskov's subtle depiction of Akhilla's "vision" seems to be a case in point. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Alesha Karamazov undergoes a similar transformation of soul. Like the childlike Deacon, the novice monk too waits in vain for a miracle to happen at the coffin of his spiritual father; he is disillusioned, only to have his faith restored and strengthened through

It is significant that the remaining part of Akhilla's life may be seen as a parodic imitation of Tuberozov, where the Deacon continues the themes and actions hitherto connected with the portrayal of the Archpriest. Thus, Akhilla finds it impossible to accept the new, urban Archpriest Gratsianskii and reiterates Tuberozov's critical themes of the "authorities" and "foreigners." Suffering from what others describe as an "exalted sensibility" (возвыщенная чувствительность, 303), he embarks in his mourning upon a voluntary exile, thus mirroring his teacher's ecclesiastical confinements and sequestration. Finally, on a symbolic level, his fight with the "devil" Danilka, a harmless vagrant (*brodiaga*) who frightens his fellow Stargorodians by desecrating Tuberozov's grave, may be compared to Tuberozov's fight with the "devil of atheism" that takes hold of Akhilla after his trip to St Petersburg, but also to the demon of moral rottenness that has permeated Russian society. To be sure, the chronicler's depiction is a carnivalized one: whilst the "Christian warrior" and "the Prince of Darkness" contend for their lives in earnest, they are, at the same time, contributing to little more than another trivial, local scandal. As was the case with the "free-thinking" Varnavka in St Petersburg, they are soon reconciled: realizing that Danilka acted because of hunger, Akhilla follows his heart, shows pity and forgives him. When the new Archpriest Gratsianskii accuses him of "socialism," he is prepared to go on fighting the authorities:

> Ну, какой там «социалист»! Святые апостолы, говорю вам, проходя полем, класы исторгали и ели. Вы, разумеется, городские иерейские дети, этого не знаете, а мы, дети дьячковские, в училище, бывало, сами съестное часто воровали. Нет, отпустите его, Христа ради, а то я его все равно вам не дам. (315)[68]

a visitation from his elder (*starets*) in a visionary dream (Cf. the chapters "The Breath of Corruption" (*Tletvornyi dukh*) and "Cana of Galilee" (*Kana galileiskaia*). Following similar experiences, which occur in a liminal situation, both figures are represented as disciples in relation to their deceased teachers. With Akhilla's "vision" mirroring that of Tuberozov's (in the forest), and with the reference to John 1 (the Word is "handed over" to Akhilla), this scene upholds the intertextual link with Pushkin's poem "The Prophet."

68 "What do you mean 'socialist'? The holy apostles, I'm telling you, as they went through the cornfield, plucked the ears of corn and ate. Of course, you municipal priests don't know that, but we, the children of the lower clergy, when we were in school, often stole things to eat. Yes, release him, for Christ's sake, I won't let you have him anyway."

In this state of emotional stress, Akhilla paraphrases Scripture. By referring to the Gospel story of how Jesus and the apostles ignored the Pharisees and the Jewish law by eating the ears of corn on the sabbath,[69] he adapts the Christian text in a manner that resembles the "cross-domain conceptual mapping" of his late spiritual father. The parallel achieved between "the holy apostles" (the source) and "us, the sexton's children" (the target) places Akhilla and his friends, as it were, on an equal footing (= "Akhilla Is An Apostle").[70] In turn, the comparison between "us," the rural "children," and "them," the urban "municipal priests," yields the opposition between the ("sacred") inside world of Stargorod and the ("profane") outside world of the principal town of the province (*gubernskii gorod*). Akhilla too seems to be performing a self-exegesis, understanding himself critically in terms of strangeness and familiarity, coldheartedness and compassion. But for once the Deacon is not destined to take up the battle in his usual "folk heroic" manner: he falls unconscious, is taken seriously ill, and, like the apostle and martyr Peter, who declared his readiness to follow his Teacher unto death, follows his Archpriest and also becomes a "martyr" for his faith. Benefaktov, the last of the old men, accompanies them shortly after, dying during the divine service on the Bright Sunday of Easter (*Svetloe voskresenie*).

In this way, the idealistic Archpriest Tuberozov, his wife and his two auxiliaries give way to an altogether new, apparently competent, clerical staff ready to take over the Cathedral of Stargorod (Старогородской поповке настало время полного обновления, 319). With the affinity between the simple-hearted characters remaining unbroken even in death, the chronicler's open-ended presentation of the struggles in Stargorod would seem to indicate the multicultural Empire's difficulty in conceiving the true nature of social relations.

Identity formation and the significance of sociality

The cathedral folk deal with the challenging life of Stargorod through Scripture. When the Archpriest and the Deacon *map* elements of the Gospel story and the Holy Writings in their accounts of their own lives, the result is a metaphorization which provides their lives with a fuller

69 Cf. Matthew 12:1, Mark 2:23, Luke 6:1.

70 Following Lakoff and Johnson's line of thinking, the deacon is thus entered into a metaforical mapping of the Gospel stories.

and more universal meaning. Such adaptation of Christian texts also underlies the chronicler's representation of the main heroes' lives as a form of struggle. As shown, Tuberozov emerges as an *imitator Christi*; his approach to people and events is a metaphorical one and he interprets his own life in terms of prototypical suffering (above all, in his homiletic activity). In turn, Akhilla becomes his factotum loyal unto death; identifying with the role of a disciple, he styles himself as an "imitator" of his spiritual father (his "pilgrimage" to St Petersburg, fight with Danilka, opposition to the authorities, and so on). In so far as both lives are represented as a gradual process of transformation, wherein the churchman strives to extend himself on both a social and a personal plane, the chronicler can be said to have created two interrelated *Bildungsentwürfe*, "drafts" or stories of identity formation, which have been moulded by a Russian Orthodox mentality.

Any unambigious reading of these formation stories is challenged, however, by an inner-fictional, "human" factor. If we conceive of societies as "open systems […] inextricably involved with other aggregates, near and far, in weblike, netlike connections,"[71] the Stargorodians, with their individual histories, may be described as social individuals connected to one another as though in a taut, reverberating cross-cultural "web." Since the understandings that occur within it are mutual and reciprocal, these understandings are by their nature interpersonal or intersubjective. As everyday provinciality in *Cathedral Folk* also implies multisocial interaction, it follows that ideological exchange and contamination will always affect the discourse of any individual character in terms of meaning. (Hence the importance of monitoring the little things and changes in a character's status, relationships, attitudes and beliefs, in order to fully grasp the action.) We have seen that the Orthodox pre-texts informing Tuberozov's interpretation of himself and others by no means invalidates *non*-Orthodox ones. On the contrary, he endorses many Catholic or Protestant values (his Polish friends, his foreign reading), whilst disagreeing with the official views of the Russian State Church (the poverty of the rural clergy, the persecution of schismatics). With regard to this particular point, the novel's use of Scripture results in a *prosaic* conceptualization of the world, where the primary metaphor—"Tuberozov

71 Alexander Lesser, 1961, "Social Fields and the Evolution of Society," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 17, p. 42.

Is Christ"—forms the basis of new metaphorical combinations, both poetic and everyday, within the same context.

Considering the constant flux of diverging views and values that results from the characters' everyday interrelations, the Life of the Archpriest is a far cry from the *vitae* proper, where the biographical material of the protagonist is transformed into a representation of sanctity. Within the chronicler's heterogeneous vision, Tuberozov's struggle within the motley, multiethnic Stargorod community has to be rendered as a "reduced" martyrdom, in which the saintly and the sinful stand on an equal footing. Thus Leskov combines the poetics of Russian realism with an Orthodox anthropology; his conception of human beings—and of their "social" propensity for mutual engagement and responsiveness—is one which has its origins in hagiographic and homiletic genres.

Roots of ambivalence

In tracing four distinctive styling strategies, we have analysed Leskov's novel with a dual focus: one stylistic, probing its verbal texture with a view to generating meaning; the other anthropological, revealing a complex picture of people and society as constructed within the text. As we have shown, the (un)making of national myths, imperfect idyllization, the treatment of multiethnicity, and the adaptation of Christian texts, lead in many different directions and produce an open universe of cultural meaning.

The portrayal of the cathedral folk themselves relies on the dramatization of various societal differences in the provinces and draws on the ethnic heterogeneity in the Empire at large. Here the primary example is Savelii Tuberozov, the Russian Orthodox Archpriest, who spends his adult life fighting apostasy, atheism and apathy in the imaginary town of Stargorod. In a "progressive" literature where the popular image of the priest was usually that of a mean, hypocritical and lecherous drunkard, Leskov's sympathetic representation of the Stargorod clergy is clearly a novelty. The main hero's everyday life consists in a series of close encounters with elements both inside and outside his own culture; he simply cannot avoid clashing with local "free-thinkers" and would-be atheists, high-ranking members of the official Church, corrupt Russians from out of town, government bureaucrats of foreign origin, and so on. This hectic state of affairs reflects back on the town of Stargorod itself, which, under-

neath its idyllic surface, is an Imperial "melting pot"; the Stargorodians epitomize a vigorous, multicultural mixture of ideas, beliefs and ethnies. When the characters come into conflictual contact, styles and discourses also mingle and confront one another.

More importantly, with the collation of styles and discourses, different perspectives upon the world interpenetrate so that the monocultural meaning of the character's "own" discourse is destabilized. For example, when Tuberozov quotes Laurence Sterne and Kirill of Belozersk in one and the same text, a competition occurs between the value judgments of Western enlightened thinking and those of Russian Orthodoxy, which disturbs the "pro-Russian" stance of his diary. Or, when Akhilla paraphrases his St Petersburg friends and the Scriptures simultaneously, the mingling of atheist and Christian worldviews ("his mixed, vast, and incoherent speech") highlights an "urban artificiality" that challenges the Stargorod "naturalness." In a similar fashion, the Archpriest condemns the Poles for their cunning, but describes Polish patriotism and Polish Catholic temperance work with such enthusiasm that Polishness (or foreignness) interferes with his own idea of Russian national character and glory. Since our main concern is with the semantic explosion that takes place when texts are juxtaposed, we have concentrated especially on the novel's two stylistic tendencies, or *ambivalent* ways of understanding the world, one idyllic-affirmative, the other sociocritical. Bearing in mind that the coexistence of these conflicting tendencies always brings about the synchronization of the semantic with the cultural experience accumulated within them (syncretism), we may now establish the main effects of Leskov's four styling strategies.

Due to the myth-making movements in the text, ideas of Russian grandeur and superiority are continually being inflated, deflated and reaffirmed; the multi-meaning potential of this circular process yields a Russian culture that never comes to rest. Furthermore, a societal idyll is constructed consisting of several *topoi* and motifs in combination with different intellectual themes and fragments of worldviews; as a result of this "imperfection," the sentimental idyllization of the Russian provinces takes the form of an Orthodox micro-harmony, which counteracts the foreign and the strange within the complexity of the Empire. In this context, the treatment or "processing" of multiethnicity reflects the cathedral folk's ceaseless striving to construct simple lives and a single set of

meanings, whilst the adaptation of Christian texts, that is, the memory of the Orthodox heritage, points to their need to consolidate an identity, to understand and site themselves in multiculture.[72] To be sure, in understanding themselves within a "remembered" religious heritage, they bring this heritage into contact with the quotidian, with life, as it were, at the ground level. And so their understanding of self will remain conflictual, because life itself is conflict.

Such instability would seem to mirror Leskov's endeavour to synchronize the Christian faith for a Russian nineteenth-century readership; indeed, the author's own quest for an alternative Orthodoxy that would be more harmonious, simple and true to life, was in itself ambivalent and confrontational.[73] Considering the multitude of social and cultural voices at work in *Cathedral Folk*, it should be stressed that the main heroes are men of the cloth who oppose their "own" Imperial Church, readily espousing unofficial, foreign views and values. As symbols of a noble Russia of the past, which just may (or may not) reappear in a distant future, they are ambiguous. In this light, the representation of people who are essentially "Russian" plus something "other" entails a striking deconstruction of the official image of Imperial harmony, as well as of *any* image of absolute Russianness. Disharmony and instability also motivate the Archpriest's rhetoric: as we have seen most clearly in his diary, he combines elements from Scripture, saints' lives and sermons to suit his own interpretation of Russian "reality" and to ward off, as it were, the discrepancies in his priestly life (he is destined to shine, but fails). Many years prior to his confinement, he confides his apprehensions regarding the decline of morals and high ideals among his people: как человек веры, и как гражданин, любящий отечество, и как философствующий мыс-

72 In order better to understand life in *Cathedral Folk*, we should not forget that the characters' perception of Stargorod as a fixed place is constantly disturbed by changeable and ever-expanding networks of relations.

73 As to Leskov's religious "heterodoxy," see, among others, James Muckle (1978, p. 152): "We have in Leskov a Russian writer, who, from the beginning of his career, seems to say: 'Never mind what the Church says, never mind what clever phrases the priest can invent to absolve you from your responsibility—what does the Bible say? What does Christ say? And what are you going to do about it?' His attitude is free from the sententious drivel about the sacred destiny of Russia, or the unique qualities of the Russian peasant, but it is accompanied by an awareness that these questions are vital for the society in which he and his readers live."

литель (201).[74] Echoing the orphanhood motif, that of *loneliness* is now confirmed in the "idyllic" company of Natal'ia Nikolaevna, who, as we remember, has dozed off:

> Туберозов понял, что он все время говорил воздуху […] Ему припомнились слова, некогда давно сказанные ему покойною боярыней Марфой Плодомасовой: «А ты разве не одинок? Что же в том, что у тебя есть жена добрая и тебя любит, а все же чем ты болеешь, ей того не понять. И так всяк, кто подальше брата видит, будет одинок промеж своих». (203)[75]

His quoting of Plodomasova on the isolation of deviant individuals points to Tuberozov's predicament with regard to his fellow human beings and human relationships. As to his habit of "seeing a little further than his brother," the multi-social interaction (and the stepping out of his own circle) in his everyday life should be viewed on the level of his priestly mission: he must go out into the world, and it is here, in the world, that he realizes his own "otherness" and separation, his being "alone among his own." A religious, social and cultural outsider, the Archpriest intuits his own "heresy" of accepting an authority in principle yet interpreting this authority as an individual; he becomes a righteous "wanderer" who is incapable of discarding foreign/strange elements. In this way, *Cathedral Folk* is a fictional text in which Imperial Russia is re-enacted; as people interpret people, texts are adapted from texts, on various levels of relationship. With the main hero's spiritual formation hinging not only on everyday confrontation but also on the developing of sociocultural links, on various forms of "bonding" within the multiethnic community, we might say that the style of the novel as a whole is characterized by *a rhetoric of sociality*.

In Part Two of this book, we will re-examine the four styling strategies with regard to four tales (*povesti*). Here, too, the reader is presented with a narrative constructed loosely along the lines of the *Bildungsroman*;

74 "as a man of faith, as a citizen who loves his fatherland, and as a philosophizing thinker."

75 "Tuberozov realized that all this time he had been talking to the air […] he recalled the words which had been said to him, so long ago, by the late noblewoman Marfa Plodomasova: 'And are not you alone? What if you do have a good wife who loves you, nevertheless, she cannot understand all that pains you. And so every one who sees a little further than his brother will be alone among his own people.'"

Hans Gerhard Sørensen · 1965

here, too, the fictive characters—a schismatic, a serf, a bishop and a monk—are affected by the complex metaphor: A Purposeful Life Is An Imitation of Christ. But unlike the churchmen of Stargorod, the main heroes are "wanderers" who literally travel through the multiethnic Empire, whose "stories have the dust and jolts of the journey on them."[76] To these characters, a purposeful life is—above all—a "journey": couched in images of "roaming," "going astray," and "erring," their language is significantly linked to the notion of being-on-the-move-to-somewhere-else. Once again, sociality is conducive to spiritual development; the various life stories may be regarded as representations of religious quests through cultural confrontation. So far we have pursued the roots of Leskov's prosaic ambivalence and disharmony in relation to his chronicle-novel; although more homogeneous in terms of structure—and therefore considered more "accomplished"—his four tales are, in my view, equally capable of advancing unstable, conflictual meanings by juxtaposing texts and collating styles. For our purposes, extended travel will be treated as a *topos* reflecting the identity formation of righteous men in a multicultural Russia.

76 V.S. Pritchett, 1962, "Introduction," N.S. Leskov, *Selected Tales*, trans. D. Magarshack, London, p. xiii.

The Sealed Angel

> For a man on a long journey, the nature of his travelling companion is of the first importance. With a good, intelligent companion it's easier to bear both cold and hunger, and I had received this blessing […].

A GROUP of Old Believer stonemasons building a bridge near Kiev are robbed by government officials of their ancient icon, The Archangel Michael.[1] After the angel has had sealing wax dripped over its face and been marked with an official stamp (it is considered heretical by the ruling Church), the Old Believers decide to send two of their youngest men to look for an icon painter skilled enough to duplicate their sealed angel and then steal the original back from the cathedral, leaving the copy in its place. The tale culminates with the leader of the schismatics crossing the river Dnieper on a stormy night, icon in hand and balancing himself on a chain suspended between the piles of the new bridge, then under construction. When the duplicate is brought to the church, the seal which had been placed on it shortly beforehand to make it perfectly identical with the original has vanished. The stonemasons understand this "miracle" as a sign that they must abandon their Old Belief and convert to official Orthodoxy.

In what is rightly described as "Leskov's fullest and most sympathetic account of Old Believers,"[2] the hero-narrator of *The Sealed Angel* (1873) displays both an educated mind and a simple-hearted religion. A mem-

1 The Archangel Michael, who leads the other angels in the battle against the "dragon" (Rev. 12:7), is a potent symbol in the Russian popular imagination. Generally linked to the baptism of Rus' into Christianity in medieval times, he is also the guardian angel of Kiev, who, in Leskov's tale, wanders himself to the Kievan side of the river taking the Old Believers with him. Cf. Gorelov, 1988, pp. 161–62.

2 Muckle, 1978, p. 35.

ber of this conservative and pious sect, Mark Aleksandrov explains the art and purpose of icon painting from the perspective of an ex-schismatic. First, he recalls the manner in which the holy images could inspire a believer and then links the dramatic circumstances surrounding the cherished angel to his own revelation: how he came to perceive the essential unity of Christians.

A common contrivance

The four tales analysed in this book have certain narrative features in common. Briefly stated, a frame situation is established within a sociocultural space, a meeting place of one kind or another: travellers at an inn, or on a ship; guests at a tea party; visitors at a holiday resort. A conversation then ensues, during which events are recounted by the "author" speaking in the first person, ostensibly as a fact; this primary narrator either represents an autobiographical tale proper or, as is the case in *The Sealed Angel*, transcribes for the reader the autobiographical tale of a second, inner narrator.[3] Before recounting the "miraculous happenings" (182; дивные дивеса, 325) that befall the protagonist's life, the primary narrator paints a canvas of the entire Russian Empire:

> Дело было о святках, накануне Васильева вечера. Погода разгулялась самая немилостивая. Жесточайшая поземная пурга, из тех, какими бывают славны зимы на степном завольже, загнала множество людей в одинокий постоялый двор, стоящий бобылем среди гладкой и необозримой степи. Тут очутились в одной куче дворяне, купцы и крестьяне, русские, и мордва, и чуваши. Соблюдать чины и ранги на таком ночлеге было невозможно: […] (320)[4]

3 Aleksej B. Ansberg observes that "by using the frame story and the first person story (where the "I" was not identical with the author) Leskov was able to motivate a perspective and an outlook that differed from his own, to explore a foreign temperament, including its linguistic manifestations." Aleksej B. Ansberg, "Frame Story and First Person Story in N.S. Leskov, *Scando-Slavica* 3, p. 58.

4 "It happened after Christmas, on New Year's eve. The weather was terrible. A ferocious blizzard, for which the winters on the left bank of the Volga are famous, had driven many people into a solitary inn which stood like a lonely man in the midst of the smooth and boundless steppe. Here, thrown together higgledy-piggledy, were noblemen, merchants and peasants, Russians, Mordvins and Chuvashes. In such cramped quarters it was impossible to observe the niceties of social rank and distinction: […]" (175).

In the Russian Orthodox tradition, the period which lasts from Christmas proper (*rozhdestvo*) to Epiphany is called *sviatki*. This is the time when people are supposed to be open to contact with the mysterious, often hostile and dangerous other-world.[5] Thus the context of religious susceptibility is already suggested in the opening line with the reference to New Year's Eve. With the subsequent phrases "a terrible blizzard," "the left bank of the Volga," and "the boundless steppe," the mythologized landscape of Russia's vastness is easily recognizable. More importantly, the mention of noblemen, merchants, and peasants on the one hand, and of Russians, Mordvins, and Chuvashes on the other, evokes an Empire which is thoroughly diverse: here Russianness may always be countered by foreignness (multiethnicity), the Russian faith by non-Russian religions, Orthodoxy by non-Orthodox denominations, and so on. This many-levelled heterogeneity is underscored by the restless atmosphere of the inn, which is crammed to bursting with various ranks and distinctions (multisociality). In other words, the "theme of Russia" is established well before the inner storytelling begins.

As we have indicated, Mark Aleksandrov may be a provincial stonemason with a modest education (воспитание свое получил по состоянию, самое деревенское. 322),[6] but he is also an art connoisseur. A combination of emotional simplicity and aesthetic subtlety informs his *skaz*—a highly idiosyncratic personal language reflecting the status, life experience, and character of the speaker, which is bookish and colloquial at the same time. In the following quotation, the narrator evokes the icon of the Archangel Michael, that is, the main theme of the tale as such:[7]

> Сей ангел воистину был что-то неописуемое. Лик у него, как сейчас вижу, самый светлобожественный и этакий скопопомощный; взор умилен; ушки с тороцами, в знак повсеместного

5 See Natal'ia Starygina, 1992, "Sviatochnyi rasskaz kak zhanr," *Problemy istoricheskoi poetiki*, Petrozavodsk, vol. 2, pp. 113–27.

6 "usual for a person of my social standing—a truly rural one." (179).

7 Jostein Børtnes, in his MA dissertation *Fra fortelling til legende: En studie i N.S. Leskovs forfatterskap*, University of Oslo, 1965, has shown how a "vertical connection" between the story about the angel and the legend of Christ's life provides the Icon of the Angel with new meaning: "*The Sealed Angel* is an artistic realization of a life-outlook, for which Leskov had long been questing: the story's plot is read into the historical pattern of the drama of Christ, following a particular pattern: *the figural interpretation*" (p. 71).

> отвсюду слышания; одеянье горит, рясны златыми преиспещрено; доспех пернат, рамена препоясаны; на персях младенческий лик Эмануилев; в правой руке крест, в левой огнепалящий меч. Дивно! дивно!.. (324)[8]

Filled with ecclesiastical terms and references, archaisms, Slavonicisms, echoes of scriptural quotations, prayers and liturgical formulas, this elated description reflects a nostalgic way of thinking. For example, the Russian word for "closely studded," *preispeshchrennyi*, is an archaic ecclesiastical term echoing Psalm 45 (about the righteous King's daughter);[9] the Russian for "armour," "shoulders heavily girdled" and "wondrous" (*dospekh, ramena prepoiasany, divno*) is a combination of archaic and bookish stylistic elements which indicate that the storyteller's literary sources are not those written for or by the contemporary Westernized intelligentsia; in other words, the distinctions he makes between literary and spoken Russian are not those made by the members of the educated classes.[10] As Hugh McLean has shown, the main hero is a product of a pre-Petrine culture; his "words breathe the spirit of ancient piety."[11]

However, whilst his positive depiction of the local icon reflects a culture that shows little or no impact of science, industry, the West, or anything that has happened in Russia since Peter the Great, his *negative*

8 For the translation of this particular quotation, see McLean, 1977, p. 235: "That angel was verily something indescribable. His countenance, as I see it now, is most luminously divine and, so to say, swift to succour; his gaze is tender; his ears are with thongs, in sign of his ability to hear in all directions and places; his raiment gleams, closely studded with golden ornaments; his armour is feathered, his shoulders heavily girdled; at his breast he bears an image of the infant Emmanuel; in his right hand is a cross and in his left a flaming sword. Wondrous! Wondrous!.." In icon painting, "thongs" indicate the symbolic stream of light emanating from the ears of the divine figure (the Russian *torotsy* is a quasi-Slavonic derivative from *toroka*, a word of Mongolian origin meaning "saddle-straps"). Consider: "Angels have thongs above their ears; these are the abode of the Holy Spirit, which exercises its influence upon them" (Fedor I. Buslaev, 1861, *Istoricheskie ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti i iskusstva*, St Petersburg, vol. 2, p. 297).

9 McLean, 1967, pp. 1333–34. Cf. Psalm 45:13, 14: "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is wrought of gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework […]." (In the Russian Bible, Psalm 44:14, 15: Вся слава дщери Царя внутри; одежда ее шита золотом. В испещренной одежде ведется она к Царю […].

10 McLean, 1977, p. 234.

11 McLean, 1977, p. 234.

description of the icon painters in Moscow indicates interaction with a culture of a more modern (prosaic) kind:

> […] все эти люди, как черные цыгане лошадьми друг друга обманывают, так и они святынею, и все это при таком с оною обращении, что становится за них стыдно и видишь во всем этом один грех да соблазн и вере поношение […] из московских охотников многие этою нечестною меною даже интересуются и хвалятся: что-де тот-то того-то так вот Деисусом надул, а этот этого вон как Николою огрел […] (354–355)[12]

Throughout Mark Aleksandrov's story, the voice of the Russian past mingles with the voice of Russian contemporaneity, implying a cultural tension between the "old" and the "new," but also between provincial righteousness and urban corruption. On the level of Leskov's styling, the two quotations given above illustrate how the main tendencies in his fictional universe, the affirmative and the sociocritical, coexist and confront one another. As we shall see, this principle of combining potentionally contradictory functions as a common denominator in the way the narrators of all four tales interpret, or "remember," their lives as transformational processes unfolding within multiculture. In the case of *The Sealed Angel*, the hero-narrator is contrived as a "wanderer" who relies, above all, on his idyllizing vision.

Loss, discovery, or "an account of the places through which we travelled"

"Wandering" in Mark's story is in fact developed on two interrelated levels. To begin with, he describes his group (*artel'*) of itinerant stonemasons in terms of peaceful movement and on a social level: they "traversed the length and breadth of Russia" (179; всю Россию изошли, 323), living with their leader Luka Kirillovich "in the most peaceful form of patriarchal relationship" (179; жили мы при нем в самой тихой пат-

12 "[…] all these people deceive one another in the matter of holy objects like black gypsies trading in horses, and all this with a lack of respect to them that makes you feel embarrassed, as all it reveals is sin, temptation and blasphemy […] among the Muscovite art-lovers there are many who are even interested in this dishonourable work of forgery and who boast about it: so-and-so has duped so-and-so with a *Deisis*, and gulled so-and-so with a St Nicholas […]" (218–19). A Deisis is a three-figured icon depicting, in the centre, Christ, with the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist at either side.

риархии, 323), and following him "like the Jews in their wanderings in the wilderness with Moses" (179; точно иудеи в своих странствиях пустынных с Моисеем, 323). A harmonious concord reigns among the schismatics (181; промежду собою у нас было согласие, 324), which, we are led to believe, is the result of their simple-heartedness and emotional sincerity: мы люди простые, но преизящество Богозданной природы все же ощущаем. (325).[13] Mark, who was adopted by Luka and his wife as an orphan, works and travels with his co-believers until the government officials confiscate their icon. This indicates the beginning of his "wandering" on the personal level.

But all is not well among the Old Believers. We are told that certain members of the community, who are motivated by vanity and greed, lead it into conflict with secular society.[14] There is a sense that the persecuted religious minority is struggling to find its direction and know which way to turn. However, defining a purpose in life provides "goals to reach" and forces human beings to map out ways to reach those goals. With the sealing and seizure of the Angel, therefore, the main hero is suddenly provided with such a goal: to find a skilled icon-painter, rescue the beloved icon from Orthodox captivity and break the official seal that has been put on it. As he begins the "the middle part" (216; преполовение, 353) of his story, past events already seem to be conceived within the larger scheme of spiritual development: […] я вам вкратце изложу: […] какие мы места исходили, каких людей видели, какие новые дивеса нам объявились, и что, наконец, мы нашли, и что потеряли, и с чем возвратилися. (353).[15] Both prior to and during the journey, Mark considers what other immediate goals he will have to reach in order to arrive at the main goal; he contemplates what might be standing in his way, and how he should deal with obstacles. The listeners (readers) learn that he takes with him a knapsack, a sufficient amount of money, a sabre with which

13 "we're just simple folk, but we feel the exquisiteness of the nature created by God all the same" (183).

14 Their problematic confrontation with the world happens through Pimen, their "business manager," whose financial dealings with a lady from the other side of the river provokes the anger of her husband, a high-ranking government official. Since it is the husband who orders the seizure of the Angel, the hero-narrator brands Pimen as "the culprit of the whole affair."

15 "[…] I shall give you a brief account of the places through which we travelled, of the people we saw, what fresh wonders were revealed to us and what, at last, we found and what we lost, and what we returned with." (216).

to defend himself; he travels in a most pragmatic fashion: вроде торговых людей, где как попало вымышляя надобности, для коих будто бы следуем, а сами всё, разумеется, высматривали свое дело. (353);[16] he even follows an itinerary: Kiev—Klintsy—Zlynka—Orel—Moscow, then from town to town, from village to village, visiting, at every destination, the local schismatic community.

Before he recounts the journey itself, the narrator explains to his audience the benefits of not setting out single-handed: В путь шествующему человеку первое дело сопутник; с умным и добрым товарищем и холод и голод легче, а мне это благо было даровано в том чудном отроке Левонтии. (353).[17] It is significant that the seventeen-year-old travelling companion is styled according to hagiographic topoi. Already in the initial lines of the hero-narrator's description, the figure of Levontii is endowed with saintly features: великотелесен, добр сердцем;[18] богочтитель с детства своего;[19] послушлив и благонравен, что твой ретив бел конь среброузден (343–344).[20] In a *vita* proper, such references to a character's "childhood story" would describe the first stage of his or her gradual ascent into sainthood.[21] Furthermore, as Jostein Børtnes has pointed out, we may recognize here the *puer-senex* topos that goes back to Late Antiquity. On the level of Russian intertextuality, Mark's ideals of youthful piety ("I had received this blessing in the person of that wonderful youth") are similar to those expressed in early hagiographic pretexts such as the eleventh-century *Narrative and Passion and Eulogy of the Blessed Martyrs Boris and Gleb* and the fourteenth-century *Life of Saint Stephen, Bishop of Perm*.[22] By thus adapting elements of Christian texts to

16 "as tradesmen do, everywhere at random making up needs that we were supposedly travelling to fill, while actually keeping an eye out for our real business." (217).

17 "For a man on a long journey, the nature of his travelling companion is of the first importance. With a good, intelligent companion it's easier to bear both cold and hunger, and I had received this blessing in the person of that wonderful youth Levontii." (217).

18 "powerfully built and good-hearted" (205).

19 "a devout Christian since childhood" (205).

20 "as docile and well-tempered as a keen white stallion in a silver harness" (205).

21 The transformational idea of *divine verticalism* implies that "man has to travel on an upward path from a rough sketch (εικών, image) to that of the divine similarity (όμοίωσις, όμοίωμα, likeness) inherent in all of us." Cf. Gerhard Podskalsky, 1982, *Christentum und Theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus'* (*988–1237*), Munich, pp. 272–73.

22 Børtnes, 1959, pp. 59–60. The figure of the "young novice" in Leskov's tale may be seen as a variant of the *puer-senex* topos which is typical of Russian literature. Among the

fit his storytelling, the hero-narrator portrays Levontii as an exemplary figure: Лучшего сомудренника и содеятеля и желать нельзя было на такое опасное дело (344).[23]

Upon their arrival in Moscow, Mark and his friend discover a dark, topsy-turvy world, where the schismatic icon painters whom they meet are creating not holy objects but "hell-paintings" (220; адописные [иконы], 356). To the co-travellers, who are just "simple and pious country folk" (219; простые деревенские богочтители, 355), their stay in the old capital turns out to be a travesty of their own Christian ideas; they are convinced that those who venerate such icons worship not God, but the Devil. As Mark's Old Belief is now *negatively* challenged (Оле тебе, древлего русского общества преславная царица! не были мы, старые верители, и тобою утешены. 354),[24] the narrator's predilection for idyllization becomes evident: a micro-harmony is now developed wherein the "wonderful youth" appears in the role of a pathfinder guiding, as it were, his senior companion out of the spiritual darkness. Preceded by a scene wherein Mark is tricked by a unpleasant and dishonourable Muscovite, the description of Levontii's tender singing is a prime example:

> […] это поет приятный Левонтиев голос, и поет с таким чувством, что всякое слово будто в слезах купает. […я] слушаю, как он Иосифов плач выводит:
>
> Кому повем печаль мою,
>
> Кого призову ко рыданию.
>
> Стих этот, если его изволите знать, и без того столь жалостный, что его спокойно слушать невозможно, а Левонтий его поет да сам плачет и рыдает, что
>
> Продаша мя мои братия!
>
> И плачет, и плачет он, воспевая, как видит гроб своей матери, и зовет землю к воплению за братский грех!.. Слова эти […] меня

better known examples are Grigorii in Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* and Alesha Karamazov in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*.

23 "I could have wished for no better collaborator and coadjutor for such a risky undertaking" (205).

24 "Woe betide thee, glorious queen of the ancient Russian community! We Old Believers were not favoured by thee." (216).

так растрогали, что я и сам захлипкал, а Левонтий, услыхав это, смолк и зовет меня: […] (356–57)[25]

Mark's idyllized romantic text depends on a language of feeling. With the comparison of Levontii to the lamenting Joseph on the one hand, and the description of Mark's own emotional response to his companion's rendering of the Christian text on the other, we may speak of an *idealization of responsiveness to feeling* similar to that of the Archpriest Tuberozov, who, as we have shown, also tries to create micro-harmony through idyllization in a chaotic world. It is interesting, however, that in the ensuing discussion on the significance of Joseph's mother, the "silver-harnessed" youth seems to disturb the idyllized worldview within which his senior companion seeks to conceive of him. By understanding the biblical figure as representing the mother country, whose embodiment is "the ruling church" (222, 252; господствующая церковь, 357, 382) and whose synonyms are "all of Rus'" and "the fatherland" (252, 254; вся Русь, отечество, 383, 384), Levontii offers a "mystical" (221; таинственный, 357) interpretation of "our mother" (наша мать, 357):

— […] это слово с преобразованием сказано.

—Ты,—говорю,—смотри, дитя: не опасно ли ты умствуешь?

—Нет,—отвечает,—я это в сердце моем чувствую, что крестует бо ся Спас нас ради того, что мы его едиными усты и единым сердцем не ишем. (357)[26]

25 "It was Levontii's pleasant voice, singing with such feeling that every word seemed bathed in tears. I […] listened as he sang the lamentation of Joseph: /'To whom shall I tell my sorrow, Whom shall I summon to sobbing'./ This verse, as you may know, is already so piteous that it is impossible to hear it with equanimity; Levontii was singing it, weeping and sobbing as he did so that /'It was my brethren who sold me!'/ He wept and wept, singing of how he could see his mother's coffin, and summoning the earth to mourning for the sin of his brethren! […] So deeply was I moved by [these words] that I began myself to whimper, and when Levontii heard this he stopped singing and called me […]" (220–21).

26 "'[…] this word has taken on a different meaning'./'Listen, lad: are you sure you're not thinking along dangerous lines here?'/'No,' he replied, 'I feel it in my heart that the Saviour is crucified for our sake, for our not seeking Him with united mouths and united hearts.'" (221).

The main hero is now brought out of his state of tender emotion. With the allusion to Christian unity or *sobornost'*, ("united mouths and united hearts"), Levontii's *re*-interpretation of the Old Believer text implies a submission to the official Church ("I feel it in my heart").[27] At this point, the youth begins to speak of a certain Elder Pamva, "an anchorite completely without envy or wrath" (222; анахорит совсем беззавистный и безгневный, 357), whom he longs to meet. Whilst this man is most unsettling to Mark as an idyllizing person (Pamva is a servant of the official Church), the retrospective hero-narrator, interestingly, supports the micro-harmony of Mark's text. Reminding his listeners (and himself) that at the time of the events he had "really grasped what was taking place in the soul of this grace-inspired youth" (222; еще ясно не разгадал, что такое в душе сего благодатного юноши делалось, 358), he now recalls how they walked on together searching for the *isographer* "in peace and harmony" (223; мирно и благополучно, 359). But then there is another bout of discord between them (мы с Левонтием и заспорили, 359),[28] and, as they wander through a forest, the youth is taken seriously ill. In this situation, Mark's behaviour is described in rather prosaic ("un-idyllic") terms: terrified of being attacked by wild animals, he climbs a tree, leaving his companion on the ground with no one to defend him. As we shall see, the vacillation in the inner narrative between the elevated and the lowly, accord and discord, indicates the fragile nature of the hero-narrator's idyllic world, or rather, its imperfection.[29]

The night in the forest marks a turning point in the main hero's transformation process. The Elder Pamva appears out of the darkness, his wondrous apparition representing a *positive* challenge to Mark's Old Belief. In fact, the anchorite's sanctity is so strong, that the infirm youth rises to his feet and follows him as if in trance. Having seen this, Mark marvels at Pamva, who humbly accepts verbal and physical abuse from his cohabitant, a monk called Miron (consider the hagiographic virtue *smirenie*, "humility"), and is astonished by the Elder's magnanimous response to the fact that they are of the Old Faith:—Все,—говорит,—уды

27 Gorelov, 1988, pp. 157–58.

28 "Levontii and I began to quarrel" (223).

29 Mark's description of his own cowardice may be viewed as a "prosaization" of a hagiographic pre-text, the fifteenth-century *Life of Sergius of Radonezh*, where the saint is depicted peacefully feeding wild bears.

единого тела Христова! Он всех соберет! (362).[30] The next morning, devastated by the news of Levontii's sudden death, Mark weeps bitterly, tormenting himself with guilt for not having been at his companion's side at such a decisive moment: он сим утром, пока я, нетяг, спал, к церкви присоединился. (365).[31] However, as Pamva reveals to him the meaning of the sealed icon, he is once again immersed in romantic idyll: —Ангел тих, ангел кроток, во что ему повелит господь, он в то и одеется; что ему укажет, то он сотворит. Вот ангел! Он в душе человечьей живет, суемудрием запечатлен, но любовь сокрушит печать… (366).[32] Let us note how Levontii and Pamva have in common the charisma of clear-sightedness—they both know that "God instructs" and "gathers all unto Him." As regards their influence on Mark, he walks for sixty versts without a break, finds the isographer and returns home. But having entered into an in-between state ("I wasn't really myself," 232; сам я не тот стал, 366), he is now prepared to cross over to the Church of Christ: А я как давно, еще с гостинок у старца Памвы, имел влечение воедино одушевиться со всею Русью (383).[33]

According to George Fedotov, the essence of Russian kenoticism is expressed in the idea of humbling oneself in imitation of Christ; the conception of a righteous life as *sanctifying suffering* is a favourite idea in the Russian mentality.[34] In describing Pamva in terms of simplicity and simple-heartedness, the idyllizing narrator reveals a manner of thinking influenced by spiritual values that are associated with the kenotic ideals: an overt commitment to God, humility and selfless charity in conjunction with an unusual religious tolerance (consider *sobornost'*).[35] Judging

30 "We are all members of the one body of Christ! He will gather all unto him" (227).

31 "[…] that very morning, while I, lazy fellow, had been asleep, he had joined the Church" (230).

32 "The angel is quiet, the angel is modest, he dresses in the apparel ordained for him by the Lord; what the Lord instructs him to fulfil, he fulfils. That is the angel! He lives in the souls of men, sealed with false wisdom, but love can break the seal…" (232).

33 "ever since we had stayed with the Elder Pamva, [I felt the urge] to be animated with the soul of all Rus'" (252).

34 Fedotov, 1946, p. 110; pp. 94–132.

35 According to Ziolkowski (1988, pp. 173ff), Leskov considered the love of simplicity in holy men to be a specifically Russian trait: "Popular memory preserves the names of 'simple and very simple' prelates and not of the magnificent and important. In general our people never consider the 'unsimple' (*neprostykh*) either righteous or God-pleasing. The Russian people like to look at splendour, but they respect simplicity." Cf. N.S.

from his own travel story, these ideals help him to create a mental representation of the surrounding multicultural world, as well as of his own purpose within that world.[36] In the inner narrative, this purpose is understood metaphorically as a "destination," that of self-realization as a Christian human being, whilst the action needed to reach such a destination is understood as "movement"—a constant progression towards spiritual maturity. If we return for a moment to the theories of Lakoff and Johnson, we may say that the narrating hero construes his life in accordance with the metaphor "A Purposeful Life Is A Journey," which entails a complex metaphorical *mapping*:

A Purposeful Life Is A Journey
A Person Living A Life Is A Traveller
Life Goals Are Destinations
A Life Plan Is An Itinerary[37]

In the hero-narrator's interpretation, life is rendered meaningful by being metaphorized as a mapping of the model path to salvation: an imitation of the suffering Christ. Elements of the Scriptures (the "source domain") are re-presented in the here and now, his looking back at his predicament as a persecuted schismatic (the "target domain"), which then give his life story a meaning that something literal cannot provide. The account of "the places through which we travelled" is truly one of exchange: by "losing" Levontii and his Old Faith, Mark discovers the road to conversion. Considering how extensive travel thus emerges as a topos that reflects the formation of a righteous man within the multicultural Empire, it is intriguing that the Russian hero's metaphorical thinking involves a *non*-Russian fellow conspirator.

An English master builder

No sooner has Mark declared himself to his community back on the Dnieper, than he rushes off to see the chief engineer on the bridge-build-

Leskov, 1957, "The Little Things in a Bishop's Life" ("Melochi arkhiereiskoi zhizni"), *Sobranie sochinenii v odinnadtsati tomakh*, Leningrad, vol. 6, p. 448.

36 Within the hero-narrator's world, Pamva may be understood as a "kenotic" character in a contemporary setting. Cf. Ziolkowski, 1988, pp. 171–76.

37 See Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, pp. 60–63.

ing site, Iakov Iakovlevich (a Russified variant of James Jamesson). To my knowledge, little attention has been given to the role of this "supporting" character.[38] The Englishman and his wife, who are the Old Believers' only allies in the world of educated society, are always prepared to assist them in every way possible. If Mark's learning belongs to a culture more or less alien to nineteenth-century Russia, here, by way of social interaction (даже и иностранцы […] старым русским обрядом интересовались, 326),[39] he comes into contact with Western culture and its scientific impact. On the whole, the foreigner is portrayed as a open-minded, well-intentioned student of Russian lore and traditions:[40]

> Главный строитель из англичан, Яков Яковлевич […] все норовил, чтобы на ноту наше гласование замечать, и потом, бывало, ходит по работам, а сам все про себя в нашем роде гудет: «Богосподь и явися нам», но только все это у него, разумеется, выходило на другой штыль […]. Англичане, чести им приписать, сами люди обстоятельные и набожные […] Одним словом, привел нас господень ангел в доброе место и открыл нам все сердца людей и весь пеозаж природы. (326)[41]

By understanding friendly relations with foreigners as a result of Divine Intervention ("the angel of the Lord had brought us to a good place"), the narrating hero not only interprets the English couple positively within his idyllizing vision, he also *reads* them into "his" Orthodox culture. For instance, we are given the impression that Iakov Iakovlevich understands the sad loss to Russia of the many valuable old-style icons that have been

38 Neither Børtnes (1959) nor Kuz'min (2003) mentions him; McLean (1977, p. 236) and Gorelov (1988, p. 154) make only passing remarks.

39 "even foreigners […] were interested in the old Russian tradition," (184).

40 The chief engineer in Mark's narrative shares his name with the Oxford man Richard *James*, chaplain to the English diplomatic mission in Moscow, who upon his return to England in 1620 presented the first transcription of Russian secular folk songs.

41 "The English master-builder, Iakov Iakovlevich […] was forever trying to transcribe the chants we sang; afterwards, he would go off to inspect the work-sites, droning away to himself in imitation of us: 'The Lord has appeared to us'—except that, of course, in his mouth it sounded rather different […] to do them all credit though, the English are devout, reliable folk […]. In short, the angel of the Lord had brought us to a good place, had opened the hearts of the people towards us and revealed to us the whole of nature's landscape." (184).

exported (one even to the Pope's residence in Rome) by people who cannot appreciate their own cultural heritage:

> Англичанин улыбнулся и задумался, и потом тихо молвит, что у них будто в Англии всякая картинка из рода в род сохраняется и тем сама явствует, кто от какого родословия происходит.
>
> —Ну, а у нас,—говорю,—верно, другое образование, и с предковскими преданиями связь рассыпана, дабы все казалось обновленнее, как будто и весь род русский только вчера наседка под крапивой вывела. (350)[42]

With this juxtaposition of two cultural traditions, the English and the Russian, a comparison is effected between "the old" and "the new," the "East" and the "West," stability and change, in such a way that "Englishness" seems to be more closely related to the idea of genuine Russian virtues than what prevails in the contemporary Empire (where the link to the forefathers' heritage has been broken). In sharing with the Englishman his own ideas of Russian culture, Mark is processing foreignness so as to make it fit into his micro-harmony, where people have "open hearts" and are capable of perceiving "the whole of nature's landscape," that is, the essential unity of Christians. Interestingly, the language of feeling used to describe the virtuous Levontii is also applied in the portrayal of the Englishman's wife, an exceptional woman, whose warmth and moral rectitude are such that even language barriers are crossed:

> [его жена англичанка] была прекрасная барыня, благосветливая, и хотя не много по-нашему говорила, но все понимала, и, верно, хотелось ей наш разговор с ее мужем о религии слышать […] а сама говорит:
>
> —Добри люди, добри русски люди!

42 "The Englishman smiled and thought for a while, then quietly said that in England every painting was preserved from generation to generation, thereby showing who was descended from whom./'Yes [I said], I suppose our methods of education are a bit different; the connections with the traditions of our forefathers have been broken, so that everything should seem as new as possible, as though the entire Russian race was only hatched out yesterday by a moorhen from under a nettle-patch.'" (212).

> Мы с Лукою за это ее доброе слово у нее обе ручки поцеловали, а она к нашим мужичьим головам свои губки приложила […] Трогательная женщина! (352)[43]

Echoing the sentimentalized description of Levontii ("wonderful," "good-hearted," "devout," "well-behaved," "grace-inspired")—as well as that of the hero-narrator's response to the former's saint-like qualities ("so deeply was I moved […] that I began myself to sob")—the foregrounding of the "marvellous, good-natured" wife who touches people's hearts, is important as it contributes to a relationship of similarity between the Russian youth and the English engineer. Both men are idealized as travelling companions within the micro-harmony.[44] Moreover, a process of acculturation unfolds in the hero-narrator's interpretation, wherein the couple, having arrived in Imperial Russia, continue their "journey" as they assimilate elements of the Russian tradition (consider Iakov Iakovlevich singing liturgical chants, his wife kissing the Old Believers on their heads). Significantly, this cultural cross-over forms part of the text's thematization of boundary-crossing as such: first, the stonemasons are building a bridge on which to cross the river; second, Levontii, Mark, and their schismatic brethren cross from the old to the new faith; third, there is a series of *literal* crossings of the river made by different people, on different occasions. In the end, the dramatic balancing act over the river performed by the leader of the schismatics (in order to replace the original Angel with the duplicate), amounts to the finalization of a passage of catharsis from one world to another.[45] Here we should consider Mark's story in terms of a transitional rite, as summarized by Victor and Edith Turner: first, there is the phase of transgression, culminating in the

43 "[His English wife] was a marvellous, good-natured lady, and although she couldn't speak much Russian, she understood everything we said and had surely wanted to listen to our conversation with her husband on the subject of religion […] she said: 'Good people, good Russian people!'/For these kind words, Luka and I kissed both her hands, and she placed her lips against our muzhik heads […] that woman fairly touched my heart!" (215).

44 Mark's glorification of the Englishwoman may be compared to Tuberozov's "idyllic" description of his wife, the epitome of Russian femininity, who is held up as an antidote to the local women corrupted by "foreign" ideas. For the signficance of two other Englishwomen in one of Leskov's later stories "Vale of Tears" (*Iudol'*, 1892), see Kuz'min, 2003, pp. 76–85.

45 Cf. Gorelov, 1988, p. 158.

separation of the schismatic heroes from the rest of the official Orthodox society, which regarded them as criminals; second, there is the *liminal phase*, a kind of social limbo.[46] After the final crossing, when the Old Believers have returned, as it were, to the mother church, a community of "new" believers, a *communitas*, has been fostered, in which the deceased Levontii and the *un*sealed Angel are transformed into a living presence inside each one of them.

At one point, when the ill-fated bridge is not yet finished, Iakov Iakovlevich emerges as an instrument of the Divine scheme: создал Бог другой мост: река стала, и наш англичанин поехал по льду за Днепр хлопотать о нашей иконе (370–71).[47] Throughout Mark's account, the Englishman is interpreted as a mediator and "benefactor" (241; благодетель, 374); above all, he is styled as a helper and travelling companion, mirroring the crossing over to the other side ("transfiguration") of Mark and Levontii. In this connection, Iakov Iakovlevich is rendered ambiguously: both as "our Englishman," who is included in the schismatics' culture and, as a *foreign* foreigner, who assists them in stealing back their Angel ("our icon"). This semantic in-betweenness is further amplified through the depiction of the "assimilated" Englishman working together with the simple-hearted Maroi, the epitome of Old Russian spirituality; neither of the two is able to carry out the rescue operation without the help of the other:

> И оба таким образом друг другу свое благородство являют и не позволяют один другому себя во взаймоверии превозвысить, а к этим двум верам третья, еще сильнейшая двизает, но только не знают они, что та, третья вера, творит. (381)[48]

46 Victor & Edith Turner, 1982, "Religious Celebrations," *Celebration, Studies in Festivity and Ritual*, ed. V. Turner, Washington, pp. 202ff. The liminal phase can be broken down into three major events: first, the communication of *sacra*, that is, of symbolic things and actions representing society's religious mysteries; second, *ludic recombination* (from Latin *ludus*, "play," "jest," and so on)—the free and playful rearrangement of traditional cultural factors in new and unexpected configurations; and, third, the fostering of *communitas*, defined as "a bond uniting people over and above any formal social bonds."

47 "God created another bridge: the river froze, and our Englishman crossed the Dnieper on the ice to attend to the business of our icon." (237).

48 "Thus both men showed each other nobility of spirit, and neither would allow the other to exceed him in mutual trust. Towards these two faiths a third, still stronger one, was moving, but as yet they had no knowledge of what that third faith was doing." (250).

With this interdependence between Russian simplicity and English rationality, the function of the foreigner exceeds that of a chief engineer in the literal sense of the word. He is also a master-builder in the figurative sense, a *glavnyi stroitel'*, who, in his repeated crossing of the river, facilitates the conversion of contemporary Russians to a united Orthodox Church. Thus Iakov Iakovlevich is included in the inner story's time and space which are liminal, and do not coincide with the time-space perception (chronotope) of normal experience. Conceived as both *an other* and as "one of us," he is part of the vision of an immanent, supracultural ecumenical community ("towards these two faiths a third was moving") which encompasses Russian and non-Russian minorities alike.

The purpose of sentimental dreaming

The hero-narrator in Leskov's tale interprets his life as a journey that entails a transformation process; we could say that he and his schismatic brethren, in their attempt to retrieve their icon of the Archangel Michael, are "wandering" in multiculture towards a new faith. A key character in this conversion story is the Elder Pamva, whose inspirational force points Mark, as it were, in the right direction. Significantly, Levontii is portrayed in accordance with the *puer-senex* topos, whilst both he and the anchorite aspire to kenotic self-realization in imitation of the suffering Christ.

As we have seen, however, a crucial role in the inner narrative is played by the Englishman Iakov Iakovlevich. Without his mediating role, the Old Believers' goal would have been impossible to achieve. More importantly, the hero-narrator's incorporation into the text of their foreign ally is essential in order to realize a mythic religious unity (*sobornost'*). In Mark's metaphorical understanding of life as a purposeful journeying, there are *two* travelling companions, one Russian, the saint-like Levontii, the other foreign, the engineer James, who jointly bring about the crossing over to the "third faith."

Returning to the frame situation, we learn from the primary narrator that Mark (the inner narrator) confesses that not only educated people but even some of his own brethren, who have remained schismatics, are sceptical of his conversion story:

> [они] над нами смеются, что будто нас англичанка на бумажке под церковь подсунула. Но […] для нас все равно, какими путя-

ми Господь человека взыщет и из какого сосуда напоит, лишь бы взыскал и жажду единодушия его с отечеством утолил. (384)[49]

The quest for the icon and the resulting conversion would appear to be unthinkable without the contribution of the English couple: he masterminds the entire rescuing project, whilst she performs the sealing of the icon copy "with a bit of paper." It is they, as an *intercultural* vehicle ("a vessel") of the Divine Purpose, who enable the hero-narrator finally to "slake his thirst to be united with his Fatherland." Although the local Bishop turns out to be an agreeable and forgiving person, the representatives of the ruling church play no role in this harmonization process whatsoever. Briefly stated, the fact that two foreigners are needed to proselytize the Empire's religious minorities would seem to imply a critique of the official Orthodox Church.

But within the frame story, the harmonious foreignness of Mark's representation is countered by the primary narrator's description of the dire circumstances in the isolated inn. Huddled together because of the raging blizzard, the multiethnic group of travellers shows no evidence of compassion or "nobility of spirit"; on the contrary, given to logical reasoning, they question the "miraculous" dimension of the hero-narrator's account. Considering the ironical attitude expressed in the frame situation, the sociocritical sphere of the "real" world would seem to challenge here the idyllic-affirmative sphere of Mark's world (consider idyllic imperfection). It is significant that Mark himself remains within his idyllizing vision: Васильева ночка прошла. Утрудил я вас и много кое-где с собою выводил […] простите, Христа ради, меня, невежу! (384).[50] Here, in order to sustain for himself the myth of an official harmony in multiethnic Russia, the hero-narrator resorts to *sentimental dreaming*.[51]

49 "[they] laugh at us for being shoved under the Church on a piece of paper by an Englishwoman. But […] for us it's all the same by what paths the Lord seeks out a man and from which vessel he gives him to drink, just as long as he does seek him out and slakes his thirst to be united with his Fatherland." (254).

50 "New Year's Eve has passed. I've been a bother to you and have taken you with me to many places […] In the name of Christ, forgive me: I'm just a poor, ignorant soul!" (254).

51 Thus Leskov's tale differs radically from Andrei Platonov's "The Sluices of Epifanii" (*Epifanskie shliuzy*, 1927), which tells the story of a Scottish engineer invited to Russia by Peter the Great to work on a grandiose waterway project. As the engineer gradually realizes that the project is impossible, he senses that he is doomed and will never see

As "a man on a long journey," "blessed" with "good, intelligent" travelling companions, he sees himself as having survived the spiritual "cold and hunger." This strategy would suggest a tension in *The Sealed Angel* between two Russias: one imaginary, created by the inner narrator, in which crossing is possible and a new, alternative faith is conceived as "realistic"—the other "real," created by the primary narrator, in which crossing is impossible and cultural unity hypothetical. Finally, by having Mark Aleksandrov end his story as New Year's Eve passes, the primary narrator signals that the frame story has been developed in a threshold situation; crammed together in the wayside inn, the listeners have also performed a crossing by moving from an old year into a new one. Thus, Leskov's liminal rendering of the Old Believers' existence serves as an aesthetic "justification" not only of the conclusion in the frame but of the tale as a whole.[52]

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his homeland again. With its combination of rich graphic detail, skilful treatment of suspense and great symbolic power, Platonov's highly un-idyllic work thematizes the tragic clash between human hubris on the one hand, and Nature's inertia and life's complexity on the other.

52 Kenneth Lantz (1979, p. 83) brands the ending of *The Sealed Angel* as "esthetically unsatisfying." For a more nuanced discussion of this issue, see McLean, 1977, pp. 239–40.

The Enchanted Wanderer

"I experienced more and more brutal scrapes with death."
"But you didn't perish."
"No, I did not perish."

As they sail across Lake Ladoga in northwestern Russia, a group of tourists from St Petersburg are joined by a novice monk of giant stature. This middle-aged man, Ivan Sever'ianych Fliagin, who has an exceptional flair for colour and dramatic incident, relates two compelling anecdotes, then proceeds, pressed by the travellers, to tell the story of his own life; in so doing, he reveals his rather limited powers of analysis but extraordinary spiritual depth. Born a serf in the vicinity of Orel, Fliagin is tossed from adventure to adventure, while the diverse social and geographical settings of his narrative reflect the huge expanses of the multiethnic Empire.

He tames the wildest of horses; kills a monk with one stroke of his whip; risks his own life saving his master from death in a coach accident; is flogged for having maimed his mistress' cat, and tries to hang himself; flees the estate together with a gypsy; nurses the baby of a Polish nobleman; kills a Tatar in a flogging contest and spends ten years in the steppes in Tatar captivity; works as a purchaser of horses for the Russian army; befriends a "mesmerist" who cures him from excessive drinking; falls head over heels in love with a gypsy girl (whom he eventually kills); enters the army in place of the son of an elderly couple; acts in pre-Lenten theatrical spectacles; and, finally, enters a monastery.

During his peregrinations, the protagonist of *The Enchanted Wanderer* (1873) traverses the entire western part of Imperial Russia: from the southern steppe around the Black Sea to the northern Lake Ladoga and Nizhnii Novgorod; from Moscow, St Petersburg and Penza to the river Koisa and the Astrakhan desert by the Caspian Sea. During his travels,

he interacts with a wide range of *ethnies*: Russians, Nogais, Poles, Jews, Indians, Cheremisses, Gypsies, Germans, English, Americans and Avars. A kind of pilgrimage, interpreted by the hero himself as a form of confession, Fliagin's life contains numerous trials and ordeals, which he endures within the sphere of multicultural encounters and confrontations.

The adventures of an unwilling adventurer

When describing the various reactions of his co-travellers, the primary narrator of the frame refers to one of them as "a philosopher" (52; философ, 386) and to another as a "merchant […] a man of substance and religion" (52; купец […] человек солидный и религиозный, 386), then, introduces the novice monk as "a typical, simple-hearted, good Russian *giant*" (53; типический, простодушный, добрый русский *богатырь*, 386–87).[1] Thus a relationship of social disparity is established. As the sophisticated listeners interrupt the storyteller with an occasional exhortation or question (—Сделайте же милость, расскажите: что вы дальше […] вытерпели. 432;—А вы же как потом? 497),[2] the reader becomes aware of different sets of cultural values as well as of contrasting modes of consciousness. As Richard A. Peace has observed, there is "on the one hand the fatalistic, medieval attitude to life of the enchanted wanderer, and on the other, the more sophisticated, the more "western" cast of mind of the audience listening to his tale."[3] Whereas in *The Sealed Angel* cultural traditions interact in the inner narrative, in this tale worldviews clash already in the situation of the frame. For our purposes, suffice it to observe that the effect of the primary narrator's transcription of the inner narrator's autobiographical story is to emphasize cultural differ-

1 One of his key characteristics, Fliagin's "gigantic" strength may be related to the nineteenth-century myths about Russianness, the cultural *idées reçues* held by the Russians about themselves and by others. According to a catalogue suggested by Peter Ulf Møller, the Russians are: 1. strong and have stamina; 2. ignorant and backward; 3. superstitious and religious in a superficial way; 4. rude and unmannered; 5. submissive and fawning; 6. corrupt and cheating; 7. unclean and bad-smelling; 8. given to excessive drinking. Cf. Peter Ulf Møller, 1997, "Counter-Images of Russianness: Characterology in Gogol's *Dead Souls*," *Celebrating Creativity: Essays in Honour of Jostein Børtnes*, eds. K.A. Grimstad & I. Lunde, Bergen, p. 72.

2 "Won't you tell us what further trials you had to undergo […]? (110); "And what did you do after that?" (191).

3 Richard A. Peace, 1991, "*The Enchanted Wanderer*: A Parable of National Identity," *Russian Literature* 29, p. 439.

ence: whilst we identify with the listeners' "civilized" stance, we wish to find out more about the mentality of the wanderer himself as manifested in his account, what makes him and his storytelling "tick."[4] In this light, the two anecdotes told within the frame situation are important as they indicate the religious susceptibility and superstitious disposition of the main hero.

First, there is the story of the simple village priest, "a terrible drunkard" (54; ужасная [*sic*] пьяница, 388), who is reported to the Archbishop of Moscow for praying for the souls of suicides. The Archbishop then has two dreams: in one, he is visited by St Sergius of Radonezh who begs for mercy on behalf of the low-ranking ecclestiastic; in the other, he is approached by sobbing spirits who have no one to pray for them. It is the priest's spiritual strength, revealed to the Archbishop in these visions, that saves him from losing his parish: in the end, the Archbishop condones his action: […] к тому не согрешай, а за кого молился—молись, (389).[5] Thus, in placing spiritual merit over external facts and human weaknesses, the hero-narrator emerges as an unconventional novice monk in whom we may suspect an opposition to the teachings of official Orthodoxy: even suicide, which is regarded in Orthodox theology as a cardinal sin, may be forgiven.

Second, there is the story where Fliagin discloses that he is a "connoisseur" (58; *конэсер,* 391) who possesses the gift of being able to divine instinctively the nature of a horse.[6] It is also here that he, in passing, properly introduces himself: меня в миру Иван Северьяныч, господин Флягин, звали (392).[7] This allusion to a *before and after* is the first indi-

4 I here concur with Peace (1991, p. 440), who states that Fliagin's audience "articulates the reader's own reactions to the behaviour and attitudes of a psychological outlook totally remote from his own. It is the presence of this listening and articulating consciousness which refocuses a picaresque tale of wandering into a metaphor of psychological exploration in which each bizarre incident of the plot becomes yet another stage in the revelation of character."

5 "[…] sin no more, and for whomsoever thou hast been praying, continue praying for them" (57).

6 The Russian variant *koneser* is a pun on the word for horse *kon'*.

7 "they used to call me Ivan Sever'ianych in the world, Fliagin was my family name" (61). The hero's name is commonly seen as the epitome of the contradictory impulses in the Russian nature: "Ivan" is the Russian equivalent of Jack, the patronymic "Sever'ianych" hints at *sever*—"north" ("the son of the north") and "Fliagin' implies a toper (*fliaga* means flask). See McLean, 1977, p. 243; and, Wigzell, 1998, p. 502.

cator of the hero-narrator's dichotomous way of looking at the world, a transitional perspective which is amplified in his response to a certain Mr. Rarey, an American horse trainer who offers him a job abroad. Fliagin is flattered but declines to sell his "instinctive" gift, since Rarey "takes everything from an English, scientific point of view, and wouldn't believe me" (63; все с англицкой, ученой точки берет, и не поверил, 394). Briefly stated, there appears to be a gulf between the foreigner's rationalist way of thinking and the Russian hero's conviction that no one can "run away from his fate" (63; своего пути не обежишь, 394) and that he himself must "follow a different calling" (63; другому призванию следовать, 394). The inner narrator thus prepares the ground for the story of his life by voicing religious heterodoxy on the one hand, and a patriotic vocation on the other.

Fliagin's fatalist perspective, whereby events are typically attributed to the action of divine forces, is maintained in his auto-representation proper. Here a certain event from his "childhood story" is foregrounded:

> От родительницы своей я в самом юном сиротстве остался и ее не помню, потому как я был у нее *молитвенный сын*, значит, она, долго детей не имея, меня себе у Бога все выпрашивала и как выпросила, так сейчас же, меня породивши, и умерла, оттого что я произошел на свет с необыкновенною большою головою, так что меня поэтому и звали не Иван Флягин, а просто *Голован*. (396)[8]

Not only does the "Russian giant" refer to his own birth according to hagiographic patterns;[9] as the indirect cause of his mother's death, he is also aware of his own "excess."[10] Interestingly, the mother-son link

8 "My mother died while I was a baby and I do not remember her, for I was her *prayed-for* son, which meant that, being without children for ten years, she had kept begging God to send me to her, and when He did, she died after giving birth to me, for I came into the world with an unusually large head, so that for that reason I was never known by my name of Ivan Fliagin, but was called Golovan, being nicknamed thus from *golova*, a head." (65).

9 In the lives of the saints, the birth of a holy man or hero typically occurs as a reward to pious parents after a long period of infertility, John the Baptist being of course the classic example.

10 Consider the dominant "orphan" motif in Leskov's other texts: Mark Aleksandrov is adopted by the schismatic leader and his wife; the simpleton Pizonskii adopts an orphan girl; Natal'ia Nikolaevna suspects her husband has an "orphan" (the supposed illegitimate child), and so on.

is consolidated by the inclusion of a dialogue between himself and the monk whom he kills with his whip. Fliagin has two dreams which lead to greater insight, but unlike the Archbishop of Moscow, who receives a religious message pertaining to a present situation, he is given information concerning his future trials and tribulations:

> «А знаешь ли,—говорит,—ты еще и то, что ты *сын обещанный*?»
>
> «Как это так?»
>
> «А так,—говорит,—что ты Богу обещан».
>
> «Кто же меня ему обещал?»
>
> «Мать твоя […] если ты хочешь,—говорит,—так я тебе дам знамение в удостоверение».
>
> «Хочу,—отвечаю,—только какое же знамение?»
>
> «А вот,—говорит,—тебе знамение, что будешь ты много раз погибать и ни разу не погибнешь, пока придет твоя настоящая погибель, и ты тогда вспомнишь материно обещание за тебя и пойдешь в чернецы».
>
> «Чудесно,—отвечаю,—согласен и ожидаю». (399–400)[11]

The monk's prophecy lies at the core of the hero-narrator's storytelling process; this is the spell that has been cast over him, the *enchantment* which he understands as determining the course of his life. In as much as Fliagin interprets the series of hardships he endures as stations leading to his final destination ("I consent and I shall be ready"), he himself becomes a perpetual traveller, his adventurous life an extended journey. Thus on the level of intertextuality, Fliagin's account has many features in common with the seventeenth-century *Tale of Woe-Misfortune* (*Povest' o Gore-Zlochastii*), a derivative literary text which takes as its main character a young man who leaves home to make a life of his own, only to

11 "'But do you also know', he said, 'that you're *a promised son*?'/"What do you mean?'/'I mean', he said, 'that you were promised to God'./'Who promised me to Him?'/'Your mother […] if you wish', he said, 'I'll give you a sign to show you that I am speaking the truth'./'All right', I said, 'but what kind of a sign is it?'/'This sign I give you', he said, 'that you will suffer many hardships and adversities, but you will not die until the day appointed for your doom, and then you'll remember your mother's promise and you'll become a monk'./'That's fine', I replied, 'I consent and I shall be ready'." (69–70).

find this more difficult than he had imagined.[12] However, even before he begins his "enchanted" story, the narrator imparts an acceptance of life's ups and downs which are both inexplicable and unavoidable: я всей моей обширной протекшей жизненности даже обнять не могу […] я многое даже не своею волею делал. (395).[13] Considering that Fliagin perceives himself as being doomed to roam without any itinerary, set goal or definite plans for his future (131; без всякого о себе намерения, 449), he may be described as an *unwilling adventurer*.[14]

An early example: having fled from his master in Orel, he relates how he reluctantly accepts an job offered to him by a Polish civil servant. Well aware of the lawless serf's vulnerable situation, the Pole persuades him to work as his baby daughter's *nurse*: ведь ты русский человек? Русский человек со всем справится. (408).[15] In quoting the foreigner's definition of generic Russianness, that is, the extreme adaptability of the Russian people, the hero-narrator allows for an idyllic micro-harmony: Fliagin becomes attached to the little girl and the curious threesome live peacefully together; in his own words: это мне лучше всего было от скуки, потому скука […] была ужасная (409).[16] Before long, however, the caring nurse competes with the restless wanderer. When the Pole's estranged wife appears on the scene, wishing to take back her daughter, Fliagin bluntly refuses (she has broken both secular and sacral law by leaving her child for a cavalry officer), but later, in response to her sincere feelings, he submits: и вот вижу я и чувствую, как она, точно живая, пополам рвется […] (414).[17] Although externally unworthy, the divided woman is vindicated by her maternal compassion. Having thus created

12 The hero of this anonymous tale strays from the right path, gives in to drink, wastes his patrimony, and indulges in a dissipated lifestyle; the prodigal youth's boasting then arouses the Woe-Misfortune, his evil spirit and the incarnation of death, which pursues him relentlessly until he is saved by entering a monastery where he can be spiritually reborn. For a comparative analysis, see Faith Wigzell, 1997, pp. 754–62.

13 "My past life is still a great mystery to me […] much that I did, I didn't do of my own free will" (63).

14 Cf. Mirsky, 1945, p. 317.

15 "You're a Russian, aren't you? Well, a Russian can cope with anything!" (81). The Pole subscribes here to the same national myth as Fliagin's audience of listeners in the frame situation ("strength and stamina"). Cf. Møller's catalogue no. 1.

16 "that was the best remedy for my dejection, because I felt terribly dejected" (82).

17 "I could see clearly and, indeed, I felt it inside me that the poor lady was being torn in two alive […] (88).

a parallel between his own merciful deed and that of the village priest of his initial anecdote,[18] the narrator now tells of how he runs away from his Polish adventure, wandering on through the multicultural Empire: Куда я теперь пойду? (416).[19]

It should be emphasized that on an external level, the epithet "wanderer" points to Fliagin's status not only as a homeless fugitive or a persecuted serf, but also as a person on a pilgrimage on foot (*strannichestvo*), walking from one holy place to another. On an internal level, this duality highlights his "split personality": ungovernable, brave and reckless (he is a murderer), but also meek, humble and compassionate (he is also a nurse), he emerges both as a villain and benefactor. In turn, the combination of his two names—in the monastic community he is *Izmail* (Ishmael), in the world he is *Ivan* (John)—yields an important reference to scriptural patterns. Like the Old Testament wanderer Ishmael, the forefather of the nomadic Arab tribes, Fliagin, too, is "a wild man," whose "hand will be against every man […] the presence of all his brethren" (Gen. 16:12); he, too, is an outcast or alien in his own society. But, like the New Testament prophet John the Baptist, he is also a *prayed-for* son who, as we shall see, baptizes and prophesies.[20] After running away from his first master, the *promised son* roams the Empire until he arrives at an unnamed monastery. In this way, the dual identities of "fugitive-pilgrim" and "villain-benefactor" are reflected in the fundamental juxtaposition "Ishmael-John."[21]

In the following analysis, I will demonstrate how this incongruity informs the hero-narrator's representation of cultural diversity: as a fugitive tramp (*brodiaga*), he emerges as a xenophobic spokesman for the official expansionist Church; as a righteous wanderer (*strannik*), his behaviour is compatible with a "natural" and more tolerant Christianity. Again, we will observe a juxtaposition, which is typical of Leskov's texts, between

18 As indicated by Albert J. Wehrle, Fliagin's instinctive action follows a paradigmatic pattern of parallelism and antithesis. See Albert J. Wehrle, 1976, "Paradigmatic Aspects of Leskov's *The Enchanted Pilgrim*," *Slavic and East European Journal* 20 (4), pp. 372–73.

19 "Where shall I go now?" (91).

20 The combination of Ishmael (in Hebrew "God hears") and John (from Hebrew/Greek, "God is gracious") also involves the biblical antithesis of Law and Grace, old and new, implying a series of cultural juxtapositions: Christian-infidel, native-foreign, majority-minority, and so on.

21 This nominal compositeness is amplified by Fliagin's nickname from birth, "Golovan," which implies eccentricity, and the alias he takes when he enrols for military service, "Petr Serdiukov," which implies anonymity.

the official centre and the unofficial, popular periphery, the religious implications of which are particularly clear in two of the tale's multiethnic episodes: Fliagin's Tatar captivity and his love for the gypsy girl Grusha.

Under the Tatar yoke

As we have already indicated, the superstitious Fliagin places great emphasis on the significance of divine intervention, especially as manifested in dreams. Whilst caring for the Polish civil servant's child, he experiences a vision that is characteristic of his way of thinking:

> […] люди такие дикие, сарацины, как вот бывают при сказках в Еруслане и в Бове Королевиче; в больших шапках лохматых и с стрелами, на страшних диких конях. […] взмело песок тучею […] где-то тонько колокол тихо звонит, и весь как алою зарею облитый большой белый монастырь по вершине показывается, а по стенам крылатые ангелы с золотыми копьями ходят […] страшные голоса вопиют: «Свят!» (410)[22]

In this dreamscape, the Tatar theme is antithetically introduced; featuring both steppe and religious splendour, the Muslim ("Saracen")[23] elements are followed by a storm and an awe-inspiring Orthodox monastery, thus anticipating the religious character of Fliagin's future confrontations with the nomadic tribes. As the story unfolds, we learn that while visiting a horse fair in the steppes, the hero becomes involved in a contest, in which he flogs his Tatar opponent (actually a Kirgiz) to death. It is significant that those who are keen to arrest him after the duel are not the Tatars, but his compatriots, who explain to him the legalistic logic motivating their action:—Он,—говорят,—тебя мог засечь, и ему ничего, потому что он иновер, а тебя,—говорят,—по христианству

22 "such strange, savage people, Saracens, the kind of people one finds in fairy tales about [the folkloric heroes] Eruslan and Bova the Crown Prince; in huge, shaggy hats, armed with bows and arrows and mounted on wild, terrible horses […] a sandstorm […] somewhere a bell was tolling faintly, and a big white monastery appeared on a high eminence, glowing red in the sunset, and on its walls winged angels with golden spears were walking […] and dreadful voices would set up the cry, 'Holy!'" (83).

23 Fliagin uses this epithet in the chauvinist meaning of "infidel" or "barbarian." Originally, of course, "Saracen" would refer to a member of any of the nomadic, desert tribes of Arabia that harassed the borders of the Roman Empire (later, to any Arab or Muslim who opposed the Crusades).

надо судить. Пойдем,—говорят,—в полицию. (427).[24] This is one of several examples of how the Russian runaway serf is assisted not by his co-religionists (*edinovertsy*), but by the non-Orthodox (*inovertsy*). In fleeing with his pagan friends, the main hero also transcends the institutionalized Orthodox church of his enemies and opts for the side of unofficial or lay Christianity.

Fliagin's voluntary escape with the Tatars turns into a ten-year period of captivity, during which he leads a fairly good life, marries four indigenous women, with whom he sires eight children. The narrator stresses, however, that "children" is no more than a manner of speaking; he does not consider his ethnically mixed offspring *his*, as "they had never received the sacraments of the Church" (111; они были без всех церковных таинств, 433). In this instance, Fliagin's text may be said to reflect a legalistic indoctrination similar to that represented by the Imperial police, from whom he ran away and distanced himself. More importantly, the friendly Tatars, who hold him prisoner because they like him, literally bring him to his knees: having sewn chopped-up horsehair into the soles of his feet, they render him a cripple crawling about on all fours. As the listeners are told, this unasked-for adventure is but one of many such horrible events in the hero's life:

> —Опять и еще жесточе погибал.
> —Но не погибли?
> —Нет-с, не погиб. (432)[25]

In Fliagin's interpretation of himself as a *promised son*, he is a man on a mission for God, a chosen individual "counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:8); although subjected to persecution (Gal. 4:28, 29), he is adopted by Christ and thus "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:5, 13). In so far as his life is understood in terms of Divine Intervention, the hero-nar-

24 "'He could have killed you', they said, 'and gone scot free, because he isn't a Christian; but you', they said, 'are a Christian and you'll therefore have to be put on trial according to Christian laws. Come on', they said, 'to the police station with you!'" (104).

25 "'I experienced more and more brutal scrapes with death.'/'But you didn't perish.'/'No, I did not perish'" (110). This is a beautiful example of the perfective/imperfective distinction in Russia, hard to render epigrammatically: the verb (*pogibat'*) used in the first sentence means "to die a little" or "repeatedly," whereas the verb used in the question and the subsequent reply (*pogibnut'*) means "to die once and for all."

rator will not perish, but will move, willy-nilly, from one "scrape with death" to another, until he finally reaches his predestined goal. Before long, overwhelmed by the "un-Russianness" of the nomadic lifestyle, he is seized by nostalgia for his homeland:

> и степи, словно жизни тягостной, нигде конца не превидится, и тут глубине тоски дна нет… Зришь сам не знаешь куда, и вдруг пред тобой отколь ни возьмется обозначается монастырь или храм, и вспомнишь крещеную землю и заплачешь. (434)[26]

In this topographical description, Fliagin juxtaposes the interminableness of the foreign landscape with the finality of a familiar sight which, in turn, will put an end to his earthly trials (the monastery). Then, contrasting the tedious routines in the Tatar camp (where there is "neither death, nor life, nor repentance" 113; ни смерти, ни живота, ни покаяния, 435) with the rituals of Orthodox community life, he enters into a series of idyllic reverie-descriptions:

> к празднику уток, мол, и гусей щипят, свиней режут, щи с зашеиной варят жирные-прежирные, и отец Илья, наш священник, добрый-предобрый старичок, теперь скоро пойдет он Христа славить, и с ним дьяки, попадьи и дьячихи идут, и с семинаристами, и все навеселе […] (436)[27]

In idyllizing the harsh village society from which he had escaped in the first place, Fliagin interprets his foreign exile as a series of consecutive events foreordained by God. Given that he is a *promised son,* predestined to suffer adversities until he leaves this world for another, he seeks to maintain his self-interpretation within a biblical chronotope. Like the

26 "there was no end to the steppe, just as there's no end to life's sorrows, and there was no bottom to my heartache […] You'd look, not knowing where, and there would suddenly appear before you a monastery, or a temple, and I'd recall the Christian soil and begin to weep." (112).

27 "Christmas would be coming soon and everybody would be plucking ducks and geese, slaughtering pigs, cooking cabbage soup with stuffed birds' necks, as fat as anything! And Father Il'ia, our priest, such a dear old soul, would soon be leading a procession to glorify Christ the Lord and with him in that procession would be his deacons, his priests' ladies, and the deacons' ladies, walking side by side with the seminary students, and all of them a bit tipsy […]." (114).

Israelites held captive in Babylon and Egypt, the hero-narrator relates how he had by now "despaired of ever returning home and seeing again his fatherland" (116; отчаялся когда-нибудь вернуться домой и увидать свое отечество, 437); and how his hopes of deliverance rise with the arrival of two missionaries sent by the official Church. The "good fathers" (117; отцы-благодетели, 438), however, realizing that Fliagin has not renounced Mohammed yet is one of their own, turn out to be completely indifferent to his salvation. Although "Russians and fellow countrymen" (118; русские и земляки, 439), the representatives of the official Church refuse to help him; instead, they support the expansionist policy of "nonresistance" with ideas of unity and equality, paraphrasing the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians: мы во Христе, а во Христе нет ни еллин, ни жид: наши земляки все послушенствующе (439).[28] From an offical point of view, Fliagin is already a servant; or rather, he is a Christian servant ("servants must be obedient" 118; рабы должны повиноваться, 439),[29] and should therefore accept things as they are: А ты помни, что ты христианин, и потому о тебе нам уже хлопотать нечего, твоей душе и без нас врата в рай уже отверзты, а эти во тьме будут, если мы их не присоединим, так мы за них должны хлопотать. (439).[30] In spite of his desire to rejoin the people of his own original faith, Fliagin cannot feel any affinity with official Orthodoxy, because it rejects him. It is characteristic of him, however, that when the missionaries are eventually killed by the Tatars, he no longer blames his compatriots; on the contrary, glossing over their former rejection, the narrator incorporates their death into the story of his own life as one of protracted suffering. Consequently, Fliagin considers one of the missionaries to be worthy of a martyr's crown" (119; сподобился и венец страдания приял, 439).

In his description of subsequent events, a new side to the Russian hero's complex character is highlighted. Convinced himself of the need to *frighten* the "Asiatics" (119; азияты, 440) into the Russian faith through

28 "We are one body of Christ, and in Christ there are neither Jews nor Hellenes: our fellow countrymen all obey the law of Christ." (118).

29 Cf. Gal. 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

30 "You have to remember that you are a Christian and that therefore we have no further business with you, for the pearly gates are even without our help open to admit your soul, but these people here will abide in darkness if we do not convert them […]." (118).

the use of Indian fireworks, he performs a series of quasi-liturgical acts, including the sacrament of baptism, the reading of "in the name of the Father and the Son" (126; во имя отца и сына, 445) and the veneration of one of the late missionaries as a saint. The whole performance of Ivan "the Baptist" amounts to parody, as his mimicry of the holy ceremonies is motivated by his specific aim of returning to Holy Rus'.[31] Eventually, Fliagin manages to escape: upon his homecoming, he is flogged by his master for having run away, deprived of the sacraments by Father Il'ia for having "kept Tatar women instead of wives" (130; татарок при себе вместо жен держал, 448), and—because he has now been refused absolution—provided with a passport (and thus released from serfdom) and driven from the estate. For the third time, he is deceived by his Russian co-religionists. It appears that by performing his mock baptism "offical style," the "enchanted" traveller has chosen a roundabout way back to his old faith. Albeit now free according to the law, he has yet to arrive at his spiritual destination.

In Fliagin's life story, we may trace the two opposing, albeit coexisting, stylistic tendencies that we have already observed in *Cathedral Folk*: one denunciatory in the form of sociocriticism, the other affirmative in the form of idyllization. In relation to the Tatars, his initial "friends," the hero appears above all as an ungovernable, persecuted serf; here, we might say, the criticism of Russia's social system predominates. Inasmuch as Fliagin is one of the common people (*prostoliudin*) acting mostly according to conventional Russian attitudes, he appears to be a "product" of an official xenophobic mentality. To be sure, Fliagin's story unfolds on both a social and a personal plane (consider Tuberozov's diary), from the point of view of a fugitive tramp and of a righteous wanderer simultaneously. However, during the "Tatar stage" in his history, his behaviour is primarily determined by his social predicament as a roaming runaway serf.

31 There is a parallel here with the Deacon Akhilla in *Cathedral Folk*, who likewise performs a parodic, and symbolic, Christian act in the form of his "pilgrimage" to St Petersburg. Just as Akhilla's journey leads him towards a greater wisdom, so too Fliagin's baptismal act can be seen as a stage in his wandering towards a similar "revelation."

Hans Gerhard Sørensen · 1958

Gypsies, tramps and thieves

In Fliagin's representation of his own life, a significant role is played by gypsies. It is a representative of this ethnic minority who saves the unhappy serf from suicide and encourages him to run away and live with the gypsy people. At this stage in the story, the Russian hero responds with unambiguous scepticism:

> —А вы кто такие и чем живете? Вы ведь небось воры?
>
> —Воры,—говорит,—мы и воры и мошенники.
>
> —Да; вот видишь,—говорю,—а при случае, мол, вы, пожалуй, небось и людей режете? (405)[32]

In spite of his misgivings, Fliagin is eventually persuaded by the gypsy—whose self-irony seems to escape him—to adopt an alternative lifestyle (что тут делать […] пошел в разбойники, 405–406);[33] once again, he emerges as an unwilling adventurer. It is worth noting that the wandering Russian hero is guided by a non-Russian, itinerant minority. Now one non-Russian evil seems to lead to another; more specifically, the "cunning gypsy villain" (78; хитрый цыган, 406) leads Fliagin to the marketplace where he meets the Polish civil servant who sizes him up for the nursing role:—Вор,—говорит,—или душегубец, или просто бродяга? (408).[34] With the Pole and the Russian hero similarly addressing the same vagabond "kind of living" as villainous, a link is established between the latter and the Pole on the one hand, and with the gypsy on the other. In fact, the hero-narrator seems to intuit the significance of ethnic minorities in his spiritual development, as he reads his initial flight from his Russian master into the context of his predestination: я цыганов тогда смерть ненавидел через то, что от первых от них имел соблазн бродить, и впереди, вероятно, еще иное предчувствовал, как и оправдалось. (450).[35]

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32 "'And who are you and what kind of living do you make? I bet you're just thieves'./ 'Thieves?' he said, 'Why, of course, we're thieves *and* rogues'./'I thought so', I said, 'and sometimes I daresay you don't stop at cutting a man's throat, do you?'" (77).

33 "what could I do […] I decided to become a highwayman" (78).

34 "'Are you', he said, 'a thief, a murderer, or just a tramp?'" (80).

35 "I developed a great hatred for gypsies at that time, seeing that it was a gypsy who first gave me a taste for the life of a tramp, and I must, I suppose, have also had a premonition of something else which indeed came to pass." (132).

Released both from Tatar captivity and serfdom, Fliagin moves on to his next adventure: employed as a "connoisseur" buying remounts for the Russian army, he develops a serious case of excessive drinking.[36] At this stage in his wandering, Fliagin comes into contact with another Russian alcoholic, "a sort of rogue" (141; какой-то проходимец, 457), who not only cures him of his drinking problem by actually forcing him to drink more, but also teaches him about the nature of love. In the narrator's understanding of his own life as a predestined journey, an important role is played by the Francophone "magnetizer" (магнетизер):

> —Истинно,—говорит,—истинно: такое пти-ком-пё…
>
> —Да не болтай ты,—говорю,—черт, со мною по-французски: я не понимаю, что то за пти-ком-пё.
>
> —Я,—отвечает,—тебе в жизни новое понятие дам.
>
> —Ну, вот это, мол, так, но только какое же такое ты можешь мне дать новое понятие?
>
> —А такое,—говорит,—что ты постигнешь красу природы совершенство. (465)[37]

Fliagin is being prepared for an insight exceeding anything he has known hitherto: his life is to take on "a new meaning." Halfway through the lesson, as if to keep the pupil's attention, the mesmerist drops the French for another text: […] он настаивает, что будто бы я не так слушаю, и говорит мне божественным языком, (467).[38] Speaking to Fliagin "in the tongue of angels" (от божества, 467), the multilingual man now testifies that in order to understand the meaning of real beauty one must imitate King David: подражай гуслеигрателю, како сей подклоняет низу главу и, слух прилагая к пению, подвизает бряцало рукою. (467).[39]

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36 In Møller's catalogue of Russian national myths, "excessive drinking" is listed as number 8.

37 "'Truly', he said, 'truly, such a petit-comme-peu…'/'What the devil are you talking French to me for?' I said. 'I don't know what your petit-comme-peu is!'/'I'll give your life a new meaning', he said./'All right', I said, 'that's different. But what kind of new meaning can it give me?'/'Such a one', he said, 'that you'll comprehend beauty, nature's perfection.'" (150).

38 "[…] he insisted that I wasn't listening properly and he spoke to me in the language of the Holy Writ," (152).

39 "thou must imitate the one who playeth the harp, he who inclineth his head towards the heart and straineth his ear to singing and striketh the strings with his hand." (153).

As a result of this meeting between Russian simple-heartedness on the one hand, and the Western quasi-science of mesmerism on the other, Fliagin's responsiveness to feelings is enchanced.[40] With the *petit-commepeu*, an additional spell has now been cast upon the hero-narrator, enabling him to respond to a particularly evocative singing voice: песня… томная-претомная, сердечнейшая, и поет ее голос, точно колокол малиновый, так за душу и щипет, так и берет в полон. (468).[41] This "language of feeling" echoes that of Mark Aleksandrov in his idyllized description of Levontii's vocal talents, just before the Christian faith of both men is renewed. Now a similar revelation is about to be experienced by Fliagin, except that in his rendering of the event the travelling companion is not a Russian youth but a girl and a non-Russian at that.

Вот она […] где настоящая красота-то, что природы совершенность называется: (470),[42] muses Fliagin, passionately in love with Grusha, the central figure within the gypsy theme of his story. Fliagin's contact with the young, hot-tempered girl is, however, problematic. A novice in amorous feelings of this intensity, he uses anti-Christian epithets such as "gaily-coloured serpent" (156; яркая змея, 469), "tempting snake" (162; змеица-горынице, 474) and "little viper" (166; аспидка, 477) in describing her, so as to distance himself from the peril of "that evil hour" (160; в этот лукавый час, 473). The consequence of their encounter is twofold. Fliagin's obvious sensual infatuation with Grusha is gradually transformed into spiritual compassion. More importantly, a special kind of Christian affinity is established between himself and the wildly jealous girl:

> […] и обняла меня, и поцеловала, и говорит:
>
> —Ты мне все равно что милый брат.
>
> Я говорю:
>
> —И ты мне все равно что сестра милая,—а у самого от чувства слезы пошли.
>
> А она плачет и говорит:

40 As pointed out by Wehrle (1976, p. 374), there are several parallels between the mesmerist and the village priest of the anecdote who challenges the Archbishop of Moscow: notably, both are merciful drunkards preaching Christ's Gospel of love.

41 "such a languorous, heartfelt song… and the voice that sang it was clear as a bell, a voice that just took your breath away, that bewitched your soul." (154).

42 "So that's what real beauty is, […] which is called nature's perfection." (156).

—Знаю я, Иван Северьяныч, все знаю и разумею; один ты и любил меня, мил-сердечный друг мой, ласковый. Докажи же мне теперь твою последнюю любовь, сделай, что я попрошу тебя в этот страшный час.

—Говори,—отвечаю,—что тебе хочется? (496)[43]

At this point, Fliagin reveals his ability to overcome the imperial-chauvinist attitude towards the gypsies, who comprise a non-Russian minority and who, though officially regarded as co-religionists (consider—Что ты, мол, перекрестись: ведь ты крещеная, а что душе твоей будет? 492),[44] occupy in effect the lowest position in the ethnic hierarchy of the Empire.[45] Having declared his fraternal love for Grusha, he tells her to say her prayers, then, at her behest, kills her, throwing her off a precipice into the river. In doing what the gypsy woman asks, the Russian hero consciously violates both sacred and secular law and relies upon a compassionate God to grant him forgiveness.

For Fliagin, who has killed twice before, this third murder is particularly important. Unable to orient himself in time and space, he enters into a threshold situation: ничего у меня на душе нет, ни чувства, ни определения, что мне делать; (498).[46] Willing to atone for Grusha's sins—Грушина душа теперь погибшая и моя обязанность за нее отстрадать и ее из ада выручить. (498)[47]—he now embarks upon a new path where, suffering for his neighbour, he also expiates his own sins. In so doing, he exemplifies, through his righteous action, the kenotic ideal of *satisfactio vicaria*, the imitation of Christ in suffering. As observed by Aleksej Ansberg, "what Fliagin reads into his life is an archetypal pat-

43 "[…] and she embraced me and kissed me and said:/ 'You're like a dear brother to me'./I said: 'And you're like a dear sister to me', and overcome by my feelings, I began to shed tears./And she, too, wept and said:/'I know, Ivan Sever'ianych, I know everything and I realize that you alone really loved me, my dear friend of the heart! Prove to me that you still love me and do what I shall ask you in this fateful hour'./'Tell me what you want me to do', I said." (190).

44 "What are you saying? Make the sign of the cross: you're baptised Christian, but what will happen to your soul?" (185).

45 My thanks to the late Professor Alf Grannes, Bergen, for his comments on this subject.

46 "there was a horrid emptiness in my soul: not an inkling of an idea of what I should do." (192).

47 "Grusha's soul has now perished, and my duty is to suffer for her and rescue her from hell." (192).

tern—vicarious suffering. His life, as he himself tells it, has taken the form of a "lived *vita*," of mythical identification."[48]

Eventually, and this time as a real would-be novice unable to attain peace of mind in his monastic vocation, Father Ishmael (меня теперь Измаилом зовут, 504),[49] as he reads *The Life of the Holy Tikhon of Zadonsk*, prays to God for guidance in the form of a "more conformable spirit" (208; более соответственный дух, 511). Anticipated by the hagiographic topos of "tears of tender emotion"—И даны были мне слезы, дивно обильные!.. все я о родине плакал. (512)[50]—a transformation now occurs in Fliagin's ascetic life which rouses the prophet in him: beginning "to weep terribly and prophesy war" (209; очень плакать и войну пророчествовать. 512) he possesses henceforth a providential spirit. As Fliagin sets out to tell his life story, it is as a pilgrim who has left his monastery (the supposed final haven of his life) *en route* to the fathers on the islands of Solovki "to bow down in prayer before my death" (210; хочу им перед смертью поклониться, 512). Ishmael is still on the move, however; the narrator confesses that he has exchanged the characteristic headgear of an Orthodox monk (*klobuk*) for his "warrior's outfit," (211; амуничка, 513) and, having dedicated his life and death to the Russian people, seems to be preparing himself for battle, the ultimate quest.[51]

If Fliagin, in his relationship with the Tatars, emerges as a "product" of an official xenophobic mentality, then in his relationship with the gypsy girl Grusha he reveals something quite the reverse. By atoning for her and dedicating his life to her—and, by implication, to all non-Russians of the Empire—he appears to emerge in this spiritual union as a living repository of natural goodness that forms part of a visionary, altogether different Christianity. Here we are dealing with the positive idyllic-affirmative tendency. To be sure, the "idyll" in question is not merely an "idyll" for its own sake; it is also an *idyllized utopia* that serves as the background for a hidden criticism of official Orthodoxy.[52] Furthermore, the personal plane

48 Ansberg, 1957, p. 73.

49 "they call me Ishmael now," (200).

50 "and I was given tears, wonderfully abundant!.. I wept all the time for my homeland" (209).

51 The final image of Fliagin as a patriotic warrior monk has a parallel in the figure of the monk Peresvet, who participated in the famous battle of Kulikovo Field against the Tatars in 1380. Cf. Wigzell, 1998, p. 503.

52 This critical aspect of Leskov's idyllization should be viewed in the light of the Impe-

takes precedence over the social one: the hero undergoes a transformation whereby human beauty is perceived first as an aesthetic expression of "nature's perfection," and only then in terms of compassionate love. Not unlike Tuberozov's idea of the "old fairy-tale" (*staraia skazka*), the mesmerist's concept acquires a wider meaning as a religious ideal, consisting of elements of universal Christian love for one's neighbour. It should be emphasized, however, that the general vacillation between religious tolerance and intolerance, moral freedom and restriction, which we observe in Fliagin's confrontations with foreigners, may also be viewed in the context of a broader moral-religious conflict. We could say that Fliagin *senses* what Tuberozov *expresses* (albeit to himself); in the former, the internalized search for a new path for the Russian people remains, for the most part, implicit. Just as the story of the Archpriest has, however, an open ending, so too Fliagin's confessional tale provides no final solution regarding his own or his people's fate.

Surveying Russian history

With its many folk and literary references, its broad spatial and chronological canvas, Leskov's tale of wandering may be said to mirror the multicultural evolution of the Russian nation itself.[53] Following this line of approach, each evolutional stage would seem to reflect a cultural antagonism—paganism vs. Christianity, the Orient vs. the Occident, Orthodoxy vs. Catholicism, Westernization vs. Slavophilism—which, in turn, would address the complex question of national character.[54] Moreover, the tale evokes the dramatic arena of Russian expansionism and assimilationism, notably, the drive to the south that eventually led to the annexation of the entire northern extent of the Black Sea coast, and

rial censorship, which forestalled any unfavourable or severe judgement of the Russian State Church.

53 Consider, for example, such mythologized events as the conversion of Old Russia to Byzantine Orthodoxy (988), the subjugation to the Tatar yoke (1240–1480), the domination by Poland during the Time of Troubles (1598–1613) and the invasion by the French in the early nineteenth century.

54 Paul L. Nielsen, in his introductory article to N. Leskov, *Den fortryllede vandringsmann*, Oslo, 1960, suggests a "Chaadaevian" perspective: "On the endless steppe, wandering became a natural form of life. The wandering of the Russians is, above all, about flight and escape and evasion—into the forest, out on the plains—first, fleeing from alien aggressors from both Asia and Europe, then, from any oppressive central authority" (p. 19). See, also, Peace, 1991, pp. 447f.

then, the final line of expansion which took "imperialism" to the south-east, across the semi-arid steppe regions beyond the lower Volga and on into the desert and oases of Turkestan.

In our discussion of *the basic motivation* of Fliagin's storytelling, we have been less interested in the historiographical implications of the author's tale, and more in the personal journey through Russia as re-told by the hero-narrator: не раз говорил, (505).[55] What is it—in his understanding—that drives him through the trials and tribulations of his life, killing, contemplating suicide, succumbing to drink, tormented by an externalized evil before choosing "a monastic haven as a second best to a responsible lay Orthodox life?"[56] Inasmuch as Fliagin perceives himself as a "prayed-for" and a "promised" son, he instinctively bases the interpretation of his life on the hagiographic topos of suffering in imitation of Christ. In renouncing the world and becoming a monk, his abasement thus becomes a transitional stage between the world (his *vita activa*) and its evil on the one hand, and his new life in the monastery on the other (his *vita passiva*). As we have shown, however, this conception of Orthodox self-realization does not go unchallenged. Whereas the hero-narrator of the frame situation looks at his former, tumultuous life in retrospect, re-telling and "sanctifying" it, the character Fliagin of the inner narrative, who is in the midst of the wild events, has enough simply coping with it. The hero-narrator's restless attitude is, of course, closely linked to his/Fliagin's dual personality: a humble, compassionate pilgrim moving towards a final destination, he is also an ungovernable, reckless tramp who lacks such a goal. Indeed, given that the storyteller in the frame is Father Ishmael, a travelling novice monk who cannot cope with the enclosedness of monastic living, the unfolding story of his own life as "purposeful" and predestined also conveys a sense of disharmony. This incongruity informs his treatment of multiethnicity.

At the "Tatar stage" in the story Fliagin acts and thinks, above all, like a chauvinist villain, whilst at the "gypsy stage" he is transformed into a tolerant benefactor, killing out of compassion. It is significant here that the Russian "enchantment" communicated by the monk (whom he has flogged to death) is coupled with the non-Russian spell cast by the Francophone "magnetizer." We might say that the rivalry between these

55 "I've told it more than once." (201).

56 Wigzell, 1997, p. 762.

two perspectives, one Russian Orthodox, the other foreign and quasi-scientific, determines Fliagin's multiethnic relationships so that any fixed idea of national character, or culture, is rendered ambiguous. For the main hero often identifies with foreignness (he is assimilated into one nomadic minority, discovers real beauty in another), but remains ambivalent: he both is and is not a "Russian."

We might say that the author here wrenches the Bible from the hands of the official rulers, and hands it over to the ethnic minorities. In this sense, as a radical re-enactment of the tension between official and unofficial Russianness, *The Enchanted Wanderer* becomes a "parable of national identity";[57] Fliagin's predicament—perishing many times, yet not perishing—would seem to mimic the multicultural destiny of Russia. By interpreting the story of his life as a never-ending journey ("Where shall I go now?"), the hero-narrator thus surveys for his listeners the turbulent history of their nation ("Whither Russia?").

57 Peace, 1991, p. 439.

On the Edge of the World

> Could it be that I already finished my crossing? How nice! How curious this spirit, my new fellow citizen in the new life!

DURING the Christmas holidays, a group of intellectuals is having tea at the Archbishop's residence. A discussion ensues between the elderly host and his guests regarding the ineffectiveness of the Imperial Church's missionary work. Disagreeing with the view that Orthodox proselytizers fail because their notions of Christianity are too narrow, the Archbishop maintains that Russians have their own unique concept of Christ, whose true character is best portrayed in the simplicity and homeliness of their national icons. As if to illustrate this point, he offers to relate his own experiences as a young and newly consecrated Bishop in a remote Siberian diocese. The plot of his story is unequivocal: assigned to bring the light of the Orthodox Church's teachings to the primitive heathen nomads, the Bishop undergoes a spiritual transformation when he is saved by his Yakut sledge-driver, who has never been baptized, from the horrors of a blizzard.

On the Edge of the World (1875) features a first-person narrator whose appeal rests on his status as an educated, cultivated churchman of high rank, and who, in turn, reproduces the oral speech of provincial characters. Briefly stated, the Archbishop portrays himself as a missionary Bishop for the official Church who, through his contact with the members of his multicultural parish, experiences a conflict of conscience with regard to the doctrinal teachings of that Church.

A Christological discussion

So as to better understand the patterns of thought underlying the Archbishop's account, let us briefly consider his contribution to the debate

preceding it. Once again, Leskov's storyteller addresses an audience of listeners in that "in-between" period following Christmas proper (*sviatki*) during which, according to the Russian Orthodox tradition, human beings are believed to be particularly susceptible to contact with the mysterious other world. The issues broached in the discussion are the mystery of faith and the nature of Christ. Having shown his guests the refined and sophisticated portrayals of Jesus in West European art (allusions are also made to Rembrandt, Rubens, Guercino, Titian, Metsu, and others), the Archbishop carefully dismisses one after another. Meanwhile, he points to an ancient Russian icon of the Saviour placed in the corner of his sitting room. To his mind, this piece of sacred art captures the essence of the divine personality, as well as the perfect union in Jesus of God and Man, better than any of the pictures painted by the famous Western artists:

> Мужиковат он, повторяю вам [...] да что́ беды!—где он каким открылся, там таким и ходит; а к нам зашел он в рабьем зраке и так и ходит, не имея где главы приклонить от Петербурга до Камчатки. (455)[1]

This image of unassuming simplicity (*prostota*) and total sincerity (*iskrennost'*) is meant to convey the real essence of Christ's teachings as revealed to the Russian people; the Russians appear to the Archbishop to be both a people chosen by God ("us He visited in the form of a servant") and a nation led by Him in its mission to bring civilization and spiritual salvation to the entire Russian Empire: "He walks, with no place to lay His head, from St Petersburg to Kamchatka."

It is significant that in marking out Christ's route from the European capital, the symbol of Imperial rule, to the Asian peninsula, which connotes legal transgression,[2] the Archbishop alludes to a country that is located in a vast intermediary space between two highly differentiated

1 "He is a bit peasant-like, I repeat [...] but what does it matter—in whatever form He revealed Himself, there He will walk in that form; and us He visited in the form of a servant and so He walks, with no place to lay His head, from St Petersburg to Kamchatka." (27).

2 Since 1750, the Kamchatka peninsula in the Far East was largely used as a place of exile for the Empire's criminals and political prisoners (Russian schoolboys were often punished with the threat that slackers would be "sent to Kamchatka"—the furthest corner of the classroom).

poles of civilization; he invokes that middle ground, which for his well-informed listeners has always raised critical questions concerning their national identity and destiny. Seen in this perspective of "Eurasianism" (*Evraziistvo*),[3] the respected churchman appears to align his own Orthodox faith with the exigencies of Russian national sentiment, whilst establishing his own kind of patriotic Orthodoxy:

> […] народный дух наш, может быть, ближе к истине постиг и внутренние черты его характера. Не хотите ли, я вам расскажу некоторый, может быть не лишенный интереса, анкедот на этот случай. (455)[4]

Having thus subjected the figure of Jesus, as it were, to "a program of Russification,"[5] the Archbishop stresses the importance of this far-away assignment in his spiritual development; recalling his initial excitement at beginning "a genuine life's work, with which it was possible to occupy oneself with devotion" (29; настоящее живое дело, которым можно с любовию заняться, 456), he links the consolidation of his renewed faith to a particular event:

> Ехал я к своему месту, пылая рвением и с планами самыми обширными, и сразу же было и всю свою энергия остудил и, что еще важнее,—чуть-чуть было самого дела не перепортил, если бы мне не дан был спасительный урок в одном чудесном событии. (456)[6]

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3 The scientific, ideological and political position of the Eurasian movement was that Russia and Asia constituted an integral ethnogeographic and cultural unity. Consider Nikolai Trubetskoi (1890–1935), the movement's most original thinker, for whom the diversity of Russian culture was a source of pride, as was the ethnic mixture of the Russian Empire. For a more recent, scholarly evaluation of "Eurasianism" and Russia's quest for cultural identity, see Mark Bassin, 1998, "Asia," *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, ed. N. Rzhevsky, Cambridge, pp. 57–84.

4 "perhaps our people's spirit has better perceived the truth of the inward features of His character. If you like I shall tell you of a related experience which perhaps is not entirely devoid of interest." (27).

5 McLean, 1977, p. 307.

6 "I travelled to my new assignment fired with zeal and with the most extensive plans; and suddenly all my ardour cooled. What is still more important, I came within an inch of spoiling the whole affair, had a miraculous event not given me a lesson in salvation." (29).

In branding the main event of his story as "miraculous" (—Да, господа, обомолвясь словом, могу его не брать назад, 456),[7] the Orthodox clergyman signals a narrative strategy typical of Leskov's righteous storytellers: he is about to "stage" his own life story as a purposeful journey leading towards a Final Destination ("I travelled to my new assignment […] a miraculous event […] a lesson in salvation"). Furthermore, as he exchanges European Russia for its easternmost, Asian counterpart—a distant and strange world—he surpasses both Tuberozov's local movements around the unspecified Stargorodian provinces and Fliagin's extended criss-crossing of the western parts of the Empire.

As regards the Archbishop's portrayal of himself situated *on the edge* of the Empire's civilization, we should bear in mind the contrastive tendency of his Christological exposition in the frame narrative. The juxtaposition of simplicity with sophistication, sincerity with artificiality, Western Europe with Russia, and the Occident with the Orient, is characteristic of his storytelling as a whole. If we take the main hero to be a "wanderer" within the inner narrative, we may even speak of an antithetical principle informing his entire life story. Faced with the ethnic and religious diversity of the eastern part of the Empire, the Russian Bishop vascillates, as we will see, between his role as an "official" missionary on the one hand, and an "unofficial" believer on the other. In view of the "Eurasian" ambiguity suggested above, I now propose to explore the impact of sociocultural heterogeneity on the Bishop's spiritual development.

Going East

The story of the Orthodox missionary who is sent out into the freezing *terra incognita* of Siberia, may be viewed in relation to the idea of Russia's intermediate position as a nation. In nineteenth-century Russia, the awareness of an in-between location caused an enduring and disquieting ambivalence which, according to Mark Bassin, "assumes the form of a sort of existential indeterminacy between East and West, a veritable geo-schizophrenia which for nearly three centuries has penetrated to the very core of the society's self-consciousness."[8] A similar awareness of cultural intermediacy may also be said to provoke ambivalence in the self-awareness of the Archbishop. In his description of the religious and social work

7 "yes, gentlemen, the word slipped out, and I do not have to take it back" (29).

8 Bassin, 1998, p. 58.

he carries out in the name of the Imperial Church, what is at stake is not only the question of missionary "conquest" or defeat, but the seemingly Russian manner in which the hero-narrator interprets his multicultural contacts with outsiders, Christians and non-Christians, Russians and non-Russians, within his own social sphere.

I will try to show how this duality affects his story. Full of ambitious ardour, the Bishop arrives in Siberia convinced, it seems, that he has been providentally charged with the mission of bringing enlightenment and civilization to the ossified societies of the East: я мог всего себя посвятить трудам по просвещению диких овец моей паствы, пасущихся без пастыря. (459).[9] However, the solidity of his "noble calling"[10] is soon to be challenged. We learn that conversions to Christianity are few, or they exist only on paper; many newly baptized natives complicate the Bishop's task by returning to their former faith, such as shamanism and Lamaism,[11] others by confessing to a mixture of various religions at one and the same time:

> […] они молились и Христу с его апостолами, и Будде с его буддисидами да тенгеринами, и войлочным сумочкам с шаманскими ангонами. Двоеверие держалось не у одних кочевников, а почти и повсеместно в моей пастве, которая не представляла отдельной ветви какой-нибудь одной народности, а какие-то щепы и осколки Бог весть когда и откуда сюда попавших племенных разновидностей, бедных по языку и еще более бедных по понятиям и фантазии. Видя, что все, касающееся миссионерства, находится здесь в таком хаосе, я возымел об этих моих сотрудниках мнение самое невыгодное […] (460)[12]

9 "I was able to devote myself entirely to the work of the enlightenment of the wild sheep of my flock, who were pasturing without a pastor." (33).

10 Cf. the Russian Orientalist Vasilii Grigoriev, who wrote in the early ninteenth century: "I do not know if there can be on earth a higher, more noble calling for a people and a state than the calling of Russia with regard to the tribes of Asia: to preserve them, set their lives in order, and enlighten them." Vasilii Grigoriev, 1840, *Ob otnoshenii Rossii k Vostoku*, Odessa, pp. 4, 7–9.

11 In nineteenth-century Russia, the Orthodox missionaries to the peoples of eastern Siberia were challenged not only by the old pagan religion under the auspices of shamanism, but also by the lamas who competed for new converts with the Imperial Church.

12 "They prayed to Christ and His apostles, and Buddha and his bodhisattvas, and to [shamanistic spirits called] tengerins and felt purses with shamanistic idols called angons.

Inasmuch as the hero has to deal with "an absurd mixture of all these faiths," (35; делали из всех этих вер самое странное и нелепое смешение, 460), not merely a combination of two religions, the denominational chaos referred to as "double-faith" (*dvoeverie*) is perhaps more accurately described as "multiple faith" (*mnogoverie*).[13] Provoked by a fragmentation of religious practice more complex than is suggested by a simple dichotomy, the Bishop responds to this diversity in his everyday life with harshness and severity—the nickname "despot," which the people give him, begins, as he says, "to fit" (35; данное мне прозвище «лютого» начало мне приличествовать, 460).

The problem of multiple faith is not limited to the nomads but exists even among the Bishop's parishioners who represent a multitude of different tribes and languages. Also, we learn that he is unable to communicate with the natives because of their linguistic and mental shortcomings ("limited speech and still poorer understanding and imagination"), a circumstance which hampers his work for the Imperial Church ("everything pertinent to missionary work was in such chaos here"). With this dichotomous We/They mode of thinking, the Russian missionary actually accentuates his own position as the odd man out and isolated outsider. At this stage, he encounters Father Kiriak, a strong-willed, yet simple and saintly monk, who adamantly refuses to proselytize.

Claiming that the efforts of the Church to baptize the natives only harm them, the local veteran ascribes the immorality of missionary work to its association with Russian officials. Here the Archbishop's rendering of Father Kiriak's "little enemies" (49; вражки, 470) may be described as a descent into the *otherness* of popular speech. Since the term is incongruous with the social class of both himself and his listeners, he challenges it by accentuating its quaintness: вражки; что это за

Not only nomads adhered to the double-faith, but it was almost everywhere in my flock, which did not represent a separate branch of a certain people but some such bits and pieces of many tribes. God knows when and whence the variety of tribes came here, with limited speech and still poorer understanding and imagination. Seeing that everything pertinent to missionary work was in such chaos here, I formed the most unfavourable opinion of my fellow workers […]" (35).

13 The "double-faith" had persisted after the adoption of Christianity by Prince Vladimir in Kievan Rus' and plagued the Orthodox Church for centuries. For a discussion of multiple faith, see Tatiana A. Bernshtam, 1992, "Folk Culture and Folk Religion," *Russian Traditional Culture: Religion, Gender, and Customary Law*, ed. & intro. M.M. Balzer, New York, pp. 43ff.

вражки?[14] Moreover, the Archbishop observes the figurativeness of the monk's colloquial speech (я не Моисей […] из Египта-то языческого я вывесть—выведу, а Чермного моря не рассеку и из степи не выведу, 462);[15] suspecting the old churchman of having the background of a religious outsider, that is an Old Believer, the young missionary wonders "what miracle" (38; каким чудом, 462) made him enter the Church.

Seemingly unaffected by the Bishop's irony, Kiriak, as Mark Aleksandrov and *The Enchanted Wanderer* before him, evokes images of his childhood using hagiographic topoi: Я […] в единении с нею с моего младенчества и пребуду в ней даже до гроба; с детства я был взыскан Божиею милостию и недостойно получал дважды чудесные заступления (462, 464).[16] After being pressed by the Bishop for two miracle stories from his "simple existence" (41; простое существо, 465), the monk delivers his credo:

> Я вам должен признаться, что я более всяких представлений о божестве люблю этого нашего *русского Бога*, который творит себе обитель «за пазушкой». Тут, что нам господа греки ни толкуй и как ни доказывай, что мы им обязаны тем, что и Бога через них знаем, а не они нам его открыли; не в их пышном византийстве мы обрели его в дыме каждений, а он у нас свой, притоманный и по-нашему, попросту, всюду ходит, и под банный полочек без ладана в дусе хлада тонка проникнет, и за теплой пазухой голубком приоборкается. (465)[17]

14 "Little enemies […] What are these *little enemies*?" Cf. Catherine V. Chvany, 1974, "Stylistic Use of Affective Suffixes in Leskov," *Mnemozina: Studia litteraria russica in honorem Vsevolod Setchkarev*, eds. J.T. Baer & N.W. Ingham, Munich, p. 77, 131n.

15 "I'm not Moses […] I may lead them out of heathen Egypt, but I shall not part the Red Sea and lead them from the steppes" (38).

16 "I […] was united to [the Church] in my infancy and shall abide with Her right to the grave"; "I have been greatly affected by the Grace of God since childhood, and though unworthy, I have twice received divine intervention." (38, 40).

17 "I must confess to you that more than all the other representations of the Deity I love this one, our *Russian God*, Who makes for Himself an abode in one's "little bosom'. Whether or not we are obligated to the Greeks because we know God through them—you can't demonstrate or prove that the Greeks revealed Him to us. We found Him neither in the magnificence of Byzantium nor in the smoke of the censer, but He is simply our own co-sufferer walking everywhere with us, and without incense He fills a soul with a cool fresh breath under a bathhouse bench, without incense and turns into a dove in one's warm bosom." (41).

By thus repeating the monk's opposition between unceremonious Russian religion and formalistic Byzantine Christianity, the Archbishop achieves a twofold effect. First, Father Kiriak is likened to Christ; with his simple faith that God lives in the hearts of human beings—"in one's 'little bosom'"—the saintly Russian monk preaches the Gospel by way of example instead of force. Once again, by putting Kiriak's vestigial populism in quotation marks, the hero-narrator addresses the *otherness* of the former's speech.[18] Second, he likens himself to Father Kiriak; the "Asian" monk's Russocentric testimony ("Our *Russian God* […] He is simply our own co-sufferer walking everywhere with us") reiterates the gist of his own Christological interpretation in the frame ("[…] us He visited in the form of a servant and so he walks […] from Petersburg to Kamchatka"). But then the ambiguity inherent in the passage becomes conspicuous: the Bishop warns Kiriak that he is coming dangerously close to heresy, whilst at the same time he is drawn to the "good-natured and outspoken old man" (45; благодушный и откровенный старик, 468) and willing to listen to him. By the same token, he is unable to communicate with the Asian minorities and suggests to Kiriak that he teach him the native tongue which he had formerly derided:—Давай-ка,—говорю,—брат, не иерусалимскому, а дикарскому языку учиться (468);[19] but he then states, needing to re-confirm his national identity, that the *other* language is nothing but "a language of animal existence and not of intellectual life" (45; язык жизни животной, а не жизни умственной, 468). In the end, he confesses that he has "learned the spirit of the language and understood the whole spirit of this poor people" (45; я, узнав дух языка, постиг и весь дух этого бедного народа, 468). With his alternation between extrovert and introvert gestures, the Orthodox missionary seems to seek a way out of his social isolation by resorting to the mediacy of a "heretic." By forming a social bond with the monk and thereby acquiring an Asian language, the representative of the official Church verges towards the unofficial sphere; *decentred* in the midst of several cultures and languages, he actualizes, as it were, the "disquieting ambivalence" of Russia's East-West position with regard to his own identity. Understood

18 Chvany, 1974, p. 77, 13n.

19 "Come on brother, let's study the language of the heathen and not the language of Jerusalem" (45).

in this light, we may say, using a Bakhtin's term, that the Archbishop represents his own in-betweenness within the *heteroglossia* of the Empire.[20]

According to Kiriak, to transform Christ's essentially simple doctrine into something mysterious and complex makes little sense. As the natives cannot understand such concepts as "martyr," "baptist" and "All-Holy Virgin," "to construct for them some sort of theological system" (45; строить им какую-нибудь богословскую систему, 468) is, he argues, a futile undertaking. No sooner has the Bishop engaged the monk in a discussion on the value of teaching and baptizing *in spite of* the "little enemies," when he himself is reproached by government officials for not being more persistent in his religious work. By now he has become so friendly with Father Kiriak that the latter addresses him as an ally or a comrade-in-arms in a shared battle:—Посоветуйся со мною, владыко, как будешь вражкам писать? (477).[21] When news reaches the Bishop about the scandalous missionary activities of a newly converted nomad, a Zyryan,[22] he decides to size up the situation himself and takes Kiriak with him:

> […] вдруг мне пришла в голову мысль: пробежать самому пустыню. […] на другое же утро раным-рано отпели обеденку, оделись оба по-туземному и выехали, держа путь к самому северу, где мой зырянин апостольствовал. (479–80)[23]

20 The term denotes the basis condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance: there is always a set of conditions (social, historical, meterological, physiological) which will insure that a word uttered at a given time and in a given place will have a meaning different from that which it would have had under any other conditions. Thus "heteroglossia" can be said to conceptualize that locus where centripetal and centrifugal forces collide and interact. Cf. Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 263ff.

21 "Your Grace, would you consult with me when you write to the little enemies?" (57).

22 The Zyryans (Komi) live in the large region west of the northern Urals towards Archangel even today. Converted to Christianity as early as the twelfth century, they are associated with St Stephen of Perm (c. 1345–96). A Russian born among the Zyryans, this holy man believed, in accordance with Orthodox Tradition, that the people should worship in their own language, so he translated passages of the Bible and the liturgy of the Church into their native tongue.

23 "The idea suddenly came to me: I myself must pass through the wilderness. […] very early the next morning we sang the Liturgy, both put on native dress and left, taking the road straight north where my Zyryan carried on his apostolic mission." (60).

This brief description is typical of the main hero's antithetical way of thinking. Before entering deeper into "the wilderness" of heathen Russia, he is concerned to define himself as belonging to the Russian national entity—they sing the Russian Liturgy. On the other hand, he literally enters into *another* culture: the co-travellers, one Orthodox, the other heterodox, "put on native dress." When we consider the Archbishop's thematic juxtaposition of the official and popular spheres, of artificiality and naturalness, Russianness and foreignness, we see that the connection made here between the multicultural dimension and the theme of Christianity is even more obvious than in *Cathedral Folk* or *The Enchanted Wanderer.*

The potential of borderlands

The sledge-ride organized by Father Kiriak into the remote wintry wastes becomes the climax of the Bishop's spiritual peregrinations. When the two men are soon separated from one another, he enters into a thought-provoking discussion with his pagan Yakut driver,[24] who, though he loves Christ, deplores the Orthodox practice of forgiving sins unconditionally: крещеный сворует […], а поп его, бачка, простит; он и неверный, бачка, через это у людей станет. (486).[25] A conversation then ensues in which the missionary Bishop examines his unbaptized guide on the topic of Christ:

—Что же ты про него слыхал?

—По воде, бачка, ходил.

—Гм! ну, хорошо—ходил; а еще что?

—Свинью, бачка, в море топил.

—А более сего?

—Ничего, бачка,—хорош, жалостлив, бачка, был.

—Ну, как же жалостлив? Что он делал?

—Слепому на глаза, бачка, плевал,—слепой видел; хлебца и рыбка народца кормил.

24 The Yakut are the northernmost Turkic people, living in northeastern Siberia in the Lena River basin. Nomads subjugated by Russia in the first half of the seventeenth century, they only nominally accepted Orthodox Christianity, attributing traits of God, Mary, and angels to shaman spirits (double-faith).

25 "The baptized person can steal […], and then the priest forgives him, Father; because of that, Father, he's considered an untrustworthy person." (70).

—Однако ты, брат, много знаешь […] а не знаешь ли ты, зачем Христос сюда на землю приходил? (487)[26]

Here the Bishop deals with the "limited speech" and "poor imagination" which, as we have seen, so complicate matters in his diocese. In line with his thinking as a Russian missionary, the native emerges as a simple-minded man who perceives Christ as a good man and a miracle worker, but has no inkling of why he descended to earth (that is, of the paradox of the Incarnation). Events take an unexpected turn, however, as a blizzard forces them to take refuge together in a snow hole.[27]

In the freezing cold, the driver defrosts the Bishop's eyelids with his own saliva, presses close to him under a reindeer skin and breathes onto his face to keep him warm, but also snores when sleeping and emits an unbearable stench: Четвородневный Лазарь в Вифанской пещере не мог отвратительнее смердеть, чем этот живой человек; (491).[28] Finding it almost impossible to bear such extreme intimacy, the Bishop castigates himself, exclaiming, interestingly: О Боже, о бедный я человек! Как мне был противен этот, по образу твоему созданный, брат мой! (491).[29] In view of his earlier description of the Siberian natives and their "language of animal existence and not of intellectual life," it is significant here that the Orthodox Russian and the heathen non-Russian now *coexist* on an elemental level. In this way, the Bishop is pushed to the limit; obliged to put his life in the hands of the pagan tribesman, he gradually moves away from his Russian Orthodox identity towards a cultural in-betweenness.

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26 "'What did you hear about Him?'/'He walked on water, Father'./'Hm! Well, fine—he walked on water; but what else?'/'Pigs, Father, He drowned in the sea'./'And any more than that?'/'Nothing, Father. He was good, compassionate, Father'./'Well, how was He compassionate? What did He do?'/'He spat in the blind man's eyes, Father, the blind man could see. He fed the peoples with loaves and little fish'./'You don't say, brother, you know quite a bit […] don't you know why Christ came here to earth?'" (71–72).

27 Of course Leskov's Russian language as "styled" in this scene may be contemplated in Eurasianist terms as permeable to the East, distinguishable from other Slavonic languages by its capacity to absorb Turkic loanwords and phonetics.

28 "Lazarus dead four days in the tomb of Bethany couldn't have smelled more foul than this living man." (76).

29 "Oh, God, oh poor me! How could I be so repulsed by this, my brother, created in Thy image!" (76).

When the blizzard subsides, the Yakut driver sets off to provide food. Half-unconscious, starved from being so cold and convinced he has already left this world (я так искренно желал уйти из этой мерзлой пустыни в сборный дом всех живущих, 504),[30] the Bishop is saved by his returning "haloed" friend:

> неужто я уже и кончил *переход*? Как хорошо! как любопытен этот дух, этот *мой новый согражданин в новой жизни*! […] ко мне плыла крылатая гигантская фигура, которая вся с головы до пят была облечена в хитон серебряной парчи и вся искрилась; на голове огромнейший, казалось, чуть ли не в сажень вышины, убор, который горел, как будто весь сплошь усыпан был бриллиантами или точно это цельная бриллиантовая митра… […] из-под ног моего дивнего гостя брызжут искры серебристой пыли, по которой он точно несется на легком облаке, по меньшей мере как сказочный Гермес. (505–506, my italics)[31]

This borderland vision illustrates well how the narrating Archbishop interprets the events of his own life in terms of a transformation process; about to move from one form of existence to another, the young missionary is now in an indeterminate or *liminal* state. But whilst the idea of a passage from the terrestrial sphere to the celestial "new life" is commonplace within his Orthodox mentality, the connection between the "crossing" itself and his Yakut driver is quite the reverse: as he approaches the Bishop as an otherworldly messenger ("like the legendary Hermes"), the non-Russian pagan is transformed into his "new fellow citizen." Judging from the Archbishop's incongruous representation of himself within the salvational scheme, the main hero's position in and relationship to Asia

30 "I wanted earnestly to go away from this frozen steppe to the assembled home of all mortals" (96).

31 "Could it be that I have already finished *my crossing*? How nice! How curious this spirit, *my new fellow citizen in the new life*! […] A winged, gigantic figure swam towards me clothed from head to toe in a chiton of silver brocade, sparkling all over. On its head a huge headpiece which seemed seven feet tall was afire and looked as if it was all covered with diamonds, or more precisely, a diamond-covered mitre […] from under the feet of this marvellous guest showered sparks of silver dust, by which it seemed to float on a light cloud, at the very least like the legendary Hermes." (97, my italics).

thus appears to be a profoundly obscure one: who are the victims, who are the civilizers? And who are his co-religionists?

Not only have the negative features linked to foreignness (primitivism and foulness) now been replaced by positive ones (enlightenment and resplendence), the hero-narrator also introduces a series of biblical allusions, whereby a parallel is established between the actions of the Yakut pagan, "this marvellous guest," and the miracles of Christ. The driver restores the Bishop's sight by spitting in his eyes (Mark 8:23); he smells worse than Lazarus's tomb (Luke 16:19–31); he struggles through the blizzard with food to save the Bishop from death in his snowy grave—all of which, in the latter's eyes, are "miracles" equal to the Lord's walking on water, waking of the dead and feeding of the multitude. As Kenneth Lantz puts it, the pagan emerges as "a living manifestation of the image of Christ."[32] Moreover, by allowing the Yakut driver *himself* to prefigure his Gospel deeds during the Bishop's earlier cross-examination, the Orthodox churchman hands over the Scriptures to a non-Orthodox subject of the Russian Empire, thus transferring his adapted Christian text, as it were, into the unofficial realm of lay theology.

The Bishop's revelatory experience leads him to conclude that the motivation for the pagan driver's *natural* feeling of compassion towards him lies in his wish to seek oneness with the Godhead, but also in his piety and reverence for the supernatural:

> он мне показался прекрасен […] он, не зная апостольского завета Петра, «мужался ради меня (своего недруга) и предавал душу свою в благотворение». Он […] движимый не одним *естественным* чувством сострадания ко мне, а имея также religio,—дорожа *воссоединением* с тем хозяином, «который сверху смотрит». Что же я с ним сотворю теперь? (508–509)[33]

32 Kenneth Lantz, 1981, "Leskov's 'At the Edge of the World': The Search for an Image of Christ," *Slavic and East European Journal* 25 (1), p. 39.

33 "He looked beautiful to me […] he, not knowing the precept of the Apostle Peter, 'took courage for me (his adversary), and committed his soul to the works of charity'. He […] [was] moved not only by a *natural* feeling of compassion for me, but possessing also *religio*, he cherished *union* with the Master 'Who looks from above'. What am I going to do with him now?" (103).

By associating the pagan driver both with Peter, the rock upon which the Church would be built, and with Christ Himself ("the Master 'Who looks from above'"), the Bishop points to his own insecure position in terms of religious and cultural belonging. Now that the non-Russian has saved his Russian "adversary," the latter cannot easily maintain his We/They mode of thinking ("What am I going to do with him now?"). In this way, the fine line between foreignness and Russianness has become blurred. As to the Archbishop's interpretation of this social interaction, the primary influence seems to be the teaching of Kiriak, whose Christ is a "co-sufferer," walking everywhere with the believer, residing in his "little bosom," filling his soul with a fresh breath "under a bathhouse bench." More precisely, the monk's *natural theology* implies that all human beings are born Christians and that they bear, unconsciously, within themselves a Christianity which will find its own revelation: the truths about God can be learned from created things—nature, humankind, the world—through experience alone.[34] Realizing that God has revealed to his non-Russian, "new fellow citizen" as much as he needs, that is, an apprehension of "religio," the main hero thus embraces his own newly gained wisdom:

> я поклонился у изголовья моего дикаря лицом донизу, и, став на колени, благословил его, и, покрыв его мерзлую голову своею полою, спал с ним рядом так, как бы я спал, обнявшись с пустынным ангелом. (510).[35]

In this amazing image, the roles are reversed: the young missionary bows his head to the earth near "his native," blesses him, keeps him warm, and sleeps next to him. As the Orthodox Bishop elevates the pagan Yakut to the level of angels, the boundary-crossing from the official to the unof-

34 Given Kiriak's anti-philosophical stance, his "natural" faith is undoubtedly founded in Orthodox Patristic theology. However, in Leskov this faith seems to be actualized through the author's Protestant leanings. Cf. James Muckle (1978, p. 117–18), who states that behind Leskov's tale "can be detected this belief, particularly strong in Protestantism, that the actual performance of a [baptismal] ritual is far less important than the intention in the subject's mind."

35 "I bowed my head to the earth near the head of my native; and getting on my knees, I blessed him and covered his frozen head with the skirt of my coat, and slept by him as I would sleep embracing an angel of the wilderness." (104).

ficial sphere reaches its culmination. Regarding the Christological aspect of the hero-narrator's purposeful journey, the mystery of faith is portrayed as a gradual shedding of what he formally believed to be Christian; "the religious mystery has moved into the Bishop's life in the shape of the stinking, stoical, immovable tribesman."[36] In the unbaptized Asian, who is moved "by a *natural* feeling of compassion," the Orthodox Russian has found a real *travelling companion* in the full social, religious and cultural understanding of the term.[37]

The reconciliatory/idyllic nature of this cultural confrontation is reinforced by the description of Father Kiriak's deathbed scene. Having been deserted in the blizzard by his Siberian sledge-driver (a *baptized* man who from hunger has eaten the Holy Gifts [*sic*], assured that he will be forgiven), the frail old monk implores his superior to forgive him and not to "tell the little enemies anything" (106; вражкам ничего о нем не сказывать, 511). A remarkable scene of multiple faith is then depicted: the Bishop begins to receive the dying man's confession, whilst, at the same time, a Yakut shamaness leads a "wild ceremony" (106; дикое торжество, 511), praying "for us and for our deliverance, when it might have been better for them to pray for their deliverance from us" (106–107; за нас и за наше избавление, когда им, может быть, лучше было бы молиться за свое от нас избавление, 511). In the Archbishop's account, Kiriak himself appears to be an example of geo-religious indeterminacy. As to the potential of this multicultural borderland in terms of identity formation, he is both European and Asian, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, Russian and non-Russian.[38] Finally, the old monk performs his supreme kenotic act of forgiveness in the form of a prayer:

> —Умилосердись,—шептал он.—Прими меня теперь как одного из наемников твоих! Настал час… возврати мне мой прежний

36 V.S. Pritchett, 1964, "A Russian Outsider," *The Living Novel & Later Appreciations*, New York, p. 425.

37 The inspired fraternal union established between the two men is religious in essence, resembling the spiritual bonds between Tuberozov and Akhilla on the one hand, and between Fliagin and Grusha on the other.

38 Consider here Trubetskoi's "Eurasianist" views as expressed in his *Europe and Mankind* (*Evropa i chelovechestvo*, 1920) and *On the Problem of Russian Self-Awareness* (*K probleme russkogo samopoznaniia*, 1927), where he conceives of all human cultural phenomena as one integrated whole.

> образ и наследие […]—О доброта… о простота… о любовь!.. о радость моя!.. Иисусе!… вот я бегу к тебе, как Никодим, ночью; вари ко мне, открой дверь… дай мне слышать Бога, ходящего и глаголющего!.. Вот… риза твоя уже в руках моих… сокруши стегно мое… но я не отпущу тебя… доколе не благословишь со мной всех. (512)[39]

To Kiriak's confession of an inclusive faith ("I won't let Thee go […] until Thou blessest everyone with me"), the Bishop responds affirmatively (Люблю эту *русскую* молитву, 512),[40] imagining, as it were, a Russian lay Christianity where everyone is included: У нас ведь это все in sancta simplicitate *семейно* со Христом делается. (512).[41] In fulfilling Kiriak's request for forgiveness in "blessed simplicity," the Bishop comes to resemble the late monk; like him, he proceeds towards the pagan inhabitants of the Empire in a milder, meeker and more tolerant manner. Thus, in the Archbishop's representation of the old man's life as an *imitabile*, as something worthy of imitation, the natural religious feeling of the Asian nomads coincides with Christianity.[42]

Apocatastasis, or an optimistic worldview

In our analysis of the Archbishop's story about his life as a Russian missionary, we have tried to establish the impact of sociocultural heterogeneity on his spiritual development. More precisely, we have shown how the official churchman *stages* his contacts with cultural outsiders within his own social sphere—so as to fit his interpretation of his own life on the peripheries of the Empire as a purposeful journey. First, he is sent out on a mission to its Asian part ("I travelled to my new assignment"). In

39 "'Have mercy', he whispered. 'Make me now as one of Thy hired servants! The hour has come […] return me to my former image and inheritance […] O goodness […] O simplicity […] O love! […] O my joy! […] Jesus! Now I run to Thee like Nicodemus at night; hasten to help me, open the door […] let me hear God, walking and speaking! […] Now […] Thy garment is already in my hands […] break my thigh […] but I won't let Thee go […] until Thou blessest everyone with me'" (107). With the phrase "break my thigh," Kiriak alludes to the biblical story about Jacob who before dying wrestles with an angel (God) before being granted eternal life. Cf. Gen. 32:25: "[…] and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him."

40 "I love this *Russian* prayer," (107).

41 "With us, in the family of Christ, all this is done *in sancta simplicitate*." (107).

42 Cf. Børtnes, 1964, p. 79.

responding to the linguistic and cultural multiplicity in his diocese, he soon finds himself in a chaotic borderland; "everything pertinent to missionary work was in such chaos." By confronting and befriending Father Kiriak, the monk who refuses to proselytize, the Bishop comes to vacillate between the official and the unofficial spheres of Russianness. He then decides to travel on to northern Siberia, to "pass through the wilderness," where he becomes trapped in a blizzard with an unbaptized Yakut driver who saves his life ("a miraculous event").[43] In turn, this experience leads to a third progression in the form of a revelatory experience ("a lesson in salvation"). Having attained a new religious wisdom, he perceives the pagan driver in a different light, identifying with the non-Russian nomad ("embracing the angel of wilderness").

Underlying the Archbishop's auto-representation is Father Kiriak's "natural" faith which includes everyone, an integrated Christianity which is related to the Patristic tradition of *apocatastasis*, the final restitution of all things at the coming of the Messiah. It is significant here that the hero-narrator (rightly) identifies this faith as "heretical," whilst associating it with Russian reactions generated by the heart ("I love this one, our *Russian God*"; "I love this *Russian* prayer").[44] As a representative of the sort of "inside" criticism we saw in the Archpriest Tuberozov, the Archbishop thus discusses critically the missionary work of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the meaning of "conversion" in particular, whilst upholding an optimistic worldview.

It should be emphasized that on the level of the inner narrative, the Russian hero displays ambivalence; vascillating between the official and the unofficial, Russianness and foreignness, his is a flexible identity. On the level of the frame, however, there is no question about the Archbishop's Russian character. As revealed by his understanding of his life as a vigorous process of transformation ("Could it be that I already finished my crossing?"), his narrative may be said to re-enact the union within the Empire of all natural Christians, Russians and non-Russians, in the form of an *idyllic utopia* ("My new fellow citizen in the new life!").

43 Similar to *On the Edge of the World* with its focus on moral transfiguration is Tolstoy's well-known tale "Master and Man" (*Khoziain i rabotnik*, 1895); this story depicts the internal metamorphosis of a self-centred merchant named Brekhunov after he is trapped with his servant in a raging blizzard.

44 This observation is also made by Christina Weinberg, 1996, p. 169.

In this respect, the tale's Eurasian sensibility appears to be more attracted to the familiar than the exotic; it is the steppe, rather than the impassable mountain ranges of Siberia, that has become the preferred imaginative space. However, his utopian construction also contains an implicit criticism of the official Church.

In view of the Archbishop's essentialist concept of Russianness, we could say that his national identity is "framed" and defined inflexibly. Although he has gained revelatory insight of a more "real" and dynamic Church, his attitude is still Russocentric; after all, he has remained within the bounds of official Orthodoxy, where such "dynamism" cannot be permitted. And so the hero-narrator of this tale may go on recalling his own life story—as mere memory or nostalgia—for his own benefit or for that of others, but it is only by *not* being realized that his idyllic vision of universal salvation within the multicultural Empire gains verisimilitude as a utopia. From the viewpoint of the modern reader, therefore, Leskov's "Russian idea" appears in itself to consist of elements well known from contemporary lay theology and from the works of such writers as Pushkin, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

Thus the Archbishop's interpretation reflects the problem of Asia in the Russian imagination. Just as the distinction between the national core of the Russian Empire on the one hand and its Imperial domains in Asia on the other is by no means straightforward, so too the churchman's understanding of an official Orthodoxy and a "natural," unofficial and alternative Christianity must be described as indeterminate.

Childhood Years

> On the Great Russian side there were hunger and a staggering poverty, whereas on the Little Russian or the Chernigov side, there was something else in the air.

A GROUP of St Petersburg acquaintances spend their summer in a small provincial town and befriend a local monk. Speculation soon arises among the visitors as to why old Father Gordii, a strikingly handsome man of exceptional cultivation and artistic talent, has chosen to immure himself in a monastery. He responds by depicting the early stages of his life in the form of a written memoir.[1] The plot is as follows: having been expelled from the St Petersburg Cadet Corps after a "mutiny," the sixteen-year-old Merkul Praottsev is sent back to his home town of Kiev; the pains and pleasures he experiences on his month-long journey lead to an increased awareness of his own individuality. No sooner is he reunited with his mother, a widow of Baltic German stock who gives more weight to logic and reason than to the free play of emotions, than Merkul begins to study extensively. While genuinely thirsting for knowledge, he suffers a series of illnesses—a warning of the inherent disharmony in his life. Then, when away from Kiev on a brief journey, the youth experiences the excitement of his own creativity as he experiments with fresco painting; finally, he leaves Kiev to study with a German artist. In the monk's account, Merkul does not actually take monastic vows at any stage, but reaches a point where he is freed from "rational" restrictions and may start afresh, following the dictates of his heart.

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1 The "frame" information is conveyed to the reader through a fragment of a Preface, which was later excluded from the final text. See N.S. Leskov, 1957, *Sobranie sochinenii v odinnadtsati tomakh*, vol. 5, pp. 605–608.

Once again, we are dealing with a Russian hero whose life story may be viewed as a religious quest through cultural confrontation. The hero of *Childhood Years* (1875) perceives his former life as extensive travel: couched in images of "roaming," "going astray," and "erring," his language is coloured by his state of being on the move, physically as well a spiritually, and of being susceptible to personal change. But unlike Leskov's heroes we have examined so far, Father Gordii displays a preoccupation with the recollective aspect of his own storytelling. In this respect, the subtitle "From the Reminiscences of Merkul Praottsev" (*Iz vospominanii Merkula Praottseva*) points not only to the leisurely and ruminative manner in which he casts his nostalgic mind back over past events, but also to how he actively pieces together dimly remembered details.

The art of remembering

An early exhortation to the reader sets the tone: […] начнем ab ovo, если не с самой колыбели, то хоть с той поры, как я себя помню. (281).[2] Considering that Father Gordii begins his narrative with this traditional reference to his own memory and later concludes it with the formula "may their memory live forever!" ([им] вечная память, 450), thereby wishing to keep alive the remembrance of all the people who have influenced his childhood and youth, we could say that he frames his life story with "a vocabulary of recollection." His text is permeated with words and phrases such as "memory" (память), "reminiscence" (воспоминание), "to recall" (напоминать), "to recollect" (припомнить), and their various permutations.[3] Among the hero-narrator's earliest memories is an incident that occurred in a Polish town where his Russian father was serving as a cavalry officer: left alone by his parents, the tiny child almost falls out of a window five floors above the street. Little Merkul is only just rescued by his father, who, convinced that his son saw a vision and tried to capture it, brands him "a dreamer" and "a fantast" (верхолет; фантазер,

2 "[…] let us begin *ab ovo*, if not from the very cradle, then at least from when I remember myself."

3 See Olga V. Evdokimova, who asserts that "memory is one of the main foundations of Nikolai Leskov's poetics." Olga V. Evdokimova, 1996, "Poetika pamiati i avtorskaia pozitsiia v proze N.S. Leskova. 'Detskie gody. (Iz vospominanii Merkula Praottseva)'," *Avtor i tekst: Sbornik statei*, eds. V.M. Markovich & W. Shmid [Schmid], St Petersburg, pp. 288, 290.

282). As to Father Gordii's summoning up of his own past, this incident appears to be decisive:

> […] я начал припоминать, как это было,—и действительно вспомнил, что передо мною неслось что-то легкое, тонкое и прекрасное: оно тянуло меня за собою, или мне только казалось, что оно меня тянет, но я бросился к нему и… очутился в описанном положении, между небом и землею, откуда и начинался ряд моих воспоминаний. (283)[4]

The image of the child, who is drawn towards "something light, subtle and wonderful," whilst, at the same time, suspended in-between the heavenly and the earthly spheres, informs the narrator's understanding of himself as a restless "wanderer." As we shall see, Merkul finds himself caught between different worldviews and value judgements, without a sense of spiritual belonging. Unlike the Archpriest Tuberozov in his *Demicoton Book*, Father Gordii is explicit about his intention to connect his past experiences in memory, simply because he believes his past is worth recording: Я думаю, что я должен непременно написать свою повесть, или, лучше сказать,—свою исповедь (279).[5] It is interesting that Father Gordii's "confession," as the manifestation of his religious quest, is realized through a confrontation of cultures. Thus the initial figure of in-betweenness ("in-between heaven and earth") appears to point towards the technique of impressing on memory the people and places of Imperial Russia; as the Russian monk proceeds to tell the story of his life, memory emerges not as a passive repository of the past but as an active agency of creation. Apart from the description of this vision and a couple of other incidents, Merkul's childhood years are passed over completely. In this way, the function of the title seems to be primarily a "mnemonic" one, signalling the recollective work that takes place within the narrator's text as a whole.

4 "I began to recollect how it was—and indeed I remembered that in front of me drifted something light, subtle and wonderful: it pulled me along, or it only appeared to me to be pulling, but I rushed towards it and… I found myself, in the described situation, in-between heaven and earth, from whence began the whole series of my recollections."

5 "It seems that I must inevitably write down my story, or rather my confession."

According to Frances A. Yates, the first step of mnemonics is to imprint on the memory a series of places (*loci*) and images (*imagines*) which together, through the formation of sequences in space (*collocatio*), constitute a so-called memory theatre. The places must be easily grasped, or "memorable"; a revered building, a typical room, a well-known, salient architectural feature, and so on; the images are forms, marks or simulacra of what we wish to remember. For instance, in order to remember individuals belonging to a specific social and cultural group that have common characteristics—monks, priests, artists, or persons belonging to ethnic minorities—the speaker (*orator*), in classical rhetoric, must place his or her images in definite *loci* as part of *memoria*.[6] By exploiting the power of the visual cortex, the idea is that the speaker associates a particular pattern of argument with a particular visual scene consisting of foregrounded figures against background scenes. In order to stimulate the part of the brain concerned with basic emotion, hunger, and sex (the limbic system), to arouse emotional affects, both background and foreground information need to be as powerful as possible. Therefore, according to Yates, a memory theatre should be furnished with a gallery of striking and unusual human images (*imagines agentes*), beautiful or hideous, comic or pathetic; human figures that are "dramatically engaged in some activity—doing something," that is well suited to their representation.[7] By analogy, the hero of *Childhood Years* may be said, in his narration, to associate a particular representational pattern with imaginary visual scenes, so that the text grows together out of its parts, like a woven fabric.[8] Father Gordii comments on the presentation of his "confession":

> […] я буду рассказывать все это не так, как рассказывается в романах […]. Я не стану усекать одних и раздувать значение других совытий: меня к этому не вынуждает искусственная и неестественная форма романа, требующая закругления фабулы и сосредоточения всего около главного центра. В жизни так не бывает. Жизнь человека идет как развивающаяся со скалки хартия, и я

6 Francis A. Yates, 1966, *The Art of Memory*, London, p. 22.

7 Yates, 1966, p. 26.

8 This is a creative procedure, where mnemonic rules govern the semantic relationships between what is to be "remembered" (the signified) and its image (the signifier), between absence and presence.

ее так просто и буду развивать лентою в предлагаемых мною записках. (279)[9]

Thus he begins his account with a disclaimer;[10] the reader is told that what follows is not a novel but an autobiography, that is, an exercise in literary memory—events and adventures will be recalled "as in real life," unfolding naturally "like a parchment unwinding from a ancient scroll."[11] I should like to stress that the responsibility for retrieving what is to be remembered also falls upon the reader, who, as co-creator, mimics the narrator's recollection of order (*collocatio*), so as to reconstruct the remembered material in face of its destruction. Through the process of fictionalizing, or what Yates calls "inner writing,"[12] both narrator and reader make historiographical contributions as the tropes—the *imagines* or the simulacra—ward off forgetting.[13] More importantly, this kind of artificial memory tells us something about the "dialogic" work of culture, indicating that the survival of a particular culture hinges on the translatability of *several* cultures, that is, on intercultural transmission.

In view of Leskov's portrayal of the multicultural Empire, I will focus our attention on one particular section of Leskov's tale: the description of the young hero's month-long journey from the Russian capital to

9 "[…] I will not tell it in the way such stories are told in novels […] I will not pare down the significance of certain events and magnify that of others; I am not obliged to do that by the artificial and unnatural form of the novel, which requires a rounding off of plot line and a concentration of everything around one main centre. In life it is not like that. A man's life moves like a parchment unwinding from a ancient scroll, and in the notes presented here I will unwind my life like a ribbon, just in that way." For the translation of this particular quotation, see McLean, 1977, p. 280.

10 According to McLean (1977, pp. 281ff), Father Gordii's statement reflects the author's philosophical approach to life, which went against the scientific bias of the nineteenth century: "[Leskov] discovered that neither symmetry nor logical causality is typical of people's lives. Most human beings stagger chaotically and unsymmetrically through a series of accidents fortuitously connected with one another. Their lives do not form a tight structure created by their personalities, but consist of a loose series of last-minute, improvised attempts to cope with unpredictable events in their environment." See, also, for a similar view, Weinberg, 1996, pp. 118ff.

11 Evdokimova (1996, p. 289) suggests that the word for "scroll" (*khartia*) actualizes such significant associations as olden times, temporal expanse and "simplicity of organization."

12 Yates, 1966, p. 22.

13 In this sense, the art of memory becomes "the *clavis universalis* for knowledge of the world." (Lachmann, 1997, p. 5).

his home town in the Ukraine. I shall concentrate not so much on the binary "Great Russia"—"Little Russia" as such,[14] but, more broadly, on the outcome of the intermediate ground that transpires when different worldviews, ethnies and mentalities meet and confront each other. Thus the characters in Leskov's text will be seen both as culture-possessing and culture-creating social beings, whilst "culture" will be understood as a border phenomenon in the Bakhtinian sense, depending on its "in-between" status in order not to petrify and die.[15]

A journey from St Petersburg to Kiev

Following his expulsion from the Cadet Corps, Merkul, along with several schoolmates, embarks on a "pre-railway" journey (the year is ca. 1850) replete with curious and absorbing incidents: new people, new situations and new adventures. They travel according to the following itinerary: St Petersburg—Tver'—Moscow—Tula—Orel—Kiev, where each place in the sequence adds cumulatively to the weight of inner turmoil experienced by the hero. A Russian reader would perhaps associate this scenario with Aleksandr Radishchev's *A Journey from St Peterburg to Moscow* (*Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu*, 1790), where the "feeling hero" representing Everyman travels through the Empire of Catherine the Great, emerging as a critical champion of freedom with a "project for the future."[16] Another intertextual link may be drawn with the "pseudo-autobiographical" childhood/youth narratives of Leo Tolstoy and Sergei Aksakov, whose first-person narrating heroes travel extensively whilst enjoying a varied social and cultural life.[17] The same may be said of Leskov's tale, whose reminiscing monk is less concerned with Russia's

14 Whereas "Great Russia" was the conventional contemporary term for the central bulk of European Russia, including such old provinces as Iaroslav, Kostroma, Kursk, Moscow, Novgorod, Orel, Pskov, R'iazan, Tula and Vladimir, "Little Russia" denoted the southern Russian area consisting of the provinces of Kiev, Chernigov, Poltava and Kharkov (Ukraine).

15 "Removed from its borders [culture] loses its fertile soil, becomes empty, arrogant, degenerates and dies." See Bakhtin, 1975, p. 25.

16 For an English translation, see Aleksandr N. Radishchev, 1958, *A Journey from St Petersburg to Moscow*, trans. L. Wiener, ed. & intro. R.P. Thaler, Cambridge, Mass.

17 I have here in mind Sergei Aksakov's *Childhood Years of Bagrov Grandson* (*Detskie gody Bagrova-vnuka*, 1858) and Leo Tolstoy's *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth* (*Detstvo*, *Otrochestvo*, *Iunost'*, 1852–1857).

sociocultural incongruity per se, than with the effect of such incongruity on his own self-development.

As if to prepare the ground for his memory theatre, Father Gordii signals the consequentiality of the events to be depicted:

> Впереди был длинный, очень длинный путь, о котором не могут составить себе даже приблизительно верного понятия люди, доезжающие нынче от Петербурга до Киева в трое суток, и вдобавок без всяких приключений. (298)[18]

On the one hand, Merkul's journey is a *passage* through the world of masculine adventure: in Tver', he falls desperately in love with the sister of one of his schoolmates, a woman almost twice his age (Странная, прекрасная и непонятная женщина, мелькнувшая в моей жизни как мимолетное видение, 305);[19] in Moscow, where every place is "holy and fascinating" (всякое место было свято и интересно, 307), he savours the experience of the pulsating city-life, doing "nothing but run, look around, go into raptures" (не было другого намеренья, как бежать, смотреть, восторгаться, 307); in the "Drunken Ravine" («Пьяная балка»), a locality of ill repute near the Ukrainian border, where he gets drunk and loses his virginity with a wayside prostitute (313–314, 320); and so on. On the other hand, the journey may be seen as a *crossing* on the level of cultural identity and national belonging. In recollecting how he travelled into the southwestern part of European Russia, Father Gordii draws a significant comparison:

> Их [великорусскую деревушку и малороссийский хуторок] разделяла только одна «Пьяная балка» и соединял мост; затем у них все условия жизни были одни и те же: один климат, одна почва, одни перемены годы; но на орловской, то есть на великорусской, стороне были поражающие нищета и голод, а на малорусской, или черниговской, веяло иным. Малороссийский хутор про-

18 "In front of us was a long, very long journey, which cannot be imagined even remotely by people who travel today from St Petersburg to Kiev within three days, and without any adventures at that."

19 "A strange, beautiful and incomprehensible woman, who appeared for a moment in my life like a fleeting vision."

цветал, великорусская деревня извелась вконец—и невозможно было решить: чего еще она здесь держится? (312–13)[20]

In Father Gordii's depiction we recognize the two stylistic tendencies of Leskov's fictional universe: whereas the Great Russian village is described in depreciatory terms as barren, mostly false and harmful (social criticism), the Ukrainian village is presented in a picturesque light, as fertile and invigorating (affirmation). Interestingly, the abandonment of the miserable Great Russian side for the happy "Little Russian or Chernigov side,"[21] continues the quest that was established in Merkul's first childhood memory: as a little child, he was drawn towards "something light, subtle and wonderful"; now, as a young man, he registers something *undefinably* better and beautiful ("there was something else in the air").[22] But here idyllization (страна украинских черешен, 312)[23] also indicates an instability which is characteristic of Father Gordii's auto-representation as a whole: just as in early childhood he was suspended between heaven and earth, now, too, his crossing into this borderland—in Russian *krai* denotes "edge" or "border"—signifies his entry into an intermediate territory. As anticipated by the similarities between the two "Russias" in his

20 "They [the Great Russian village and the Little Russian *khutor*] were divided only by the 'Drunken Ravine' and linked together by a bridge: their living conditions were therefore the same: the same climate, the same soil, the same seasons of the year; but on the Orlovian, that is the Great Russian side there was staggering poverty and hunger, whereas on the Little Russian or the Chernigov side, there was something else in the air. The Little Russian *khutor* was thriving, the Great Russian village was utterly perishing and it was impossible to make out: how does it survive at all?"

21 The town of Chernigov resonates with dramatic grandeur in the Russian national mythology: it was fought over by the Kievan princes in the early eleventh century; conquered and devastated by the Mongol Hordes in 1240; annexed from the Lithuanians by Ivan III in 1503; and visited by the False Dimitry, the usurper of the Russian throne in the so-called Time of Troubles (1598–1613).

22 This description of "Little Russia" should be seen in relation to the overall tendency in Russian nineteenth-century literature to idyllize Ukraine as a "national-romantic" Russia that was about to perish. See, most notably, Nikolai Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* (*Vechera na khutore bliz Dikan'ki*, 1831–32). As to the notion of Little Russian vitality in "imperialist" thinking, David Saunders (1985, p. 5) writes: "A picture of Ukraine emerged: land of Cossacks, of the bandit Horkusha and the itinerant philosopher Skovoroda, land of cholera and locusts, of the great river Dniepr, of bootlegging, week-long wedding festivities, painting, folk medicine, song, tumuli, witches, Orthodoxy and Enlightenment."

23 "the land of Ukrainian cherry-trees."

description ("the same climate, the same soil, the same seasons of the year"), Merkul's crossing from the Great Russian to the Little Russian side will always be inconclusive. In this sense, the motif of the Trans-Russian Journey may be taken to signify the hero's "country of residence," in so far as his journey emerges as an all-embracing metaphor for his cultural in-betweenness.[24]

Merkul is continually involved in multicultural interaction. In this connection, Father Gordii introduces into his account an "unusual" or memorable travelling companion, a certain Stanisław Pieńkowski: Этот молодой поляк был годами двумя нас постарше, высок ростом, довольно мужественен, красив собою, при этом большой франт—и, по польскому обычаю, франт довольно безвкусный (315).[25] Appearing at regular intervals throughout Father Gordii's life story, the Pole is often stereotypically described as a superficial and rather insensitive person (Пеньковскому необыкновенно нравилось, что он играет такую заметную роль, 316; Пеньковский, обаянный своим великолепием […], 317).[26] It is worth noting that Father Gordii recalls in detail how this schoolmate paraded through the provincal marketplaces incongruously dressed in a Hussar-style jacket (венгерка, 315) with cords and tassels, a pair of wide, brightly coloured Ukrainian trousers (шаровары), and a Turkish fez (ермолка). I shall return later to the representation of Poles and Polishness; suffice it to say that this case of cultural "cross-dressing" indicates a multicultural adaptability that may also be attributed to the Russian hero himself.

Whilst describing the Pole and his extravagant behaviour in negative or critical terms, Father Gordii recalls the circumstances surrounding another of his travelling companions in a very different light. After a squabble with Pieńkowski over fishing skills, the Ukrainian Knyshenko accidentally drowns in a river:

> […] его смерть была для меня ужасным, потрясающим событием. Она дала мне первый повод к несколько рановременным

24 The term "Trans-Russian" will pertain here to the peripheries of Imperial Russia, from the point of view of the "centre" of St Petersburg and Moscow.

25 "This young Pole was two years our senior, tall, quite manly, handsome; moreover, a great dandy—and, in accordance with Polish custom, quite a tawdry dandy."

26 "it pleased Pieńkovski tremendously that he was playing such an important role"; "Pieńkowski, fascinated by his own splendour […]."

> размышлениям о непрочности всего земного […] Кнышенко был добрый и очень нежный мальчик: он пламенно любил свою мать, говорил о ней с восторгом и стремился к ней с какою-то болезненною страстностью. (319–20)[27]

The positive or affirmative description of tender-hearted Knyshenko continues the Little Russia theme; the earnest and sensitive boy dies "cheerfully and gracefully" (весело и грациозно, 319), his *responsiveness to emotion* complementing, as it were, the invigorating beauty of the idyllized Ukrainian village. As regards Father Gordii's life story, the filial love of this character foreshadows Merkul's attachment to his own mother, whom he reveres and idealizes: Матушка была бы красавица, если бы она не была ангелом. (290).[28] At this stage in his account, Father Gordii recollects how the drowning made him undergo "a terribly difficult moral upheaval" (321), and led to his feeling guilt and "existential" despair:

> У меня уже была *испорченная жизнь*—и мне хотелось оплакать и сбросить ее […] я лег лицом ниц к земле и заплакал. Я оплакивал свою *погибщую жизнь*, свое глубокое нравственное падение, страшно расстроившее мое воображение и нервы и доведшее меня до отчаяния, что я, сопричастясь бездне грязных пороков, уже недостоин и не могу взглянуть в светлые глаза моей матери […]. Оплакивая в канаве свое падение, я проникался духом смирения: я порицал свободу (и это так рано!), и жаждал какой-то сладкой неволи, и тосковал о каком-то рабстве—рабстве сладком, добром, смирном, покорном и покойном,—словом, о рабстве приязни и попечительности дружбы […] (322–23)[29]

27 "his death was for me a terrible, staggering event. It gave me the first occasion for a few early reflections on the precariousness of everything earthly […] Knyshenko was a kind and very tender boy: he loved his mother ardently, spoke about her with rapture and longed for her with a painful passion."

28 "my mother would have been a beauty, had she not been an angel."

29 "I already had a ruined life—and I wanted to mourn over it and to cast it off […] I lay with my face to the ground and began to weep. I mourned over my lost life, my profound moral degradation, which had unsettled my imagination and nerves so terribly, and which had led me to such despair over the fact that I, indulging in an abyss of mud-stained vices, was already unworthy and could no longer look into my mother's radiant eyes […]. Mourning over my degradation as I lay in the gutter, I was imbued with the

By interpreting past events as various stations in his process of character formation, Father Gordii shapes the story of his spiritual development. Hence he arises from amorality ("a ruined life"; "my lost life") and is prepared ("even that early!") to exchange the "old" freedom for a "new" servitude—a prefiguration of his tonsure much later in life. Only when inspired "with the spirit of tender emotion," is he worthy of standing before his mother.

Towards the end of the travel story, a third memorable character is introduced: the Greek monk Diodor. Significantly, we learn that this fat and jovial man is more interested in wine and women than in the youth's wish to begin a life of asceticism; Father Diodor recounts his own pre-monastic exploits, addressing the would-be novice in an exuberant, ungrammatical language "with a strong Greek accent" (с сильным греческим акцентом, 328):

> —Пцю, пцю, пцю,—зачмокал он вдруг, сам начиная говорить о моем желании поступить в монастырь,—желание, которое он ни одобрял, ни порицал, но проводил ту мысль, что мне в монастырь собираться рано: что прежде надо «всего испитать». […]. Но в те юные годы и при тогдашней моей невежественности и неопытности я ничего этого не понимал и пророчества отца Диодора [«все черный клобук попадес»] пустил по ветру вместе со всеми его нескладными рассказами […] (329–30, 332)[30]

The Greek monk is the third non-Russian figure who is included in Father Gordii's memory theatre. Whereas the Pole is represented negatively in terms of insensitivity and superficiality, and the Ukrainian is rendered positively in terms of tender feelings and sincerity, Father Diodor emerg-

spirit of tender emotion: I disapproved of my freedom (even that early!), and craved for some sort of sweet captivity, and I yearned for some sort of servitude—a sweet servitude, which was good-natured, quiet, humble and calm—in a word, for the servitude of friendliness and the solicitousness of friendship […]."

30 "Ptsiu, ptsiu, ptsiu,—he smacked his lips, himself beginning to talk about my desire to enter the monastery—a wish he neither encouraged nor censured, but he pursued the idea that it was too early for me to prepare for the monastery: I must first "experience a bit of everything" […]. But in those youthful years and in my ignorance and inexperience at that time, I did not understand anything and made light of Father Diodor's prophecy ['you still won't escape the monk's black cowl'] together with all his incoherent stories."

es in a dubious light (his hedonism is stressed and mocked)—as the embodiment of incongruity: he neither encourages nor censures; his advice is to "experience a bit of everything." Convinced of having missed the opportunity of experiencing a full life in what he perceives to be the very "place of his predestination" (место своего назначения, 332), Merkul therefore feels neither here nor there. As to the question of his identity, he appears to be straddling several cultures whose values and ways are apparently incommensurable. Tormented by an exasperating cynicism ("I grew into a misanthrope," 332), he arrives in his home town:

> [… я] увидел блестящий крест Киевской печерской лавры и вслед за тем передо мною открылись киевские высоты со всею чудною нагорною панорамою этого живописного города. Я с жадностию обозревал это местоположение и находил, что братья Кий, Щек и Хорев обладали гораздо более совершенным вкусом, чем основатель Москвы боярин Кучка и закладчики многих других великорусских городов. При самом первом взгляде на Киев делается понятно, почему святые отшельники нашей земли избирали именно это место для перехода с него в высшие обители. Киево-печерская вершина—это русская ступень на небо. Здесь, у подножия этих гор, изрытых древлерусскими христианскими подвижниками, всякий человек, как у подножья Сиона, становится хоть на минуту верующим; необходимость глядеть вдаль и вверх на эти уносящиеся под небо красоты будит душу—и у нее, как у отогревающегося на подъеме орла, обновляются крылья. (333)[31]

31 "I caught sight of the shining cross of the Kievan Caves Monastery, and after that the Kievan heights unfolded in front of me with the entire, marvellous hilly panorama of that picturesque town. I avidly surveyed the site and discovered that the legendary brothers Kii, Shchek and Khorev had a much more complete taste than the founder of Moscow, the boyar Kuchka and the builders of many other Great Russian cities. The moment you look at Kiev, you understand why the holy anchorites of our land chose this place whence to leave for a higher dwelling-place. The summit of the Kievan Caves is the Russian step to Heaven. Here, at the foot of these hills, which were dug into by the Christian zealots of Old Russia, every human being, as though he stood at the foot of Mount Zion, becomes a believer if only for a minute. The necessity of looking into the distance and upwards at all this beauty that is carried away into the sky, awakens the soul—like an eagle warming in ascending flight, its wings are renewed."

As he recalls his own youthful enthusiasm, Father Gordii fixes the mythologized *locus* in memory by focusing on easily graspable *imagines*: the cross of the Kievan monastery and the summit of the Kievan heights. As Olga Evdokimova observes, his salutation of Kiev may be seen as a cultural "document" composed from multiple points of view, "in the spirit of the dreamer, religious lyric poet and specialist on antiquities simultaneously."[32] A similar multiplicity is reflected on the level of cultural representation, where Father Gordii's text is characteristically ambiguous.

First, the legendary founders of Kiev are rendered superior to those of Moscow and other Great Russian cities; that is, the old Ukrainian town is idyllized ("the marvellous hilly panorama of that picturesque town"), whilst the capital of Muscovy appears in a more critical light. Here Father Gordii's *mental* crossing over to "the other side" may be said to parallel his literal passage into the Little Russian village on the Ukrainian border. Second, Kiev is evoked as the cradle of Russian Orthodoxy ("you understand why the holy anchorites of our land chose this place"); more precisely, the vision of the "borderland" town becomes a realization of his childhood dream, where he is suspended in between the heavenly and the earthly spheres. A blurring of the line between Russianness and semi-Russianness is achieved with the reference to the Ukrainian place of worship as "the Russian step to Heaven" or, indeed, as a "Mount Zion" for *every* human being, who may believe "if only for a minute." Thus described in "universalist" terms without regard to national allegiances, the Kievan Caves Monastery is connected to the theme of Father Gordii's own spiritual development: "like an eagle warming itself in ascending flight, [the soul's] wings are renewed."[33]

Considering the vacillation in Father Gordii's text between two conceptions of Russia, one official ("Little Russia"), the other unofficial ("Ukraine"), we could say that the borderland *locus* of Kiev reflects the intermediate position he holds in the story of his own spiritual transformation. As already indicated, the hero's crossing-over is never finalized, never really takes him beyond, but holds him on the border be-

32 Evdokimova (1996, p. 294) suggests that the many points of view in Father Gordii's text reflect the mnemonic work of culture itself: here the author, the narrator and the reader are united in "the sphere of cultural memory which is common to all."

33 Incidentally, the retrospective hero uses imagery similar to that of the chronicler in *Cathedral Folk*, who describes Tuberozov's revelatory experience as follows: "It was as though an eagle had acquired new wings!" ("Словно орлу обновились крылья!").

tween several different cultural and national identities (Little Russian, Great Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Greek). In this sense, the multicultural journey from St Petersburg to Kiev is symptomatic of the remaining part of his account.[34]

The portrayal of Merkul"s relationship with his mother is a case in point. With her non-Russian origin on the one hand, and her conversion to Russian Orthodoxy on the other, Mme Praottseva emerges as a matrix of cultural plurality.[35] It is interesting that her son actually questions the way she uses her two names—one German, *Karolina Vil'gel'mina*, the other Russian, *Katerina Vasil'evna*—thus re-establishing the figure of in-betweenness (350). At one stage in his reminiscences, Father Gordii even confuses the two, referring to her as *Karolina Vasil'evna* (373). The thematization of transnational identities—or straddling of cultures—may be said to reflect the two different worldviews that have already been voiced in the juxtaposition of the swaggering Pieńkowski and the timid Knyshenko: one "foreign" and detached, one "Russian" and emotional. However, a curious linking of non-Russian elements occurs as Pieńkowski, shortly after their homecoming, tells Mme Praottseva all about her son's adult adventures during the journey (the "love affair," the drinking bout, the prostitute). Father Gordii recollects his mother's magnanimous attitude in this matter:

> —Ты не плачь,—продолжала матушка нежным и ласковым, но как будто несколько деловым тоном,—тебе теперь нужны не слезы, а душевная бодрость. Ты лишен самого величайшего блага—правильного образования […]. Все дело в облагорожении чувств и просвещении ума и сердца, (335)[36]

34 McLean (1977, p. 284) rightly observes that after the arrival in Kiev, Father Gordii's autobiography is transposed from being a string of loosely connected anecdotes to a narrative in a more philosophical vein: "a problem novel, a *Bildungsroman* in the literal sense, a work designed to illustrate the faults and virtues of a particular theory of education" [that is, the "German rationalist" principles of Merkul's mother].

35 As pointed out to me by Catriona Kelly, Praottseva—a feminine derivative from the masculine noun *praotets*, "forefather")—is a splendid example of a "speaking name," indicating the heterogeneous origins of what is usually considered to be a single "Russian"/patriarchal culture.

36 "'Don't you cry', my mother went on in a tender and affectionate, but slightly business-like tone, 'you do not need tears now, but spiritual courage. You have been deprived of the greatest blessing—the right kind of education […]. The whole point is to ennoble

Merkul's mother emerges as a living oxymoron: tender and affectionate in a "business-like tone," she speaks of feelings in rationalist terms: the crux of the matter is to "enlighten the mind and the heart." With the idealization of the German/Russian mother as a paragon of virtue and loving benevolence, the son's own identity is destabilized. For whilst identifying culturally with everything Little Russian (the thriving village, the tender Knyshenko, the picturesque Kiev) as opposed to everything "un-Russian" (dissipation, superficiality, rationality), he is also bound up with his rational mother as much as with the romantic Pieńkowski, simply because they form part of his everyday life. Thus social interaction entails a constant exposure to non-Russianness which, in turn, informs Father Gordii's representation of his spiritual life-journey. As a Russian hero in search of self-realization, he fluctuates between emotionality and rationality on the one hand, and between Russianness and foreignness on the other. In view of this ambiguity, let us return briefly to the portrayal of his Polish companion.

Polishness revisited

Pieńkowski is often referred to in a negative, sometimes ironical, tone: мой Пеньковский (334), мой грандиозный коллега (359), мой интересный приятель, пан Пеньковский (403), мой добрый друг, Пеньковский (425), and so on.[37] However, judging from other descriptions of the relationship between the two youths, Pieńkowski—the only ex-cadet with whom Merkul, interestingly, remains in close contact after their arrival in Ukraine—emerges more as a *mock adversary*, than as a traditional, Polish Catholic arch-enemy of Russian national mythology.[38] For example, Father Gordii distinctly remembers how Pieńkowski had explained to him Polish sympathy for the Hungarian revolt of 1848 (это тебе нет дела, потому что ты русский, а там братец, венгерцы вою-

the feelings and to enlighten the mind and the heart."

37 "my Pieńkowski"; "my grandiose colleague"; "my interesting friend, *pan* Pieńkowski"; "my good friend Pieńkowski."

38 Ukraine being the stage of the centuries-old national and religious struggle between Poland and Russia, Merkul's Polish schoolmate is especially challenging here: as a Slav having inherited part of the legacy of Kievan Rus', he can put forward perfectly plausible, rival claims to the loyalty of the Ukrainians. Pieńkowski's Catholicism makes his pretensions doubly repugnant, whilst his culture, conspicuously aristocratic and westernized, completes the picture of family perfidy.

ют. 359);[39] in so doing, the hero-narrator reproduces a dialogue in which he himself has the role of the younger, less experienced, brother:

> […] и если мы встретимся друг с другом с оружием в руках в бою, я закричу: «Скачи мимо!» и тебя не ударю.
>
> —И я тоже, и я тебя ни за что не ударю,—отвечал я.
>
> —Щадить друг друга, щадить, как должно благородным людям и однокашникам. Слышишь?
>
> —Хорошо, непременно пощажу, отвечал я.
>
> —Махни саблей—и мимо.
>
> —Махну и мимо.
>
> —Честное слово?
>
> —Честное слово.
>
> —Руку от сердца!
>
> Я подал руку. (360)[40]

As if adding to the significance of his own submission ("Same here, I shall not hit you"; "All right, I shall spare you"), Father Gordii stresses that their fraternization went largely unnoticed by the people of "un-Russian" Kiev:

> Заключив этот союз взаимной пощады, мы крепко стиснули друг другу руки и поцеловались, что, впрочем, не обратило на нас особенное внимание прохожих—вероятно потому, что в тогдашнем ополяченном киевском обществе поцелуи при уличных встречах знакомых мужчин были делом весьма обыкновенным. (360)[41]

39 "it doesn't concern you, because you're Russian, but down there, my boy, the Hungarians are fighting." It is worth mentioning that Tsar Nicholas I heeded the Austrian appeal to help combat this revolt. As Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, 1993, *A History of Russia*, New York, p. 335, explains, "the successful Russian intervention in Hungary—which earned the undying hatred of the Hungarians—was directed in part against the Polish danger, as Polish revolutionaries were fighting on the Hungarian side."

40 "'[…] and if we run into one another in battle, armed with our weapons, I will shout: Gallop past!—and I shall not hit you'./'Same here, I shall not hit you either for anything in the world', I replied./'We will spare one another; spare, as noble people and schoolmates ought to. Do you hear?'/'All right, I shall spare you without fail', I replied./'Wave the sabre—and pass'./'I'll wave the sabre and pass'./'Word of honour?'/'Word of honour'./'Give me your hand!'/I gave him my hand." The Russian original has "Remove your hand from the heart."

41 "Having entered into this alliance of mutual mercy, we firmly pressed each other's hands

With this pact of "mutual mercy," Pieńkowski appears to be less an object of contempt and ridicule than a trusted ally and even friend, to whose guidance Merkul responds. As an act of male bonding ("we firmly pressed each other's hands and kissed"), this scene becomes an expression of Merkul's yearning for "the servitude of friendliness and the solicitousness of friendship," that is, for a monastic existence where harmony and mutual understanding reign among brethren. The "un-Russian" influence on the questing hero seems to persist as he, at a later stage, quotes his mother's words concerning the predicament of his Polish companion:

> […] он имеет несчастие быть поляком и потому заслуживает извинения,—подсказала maman […]—Поляки потеряли свою самостоятельность […] а выше этого несчастия нет; все народы, теряя свою государственную самостоятельность, обыкновенно теряют доблести духа и свойства к его возвышению. Так было с великими греками, римлянами и евреями, и теперь то же самое в наших глазах происходит с поляками. Это ужасный урок. (391)[42]

Here the "cross-cultural" Mme Praottseva develops the independence/freedom theme that was earlier introduced by Pieńkowski ("down there, my boy, the Hungarians are fighting"); by comparing the Polish people to the leading nations of antiquity ("the great Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews"), she sees their spiritual weakness as a consequence of their statelessness and "wandering" existence. If we take Pieńkowski's cultural cross-dressing to symbolize the multinational traditions of "his" pre-partitioned Poland (the *Rzeczpospolita*), a striking parallel is established between the Poles' incongruous status as an ethnic minority in the Empire and Merkul's own in-between position in "Polonized Kievan society" (where "kisses exchanged between male acquiantances on the street were

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and kissed, which did not, however, draw any particular attention from the passers-by—probably because in the Polonized Kievan society of those days kisses exchanged between male acquiantances on the street were something entirely commonplace."

42 "'[…] he is unfortunate enough to be a Pole and therefore deserves to be excused', *maman* intimated […] 'the Poles have lost their independence […] and there is no greater misfortune than that. All nations, when losing their statehood, usually lose the valour of their soul and the qualities needed to ennoble it. This is what happened to the great Greeks, the Romans and the Jews, and now the same is happening before our eyes to the Poles. It is a terrible lesson.'"

something entirely commonplace"); the two young men would seem to share an intermediate existence in terms of cultural identity and national belonging. Here, returning to the straddling of cultures, whose ways are *seemingly* incommensurable, we should stress that Merkul somehow manages to get along, to live according to some form or other; not only does he talk to the Pole, he also learns something from him, and participates to some degree in his life. The world of Leskov's questing hero remains, to use the words of Michael Carrithers, "a permanent half-way station between one condition and another, between a past and a future and between one society and another."[43]

In this respect, it is further revealing that Father Gordii counteracts his mother's positive attitude towards Pieńkowski's plight by focusing on ethnicity: почему польское происхождение может заставить не только *прощать* пороки по милости, но даже извинять их по какому-то праву на снисхождение (391).[44] The topic of Polishness is broached for a second time:

> […] матушка, презирая ничтожный польский характер, отразившийся между прочим в поступках старого Пеньковского, всегда считала обязанностью относиться к полякам с бесконечною снисходительностию, «как к жалкому народу, потерявшему национальную самостоятельность», что, по ее мнению, влекло за собою и потерю лучших духовных доблестей […] (405)[45]

Following his reiteration of Mme Praottseva's statement about unstable national identities, the ambivalence of Father Gordii's representation of Polishness becomes quite obvious. Pieńkowski's father may be remem-

43 Carrithers, 1992, p. 21. In posing the question of how human diversity should be understood, Carrithers proposes a change of focus "from the centres of cultures and societies to their peripheries and the relations between them; and from a more or less static description of their characteristics to a dynamic one of processes in which they are involved" (pp. 26–27).

44 "Why is it that their being of Polish extraction should compel us not only *to excuse* vice out of mercy, but even according to some right of leniency?"

45 "mother, although she despised the paltry Polish character, which, incidentally, was reflected in the actions of Pieńkowski senior, always considered it her duty to relate to the Poles with infinite leniency, as 'a pitiable people, who had lost their national independence', which, in her view also involved the loss of the highest spiritual qualities […]."

bered in terms of his "paltry Polish character," but, at the same time, his son appears as a fascinating acquaintance ("my friend, Pieńkowski") blessed with, amongst other things, a gift for storytelling (оказался большим наблюдателем, а также талантливым, и притом весьма правдивым, рассказчиком. 416).[46] By the same token, the narrator may distance himself from the Pole's levity and vanity, but he also takes pleasure in his appearance:

> […] его высокий рост, крупная, но стройная и представительная фигура, прекрасные светло-русые, слегка вьющиеся волосы, открытое высокое чело, полное яблоко голубых, завешенных густыми ресницами глаз и удивительнейшей, античной формы большая белая рука […] обратили его в какого-то Ганимеда, затмевавшего своей весенней красотой все, что могло сколько-нибудь спорить о красоте. (426)[47]

If we take into consideration the interconnection in Father Gordii's memory between his mother and his schoolmate, that is between two apparently incongruous characters (Russian/non-Russian, emotional/rational, sincere/superficial, and so on), the portrayal of the latter goes beyond the stereotypical Russian idea of the Polish nobleman (*szlachcic*) as being handsome, but arrogant and corrupt. In fact, Pieńkowski is summoned back from the past as a "dandified brother" (*brat—frant*), who, although annoyingly troublesome, seems to belong to the same borderland "family." In this way, the Polish figure of Father Gordii's memory theatre takes on greater significance: not unlike the English Iakov Iakovlevich in *The Sealed Angel*, Pieńkowski becomes a foreign travelling companion to the Russian hero.[48] It is characteristic of Father Gordii that he concludes his auto-representation with an open-ended, inclusive gesture:

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46 "he turned out to be a great observer as well as a gifted storyteller, entirely truthful at that."

47 "[…] his height; his large but slender and impressive figure; his beautiful light-brown, slightly curly hair, and open, high brow; his large perfectly blue eyes, which were framed with thick lashes; and the most remarkable classical-shaped, large, white hands […] made him a kind of Ganymede, who with his vernal beauty, overshadowed everything that might in any way contest his beauty."

48 Needless to say, I do not share the view of Kuz'min (2003, p. 13) who writes that "the Polish theme in Leskov's writings occupies a peripheral position."

> […] я вступил в новую жизнь—в новую колею ошибок, которые запишу когда-нибудь; конечно, уже не в эту тетрадь, заключающую дни моего детства и юношества, проведенные между людьми, которым да будет мирный сон и вечная память. (450)[49]

With Father Gordii's desire to remember the people with whom he spent his formative years, his story about the road he travels to Orthodox monasticism becomes a "multiethnic" one. Not only do these people represent different stages in his journey toward spiritual fulfilment, they also imply a semantic interface where any one-sided meaning concerning Russianness and the national character of the Russian people is challenged. In turn, the interaction between the Russian hero and his foreign friends and relations—his Ukrainian schoolmate, the Greek monk, his German mother and his Polish friend—contributes to the memorability of past, multicultural events; it makes his recollection of these events valuable and worthwhile—if viewed retrospectively, they form a pattern, mapping his "sentimental education."

The dictates of the heart

Towards the end of Father Gordii's memoir, we learn that Mme Praottseva, disillusioned with her principles of benevolent rationality, commits suicide, whilst her son accepts an apprenticeship with a German painter, thus leaving Kiev forever. As if making a "case for spontaneity,"[50] the narrator recalls his youthful determination to start afresh: Более мне ничего не оставалось делать: я был выбит из старой колеи и должен был искать новой. (450).[51] Freed from the educational restraints of his "old" life, Merkul will now follow his heart, pursuing that "something-else-in-the-air," a "new" life.[52]

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49 "I entered upon a new life—upon a new trail of errors, which I shall record some day; but not, of course, in this copy-book, which closes my days of childhood and youth spent among people of whom I will say: may they rest in peace and their memory live forever."

50 Cf. McLean, 1977, pp. 279–88.

51 "There was nothing else left for me to do: I had been knocked out of my old rut and had to find a new one."

52 According to Lantz (1979, pp. 76–77), Merkul seems to be striving towards the ideal "of a harmonious nature which combines […] the sensitivity and creativity of the artist with basic Christian ethics."

Hans Gerhard Sørensen · 1965

Merkul Praottsev is, as a character, forced into a constant reassessment of his cultural identity and choice-making by what he perceives to be the sheer complexity of life: the tension between the heavenly and the earthly, the dissipated lifestyle of the "Drunken Ravine," the tragic death of Knyshenko, his dismissal by the Greek monk, his ambivalent relationship with the Pole, the "un-Russian" attitudes of his own mother, and so on. On the level of the text, we could say that the multiplicity of culture is internalized in Father Gordii's recording of events; his story is a re-enactment of the hybrid or in-between sense of his cultural and social position (like Tuberozov, Merkul is both inside and outside his own culture). In fact, Father Gordii's reminiscences seem to be determined by the incongruity of cultural form as experienced in human interrelationships; most notably, between himself, Pieńkowski and his mother. Stimulated by the inconclusiveness of the situation, his auto-representation becomes a kind of staging (*mise en scène*) which focuses on initiation, on the discovery of "self." In this way, his journey from St Petersburg to Kiev and his final departure from Kiev imply not only Merkul's readiness to mature in the world, but also to accept the cultural in-between status of being a *permanent* quasi-novice and wanderer, of always being "Russian" and "not Russian" simultaneously. Such semantic instability is activated by the different worldviews, ethnies and mentalities that confront one another in Leskov's provincial, or peripheral, Russia.[53]

We have shown how the hero-narrator of *Childhood Years* incorporates into his life story various "interesting" people and places which together constitute his theatre of memory, his vision of the multicultural Empire. As a mnemonic exercise, the culturally ambiguous text should also be viewed as an attempt on the part of Father Gordii to convince himself of the purpose of his extensive travelling, which is to become a righteous man.[54] It would seem that Father Gordii, in the retrospective context of the frame, may safely remember the "complexity" of his past, having finally arrived, at least in his own mind, at his destination—the Russian Orthodox monastery.

53 In this connection, consider Lars Rodseth's (1998, p. 56) conception of a given culture as an unstable and changeable entity or "population of meaning."

54 Similarly, the ambiguous representation of culture in Father Gordii's text may be read as an implicit call on the part of the author to cope with the permanent straddling of cultural modes and values, to be always in motion and *en route* to somewhere else, that is to an alternative Russian Empire.

Restless identities: Who are Leskov's Russians?

The Russian heroes of Leskov's four tales encounter, during their various travels, people of foreign extraction. When this happens, different worldviews and value judgements meet and penetrate one another mutually. Moreover, this heterogeneity is reflected in the heroes' endeavour to verbalize the multifariousness of their own world, by collating two stylistic registers, one affirmative, the other critical. As they interpret themselves as righteous men on purposeful journeys, they never gloss over dissonance but incorporate it into their life stories as part of their experience of multiculture: in *The Sealed Angel*, an Old Believer converts to the Orthodox Church with the aid of an Englishman and his wife; in order to sustain the national myth of religious unity (*sobornost'*), he harmonizes the foreign or alien elements with Russianness, making them part of his own idyllic vision. The serf turned novice monk in *The Enchanted Wanderer* lives among Tatars and falls in love with a gypsy. In perceiving his life in nineteenth-century Russia through the lens of kenotic spirituality—as an imitation of the suffering, self-emptying Christ—he discovers "real beauty" through the intermediacy of these non-Russian minorities. *On the Edge of the World* features an Archbishop, who, in his mission days, is saved from death by a Siberian pagan; whilst glorifying the "Russian Christ," the high-ranking clergyman vacillates between an official and unofficial understanding of Russianness. And Merkul in *Childhood Years* reaches emotional maturity in German-Ukrainian-Polish surroundings; in his dialogic relationship with his "un-Russian" impulses, the reminiscing hero re-enacts the Empire's cultural tensions.

Common to all our five texts, the interaction of mythopoeia, idyllization, and the foregrounding of ethnic and religious diversity, produces a number of "threshold" situations of passage, crossing and journeying. Here each one of Leskov's styling strategies can be read as a signpost in a multiculturalist itinerary, whereby each one of his heroes undergoes an initiation or a conversion "on the edge," gaining new and vital insights: most notably, he realizes that there exists no Russian monolithic whole, no Russian monoculture, but a Russia that is intersected instead by cultural and religious borders in its central as well as in its more remote regions. Asserting itself in all the Empire's parts and places, the distance between "centre" and "periphery" is manifested in Leskov in his all-embracing opposition between the official and the unofficial perspective upon the

world. In this respect, the primary setting of "the Russian provinces" becomes a metaphor for Imperial Russia—a kind of microscopic mirror of a thoroughly complex society, whose members are indoctrinated by an official myth of national unity that almost entirely fails to take into the account the fragmentary reality within the nation. It is significant that Leskov situates his provincial heroes outside this ideology of national unity, whilst representing ethnic identity as permeable and unstable; in turn, they render Russian super-culture ambiguous by constantly revealing its underlying plethora of cultures. Thus the interplay of the four styling strategies can be said to yield a twofold effect: on the one hand, there emerges an unfinalized vision of Russia, that is, a "Russia" which both is and is not Russian; on the other, a more fundamental instability may be traced in the representation of cultural interrelationships.

As I have shown, Leskov's prosaic universe is governed by a duality: the Russian protagonist is just as often denigrated in the sociocritical sphere, as he is elevated in the idyllic-affirmative sphere. When these two stylistic tendencies or interpretations of history and the world coincide, something new, a semantic in-betweenness, arises. The possibility of "something new" lies, more often than not, in the multiethnic encounter between the Orthodox Russian and the non-Orthodox foreigner. Consequently, *an understanding of culture may be discerned in Leskov's texts that is neither romantic nor essentialist*. When we approach his verbal compositeness, and the stylistic and ideological ambivalence linked to it, with such concepts as "cultural encounters" and "cultural borderlands" in mind, we arrive at a number of world outlooks as they are reflected in his heroes and their interrelationships. Their stories are shaped by heterogeneous contexts and discourses in a multicultural styling process, which, in turn, yields an inconclusive representation of everyday life in the Russian provinces, of Imperial Russia itself. But in my reading, or "co-styling," of Leskov's prose, aesthetic heterogeneity does not imply a defect or limitation. On the contrary, I claim that a many-levelled compositeness is part and parcel of his prosaics or better still, that the "prosaic dissonance" within his texts is momentous for the advancement of cultural meaning. If this claim is accepted, then it follows that we may state the case intelligibly as follows: in Leskov's universe, multicultural sociality is part of human conditioning; his heroes are Russians who constantly come into contact with non-Russians, as they yearn for harmony

and community and are anxious when faced with disharmony and social disjuncture. The necessity to bond across ethnic borders and to form unexpected alliances entails not only a permanent straddling of different cultures, but also the ability to cope with such cultural in-betweenness. The *homo russicus in terra russica* represented in Leskov's prose fiction is never Russian in the narrow meaning of the word.

It should be emphasized that for all of his characters, the ultimate goal of life is to be formed in the image of Christ; like the Archpriest Tuberozov in *Cathedral Folk*, they enter, consciously and to their full potential, upon the task of "mapping" the life story of the kenotic Christ in accounts of their own lives. At the same time, however, their humble mode of thinking enables them to embrace non-Orthodox, or even non-Christian, mentalities; for example, when confronted by ostentatious display and foreign finery (consider the wine-drinking Poles in Stargorod and the "cross-dressing" Pieńkowski in Ukraine), or by Asiatic pagandom (the Yakut sledge-driver who emerges as a theological primitive and a moral *raisonneur*), Leskov's righteous men tend to look beyond incongruity for relationships of consonance and affinity. Hence their accounts become representations of religious quests through multicultural confrontation, and in so doing suspend, as it were, the problem of multiculturality altogether.[55]

When we regard Leskov's representations of Russian society as an open system "inextricably involved with other aggregates, near and far, in weblike, netlike connections,"[56] and his cultural multiplicity as "populations of meaning,"[57] his texts can no longer be taken as surface manifestations of an essential, unchanging Russian culture, of Russian Orthodoxy

55 In this respect, my understanding of Leskov's aesthetic disharmony differs from, but does not rule out, Sperrle's exposition on his religious notion of organicity. "Organicism" as used by Sperrle focuses, untraditionally, on movement and transformation where death and rebirth alternate and condition each other; similarly, evil is taken as a prerequisite for good and thus a significant element in Leskov's active Christology. As to the business of my book, the *twofold styling* of Leskov's works, I agree that the crux of the matter lies in his religious disposition, that he is an organicist who focuses on the moment of transformation (Sperrle, 2002, pp. 18, 198). However, Leskov's organicity and disharmony are not mutually exclusive qualities; rather, they coexist and complement one another, especially in his representation of the Empire's multiculture. I shall have more to say on this subject in the epilogue.

56 Lesser, 1961, p. 42.

57 Rodseth, 1996, p. 56.

or of "the Russian soul." Such a mythologization becomes destabilized; we have seen how the characters' urge for sameness is always doubled by the urge for otherness, so that any monocultural portrayal, or reading, of Russianness cannot come to rest. In this light, Leskov's contribution to the creation of a Russian national literature becomes intriguing as he does not succumb to the *mythic drug*.[58] Indeed, his "national-romantic" prose offers an example of how Orthodox conceptions of faith, man and culture have been transposed ambivalently into Russian realism. With Leskov's equivocal representation of foreigners and foreignness, the concept of Russianness seems to comprise both the Russian traditional ethos and the un-Russian new, expressing an intuition of the Empire where culture is seen as an open and global system.

Considered in the above light, Leskov's five texts from the 1870s form part of an anthropological "project," where the modern reader may detect a concern with multicultural problems, and their possible solutions, in the form of a Christian prosaics. If we accept that Leskov's representation of people and society is based on a Christological hermeneutics, while, at the same time, being permeated by a fundamental semantic ambiguity, his texts may thus be read as a charting of the Empire's ideological turmoil, but also of the variability of religion and culture in a more universal sense. More specifically, Leskov's styling of Russia yields a meaning of Christ as universal saviour. From this perspective, the prose of "the most quintessentially Russian of writers" emerges, as I have argued, in an altogether new light, as a contribution *sui generis* to Russian realism.

58 I have borrowed this term from Maria Bobrownicka, 1995, *Narkotyk mitu: szkice o świadomości narodowej i kulturowej słowian zachodnich i południowych*, Cracow.

Epilogue: Simplicity is good, but so is plurality? Tracing Leskov's Orthodox Christianity for the Empire

Fictional worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already to hand; the making is a remaking. Starting from this premise, I have attempted to read anew Leskov's literary works by raising cultural and anthropological questions. In so far as his prose pieces together present for us a panorama of an Empire intensely at odds with itself, portraying intractable conflicts of ethnicity and conviction, they also thematize multiethnicity as a religious problem. Characteristically, Leskov's provincial protagonists, simple-hearted if not simple-minded, "misrepresent" official Orthodoxy by associating it with foreign or non-Orthodox fractions of society. Does Leskov's multiculturalism merely reflect the instability of a nineteenth-century Russia conceived of by many as coherent and unified? I think not. The writer is driven by a passionate concern for the well-being of the Russian Orthodox Church and its relationship to the world. He cares about the Church, present and future. Judging from his works, he also believes that in his generation the Church has to deal with a profound "social problem" that could be defined as a tension between the Empire, that is political power, and Society—various entities and networks distinct from the Empire but influenced by it.

Here, drawing on various published, non-literary material as well as my own readings of Leskov, I would like to examine in some detail two themes that emerge from this problematic situation. The first is a discussion of the writer's idyllization of multiculture in the Russian provinces and how it amounts to a specific kind of Orthodox utopia. The second section looks at an aspect of his works that may be conceived of as a Christian theology of religious pluralism. While the epilogue is not intended to be exhaustive, I hope that its suggestions and conjectures will

stimulate more research not only on this particular writer, but also on other nineteenth-century European writers whose concerns with cultural and religious diversity may help us to understand the worlds we inhabit today.

Leskov's texts as testaments to "idyllic utopia"

Our main concern has been with Leskov's styling strategies for embodying his multiculturalist vision of an ideal multiethnic world within the Russian Empire. Herein lies the main thrust of the author's anthropological achievement: somehow Tuberozov in *Cathedral Folk*, Mark Aleksandrov in *The Sealed Angel*, Fliagin in *The Enchanted Wanderer*, the Archbishop in *On the Edge of the World* and Father Gordii in *Childhood Years*, all manage to live on the peripheries of cultures and societies; more precisely, Leskov's Russian heroes are able to make sense of their existence half-way between Russianness and foreignness, a national past and a multinational future. In the idyllized settings of his stories, we discern a religious utopia which, in various ways, takes on a critical function regarding the Orthodox culture of the synodal period, when the Empire's "state religion" was more or less foisted upon its people. I have in mind utopianism in its most common and generally positive meaning, one which refers to an imaginary, ideal civilization, ranging from the Empire's regions and cities to the entire world and the universe, regarded to be attainable in the future by some of, if not all of mankind. It is significant that Leskov's heroes are portrayed positively in terms of their sincere efforts to create a better, or even perfect society. Indeed, their feelings, ideas and actions are "utopian" inasmuch as they are believed, at least by the heroes themselves, to be able to radically improve the multicultural world in which they live.

As to Leskov's utopianism, we note that there had been a blur in Russian consciousness between a paradise and the contemporary status quo since the accession of Peter the Great (1682) and the country's further expansion into an empire. Especially though, from Catherine the Great (1762) onwards, literary conventions of the paradise myth became a frequent propagandistic tool used in order to bolster a national identity: old myths were blended with new ones ("Russia as the Third Rome," "Russia with a messianic mission," "Russia as an ideal state," and so on), so that literature became largely monologic and authoritarian,

depicting a static, ordered world where truth and faith were knowable and embodied in the state and its divinely apppointed Tsar. But towards the last third of the eighteenth and in the first third of the nineteenth century, largely due to Enlightenment influences, a new Russian literature based on individuality and freedom emerged. During the nineteenth century, the so-called Iron Age of Russian society—with its industrialization, urbanization and "soullessness"—signalled an orientation away from, or even a revolt against, the "official" literature on which writers had been raised.[1] This is not unlike what goes on in Leskov's works from the first half of the 1870s, where, more often than not, the paradise myth as monologizing "text" is suspended. Take, for example, Tuberozov, who evokes the "old fairy-tale" (*staraia skazka*)—his own fusion of traditional Russian virtues denoting the moral and cultural values of the past, the legacy of every Russian—whilst, at the same time, seeking inspiration notably from such non-Russian sources as Protestantism (Sterne) and Catholicism (Loyola); Akhilla, the "Cossack in a cassock," whose puerile war with atheist and nihilist forces contributes, ironically, to the enrichment of his own Christian nature; Fliagin, the Russian wanderer who transgresses beyond the bounds of the official church through his love union with Grusha the gypsy girl; the Archbishop who experiences a spiritual revelation in the Siberian wilderness outside of conventional Christianity; or, Father Gordii's empathy for the Poles and their predicament within the Empire as an ethnic minority ("all nations, when losing their statehood, usually lose the valour of their soul")—all these *dialogically oriented* instances bespeak a frustration with the official, stagnant view of Orthodoxy and Russianness alike. I will have more to say on this subject later, but this is the crux of the matter:

What motivates the "idyllic utopia" in all of the five texts we have analysed is the heroes' need for otherness and plurality. Thus, the greatest threat to communication in Leskov's prose is not difference but sameness. Regardless of how frank, free of deceit or "natural" his heroes may be, communication decreases when there is no difference between themselves and other cultural human beings; when there is nothing strange

1 As the late Steven L. Baehr puts it: "Now Russia begins to change from a centripetal, court-centered culture, epitomized by the ideal of the Tsar, to a more centrifugal culture, epitomized by the individualist—typically, an artist, writer or thinker who accepts no earthly gods." See Steven L. Baehr, 1991, *The Paradise Myth in Eightenteenth-Centruy Russia: Utopian Patterns in Early Secular Russian Literature and Culture*, Stanford, pp. x–xi.

to fear or wonder at and no new information to exchange. For that reason, the author must honour the variety and complexity of human language, faiths and identities, instead of homogenizing it. It is as though Fliagin and his fellow "wanderers" are aware of the fact that the variety and even the contradictions within the Russian Orthodox church, and even more, the contradictions between different Christian denominations (Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox), are not really a sign of decay and breakdown. Rather, they are a formative manifestation of parts of the whole, the united whole which they have to reach at greater depth. In Leskov's vision of Russia, therefore, what may seem to be impossible to unite might just be unitable. Consider here the young Mark Aleksandrov who resorts to sentimental dreaming in order to sustain for himself the official myth of harmony within the multiethnic Empire; significantly, this accounts for a tension in *The Sealed Angel* between two Russias: one imaginary, created by the inner narrator, where a crossing over between faiths and cultures is possible and where a new, alternative faith is conceived—the other "real," created by the primary narrator, where crossing remains impossible and ethnic unity hypothetical. Or again, take Fliagin, who, having atoned for the gypsy girl, dedicates his life to her and—by implication—to all of the Empire's non-Orthodox, non-Russian subjects; in this spiritual-ethnic mésalliance, the Russian protagonist becomes a living repository of natural goodness that forms part of Leskov's visionary, altogether different Christianity. As already indicated, Leskov's idyllization serves as an utopian background for a hidden criticism of the expansionistic Orthodoxy of the ruling Church. So, too, in *On the Edge of the World*, the Archbishop appears to re-enact within the Empire the union of all natural Christians, Russians and non-Russians, by way of anticipation ("My new fellow citizen in the new life!"). And it is precisely by being difficult, if not impossible, to realize that the clergyman's idyllic vision of *universal salvation in multiculture* gains verisimillitude as a utopia.

So how can contradictory powers be united in the reality of a new, alternative Orthodoxy? Leskov's Russian heroes tend to believe in the sanctity of human love provided it is combined with responsibility: hence they do not reject the goodness of non-Orthodox people and even of non-Christians, but are open to all that is valuable in other Christian denominations as well as non-Christian beliefs; furthermore, they try to see all

that is beautiful, creative and good as coming from the one and only God, as the secret agency of grace. Conversely, they mostly question or downright reject force, dictatorship and hatred even if they are perpetrated in the name of Christ, or the Tsar (remember how Fliagin, having been rejected by the dubious missionaries, cannot feel any affinity with official Orthodoxy); when confronted by all the problems of the world, they hold that every one of them can be dealt with and made sense of in the light of faith. In consequence, they look upon life in a multicultural society as a sphere where the basic moral principles of God's way of life can be applied. Thus Leskov's portrayal of multiculture in the Empire seems to be based on social as well as religious ideals, whilst his heroes do their best to follow and believe in the particular Orthodox tradition that underpins the "idyllic utopia." We could say here that the writer's ideal of unity in diversity (*sobornost'*) together with his idea of a "natural" religion, imply that all people are essentially Christians. In this way, his represenation of life in Russia as an idyllized existence is guided by a futuristic, eschatological vision. Hence his Russian heroes, whose lives are not free from sin, pain, poverty or death, contribute through their human efforts to the notion of a certain kind of society: one which reflects the virtues and values they believe have been lost or are being threatened in the Empire, or which await them in the Afterlife.

Significantly, Leskov's positive thinking of a multiethnic Russia appears to be primarily directed not towards a remote past, but rather towards an unspecified future, imagining that at some point in time and space the possibility of living happily must exist—for all of the Empire's cultures and religions. Given that even his provincial, all too human, heroes at times succumb to smug irrational belief in the superiority of their own people when faced with non-Russian cultures, our writer appears to suggest that nineteenth-century Russians are far removed from spiritual as well as social happiness. According to my reading of his prose, it calls for nothing less than an ecumenical project for the future.

Religious pluralism or, transcending multiculture

If Leskov's interest is to promote the cooperation and unity among non-Christians as well as Christians in the Empire, it is not surprising that he treats multicultural tensions in a religious context. That said, a distinction between religion and culture in his works is difficult to sustain;

representing as it does the transcendent element in culture, religion is scarcely separable from culture. In Leskov's prose, all theological knowledge is also culturally mediated; as his heroes aspire to model their own lives on that of Christ, they are imbued with a theology which speaks not only from Christ, of Christ and in Christ, but also to culture. In this respect, the writer comes close to the view that Christian theology is inevitably implicated in cultural negotiations, that it is always in this sense engaged in an ongoing Christian *Kulturkritik*, which involves a reading of the signs of the times. Here his "Troeltschian" tendency to ground the Christianity of his tender-hearted believers in a realistic understanding of the complexities of the Empire, their concern with the ethical relevance of the faith, as well as their critical involvement in the potentially tragic conflicts of contemporary life, all point to a kind of cultural Orthodoxy.[2] By that I mean a Orthodox faith that understands itself, without exception, as historically responsive and ethically responsible in the context of a realistic, engaged, and critical comprehension of the multicultural present.[3] Above all, such a liberal theology or better still, such an Orthodox mode of cultural thinking, underlies the portrayal of Tuberozov, who provokes the official Church authorities by subscribing to the social teachings of Catholic and Protestant theologians. However, the Russian Archpriest—while trying to learn from his own moral and religious struggles—continues to look both within and beyond his own sociocultural community for answers.

Bearing in mind the multicultural borderland existence of Leskov's Russian believers, it seems to me that his representation of "utopian"

2 I am drawing here on the German Protestant theologian Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923), who made a major contribution to the field of Christian social ethics in *The History of the Social Teaching of the Churches* (*Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt*, 1912) and *Protestantism and Progress* (*Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*, 1912). Concerned with the condition and the prospects of the contemporary Christian Church, his instinct was always to examine the past with a view to helping Christianity engage with the complexities of the contemporary situation.

3 At this stage, we may bring in Schleiermacher's (1768–1834) notion of *Kulturprotestantismus*, a rather vague term used to describe the vital culture of Protestant liberal theology in Germany 1900–20. As to Troeltsch, usually regarded a "Culture Protestant", a more precise phrase would be "public theologian," that is a religious thinker cum sociologist firmly opposed to any theological disengagement from the complicated social and scientific challenges of his day. Cf. Mark D. Chapman, 2001, *Ernst Troeltsch and Liberal Theology: Religion and Cultural Synthesis in Wilhelmine Germany*, Oxford, pp. 1–12.

Orthodoxy is quintessentially dialogic. Suffice it here to re-establish the openness of Akhilla, Fliagin, Father Gordii, Mark Aleksandrov and the Archbishop towards religious otherness—they all appear to intuit, or even value, the cultural character of each Christian church as being particular, concrete embodiments of the human spirit and of the mystery of the incarnation. From this unifying gesture, let us return briefly to what I have referred to earlier as the writer's "language of feeling": as seen with regard to the idyllization of the Empire's provinces, the manner in which his heroes act and express themselves, resonate with sensitive religiousness. Above all, it is as if the Orthodox notions of tenderness and humility (*umilenie, smirenie, sokrushenie serdechnoe*) inspire in them a sense of moral beauty that affects the way they relate to one another as human beings across faiths, and how they perceive these relations; as will be remembered, Natal'ia Nikolaevna, Akhilla and Fliagin humbly and simple-mindedly follow their hearts on their multicultural journeys towards higher spiritual insight. In this respect, the strived-for responsiveness of Leskov's ingenuous heroes to deep and tender feeling can also be understood as openness to everything, as the readiness to accept other points of view, as the readiness to listen to and hear the voice of other, non-Orthodox, non-Russian people—and the voice of a Christian God.

Judging from the writer's idealization of such sensibility as an aid to everyday communication, Christianity emerges as the interhuman domain which joins higher things with lower things, the divine with the human. Just as there is nothing in history which is indifferent to spirituality, so too the all-empowering Christian ideal underlying Leskov's fictional universe can absorb into itself everything, including social problems, the problems of multireligious society, and even problems of art (consider, for example, the Archbishop and Mark Aleksandrov who both engage in discussions on iconographic traditions). Thus it may happen, paradoxically, that the wife of a English guest worker, a Protestant who represents the religious "other," may become a greater mediator for "true" Christianity than many members of the Russian Orthodox community; similarly, even a pagan sledge-driver, someone far removed from the Church, may come spiritually closer to a Christian faith than an Orthodox bishop and his fellow believers. Notably in *The Sealed Angel* and *On the Edge of the World*, this kind of cultural encounter can occur because the premise is that there is no single interpretation of Christianity. As to the writer's

theological stance, he no doubt advocates "a Christian faith wherein the notion of God, the highest authority, is to be found in movement, in reinterpretation."[4] In their spiritual quests, therefore, his heroes may not only question accepted church dogmas—when these oppose the work of love—they also represent a serious critique of the eccelesiastical ideals of the official Church. Here Leskov draws on a certain model of Christianity which is open and fully participates in the world, in the whole movement of multireligious society.

As discussed earlier with reference to the Archbishop's representation of Father Kiriak's "natural" faith that included everyone—an integrated Christianity related to the doctrine of the ultimate reconciliation of all moral creatures good and evil—this social orientation reflects the writer's affinity with the traditions of patristic literature and the Church Fathers.[5] Also, he resembles such Russian religious thinkers as Vladimir Solov'ev, Pavel Florenskii and Nikolai Berdiaev, all of whom aspired to unite or synthesize the two patristic understandings of Christianity: one revolving around the heavenly sphere and personal salvation, the other around the worldly sphere and creativity.[6] Similarly, in Leskov's prose, the important thing is not simply and exclusively inner self-perfection lead-

4 See Sperrle, 2002, pp. 132–33.

5 The doctrine of *apokatastasis* is based on the Biblical passage in 1 Corinthians 15:28 and was preached in the Eastern church by St Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus, and in the Western church by Ambrose of Milan in the fourth century. However, as pointed out to me by Jostein Børtnes, the idea of the salvation of all things and beings was never extensively preached; on the contrary, it was deemed *heretical* by the official church. In nineteenth-century Russia, it was revived by lay theologians such as Leskov.

6 According to Vladimir Solov'ev (1853–1900), Christianity is not some abstract idea, but a life-giving impulse, transforming earthly existence; to him spiritual knowledge and revelation has a definable dynamic (cf. *A Solovyov Anthology*, ed. S.L. Frank, London, 1950, pp. 15ff). Florenskii (1882–1937) wrote: "in life everything is in a state of unrest, everything is as unstable as a mirage. And out of the depths of the soul there rises an unbearable need to find support, not in one of the particular and fragmented human truths which are unstable but in the one Divine Truth, total and eternal" (cf. Pavel Florenskii, 1997, *The Pillar and Ground of Truth,* trans. B. Jakim, intro. R.F. Gustafson, Princeton, pp. 12ff.) Nikolai Berdiaev (1874–1948), for his part, stated that Christianity is the religion which exalts man and makes him a creative partner in the movement towards the Kingdom of God; moreover, that the return of Christ and His Personality will fulfill the hope of all religions (cf. Berdyaev, Nicolas, 1935, *Freedom and Spirit*, London, pp. 88–89). We should perhaps add here that for Berdiaev, the end in view for Russia was not so much Solov'ev and Florenskii's vision of universal confessional reconciliation but the more nationalistic belief that Russian society would somehow come to embody a Christianity more vital than that of any other Christian country.

ing to salvation; of equal importance is creativity which should in its turn not be left to the secular world, but kept inside the domain of the church, the spiritual realm and the light inherent in the impulse of the Gospels. Here one of Leskov's kindred spirits comes to mind, the Archimandrite Aleksandr Bukharev (1824–1871): a notorious figure in nineteenth-century Russian religious culture, who attempted to overcome the narrow ecclesiastical rigorism and present *all* contemporary art as imbued with the "light of Christ" and cherished by the "secret warmth" of the Church.[7] In so doing, he sought to overthrow what he considered to be the unnatural idea of secularism in culture. In the view of Bukharev, any creative activity is an act of divine grace, even if it has no clear external indications of its religious, ecclesiastical or Russian character. This is the case, he concludes, with all works of art that engage "the love that creates and directs all things," also when the artist is "a foreigner, an adherent of another faith or even a pagan."[8]

Such an all-encompassing understanding of creativity is significant for the representation of Leskov's (un)Russian heroes as they adapt scriptural elements in order to better understand themselves as human beings with multiethnic lives, as well as their own Russianness. In so doing, they recognize the presence and agency of Christ in the church as well as in the body of all the Empire's Christians (and even non-Christians), and in all life, even in the simplest and the most mundane of its manifestations—in other words, *all* values created by them before the second coming of Christ are part of man's movement towards salvation. Thus, within the scope of the five works we have analysed, complete truth is fragmented into contradictory parts and the heroes see only this fragmented world, but somewhere in a higher dimension all these paradoxical, disunited and antinomic fragments are united in diversity. For this reason, Tuberozov and his fellow believers have their individual uniqueness and dignity preserved, whilst, at the same time, they are called into communality, an avowing of reciprocal responsibility in the worldly and historical process. Within the Leskovian vision for the Russian Orthodox

7 Consider note 41 in the chapter "Adapting the Christian text." For a discussion of Bukharev's controversial life and work, see Paul Valliere, 2000, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key*, Edinburgh, pp. 19–109. For an apt description of his "utopian" alternative Orthodoxy, see Onasch, 1993, pp. 96–97.

8 Cited in Valliere, 2000, p. 28.

Church and Christianity in general, everything would be based on mutual understanding, tolerance and dialogue, on what has become known as *superecumenism*, in which one also seeks closer links with non-Christian religions.[9] And that is why religious dialogue is not merely a pastime involving urban, Russian intellectuals, but a necessity of life for people of all cultural walks of the Empire.

In Leskov's prose, the idea of a synchronized Christianity may be understood as the profound source of spiritual life which goes beyond the limits of the merely personal and becomes a sociocultural force. This is a force that enables Tuberozov and his compatriots to enter into contact with non-Russian cultures as outsiders "looking in," while bringing to this multicultural world their value as human beings—and the light which each of them has been given to the degree that they are in communion with it. It is as though each one of them poses new questions to a strange culture, questions which they could never have asked within their own culture, as if they are guided in an outward direction to search for answers to their own burning questions. For Leskov's people, therefore, exteriority is the strongest force for understanding.[10] Consider, for exam-

9 Incidentally, today in Russia the Orthodox Church appears to be conducting a much more active dialogue with other religions, particularly with Islam and Judaism, than with other Christian confessions. According to the president of the Union of Orthodox Citizens, Valentin Lebedev, these contacts, conducted in the main in the social sphere, amount to a distinct kind of "superecumenism." Joint actions with Muslims and Jews do not disturb any Orthodox believers, Lebedev stressed. See *Stetson: Russia Religion News*, "World Council of Churches tries to mend relations with Russian Orthodox: Konrad Raiser Participates in Discussion on Prospects of Ecumenism, 10 July 2003": *http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/0307e.html* (21 November 2007). As for the less successful relations of Russian Orthodoxy with western Christianity and the ecumenical movement, see Zoe Knox, 2005, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism*, London.

10 Consider Bakhtin on how the dialogic interrelations that shape individual utterances also shape whole cultures. From a cultural and intercultural perspective, these interrelations are a viewing of each culture from the standpoint of another: "In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly". These dialogic interrelations take place on the boundaries between cultures and are the sites of "the most intense and productive life of culture." A different, strange culture opens up in a fuller and more profound way viewed through the eyes of another. Similarly, one meaning can reveal its depths for Leskov's heroes when they come into contact with people of other cultures, representing alien meanings; a dialogue between people takes place which overcomes the closedness and onesidedness of different cultural meanings. Mikhail Bakhtin, 1986, "Response to a Question from the *Novy Mir* Editorial Staff,"

ple, Mark Aleksandrov and Father Gordii's intercultural journeys, where their minds are ecumenically oriented and open in terms of their own identity formation. In each of the five texts we have examined, such religious interaction between different points of view and value judgments is an important pre-condition for the vitality of Christianity, only that the question for the author seems to be less whether "salvation" occurs for members of other religious traditions and more how in God's plan these traditions mediate salvation to their members. Here Leskov, like Bukharev before him, finds higher ground in Christological humanism. However, if it is to be a true interfaith dialogue it may not seek an easy way out; to camouflage differences and possible contradictions would amount to cheating and would actually end by depriving the dialogue of its object. True interfaith dialogue seeks *understanding in difference*, in a sincere esteem for convictions other than one's own.[11]

As we have seen, Leskov's Russians gain much from such dialogue: on the one hand, they win an enrichment of their own Orthodox faith; through the experience and testimony of the cultural other (Catholic, Protestant or non-Christian), they are able to discover at greater depth certain aspects, certain dimensions, of the Divine Mystery which they had perceived less clearly and which had been suppressed by the official doctrine of the Christian churches, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant alike. Furthermore, they gain a purification of their faith: the "shock" of the multicultural encounter may often raise religious questions, force them as Orthodox Christians to revise gratuituous assumptions, and even destroy deep-rooted prejudices (xenophobic, chauvinistic, nationalistic) or overthrow overly narrow conceptions or outlooks.[12] As regards the challenging relationships between Tuberozov and the German government officials, Fliagin and his Tatar captors, Merkul and his Polish or Ukrainian schoolmates, we are therefore to believe that the same God

Speech Genres and Other Late Essay, trans. V. W. McGee, eds. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Austin, pp. 1–9, pp 7, 2.

11 "If thus committed and open, it leads," writes Jacques Dupuis, "both partners to question themselves on the implications for their own faith of the personal convictions of the other." See Jacques Dupuis, 2002, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, New York, p. 378.

12 Moreover, the encounters and exchanges have a value in themselves; indeed, they are an end in themselves. Says Dupuis (2002, p. 383): "While, to begin with, they presupposed openness to the other and to God, they also effect a deeper openness to God of each through the other."

speaks in the heart of all partners, or rather: the same spirit is at work in all.[13] Although, as signposts in his multiculturalist itinerary, Leskov's characters are not always successful in their dialogic and spiritual endeavours, they do reflect the workings of "idyllic utopianism," of an ecumenical project, inside of which every attempt at interreligious dialogue seems to promise the common conversion of Christians and members of other religious traditions—to the same God, the God of Jesus Christ. Within Leskov's grand scheme of things, *dialogic harmony* between the Empire's religious communities will not be served by a universal theology which would claim to bypass all differences and contradictions. On the contrary, such a modus vivendi is best served by the development in various traditions of theologies which, taking religious pluralism seriously, will assume their mutual differences and resolve to interact in dialogue and cooperation.[14]

And yet: our writer does not have to wrestle with the traditional assumption that Christianity is inherently absolute and superior to other world religions, because the only world religion for him remains the religion of Christianity, real and entire. *A general convergence of religions upon a universal Christ who fundamentally satisfies them all*: that, I believe, is to Leskov the only possible conversion for Imperial Russia and for the world, and the only form in which a religion of the future can be conceived.[15] If we thus accept that his representation of Orthodoxy is dialogic and ecumenical at its core, his works might be said to promote a Christian theology of all religions which transcends all cultures. In view of this most imaginative attempt to harmonize Christianity and culture,

13 In this way, all of Leskov's people become—for each other—a sign, as it were, leading to God.

14 Interesting, in this connection, is Sperrle's interpretation of Leskov (2002) as a dialogist; not in the sense invoked by Bakhtin—as a thinker possessed by a conviction of the unfinalizability of meaning—but rather as a "pre-Bakhtinian" writer who uses dialogic forms in order to express a consistent and unified organic set of passionately held moral values and convictions (consider Leskov's notion of "guided speech," that is speech which is capable of joining two opposed entities). In this connection, Sperrle rightly recognizes the *prosaic* quality underlying many of the writer's works.

15 Unlike Troeltsch, who, in his *Christian Thought* (*Der Historismus und seine Überwindung*, 1924), was rather cautious in suggesting that while Christianity might be valid to the Western world, it might not be necessary to other parts of the world, Leskov in contrast appears to be more confident, if not less cautious, when considering the role Christianity can play in cultural transformation.

I suggest we reconsider his multiculturalist tendency from the point of view of transculturality.[16] Again, I use a non-essentialist concept in order to outline a Christian project which aims at a multi-meshed and inclusive—not separatist and exclusive—understanding of Russian Orthodox culture: given that Leskov's styling intends an Imperial culture and society whose pragmatic feats exist not in delimitation, but in the ability to link and undergo transition, is he not a transculturalist? Yes, and what is more: the cultural interaction in his prose may have an enlightening dimension to it inasmuch as it can bring about an awareness of the interpreted and constructed nature of our day-to-day understanding of ourselves and the world.

Ultimately, in the five works we have discussed there shines through a need for the transformation of religious and cultural Orthodoxy. Indeed, at some future time Leskov's people might well relate to the sum total of these transformations as the end of the "old" Russian Orthodox era. Except that the end of this era would not be the end of Orthodoxy. On the contrary, it may be the way in which the Christian principle must affirm itself in the present situation. The end of the "old" Russian Orthodox era would be a new, alternative Christianity, to be expected and prepared for, but not yet to be named. In this connection, Leskov—as writer, theologian, ethnographer and historical sociologist—takes seriously his intuition of a future shift from Christendom to World Christianity.

By way of conclusion

Throughout this book, my main concern has been with Leskov's treatment of multiculture, with his Russian heroes and their multiethnic interaction in the provinces, a microcosm of Imperial Russia. I have explored a writer who is a fervent patriot and believer in the spiritual uniqueness of the Russian people, but who also challenges the view of the multiethnic Empire as a culturally unified nation state; therefore, when he does not always fit comfortably within the framework of what is considered "classic" Russian literature, this is because the multitude of social and cultural voices in his texts have been difficult to deal with in a fashion that anticipates the needs of the contemporary reader. Now Leskov may himself have believed that the Russian people never consider the artful either righteous or God-pleasing and that they *love and respect simplicity*,

16 See Welsch, 1999.

but he certainly does not refrain from placing his simple-hearted heroes *in the most pluralistically complex situations*, with little or no means of securing their identity. Thus, his prose may be said to counteract the official Church's particularistic strategy of identity protection which conveys a strongly conservative agenda on certain crucial issues such as nation, state and culture. In so far as Leskov represents ethnic identity as unstable and permeable, his prose clearly aspires to overcome cultural egocentrism; more importantly, the open-minded faith of Tuberozov and his questing soulmates may be taken, jointly, as criticism not only of the Orthodox church's linkage with the Russian state as the most desirable situation for faith (involving the danger inherent in the very idea of a "state religion"), but by extension also of the tendencies of a narrow nationalism and fundamentalism in the name of this Church.

As evidenced by the multicultural lives of Leskov's heroes, it is perfectly possible though to be a thoughtful patriotic, even a conservative, on certain matters of Church doctrine and practice without espousing the anti-Westernism (and anti-Semitism) of the nationalists. Besides, patriotism is by no means a monopoly of the right-wing; it has rightly been pointed out that "Russian church reformers and democrats can be fervently patriotic in a way which sometimes surprises their Western counterparts."[17] What kind of nationalism, then, can be extracted from Leskov's works? Obviously, we are not dealing with a "classical nationalist" who starts from the assumption that the appropriate (or "natural") unit of culture is the ethno-nation, and who claims that a primary duty of each member is to abide in cultural matters by one's recognizably ethno-national culture. Rather, his prose points to a nationalism in a much wider sense: moderate, universalizing and less demanding than its classical counterpart, it involves—like "patriotism"—the valuing of civic community and loyalty to the state (as opposed to the centring around ethnocultural communities), that is the multiethnic Russian Empire. In this sense, the legacy of Leskov can be taken as an alternative Orthodox argument for diversity, whereby each national culture, or ethnie, is expected to contribute in a unique way to the diversity of human cultures, so that the bearer of basic Christian value is thus the totality of cultures,

17 Jane Ellis, 1998, "Religion and Orthodoxy," *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, eds. C. Kelly & D. Shepherd, Oxford, p. 296.

from which each national culture, ethnie and style of life that contributes to the totality derives its own value.

From this perspective, we could proceed and try to address some of the religious and cultural problems in Russia today. Considering that in Putin's day and age there is a constant danger of nationalism and intolerance pushing more liberal and tolerant voices—including those of the modern-day Tuberozovs—out of the Russian Orthodox Church, we may surmise that there is a certain unwillingness among Russians in general to show respect for another person's culture and faith, even another person's model of Christianity.[18] It is tempting to advance a "Leskovian" guidepost for this situation, namely that all citizens of the Russian Federation should aspire to accommodate a more transculturalist mode of thinking, or better still—that they should not underestimate the values of interfaith dialogue. Suffice it here to observe, as does Wolfgang Welsch, that "in meeting with other [cultural] lifeforms, there are always not only divergences but opportunities to link up, and these can be developed and extended so that a common lifeform is fashioned which includes even reserves which hadn't earlier seemed capable of being linked in."[19] Typically, Leskov's heroes are thrown into cultural encounters which involve dialogue between various faiths and denominations. More precisely, they embody a cultural Orthodoxy which is critical of any one-sided, stagnant view of Christian culture in the Empire.

One-sided assimilation to the dominant culture is the opposite of pluralism, a single homogenous society is the antithesis of a society of diverse individual and collective identities. For all its Christological humanism, Leskov's project is arguably elusive and utopian. It is perhaps best understood as a fictional response to one central question, namely: how can the Russian Orthodox Church harmonize with the forces of Empire and Society in such a way that together they will form a unity of civilization? As for Leskov's styling (and our "co-styling") of Russia, we might say that the plurality of styles can be preserved and enhanced by tying the styles

18 Consider the following statement of Aleksandr Men', the liberal Orthodox priest who in 1992 was brutally murdered for his ecumenist and "un-Russian" leanings: "Instead of [respect for another person's model of Christianity] we have hatred. The word 'Catholic' has almost become a term of abuse now, like in the times of Taras Bulba." See Alexander Men, *Christianity for the Twenty-First Century: The Prophetic Writings of Alexander Men*, eds. E. Roberts & A. Shukman, New York, 1996, p. 166.

19 Welsch, 1999, pp. 200–201.

to the Empire's many ethno-national "lifeforms." Therefore, the manner in which multiculture is portrayed in his works—their "Russianness" and Orthodoxy notwithstanding—remains pluralistic: his prose ascribes value to each particular religion and culture from the viewpoint of the totality of available religions and cultures. To my mind, Leskov therefore enters into *a thoroughly creative dialogue* with the very identity of the Christian ethos: in a most original manner, he endeavours to construct a new "religious and social imaginary"[20] that would be at the centre of his utopian vison. In this connection, Orthodox Christianity is a force for tolerance, social action and ecumenism in the Empire; in fact, it contains much which could be conducive to the entrenchment of democracy and civil society today.

And so Leskov's prose from the early 1870s seems to offer valuable guidance for post-Communist Russia's transition into a modern, civil state, in the form of a Russian Orthodox yet transculturalist vision—his projected Christian theology of religious pluralism might perhaps be construed as a catalyst for democratic cooperation in the Russian Federation. But these more optimistic prognoses would seem to be for a longer term than the future that is discussed and pointed to in this book.

20 I here use Cornelius Castoriades' concept (*The Imaginary Institution of Society,* trad. K. Blamey, Cambridge, Mass., 1987) which denotes the set of values, institutions, laws, and symbols common to a particular social group and the corresponding society. Following this line of thought, Leskov's Christian "imaginary" emerges as an pluralistic ethos of Russian culture.

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